



ESCO (2014) SEC 007 DRAFT

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Update from the Cross-Sectoral Reference Group ESCO (2014) SEC 007 FINAL

1. Introduction

The first version of the thesaurus of cross sectoral skills and competences, produced by the CSREF, is integrated in ESCOv0. This version is based on an international analysis of initiatives in cross-sectoral skills and competences, an empirical study of cross-sectoral skills and competences in labour market and education settings and an analysis of key theoretical and policy issues, including levels, language and policy priorities.

As it was agreed this version will be updated for the release of ESCOv0.1. To this end the CSREF has actively collected feedback of the SREF. Two broad questions for the SREF consultation process were highlighted:

- What are the cross-sectoral knowledge, skills and attitudes/values people working in your sector need?
- To what extent does the current version of the cross-sectoral thesaurus accommodate those transversal skills and competences identified by your SREF?

The purpose of this note is to inform the MAI on the feedback collection **process**.

The results of this process will be presented in a separate note, together with the updated thesaurus.

2. An overview of the consultation process

To facilitate maximum participation, and to ensure that the questions were interrogated in several different ways, a multi-faceted approach was designed: this comprised Face-to-face facilitated



group meetings with SREFs between July and November, 2013; and individual Skype/telephone interviews with volunteers from the SREF groups, following the facilitated group meetings. An overview of this consultation process is attached in Annex 1.

2.1. Face-to-face group meetings

These meeting informed participants about the work of the CSREF and clarified conceptual issues which the CSREF have worked on. It also provided a structured, supportive forum for discussion and reflection which was facilitated by one of the CSREF consultants. Where possible, the consultant and the SREF chairperson were in telephone contact in advance of the meeting, to clarify the process and to ensure maximum communication between the SREF and the CSREF.

The 2 hours sessions were used in the SREF meetings in a standard way. The discussions focussed on the following questions:

1. Brainstorm a selection of the most commonly-found knowledge, skills and attitudes/values people working in your sector need. If your group has completed the sectoral break-down, use that to structure your discussion.
2. Look back at each of the items you have listed in Hand-out 1. Say whether, in your view, they are relevant: only to this sector; OR to several sectors; OR to most or all sectors.
3. Examine the supplied template which summarises the first two levels of the cross-sectoral thesaurus. Decide how far you can fit in the cross sectoral skills and competences you have identified on to this template; and identify any gaps ie skills and competences you have identified, which cannot find a place.

There was also time for group members to share views with their colleagues and to raise issues not already foreseen, and to influence the subsequent shape of the data-gathering process.

2.2. Individual Skype/telephone interviews

At the start of the session, participants were told that those who wanted to could explore more in-depth issues in greater detail by reading some of the CSREF project documentation and participating in a one-to-one interview, mostly by telephone or Skype, but in a few cases where this was practical, face-to-face.

Before taking part in the interview, volunteers were supplied with three documents: the Summary document of the main project report; the paper on levels discussed by the CSREF at the meeting of June, 2013; and the full version of the current stage of the cross-sectoral thesaurus in the form of an Excel file. The purpose of providing these documents in advance was to enable interviewees to engage with some of the key topics to be probed. These are set out in an Interview Schedule (see Appendix 2), which participants also received in advance.



Interviews lasted between thirty minutes and one hour. People varied in the range of topics they were willing, or able, to discuss in depth. Some people wanted to comment in detail on all of the topics; others were content to express their views on just a few issues within their particular area of expertise. On completion of this current stage of consultation, twenty two people from ten of the eleven active SREFs participated in an interview

Interview participants, who saw the whole thesaurus and had time to think about it in advance, were able to discuss in more detail issues of structure and detail, such as:

- Identification of omissions, refinements needed;
- New headings/sub-headings needed;
- Additional specific skills/competences to include;
- Levels;
- Degree of detail thesaurus should describe;
- Views on general principles, inclusion and exclusion criteria;
- Whether to single out ICT and add a sixth headline for it;
- Additional questions, as these emerged during the group discussion and interviews.

3. Processing collected feedback

The consultation process generated rich, qualitative data. At an early stage in analysing the data gathered during the consultations with the SREFs, it became clear that a systematic and comprehensive rationale would be needed, to justify decisions that the CSREF would make on issues of concern to all stakeholders, especially when these cover contested ground. To assist with this, the criteria, which Habermas calls 'validity claims', provide a way of strengthening the rationality and construction of knowledge which offers an alternative, or complementary approach, to the quantitative method.

Validity claims are a set of objective criteria that can be used to test, clarify and challenge different versions of reality. They can be expressed in the form of four questions, shown below, which can be applied to the issue under debate. These questions are accompanied here by a limited number of examples of how they can be related to the development of the ESCO thesaurus:

Question 1: Is it true? (i.e., does it correspond to reality; is it factually correct, verifiable?)

- Is the opinion of the consultation participant factually correct? e.g. check whether a skill reported as missing from the structure isn't in fact already there as a cross-sectoral or occupation-specific skill;
- Check whether a reported skill can be decomposed into components that are already represented in the thesaurus.



Question 2: Is it right? (i.e., is it consistent with accepted norms and values?)

- Does the input conform to the overall purpose of ESCO and the general principles?
- Does the input conform to the inclusion/exclusion criteria already established?
- Is it consistent with the ESCO Guidelines?

Question 3: Is it intelligible? (i.e., is it capable of being understood?)

- Does the suggestion improve or hinder transparency?
- Does it enhance or hinder navigability?
- Would this measure clarify the thesaurus for stakeholders or confuse them?
- Is it comprehensible in its current form?

Question 4: Is it authentic? (i.e., is it a sincere attempt to arrive at mutual agreement?)

- Does the input address the question in its own terms, or are other priorities involved?

The development of a thesaurus of cross-sectoral skills draws on a number of factors, some of which are influenced or determined by norms and values which can often be unstated and unrecognised. Applying these criteria provides a practical, systematic methodology for highlighting the basis for decisions on key issues, which will strengthen the rational basis for those judgements and make their underlying reasoning transparent, open to scrutiny and, where necessary, challenge.

The consultants collected and structured the data and presented the results through means of a report and questions to the **CSREF in meeting in November 2013**. The input was discussed by the CSREF.

Following the meeting of the CSREF a summary of the issues and decisions was circulated to all members of the group, including those who had not been present, for comment. It suggested that given the significance of the decisions made at this stage in responding to the inputs from the SREFs, it would also be important to revisit the conclusions reached at the last meeting and reported here; and start the next CSREF meeting by summarising them and verifying that the group as a whole.

The **CSREF discussed in their meeting of February 2014** the result of the changes in the (structure of the) thesaurus. Further input from, and discussions with, members of the CSREF, the ESCO Secretariat and the consultants supporting the CSREF have resulted in the current proposal.



Anex1 Overview of participation July-December 2013

Number	Affiliation (SREF)	Participants	Date	Format of consultation
1	Agriculture, Forestry & Fishery	6	10/13	Moderated feedback at SREF meeting
2	Agriculture, Forestry & Fishery	1	10/13	Interview
3	Agriculture, Forestry & Fishery	1	10/13	Interview
4	Agriculture, Forestry & Fishery	1	11/13	Interview
5	Arts, entertainment and recreation	15	10/13	Moderated feedback at SREF meeting
6	Arts, entertainment and recreation	1	10/13	Interview
7	Arts, entertainment and recreation	1	11/13	Interview
8	Arts, entertainment and recreation	1	11/13	Interview
9	Health care & social services	15	10/13	Moderated feedback at SREF meeting
10	Health care & social services	1	10/13	Interview
11	Health care & social services	1	10/13	Interview
12	Health care & social services	1	10/13	Interview
13	Health care & social services	1	10/13	Interview
14	Hospitality & Tourism	10	10/13	Moderated feedback at SREF meeting
15	Hospitality & Tourism	1	11/13	Interview
16	ICT	15	07/13	Moderated feedback at SREF meeting
17	ICT	1	07/13	Interview
18	ICT	1	07/13	Interview
19	ICT	1	07/13	Interview
20	ICT	1	08/13	Interview
21	ICT	1	08/13	Interview
22	Manufacturing of Food, Beverages, Tobacco	14	10/13	Moderated feedback at SREF meeting
23	Manufacturing of Food, Beverages, Tobacco	1	12/13	Interview
24	Manufacturing of Food, Beverages, Tobacco	1	12/13	Interview
25	Manufacturing of Textiles, Clothing, Footwear, Leather	15	10/13	Moderated feedback at SREF meeting
26	Manufacturing of Textiles, Clothing, Footwear, Leather	1	11/13	Interview
27	Mining and Heavy Industry	7	11/13	Moderated feedback at SREF meeting
28	Mining and Heavy Industry	1	12/13	Interview
29	Veterinary Services	6	11/13	Moderated feedback at SREF meeting
30	Veterinary Services	1	12/13	Interview
31	Veterinary Services	1	12/13	Interview
32	Wholesale, Retail Trade and Rental Leasing	5	10/13	Moderated feedback at SREF meeting
33	Wholesale, Retail Trade and Rental Leasing	1	11/13	Interview
Totals	10 SREFs	108 meeting participants 23 interviewees		