



ESCO MAI 30-Minutes

## Minutes of the expert groups

Brussels, 6 September 2019

### 30<sup>th</sup> meeting of the ESCO Maintenance Committee (MAI) - Brussels, 24 May 2019

#### Introduction, adoption of the minutes and agenda items

The Commission (COM) opened the meeting and welcomed the members of the MAI.

COM welcomed Mr Jiri Braka, representing CEDEFOP, and Mr Thomas Britt, representing DG HR, as responsible for the learning management system in the Commission

The agenda of the 30<sup>th</sup> meeting was approved with one further point for discussion under AOB: the state of play of the list of domain experts registered to the ESCO fora.

The minutes of the 29<sup>th</sup> meeting were approved. COM clarified that the list of risks for ESCO v1.1 will be discussed in the next MAI meeting under a dedicated agenda item.

Finally, COM invited any comments on the note on recent ESCO developments (MAI 30-02). The MAI requested more information on the composition of the new expert group on transversal skills and pointed out the importance to include a labor market expert. COM clarified that two experts are already confirmed: Jens Bjornavold from Cedefop and Claudia Plaimauer. Three more experts from the areas of validation, HR and education will also join the group. The final composition of the group will be communicated to the MAI.

COM informed that the ESCO annual report 2018 had been distributed and a new edition of the ESCO newsletter published.

#### Follow up actions:

- Inform the MAI on the final composition of the transversal skills expert group and present their work in the MAI meeting of 24 September 2019.

#### 1. Structuring the ESCO skills pillar

##### Presentation – Proposal of the expert group for structuring the ESCO skills pillar

Mr David Hunter, as member of the expert group drafting a hierarchy for the ESCO skills pillar, presented the progress of the work done up to now.

The expert group has the mandate to produce:

- A list of skills and knowledge groups based on the Canadian Skills and Knowledge glossary, enriched with descriptions, scope notes and examples;
- Principles for developing the hierarchy;
- Guidelines for allocating ESCO KSC concepts to its groupings.

Mr Hunter presented the new hierarchy as a single all-embracing framework, including four different concept types: knowledge, skills, attitudes and values and languages. The group proposes a three-level hierarchical framework, with twelve categories at the broader level. The Canadian Classification is the starting point for building this hierarchy, as previously agreed by the MAI. However, some amendments have been introduced and other hierarchies have been considered, such as O\*Net, in order to make it more comprehensive. For Knowledge concepts, the experts propose to structure them based on ISCED-F.

By mid-June experts will provide the hierarchy's draft operational version, including already some skills and knowledge allocated to it. The process to allocate skills to the hierarchy should then start as soon as possible. The hierarchy can only be considered final after several iterations, once all skills have been allocated, feedback from mapping national skills classifications has been incorporated and there has been a clean up process. Therefore, the first draft of the hierarchy can only be considered a tool, but not a final product.

Main points during the subsequent discussion were as follows:

- Members pointed out that allocating skills to the hierarchy is not an exact science and it cannot be fully automated;
- Members asked if some legal certificates, which are labor market specific, are taken into account when developing the hierarchy;
- Members stated that the revision process is important in order to correct redundancies and overlaps. Sectoral experts should be engaged;
- Members noted that Public Employment Services should also be involved in testing the hierarchy;
- Members underlined the importance to engage the Eures team in this process;
- Members noted that the principles for allocation are not tailored to certain skills, for instance, in social services or robotics, as they focus on tools and equipment. Guidance needs to be adapted;
- Members raised questions regarding the adequacy of having a monohierarchy: for some skills it is difficult to work in a monohierarchical structure;
- Members questioned whether transversal skills are useful for job matching purposes.

COM informed the members of the MAI that there are exchanges going on with the Eures team to ensure that this exercise is fit for purpose for the use of ESCO in Eures. Regarding the revision of overlaps and redundancies, the content needs to be frozen until 2021 for the purposes of mapping. However, there is work ongoing to remedy this in view of the publication of a new version of ESCO in 2021.

Regarding licensing requirements, these are not so much related to the skills pillar and are not considered for the moment.

The experts pointed out the importance of having a holistic approach towards the skills pillar. If the objective is to facilitate mobility between occupations and transparency in the labor market and education, it is important to go beyond the sectoral point of view (which is also important). They also clarified that the guidelines for allocation will be adapted, and that allocation should be based on the action verb. For the experts, it is important to engage potential users of the product for testing purposes. They also noted that currently ESCO offers very generic concepts from the transversal skills thesaurus, and very specific concepts linked to occupations. It is important to develop an intermediary level. In their view, the importance of transversal skills must not be underestimated.

#### Workshop 1: Discussion in two parallel groups on the use case of matching occupational profiles with job vacancies and CVs.

An exercise in two parallel groups followed the above presentation. The objectives of the workshop were:

- To demonstrate the value of systematically grouping ESCO KSCs for facilitating matching;
- To provide an opportunity to experience the many possible ways of classifying KSCs;
- To deepen understanding of the challenges involved in structuring the ESCO skills pillar.

One group worked from the perspective of job vacancies, the other one from the perspective of CVs. The experts moderated the two parallel groups. One rapporteur from each parallel group summarised the outcome of the parallel discussions to all the members. The following points were underlined:

- The exercise was useful to understand the cognitive processes involved when comparing vacancies and to see how ESCO can be improved;
- Sometimes it was difficult to determine which skills are the ones to be retained for job matching;
- The list of skills related to occupational profiles and the division of skills into essential/optional looks arbitrary in some cases: this needs to be reviewed;
- Information on how to make use of the current skills structure is missing in the portal;
- In general, the approach used for this exercise was to start from specific skills, trying to find broader categories, and on that basis comparing the profiles;
- The exercise allowed to better understand the value of having a hierarchy
- The mapping platform could be further developed to allow comparing two or more occupations
- Need for hierarchical visualisation of skills relations (broader/narrower)

#### Workshop 2: exercise in two parallel groups on allocating ESCO skills to the current development stage of the skills structure

An exercise in parallel groups was organised in order to allocate skills to the draft hierarchy.

The objectives of the workshop were:

- To gain insight into the applicability of the draft ESCO skills classification;
- To test two different methods for allocating skills to the draft hierarchy.

One group allocated single skills to the hierarchy, the other group tested bulk allocation of skills. The experts moderated the two parallel groups. One rapporteur from each parallel group summarized the outcome of the parallel discussions to all the members. The following points were underlined:

- Previous knowledge of the whole hierarchy is needed to better carry out the exercise;
- It is necessary to look at the different metadata of the skills to assign them to the proper category;
- It is important to apply the guidelines for allocation and to focus attention to the action verb, then to look at the occupational context, the tools, the object and the outcome;
- The exercise allowed to identify skills that need remediation work;
- Bulk allocation was proven to be a more efficient way to allocate skills.

COM concluded the exercise and announced that experts will continue working on the hierarchy. An update of the work done will be provided to the MAI Members in September.

## **2. Pilot for linking qualifications to ESCO skills**

COM presented the state of play of the pilot project on linking learning outcomes of qualifications to ESCO skills. The objectives of this pilot project are to test the suitability of the approach for different actors, to define requirements for building a user-friendly IT tool for linking, to develop guidance and support materials, to assess the required effort needed and to get feedback on the ESCO skills pillar. Greece, Poland, Slovenia and the Netherlands have manifested interest to participating in the pilot. Latvia and Romania will participate as observers. A first workshop will take place in Brussels on 19 June 2019 to assess national processes for publication and define further steps. Once the tool has been developed, participants will proceed to linking their learning outcomes to ESCO skills. Results will be discussed with the different governance bodies at the end of the year.

- Members requested to be updated on the progresses of this pilot project

Follow up action: Inform the members of the MAI on the progress of the project.

## **3. AOB**

Members of the MAI pointed out that the coverage of domain experts registered to the ESCO Fora is not enough. They called for a joint effort to increase the number of registered experts.

COM acknowledged this fact and informed that efforts are ongoing to invite more experts and engage them to review the ESCO classification. COM invited the MAI members to share any initiative they might have to boost participation.

The next meetings of the MAI are scheduled for the 24 of September and the 12 of November.

## **Annex**

### List of present members and observers

Bakker Marcel  
Bird Tony  
Cerk Tina  
Goetschalckxs Gerd  
Harold Alison  
Hunter David  
Kikute Lelde  
Kopyt Marek  
Kovács Tibor  
Kreher Wolfgang  
Postavaru Nicolae  
Ramombordes Cecile  
Sundin Kenneth  
Ulovec Martin  
Valk Sarah  
Van der Sanden Karin

### List of absent members

Triganza Clyde (DGT)  
Szebeni Kinga (DG EMPL)  
Franco Ana (Eurostat)  
Katerina Flaka  
Kozakova Diana  
Mirski Peter  
Mrsik Leo  
Ravaioli Simone

### List of guests

Branka Jiri (CEDEFOP)  
Brits Thomas (DG HR)  
Claudia Plaimauer  
Julius de Zeeuws