



The upcoming new ESCO portal

MSWG 13-07

Background

The Commission is currently working on the redesign of the ESCO portal, which is planned to be launched at the end of 2020. Based on feedback from different ESCO stakeholders, the redesign seeks to improve the usability and the information structure for the visitors of the portal as well as the maintainability and flexibility of the platform for the Commission. In addition, the future ESCO portal seeks to reach more users and create economies of scale by aligning its look and Content Management System (CMS)¹ with the new Europass portal.

Stakeholder overview

The ESCO portal is visited by a wide variety of stakeholders, mainly employment services (both public and private), policy makers, educational institutions, research institutions, application developers and career advisors. The redesign of the portal seeks to improve the experience for all these stakeholders.

The general needs that the stakeholders seek to cover when visiting the ESCO portal are listed below:

- download the ESCO data set;
- get support to implement and use ESCO;
- learn how ESCO can be useful in their services;
- participate in one of the ESCO fora;
- contribute to the improvement of ESCO;
- understand the impact of ESCO in the labour market;
- understand ESCO's policy goals;
- stay up to date with ESCO news and improvements.

Portal improvements

The Commission reviewed the current ESCO portal and the feedback received from users in order to identify improvement areas. In this context, the main features that the new ESCO portal will include cover the homepage, the download section and the classification section.

In particular, the reorganisation of the homepage layout and the general restructuring of the information of the portal will provide a better communication on what users can do and find in the portal. The homepage of the portal will provide an **overview** of the main sections that can be found in the portal, allowing users to **access directly** the classification, the web API and the download section. This quick access will especially benefit users that visit the portal regularly, as they will be able to browse the portal with fewer clicks.

New users will find **information about ESCO** in the homepage, with a brief description and a video of what ESCO is about, plus a direct link to the section where the primary ESCO information can be found.

The **download** section will be restructured as well by reducing the number of packages to download. Packages like the ESCO classification will be merged in compressed files to be downloaded at once, making it easier to download all the information the user needs.

¹ A Content Management System is an application used in order to manage web content, allowing contributors to create, edit and publish.

Moreover, a working email address will be required to download the classification, allowing the Commission to follow up and provide better support.

In the **classification** section, changes to the classification will be displayed with every concept. Additionally, users will have the option to browse and compare the classification in the desired version. This way, users will be able to see the changes that each concept has gone throughout the release of different versions.

Other general improvements will cover the following:

- Improve **content discovery** through search, filtering and sorting actions, by making the search functionality more visible and adding filters to it. This will provide access to concepts located in the different sections of the portal.
- Change the **layout** of the site to efficiently use the available space, reducing the scrolling and giving improved visual organisation.
- Enhance **navigation** by avoiding duplicate actions and improving navigational support.
- Use **visual hints** to help users anticipate the behaviour of interactive elements and explaining the meaning of technical ESCO vocabulary.

State of play and timeline

The process of the redesign started at the end of April 2020, with an analysis of the stakeholders, their needs, and the challenges of the current ESCO portal. Among those challenges, the Commission identified the need to be able to customise and update the portal in a quick and efficient manner, for example to update content or include new features. For this reason, a Drupal² CMS will be used for ESCO (Drupal is the CMS now used by all Commission web portals). The main benefits of using Drupal are that it provides a simple way to edit and upload different types of content, while ensuring the security of the portal.

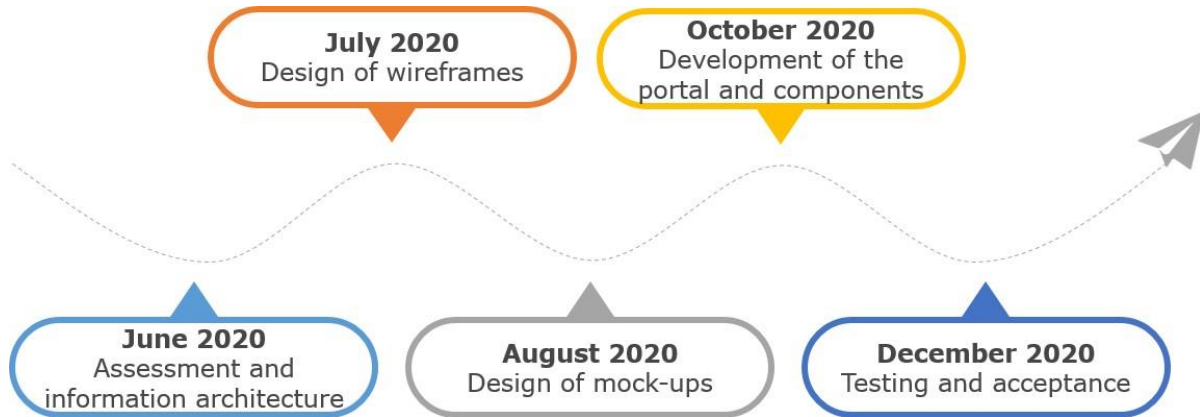
Next, the Commission carried out a series of workshops for creating the information architecture and structure of the new portal in terms of its elements and their hierarchy, categorisation and navigation. Wireframes³ based on the information architecture and structural design were developed and then tested in eight individual sessions with ESCO stakeholders⁴, where the latter provided feedback on the structure of the content and the flow of the new portal. The testing of wireframes resulted in a valuable collection of feedback about the prioritisation of sections in the 'Homepage', the content of the 'Occupations' section and the format of the 'Downloads' section of the new ESCO portal.

² Drupal is a free and open-source web content management framework.

³ A website wireframe is a visual guide that represents the skeletal framework of a website. The wireframe depicts the page layout or arrangement of the website's content, including interface elements and navigational systems, and how they work together.

⁴ Testers included members of the ESCO MSWG and MAI.

Based on the above and the subsequent design of mock-ups⁵, the development of the portal started. It is scheduled to continue until the end of November, when the portal will be tested before launching it at the end of December. The overall development of the portal follows the below timeline:



⁵ In manufacturing and design, a mock-up is a model of a design, used for demonstration and design evaluation or for receiving feedback from users.