

WP4 Survey Country report for CSCS (Italy)



1. Questionnaire sample and research

(include number of responses, who was consulted by questionnaire, interview or other research methods including desk research)

- 25 questionnaires were distributed electronically at international planners or coordinators in VET institutes and training agencies of south, north and centre of Italy. A phone call has been made before sending the questionnaire, and sometimes also after
- 16 questionnaires have been received back
- 10 persons are willing to be interviewed for the skill set in the next step of the survey
- the majority of people interviewed belong to 'Private training organisation' (n.10 persons – *quest.1*)
- n.10 persons are 'Manager with international responsibility, along with 5 persons who are 'International project or mobility coordinator' (*quest.2*)
- n. 8 of them work on international activities for less than 50% of their weekly time, and other 5 persons spent 50-75% of their time for those activities (*quest.3*)
- n. 13 of them have been in the role for more than 3 years, while other 3 persons have 1-3 years experience (*quest.4*)

2. Summary of research findings

(Identify current education & training of IDOs, activities, skills, key training needs and ways of validating informal & non formal learning)

- ✓ n. 12 of them have a University degree, along with 5 persons with other formal qualification (*quest.5*)
- ✓ The absolute majority have had 'informal training' as a basis for their role (n.15 -*quest.6*)
- ✓ The following activities have been considered as priorities in playing their international role (*quest.8*):
 - *communication with others,*
 - *networking,*
 - *communication in a foreign language,*
 - *writing bids and reports,*
 - *organising dissemination activities*

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- ✓ The following competences have been considered as most important for being an International Development Officer (*quest.9*):
 - *communication (verbal and written)*
 - *use of foreign languages,*
 - *interpersonal skills,*
 - *project management*
 - *understanding education sector you represent*

Other skills, such as 'cultural awareness' and ICT competences, are also underlined as significant.

- ✓ Concerning 'key-areas of knowledge' (*quest.10*), topics mentioned by the interviewers as important are listed below by each questionnaires:

a) communicating, giving ear to problems, motivating myself and others, having a good interpersonal skill, understanding education sector

b) knowledge on EU programme and regulations, use of foreign languages, cultural awareness, project management

c) Main activity consist in establishing partnerships and raising mutual trust. It is therefore essential that an International Development Officer is a person able to interact positively with others, both by written communication as well as when meeting potential partners in person. I also think that a good International Development Officer is somebody who has in her/his portfolio consistent experiences of mobility abroad and working within international teams.

d) ICT

e) It is important to have a good international network, to be able to write project bid, to manage international projects taking into account the cultural differences, to carry out an effective financial management. ICT and English language skills are vital. Language skills in at least two other languages are also important.

f) Project management (problem solving) and intercultural awareness

g) The above are all important for an efficient international development officer. Furthermore it is important for this kind of figure to know how to identify the correct funding and possibilities of funding for the project ideas. Another competence and key skill is how to conduct evaluation or at least understand the importance of evaluating a product, outcome or the project process.

h) Communication (both oral and written) is a key knowledge to manage and cooperate in international partnerships. Interaction and mutual understanding are strongly based upon communication, language (english) and interpersonal skills. Understanding of common issues, different



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cultures and approaches, different work-routines are key factors in successful international collaboration, a must for any project success.

i) cultural awareness, interpersonal skills, foreign language

l) Being aware of the new needs and able to devise appropriate and innovative solutions to them. Being able to communicate vision clearly and convincingly, bearing in mind the cultural background of the counterpart. Keeping projects under control in particular from a financial point of view

m) capacity of working in international teams (competences: communication, project management, problem solving); to be well involved in the education sector

n) Ability to communicate in various and different situations and with different media. Ability to organize themselves in terms of right defence and self improvement - self learning

o) Communication (verbal & written), Use of foreign languages, Cultural awareness

p) flexibility, adaptability, communication, prevent risk and conflicts.

- ✓ Concerning 'formal' qualification for International Development Officer (quest. 11) most of the people answered that they 'don't know' if it exists in Italy (n.10), while others answered 'no' (n.5)

In this regard is interesting to underline that there are in Italy some Master courses at University level for European project management, European project planning, Community funds etc.. (see 'Italian Valorisation Plan'), but most of the professionals seem to ignore this information, probably because they have developed their role only on informal training basis (ref. question 6.).

- ✓ In relation to the training needs for IDOs, people have expressed the following priorities as the most important (quest. 12 – see Annex):
 - *Communication – verbal and written (very much)*
 - *Use of foreign languages (very much)*
 - *ICT (quite)*
 - *project management (quite)*
 - *cultural awareness (quite)*
 - *understanding education sector you represent (quite).*
- ✓ Concerning other 'gaps or training needs', some questionnaires stated as follow (quest. 13):
 - a) *Understanding of EU strategies*

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- b) Understanding other countries way of administrating, beaurocracy, and education/training systems and to what extent they are developed*
 - c) European policies*
 - d) Intercultural training within partnership*
- ✓ Concerning the ways of validating competences, the majority has chosen (quest. 14):
- *work based assessment,*
 - *portfolio*
 - *continuing professional development*
- ✓ For 'other thoughts and ideas' about training and development of IDO role, some people have expressed the following opinions (quest. 15):
- a) In my opinion there must be a great development of continuing training opportunities. Also through the exchange of best practice, or a portal internet to having a chat, to exchange each other documents, projects, ideas, problems, solutions.*
 - b) Direct involvement in mobility initiative*
 - c) Organise training activities which include specific stage (eg: take part in European steering group meetings; info days etc..)*
 - d) It is difficult to grasp the needs of a profession which is not recognised as such, but is rather part of the work of other professional profiles. In most countries, the job is probably given to teachers (at individual schools and training institutions level) or to civil servants (at local authorities/ministerial level). With appropriate training (eg in the form of transnational learning opportunities, study visits etc) , and if they were given a clear perspective of what is expected of their activity overall, these persons would be more effective in developing a cursus studiorum adapted to their local/national reality and able to provide responses to the growing needs in this area of our increasingly multicultural societies. The lack of clear and agreed overall objectives in this area is a challenge not only for individual countries but also, I feel, for supranational bodies like the EU*
 - e) about point 14 - f, throughout balance of competences*
 - f) creates a community at European level and put the bases of an international association able to represent International Development Officers, for rights and training needs*



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3. Specific country requirements & difficulties

(Identify any requirements which you feel are different to other partner countries and any difficulties you have experienced or anticipate)

Vocational Education and Training

The VET system in Italy depends on two national Ministries: Ministry of Education, University and Research and Ministry of Work, Health and Social Policies.

The 20 Italian Regions also have some autonomy in defining professional profile, competences system, certification of professional qualifications.

Other national Institutions and Social Partners play a significant role in determining educational path and professional certification careers.

In this regard, the main Institutes and Trade Unions are mentioned below (see also Italian Valorisation Plan).

- **ISFOL** - Istituto per lo Sviluppo della Formazione Professionale dei Lavoratori (*Institute for the Development of VET for the Workers* – also Italian LdV National Agency). The Institute support in particular the Ministry of Work, Health and Social Policies in planning and implementing policies and activities on the following macro-areas, such as: Initial VET and VET; Continuing Education and Training; Guidance policies; Structural, Human Resources and Training; Europass; Professionals' training needs; specific projects on Environment etc..
- **Agenzia Nazionale per lo Sviluppo dell'Autonomia Scolastica** (*National Agency for the Development of School Autonomy* - also Italian LLP National Agency) – The Institute support in particular the Ministry of Education, University and Research. It has specific competences in compulsory and secondary education. It deals with pedagogical and didactical research, school teachers training; collaboration with Regions etc..

In relation to Vocational and Continuing Education and Training the social partners, along with the Ministry of Work, Health and Social Policies, address policies and activities in the field. In this regard the main 'actors' are listed below.

- **Trade Unions** – Training Agency (Social Partners)
 - **IAL CISL** - Istituto per l'Addestramento dei Lavoratori - *Institute for Workers' Vocational Training*
 - **SMILE CGIL** - Sistemi e Metodologie Innovativi per il Lavoro e l'Educazione - *Innovative Systems and Methodologies for Work and Education*
 - **ENFAP UIL** – Ente Nazionale Formazione Addestramento Professionale – *National Body for VET*



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- **Enterprises & Tertiary Services Association** (Main social partners)
 - **CONFINDUSTRIA** – Industrial Enterprises Assoc.
 - **CNA** – Confederazione Nazionale dell'Artigianato e della PMI
(*National Confederation of Handcrafts and SMEs*)
 - **CONFARTIGIANATO** – *National Assoc. of Handcrafts and SMEs*
 - **CONFESERCENTI** - *Trade, tourism, services Enterprises Assoc.*
 - **CONFCOMMERCIO** - *Trade, tourism, services Enterprises Assoc.*

The **System of acknowledgement and certification of competences** is 'under construction' at national level (D. 174/2001), while there are different experiences and tests at regional level. Tuscany Region has developed in this regard a specific system (L.R. 32/2002-Delibera G.R. 347/2004) which probably will be taken into account as the main 'model' in addressing the national framework.

The Tuscan system foresees three kind of standards' definition: on the basis of vocational profiles standards (defined in collaboration with social partners), there will be created the standards for the acknowledgement and certification of competences, along with training paths' standards for the development of such competences. The framework has an inventory of professional profiles (277 at the moment belonging to 24 productive sectors), declined in competences and then in 'areas of activities', knowledge and skills. The training activities are then defined on the basis of such criteria, according to the European Qualification Framework levels (EQF). The system for the acknowledgement and certification of competences adopts different evaluation methods (from theoretical to practical tests), taking into account also non formal and informal experiences for the acquisition of vocational qualifications and certificates.

4. Recommendations

(Based on your overall research findings, what specific recommendations could you make to work towards the work package and project objectives?)

In relation to IDO's training activities the following aspects are underlined:

- contents: consider 'European policies and strategies' as a key-topic
- methodologies: going deeper on specific 'transversal' competences required, such as *cultural awareness, communication, interpersonal skills* etc.. and define through which methodological approaches and contents they could be acquired

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➤ mobility: taking into account IDO mobility around European organisations as a part of their training activities.

5. Appendix

(Attach a questionnaire including summary of responses and comments and any other relevant material)

See Annexes