

ECVET-STEP NEWSLETTER 4



Teleconferencing—taking the digital step to STEP!

The consortium members of the ECVET-STEP project span virtually all corners of Europe, with Greece, Spain, BENE(lux) and the Czech Republic represented, among others.

Any group working together needs to meet to assess progress and chart the next road ahead.

In order to save resources (time and mon-

natural is a particular skill not possessed by everyone.

“Being able to see the speaking person in front of you, and knowing that you yourself can use gestures and other tools in your expression, makes modern virtual communication close to physical presence“...

ern virtual communication much closer to all the evolution-based advantages of physical presence.

The interface is de-

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ECVET-STEP



Strengthening Training to Employment Pathways

apart, so the account reads like a little chronological review of some of the things the ECVET-STEP team has been doing. However, that account is far from complete. The work emphasis shifts over time between different work packages, and in reality during both the flash meetings and the intervening periods, everybody contributes with ideas, across the

Highlights

- Teleconferencing works
- National workshops and interviews
- Strategies for assessing national Vocational Education and Training systems



You may be reading this at a workshop on national VET systems...

What are we, the ECVET-STEP team, trying to get out of the discussion?

We value your time. We wouldn't involve you for something we could do ourselves. But... We all know there already are many theoretical materials about how the VET system should work etc.

We are interested in how the system *actually*

works. And that information rests with YOU, not in brochures. We want to know your experiences with the system, **especially regarding mobility:**

- ◆ How is mobility organized in the country
- ◆ Who is responsible
- ◆ Who are the actors in this process
- ◆ How exactly are they involved
- ◆ How far is ECVET introduced?

ey), we can do a lot of work by “meeting without actually meeting”. In other words, meet in the virtual reality.

Although people have been able to conference-call for decades, speaking with everyone else only through a telephone and still being

scribed elsewhere in this issue of our Newsletter.

We also review the four Flash Meetings we have had so far: What were the issues discussed and what was the road ahead.

They were generally spaced about a month

work packages and their defined domains.

The project's components are so closely intertwined with each other that no sub-component can rest whilst the others components are producing ideas! It's a wholesome living organism!

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Flash Meeting 1, February 20th, 2014

Outcomes-related discussion concentrated around the issues of finalizing Vision and Mission statements, the project logo and slogan.

This being the first digital meeting, some time was devoted to getting to know the tools of oncoming co-operation. In addition to the Flash Meeting interface itself (see the interface picture), the digital HeadQuarters were introduced: a project management central system that lists individual tasks, tracks their progress and

archives any results and contributions.

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Work also started on planning the structure and purpose of the project website, our window to the

outside world.

Any project involved in designing a system based on quality-assurance principles should, of course, itself be well Quality-managed. So the consortium member UDE started work on quality management of the team's forthcoming work with questionnaires on national evaluations.

How much CO₂ have we saved through our Flash Meetings so far?

1



3204 kg of CO₂ saved!

2



4102 kg of CO₂ saved!

3



1859 kg of CO₂ saved!

4



2165 kg of CO₂ saved!

How it's calculated:

The FM software takes each participant's location (from the IP address), calculates where optimally participates would have to physically meet in the middle to minimize total travelling costs, and then converts the hypothetical flights saved into CO₂ saved!

11.3 tonnes!
That's more than
2 hot-air balloons!

Examples of CO ₂ volume to weight equivalents			
Hot Air Balloon 5,000 kg	Zeppelin 140,000 kg	15 Party Balloons 1 kg	Breathing for a day 1 kg

Flash Meeting 2, March 28, 2014

The consortium member AOC has been very diligent in preparing guidelines and questionnaires to support members in creating this common platform.

The first larger task of the work involves assessment of national systems of VET (Vocational Education and Training) and the role played in them, currently, by ECVET. This is not a mere "mapping" exercise, but a sophisticated process of identifying common features across the countries to build a common platform. Once such platform is built, it will serve as a springboard for

further core technical work of the ECVET-STEP project on reusable learning outcomes and their sub-units.

Consequently, most discussion concentrated on progress with preparing these. The consortium member AOC has been very diligent in preparing guidelines and questionnaires to support members in creating this common platform.

The rest of the discussion concerned mostly the finalizing work on the Dissemination package. Work on that actually extended the digitization of the consortium's cooperation. Individual contacts for dissemination in members countries are to be centrally collected, accessible by any member, and supplied by them through an online form.

Flash Meeting 3, April 25, 2014

The hottest topic on everybody's mind was the upcoming season of national workshops and meetings.

AOC is constantly preparing useful materials for these. Consortium members brainstormed the kind of venues they are planning to participate in order that other members can get inspiration for their local conditions.

These workshops and meetings are supposed to bring together the main institutional stakeholders in ECVET and evaluate the "state we're in" in respective countries.

Partners also finalized their profiles that will be used about them in all dissemination activities, and continued the collection of useful contacts in one central place.

On the administrative side, some clarifications have been made in the issue of financial reporting from the Czech Republic, the only consortium member not using the Euro. Although there is a central conversion calculator, it is to be determined whether it is to be used always for each individual transaction or on monthly (or other) basis.

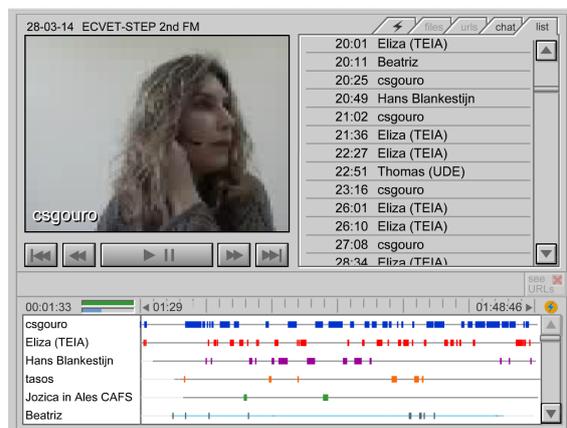
...*"The workshops and meetings are supposed to bring together the main institutional stakeholders in ECVET" ...*

Multi-user video chats on the internet can be a nightmare. Not the Flash Meeting interface the ECVET-STEP team are using. It is an excellent resource. During the session, at any time one speaker has the floor and his/her video feed appears in the main window. Other meeting participants' video feeds continue to appear live in smaller feeds next to the main feed. This is useful since during someone's speech everybody can assess everybody else's reaction, too. People click to enter the queue to speak, but they can override the queue and cut in into the speaker.

Rolling chat-line for typed messages is included (which is good for html links and additional information).

All sessions are saved and can be replayed at any time.

(Pictured is the replay interface.)



Flash Meeting 4, May 23, 2014

Work on the technical (programming) aspects of the project were starting in earnest.

The work on Capability maturity framework is starting to feed on the input from other packages, especially the work on assessing the national situations with VET systems.

The consortium member TEIA has already started to work on programming for the Reusable Units of Learning Outcomes, which the project is placing as one of the main products to the general public and

stakeholders, in order to simplify and streamline the process of matching and selecting suppliers and demanders of skills and practical training.

Partners reported on first national meetings on VET systems that have already taken place. It was useful for everyone to hear what issues may have cropped up. As a constant feedback into quality monitoring of our own processes, others have learned from the first experiences.

For example, more and more opportunities were identified where already existing scheduled events

organized by 3rd parties could be joined by the ECVET-STEP team. This overcomes the incentive constraint how to attract stakeholders to "another" meeting when their "conference and meeting schedule" is already pretty set and it is difficult to coordinate sufficient numbers of stakeholders for a new event. Experience is good about 3rd party events letting ECVET-STEP people to create a subgroup or a panel within. Informal small round tables outside the official proceedings at such event are also a possibility.

...*"more opportunities were identified where already existing scheduled events organized by 3rd parties could be joined by the ECVET-STEP team. This overcomes the problem of attracting stakeholders to yet "another" meeting" ...*

Take the ECVET step!

This Newsletter's mission is to inform general and professional public about proceedings of the ECVET-STEP project
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This newsletter is published monthly. If you want to receive it electronically by email, please sign up on the website. (Archive of past issues is on the website.)

ECVET-STEP aims in making the best value of the ECVET system, facilitating the transfer, accumulation and recognition of credits and learning outcomes or competence acquired otherwise between countries, thus promoting mobility and lifelong learning.

ECVET-STEP's mission is to support European citizens and industry to "take the ECVET STEP": adopt and use ECVET through a stepwise, quality-controlled framework and online services for building knowledge-based employment for the 21st century... And beyond!

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ECVET-STEP



Strengthening Training to
Employment Pathways



Lifelong
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