



NET-TRAINERS 2

Transfer Report

Authors: Ute Nunnenmacher & Dr. Thomas Jechle

Transferring Net-Trainers into 6 new language versions - experiences and lessons learned from the process



Education and Culture

Leonardo da Vinci

Pilot projects

INTRODUCTION

This report is a result of two projects that have been funded within the Leonardo da Vinci program: Net-Trainers and Net-Trainers 2

In the frame of the first Net-Trainers project a European qualification for online trainers has been developed that is unique with its European Dimension and the European Certificate. The training has been developed and implemented in training institutions in France, United Kingdom and Germany. After successful completion of the pilot training and after establishing the training on the national markets partners decided to make the next step in transferring the training to 6 more European countries. Together with partners from Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Italy, Poland and Spain the original Net-Trainers providers applied for funding of the Net-Trainers 2 project. The aim of this project was to widen the European Dimension of the training and the certificate and to make the training widely known in Europe. It was the first time that the Net-Trainers training has been transferred to new language versions and the experiences made as well as the lessons learned from the process are described in this report. The report furthermore comprises detailed recommendations for future transfers of Net-Trainers to new partner countries. These recommendations may be applicable in similar European projects.

INDEX OF CONTENTS

1 Experiences with the transfer of Net-Trainers into 6 new partner countries.....	4
1.1 Needs assessment and Adaptation of the common job profile and training framework.....	4
1.2 Property Rights.....	4
1.3 Production of Learning Material.....	5
1.3.1 National adaptations.....	6
1.3.2 Pedagogical adaptations.....	6
1.3.3 Medial adaptations.....	7
1.3.4 Different national contents versus standardised contents.....	7
1.4 Common platform.....	9
1.5 Methods used in the Net-Trainers training.....	9
2 Lessons learned from the transfer process.....	11
2.1 Standardisation of processes and workflows.....	11
2.2 Limited flexibility.....	11
2.3 Project management and Coordinative tasks.....	12
2.4 Results from evaluation of the pilot training.....	13
2.5 Strategic challenges.....	13
2.5.1 Economical differences.....	13
2.5.2 Commercial Interest and Sustainability.....	14
3 Procedure how the training can be transferred to new partners in future.....	15
3.1 Evaluations of the project partners.....	15
3.2 Recommended procedure for future transfers.....	16
4 Quality Standards agreed by the Net-Trainers providing partners.....	18
4.1 What are quality standards needed for?.....	18
4.2 Quality standards as agreed by the partnership.....	18
4.2.1 Quality guidelines for Recruitment activities and ethical recruitment.....	18
4.2.2 Platform.....	19
4.2.3 Standards for content.....	22
4.2.4 Tutoring.....	24
4.2.5 Quality Criteria for Activities and Assessment.....	26
5 Final Conclusions.....	29
5.1 Recommendations for short term activities.....	29
5.2 Medium and long term recommendations.....	31

Annexes.....32

1 EXPERIENCES WITH THE TRANSFER OF NET-TRAINERS INTO 6 NEW PARTNER COUNTRIES

1.1 NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND ADAPTATION OF THE COMMON JOB PROFILE AND TRAINING FRAMEWORK

As the very first step in the project new partners were asked to compare the existing job profile and training framework of Net-Trainers with their national requirements. Each of the new partners went through the existing documents and made amendments based on up-to-date literature and their professional expertise in the field of e-learning. All suggested amendments have been discussed at the first transnational meeting and it became obvious that only minor amendments were necessary. However it was very important to have approval from 6 different countries that the job profile as well as the training framework is up-to-date and relevant for training online trainers. In future transfer processes it is intended to keep-up this procedure as it is important for the partnership to have the job profile and training framework reviewed and amended by external experts and at the same time it is a good opportunity for the potential new partner to get to know the core parts of the training really in depth.

The ENTA Board has decided that the up-to-datedness of the training framework will be checked at least once every 2 years by the ENTA partnership, but if a new partner is willing to join the consortium it is regarded as being essential to ask for his needs and experiences.

1.2 PROPERTY RIGHTS

When it comes to sharing learning contents amongst different training institutions it is essential to have a clear regulation of the intellectual property rights and the rights of use. It must be made clear who is on what conditions allowed to use the learning contents of other partners. In the Net-Trainers partnership it is regarded as being essential that each partner can be sure that other partners only use the shared contents within Net-Trainers and that they are not allowed to give the contents to third parties.

The intellectual property rights as well as the right of use of the learning material have been regulated in the project contract agreed between the project partners and the project promoter by the start of the project.

“Learning content produced with funding of project n° - PP 146 397 shall

- (a) enable the **Partner** to use this content for commercial purposes
- (b) enable the **Partner** to use this content for any other purposes and via all media (especially over the internet)
- (c) be made available for other partners of this project to translate and use this translated learning content in a Net-Trainers course. The **Partner** shall ensure this, e.g. by appropriate contracts with authors, according to the national laws on intellectual property rights.

The **Partner** shall consider that learning content that is the intellectual property of a partner in the project n° - PP 146 397, may only be translated with consent of the rightholder in compliance with intellectual property laws. Learning content released for translation may only be translated into languages other than existing Net-Trainers languages. Existing Net-Trainers languages are English, French, German.

The **Partner** shall ensure that learning content which is translated from a partner may be used only within the Net-Trainers course.

The **Partner** shall ensure that in any case the name of the author(s) and of the providing organisation of the original version must be quoted on all documents in an appropriate way.”

As a result of this project ENTA does now have a list of all learning contents that can be used for the Net-Trainers training in all languages and that can be offered to new partners for translation. The list of contents is kept by the ENTA Board and will be provided on request to ENTA members who are becoming training providing partners of Net-Trainer.

The ENTA Board should consider establishing contracts similar to the project contract with all training providing partners in order to properly regulate the intellectual property rights and the rights of use. It is recommended that the contract also regulates that the use of the learning materials is only allowed within the official common Net-Trainers platform (see 1.4).

1.3 PRODUCTION OF LEARNING MATERIAL

New partners had different options for producing the learning materials for their language version of the training. They were allowed to

- translate the learning materials from the existing NT versions (DE, FR, UK) and adapt them to their national contexts
- to use learning materials they already have available from other courses
- to produce new materials from the scratch

The table below shows that the majority of the new partners benefited from the existing language versions and translated the majority of learning materials from the experienced Net-Trainers providers. They found it essential to be able to rely on existing contents for setting up a high quality

training within the given short time frame. Only the partners from Bulgaria decided to create all contents by themselves in order to ensure top up-to-datedness and national reference.

	IT	ES	CZ	PL	DK	BG
DE	0,00%	0,00%	25,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%
UK	0,00%	75,00%	25,00%	60,00%	80,00%	0,00%
FR	90,00%	0,00%	25,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%
Own material	10,00%	25,00%	25,00%	40,00%	20,00%	100,00%

1.3.1 NATIONAL ADAPTATIONS

All partners report that they did not only translate the texts but needed to adapt them to their national conditions, like e.g.:

- editing material that relates to educational policy and initiatives within the educational area
- adding web links and resources with reference to national e-learning initiatives, institutions and projects
- adding references to important national theories and authors
- adapting the text to different cultural conditions, like different sense of humour, style of language

1.3.2 PEDAGOGICAL ADAPTATIONS

Some of the partners reported that they also had to amend translated texts and especially learning activities with view to pedagogical aspects. Partners from Denmark and Italy found that they needed more collaborative activities than they found in the existing versions in order to follow their normal pedagogical approach. The Danish partner needed to adapt all activities to their special approach in course communication: people do not communicate tutor-participant on e-mail or in closed forums, but in forums everybody can see and learn from. Private communication between tutor and learner is other than in the original language version rather an exception than normal.

The Danish partners did translate most of their learning materials from the English Net-Trainer provider. They reported that their learners were not completely happy with the learning materials: The texts of the English provider are rather short and contain a couple of weblinks for further reading. The Danish learners would have preferred longer texts that are written in a more traditional academic style. The Danish partner is now considering to adjust the contents accordingly.

The Italian partner reported that they have translated the learning material from the French partners without adapting them enough to the Italian context.

They were translating the texts successive whilst the pilot training was already running. This approach had several obstacles:

- Without being fully adapted to the Italian context the contents were difficult to use for the learners as they did not have e.g. the chance for further reading, because the authors were mainly French.
- The tutors were not familiar with the contents and the learning activities in advance of the training, so they felt the materials would not fully reflect their pedagogical approach.

After the pilot the partners from Italy reflected their experiences from the pilot and decided to completely rewrite the contents. They have learned that for both the tutors as well as the learners it is important to fully reflect the Italian context and their preferred pedagogical approach.

1.3.3 MEDIAL ADAPTATIONS

Some partners found that in their national context they would need more multimedia elements than the original versions comprise. For example the Czech partner added the following components:

- Previews of online courses
- Animations
- Videoconference recordings
- Video recording of a lecture
- Online tests

One online course preview was added to each of the modules and the course participants were instructed to assess these previews. Through a critical review of real-life examples, the students were able to identify the positive and negative aspects of these courses. The recording of the videoconference on English learning showed Czech students communicating with students from the USA, China, India and Malaysia. It was an example of intercultural understanding. The course also included a video recording of a lecture. The aims of the online tests were, for instance, to reveal participants' knowledge of netiquette, to find their aptitude for teamwork, to identify their role as part of a team and to discover their individual study styles.

1.3.4 DIFFERENT NATIONAL CONTENTS VERSUS STANDARDISED CONTENTS

When the project started the question arose why Net-Trainer partners would not use one and the same standardised learning contents translated into different languages as it would cost much less effort to keep the contents up to date then. Furthermore it would be easier for ENTA to supervise the quality of the contents.

The experiences of the new Net-Trainer providers have shown that the decision to have different language versions that are written to reflect the respective learning culture of the country has the following advantages:

- Partners experienced that as well learners as tutors better identify themselves with contents that are adapted to their context and culture.

The Italian partners reported that they have had quite a lot of problems with the contents and activities that were only translated but not enough adjusted to their specific needs. The experiences made by the Danish partner are similar. Learners would have been better identified with contents that are closer to the style of contents they are normally used to.

- Learning Contents and learning activities that are inline with the respective learning culture are more motivating for students as well as tutors. The Italian partner for example reported that they needed to adapt the activities to the teaching and learning culture of their institution. Tutors felt quite uncomfortable with learning activities that are not in line with their pedagogical approach and ideas.
- Partners who have translated parts of the learning material from other partners explained that they gathered various good ideas for writing and presenting learning contents. The different styles partners are using for medial presentations was enriching for both the experienced and new partners. It was a mutual learning process that was enriching for the majority of training institutions.
- During the pilot training it became obvious that especially those participants with good language skills were benefiting from the variety of different learning contents. E.g. the Czech course manager reports: *“Czech participants are good at languages and they read not only Czech units, but also English, German, French, Spanish, Polish and Bulgarian versions. I regret that we don't have any participants speaking Italian or Danish. They compare texts in each unit and give me feed back what they like in other versions. For example we discussed a Polish term for digital divide - „wykluczenie cyfrowe“ which we consider as better than the Czech term „digitalni rozdeleni“ frequently used for this phenomenon.”*
- For measuring the quality and appropriateness of the learning contents and activities ENTA has used an online form where learners were asked to rate contents and activities on a numeric scale (unit-wise evaluation). This evaluation method is generally suitable for overcoming the language problems and for gathering the feedback of the end-user which is considered as being most important for rating the quality and appropriateness of learning material.

Looking at these experiences one can come to the conclusion that it is important for the satisfaction of both the tutors and the learners that a new provider takes enough time for adapting translated activities and contents. Contents that cannot be adapted to other national context in a satisfying manner should be authored by the provider himself.

1.4 COMMON PLATFORM

The Net-Trainers training is designed in a way that makes it necessary to run all language versions on one common platform. Especially the European Dimension of the training makes it necessary that learners can easily access other language versions of the training and that they can log on the European Forum without going to another website, etc. And even more for the Europath participants it is important to find the same structure of the module and familiar communication tools when embarking on a module in a foreign language.

It was communicated to all the partners that this is an indispensable prerequisite before the pilot training was started. During 2 weeks in advance of the start of the pilot training several technical problems appeared within the existing NT platform and the technical partner had difficulties in catching up with answering all requests from all the different partners. Many partners then wished to run the training on their own platform in order to be more independent from the support of the technical partner. The project promoter then reminded the partners that it is obligatory for all partners to use the common platform and only one exception was accepted. The obstacle of the Bulgarian partner due to problems caused by Cyrillic characters needed to be accepted for allowing the partner to run the training on a separate platform. The Polish partner decided to run the training for the official pilot group with 15 learners on the official NT platform and one group with additional learners on their own platform.

It became clear from these experiences that after the pilot session a new learning platform must be found that allows for utmost flexibility and autonomy of each partner in handling their own language version whilst running all sessions on one and the same platform and server. A group of partners evaluated the use of moodle as a potential new platform and found it would be suitable for the needs of NT. The platform was presented to all partners at the transnational meeting in Toulouse and it was suggested to the ENTA Board for taking a decision in favour of using moodle as the future platform for the Net-Trainers training. A test-set up was implemented and each partner had the chance to further explore the features of moodle. After this period the ENTA Board has decided to use the new platform from October 07 on.

1.5 METHODS USED IN THE NET-TRAINERS TRAINING

In the projects work plan it was foreseen to build workgroups consisting of representatives from experienced and new Net-Trainer providers for discussing the methods used in Net-Trainer within an online forum. During the process it has become clear that it is more straightforward to shortly describe the methods applied and to share the documents and tools that are used for it. This is especially true for the methods of contract learning as well as the learning portfolio. To see examples of the concrete tools that are applied in the training made it quite easy for the new partners to understand the methods and to adapt the tools according to their needs very easily. As a

result of this project, examples of the methods contract learning and learning portfolio are available in English language and can be shared with future new partners.

2 LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE TRANSFER PROCESS

2.1 STANDARDISATION OF PROCESSES AND WORKFLOWS

When working together in the extended partnership it became obvious that more clearly defined standards and procedures would be necessary than before. With only 3 training providers it has been already challenging to follow similar approaches in conducting the training as well as in organising the cooperation within the European Net-Trainers Association. It has required a lot of work and strong involvement from all partners to allow for successful cooperation. During the Net-Trainers 2 project it became obvious that within a partnership of now 9 providers collaboration would be even more challenging and demanding. In a widened consortium it is necessary to define processes, workflows and standards in a clear and unmistakably way in order to avoid misunderstandings and conflicts. For example whilst exchanging learners on the European Learning Path of the pilot training it became apparent that there were significant differences in the level of support provided by the tutors of the different language versions. This led to the conclusion that it is necessary to commonly define (minimum) standards for tutoring in order to guarantee a comparable quality of support in all language versions. All partners were convinced that it would be necessary to agree upon certain quality standards and worked out drafts in international workgroups. These drafts have been discussed and agreed upon at the final transnational meeting. (See chapter 4). The enlarged partnership also needs more clearly defined structures and processes for decision taking. Especially for future transfer processes it will be inevitably necessary to have guidelines and manuals at hand that explain the responsibilities and decision taking processes clearly to the new partner. One example of the manuals that need to be developed is the management grid for the technical learning platform that can be found under 4.2.2.3 of this report.

2.2 LIMITED FLEXIBILITY

Within a partnership of 3 training providing institutions it has not always been easy to agree upon parallel training schedules and to use one and the same learning platform for providing the training. The transfer project has shown that these limitations of flexibility are even more challenging in an enlarged partnership. For example when discussing the parallel schedule for the pilot training it became obvious that it would not be possible to run the training in July and August due to different national holiday times. Up to the pilot training the summer break was in August but now new countries joined

the partnership where July is the main month for summer holidays. This led to the decision to have an 8 weeks summer break instead of 4 weeks before, which is not ideal with view to the training process. Furthermore cases arose where partners wished to conduct the training apart from the common European schedule. This leads to the situation that the training must be offered without core parts of the European Dimension, like e.g. the European Discussion Forum and the European Learning Path.

It would be advisable if the ENTA Board would discuss and suggest solutions that allow for more flexibility in time without giving up the core parts of the European Dimension.

It is an important aspect of the European Dimension of the Net-Trainers training to run the course on one common platform and to make it as easy as possible for the learner to access and compare all language versions.

Two partners have run the pilot training (partly) on separate platforms due to major technical problems with the existing NT platform. These experiences have shown that learners tend to not make use of the European Dimension if the training is run on a separate platform as it was striking that especially those learners were not or only very little extent taking part in the European Discussion Forum. In one case learners did not even take part in the European Learning Path.

This makes clear that new providers indispensably need to have a strong commitment to the European Dimension of the training: They need to be ready to run the training on one common platform even if it may limit their flexibility. Furthermore partners must take efforts in introducing their learners carefully to all aspects of the European dimension, especially the European Forum and the European Learning Path.

In order to make it easy for all partners to comply with the requirement to use the common Net-Trainers platform ENTA has decided to set up the training on a new learning platform that makes it as easy as possible for each partner to administrate his/her language version by him/herself and that allows at the same time utmost flexibility for the learners in switching between the different language versions and in accessing the European Forum and activities. In future transfer processes it must be made very clear to the potential new partner that it is a prerequisite for becoming a provider of Net-Trainers to run the training on the common NT-platform.

2.3 PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATIVE TASKS

The partners who were in charge of setting up new language versions of Net-Trainers reported that it was important for them to be regular in touch with an experienced NT provider (project coordinator). They considered it as being helpful for them to have a contact person who supervised the overall transfer process and advised them in terms of time and activity management. It is obvious from this experience that it will be important for new providers as well to be in regular contact with one experienced provider who will keep an

eye on the transfer process and will answer questions that may arise when setting up the training. It is recommendable that the ENTA Board appoints one experienced partner to be the contact person/consultant after a decision in favour of a new partner has been taken (see 3.2.).

2.4 RESULTS FROM EVALUATION OF THE PILOT TRAINING

In the pilot training several aspects of the training have been evaluated. The majority of results are outstanding positive, however one result points on a field for further activity. The evaluations per unit have shown that the time learners spend for each unit is considerably lower than the learning time that was assumed when calculating the ECTS points. Since it is unclear whether learners calculated all time they have used to fulfil the task it is not clear if there is any need for improvement. Besides from that it was very difficult to motivate learners to regularly fill in their learning time in the online form. For this reason the data base of this part of evaluation is very low.

But anyhow the evaluation has made clear that ENTA needs to think about a good method for evaluating the learning time learners spend on the units. When it comes to issuing a common European Certificate as well as credit points according to ECTS it is essential for the association to have a tool in place for supervising the comparability of the workload and the level of the respective trainings. It is a true challenge to implement an effective tool for supervising these aspects without overloading learners with evaluation efforts.

2.5 STRATEGIC CHALLENGES

Working in an extended partnership of nine partners from very different Eastern and Western European countries revealed several challenges that need to be overcome.

2.5.1 ECONOMICAL DIFFERENCES

The levels of income and costs of living vary significantly between the countries involved. This turns out to be a challenge when it comes to financing the European Learning Path. In exchanging learners partners need to cover each others costs for tutoring these participants. E.g. Costs for tutoring one learner in the Bulgarian Module 3 are approx. 15 EURO whereas in the UK the costs for supporting one learner in the same module are around 400 EURO. The price for tutoring one learner in the UK is higher than the price Czech and Polish learners need to pay for the whole training. It is obvious that a model needs to be established for balancing the huge differences without making it unaffordable for the Eastern European participants to join the Europath in the more expensive countries. Partners have discussed several models and explored various sources for funding but haven't found a satisfying solution up to now. It is regarded as being essential to have a comparable detailed cost calculation from each partner in order to find a just and reasonable solution for all training providing institutions involved.

Up to today a satisfying solution has not been found even if many efforts have been made for finding a good model (See annex 1). Overcoming the huge economical differences between Western and Eastern European countries is a general problem within the EU but also a quite practical challenge in a European online course. It will be necessary to further explore possibilities that are foreseen by the EU for attenuating the differences and for allowing collaboration across the borders in spite of these challenges.

2.5.2 COMMERCIAL INTEREST AND SUSTAINABILITY

Being a large partnership of very different institutions (public and private institutions, universities and vocational training institutes) it has become clear that partners have different commercial interest in the Net-Trainers course. For some partners it is rather a “nice-to-have” offer in their portfolio, others have a stake in running the course regularly. One of ENTA’s main aims is to achieve sustainability in running the course in the existing language versions. In order to be sure of that, the Internal Rules and Regulations have been amended. It has been determined that each provider must at least run one session of Net-Trainers per year, otherwise ENTA is allowed to look for a new partner in the respective language.

It is generally strongly recommended for ENTA when looking for new training providers to attach importance to the commercial interest the potential new partner has in the Net-Trainers course.

Another aspect of sustainability is to integrate Net-Trainers fully into the course portfolio of the training providing institution. It has been stated by members of the advisory board that it is very important to make Net-Trainers independent from persons. The partners who were involved in setting up the new Net-Trainers versions need to make efforts for making the course known amongst the decision makers of their institutions in order to make sure the course will be regarded as an important part of their course portfolio independent from the employment of the developers. The developers of the national Net-Trainers versions furthermore need to document all tasks that need to be fulfilled for managing and running the course.

3 PROCEDURE HOW THE TRAINING CAN BE TRANSFERRED TO NEW PARTNERS IN FUTURE

3.1 EVALUATIONS OF THE PROJECT PARTNERS

Before writing this report the authors have asked the new partners for their feedback about the transfer process of the training. Amongst others partners were asked how they would introduce a new partner to Net-Trainers and what setting they would find useful. They were asked to rate the settings listed on the left of the table below on a scale from 1-4

1 (not effective), 2 (rather not effective), 3 (quite effective), 4 (very effective)

Complete replies of the partners from Czech Republic, Denmark, Italy and Poland were received and their answers were added together in the table below.

	Introducing the pedagogical approach/ methods used in NT	Introducing the modules/ contents/ learning activities	Introducing Certification procedure as well as ECTS points	Introducing new partner to ENTA and it's organization
Face to Face meeting with new partner	15	13	11	15
New partner is following the course as a participant in an existing NT version	15	15	5	8
New partner joins a guided tour through the course web	11	12	7	6
New partner joins a counseling sessions in a virtual classroom	10	9	8	10
New partner receives written guidelines/manuals	11	13	16	12
New partner is only introduced by email contact	6	6	8	11

Generally speaking the most effective means for introducing new partners seem to be face to face meetings, new partner attending the course and written guidelines and manuals. According to the experiences of the project manager

at least one face to face meeting with the new partner is necessary. Virtual cooperation needs a trustful relationship amongst the partners and face to face meetings are an important prerequisite for establishing mutual trust and for getting to know each others cultural contexts and traditions. Furthermore virtual cooperation is likely to cause misunderstandings therefore it seems to be sensible to be in close contact with the new partner and to have as many precise guidelines and manuals as possible.

These experiences are reflected in the procedure that is recommended for future transfers of Net-Trainers into new partner countries.

3.2 RECOMMENDED PROCEDURE FOR FUTURE TRANSFERS

1. If an institution is interested in becoming a Net-Trainers provider the contact person receives general information about the Net-Trainers training from the partner who has established the first contact. The interested institution is the asked to fill in a questionnaire explaining their interest in NT and describing their institutions general character and aims (See annex 2.1.). The questionnaire is submitted to the ENTA Board who then decides if the contact with the applying institution will be deepened.
2. If ENTA has decided to deepen the contact the potential partner an ENTA Board representative will be appointed who will be the main contact person for the potential new partner. The ENTA Board member will organise a detailed guided tour on the training website and provide an insight to the job profile and the training framework. S/he recommends to the interested institution to get in contact with other NT providers to learn from their experiences and approach. The interested institution meets the ENTA Board representative personally; at least two face-to-face meetings should be arranged.
3. If the mutual will is expressed to engage in the transfer process of Net-Trainers to the respective country the partner needs to become a member of ENTA and signs a contract concerning the property rights of the learning materials. S/he will meet face-to-face with the ENTA Board representative for signing the contract and planning the transfer process in detail.
4. It is strongly recommended to applying partners to send a representative of their organisation as a learner to one of the existing Net-Trainers versions in order to get to know the training and the pedagogical approach in detail. This has been done by two interested parties: course providing institutions from Romania and Slovenia have sent representatives to the Net-Trainers training of the UK partner in order to get to know the training and for qualifying their staff.
5. Independent from their decision to send a representative to an existing course, the new partner will then check whether the job profile and training framework is applicable in their country. If there are any significant changes to be made, they send their suggestions to the ENTA board.

6. As member of ENTA the new partner is allowed to use and translate the learning contents of the other providers used in the Net-Trainers course. ENTA is holding the right of use of the majority of learning contents of the training. For the use within the Net-Trainers training partners are free to use the contents without having to pay additional fees. It is strongly recommended to the partners not to translate 100% of the contents and to plan enough time and capacity for adapting translated contents to the national needs. It is generally advisable that partners create parts of the contents themselves or to use existing contents they already have available. They have to make sure that the contents are adequate for achieving the learning objectives, they need to follow a constructivist approach and must be structured in the way that is described in the training framework.
7. The new providers can access several useful resources for planning the work of the tutors in the Net-Trainers course. They receive
 - a) A table with the main tutoring activities that are required when conducting the course (see 4.4)
 - b) a table for calculating the tutoring costs that will arise (See annex 2.2.)
 - c) several documents that are used in order to implement the methods that are defined in the training framework, e.g. a model learning contract, self-assessment questionnaires for the learners, etc (See annex 2.3.)
8. The implementation of the training must follow the common quality standards as defined by the partnership. The quality standards define minimum requirements and guidelines for: tutoring, recruitment, platform, contents, assessment and evaluation. (See chapter 4).
9. The new provider must make sure that s/he has national accreditation for the NT course and must offer a certificate in cooperation with a university or another official body that is able to provide official certification like e.g. a Chamber of Commerce and Industry in order to be able to issue a national certificate as well as credit points after the ECTS system if possible. The partnership will make efforts to follow the “European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training“ (ECVET) as soon as the system is finally adopted.

4 QUALITY STANDARDS AGREED BY THE NET-TRAINERS PROVIDING PARTNERS

4.1 WHAT ARE QUALITY STANDARDS NEEDED FOR?

The pilot training revealed that in all training providing institutions different quality standards are applied. It was undisputed that it would be necessary to commonly define basic quality standards for Net-Trainer in order to be able to offer comparable trainings for achieving the European Net-Trainers certificate. Partners are aware that the quality standards that have been agreed up to know are only a first step in the process of quality assurance and management. The task is a very complex one and would be an appropriate topic for another funded project. Parts of the quality standards as agreed up to know will be supervised by the European Net-Trainers Association (tutoring, contents and assessment). According to the updated Internal Rules and Regulations of ENTA each partner is obliged to regularly evaluate students' satisfaction with the training and to report the results to the association.

4.2 QUALITY STANDARDS AS AGREED BY THE PARTNERSHIP

4.2.1 QUALITY GUIDELINES FOR RECRUITMENT ACTIVITIES AND ETHICAL RECRUITMENT

4.2.1.1 *General Statement/Recommendation*

All Net-Trainer providers aim at inclusive recruitment. Efforts are taken for not excluding people due to social or physical disadvantages.

4.2.1.2 *Honest information*

All candidates have access to useful and available information concerning the Net-Trainers training system:

- The titles, the official aims and the duration of the 5 modules are available.
- The signature and the 7 key concepts
- The European dimension
- The learning pace, the delivering method and the work load for the participants.
- Details concerning the providing organisation and the qualification of the staff.
- Details concerning the recruitment procedure and schedule.

Evidences concerning the information and figures describing the advantages of the Net-Trainers training can be provided to the candidates, if necessary.

The candidates have possibility to be in touch by e-mail with certified Net-Trainers, if they ask for it.

The candidates are informed of the possibilities to get in contact by phone and e-mail with one training manager of the providing organisation.

4.2.1.3 Pricing

The price of the Net-Trainers training is based on a detailed cost calculation. This cost is including the improvements of the system, at a technical and pedagogical point of view.

4.2.1.4 Inclusive recruitment

The selection of the candidates is based only on the prerequisites as mentioned below*. Training providers are able to provide evidence of their selection decision procedure and conclusion, if it is asked by any individual candidate.

The selection of the candidates does not take into account criteria of ethnicity, religion, gender or social level.

* The participant should have an academic degree or a comparable job-experience.

A comparable job-experience is at least one year experience of face to face teaching.

* The technical prerequisites:

Basic skilled computer user, using at least one word-processing software

Owning or having continuous access to a multimedia PC, an Internet connection and a personal e-mail adress.

* The participants have in addition to commit themselves to two personal key-prerequisites:

- The time they have to mobilise for the training
- Their commitment to work collaboratively

4.2.2 PLATFORM

4.2.2.1 A list of features to be included by a complete eLearning platform

* means mentioned below

Communication

- Discussion Forums *
- Internal Email *
- Real-time Chat *

- Student Community Building *
- Accessibility Compliance

Data management

Tools, Hosted Services

- File Exchange *
- Content Sharing/Reuse *
- Online Journal/Notes *
- Bookmarks *
- Searching Within Course
- Calendar/Progress Review *
- Work Offline/Synchronize
- Groupwork *
- Instructor Helpdesk
- Orientation/Help

Student

- Curriculum Management*
- Self-assessment*
- Student Portfolios*
- Student Tracking*

Security

- Authentication
- Course Authorization
- Registration Integration
- Course Management

Lessons, multimedia tools

- Video Services * (video conferences? Streaming media?)
- Whiteboard *
- Online Grading Tools*
- Automated Testing and Scoring*
- Course Templates
- Customized Look and Feel*
- Instructional Standards Compliance
- Instructional Design Tools *

4.2.2.2 Special requirements of NT regarding a learning platform

"The learning platform has to support collaborative activities"

Platform has to include tools to perform collaborative activities: Discussion forums, file exchange, internal mailing system, notice board, real time chats, whiteboards, possibility of assigning groups/individuals to a certain activity from administrator/tutor choosing if to make it visible or not visible to certain category contents and access to tools (groupwork), real-time messaging

system, access to audio and video possibilities. Access to instructional design tools.

“The learning platform has to allow the building of the learning Community” (social and private tools integrated)

To the above mentioned tools the platform has to consider private spaces for each student (personal blog for example where private conversation take place). Customized look and feel.

“The learning platform has to allow to learn in a constructive and reflective way”

Possibility of self-assessment, students portfolios (access also to mindmap options or tools to review and change/add/update content and progress review), bookmarks on site, material to link to the portfolio, automated testing and curricula building

"The learning platform supplies features, which are suitable for both tutor and learner to supervise learning progress"

Different student tracking systems (by access and time spent on activities, online grading tools for test to access previous knowledge or new content testing previous knowledge). The online tracking system the tutor feedback needs to be added.

"Content, objectives, structure, learning objects can be shared and reused."

4.2.2.3 Management and Documentation of the learning platform used for NT

Management

The following elements of the ENTA's organizational structure are involved in managing the eLearning platform:

ENTA Board (EB);

Platform's hosting organization (HO);

A platform responsible from each ENTA member organization (RM);

ENTA members staff involved in process verification (VS);

In the following table there are listed the major tasks needed for keeping the platform running.

For each task, the are roles assigned for performing the task:

Proced. = defining the procedures for performing the task;

Implem. = implementing the procedures for performing the task (setting-up tools);

Resp. = responsible for performing the task;

Verif. = responsible for task's verification.

Major task name	Proced.	Implem.	Resp.	Verif.
Deciding about the eLearning platform	EB	EB, RM	EB	EB
Platform's software installation and maintenance	HO	HO	HO	EB
Platform's security and privacy assurance	HO	HO	HO	EB
Defining the structure (language versions, modules etc)	EB	EB, RM	EB	EB
Creating language versions and modules	HO	HO	HO	VS
Registering the users	EB, HO, RM	HO	HO	EB, VS
Managing users database	HO, RM	HO	HO	VS
Editing course content	HO, RM	HO, RM	RM	VS
Registering the students	EB, HO, RM	HO, RM	RM	EB, VS
Files management	HO, RM	HO	HO, RM	VS
Backups and restorations	EB, HO, RM	HO	HO	EB, VS

Documentation

The ENTA eLearning platform documentation consists in the following:

Procedures Manual:

- Platform software's maintenance procedures;
- Platform's security assurance procedures;
- Platform's structure definition procedures;
- Users registration procedures;
- Database management procedures;
- Course editing procedures;
- Students registrations procedures;
- Files management procedures;
- Backups and restorations procedures.
- Databases:
 - Users Database;
 - Students Database;
 - User Documentation

4.2.3 STANDARDS FOR CONTENT

4.2.3.1 General Standards

- The learning content must be clearly related to the learning objectives defined for the unit.
- Contents can be represented by different media with media specific requirements for learner friendly design to be met.
- Accessibility aspects of different media have to be respected and taken into account.
- Intellectual property rights are to be respected.
- Contents should reflect the European Dimension of the training: on the one hand they must be adapted to national requirements on the other hand it is aimed at integrating contents that refer to e-learning in an international context, like e.g. in learning unit 2.04.

4.2.3.2 Recommendations for presenting the contents

Style

- While the text in lecture notes is often static, the nature of the online course should be dynamic.
- A written text, which gives an impression of a conversation between the author and the student, is needed. Use a conversational style.
- Use „you“ and „we“ whenever appropriate (second or first person of plural).
- The following grammatical forms are important: questions, verbs in second person of plural and possessive pronouns: your.
- The units, which make up an online course, should be slightly shorter than those in lecture notes.
- Use short sentences, short paragraphs.
- Use humour if it is possible. Entertaining flavour may be introduced through different means, such as puns in texts or headings and subheadings of units, funny examples, cartoons illustrating certain problems, etc.
- The texts should contain sufficient numbers of examples, which enhance the understanding of terms or phenomena.
- Use a gender sensitive style in your texts.

Format

- Don't underline text for emphasis (underlining is reserved for links).
- Use capital letters only for:
 - initial letter of sentence or heading,
 - name or title of a specific person or entity,
 - acronyms and abbreviations.
- Don't capitalise any other words.
- Highlighting loses its effectiveness when overused. Keywords and terms, which are important for understanding, are the elements to be highlighted in the first place.

Structure

Information about a course:

- the information about author of the materials, biographical note, sources of the materials,
- the preliminary requirements of course – information about the knowledge and abilities which the participants should have before course will start,
- a preamble to whole course describing the master of course and learning purposes (very essentially, briefly),
- a list of the modules and subjects,
- a bibliography – a list of books, the articles, web sites used in course (optional whole bibliography in course description plus a bibliography added to each lesson),
- optional: the class leading methods, a system of evaluation,

- a schedule.

Information about lesson unit/module:

- start every unit with defining of an objective,
- the introduction should not be omitted,
- use frequent subheadings; write them like headlines,
- connection between individual texts is very important. Study units should thus reference previous or the upcoming topics and reveal their relationships.
- Summarizing of each unit is needed.

Links

- Make link-text self-explanatory, so people know exactly what they will find when they click. (If it is possible add a precise, brief description what is located in link and what information student should use on the Web site)
- Links to multimedia components help the course become interactive.
- Particular hypertext links and their number should be carefully selected. Overusing hyperlinks may have negative consequences: they may distract the students from the main topic.

Lists

- List items in the logical order for user.
- Limit number of items on a list to 7 maximum.
- Subdivide long lists into short lists of related items.
- Provide descriptive headings.

Images

- Restrict image size.
- Provide a long description for all complex images (e.g. charts and graphs).
- Add a list of inserted photos, diagrams, charts, pictures.

4.2.4 TUTORING

4.2.4.1 General standards

The tutoring time spent for one learner should be at least 15% of the learning time of the student. Example: Considering a learning time of 160 learning hours in NT, the tutor should spend a minimum of 24 hours for supporting one learner during the course.

The tutor must be given the opportunity to contact the author of the learning materials for clarifying questions.

4.2.4.2 Competencies and Tasks of an online tutor

Plan appropriate online and e-learning experiences:

- Employ the principles of adult learning

- Know how online learning differs from other delivery modes
- Be up-to-date with the technologies available for online learning
- Evaluate and integrate web-based resources
- Select and integrate multi-media elements into online courses
- Consider usability and accessibility issues

Welcome and induct new online learners:

- Welcome new learners with communications of the right frequency and tone to build confidence
- Be sufficiently familiar with information about the learner to provide appropriate support
- Understand the learner's working context, and their personal learning objectives, and ensure appropriate learning experiences are provided
- Give clear guidance about what is expected of learners
- Give clear guidance about the consequences if learners do not meet expectations
- Ensure that the learner knows what support is available to them
- Provide learning experience to introduce learners to the learning environment

Support individuals learning online:

- Adopt appropriate tone in online communications
- Communicate in a friendly and professional manner, avoiding any language or attitudes which are discriminatory
- Provide feedback which is detailed, individualised constructive and motivational
- Acknowledge all emails within 2 working days
- Provide feedback within 7 working days or under exceptional circumstances agree another deadline if necessary.
- Understand how learning styles impact on success of learning online
- Be ready to provide additional learning experiences for those learners who either need additional support, or more challenge
- Send private message to any one who has missed deadlines for an individual activity, reminding them of the necessity for participation to achieve certification
- Employ good practice when managing difficult learners.

Establish and coordinate online communities

- Choose appropriate group communications tools
- Provide learning experiences to introduce learners to group communications tools
- Organise effective learning groups, taking into account their interests and experiences
- Organise meaningful collaborative activities
- Read all forum postings at least every 3 days
- Encourage learners to participate confidently and appropriately in online communications
- Intervene in a tactful and supportive manner to ensure discussion is progressing appropriately
- Send private message to any one who has not contributed to a required, reminding them of the necessity for participation to achieve certification

Use online assessment tools:

- Select and/or create fit-for-purpose assessment tools
- Understand the issues of assessment for online learning
- Establish and implement ethical guidelines

Organise systems for effective online learning*:

- Establish and maintain effective data management systems
- Work within the Data Protection Act
- Ensure data is protected from viruses and other Internet-distributed threats
- Establish and maintain effective learner tracking systems

* Applies to working style of the tutor, not to technical and software related management.

4.2.5 QUALITY CRITERIA FOR ACTIVITIES AND ASSESSMENT**Definition:**

Learning activities is meant to be the general term for all learning activities in the course that are not necessarily related with assessment.

Assignment is the term that is used for learning activities that will be assessed.

*4.2.5.1 Quality standards for the design of assignments and assessments***“Design of assignments”**

Assignments have to be designed in a way to stimulate and facilitate active and social learning.

Standardized tests, like e.g. multiple choice tests represent less than 10% of all assignments.

Any form of assignment is to be preferred that requires students to produce a response rather than select from a list of possible responses.

Students should be offered a variety of different assignments, which require problem solving, critical thinking, comprehension, reasoning, and reflective thinking. Assignments that the student can perform well simply by memorizing a process without understanding the underlying concept are to be avoided. E.g. an assignment may be “open a course and create a lecture and a quiz on topic XYZ that supports the following set of learning objectives”. Such a task could then also be peer assessed in addition to the tutor’s assessment so students will learn from each other’s achievements.

Assignments have to be formulated unambiguous and in a way that they are clear and easy to understand

All tools necessary to execute the assignment have to be listed

Evaluation criteria used by the tutor in order to decide whether the assignment has been successfully completed or not have to be revealed in advance

Assignments must have an outcome that can be documented in a transferable way (e.g. text, presentation, contribution in a forum, video-tape, screen-recording, audio-recording, protocol of discussion, logs of the virtual learning environment proving that the students have worked as assigned) that achievements are accessible to the tutor and any other person entitled to evaluate the achievements

Assignments need to be consistent with the learning objectives of the unit.

At least 30% of the assignments should be communicative/collaborative activities. The group activities are to be encouraged, e.g. by allowing for competition between groups, peer review of work, or using other forms of online collaboration. They may be designed as assignments where the group has to achieve specified results as a team but this is not a must and group activities may as well be used only to maintain momentum without any evaluation element.

“Design of assessment”

Formative assessment is designed in a way to encourage and support learners in further learning steps. Summative assessment is designed in a way to provide the learner and persons who are concerned with information about the results the learner achieved throughout the course.

Formative assessment

The learner receives feedback to any obligatory activity s/he has performed. S/he is allowed to resubmit an improved version after having received the feedback from the tutor.

The feedback must be constructive and individual. It must fulfill the following criteria:

- tell students how to improve their performance,
- diagnose a student's strengths and weaknesses,

Summative assessment

Criteria for summative assessment are: The participant has successfully submitted all obligatory activities to the tutor and has presented a valid project. The learning outcomes are documented in a portfolio.

4.2.5.2 How can quality of assignments and assessment be measured?

This paragraph describes measures that will allow the national (internal) quality assurance as well as international. The measures described for international quality assurance will allow ENTA to evaluate whether the different language versions of NT are meeting the quality criteria listed above.

Quality of assignments:

1. The quality can be measured by the students themselves. After having completed an activity, students evaluate the relevance and appropriateness of the assignments in terms of reaching the learning objective, the time needed for completing the activity, etc). The student's entries are stored in a database and are accessible to ENTA.
2. It might be a good idea to introduce "peer reviews" amongst the tutors who have good knowledge of each others language. This will help the tutors to learn from each other and to benefit from the experiences of other countries.

Quality of assessment

1. All activities of the learner are gathered in a portfolio. The portfolio can be evaluated by external experts in order to assess whether a student has passed or failed the course and whether the feedback of the tutor has been appropriate. (national quality assurance)
2. The quality of tutors' feedback can be assessed by evaluation the learners' satisfaction. A given set of questions must be asked to the students at the end of the course by each provider and the results have to be accessible for the responsible persons of ENTA. It is intended to implement the evaluation online with moodle. (national and international quality assurance)

5 FINAL CONCLUSIONS

With view to the Net-Trainers 2 project the transfer of Net-Trainers into six new partner countries has been successful. The results of the project demonstrate that the Net-Trainers training is suitable for qualifying online trainers in different European countries and that the European Dimension of the training is an important added value to both the learners and the tutors. The experiences from the transfer are encouraging for further enlarging the partnership by adding other language versions to the existing ones. However the lessons learned from the transfer demonstrate that the process is not finalised yet: Actions for improvement need to be taken in the short, medium and long term. Before the partnership is extended to more language providers ENTA should make sure to be adapted to the bigger size of the partnership and to be well prepared for additional partners.

5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SHORT TERM ACTIVITIES

1. Define concrete measures for evaluating the quality and the learning time of the different language versions

ENTA must define a common evaluation strategy that is binding for each partner. This evaluation should comprise at least a common set of questions that ask the participants for the quality of the tutoring, the learning material and their overall satisfaction. ENTA needs to implement an evaluation that allows measuring the answers on a numeric scale in order to be independent from language barriers. A workflow must be agreed how the results from evaluation are reported to ENTA and its' Board. Furthermore it needs to be defined what consequences will be taken in case of bad results. Moreover it will be worthwhile thinking about ways how all providers can systematically benefit from positive results when advertising the training.

Besides from measuring the quality of the training one big challenge is to measure the learning time, learners spend on the training. It is essential to develop an instrument that provides ENTA with figures for proving that all language versions of Net-Trainers comprise the same learning time of 160 hours. Otherwise the value of the common certificate can be disputed and the issuing of the same number of ECTS credit points is in danger.

2. Close contracts with all Net-Trainers providers

After the end of the Net-Trainers 2 project the contracts agreed between the project promoter and the partners are no longer valid. In order to properly regulate the intellectual property rights and the rights of use of the learning material it will be necessary for ENTA to establish similar contracts with each single NT provider.

3. Allow for more flexibility

It is a challenge for the ENTA members to think about models that allow for more flexibility for the single providers in terms of the training schedule. It is already now apparent that it is not possible for all providers to run the training twice a year in parallel. In an even more extended partnership these problems will probably grow. ENTA should make considerations how more flexibility can be allowed to the providers without giving up the European Dimension.

4. Define and describe workflows and decision making processes

With view to the extended partnership and future new partners it is advisable to describe the most important workflows and decision making processes in manuals like the one that has been established for managing the learning platform. Issues that should be addressed are:

- Workflow and responsibilities for amending the job profile and training framework
- Workflow and responsibilities for implementing, conducting and supervising evaluations
- Workflow and responsibilities for managing all European aspects of the training, e.g. agreeing a common schedule, managing the Europath, moderating European Discussions, supporting European learning activities etc

5. Organise annual face-to-face meetings of the training providers

The experiences from the NT 2 project have shown that it is essential for the transnational cooperation to have regular face to face meetings for different reasons:

- Discussions and decision making processes are very efficient
- It is inspiring and enriching to learn from each others experiences
- Misunderstandings and problems can be solved quite easily
- It is important for the motivation of the tutors/course managers to have some time for discussing and developing ideas and to have the chance for developing e.g. additional modules for NT

ENTA should make efforts for finding sources for funding these regular meetings.

5.2 MEDIUM AND LONG TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

In the medium and long term it is advisable to further develop the general aims and activities of ENTA that go beyond the Net-Trainers training. According to the recommendations of the advisory board ENTA should formulate strategic aims that form a vision and perspective above the aim to run a sustainable Net-Trainers training.

The transfer process as it was planned for this Net Trainers 2 project is achieved completely and very successfully. But from all lessons learned it becomes clear that such a process can never be regarded as finished. The enlarged partnership opens both new opportunities and new constraints for cooperation on a European level within the ENTA consortium: e.g. define workflows and processes, establish a quality assurance system, develop services that may become a source of income for the association, etc.

All these new challenges are difficult to be faced without external funding. It is advisable to look for sources of funding the developmental process of the widened European Net-Trainers Association but at the same time proceed with the necessary improvements that can be achieved without external funding.

ANNEXES

Annex 1:

Files that document the efforts taken in order to find a financing model for the Europath

Annex 1.1. Minutes of the transnational meeting in Lublin (.doc)

Annex 1.2. Minutes of the transnational meeting in Toulouse (.doc)

Annex 1.3. Minutes of the transnational meeting in Valencia (.doc)

Annex 1.4. Draft model for financing the Europath (.xls)

Annex 1.5. Table circulated for comparable cost calculation (.xls)

Annex 2:

Files for supporting future transfer processes:

Annex 2.1. Questionnaire to be filled in by potential provider (.doc)

Annex 2.2. Table for calculating the tutoring costs (.xls)

Annex 2.3. Example Learning Contract (.rtf)

Annex 2.4. Example Self- Assessment Questionnaire (.rtf)

Annex 2.5. Example Portfolio document (.doc)

Annexes are provided in electronic format on request.