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Sectorial Learning Outcome Transparency

Leonardo da Vinci – Transfer of Innovation

D2.2 Consortium Analysis Report

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Summary

This document identifies the situation of each institutions participating in the SLOT project. It is mainly based on the inputs coming from D2.1. It tries to identify the strengths and weaknesses of all partners' institution in the adaption and implementation of the Spanish method of learning outcomes definition. This document is a starting point for the implementation and test phase of the SLOT project.

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¹ UPV-M will be the “French partner” until the end of December 2011. After that, it should be UdL (Université de Lorraine), born from the merger of the 3 universities of Nancy and the one of Metz. Also, service organization should be reviewed and amended and “SLOT dissemination plan” could also be affected by these changes.

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1 Definition and recommendations

This section is related to the definitions of terms and the recommendations mentioned in this document. It can be helpful to understand and answer the questions to read the documents in the proposed links.

Definitions

Source: European Commission, Education and Culture, “Get to know ECVET better. Questions and Answers”, 27/11/2009, http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/4900-att1-1-ECVET_QA_Final.pdf

Learning outcomes (L.O.)	Statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence.
Qualification	Formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent institution determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to a given standard.
Unit of learning outcomes (unit)	Component of a qualification, consisting of a coherent set of knowledge, skills and competence, which can be assessed and validated.
Validation of learning outcomes	The process of confirming that certain assessed learning outcomes achieved by a learner correspond to specific outcomes which may be required for a unit or a qualification.
Occupation skill card	We use the term as “The list of Competences, Knowledge and Skills which define an occupation , its activities and tasks”
Training reference table	We use the term as “The list of Competences, Knowledge and Skills on which the training will focus on”

[Recommendation or the European parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 - ECVET](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:155:0011:0018:EN:PDF)

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:155:0011:0018:EN:PDF>

[Recommendation or the European parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 - EQF](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:111:0001:0007:EN:PDF)

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:111:0001:0007:EN:PDF>

2 The learning outcome definition model

2.1 From the EQF recommendation to the SLOT project

As written in the EQF recommendation, the development and recognition of citizens' knowledge, skills and competence are crucial for the development of individuals, competitiveness, employment and social cohesion in the Community. The aim is to facilitate transnational mobility for workers and learners and contribute to meeting the requirements of supply and demand in the European labor market.

For VET organizations and for employers, EQF coupled with ECVET is a tool to improve the transparency of qualifications defined through learning outcomes. It is also a tool that will support cross-border mobility of young people and adults, as well as lifelong learning opportunities.

After some months of exchanges between the SLOT project's partners, it is clear that ECVET will not be able to work effectively without a strong network of VET organizations, supported by agreements and memorandum of understanding that will provide the necessary acceptance of the systems of assessment, validation and recognition of competences.

It is also clear that the first step for VET organizations will be to have a common approach to define learning outcomes. If the method to describe qualifications based on a common method to define learning outcomes is common to all VET organizations, members of a same network, it will be easier to accept the systems of assessment, validation and recognition of competences.

As mentioned in EQF, the recommendation does not replace or define national qualifications systems and/or qualification. It does also not describe specific qualifications or individual's competences. It gives a framework to refer qualifications in 8 levels. It offers also a tool to compare the qualification levels of different qualifications systems. By doing this the diversity of national education systems is respected and comparison is made possible. National qualifications frameworks will have to be defined, by 2012. This means that all national qualification certificates, diplomas and "Europass" documents, will have to refer to the appropriate EQF level.

Finally, EQF recommends member states to use an approach based on learning outcomes when defining and describing qualifications. The objective of the SLOT project is to reach a common maturity of the way to define learning outcomes according to the EU-recommendation EQF.

2.2 The Spanish model

In the deliverable D2.1 "Learning outcomes maturity analysis frame", we have given explanation about the Spanish National System for Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training (SNCFP) that explain how they define learning outcomes.

The National System for Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training (SNCFP) consists of instruments and actions which are necessary to promote and develop the integration of vocational education and training through the National Catalogue of

Professional Qualifications. Besides, it aims at promoting and developing the assessment and accreditation of professional competences in order to encourage the professional and social development of the people and to meet the needs of the productive system.

The National Catalogue of Professional Qualifications (CNCP) is an instrument of the SNCFP, which lists the professional qualifications according to the appropriate competences for the professional exercise.

Some of the main objectives of the CNCP are to integrate the existing programs on vocational education and training in order to adapt them to the characteristics and demands of the Spanish productive system.

The CNCP comprises the most important professional qualifications of the Spanish productive system. It is composed of 26 professional families. It includes the vocational education and training (VET) contents corresponding to each qualification.

The CNCP consists of professional qualifications arranged in levels of qualification and professional family. The 5 levels of professional qualifications are based on the professional competency required for each productive activity taking into account different criteria like knowledge, initiative, autonomy, responsibility and complexity, among others, necessary for the accomplishment of every activity.

The CNPC includes technical competences (specific to a qualification and transversal to other qualifications) as well as the core competences. The core competences are those which allow the individuals to adapt to a changing labour environment. They make possible the achievement of good outcomes during the professional career in different fields or social contexts. Therefore, they are the key for workers occupational or functional flexibility as they facilitate mobility within one occupational sector or from one sector to another.

The CNPC is one of the significant tools that allow the integration of the different training offers as well as the validation and accreditation of professional competences and prior learning (*ECVET and the Catalan VET system* - ECVET magazine n°5/ May 2011).

The Modular Catalogue of Vocational Education and Training consists of all the learning modules. Each module is associated with one of the competence units which form a professional qualification. A professional qualification is defined as a set of professional competences significant in employment which can be acquired through vocational education and training (VET) modules or any other kind of learning structure as well as through work experience (Organic Act 5/2002 on Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training).

The reference professional profile is structured in units of competences. A competence unit is the minimum set of professional qualifications which can be partially recognized and accredited. Each competence unit is related to knowledge, initiative, autonomy, responsibility and complexity, among others, necessary for the accomplishment of all the activities of a given profession.

The Modular Catalogue of Vocational Education and Training promotes a quality vocational education and training (VET) offer, which is updated and appropriate for the different target groups, according to their expectations for professional promotion and personal development.

The professional qualification structure is organized like this: each qualification has a general competence which defines briefly the workers essential tasks and functions. Other elements

are also described such as the professional environment in which the qualification takes place, the corresponding productive sectors and the relevant occupations or posts which can be accessed with that qualification.

Latorre and Vidal (*ECVET and the Catalan VET system*, ECVET magazine n°5/ May 2011, pp16) describe the different elements used to build the professional modules.

In Spain, the National Institute of Qualifications (INCUAL) has the responsibility for defining, creating and updating the National Catalogue of Professional Qualifications and the corresponding Modular Catalogue of Vocational Education and Training.

The Observatory, an internal part of INCUAL, has as objective to observe the qualifications and their evolution. The Observatory has a database to promote, in an active manner, the cooperation with the existing territorial and sectorial observatories in order to provide e.g. information on the evolution of supply and demand for jobs, occupations and profiles in the labour market, taking also into account, among others, the professional classification systems created by collective bargaining.

The Professional Observatory researches each of the professional families making up the Catalogue by doing economic and educational studies, always consulting official sources and sources from the sectors involved in a professional family.

INCUAL works with groups of technological and educational experts from the different productive sectors. These groups identify and define the professional qualifications that will be incorporated into the National Catalogue of Professional Qualifications (CNCP). The working groups make periodically new proposals for qualifications.

3 Similarities and differences in the consortium

The second part of D2.1 has given an overview of the environment of each of the partner institution of the project. The objective was to understand their respective situation concerning the implementation of EQF and ECVET recommendations. Another objective was to determine if partner's institutions already had a method to define learning outcomes.

This will help us to determine the differences and the complementarities between the methods and to propose a SLOT method for learning outcomes definition, based on the Spanish one and on partner's inputs.

With regard to the inputs of each partner and with respect to the focus on transferring knowhow from the Spanish method, we identify 3 main phases in our transfer process:

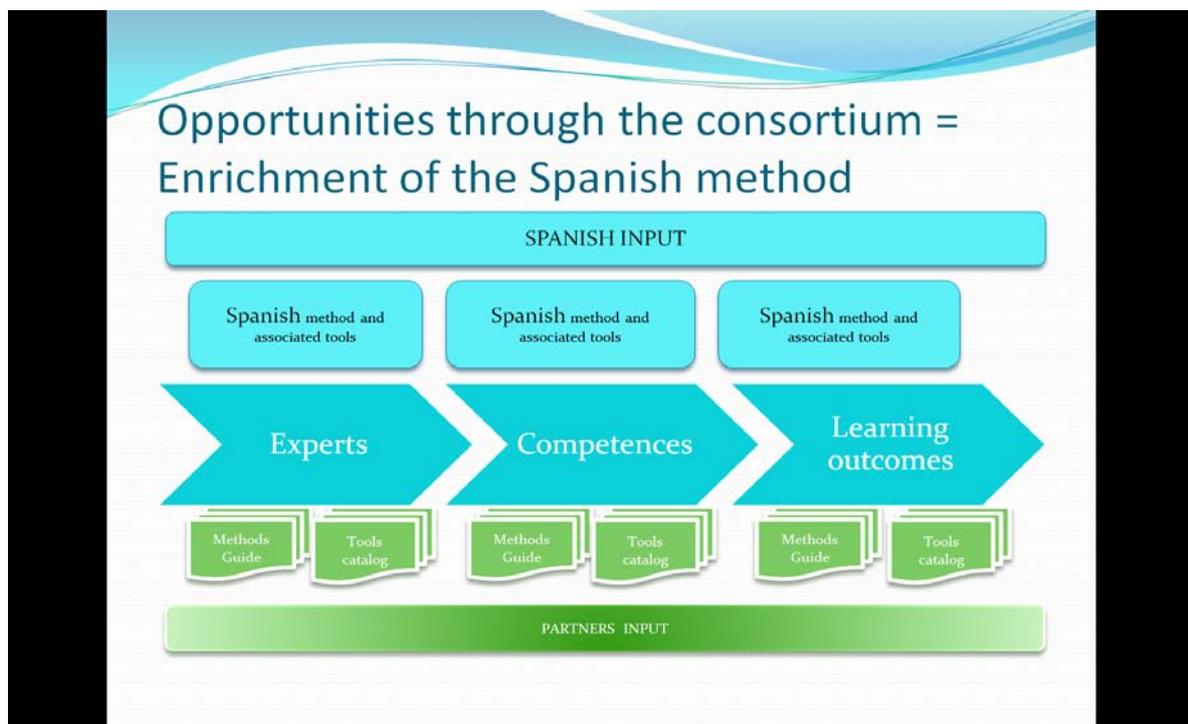
- Experts gathering
- Skill card of a family or occupation
- LO definition

Considering the diverse operational frameworks and the specificities and particularities of each partner organization, the objective of a commitment in a certain LO specification is hardly reachable.

On recommendation of the Luxembourgish Ministry of Education, we opted for a split of the LO specification process. As a matter of fact, LO specification includes 2 sub-notions which are: definition and description. So WP3 should fix the objective on transferring knowhow in three major issues:

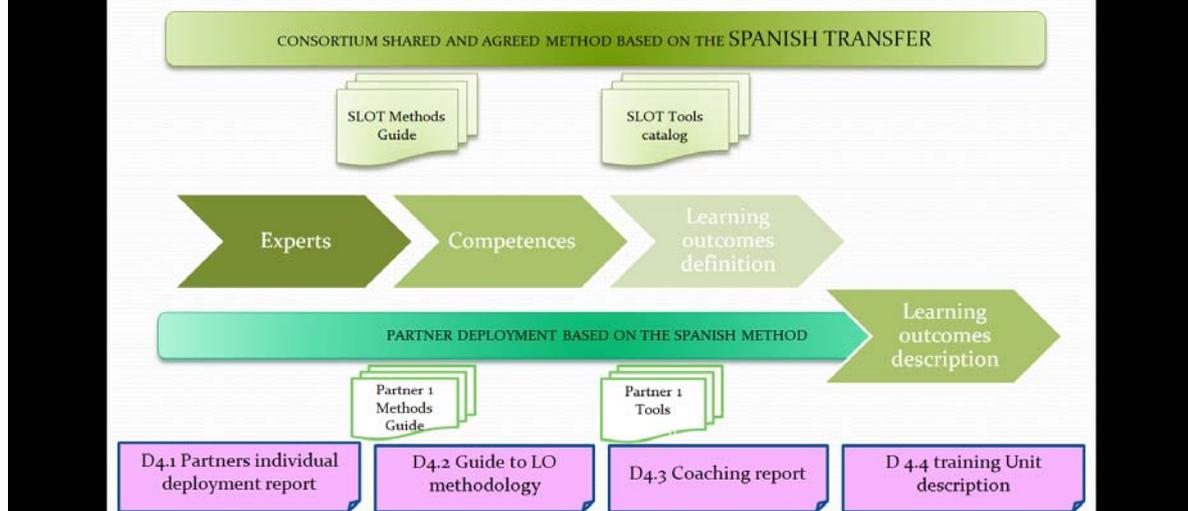
- Experts gathering
- Competencies card
- LO definition

3.1 The lessons learned through the D2.1 National Analysis.



This is to be seen as an opportunity to enrich the existing method to transfer.

Specificities on the application of the method in regard of LO description



3.2 Focus on each partners input

From the conclusion of D2.1, all partners are using some basic or advance pedagogic engineering methods to define their training programmes. Some partners are currently gathering experts, and/or working with professional skills cards. Some partners also match these skill card/competence card to training “learning outcomes” (or kind of LO).

In table 1, each partner presents, regarding to the scheme in 3 phases, how they deal with the challenges. The questions here bellow have been sent to partners in order to complete the information already received during the production of D2.1.

Phase 1: Gathering experts

- Are you gathering experts to collect training needs analysis?
- Are you gathering experts to design your trainings?
- Which profiles are you federating and what are their roles in the programme engineering process? And who ensure the lead?
- How do you manage to gather them? method and motivation
- What is the input providing by the leader?
- Which are the outputs of these phases? (type of information, level, form, recommendations ...)
- Which are the outcomes of these phases?

Phase 2: Domain or occupation competences card

- Are you using an occupation skill card to design your trainings?

- Are you using a training reference table to design your trainings?
- How do you define skills card?
- With whom are you defining them?
- How do you manage to validate them?
- What does it look like? even if you are not involved in the process, describe or give an example of the information you receive

Phase 3: Learning Outcomes

- How are you currently defining / communicating the objectives of your trainings?
- Which are the items you are using to define LO?
- How do you actually use or translate the skill card into Training LO?
- Is your institution dealing with trainers' accompaniment in this phase?

	Gathering experts	Competence card / skill card	Learning Outcomes
CRP HT - Luxembourg	<p>Learning outcomes are defined by program manager, project manager, trainers and experts (internal and external).</p> <p>It depends from one training to another. When professional actors are used to help to define L.O., this is done via the CRP Henri Tudor's CALIFORM method.</p>	<p>Skills card are designed with sectorial or domain experts. They are used to know their specific environments and needs. That information is a valuable input (especially competence related to innovation) to training engineering.</p> <p>A foresight skills card service is being currently developed to enable proactive training activities designing to match the mid-terms (3 to 5 years) market competence needs.</p>	<p>There is no so called "specific LO description" in terms of knowledge, skills and competences.</p> <p>Training objectives are used.</p>
UPV-M France	<p>The training manager defines L.O., with its network and from its own needs analysis.</p>	<p>Skills are related to a global qualification (license or master degree for example ; skills are listed in RNCP form, répertoire national des certifications professionnelles) or to a short training (1 or few days - acquired skills are listed on the certificate of training given to trainee).</p> <p>Skills are listed in a document attached to the diploma (supplement au diploma). There is no skill card used to define a training, but the training</p>	<p>Usually only training objectives are used and more recently skills (skills supposed to be acquired/obtained after training)</p>

		will be described via a skills list.	
CTI Greece	<p>In general, in the large-scale national projects the needs are predefined (at a higher-level, e.g. by Ministry of Education).</p> <p>In other types of projects, we collaborate with experts in order to identify the training needs of the targeted learners.</p> <p>In addition to in-house personnel, calls for experts are published. The selected experts collaborate in the framework of signed contracts. Also, the selection of experts maybe done in a higher level –e.g. by the Ministry of Education (public executives, in-service teachers)</p> <p>The output of this phase is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training syllabus; • learning outcomes; • timeplan; • training and supporting material, ICT tools and resources; • guidelines; • authoring tools; • evaluation and assessment tools (e.g. questionnaires, ICT-based certification applications, etc) 	No	Training objectives are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes.
SMK Lithuania	<p>At HEI level, L.O. are described according management and business administration freshman, Standard of manager.</p> <p>L.O. are defined by the institution itself, experts of the domain, professional actors, national laws or decrees, experts.</p> <p>While preparing training programs, first phase is to conduct professional needs research, experts – social partners participates while preparing certain study programs, improving and evaluating them.</p> <p>Preparing certain training program</p>		<p>In VET sector there are law and regulative rules for defining L.O. recognition system.</p> <p>Also, some institutions (HEI, VET) have their own regulations (Non formal and informal L.O. assessment) on how to recognize L.O. and how to assess them.</p> <p>L.O. has to be described in terms of knowledge, cognitive skills, practical skills, transferable skills.</p>

	<p>the need analysis is undertaken and the needs identified. According them, experts are preparing programs.</p> <p>L.O. are defined and content of the program prepared according guidelines provided by Centre for quality assessment in higher education, ECTS guide, scientific research works, etc.</p>		
RDA Slovakia	<p>Learning outcomes are defined by experts from working groups managed by the State Vocational Education Institute.</p> <p>Training programs are conceived on the basis of state education program which defines compulsory content of education on a particular level of education.</p> <p>Knowledge and skills are defined as outputs on the basis of the content structure of the state education program.</p>		<p>L.O. are related to qualifications.</p> <p>State education program covers each level of education; its output is the qualification simultaneously</p>
WIWAS Germany	<p>L.O. are described on national level, by National Umbrella Organisation (for example for Banks) together with the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany.</p> <p>They are described for Study Program Level according to ECTS with competencies, together with the professors.</p>	<p>A framework curricula containing an inventory of competences per profession (Rahmenlehrpläne) exist for all VET professions.</p> <p>The framework curricula on national level are combined with framework curricula of the Bundesländer (like Saarland) containing general skills like (languages, sport, religion)</p>	<p>L.O. are described, for Study Program level and for Job Qualification Level, with competencies grouped in learning areas, one learning area consist of different action areas.</p> <p>L.O. are related to units. For Job Qualification Level, L.O. are grouped in learn areas (Lernfelder), which are grouped to form a qualification.</p> <p>One of the main challenges working with L.O.'s in Germany is that there are more than 7 different frameworks used on national level for the definition, categorization or grouping of L.O.'s.</p>

Table 1. Comparison between partners

4 Conclusion

The situation of the partners' institution shows similarities but also differences. All these will have to be taken into account for the training concerning the Spanish method to transfer and to implement in all partners' institutions. We propose 3 main points of comparison.

Working with experts

SLOT partners are used to work with experts (professionals, working inside or outside of their institution) to identify “needs” or to define programs: training objectives, learning outcomes or contents. We can first mention that expert involvement is different from one institution to another and even within a same structure depending on the training project or diploma. Moreover, we can note that the “level” of involvement is also different from one institution to another as shown in figure 1.

CRP HT, UPV-M and SMK are mainly usually working with experts at an institutional level while IES Cavanilles, WIWAS, CTI and DA are working with experts at a national level.

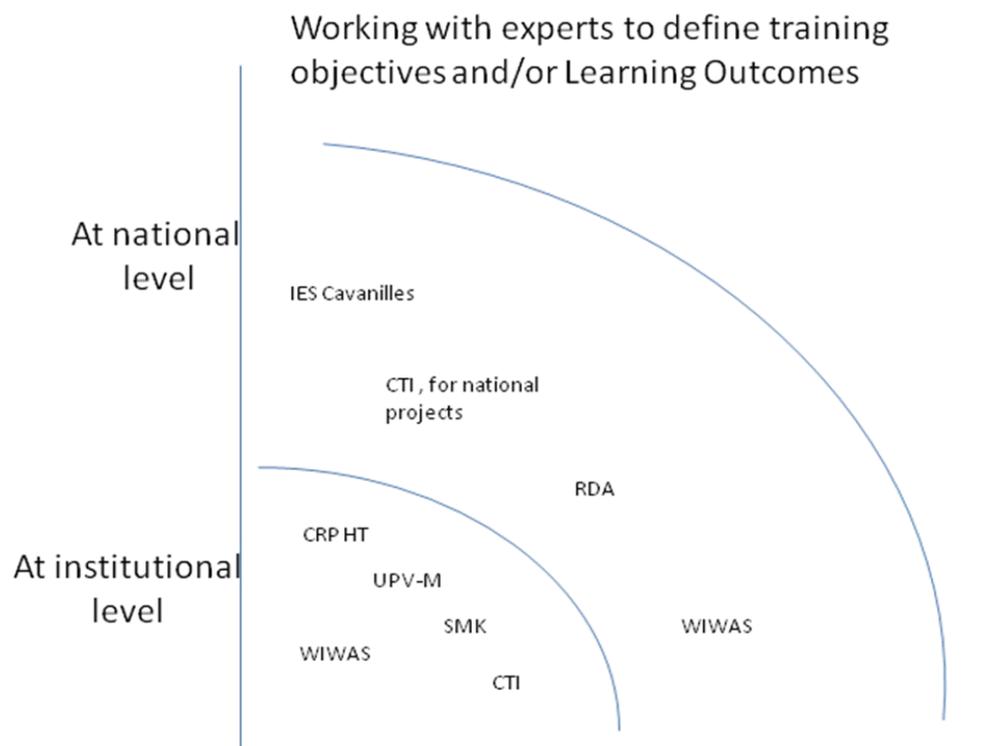


Figure 1: Working with experts

For CRP HT, UPV-M and SMK, as there is no national institution organizing this step, learning outcomes are different from one institution to another. And even if it remains at an institutional level, learning outcomes definition is not systematic and it is not based on a common and shared method.

This means that for the moment the implementation of ECVET is difficult as no institution have the same way of defining learning outcomes and as none of these institutions can refer to a national qualification level framework as it is for Spain.

In the case of WIWAS, experts like professors of the University help developing dual study programs in the banking and insurance sector.

For the other partners, CTI, RDA and WIWAS, they can refer to a national system. Even if their national system is not as developed as the Spanish one, which already refers to qualification levels, it is possible for them to compare their training to other training providers of their country as these other organizations are working with a same national framework.

The project will be a first step in the reflection concerning a NQF and how to relate it to professional experts. Its results in the different institutions could be a starting point to help the development of NQF.

Use of skill cards

The use of skill card does not appear to be a common practice to all SLOT partners. As shown on figure 2, only 4 of them declare to work with skill card or competence profile, and it's often quite new and not systematic. It is a reason why it will be a challenge for all partners' institutions to build a skill card, or a competence profile, adapted from the one used in Spain.

For all partners' institution, except for IES Cavanilles, UPV-M, CRP HT and WIWAS, the use of competence profile will be something new. Such formalization is quite new for UPV-M. Skill cards are not necessarily built and validated by professionals (for DUT, orientations are fixed at a national level).

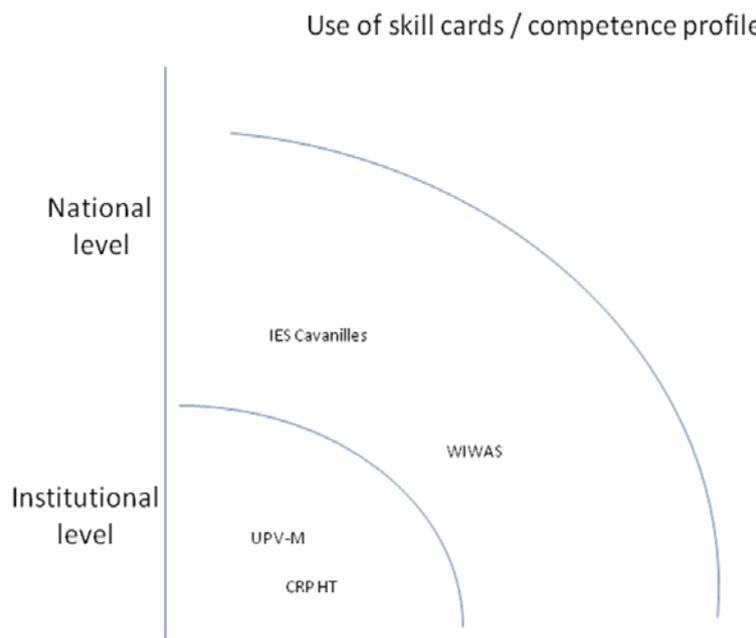


Figure 2: Use of skill cards/competence profile

Use of learning outcomes

In figure 3, we can see that L.O. definition, or training objectives, are not defined at the same level. For SMK, RDA, WIWAS, the situation is treated at the national level as in Spain for IES Cavanilles. For CTI, L.O. are defined at an institutional level, except for national projects as mentioned in figure 1.

As all partners are working with L.O., or training objectives, it will be another challenge for SLOT partners to appropriate LO concept and to start working on the way to design training programs based on LO.

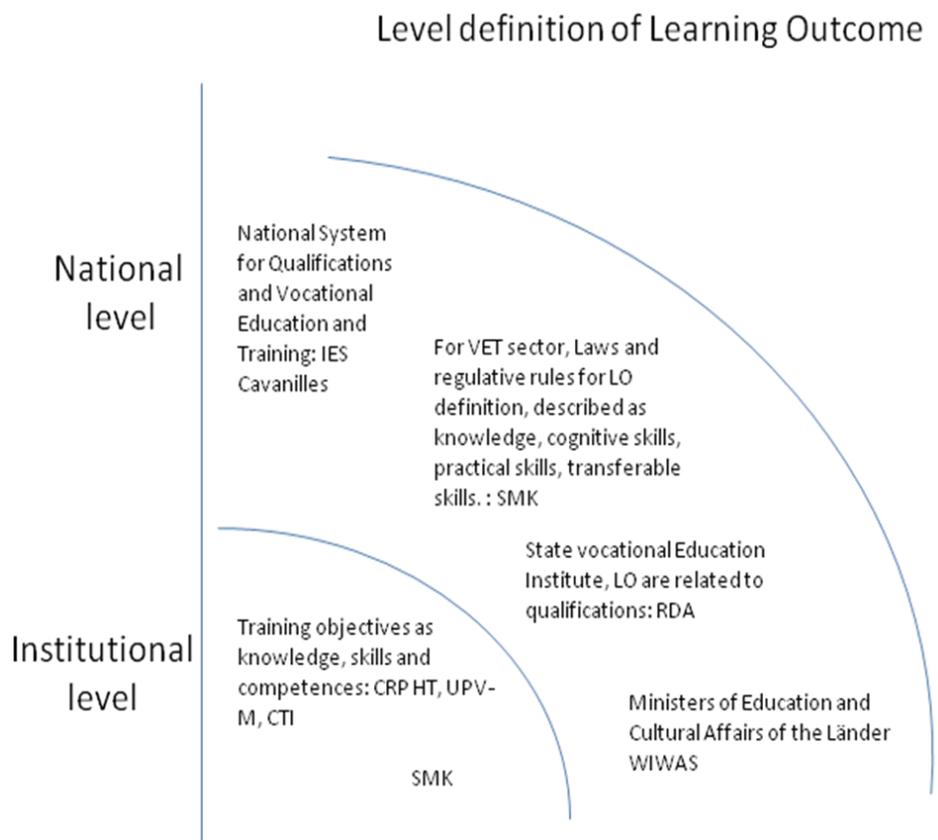


Figure 3: Level definition of L.O.

To conclude, it is clear that all institutions participating in the project need to receive full and detailed information concerning the Spanish method used in IES Cavanilles. The meeting in Alicante has to give the opportunity to all partners to understand how it will be possible for them to adapt the different steps of the Spanish method of L.O. definition in their own institutions. It will also give to all partners the opportunity to exchange about their own processes, methods, and tools to enhanced the Spanish method of L.O. definition

The training will have to focus on the transfer of the partners' methods and the main expectations are :

- to understand all the methods but also the challenges of their application;
- to identify the useful profile they could federate and use;
- to have a common way to define L.O., based on EQF recommendation, on the Spanish method, and also on the different partners' method;
- to have all the needed information to launch the WP4 deployment.