



## CO.L.O.R. (Competency and Learning Outcomes Recognition for migrants)

Final Report

Public Part



## Project information

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# Executive Summary

The COLOR project addressed primarily six Italian Regions (Campania, Latium, Piedmont and Tuscany, as well as Basilicata and Calabria as associated partner), the competent Authorities in the field of designing and awarding qualifications, committed to pilot test ECVET-oriented mechanisms in the construction and healthcare sectors. We also assisted selected non-participating regional Authorities interested in transferring the COLOR working method into their own systems. Finally, we targeted local stakeholders and practitioners requiring successfully tested tools. In so doing, we addressed the needs of workers with a migrant background, who typically have poor qualification records.

COLOR pursued a two-fold objective: pilot testing ECVET procedures for the evaluation, recognition and transfer of Learning Outcomes (LOs) and setting up a sustainable network of regional Authorities, stakeholders and practitioners. Our target groups accrued the following benefits: the Italian Regions are now considering innovating their practices, to varying degrees. Local stakeholders and practitioners have ready access to a set of transferable tools for their end-users. Finally, a group of migrant workers bettered their chances of being properly employed, as they had their work experience formally recognised.

To meet these objectives the COLOR partnership brought together a well-thought mix of competent Authorities from Italy, Malta, Romania and the UK. The Italian and transnational partners worked alongside with complementary roles: the former concentrated on testing ECVET mechanism on the pilot qualifications; the latter (Malta and UK), being more advanced in referencing their systems to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) processes, and Romania given its migration flows, played an all-important advisory role.

We adopted a hands-on-approach to pilot testing ECVET in these diverse contexts. We completed a mapping exercise and baseline studies which allowed us to deliver targeted project actions focused on identifying good-practice in the more ECVET-compliant systems; capacity-building-type of support in the other Regions. In so doing, we use participative planning and management practices (GOPP and Metaplan methods), which enabled us to work on genuinely relevant objectives in the different contexts.

We achieved four main results: 1) We developed and successfully tested O Units; 2) We expanded the partnership to two new associate partners, including *the* national umbrella organisation in the construction sector (social partners); 3) We boast a stable network of competent Authorities and key stakeholders in the framework of a dedicated ECVET Memorandum of Understanding (2013-15); 4) We promoted a substantive peer learning and capacity-building process with respect to application of ECVET mechanisms.

To assure lasting results, we delivered a dedicated valorisation strategy which built on a multi-strand dissemination strategy. Our finest achievement was that all project partners and ten relevant organisation pledged to continue cooperating in the target sectors by joining the COLOR Memorandum of Understanding (2013-15). The commitment of key institutional actors and qualified organisations on the ground will ensure the mainstreaming of our successful practices beyond the project end.

Our [project web site](#) caters to the needs of different end users (EN and IT): it features multimedia contents for the wider public; it offers ECVET introductory materials and multimedia resources for potential users and; it provides a range of baseline reports, technical documents, and practical tools for stakeholders and practitioners (Information Toolkit, etc). The web site will be our key mainstreaming vehicle after 2013; it is now also accessible on the dedicated [ISFOL-ECVET section](#), thus receiving national-level visibility.

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# 1. Project Objectives

Our project pursued and succeeded in meeting two objectives: ***pilot testing ECVET mechanisms in six Italian Regions*** (Campania, Latium, Piedmont, Tuscany, Basilicata and Calabria) and within the Formedil network by implementing procedures for the assessment, recognition and transfer of LOs acquired in different contexts. We specifically addressed the needs of workers with a migrant background, ***in the construction and healthcare sectors***, who typically have poor or no formal qualification records. In addition, we ***created a sustainable network of key actors*** including competent Authorities (i.e. Italian Regions) and stakeholders in the field of recognition of qualifications.

With reference to our ECVET pilot-testing objective, we supported our participating regional Authorities in adopting and applying the ECVET specifications within their systems in a meaningful way. All the partner Authorities and relevant stakeholders are engaged beyond the project both via the two sectoral Technical Worknig Groups and, more importantly, via a dedicated Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which will ensure cooperation in 2013-15.

With reference to the sustainable network aim, our first specific objective was strengthening cooperation between partner Regions to promote a homogeneous application of ECVET and engage non-participating Regions interested in adopting an LO-oriented approach to their qualifications. Our second specific objective was two-fold: making local stakeholders and practitioners fully aware of the benefits to be accrued by applying ECVET-compliant mechanisms and practices; setting up of local networks in the target sectors as multipliers of change in the regional qualification systems. Our third specific objective was assisting an ECVET-oriented process of change at national level by drawing from the impressive expert advice and know-how of our transnational partners, who will continue to do so in the framework of the above-mentioned MoU.

In the long-term we expect to contribute to making it easier for migrant workers to have their previous experience and skills formally recognised in the form of qualifications, thus bettering their chances of being properly employed.

By achieving these objectives we generated benefits for the range of target groups addressed throughout the project life-cycle. First, the participating Regions - our prime target group - were facilitated in considering innovating their practices in an ECVET-compatible direction, to varying degrees, depending on their "ECVET compliance index". They will especially benefit from future cooperation initiatives that they pledged to deliver via the 2013-15 MoU. Second, several non-participating regional Authorities - our second target group - became aware of the benefits of the ECVET system and are now better equipped to transfer the COLOR practices to their own systems. Third, we had a positive impact on the operations of local stakeholders by inspiring their practices and tools (in terms of re-designing training pathways based on LOs, etc.), by equipping them with a set of transferable tools (i.e. ECVET Information Toolkit and dedicated [ISFOL-ECVET section](#)). Finally, we expect to have an indirect impact on our project end users - the above-mentioned migrant workers - in terms of increased opportunities, as 39 workers had their work experience recognised towards a formal qualification.

As we engaged a qualified range of target groups both at policy level and on the ground, we believe that our successfully tested practices will have a positive impact on current practices in the field of recognition of qualifications, thus contributing to make ECVET application in Italy advance.

## 2. Project Approach

### Distinctive features and added value

Our project adopted a **hands-on-approach** approach to meeting the challenges of pilot testing ECVET-oriented concepts and tools in different regional contexts. This is why we first carried out a **survey on the actual state-of-the-arts** in the partner Regions with respect to: a) their local qualifications in order to assess the extent to which these systems are ECVET-oriented; b) practices on the assessment and recognition of prior learning (APL) and; c) mapping local stakeholders in the target sectors.

Likewise, at transitional level we **drew from** the wealth of **EU level practices** and relevant projects in this field. We did so by regularly consulting the dedicated [ECVET projects web site](#) and by actively participating in the EU-level meetings with other ECVET 2<sup>nd</sup> generation pilot projects.

The targeted survey, the mapping exercise and the resulting baseline studies, in turn, allowed us to **regularly fine-tune our project actions and targets** depending on the specific local contexts. As a result, our project actions focused mainly on identifying good-practice in our participating Regions with more ECVET-compliant systems; by contrast, we delivered more capacity-building-type of support in the other Regions. We adopted this **flexible and customised approach** at each step of our learning-together and testing process.

A final feature of our project approach was the adoption of **participative and collaborative practices**, which was immensely helpful in reinforcing the partners' sense of ownership of the project. Hence, as early as our first Partner Meeting we carried out a "Hopes and fears" exercise which helped us take on board each partner's expectations and identify attention areas from the outset. In addition, we regularly put in place feedback mechanisms (Skype conferencing, virtual meetings, etc.) and written consultation which, among other, helped us incorporate new ideas and innovative approaches. We organised meetings at the request of our partners in order to address their specific requests. To do so, we used well-established participative planning methods known as the GOPP and Metaplan.

This customised/participative approach has proven very effective and made it far easier to implement our work programme. At the same time, ongoing consultation greatly reinforced our partners' sense of ownership of the project activities and final objectives. Ultimately the **added value** of our project approach was that we **worked on genuinely relevant objectives**, which every partner considered realistic and achievable, and, more importantly meaningful in their specific context.

### Evaluation strategy

In keeping with our participative approach, our partnership adopted an *ad hoc* Quality Assurance Plan which described our evaluation strategy, including a set of dedicated tools. Our conceptual and theoretical framework of reference was the European Framework for VET Quality Assurance (EQARF); thus we considered - and implemented - Quality Assurance as an on-going process including regular monitoring of a set indicators aimed at constantly improving our processes, products and outputs quality-wise.

Our strategy was based on the inter-twinned principles of self-evaluation and active involvement of all partners on an equal footing. We delivered this strategy by:

- filling in specific checklists related to the production of key documents and products;
- administering feedback forms to partners on the project event staged;
- processing incoming data enabling the partnership to adopt corrective measures in a timely fashion;
- drafting two Self-Evaluation Report for the 2011 and 2012 project operations and the Final QA Report;
- quality assuring the key outcomes through various mechanisms, including feedback at Management Group (MG) meetings, written consultations and telephone conversations with the partners.

This participative approach has proven effective: the partners, in fact, felt comfortable in critically reviewing our work, and shared attention areas, as well as areas of improvement. Their feedback provided our MG with concrete suggestions to make our joint work more effective. Overall, the partners' satisfaction level has been high across the board - as the above Self-Evaluation Reports showed -; thus we continued working in this participative way for the rest of project life-cycle.

### **Dissemination strategy**

Our dissemination strategy was based on a multi-dimensional dissemination approach, including a range of tailored actions and diversified tools adapted to the different target groups which we were addressing. Through our multi-strand strategy we pursued a two-fold objective:

- 1) disseminating project concepts and results while, at the same time, attracting the interest and involvement of relevant actors;
- 2) ensuring the valorisation of the project results and outputs.

A dedicated Communication and Dissemination Plan described in detail how we went about achieving these objectives; the Plan specified the targeted actions and tools, from project branding to our communication policy and quality indicators for evaluation. The plan was reviewed on the basis of the progress made and updated as new dissemination opportunities arose (i.e. when the [National Group of ECVET Experts](#) was created at ISFOL). Here it suffices to say that we have adopted a three-level dissemination strategy:

#### *1. Dissemination for Awareness – level 1*

We implemented dedicated actions for specific target audiences who we believed should have become aware of our events and outcomes, though not directly involved in the project activities (i.e. VET providers, the wider public, etc.). We did so mainly via our project web site and web news published on the partners' official web sites.

#### *2. Dissemination for Understanding – level 2*

We delivered a set of diversified actions at local, national and transnational level designed to target directly a number of groups/audiences that could benefit from our project outcomes. By way of example, we showed the benefits to be accrued by implementing ECVET-oriented practices via meetings with local stakeholders in the partner Regions, and via the sectoral Web Conferences open to stakeholders and practitioners across the Italian territory.

### *3. Dissemination for Action – level 3*

This third level of dissemination was implemented in two ways: a) by the Technical Working Groups (TWGs) engaged in the testing process in the two target sectors. They delivered sound technical solutions and products which raised the interest of stakeholders and institutional actors who are in a position to bring about ECVET-compatible change in current practices. b) The partnership equipped these target groups with a set of practical tools, ranging from an ECVET Information Kit to a collection of good practices in the field of recognition, so that they may consider innovating their practices in the field of assessment and recognition of qualifications.

To ensure lasting project results, we invested on two aspects from the very outset. On one hand, we identified the most appropriate channels through which our project results can be disseminated. These include: our project website, the partners' websites, the numerous partners' formal and informal networks (ISFOL data base of accredited VET providers, etc.), local meetings, all of which created "intelligent" and mutually reinforcing junctions between the local, national and EU level. On the other hand, we mapped existing events, relevant actors and planned other initiatives that helped us ensure lasting results. The key tools in this respect included: our project Stakeholder Database, the above-mentioned ECVET Information Kit - distributed from the Final Conference onward -, the web site link to the partner Regions' official web sites, and relevant EU-level web sites and portals. More importantly, our COLOR web site is now also accessible on the [ISFOL-ECVET section](#), thus receiving national-level visibility. In terms of multipliers, we can count on the [National Group of ECVET Experts](#) within ISFOL, the coordinating partner, which includes the Italian Ministry of Labour, the Italian Leonardo da Vinci National Agency (NA), the Italian EQF Coordination Point, the Europass National Centre and the Italian EQAVET Coordination Point. This will ensure the transfer of our outcomes to relevant LLP initiatives and the next generation Programme. Alongside, our participating Regions and the organisations who signed the COLOR Memorandum of Understanding will continue to act as multipliers in their respective territories and in relevant working groups for the time period 2013-15.

### 3. Project Outcomes & Results

With respect to the **Objective 1- Pilot testing ECVET mechanisms** in the construction and healthcare sectors we achieved **three main outcomes**:

1. **LO Units were developed**
2. **LO Units were successfully tested**
3. **Capacity to apply ECVET principles and mechanisms was built-up**

#### 1. LO Units developed

Our partnership developed ECVET LO Units via two parallel technical processes managed by two Technical Working Groups (TWGs). For the **construction sector** the re-design process - led by the Campania Region - focused on the qualification of Construction Operator (CO). Identified as the pilot qualification in the sector since the design phase, its pilot role became especially appropriate when the CO qualification was included in the National Register of VET qualifications - EQF level 3 adopted in 2011 (State-Regions Agreement of 27.07.11). All qualifications in the Register, in fact, are described according to a common format consistent with ECVET. The re-designing process increased the consistency of the CO qualification with ECVET, with a view to transferring the project results to the Register. Units were defined by integrating two points of view: 1) the technical specifications set in the national standard-based Register (awarding Authorities perspective) and 2) the technical approach adopted by Formedil (*the national umbrella organization representing the social partners in the construction sector with over 100 affiliated VET centres*), and its *Repertory of construction sector competences*, based on: working tasks, competences and assessment mechanisms (social partners perspective).

As a result we defined a total of 9 LO Units as follows:

1. Defining and planning operation phases
2. Preparing instruments, tools and machinery
3. Monitoring the operation of instruments, tools and machinery
4. Preparing and maintaining work sites
5. Setting up and clearing work sites
6. Masonry work for building construction
7. Carpentry work for construction and assembly of construction elements
8. Construction work finishings
9. Assessing conformity and adequacy of construction work

For more details see Table 1 “ECVET Unit: Masonry Work for Building Construction” below.

For the **healthcare sector**, our re-design process focused on the qualification of Healthcare Operator – HCO (regulated by the Agreement between the Minister of Health, Minister of Social Solidarity and the Regions of 22.02.01). The HCO national standard-based qualification was adapted to the ECVET language and concepts, using as a baseline the technical specifications adopted by the Piedmont Region (leading the TWG) in terms of upgrading to the national standard and development of LO assessment mechanisms. In the process the TWG also completed a specific work on LO descriptors which made them more consistent with the EQF format. As a result, more explicit information on autonomy and responsibility was available on each competence.

As a result we defined a total of 5 LO Units:

1. Assisting individuals in taking care of their primary needs and managing health and hygiene issues
2. Assisting individuals in their daily activities and hygiene needs
3. Managing dynamics of care relations
4. Interacting with social and health services organization
5. Helping take care of individuals in the social/health residential context.

## **2. LO Units successfully tested**

For the construction sector, out of the 9 Units developed, we tested Units 6 and 7, as they represent core professional tasks. The testing was carried out using LO Units as assessment standards. At the end a total of 27 workers had their competences validated against the requirements of each Unit. For the healthcare sector, out of the 5 Units developed, we tested Units 1 and 2, corresponding to the family care assistance area. Testing allowed to validate prior learning of 13 women, almost all with a migrant background.

We carried out the overall testing activity through two assessment sessions; the outcome was that a total of 39 migrant workers in the two sectors had their competences validated. Finally a Focus Group with a vocational training institute assessed the impact of the ECVET mechanisms on designing training and assessment practices in a formal context. Overall, testing allowed our partnership to formulate a set of recommendations to improve the practical use of Units for assessment and validation purposes.

All the products related to LO Units developed and tested are available and downloading on the projet website: [www.color-project.org](http://www.color-project.org) and [www.isfol/ecvet](http://www.isfol/ecvet).

For more details see Table 2 - Extract of Unit 1 - ECVET LO Units Framework – Healthcare sector at the end of this section.

## **3. Capacity of competent Authorities and key actors to apply ECVET principles and mechanisms built-up**

Through the peer learning activities and dissemination events (sectoral Web Conferences and the TWGs), the actors involved:

- exchanged approaches with other regional Authorities, key actors and practitioners in the relevant sectors;
- gained a common understanding of the main ECVET principles (LO approach, assessment focused on LO principles);
- gained access to transferable technical solutions regarding assessment and recognition.

This learning-together process contributed to strengthening the knowledge base on ECVET mechanisms and implications for Authorities, VET providers and potential end-users.

## **COLOR results and products at a glance**

### **Objective 1: Facilitated implementation of ECVET mechanisms in six Italian Regions**

<b>Results</b>	<b>Target groups</b>	<b>Impact</b>
1. <b>Units of Learning Outcomes (LOs) developed in the pilot qualifications</b>	National partners Technical Working Groups (TWGs).	Project partners aware of the necessary conditions to pilot test ECVET mechanisms (i.e. measurable targets and objectives in line with local context).
2. <b>LO Units successfully tested in the two target sectors</b>	National partners TWGs Migrant workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National partners enabled to move forward with ECVET testing in their respective contexts (i.e. adhering to project recommendations on the use of Units for assessment and validation purposes)</li> <li>• A total of 39 migrant workers in the two sectors more employable with their competences validated.</li> </ul>
3. <b>Capacity of competent Authorities and key actors to apply ECVET principles and mechanisms built-up</b>	Project partners TWGs Other Italian Authorities Local stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target groups in construction and healthcare sectors improved their understanding of ECVET mechanisms and implications for Authorities and VET providers;</li> <li>• Potential end-users aware of projects outcomes, and ECVET benefits to be accrued.</li> </ul>

#### **Main products**

- [Background and Pilot Sectors Analysis Report](#) (Del. No. 12-13)
- [Descriptive Report on Qualifications](#) (Del. No. 14)
- [Report of Workshop 1 on LO analysis and design for ECVET in Europe](#) (Glasgow, 27.10.11)
- [Report of Workshop 2 on LO recognition mechanism for migrants](#) (Bucharest, 05.07.13)
- Testing of LOs Units: Activities and Guidelines (Del. No. 21)
- Testing Report (Del. No.20)
- [ECVET Units Framework – Construction Sector](#) and HC Sector (Del. No. 16-18)
- Report on Networking Activities (Del. No. 11)
- COLOR ECVET Toolbox (Del. No. 32);
- ECVET Information Kit (see [www.isfol/ecvet](http://www.isfol/ecvet))
- COLOR [Web site](#) including [Document Repository](#) (Del. No. 7)

**Table 1 “ECVET Unit: Implement Masonry Work for Building Construction”**

**ECVET Unit: Masonry Work for Building Construction**

**Reference Qualification: Construction Operator (IeFP)**

**EQF Level: 3**

**Reference Labour Process: C. Masonry Work**

**Learning Outcomes:**

Competence	Skills	Knowledge
Implement <b>masonry work</b> for the development of constructions based on indications and specific project details and respect standard sector safety requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify elements in the technical plans;</li> <li>- Apply marking techniques;</li> <li>- Apply mortar preparation techniques;</li> <li>- Apply masonry work techniques;</li> <li>- Apply techniques for construction of support structures;</li> <li>- Apply techniques for the demolition and removal of waste material;</li> <li>- Apply (flat and inclined) roofing work techniques.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Characteristics of inert and binding materials;</li> <li>- Safety regulations for worksite injury prevention;</li> <li>- Knowledge of marking techniques;</li> <li>- Mortar preparation process;</li> <li>- Masonry techniques;</li> <li>- Propping techniques;</li> <li>- Types of brickwork;</li> <li>- Types and construction techniques for masonry facings.</li> </ul>

**Intermediate step in defining the Unit (cross matrix)**

*A cross matrix of descriptive elements (skills and knowledge) relative to “Masonry for construction work on the basis of indications, project specifics and in conformity with sector specific safety standards” (State-Regions Agreement - 27 July 2011) and the corresponding elements (competence-based Units) in the Formedil Repertory on which the assessment tests are structured.*

LOs Construction Operator – Masonry (State-Regions Agreement - 27 July 2011)			Formedil Repertory of competences (FR)	
Competence	Skills	Knowledge	Competence-based Units (U)	
<b>Masonry for construction work on the basis of indications, project specifics and in conformity with sector specific safety standards</b>  <i>Interpret project blueprint Masonry work Masonry support structures Masonry facing</i>	<b>Identify blueprint elements</b>		BASIC CONSTRUCTION BLUEPRINT ACTIVITIES AREA	<b>UFR Reading and Interpreting Project Blueprints</b> To pass the assessment, a worker must be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify the type of blueprint</li> <li>- Interpret the blueprint scale</li> <li>- Understand linear and height indications</li> <li>- Comprehend the graphic symbols</li> </ul>
	<b>Apply marking techniques</b>	<b>Technical know-how for marking techniques</b>		<b>UFR Interpreting Architectural Blueprints</b> To pass the assessment, a worker must be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ...</li> </ul>
	...	...		<b>UFR Internal Marking- Masonry elements and specifics</b> To pass the assessment, a worker must be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ...</li> </ul>

**Assessment methodologies and tools**

What is assessed (competence, skill and knowledge)	Assessment Methodology	Tool	Annexes
Focus on overall <b>Competence and Skill</b>			
Identify blueprint elements ↓ Reading and interpreting project blueprint Interpreting architectural blueprints Applying marking techniques ↓ Internal marking masonry elements and specifics	Direct observation of practical activities	Observation grid based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Description of competences</li> <li>- Performance indicators</li> <li>- Performance indices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Observation grid broken down into six specific grids</li> </ul>
...			
<b>Knowledge</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Characteristics of inert and binding materials;</li> <li>- Safety and security regulations for work sites;</li> <li>- ...</li> </ul>	Assessment session based on an individual multiple choice test	Questionnaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Questionnaire</li> </ul>

**Further information on: duration, threshold, weight**

Methodology	Duration	Threshold Value	Weight
Direct observation of practical activities	1 h	3/5 is a “pass”	70
Questionnaire	1 ½ h	40/100	30

With respect to the **Objective 2 - *Setting up a sustainable network of key actors in the field of recognition of qualifications*** we achieved **two main outcomes**:

- 1. Partnership expanded and consolidated**
- 2. Sustainable network of Authorities and stakeholders up and running**

### **1. Partnership expanded and consolidated**

The COLOR partnership, including five Italian regional Authorities, expanded in 2012 when the Calabria Region and the National Formedil Network (social partners) joined as associate partners. The National Formedil Agency participated both directly and through its regional and local VET centres, such as Formedil Campania, Naples Centre for Construction Work Training (CFME) and Cuneo Construction Training School. The network now boasts six regional Authorities, Formedil and ISFOL (national research institute in the field of VET and employment policies and in-house Technical Assistance agency of the Italian Ministry of Labour).

More importantly all the partners decided to continue cooperating in the framework of a dedicated Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with a view to consolidating the network of competent Authorities and stakeholders. In addition to the above-mentioned network, other numerous organizations active at local level in the partner Regions (provincial administrations, training agencies and schools, etc.) participated in the work process.

### **2. Sustainable network of Authorities and stakeholders up and running**

The six partner Regions and the stakeholders involved in pilot testing ECVET mechanisms experienced first-hand the benefits of competence-based assessments in the target sectors and of ECVET mechanisms at large. This prompted them to pledge to extend these learning and capacity-building processes. To this end all partners signed a dedicated ECVET MoU for the 2013-2015 period.

One of the MoU objectives specifically focuses on consolidating a stable network of cooperation, by promoting the exchange of ECVET good practices among competent Authorities and local stakeholders. Specific actions include: using a common information platform on the ISFOL-ECVET web page (ECVET in its relation to EQF-EQAVET, etc.); co-organizing territorial workshops with the [National Group of ECVET Experts](#), and staging an annual National ECVET Day. This testifies how the network of Authorities and stakeholders will be up and running well beyond the project end.

## ***COLOR results and products at a glance***

### **Objective 2: Sustainable network of Authorities and stakeholders up and running**

<b>Results</b>	<b>Target groups</b>	<b>Impact</b>
<b>1. Partnership expanded and consolidated as a result of web-based and face-to-face peer learning</b>	Non-partner Authorities/organisations in the target sectors Project partners	<p>Non-partner Regions/organisations aware of ECVET benefits to be accrued upon:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• attending project Web Conferences, Launch and Final Conferences, etc.</li> <li>• joining the Technical Working Groups in the two target sectors and formally joining the COLOR partnership.</li> </ul> <p>Authorities within the partnership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• aware of successful practices in other Regions/countries and necessary conditions for ECVET implementation</li> <li>• facilitated in considering adopting ECVET-oriented practices</li> <li>• open to new cooperation opportunities in the field.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Sustainable network of Authorities and stakeholders launched</b>	Project partners Non-partner Authorities/organisations in the target sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target groups' commitment in testing ECVET increased upon joining the TWGs</li> <li>• Target groups interest in pursuing further cooperation increased by signing/joining the COLOR ECVET MoU (2013-15).</li> </ul>
<b>Main products</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Stakeholder Database</li> <li>• <a href="#">1st Web Conference on LO analysis and design for ECVET in Europe</a> (Del. No. 12)</li> <li>• <a href="#">2<sup>nd</sup> Web Conference on LO recognition mechanism for migrants</a> (Del. No. 28)</li> <li>• Report on Networking Activities (Del. No. 11)</li> <li>• COLOR <a href="#">Web site</a> including links on the partner organisations' web sites (Del. No. 7)</li> <li>• <a href="#">ISFOL-ECVET section</a> (national-level portal)</li> <li>• COLOR <a href="#">Memorandum of Understanding</a> (Del. No. 22).</li> </ul>		

## 4. Partnerships

The COLOR partnership had the privilege of bringing together the competent Authorities in the field of qualification design and recognition from four different Member States and six Italian Regions, namely:

- The Italian regional Authorities of Campania (represented by [ARLAS](#), the grant beneficiary), [Latium](#), [Tuscany](#), and [Piedmont](#);
- The [Basilicata Region](#), the [Calabria Region](#) and [Formedil Nazionale](#) (the latter is *the* national umbrella organisation representing social partners in the construction sector) with an associate partner status
- The competent Authorities in Malta ([Malta Qualifications Council](#)), Romania ([National Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training Development](#)) and Scotland ([The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework](#)).

Finally our partnership is assisted by [ISFOL](#), national research institution in the field of VET and in-house Technical Assistance agency of the Italian Ministry of Labour managing, among other, the [National Group of ECVET Experts](#); ISFOL acted as the coordinating partner and a technical body *vis a vis* the wider partnership.

Our partnership was endowed with a well thought-out mix of organisations not only in terms of geographical coverage, but also competence-wise. We, in fact, had on board both old and new Member States (MSs), as well as a sound balance between large and smaller MSs. More importantly, our partner organisations complement each other well, as our countries are at different stages of implementation of the “Conditions for ECVET implementation” identified by Cedefop.

The domestic and transnational partners worked alongside with complementary roles: the former concentrated on pilot testing ECVET-oriented processes in the healthcare and construction sectors with special attention to workers with a migrant background; the latter assisted their Italian peers in delivering new solutions in the domain of qualification recognition. Specifically, the NCTVETD, being based in Romania where the migration flow is quite high, provided relevant advice in Learning Outcomes (LOs) testing and recognition for migrants. The SCQF and MQC, operating in countries where the National Reports referencing the National Qualification Framework (NQF) to European Qualification Framework (EQF) were issued first, pooled significant know-how and expertise which helped the Italian partners deliver the technical work on the pilot qualifications.

The added value of working in partnership was tangible both at transnational and trans-regional level. Working across the borders let us go through an invaluable collective learning experience which proved mutually beneficial. Specifically, as our transnational partners are more advanced in referencing their systems to the EQF processes than the Italian counterparts, they played an all-important advisory role. We especially benefited from their expert advice and methodological support in validating domestic approaches and methods. At the same time, our European partners had the unique opportunity to exchange relevant experiences in the field of recognition with their peers from diverse institutional contexts which may, with due adjustments, meaningfully inform their practices.

At trans-regional level, six very diverse Italian Regions had the opportunity to share practices and, above all, to cooperate toward a common goal: making the recognition of qualifications (or part thereof) easier for low-qualified workers in Italy. Facilitating workers mobility via shared recognition practices is a policy priority for the partner Authorities; our project worked in that direction and is therefore well-placed to innovate mainstream practices at local level.

As a partnership we also enjoyed the benefits of cooperating with a host of actors beyond our consortium, at local, national and transnational level. At local level, we created desirable synergy with qualified institutional stakeholders (i.e. other regional Authorities responsible for designing and awarding qualifications) and organizations (VET providers, third sector organisations, and social partners) both within and beyond our partner Regions. As they are directly involved in designing qualifications in our target sectors, they pooled relevant expertise which supported us in delivering our core technical activities.

At national level, we benefitted from the continued support of the Italian Ministry of Labour (competent Authority) which contributed to placing the project in the wider policy context, and promoted synergies with relevant initiatives aimed at implementing the European Strategy for transparency and mobility of qualifications in Italy (on-going EQF Referencing process). Likewise, by sitting on the [National Group of ECVET Experts](#) operating within ISFOL, we benefitted from cross-fertilisation with the parallel implementation of the other European tools for transparency, as members include the Leonardo da Vinci NA, the EQF National Coordination Point, the National EQARF Reference Point, and the Europass National Centre. At the same time, by having on board [Formedil Nazionale](#), we regularly interacted with social partners in the sector; finally, by liaising with [Caritas Italiana](#), the prime charity operating in the field of migration in Italy, we raised the project visibility *vis a vis* a wide range of third-sector organisations working on the ground in favour of migrants.

At transnational level, we acquired valuable learning by actively participating in the ECVET Team-organised events with other 2<sup>nd</sup> generation pilot projects; we developed a special synergy with the “I CARE project” which concentrated on the healthcare sector. Also, we had ready access to good practices by liaising with key organisations based in Romania and Scotland in our target sectors. Finally, as ISFOL experts are [members](#) of the EU-level Community of Practice on ECVET <http://e2-community.ecvet-team.eu/>, we have been learning from peers from a range of countries and professional sectors.

The benefits accrued by working in partnership both within and beyond our consortium have been tangible and rewarding; we will continue learning together in the framework of the dedicated ECVET Memorandum of Understanding over the 2013-15 time period.

## 5. Plans for the Future

Making our successfully tested solutions and products accessible beyond our life project cycle was our key objective in the second half our project. To this end, we delivered a three-pronged valorisation strategy:

1. We developed an [ECVET-section](#) on the national ISFOL portal, including the COLOR web site;
2. We joined the Italian [National Group of ECVET Experts](#) (2012-13);
3. We signed a dedicated [ECVET Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MoU) whereby we will continue cooperating over the next three years (2013-15).

Specifically, the [ECVET-section](#) on the national ISFOL portal will ensure national visibility of the project outcomes, as ISFOL is a national research institute in the field of VET and employment policies and the in-house Technical Assistance agency of the Italian Ministry of Labour. By sitting on the above ECVET Group (2012-13), we will continue to act as a multipliers of COLOR results and ensure cross-fertilisation with the parallel implementation of the other European tools for transparency (i.e. joint delivery of ECVET dissemination workshops across the country, etc.), bearing in mind that, members include: the Italian Ministry of Labour, the Leonardo da Vinci NA, the EQF National Coordination Point, the National EQARF Reference Point, The National Europass Centre and relevant Research Units on competence-related topics. Finally, by signing the COLOR MoU, the partner Regions - *the* competent Authorities in Italy - signalled their commitment to continue cooperating on ECVET mechanisms (2013-15). Ten organisations also joined the MoU including Regions' in-house VET agencies and construction sector schools. As the MoU is open to new organisations, cooperation on ECVET mechanisms may become wider and deeper over time.

In parallel, the organisations which endorsed the MoU have become “ ECVET champions”; they will continue to act as multipliers of the project outcomes in their respective jurisdictions and/or sectors. Alongside we will transfer the project outputs to other ECVET projects via the LdV NA and continue disseminating the ECVET Information Kit in key dissemination events.

By having on board such a qualified range of target groups and committed actors both at policy level (competent Authorities), national experts and key stakeholders the ground (VET provides in the target sectors, third sector organisations, etc.), we have ensured the mainstreaming of our successful practices beyond the project end. In the long-term, we expect the COLOR outcomes to have a positive impact on current practices in the field of assessment and recognition in the partner Regions, thus contributing to moving to the envisaged ECVET consolidation phase.

## 6. Contribution to EU policies

In keeping with the key objectives set out in the ET2020 Framework for cooperation in education and training, the CO.L.O.R. project worked in the direction of “making lifelong learning and mobility a reality”. By directly involving six competent Regional Authorities for designing and awarding vocational qualifications, and the Italian Ministry of Labour, our partnership sought to contribute to the ongoing process of: a) developing a national qualifications system gradually adapted to the EQF and, b) adopting a more flexible learning approach based on the recognition of non-formal and informal learning.

Specifically our project focused on creating a common understanding of ECVET-related issues among competent Authorities and stakeholders, as well as on supporting an incremental adaptation process of regional qualification systems to ECVET mechanisms. The long-term aim being making these systems more transparent at both the national and European level. We also tried to contribute to making the recognition of non-formal and informal learning easier: to this end we promoted the exchange of regional practices on assessment, thus facilitating the adoption of shared procedures and criteria to assess Units of LOs.

COLOR was also consistent with the ET2020 objective “Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship” since our core activities aimed at facilitating the recognition of competences mainly acquired on the job by low-qualified workers with a migrant background. In so doing, our project contributed to improving the working conditions of disadvantaged people, their qualification levels, as well as their training-qualification opportunities within enterprises. Though our project pilot tested ECVET-oriented actions in two sectors - where workers with a migrant background are widely employed– potentially our outcomes can be transferred to other qualifications/sectors/levels/contexts.

By focusing on validation of non formal and informal learning (NFIL) and disseminating principles and methods ECVET-consistent, our Project also met the key points of the Bruges Communiqué (December 2010) whereby the European Ministers for Vocational Education and Training, European Social Partners and the European Commission declared that participating countries should start to develop, no later than 2015, national procedures for the recognition and validation of NFIL, supported, as appropriate, by national qualifications frameworks. Finally COLOR is consistent with the recent Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning.

Finally COLOR was consistent with the objectives of the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) related to social cohesion, participation in lifelong learning by people of all ages, including those with special needs and disadvantaged groups. Our target groups in fact included adults without qualifications seeking qualification and migrants (with no recognition of their learning/training outcomes). As no homogeneous recognition mechanisms are in place in Italy, it is exceedingly difficult for employers to understand what migrants can offer; consequently many competences relevant to the labour market remain unused and devalue over time. This is why the problem COLOR addressed was perfectly in line with the Evaluation Recommendations reported in the LLP Mid-Term Review Report (July 2011 citare more recent source) calling for further investments in mechanisms for the recognition and validation of competences.

