



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

Progress Report

Public Part

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Executive Summary

The COLOR project addresses primarily five Italian Regions (Campania, Latium, Piedmont and Tuscany, as well as Basilicata as associated partner), the competent authorities in the field of assessment and recognition of qualifications, committed to pilot test ECVET-oriented mechanisms in the construction and healthcare sectors. We also assist selected non-participating Regional Authorities interested in transferring the COLOR working method into their own systems. Finally, we target local stakeholders and practitioners requiring successfully tested tools. In so doing, we address the needs of disadvantaged workers, who typically have poor qualification records.

COLOR pursues a two-fold objective: setting up a sustainable network of Regional Authorities, stakeholders and practitioners; and pilot testing ECVET procedures for the evaluation, recognition and transfer of Learning Outcomes (LOs). We expect our target groups to accrue the following benefits: the Italian Regions will be able to innovate their policies and practices, to varying degrees. Local stakeholders and practitioners will have ready access to a set of transferable tools for their end-users. Finally, workers may have their work experience formally recognised, thus bettering their chances of being properly employed.

To meet these objectives the COLOR partnership brings together a well-thought mix of competent authorities from Italy, Malta, Romania and UK. The Italian and transnational partners work alongside with complementary roles: the former concentrate on the pilot testing exercise on 11 qualifications; the latter, being more advanced in referencing their systems to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) processes, play an all-important advisory role.

We adopt 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 (Logical Framework, GOPP and Metaplan methods) which enabled the partners to work on genuinely relevant objectives in their unique context.

Two are main results achieved to date: 1) We have successfully launched a substantive multi-actor learning and networking process via a range of web-based solutions and meetings at local and (trans)national level; this contributed to making ECVET a renewed policy priority on the Campania Region's agenda and prompted the Calabria Region to officially join our partnership. 2) The national partners and selected stakeholders have begun building capacity by launching the process of adapting their qualifications to ECVET.

In the second half of the project we will concentrate on identifying common mechanisms of LOs recognition and then test recognition processes in our Regions, including the conclusion of a Memorandum of Understanding. To assure lasting results, we will continue delivering our multi-strand dissemination strategy coupled with a dedicated valorisation strategy. Ultimately the key institutional actors' project endorsement will ensure the mainstreaming of our successful practices beyond the project end. The Tuscany Region's commitment to maintaining and customising the project web site after 2013 is tangible step in that direction.

Our [project web site](#) is designed to cater to the needs of different end users: it features multimedia contents for the wider public; it offers ECVET introductory materials and web resources for potential users and; it provides a range of baseline reports, technical documents, and practical tools for stakeholders and practitioners. This is why our web site - the pillar of our dissemination and exploitation strategy - will be our key mainstreaming vehicle after 2013.

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1. Project Objectives

Our project seeks to **set up a sustainable network of key actors** including the competent national and Regional Authorities (i.e. Italian Regions) and stakeholders and practitioners in the field of recognition of qualifications. Our final objective is to **pilot test ECVET mechanisms in four Italian Regions** (Campania, Latium, Piedmont and Tuscany) by implementing procedures for the evaluation, recognition and transfer of Learning Outcomes (LOs) acquired in different contexts. We specifically address the needs of disadvantaged workers, including those with a migrant background, **in the construction and healthcare sectors**, who typically have poor or no formal qualification records.

With reference to the creation of a stable network aim, our first specific objective is to strengthen cooperation between our partner Regions with a view to harmonizing of their systems and promoting a shared decision-making towards a homogeneous application of ECVET in Italy. We also seek to engage non-participating Regions: the Regional Authorities that have successfully tested good practices in the field of ECVET, as well as any Regions interested in moving in the direction of a LO-oriented approach to the their qualifications.

Our second specific objective is two-fold: making local stakeholders and practitioners fully aware of the benefits to be accrued by applying ECVET-like mechanisms and practices; facilitating the creation of networks of local actors in our target sectors which may introduce significant changes in the regional qualification systems, ultimately contributing to redesign the training provision accordingly.

Our third specific objective is to assist the process of change which we are seeking to promote through our pilot project by drawing from the impressive expert advice and know how of our transnational partners.

With reference to the ECVET pilot-testing objective, we seek to support our participating Italian Regional Authorities (competent bodies) in adopting and applying the ECVET specifications within their systems in a meaningful way. To this end, we are in the process of engaging the competent authorities within and beyond our partnership through participative consultation mechanisms and local-level initiatives. We are also getting selected key stakeholders involved in this process of change via local initiatives and our planned project events.

Ultimately we seek to contribute to making it easier for migrant workers and low-qualified people 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 will generate benefits for the range of target groups and end users which we address through our project activities. First, we expect the participating Regions - our prime target group – to be able to innovate their policies and practices in the ECVET direction, to varying degrees. They will especially benefit from having at their disposal a Memorandum of Understanding, a concrete and transferable tool for future cooperation initiatives in the field of recognition of qualifications in other sectors and / or with other parties.

Second, we expect the non-participating Regional Authorities - our second target group - to become aware of the benefits of the ECVET system and LO approach and thus to be better equipped to transfer the COLOR working method into their own systems.

Third, we expect to have a positive impact on the operations of Regional stakeholders and practitioners by inspiring their practices and tools (for example in designing training pathways based on LOs, etc.), and by equipping them with a set of transferable tools designed for the wider community.

Finally, we expect to have an indirect impact on our project end users - the above-mentioned citizens and migrants with unmet competency recognition needs - in terms of increased opportunities, as they may see their work experience recognised in a formal qualification.

By engaging such a qualified range of target groups and committed actors, we believe that we will have a positive impact on current practices in the field of recognition of qualifications, thus making one step forward in the direction of ECVET application in Italy.

2. Project Approach

Distinctive features and added value

Our project approach can be described as a **hands-on-approach** to meeting the challenges of pilot testing ECVET-oriented concepts and tools to four different regional contexts. This is why we launched our joint work by carrying out a **survey on the actual state-of-the-arts** in our four partner Regions with respect to:

- 1) their local qualifications in the construction and healthcare sectors in order to assess the extent to which these systems are ECVET-oriented;
- 2) practices on the assessment and recognition of prior learning (APL) and;
- 3) mapping of local stakeholders active in the target sectors.

Likewise, at transitional level we first identified and then have been **drawing from** the wealth of **EU level practices** and relevant projects in this field, thus benefiting from synergy and avoiding undesirable duplication of efforts. We have been doing so by regularly consulting the dedicated [ECVET projects web site](#) and by attending the EU-level meetings with other ECVET projects funded under the same call for proposals.

This very concrete survey, the mapping exercise and the resulting baseline studies have, in turn, allowed us to **regularly fine-tune our project actions and targets** depending on the specific local contexts. This means, for example, that our project actions are focused mainly on identifying good-practice in our participating Regions with more ECVET-compliant systems; by contrast, we have been delivering more capacity-building-type of support in the other Regions. We have been adopting this **flexible and customised approach** from the outset and will continue to do so at each step of our remaining technical work.

A final feature of our project approach is our systematic adoption of **participative and collaborative practices**, which have been immensely helpful in reinforcing our 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 have regularly put in place feedback mechanisms (telephone and email exchange, skype conferencing, virtual meetings) and written consultation which, among other, have helped us incorporate new ideas and innovative approaches. Also we have organised a series of meetings at the request of our Italian partners in order to address their specific requests. To do so, we have been using well-established participative planning methods known as the Logical Framework, GOPP and Metaplan.

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

Evaluation strategy

In keeping with our participative approach, our partnership adopted an *ad hoc* Quality Assurance Plan which describes our evaluation strategy, including a set of dedicated tools. Our conceptual and theoretical framework of reference is the European Framework for VET Quality Assurance (EQARF); thus we consider - and implement - Quality Assurance as an

ongoing process and a "virtuous" cycle based on the ongoing monitoring of a set indicators aimed at constantly improving our processes, products and outputs quality-wise.

Our strategy is based on the inter-twinned principles of self-evaluation and active involvement of all partners on an equal footing. We have been implementing 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 a Self-Evaluation Report for the 2011 project operations;
- 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, have felt comfortable in critically reviewing our work, and shared attention areas as well as areas of improvement from the very outset of the project. The feedback given during this first year of activity has provided our MG with valuable suggestions to make our joint work more effective. Overall, the partners' satisfaction level has been high across the board - as our 2011 Self-Evaluation Report shows -; thus we are committed to continue working in this participative way for the second half of our project.

Dissemination strategy

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

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

A dedicated Communication and Dissemination Plan describes in detail how we intend to go about achieving these objectives; the Plan specifies a host of targeted actions and tools, from project branding to our communication policy and quality indicators for evaluation. The plan is regularly reviewed on the basis of the progress made and updated as new dissemination opportunities arise. Here it suffices to say that we have adopted a three-level dissemination strategy:

1. Dissemination for Awareness – level 1

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

2. Dissemination for Understanding – level 2

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

3. Dissemination for Action – level 3

This third level of dissemination will be implemented in the second half of the project, when the testing phase will be completed. We plan to foster change of practice in our partner Regions, as well as non-participating Regions, upon successfully delivering the key products and outcomes in our work plan. Essentially we will target the institutional actors and competent authorities who are in a position to bring about change within their organisations. To this end, we will equip them with a set of practical tools ranging from an ECVET kit in Italian to a collection of good practices, which may help them innovate their practices in the field of assessment and recognition of qualifications.

Our dissemination strategy ultimately serves the purpose of ensuring lasting project results beyond the project end. To this end, 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 and publications, 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 activities that can help us achieve lasting results. The key tools in this respect include: our regularly updated stakeholder data base, the above-mentioned ECVET kit to be 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. In addition, the Tuscany Region in its capacity of head of the National Coordination Commission of Regions - the institutional forum where Italian Regions coordinate their VET policies – is exploring ways to maintain our COLOR web site after the project end, and customise it for Italian end-users. In terms of actors, we can count on the Italian Leonardo da Vinci National Agency, the Italian EQF Coordination Point and the Italian EQAVET Coordination Point, within ISFOL, the coordinating partner, which will ensure the transfer of our outcomes to relevant LLP initiatives and the next generation Programme. Alongside, our participating Regions will continue to act as multipliers in their respective territories and in relevant working groups. Finally, the Italian Ministry of Labour – actively involved as a key note speaker since our Kick-off Meeting - is interested in mainstreaming the successful practices of our project in its policy-making process.

3. Project Outcomes & Results

In our first year of operation our partnership achieved a number of tangible results and put in place substantive learning processes which are very promising with respect to our final aims and specific objectives illustrated in Section 1.

With respect to our first objective - setting up a sustainable network of key actors in the field of recognition of qualifications – our first result is that our project partners and selected stakeholders have been learning together via user-friendly web-based solutions. Specifically, by participating in the on-line meetings we, the *project partners*, have all become better aware of the project incipient results, as well as of the challenges ahead; by consulting relevant materials on the web site and interacting via the restricted area, our partnership has become aware of practices in other Regions and Countries (i.e Descriptive Reports on Qualifications). By giving access to a wealth of information, tools and relevant reports on ECVET-related issues, *other Regional Authorities, stakeholders and practitioners in our target sectors* have increased their knowledge base on ECVET implementation; finally *the wider public* has become aware of projects expected results and benefits to be accrued.

Our second result toward the objective of having a sustainable network up and running in the field of recognition of qualifications is that an extensive face-to-face learning and networking process has been activated as early as the Kick-off Meeting. This was achieved by means of a number of working groups (variously named consortia, thematich groups, etc.) created in the participating Regions, or in the process of being set up (for example in the Lazio Region), alongside the (trans)national level exchange-of-practices activity (Workshop on Analysis and design with Scottish stakeholders and the 1st Web Conference on LO analysis and design for national actors).

This multi-level learning and networking process has had a tangible impact on both on the Regional Authorities within and beyond our partnership, as well as on a host of local stakeholders and practitioners. First, our *participating Regions* are now aware of successful practices in other Regions and abroad and cognizant of the steps necessary to move forward with ECVET implementation. Also, they are now able to potentially exploit the incipient results and tools in other initiatives and future projects. Secondly, we have succeed in extending our learning and sharing exercise to the Regional Authorities of Lombardy and Calabria. As they have ready access to our tools, they are now facilitated in considering the opportunity of adapting their system to ECVET-oriented. At the same time, they have become aware of new cooperation opportunities in the field. Finally, a range of *local stakeholders and practitioners* involved by our partners have become aware of the benefits of the ECVET system and the LO approach. The most active stakeholders are better equipped to take first steps to consider transferring the COLOR working method into their own practices. A telling example we can offer is in Campania where our project has been acknowledged for its contribution in making ECVET implementation a priority on the Region's agenda. This result was possible as the institutional actors realised that our pilot testing can facilitate the adjustment process of the local qualifications to the EU standards. As a result, the Region has been especially proactive by bringing together the relevant actors in the construction sector in a dedicated institutional forum.

The main products delivered in this first year include: 1) our user-friendly project web site featuring both a public and restricted areas where users can consult substantive reports, as well as promotional materials on the project activities (videos, fiches); 2) a range of news and press releases on the partners' web sites on meetings held in the partner Regions with key actors and practitioners; 3) project fiches publicised on key web sites and portals at EU level; 4) the Reports of: the Project Launch Meeting, the Workshop on Analysis and design, and the 1st Web Conference Report on LO analysis and design. A detailed list of products and sources of verification of these outcomes are reported in Diagram No. 1.

Diagram No. 1**COLOR results and products
at a glance**

Objective 1: Sustainable network of actors up and running			
Results	Target groups	Impact	Source of verification
1. Web-based networking and learning of partners and key actors achieved			
1.1. Web site accessible to the partnership and the wider public	Project partners Regional Authorities Stakeholders and practitioners in the target sectors Wider public	As the web site is publicised on the partners' web sites, a wide range of key actors and end-users in the participating Italian Regions and Member States have been reached and made aware of projects results and benefits to be accrued.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web site, including restricted area • Links on the partners' web sites
1.2 Wider partnership networks fruitfully at a distance	Project partners	Partners aware of state of project play, learning opportunities available, and next steps to undertake	Minutes of the 1 st On-line Meeting (14.07.11)
2. Consortia of competent institutions being set up	Regional Authorities within the partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aware and informed of successful practices in other Regions and abroad • Aware of the steps necessary to move forward with ECVET implementation, Including obstacles • Able to exploit COLOR incipient results and tools in other initiatives and future projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports/web news of meetings in the partner Regions • Project stakeholder data base • Report of the Launch Meeting • Workshop Report on Analysis and design • 1st Web Conference Report on LO analysis and design
	Other Regional Authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitated in considering the opportunity of adapting their system to ECVET-oriented by the tools given • New cooperation opportunities in the field available 	
	Regional stakeholders and practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aware of the benefits of the ECVET system and the LO approach • Most active stakeholders better equipped to consider transferring the COLOR working method into their own practices. 	
Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COLOR Web site and restricted area (Deliverable No. 7) • Partners' press releases and web news on meetings with local stakeholders in the partner Regions • Project fiches publicised in similar EU initiatives and projects (http://www.ecvet-projects.eu/, ADAM projects portal) • Project stakeholder data base • Report of the Launch Meeting (Naples, 25.03.11) (Deliverable No. 2) • Workshop Report on Analysis and design (Glasgow, 27.10.11) (Deliverable No. 15) • 1st Web Conference Report on LO analysis and design (06.12.11) (Deliverable No. 12). 		

With respect to our second objective - pilot testing ECVET mechanisms in our four Italian Regions in the construction and healthcare sectors – our first result is that our project partners and selected stakeholders have begun building capacity in implementing the basic concepts and tools of ECVET. Specifically, *the partners* became aware of the dynamics in the two sectors by consulting the Pilot Sector and Background Analysis Report; we understood the degree to which each of our system is ECVET-oriented in the process of co-producing a dedicated Background Analysis Report and Descriptive Report on Qualifications. At the same time, we become aware of the specific contexts and background in each Country and participating Region.

A second result we achieved is that, thanks to this joint analytical work and inter-regional exchange, our *national partners* and the *most active stakeholders* in the target sectors at regional level were able to take this capacity building exercise one step farther. They launched the process of adaptation of the Qualifications (Qs) to the ECVET logic with the final objective of ensuring the recognition of Qs (or parts thereof) to workers in these sectors.

Finally, both our *partnership* and *Scottish stakeholders* in the sectors have benefited from mutual learning upon attending an *ad hoc* transnational Workshop on LO analysis and design for ECVET (Glasgow, 27.10.11).

This multi-level learning exercise has had a tangible impact on the Regional Authorities within our partnership, as well as the local stakeholders. First, we *the partners* are now better aware of the steps necessary to move forward with ECVET testing, as well of the obstacles ahead; at the same time, we have been able to set more accurate and measurable targets and objectives in line with the specific context of each Region. Secondly, our four *participating Regions* are now better equipped to take the first concrete steps to move forward with ECVET testing in their respective territories of jurisdiction. Finally, our *partnership* has had access to expert advice and inspiring practices from key Scottish stakeholders in the construction and healthcare sectors which will help test sound solutions in the partner Regions.

The main products delivered in this first year of operations include: 1) the above-mentioned project web site and restricted area; 2) a range of news and press releases on the Partners' web sites concerning meetings with local stakeholders in the partner Regions; 3) the above-mentioned Pilot Sector and Background Analysis Report, the Descriptive Report on Qualifications, the Report of Workshop on LO analysis and design for ECVET. A detailed list of products and sources of verification of these outcomes are reported in Diagram No. 2.

Diagram No. 2

COLOR results and products at a glance			
Objective 2: Facilitating the implementation of ECVET in four Italian Regions			
Results	Target groups	Impact	Source of verification
1. Partners aware and informed of: 1) extent to which their systems are ECVET-oriented; 2) the context and background in each Country and participating Region	Project partners	Project partners aware of the steps necessary to move forward with ECVET testing, including obstacles, and more accurate and measurable targets and objectives in line with the local context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot Sector and Background Analysis Report • Descriptive Report on Qualifications • Report of Workshop 1 on LO analysis and design for ECVET in Europe Report
2. First step in the process of adaptation of the Qs concerned launched aimed at the final objective of recognition of Qs or parts.	National partners Most active stakeholders in the target sectors at regional level	National partners enabled to take the first steps to move forward with ECVET testing in their respective contexts	
3. Mutual learning on the trends and dynamics in the target sectors achieved	Project partners Scottish stakeholders	New cooperation opportunities and expert support available to the project partners	
Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COLOR Web site and restricted area (Deliverable No. 7) • Partners' press releases and web news on meetings with local stakeholders in the partner Regions • Pilot Sector and Background Analysis Report (Deliverables No. 12 – 13) • Descriptive Report on Qualifications (Deliverable No.14) • Report of Workshop 1 on LO analysis and design for ECVET in Europe (Glasgow, 27.10.11) (Deliverable No. 15). 		

4. Partnerships

The COLOR partnership has the privilege of bringing together the competent authorities in the field of qualification design and recognition from four different Member States and four Italian regions, namely:

- The Italian Regional Authorities of Campania (represented by [ARLAS](#), the grant beneficiary), [Latium](#), [Tuscany](#), and [Piedmont](#)
- The [Basilicata Region](#) (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](#), a national research institution in the field of VET, which acts as the coordinating partner and a technical body *vis a vis* the wider partnership.

Our partnership is endowed with a well thought-out mix of organisations not only in terms of geographical coverage, but also competence wise. We in fact have 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 EU benchmarks in the field of ECVET.

The domestic and transnational partners work alongside with complementary roles: the former are concentrating on pilot testing ECVET-oriented process in the healthcare and construction sectors with special attention to migrants; the latter are assisting 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, is providing highly relevant advice in Learning Outcomes (LO) 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) have already issued, are pooling significant know how and expertise which is helping the Italian partners deliver the technical work on 11 qualifications in our two target sectors.

The added value of working in partnership is real and tangible both at transnational and trans-regional level. Working across the borders is letting us go through an invaluable collective learning experience which - half way through the project - is already proving mutually beneficial. Specifically, as our transnational partners are more advanced in referencing their systems to the EQF processes than the Italian counterparts, they have been playing an all-important advisory role. We are especially benefiting from their expert advice and methodological support in validating the proposed approaches and methods. At the same time, our European partners have the unique opportunity to exchange relevant experiences in the field of recognition with their peers from diverse institutional contexts which can meaningfully inform both their practices and respective systems, with due adjustments.

At trans-regional level, four very diverse Italian Regions now have the opportunity to share practices and, above all, are cooperating toward a common goal: making the recognition of qualifications (or part thereof) easier for low-qualified people in Italy. Facilitating workers mobility via shared recognition practices is a policy priority for all these Regional Authorities; this pilot project works in that direction and is therefore expected to innovate mainstream practices and possibly regional policy-making.

As a partnership we are also enjoying the benefits of cooperating with a host of actors and networks 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 practitioners (VET providers, cooperatives, social partners) both within and beyond our partner Regions. As they are directly involved in the design/upgrading of qualifications in our target sectors, they have pooled invaluable expertise which has supported us in delivering our initial technical activities.

At national level, we have been benefiting from the endorsement and continued support of the Italian Ministry of Labour. Its involvement not only has helped us place the project activities in a wider context, but also promoted synergies with other initiatives aimed at implementing the strategy for mobility of the qualifications. At the same time, by liaising with Caritas Nazionale, *the* prime charity operating in the field of migration in Italy, we have greatly raised the project visibility *vis a vis* a wide range of third-sector organisations working on the ground in favour of migrants and the most vulnerable groups at large. Likewise we have on board Formedil, *the* national VET provider in the field of construction.

At transnational level, we have been acquiring valuable learning and networking opportunities by attending the ECVET Team-organised events; we are profitably interacting with the I CARE project - funded under the same ECVET Call for proposals - which also covers the healthcare sector. Finally, we have gained great insights into the dynamics of our target sectors by establishing links with the key actors in the healthcare and construction sectors in Scotland through our Scottish partner.

The benefits accrued by working in partnership both within and beyond our consortium have been very rewarding; we expect to learn together more in the second half of the project, as our cooperation has been growing stronger over time.

5. Plans for the Future

Our work programme has been organised on the basis eight Work Packages (WPs). As WP 3 (Analysis and design) has been successfully completed, we provide below an overview of the range of activities and outcomes associated with the remaining seven WPs that we plan to deliver in the second half of the project. We present the core-activity WPs first, followed by the transversal activity-WPs.

Core activities

Web-based and face-to-face networking (WP2)

As our website serves as a key dissemination and networking tool for stakeholders and practitioners, further development of the project website will be a key activity; we will focus on strengthening links to various relevant websites and databases within and beyond the LLP, to make sure that our outcomes are accessible and usable by the widest audience. We will also organise the remaining two On-line Meetings (March and September 2012) through which our partnership will assess the project state of play and will adopt joint decisions. At the same time, we will consolidate the networking activity of the working groups in our partner Regions where local stakeholders have been exchanging practices on the two target sectors, and thus act as multipliers of our key results. In addition, we will finalise the formal process of expanding our partnership to the Calabria Region interested in pilot testing the COLOR solutions as an associated partner. Finally, we will share the results and findings of this extensive activity in a dedicated Networking Report in February 2013.

Identifying common mechanisms of Learning Outcomes (LOs) recognition (WP4)

Identifying successful practices which make LOs recognition a reality is the objective of this second technical activity. To this end, first our national partners will complete the analysis of their respective qualifications in the healthcare and construction sectors with the support of Isfol and experts. On this basis, by April 2012 we will produce an Analysis Report which will describe the assessment processes related to the target qualifications and units of LOs. Next, we will elaborate a set of guidelines designed to support transferability processes. The process will be completed by drafting a Plan outlining commonalities and sharable components identified in the qualifications and the final ECVET units by June 2012. Finally, we will hold a dedicated Workshop on LO recognition mechanisms extended to key local stakeholders (Bucharest, July 2012) which will conclude our collective learning experience on this front.

Testing of LO recognition process (WP5)

Testing viable recognition processes valid across our participating Regions is the objective of our last technical activity to be implemented in the second half of 2012. To achieve this objective, we will test the transferability of the ECVET units and feasibility of the assessment and recognition processes following a dedicated a Testing Plan, which will build upon the results yielded by the previous LO recognition phase. We will describe the outcomes of this testing phase, as well as the challenges to be aware of, in a Testing Report. The Report will, among other, help us consider adopting corrective actions to make our testing activity more effective. A tangible output of this phase will be a Repertory of good practices successfully tested by our partner Regions. Our final and most challenging task will be to launch an extensive consultation process with our national partners aimed at drafting a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The MoU will provide the basis for the conclusion of mutual agreements and ensure the actual adoption of ECVET within the Italian regional systems involved.

Transversal activities

Ensuring a sound Project Management (WP 1)

Overall, the management model we implemented has proved successful and will therefore be continued with in the second half of the project. On one hand, we will carry out the standard PM activities (i.e. monitoring, quality assurance, financial and administrative reporting, etc.); on the other hand, we will perform our content management activities by reinforcing our consultation mechanisms with the wider partnership and participative practices in order to ensure that the tested solutions will be sustainable beyond the project duration. To this end, we will stage our last Transnational Partner Meeting (Bucharest, July 2012) and bilateral meetings at the request of individual partners.

Quality assuring processes and outputs (WP6)

As for our PM model, our Quality Assurance (QA) approach has proved successful and will therefore be continued with in the second half of the project. Therefore we will keep on quality assuring our processes, deliverables and outcomes according to the validated QA Plan and annexed tools. These activities will run in parallel with the planned PM tools and procedures, with a mutually reinforcing effect on the sound delivery of our project activities as a whole. We will have two main outputs: 1) a Self-Evaluation Report for the 2012 operations; 2) the Final QA Report by January 2012.

Disseminating the project results (WP 7)

In the second half of the project we will continue to implement our diversified dissemination strategy which is implemented through a set of integrated actions at local, national and EU level. On one hand we will continue developing our project web site - the key pillar of both our above-mentioned networking activity and dissemination strategy. On the other hand, we are committed to:

- 1) further publicising and disseminating our project outcomes and tools as they become available by targeting a range of institutional actors and stakeholders (contact information is regularly updated in a dedicated stakeholder database);
- 2) reinforcing synergy with similar EU initiatives and projects;
- 3) engaging additional stakeholders and practitioners (training providers, public authorities, etc.) via our 2nd Web Conference and ongoing networking activity at regional level;
- 4) staging the Final Conference in February 2013.

Our main products of this activity will include an ECVET information kit, the Final Conference Report and a video in Italian and English.

Exploiting the project results (WP8)

Making our successfully tested solutions and products accessible beyond our life project cycle will be our key objective in the second half of the project. To do so, in the last four months of the project we will deliver a joint valorisation strategy complementing the parallel networking activity within WP 2. Specifically we will:

- stage the final Web Conference to maximise the valorisation of project results and outputs among stakeholders at local, national and transnational level;
- disseminate the ECVET information kit, including successful practices to the different target groups;
- publish the project results and findings on technical journals and on relevant web sites;
- develop and transfer the project outputs to other ECVET projects managed by the project partners (keeping in mind that the Coordinating partner is also the LLP-Leonardo da Vinci National Agency in Italy).

Alongside, each partner will continue acting as a multiplier in its respective territory with valorisation initiatives targeted to the local context and end-users. Finally, we are committed to maintain the web site and to develop contents in Italian in order better cater to the needs of the end-users. To this end our partner, the Tuscany Region, in its capacity of head of the IX Commission on VET policies coordination in Italy, will take the lead to ensure the sustainability of our web site post 2013.

6. Contribution to EU policies

In keeping with the key objectives set out in the ET2020 Framework for cooperation in education and training, since March 2011 the CO.L.O.R. project has been working in the direction of “making lifelong learning and mobility a reality”. By directly involving five competent Regional Authorities for awarding vocational qualifications, and the Italian Ministry of Labour, our partnership seeks, in fact, 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 focuses on creating a common understanding of ECVET-related issues among the competent authorities and stakeholders, as well as on supporting a shared process of adapting the regional qualification systems involved to ECVET mechanisms. The long-term aim being harmonizing these systems at both the national and European level. We also seek to contribute to making the recognition of non-formal and informal learning easier: to this end we are promoting the exchange of regional practices on assessment, thus facilitating the adoption of shared procedures and criteria to assess units of LOs.

COLOR is also consistent with the ET2020 objective “Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship” since our core activities aim at facilitating the recognition of competences mainly acquired on the job by low-qualified workers including migrants. In so doing, our project contributes to improving the working conditions of disadvantaged people, their qualification levels, as well as their training-qualification opportunities within enterprises. Though our project pilot tests ECVET-oriented actions in two sectors - where workers with a migrant background are widely and often illegally employed- we expect to deliver lasting results which will be transferable to other qualifications/sectors/levels/contexts.

Our project is also consistent with the Lisbon Strategy’s Key Competences development process. As stated in our project proposal, key competences should be considered all-important for the purpose of personal fulfilment and development of individuals in a knowledge-based society. Specifically we are focusing on key competences related to the qualification of Construction Worker - in a set of different-sector qualifications referred to the State-Region Agreement concluded on 27th July 2011 in order to make it consistent with the ECVET system.

Finally COLOR is 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 include 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 addresses is perfectly in line with the Evaluation Recommendations reported in the LLP Mid-Term Review Report (July 2011) calling for further investments in mechanisms for the recognition and validation of competences.

