



Executive Agency, Education, Audiovisual and Culture



Taxistars-Designing and Developing Flexible Vocational Training for a Mobile Profession

Progress Report

Public Part

Project information

Project acronym: Taxistars
Project title: Designing and Developing Flexible Vocational Training for a Mobile Profession
Project number: 527625-LLP-2012-1-GR-LEONARDO-LMP
Sub-programme or KA: Leonardo da Vinci
Project website: www.taxistars.eu

Reporting period: From 1/10/2012
To 31/3/2014
Report version: Final
Date of preparation: 29/4/2014

Beneficiary organisation: Militos Consulting S.A.

Project coordinator: Jens Koslowsky
Project coordinator organisation: Militos Consulting S.A.
Project coordinator telephone number: 0030 210 6772129
Project coordinator email address: koslowsky@militos.org

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.

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Executive Summary

'Taxistars-Designing and Developing Flexible Vocational Training for a Mobile Profession' is an EU co-funded project of the LLP LdV program. Its main objective is to **design and develop innovative, ICT-based educational material for professional taxi-drivers**, taking under consideration the **training needs and the special characteristics of the profession**. The ultimate aim of the project is to contribute to the improvement of vocational education and training in the field, working towards a safer, more effective and competitive taxi-sector, enabling professional taxi-drivers to provide **high quality services**.

Taxistars is a 3-years long initiative (1/10/2012 – 30/9/2015) and is being implemented by an international consortium of 9 organisations in Greece, Austria, Cyprus, Finland, Germany, Italy, Spain, and Switzerland. The project is coordinated by Militos in Greece, and during its first 18 months of activities, the project partnership has set the ground towards the design and the development of both the educational material for professional taxi-drivers, as well as the technical deployment of the learning applications and provisions to the taxi-sector beneficiaries.

During this first period of the project a **European research** has been conducted on the identification of existing VET practices and methodologies in the taxi-sector, as well as on the main training needs of the professional taxi-drivers. Data and findings of this research have been already put to practical use for developing targeted training material for taxi-drivers. All partners in the participating countries conducted desk research for mapping the existing VET practices, as well as field research through structured questionnaires and interviews, directly contacting **more than 400 taxi-drivers and experts in the sector**. The research took place in the period between November 2012 and April 2013. Professional taxi-drivers across the surveyed EU countries are totally aware of the **lack of training structures** at the institutional as well as the non-formal level, considering vocational training for taxi-drivers as highly important to better face problems in their daily routines.

On this basis, the Taxistars partnership **has documented the structure and content of the learning topics and material**, as well as its **desired format and appeal on behalf of the end users**, the taxi-drivers and the taxi-sector community. The project has entered the phase of **learning applications development**, both in terms of **technical affordances**, as well as with respect to actual content, learning tools, duration, format and **desired learning outcomes**.

The Taxistars initiative is highly benefitting from the expertise and **extremely wide outreach of dedicated actors of the project consortium in the taxi-sector**, combined with highly effective dissemination methodology and tools, securing the distribution of the right messages and information to the right recipients, i.e. professional taxi-drivers, VET providers, taxi organisations and federations, stakeholders and policy makers in the field road transport and especially the taxi-sector.

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1. Project Objectives

The role of Taxis in the European urban and semi-urban environments is crucial: they are a fast and flexible transportation mode and they enhance mobility. Taxi-drivers belong to 'a 24h basis on-the-road profession', while the taxi-sector itself is characterized by an increasingly diverse workforce. During their daily routines professional **taxi-drivers face various situations** with regards to issues as, for example, **work and road safety, emergency cases and environmental concerns, calling for special knowledge and skills** on their part, in order to deal effectively with them. Although the issue of vocational training for professional drivers in Europe in the freight and passenger transport sector - truck and bus drivers - has been addressed, the sub-sector of the **taxi drivers** remains **scantly approached** and explored in comparison. Considering the special characteristics of the taxi driver as an '**on a 24h basis on-the-road professional**', as well as the increasingly diverse workforce and changing conditions in the field, there is **a clear need for innovative, target-specific and 'actor-oriented' educational material** for professional taxi-drivers.

Therefore, the EU co-funded project with the acronym '**Taxistars**' will design and develop innovative, ICT-based educational material for professional taxi-drivers, taking under consideration the **training needs and the special characteristics of the profession**. The ultimate aim of the project is to contribute to the improvement of vocational education and training in the field, working towards a safer, more effective and competitive taxi-sector, enabling professional taxi-drivers to provide **high quality services**.

More specifically, the aim of the 'TAXISTARS' project is to develop an innovative, **ICT-based educational toolbox for professional taxi-drivers**, by **identifying the training needs** in the field. This will be achieved by setting up **educational content, learning formats and material** both on- and off-line available (i.e. applications through smartphones, tablets and PC) addressing *Work safety issues, Road safety issues, Emergency case issues, Criminal assault issues, Social interaction and behaviour skills and competences, Environmental issues*.

The long-term aims of the project consist in:

- contributing to the improvement of professional training in the field, working towards a safer, more effective, competitive and high quality road transport system in EU
- creating a new vision for the use of ICT in lifelong learning, through learning practices and activities which motivate and effectively stimulate trainees in accordance to their special needs and day-to-day professional lives

2. Project Approach

The Taxistars project and its work-flow have been organised along the following lines:

A clear view on what is the main objective of the project has been firmly established among all partners who would work on the development of the learning applications for professional taxi-drivers. All activities to take place during the three years of the Taxistars project life carried along the main aim of the project which is to develop an innovative, **ICT-based educational toolbox for professional taxi-drivers**, which will be in line with the taxi-drivers' needs, their preferred ways of requiring certain knowledge and skills which respond to their daily professional routines. In order to succeed in this, the partnership had to adapt a bottom-up approach as foreseen and then try to connect the dots between the proposed learning topics as originally put in place at an indicative level (i.e. work safety, road safety, emergency case issues, criminal assault issues, social interaction skills, and environmental issues), coming up with a suggested structure of learning topics, bringing it to the attention of the end users once more through the organisation of focus groups, and then start to develop the actual learning material, content, learning formats and layout to be technically developed.

This three-stage model before the provision of any final learning material and content allows for the following:

- It involves the actual end users from an early stage in the development of learning material (research, interviews identifying needs/assessment of learning material and structure)
- It goes back to the taxi-sector community presenting to certain taxi-sector actors (taxi-drivers, taxi experts, VET providers) the learning structure and suggested content as a result of the initial research phase to be developed and asking them to comment on it (focus groups organisation before the development of the final learning content)
- It minimizes the risk of the final outcome (the technically developed learning applications) to 'backfire' with respect to either content or structure, or technical affordances, media, duration, layout which might lurk beyond the actual learning preferences of the end users
- It foresees a further level of involvement on behalf of end users as foreseen to take place after the technical development of the learning applications during the pilot testing of the final material
- It exploits at an optimal level the expertise of those partners who are active in the road transport and the taxi-sector, who are able to bring in their expertise as such, but only newly tested and informed by the current state in taxi-drivers' training aspects, approaches and willingness
- It keeps up a reassuring feeling among the taxi professionals community, that their approach, aspects, opinion have been a substantial part in constructing training material and practices 'authorized' by them and not as a ready-made, undifferentiated set of material just handed over to them

- It allowed for all Taxistars partners (either as experts in the field of road transport and/or taxi-sector, the field of education and VET, the field of technical support and deployment, or even non-sector experts in the fields of project management or dissemination) to immerse or deeply immerse into the world of the taxi-industry on a long-term basis, accounting for better and more effective outcomes, be it the actual training solutions developed, a message to be conveyed to the taxi world, and eventually for an overall project approach that becomes more and more informed on the taxi-sector actualities and everyday life conditions

Apart from the overall project approach to secure useful, relevant, and attractive learning applications for professional taxi drivers, special efforts have been made in order to keep up the interest of the taxi-sector community high through clear messages and provision of information on what the project is up to, and why it is important for all the members of the taxi-sector community. Thus appropriate tools and approaches to succeed in this have been produced and will accompany all project activities, right to the end of the project and after it such as:

- An attractive multilingual project leaflet made available to all partners
- Eloquent and to the spot Press releases and Newsletter in EN, EL, ES, DE, IT, FR, FI
- Catchy mottos: *Taxistars / Who said that stars are in the sky?*
- An attractive website in line with the philosophy of the conveyed messages and project visual identity (static pages in EN, EL, ES, DE, IT, FR, FI,)
- A visual approach accounting for core symbols of mobility, road transport, traffic, movement, vehicle, 'universality' of taxi colours
- High quality posters with direct message, easily understandable by the core target group of the project i.e. the taxi-drivers themselves (i.e. ...*education on all aspects of a challenging and demanding profession*)
- Full exploitation of the dissemination potential of the partners with respect to mass media, as well as sector-specific actors around Europe

3. Project Outcomes & Results

The Taxistars project has gone through its half-time period (18 months up to March 2014 starting in October 2012), entering its second phase, which will deal with the development of the structured learning and educational material in terms of format, content, learning media, and expected learning outcomes. The results and outcomes of the project up to this point refer to two separate fields, i.e.

- regarding the development of the main tools to facilitate dissemination activities and make the project known to the taxi-sector and road transport community,
- regarding all activities that have been undertaken by the partners of the project in the involved countries, in order to make available certain data and opinions coming from the taxi-sector professionals, highlighting the most crucial needs in taxi-drivers training towards the development and technical deployment of the learning applications at the second phase of the project

Dissemination outcomes and tools:

The Taxistars webpage

(Information on the project, project objectives, News, outcomes, partnership profile, interesting readings etc.)

www.taxistars.eu

HOME TAXISTARS OUTCOMES PARTNERSHIP NEWS CONTACT

CHOOSE LANGUAGE

TAXI stars.eu
 Training TAXI drivers
 For a safer and more competitive
 24h on the road profession

survey QUESTIONNAIRE

What is Taxistars about?

The EU co-funded project with the acronym 'Taxistars' designs and develops innovative, ICT-based educational material for professional taxi-drivers, taking under consideration the training needs and the special characteristics of the profession. The role of Taxis in the European urban and semi-urban environments is crucial: they are a fast and flexible transportation mode and they enhance mobility. Taxi-drivers belong to 'a 24h basis on-the-road profession', while the taxi-sector itself is characterised by an increasingly diverse workforce. During their daily routines professional taxi-drivers face various situations with regards to issues as, for example, work and road safety, emergency cases and environmental concerns, calling for special knowledge and skills on their part, in order to deal effectively with them. The ultimate aim of the project is thus to contribute to the improvement of vocational education and training in the field, working towards a safer, more effective and competitive taxi-sector, enabling professional taxi-drivers to provide high quality services.

TAXI DRIVERS AND EXPERTS IN THEIR OWN WORDS: Spain // "The taxi sector needs modern!"

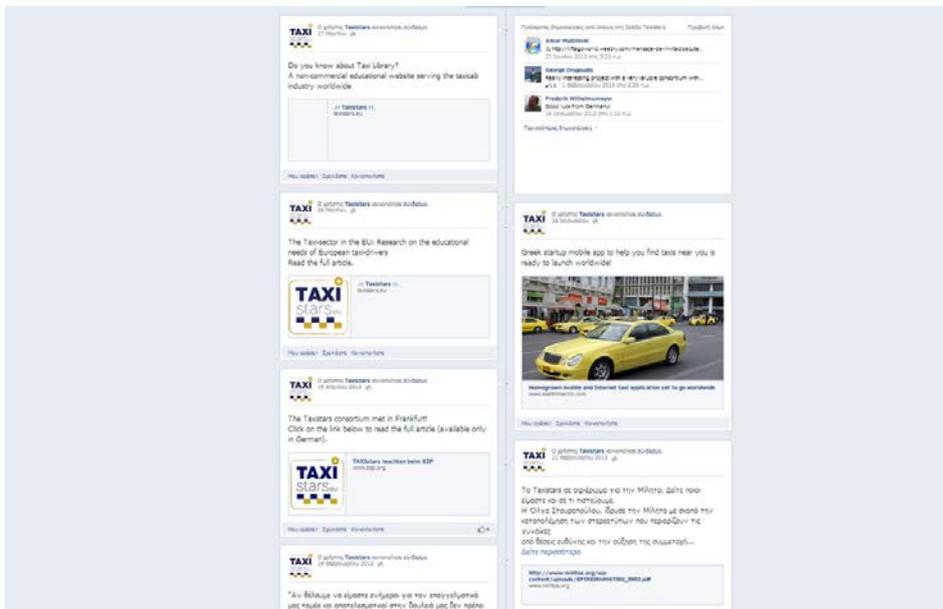
Lifelong Learning Programme

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Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/taxistarsEU>



Project logo



Project communication templates



Document Title

Date of issue _____

Author(s) _____

Contributors _____

Contact name _____

E-mail address _____

Organisation _____

Approval Status Draft Final

Number of Pages _____

Keyword list _____

Recipients Only Partners Public

Method of Distribution Email Internet

Confidentiality Status Confidential Public

History

Version No	Date	Revised by
1		
2		
3		
etc.		



With the support of the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Union, this project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This communication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

INFORMATION www.taxistars.eu

Kiriakos LINCAS S. Brigas@milliz.org T. +30 210 6772129

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PRESS RELEASE

[DATE]



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You tube channel

A You tube channel has been created to host selected learning applications, video/audio snippets etc. showcasing for the wider taxi-sector community the learning outcomes of Taxistars when made available in the upcoming phases of the project

Project multilingual leaflet

Education flexible per taxiisti

Professional competence for high quality public transportation services

La major part de taxiistes europeus són professionals. El taxi és un dels sectors més dinàmics i innovadors de l'economia europea i, a més, és un dels sectors més importants per a la mobilitat dels ciutadans. Els professionals del sector són els que garanteixen la qualitat dels serveis i la seguretat dels viatgers. Els professionals del sector són els que garanteixen la qualitat dels serveis i la seguretat dels viatgers. Els professionals del sector són els que garanteixen la qualitat dels serveis i la seguretat dels viatgers.

Formation flexible pour les conducteurs de taxis

Des professionnels de compétence pour des services de transport public de haute qualité

La grande majorité des professionnels européens du secteur du taxi sont des professionnels. Le taxi est un des secteurs les plus dynamiques et innovateurs de l'économie européenne et, en plus, c'est un des secteurs les plus importants pour la mobilité des citoyens. Les professionnels du secteur sont ceux qui garantissent la qualité des services et la sécurité des voyageurs. Les professionnels du secteur sont ceux qui garantissent la qualité des services et la sécurité des voyageurs. Les professionnels du secteur sont ceux qui garantissent la qualité des services et la sécurité des voyageurs.

Taksiinijohdajien koulutuksen joustava koulutus

Erityisen korkealaatuisten julkisten liikennepalveluiden ammattitaitoa

Ennen kaikkea Euroopassa toimivien taksien ammattilaiset ovat ammattilaisia. Taksiala on yksi Euroopan dynaamisimmista ja innovatiivisimmista talousaloista, ja lisäksi se on yksi tärkeimmistä sektoreista, jotka takaavat kansalaisten liikkuvuuden ja turvallisuuden. Ammattilaiset taksinkuljettajat ovat ne, jotka takaavat palvelun laadun ja turvallisuuden. Ammattilaiset taksinkuljettajat ovat ne, jotka takaavat palvelun laadun ja turvallisuuden. Ammattilaiset taksinkuljettajat ovat ne, jotka takaavat palvelun laadun ja turvallisuuden.

Formación flexible para taxistas

Los profesionales de alta calidad para servicios de transporte público de alta calidad

La gran mayoría de los profesionales europeos del sector del taxi son profesionales. El taxi es uno de los sectores más dinámicos e innovadores de la economía europea y, además, es uno de los sectores más importantes para la movilidad de los ciudadanos. Los profesionales del sector son los que garantizan la calidad de los servicios y la seguridad de los viajeros. Los profesionales del sector son los que garantizan la calidad de los servicios y la seguridad de los viajeros. Los profesionales del sector son los que garantizan la calidad de los servicios y la seguridad de los viajeros.

Flexible education for taxi-drivers

Specialized competence for high quality public transportation services

The large majority of European taxiists are professionals. Taxi is one of the most dynamic and innovative sectors in the European economy, and it is also one of the most important sectors for the mobility of the public and its safety. It is the professionals of the sector who ensure the quality of the services and the safety of the passengers. It is the professionals of the sector who ensure the quality of the services and the safety of the passengers. It is the professionals of the sector who ensure the quality of the services and the safety of the passengers.

Biliförare utbildning via öfverflyttad

Enkeltstående kompetens för högkvalitativa offentliga transporttjänster

Enligt de flesta europeiska taxistaxisterna är de yrkesutövare. Taxisektorn är en av de mest dynamiska och innovativa sektorerna i den europeiska ekonomin, och den är också en av de viktigaste sektorerna för medborgarnas rörelseförmåga och säkerhet. Yrkesutövande taxistaxisterna är de som säkerställer tjänstens kvalitet och säkerheten för passagerarna. Yrkesutövande taxistaxisterna är de som säkerställer tjänstens kvalitet och säkerheten för passagerarna. Yrkesutövande taxistaxisterna är de som säkerställer tjänstens kvalitet och säkerheten för passagerarna.

Flexibile Weiterbildung für Taxifahrer

Einzelnen Fachkräfte für hochwertigen öffentlichen Dienstleistungen

Die überwiegende Mehrheit der europäischen Taxifahrer sind in der Tat Profis. Das Taxi ist einer der dynamischsten und innovativsten Sektoren der europäischen Wirtschaft, und es ist auch einer der wichtigsten Sektoren für die Mobilität der Bürger und deren Sicherheit. Die Fachkräfte der Branche sind diejenigen, die die Qualität der Dienstleistungen und die Sicherheit der Fahrgäste gewährleisten. Die Fachkräfte der Branche sind diejenigen, die die Qualität der Dienstleistungen und die Sicherheit der Fahrgäste gewährleisten. Die Fachkräfte der Branche sind diejenigen, die die Qualität der Dienstleistungen und die Sicherheit der Fahrgäste gewährleisten.

Who said stars are in the sky?

www.taxistars.eu

@taxistars.eu
 @taxistars_eu

www.taxistars.eu

Training TAXI drivers
for a safer and more competitive
24h on the road profession

Who said stars are in the sky?

@taxistars.eu
 @taxistars_eu

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.

The Taxistars multilingual poster



Outcomes and results leading to the development of learning material/topics/technical layout and formats

According to the overall project approach and the developed methodology in succeeding to provide targeted, attractive and useful training applications for professional taxi-drivers, the Taxistars partners have undertaken a research and survey to touch bases with the actual situation in the taxi-sector in the involved countries, especially seeking to find what would be the main interests of taxi-drivers regarding training and more importantly, what would be the preferred formats, content, and layout of the provided training material. These data have been consolidated in an overall report on the approach of training for the taxi profession. The main outcomes and results of the Taxistars project up to M18 are as follows:

- A report on the state-of-the-art of training schemata across the consortium countries and the educational needs of taxi-drivers as road transport professionals. More than 400 taxi-drivers and VET, taxi-sector, road transport sector experts have been contacted, providing their insights through both quantitative and qualitative survey tools on training issues for the sector,

identifying the main gaps to be attended by the educational material to be developed by the project. The report documents main findings and key information on VET initiatives in Greece, Cyprus, Spain, Italy, Belgium, Germany, Austria and Finland, as well as the taxi-drivers opinions on the importance of developing professional skills through targeted training, the main topics of interest, and the preferred learning modalities and affordances. The findings of the report have been fertilised in laying out the initial structure of the learning content, taken seriously into consideration both the diverse data in training provisions in each country, as well as the consolidated data of learning topics preferences of the taxi-drivers themselves. The report accounts for a wide-reaching and accurate documentation of the actual situation in education and training initiatives across the project countries. It is important that all implications having emerged during the research phase – on the methodological and technical plane – have conditioned the next step of the project which was the laying out of the educational subjects and formats. This in turn will guarantee that the actual development of the learning application, both in terms of technical layout, as well as with respect to content, format, and duration will fully correspondent to actual trainees' needs and priorities.

Main research findings:

Professional taxi-drivers across the surveyed EU countries are totally aware of the lack of training structures at the institutional as well as the non-formal level.

76% of the respondents agree that vocational training for taxi-drivers is of uttermost importance to better face problems in their daily routines, but taxi-drivers rarely follow training courses.

The majority of the respondents (64%) stated that rarely (less than 1 day/year) or never follow training courses.

The most important training topics!

All respondents valued highly the proposed training topics (i.e. work safety, road safety, emergency case management, criminal assault issues, environmental issues), giving however the highest ratings to work and road safety, as well as criminal assault issues. Eventually, it is these issues that constitute the demanding character of the profession, as well as the need for targeted training.

What training formats do taxi-drivers prefer?

'Traditional' training courses in instructor-led, face-to-face settings seem to be the preferred training format, followed by blended and then fully online training methods. This is however anticipated, as 80% of the respondents informed us that they never followed ICT related training courses. Thus, endowing online learning material with the directness and the communicative aura of face-to-face teaching, seems to be the main challenge for the TAXIstars partnership, in developing attractive and inviting educational material. Furthermore, upcoming project activities towards fleshing out material in tangible learning tools, should look into the provision of highly adaptable final products to correspondent to both on- as well as off-line training.

Engagement with technology

A promising 42% of the taxi-drivers has access to smartphones while at work, while the general penetration rates of these devices are climbing higher and higher. This means, that the anticipated percentage of smartphone users among taxi-drivers will be considerably higher in the near future, catching up with the technical development phase of the educational material.

Online learning? Yes, but make it...

Easy to use, with text and graphics easy to read and follow, and high quality learning content! These were the top key features that the respondents consider as crucial in helping them to engage in online courses and learning applications.

A deeper view:

Interviewing taxi-drivers and experts // 38 taxi-drivers and experts in the taxi-sector and VET have been interviewed, sharing with the project their insights on the state-of-the-art of the job, as well as on present and future training needs for professional drivers across the surveyed countries. Here follow some indicative statements:

Taxi drivers

“Training is welcomed, especially considering the huge importance of the taxi-sector for the development of tourism”.

“Professional training is the exception, while it should be the rule. Road safety, emergency cases, criminality and managing customers are very important issues”.

“The taxi-driver profession has a low status. There is substantial lack in respective infrastructures”.

“Very willing to participate! Social interaction skills and competences are of high importance”.

Experts in the taxi-sector and VET

“There is a substantial lack of skills. Educational initiatives towards the achievement of better transportation services and skilled professionals should be based upon attractive and above all, mandatory schemes”.

“There are no compulsory VET structures. Professionalism should be fostered on a continuous basis”.

“Taxi-driver as a profession is interwoven with communication, involving constant interaction with customers. This makes it extremely important to insist on developing communication and interaction skills”.

“Taxi-drivers should be made more open-minded, to become fond of education and start believing that proper training will improve the working environment and provided services”.

- Based on these results, **an educational and learning activities concept/map with specific learning activities has been produced**. Based on the outcomes of the research phase, the following points have been explored:
 - What kind of learning activities will professional taxi-drivers engage in?

- How will these learning activities be organised in relation to the educational content?
- Around which training sets/tools (i.e. question & answer, practical problem presentation, case study etc) will the learning topics sequenced?
- Which should be the appropriate time-length necessary to undertake the learning activities?
- Which set and format of learning activities streams into taxi-drivers' workflow causing the least interruption with their job?

Special care has been taken to ensure, that all learning activities' content and philosophy adhere to the projects' prerequisite to take under serious consideration all age-, culture- and gender-specific factors of the trainees' community. This will be accomplished through a balanced approach focusing both on the trainee community (learner-centred), as well as educational content (context-centred).

A point-to-point overview and analysis of the educational content and learning activities concept has been developed. This serves as the training structure and methodologies blueprint to be used as the main guideline for the development of the training products. While serving as a prior to production and development basis, the educational content and learning activities report has a non-restrictive character, i.e. it will be called forth respectively as a "recommendation and reference pool", put into effect as soon as the Technical development of learning applications project phase take off.

Based on the findings which are thoroughly described in the Research report, the following issues have been attended:

- learning topics & contents
- learning outcomes
- suggested methods
- suggested durations of learning modules
- seminar type
- possible correlations ("crosslinks") between learning topics
- **A presentation of the main guidelines** of this outcome has presented in separate country **focus groups** consisting of taxi-drivers, sector's stakeholders, experts, has served as a '**tracing back**' mechanism providing a **valuable feedback and recommendation pool.**'

Eight focus groups attended by over 35 taxi-sector actors, including taxi-drivers, have been made in Greece, Cyprus, Italy, Spain, Austria, Germany, Belgium and Finland. The purpose of the focus groups was to present to the actual beneficiaries the proposed structure and preliminary content of the learning material, asking them to provide their feedback on multiple issues ranging from the content itself, the formats that most suits them, and the suggested changes they would deem necessary. The focus groups have allowed for the emergence of deeper, qualitative aspects with regard to the scheduled learning applications, which substantially complement the quantitative data collected during the survey. The participants' views have

been weighed against the overall results of the research phase, providing a safe basis and a guaranteed path for the project partners to 'raise up to occasion', and eventually offer to the taxi-sector community learning solutions that respond to its profile and nature. Lastly, country-specific aspects among different professional attitudes of taxi-drivers, have opened the way to make the learning application relevant to each country's taxi-drivers' profile, however not losing touch with the objective to make a common learning basis, consisting of learning objectives that have proved 'universal' in nature.

- **A Report on the focus groups outcomes** has been elaborated laying down the preferred content, methodologies, formats, technical affordances, and layout of the educational modules to be technically developed. Major and sub-topics have been identified providing detailed descriptions on how they will be technically developed and elaborated (i.e. Work safety, Road safety, Emergency Case Behaviour, Criminal assault issues, Environmental issues). In the national focus group workshops some learning areas proved to be of enormous interest for the participants compared to others, whereas diverse approaches at country level have been encountered. These facts are being taken into consideration and are commented upon by the partnership during the current phase of the production of the actual pedagogical scenarios which will be fed into the technical development phase.

The main benefit culminating from this methodological approach for the diverse user groups of the project, consists in the opportunity given to the actual target groups, to get involved in the elaboration of the learning material from an early stage (i.e. Research, pre-assessment of learning topics, content and modalities)

4. Partnerships

In order to come up with qualitative results, especially when dealing with training and education for a certain economic and professional sector which is vast, diverse and of great importance to both national economies, as well as to the wider society, it is of utmost importance to create a mix of partners which exhibit expertise in all involved issues. The Taxistars partnership consists in 9 organisations coming from Greece, Austria, Switzerland, Cyprus, Finland, Germany, Italy, and Spain. Each partner shows extended expertise in their fields of activity, while 3 partners are directly involved in the taxi-sector at national and European level. This allows for optimal results in terms of overall outreach, technical issues for the provision of innovative learning material that is mainly ICT based, accessible through personal computers and smartphones/tablets, and educational methodology and efficiency. The following organisations make up the Taxistars partnership:

Militos Consulting S.A. / Militos Emerging Technologies & Services (Greece) offers an integrated range of innovative consultancy services in a wide spectrum of fields, such as Entrepreneurship, Employment, VET, Agriculture, Culture, Media, R&D, etc. Its expertise includes in particular, business development, communication, dissemination, media relations, event management and information campaigns. Militos regularly participates in national and European projects, playing a key role in the elaboration and co-ordination of all managerial structures. With a track record of over 30 EU-funded projects and actions as Leader or partner, Militos has sound experience in project management and has acquired considerable experience and know-how in dissemination and publicity, having successfully designed and implemented various complex publicity and dissemination actions for several EU and national projects.

The **International Road Transport Union (IRU)** (Switzerland/Belgium) is the world road transport organisation, which upholds the interests of bus, coach, taxi and truck operators to ensure economic growth and prosperity via the sustainable mobility of people and goods by road worldwide. Today, the IRU numbers 180 members in 74 countries across all 5 continents. The activity of the taxi sector is covered by the Taxis and Hire Cars with Driver Group (TA) whose objectives are to develop proposals aiming to promote and develop taxi transport, as well as to protect the interests of taxi operators. As an international organisation, the IRU benefits through its training arm, the IRU Academy, the only global body dedicated to road transport training.

The **Deutscher Taxi- und Mietwagenverband e.V. (BZP)** (Germany) is a national branch federation, while its task is the representation of the overall interests of the taxi and hire car (PHV) industry of Germany on national and international level, dealing with government departments and other federal authorities, organizations, industry and the public. With 49 affiliated regional organisations (“Landesverbände”) and dispatching centers, BZP encompasses in its organisational structure approx. 20.000 of Germany’s 35.000 taxi or hire car enterprises. The total industry consists of circa 220.000 people operating 82.000 cars in taxi or hire car services.

STL (Finland) **Suomen Taksiliitto** is the Finnish Taxi Owners’ Federation since 1945, representing the taxi license holders throughout Finland. About 90% of the taxi

operators belong to the federation. Suomen Taksiliitto is promoting good operating conditions in the taxi transport sector in Finland, consisting of 9500 operators for 10000 vehicles.

TTI (Austria) **Test and Training International** is Europe's leading provider of training schemes covering all aspects of driver and Road Safety. Since 1984 more than 4.1 million Europeans have completed road safety training courses according to our system. The Test & Training International concept is based on innovative technical facilities and solutions in road safety training centres and research and development of training programmes for road users of all types and ages. Furthermore, Test & Training International plans and builds the world's most professional road safety training centres.

HAU (Greece) **Hellenic American Union** is a major adult education provider in Greece with decades of experience and great experience in developing course material and ICT training. It is a public-service key institution with an international focus and strong community commitment, providing opportunities for a diverse range of audiences to encounter and benefit from innovative educational programs and cultural events. Vocational Training was incorporated in its activities in 1998 to address rapid changes in business practice.

SCIENTER (Spain) **SCIENTER CID SCIENTER** is a research, consulting and services organisation, active in the field of education and training that was created as a Limited Company at the beginning of 1999. SCIENTER CID is interested in innovation of training systems, with main reference to the field of Open and Distance Learning, Lifelong Learning, use of Information and Communication Technologies in different fields such as Higher Education, Vocational Training, Professional Guidance, Local Development and Social Inclusion.

UNIMC (Italy) **The University of Macerata** 'Department of Education' draws excellence from its wide-ranged experience in e-learning, mobile and educational technology. Main research topics include among others learning environments and tools for online education, mobile learning and future-oriented learning landscapes and innovative aspects of technology-enhanced learning.

R&DO (Cyprus) designs and develops integrated IT solutions, web-based applications and enterprise software applications. It's goal is the continuous development and commercialization of innovative ideas in the form of products and services that are mainly based on ICT.



The Taxistars partnership at BZP offices, Frankfurt, Germany, April 2013, 2nd project meeting

From left to right:

Front row: Kyriakos Lingas (Militos/Greece), Georgia Dede (HAU/Greece), Begona Arenas (SCIENTER/Spain), Frederik Wilhelmsmeyer (BZP/Germany)

Back row: Natassa Economou (RNDO/Cyprus), Nina Nizotzky (STL/Finland), Patrick Philipp (IRU/Belgium and Switzerland), Chiara Rinaldi (UNIMC/Italy), Maria Ivanovici (IRU/Belgium), Thomas Graetz (BZP/Germany) *The TTI/Austria representative (Michael Gatscha) unfortunately couldn't attend the meeting

5. Plans for the Future

The Taxistars project is entering its main implementation phase, during which the learning applications and provisions for professional taxi-drivers are being developed, regarding their content, as well as their technical format, duration, visual profile, characteristics and foreseen results and impact. The previous project period has provided to the partners all necessary information coming from the taxi-sector community and what is now to be done, is to turn the taxi-drivers' aspects and approaches to professional training to actual educational provisions. The expertise of the partnership will bring into the mix all acquired knowledge on the field, while the education and training experts will look into the pedagogical aspects of the learning applications. When setting out to develop ICT based educational material, it is of great importance to get the best out of both worlds, i.e. the technical aspects and affordances needed and being feasible at once, and the desired learning outcomes, through the development of an attractive learning and training set that is appealing to the end users, in this case the taxi-drivers.

As foreseen in the upcoming work-plan, the development of the learning scenarios has started and is coming up with the following material:

- Educational storyboards and plots (for visualisation, text, animation)
- Storytelling scenarios for video/audio snippets
- Role-playing scenarios for tutorials in video format
- Playscripts for smartphone/tablet compatible audio/video educational podcasts and apps
- Testing and mini-course matrices and concepts for online or offline/downloadable, interactive self-testing tutorials
- Question banks

The educational material will comprise the 'Pedagogical Playbook' for the learning applications and will be made available in EN, EL, ES, IT, DE, FR FI. The Playbook will be the basis upon which the technical development and deployment of innovative learning applications will be produced. This will eventually be the '*Get taxiED*': *Taxi-driver's ICT based educational toolbox*, a learning application kit including indicatively educational video documentaries (dramatized/role-playing/animated), storytelling videos, e-learning exercises, training and testing quizzes, smartphone apps, video/audio apps and podcasts, slideshow educational presentations etc.

The next step consists in pilot testing the educational toolbox. Pilot testing workshops with 15-20 participants each will be held separately in to explain and introduce the software to invited and selected Taxi-drivers. This will serve as a small scale implementation stage, testing validity and identifying areas that need attention before learning applications' full-development phase and roll-out. Following the workshops, drivers will test the platform and mobile application to test the content and functionality over a longer period and report any needs for correction or improvement. Pilot testing is the most effective way of ensuring that stakeholders and beneficiaries of the field are responsive to the programme.

Dissemination and further exploitation activities will be intensified, taking advantage of the development and eventually the availability, testing and final version of the educational toolkit and all learning applications.

Lastly, the main achievements of the project will be demonstrated to a wide audience at the final event of the project scheduled to take place in Athens, Greece, in September 2015. Keynote speakers from all consortium members will present and share experiences, stimulating a wide debate concerning the field of the taxi-driver profession and road transport in general, as well as the training needs and training solutions in particular, towards a competitive taxi industry and high quality services.

For the period after the end of the project, while the Taxistars project is firstly aimed at taxi drivers, ultimately it aims to benefit all professional drivers and even the general public, being part of the modern, mobile society and exposed to the challenges of driving. Main target groups and stakeholders reached during the project's life-cycle will as well remain one of the main interests of the partners involved, after the project is finished. The **established channels** of communication between target groups and stakeholders, as well as between the consortium members, will be **maintained** in order to stay in force after the end of the project.

The creation of the partnership in charge not only of the implementation of the project, but also in ensuring the impact beyond the project's life-time, is one of the main strategies to be agreed on at the very beginning of the project. The participation of consortium members with extended 'umbrella' characteristics, affiliations and contact points databases will not only be exploited during the project's life-time, but moreover, will be as well put into effect to preserve and enhance the established communication channels.

6. Contribution to EU policies

When the Taxistars project main idea – the development and provision of learning applications for taxi-drivers that would fit their professional profile – was elaborated, an initial research came across certain EU policies in the road transport sector, exposing gaps in the education provisions in the taxi-sector, as well as diverse strategies and policies among different countries in the EU. Regulations, prerequisites in skills and knowledge varied and still vary at a great extent from one country to the other. The taxi industry is a **substantial component** of any **metropolitan mobility chart**. Upgrading and developing this important and at the same time most flexible public transport mode, especially through the **improvement of vocational training**, is closely intertwined with the scope and quality status of every possible urban mobility concept.

Although the issue of vocational training for professional drivers in Europe in the freight and passenger transport sector - truck and bus drivers - has been addressed (2003/59/EC Directive), the sub-sector of the **taxi drivers** remains **scantily approached** and explored. For example, regarding the 2003/59 directive on the basic qualification and further training of drivers for goods and passenger transport, taxi drivers are excluded from the application of this regulation, which is up to some extent problematic.

The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) has provided a broad overview of existing guidelines for taxi drivers and chauffeurs in nine European Union member states and two non-EU countries, pointing out the **need for the development of** in-depth, **harmonized and 'tailor-made' training curricula**¹. Moreover – and in a much broader context - the European Commission has repeatedly set ambitious targets of drastic reduction of road transport incidents and fatalities, underlining the fact that this issue is a shared responsibility and the desired results can be achieved with the joint efforts of all stakeholders².

Moreover, it seems that taxis are under-represented in political bargaining and on political agendas, while many people working within the taxi industry, in particular drivers, do not have a positive perception of their work and have low self-esteem. The aim of current and future EU policy with respect to the taxi-sector is mobility that is safe, more efficient, and of course 'green' Efficient mobility on the other hand, can be achieved according to certain social standards and quality affordances, which in turn call for skilled taxi-sector work-force, and a regulated market and industry at all levels.

The objective of Taxistars to provide quality training applications for taxi-drivers (with and for them), works towards the direction of infusing ongoing learning cultures and assessment of skills on behalf of the taxi-drivers, engulfing through its outreach the taxi-sector community at large. The proposed, developed, and tested learning methodologies, formats, modalities and applications could thus serve as an opportunity to delve successfully into the overall objective of the EU to provide safe, and high quality taxi services.

¹ EU-OSHA "Working environment information – Literature review. Taxi drivers' safety and health: A European review of good practice guidelines" (2010) ; see also "OECD: Towards a safer and more competitive, high quality road transport system in the Community" (2000)

² "European Transport Policy for 2010: Time to decide" (2001) and "European Road Safety Action Programme" (2003) ; see also CARE (EU road accident database)