

TLN Mobility – First meeting of the Working Group “Quality” on 11 April 2013

**Meeting venue: Mans Business Center by Fundación Paideia
Polígono de Pocomaco, Parcela D-22, A Coruña**

Minutes

Welcome, introductions and objectives of the TLN on Mobility

Susanne Strehle, Federal Ministry of Labour & Social Affairs, Germany
Sabina Schlinke, Federal Ministry of Labour & Social Affairs, Germany
Guillermo Vergara, Fundación Paideia

The meeting was opened by Guillermo Vergara with a warm welcome of all WG members and a short overview on the meeting venue, the Mans Business Center.

Susanne Strehle welcomed participants to the meeting and thanked Fundación Paideia for preparing and hosting the meeting. Participants introduced themselves. Mrs Strehle then gave a summary of the objectives of the Network based on the presentation given to the kick-off meeting of the Network held in Berlin.

Dates for further meetings were confirmed. It was agreed that the meeting of the Working Group Quality to be held in Trento in the autumn will take place on September 25 in order to coincide with the national mobility day in Italy.



Related Document: [Annex_1_2014_PPP_TLN_Mobility.pdf](#)

Presentation of concept and methods of external evaluation

Dr. Bernhard Boockmann and Hans Verbeek, IAW

Bernhard Boockmann and Hans Verbeek from IAW introduced the Working Group to the external evaluation that they have been commissioned to undertake of the Transnational Learning Network. They explained that their approach is formative and participatory and will therefore generate feedback on a continuous basis throughout the course of the work of the Network. Two members of the evaluation team will take an active part in the Network and Working Group meetings to enable this to happen. The independence of the evaluation will be ensured by an additional team member who will not participate in the meetings (Andrea

Kirchmann). It was explained that it was important that all participants at the meeting respond to the questionnaires that would be part of the evaluation.



Related document: Annex_2_2013_04_PPP_Evaluation_IAW.pdf



TO DO: All participants to fill in the evaluation questionnaire (sent by the evaluation team after the WG meeting) and send it back to the evaluators.

Introduction to agenda and objectives of Working Group “Quality”

Sabina Schlinke, Federal Ministry of Labour & Social Affairs, Germany
Dr. Andrew McCoshan, expert

Sabina Schlinke described the objectives of the Working Group and the format for the work that the Group would undertake during the afternoon.

To this point, the briefing paper on quality criteria had been produced and members of the Working Group had been asked to provide suggestions for the group of stakeholders to be involved in developing the criteria. Two replies had been received from the Working Group regarding stakeholders. Sabina Schlinke reiterated the request for more suggestions



TO DO: All participants to send suggestions for stakeholders to Sabina Schlinke and Andrew McCoshan.



Related document: Annex_3_2013_04_PPP_Task_Quality.pdf

Presentation “Briefing paper on Quality Criteria”

Dr. Andrew McCoshan, expert

Andrew McCoshan introduced the briefing paper on quality criteria that had been circulated prior to the meeting. There was an opportunity for questions and discussion. The following points arose:

- It was agreed that the definition of quality should be as follows:

quality is what is necessary to ensure that desired outcomes are achieved
(removing the word “learning” given the strong focus of the programme on employability)

- With regard to the guiding principle on linking to existing tools such as ECVET, it was noted that Europass should be included, and that a difference between documentation and validation should be maintained. In general, as the work of the Working Group progresses consideration should be given to how helpful these tools will be in practice.

- The question was raised as to whether a manual would be produced on quality criteria. Whilst a manual will not be produced and the quality criteria will be drawn up as in the example provided in the briefing paper, it will be important not to lose the “desirable” quality criteria and therefore these will be included in a brief guidance note to accompany the “essential” quality criteria.



Related document: Annex_4_2014_04_PPP_Briefing_paper.pdf

Outcomes of the team work

During the afternoon, the Working Group was split into four teams to work on the following questions:

1. Which of the success features are most important from your point of view and why?
2. Are there are additional features not mentioned and why should they be included?
3. Where are the gaps in our knowledge and how should they be filled (e.g. by holding a special stakeholders' meeting or other methods)?
4. What good practices can you identify that would help to build on the evidence compiled to date?

The outcomes are summarised below.

It should be noted that these points were not agreed upon by Members of the Working Group but arose during the small group discussions. They will be used by the expert in preparing the first draft of the quality criteria.

Preparation phase

General points

- It is important to match young people to different types of mobility period to suit their needs.
- General preparation needs to be accompanied by peer-to-peer work, and the active participation of participants.
- Dynamic group work should be included, along with the involvement of previous participants to share their positive experiences of mobility.
- Practical intercultural preparation is vital for improving motivation and needs to be adapted to the target group.
- The duration of the preparation phase should be + or - 3 months.

Recruitment

- As much as possible, recruitment procedures need to be embedded in local communities.
- Local stakeholder groups should be developed to help identify participants.
- Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the 3rd sector have an essential role to play. They are closer to participants than Public Employment Services.
- Social workers also have key roles to play.
- In order to target young people, visits to schools are important.
- Local campaigns in the media, on the Internet etc are important, and there are benefits from linking to national events such as mobility days.

Access for disabled people

- Programmes should be made available to disabled people.
- Project operators need to determine how to assess disability and the nature of any special preparations required.

Selection process

- Selection processes need to be transparent.
- They need to include measures for dealing with people who are not selected.
- Language tests should be an important first step in the selection process.
- One means of selecting participants is according to family income.

Assessing participants' competences

- Project operators need to determine how to assess all the competences of participants including social ones.
- A minimum language level will be required, depending upon the mobility period and the target group. It may be useful to set the minimum at a point where language is not a barrier to participation.

Staff preparation

- It is important to make sure that staff have the competences needed, particularly experience with the target groups and with intercultural work.
- Project operators should visit one another's regions on study visits prior to sending participants. These are essential for good preparation and knowing what to expect.

Preparing employers

- Preparation of employers in both the host and home localities is needed to raise awareness of the value of mobility.
- In the home locality, employers need to be prepared as sources of potential employment once participants have completed their mobility periods.
- In the host locality, employer preparation is important in advance of placements, and also as sources of potential employment should participants wish to remain in the host locality.
- Letters of intent/commitment from employers should be part of project operators' initial applications.
- The potential to connect employers across borders should be explored.

Implementation phase

Specifying activities during the mobility placement

- It is important to define precisely and clearly what participants will do abroad and what kind of certificate they will receive.
- Complementary activities of a cultural, social and linguistic nature need to be specified. Social activities need to be carefully organised and given the same care and attention as other elements.
- Regard needs to be given to the appropriateness of the environment for target groups (mostly urban).

Specifying partner roles

- The roles of the different partners should be clearly established.
- The nature of local support from host organisations and details of local contact people should be specified in an agreement between partners.

- Sending organisations should provide liaison in the host country between participants and enterprises as they will understand the needs of participants best. However, meetings between host organisations and companies are also important.
- The hosting organisation should take responsibility for resolving conflicts as they are competent authorities. It was noted that this was different to the Integration through Exchange (IdA) programme.

Role of mentor/tutor

(Note that the terms “mentor” and “tutor” were highlighted as requiring clarification in the glossary.)

- It is important that mentors receive appropriate training.
- The same mentors should be assigned to participants across all the phases of their mobility from preparation to follow-up.
- It is important that participants have mentors in the host organisations as well as mentors/tutors whilst at home. Host mentors can help participants to feel part of the local community. Mentors/tutors from the home locality may need to be with some participants all the time, depending on the target group.
- Ideally, mentors/tutors should work in pairs, one from the home locality and one from the host locality.
- Mentoring can take place individually or in groups, depending on the target group in question.
- Mentors/tutors should provide written reports to project operators on their participants.

Competence development

- It is important to involve host organisations and companies in the assessment of participants' competences during the mobility period.
- Participants need feedback and reflection time, and the tools to help them in the process, such as notebooks, diaries and discussions with mentors.

Duration

- Minimum and maximum durations for mobility periods need to be fixed. Defining a fixed term is unlikely to be possible owing to variations in the needs of different target groups. It was suggested that a minimum of 2 months and a maximum of 4 months would be appropriate.

Group size

- The size of the groups participating in mobility activities needs to be smaller than for non-disadvantaged people, for example about 10.

Follow-up phase

General points

- The follow-up phase needs to be intrinsic to each project and funded accordingly.
- Follow-up work needs to be tailored to the participants.
- Follow-up activities need to be part of individuals' career planning.
- It is important never to talk about failure. There needs to be well-designed follow-up for participants who finish early.
- There are benefits from involving participants who have just finished their mobility periods in preparing the next cohort.

Finding employment or further education and training

- The employment expectations of participants need to be managed and opportunities tailored to their capabilities.
- All relevant professional and educational stakeholders need to be included, such as EURES, unemployment services, local companies, to ensure a smooth transition into employment for participants. Sending organisations need to provide appropriate support to the stakeholders.
- Follow-up activities need to be designed for people who want to stay in the host country, taking into account particular requirements such as the need to contact embassies etc.
- There should be follow-up with participants 6 to 12 months after their placement into work to check their "employability", i.e. the sustainability of the positive effects of mobility.

Competence assessment and certification

- Post-placement interviews are essential and tools are needed to measure participants' improvement as a result of participating in the programme.
- Training and guidance should be offered to partners on how to valorise mobility for the labour market.

- Companies should be involved in the process of assessment.
- Appropriate recognition processes need to be an intrinsic part of the programme.
- A unique certificate should be developed (like Europass) which is the same across countries. Awareness should be raised in the labour market about the certificate.

Duration

- The duration of the follow-up phase should be 6 to 12 months.

Networking

Who to involve

- The quality of partners is key rather than quantity.
- Networks should combine diversity and expertise. Partners with specific capabilities are important as activities have a specific focus and therefore broad partnerships like those under the EQUAL programme should not be the goal. Sub-networks within the framework of a larger overall network can deal with particular issues.
- Transnational partners need to include the sending and hosting organisations, Public Employment Services, job centres and national/regional administrations.
- The involvement of some organisations should be obligatory, such as Public Employment Services, but attention needs to be paid to defining "obligatory". Definitions should not be too rigid.
- EU public institutions need to be included in networks, such as national agencies of European programmes.

Agreeing roles and responsibilities

- The benefits of being members of networks should be made clear to all partners.
- Partners should agree on standards and values (such as those developed by SALTO), and they should be reflected in a network agreement.
- Good quality communication from the beginning to the end of programmes is essential, and therefore networks need to have communication strategies.
- The legal status of contracts between partners needs consideration. Is a letter of commitment sufficient? Are legally binding contracts needed?

- There is a need to link quality criteria related to networking to the findings of Task E.

Making network strength a criterion for participation

- The approval of projects should depend in part upon the strength of networks/partnerships and therefore whether project operators have been able to obtain letters of commitment should be included in scoring mechanisms.

Networking across the phases

- Networking is important across all phases.
- In the preparation phase, strong local networks are needed involving public sector vocational education and training providers, social services and bodies in the youth sector (to ensure coverage of both formal and non-formal education and training).
- In the implementation phase, the network of operators needs to have an EU dimension and the quality of partners is especially important. Business partners ideally need to have an international/intercultural perspective, to have experience of working with youth and to be able to devote sufficient time to mobility activities.
- In a follow-up phase, local networks become important again, although networks in the host location will also be important if participants wish to stay on.

Branding

- The creation of a strong brand name like Erasmus would benefit the programme.

Glossary

During the afternoon teamwork, participants were asked to make note of any terms which ought to be included in a glossary. The glossary will evolve during the course of developing the quality criteria and will be added to the guidelines which will accompany the criteria in the final documentation. The glossary will help to clarify terms and ensure that the Working Group has a common understanding of them.

The following terms were put forward for inclusion in the glossary:

- Disability (with possible reference to legal definitions)
- Disadvantage
- Mentor/tutor
- Network/networking
- Student

Next steps

Sabina Schlinke, Federal Ministry of Labour & Social Affairs Germany

A first draft of a set of common quality criteria including options for essential and desirable criteria will be produced, taking into account the points made by members of the Working Group during the small group discussions (as above). The draft will be distributed to the WG members by the second half of May asking for comments and amendments. A revised version for the Network meeting in Rome will be produced and distributed to all Network members before the meeting as a guideline for discussions.

The next WG meeting will take place on 25 September 2013 in Trento.

Any other business

Sabina Schlinke, Federal Ministry of Labour & Social Affairs Germany

Relevant documents of the WG will be collected and available for download in the internal part of the TLN Mobility Website. After completion of the internal part, WG members will receive access details.

A list of participants will be sent out with the minutes of the WG meeting.

Sabina Schlinke concluded the meeting by thanking everyone for their valuable contributions and especially Fundación Paideia for the excellent preparatory work, organisation and hosting of the WG meeting.



Related document: [Annex_5_2014_04_WG_Quality_List_participants.pdf](#)

30 April 2013

Sabina Schlinke, Federal Ministry of Labour & Social Affairs, Germany

Andrew McCoshan