



Blueprint in the Spotlight

15 November 2018

Seminar Report

This seminar, organised by DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, in close cooperation with DG Mare and DG Grow, was the first opportunity to discuss the implementation and policy messages of the five ongoing Blueprint projects as they reached the end of their first year of activity. The five sectoral projects cover the automotive; maritime technology; space geo-information; textile, clothing, leather and footwear; and tourism sectors. Eddy Adams moderated the seminar.

Seminar headlines

- The Blueprint initiative contributes to **strategic and comprehensive skills intelligence methods at sectoral level**.
- **Regional dimension** is essential for achieving change and scaling up the impact of the Blueprint.
- Using the **EU-level tools for a common understanding of occupational profiles, qualifications and skills** is a powerful way to plan for the transfer of Blueprint project results.

The day was designed around two broader themes: skills intelligence and future skills policy. **Alison Crabb** (Head of Unit, Skills and Qualifications, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion) opened the seminar.



She highlighted that skills are at the top of the EU agenda – for at least two reasons. First, skills are the key to **economic success** and growth. Secondly, making sure that people have the chance throughout life to acquire the right skills is essential if we want a **fair society**.

The Blueprint, launched as part of the Skills Agenda for Europe in 2016, is a key example of a sectoral and strategic approach to future skills. One of the key assets of the Blueprint partnerships is that while taking a **sectoral approach**, they manage to **break silos** by bringing together stakeholders

from industry, trade unions, education and research as well as public authorities. The Commission is committed to support the stakeholders and to reach a better understanding of future skills needs, and which responses can be adapted and adopted in very diverse national and regional contexts. A sectoral approach is vital!

Plenary I: Sectoral Skills – Filling the Data Gap

In the first plenary session, the five ongoing projects shared **challenges and breakthroughs** of their first year of work. The projects are currently working on skills intelligence, and new initiatives are underway, including significant scale employer surveys.

The **wide partnerships** were experienced as a strength, and bringing experts together a breakthrough in itself. At the same time, building a solid alliance was not always easy and governing it required significant resources.



The projects' sectoral skills assessments revealed the **importance of soft skills**, such as adaptability, learning to learn – often described rather as 'attitudes' or 'mindsets'. The lack of systematic approaches to identifying skills gaps was found to be a challenge.

Stelina Chatzichristou, Expert at Cedefop, gave the keynote speech in the first plenary session.

In her presentation, “**The Future of Skills – What does data tell us**”, she outlined **four trends and challenges of the future of work**. These are: 1) Future labour market participation rates across all demographic groups are expected to fall; 2) Employment in high valued added sectors is increasing; 3) Job polarisation is expected to grow further; and 4) The need for highly skilled workforce is intensifying.

Ms Chatzichristou underlined that a **more holistic approach is needed for skills development** ('not only teaching x and y skills'). More supportive continuous training throughout careers is essential.

Regarding **skills intelligence**, Ms Chatzichristou stressed the inadequacy of ad hoc measures. Instead, we need **strategic and comprehensive skills intelligence methods** that build on both quantitative and qualitative evidence.



A significant amount of data and statistics is already available on future skills needs. For instance, we know that 7 in 10 EU workers need at least basic **digital skills**. Technological change is affecting EU workers already today: 43% of adult workers have experienced recent changes in the technologies used in their workplace. Ms Chatzichristou confirmed the **growing importance of soft skills** and of creating the **right mindsets for learning**, starting from early education and care.

Ms Chatzichristou presented the **Skills Panorama** and how to navigate its rich

resources. Cedefop is further developing **sectoral dashboards** which can be useful for the Blueprint projects. Dashboards for the automotive and tourism sectors will be introduced in 2019. In addition, Cedefop will publish the first results of their **big data project** in spring 2019. The analysis will allow a fully-fledged EU-wide system to collect and analyse data on skill demand using online job postings.



Sectoral Workshop

In the first workshop “**The future of skills in my sector**”, participants discussed in five parallel sectoral groups.

Automotive – DRIVES

The DRIVES project is working on skills intelligence, and LinkedIn is involved in the data analysis as an associate partner. Largely, the automotive companies in the sector accept the methodology, but regarding data validation, big players (e.g. VW, Mercedes-Benz) will only validate data on broad trends.

Therefore, it will be a challenge to establish an industry-agreed recognition framework in the life span of the project, and to opt in those large companies that tend to keep their specific training frameworks ‘confidential’, and do not immediately see how joining would benefit them. However, **involving the big players**

will not be a road blocker as they are currently at least following the project. In the context of obtaining and keeping the collected data up-to-date, the importance of establishing a **well-structured research framework** was discussed. Such a framework would enable a **periodical analysis of skills needs** also at later stages. However, to capture the relevant changes in the sector, the time-period in which the data is updated should not be too short.



Today's multiple technical options such as hydrogen, combustions, batteries, or hybrid, have **considerable implications for automotive engineering qualifications and the related skills requirements**. The regional automotive cluster 'Automotive Saarland' emphasised that, apart from engineers, also production managers, particularly those in SMEs, closely observe changes in skills needs, including a need for higher qualifications and "Industry 4.0" skills.

The European Forum of Technical and Vocational Education & Training, a partner in DRIVES, is establishing a **cluster of VET providers for automotive occupations and qualifications**. The cluster aims at developing joint European qualifications in automotive with related 'core' curricula for the DRIVES project. Regarding **recognition and certification**, DRIVES is in contact with the European Certification and Qualification Association (ECQA).

Partnerships with research centres

(technology for industry), and the update and continuous expansion of technological knowledge will be part of the solutions for skills development. The EU supports this through a number of actions, such as the regional clusters, and the "Factories of the future" projects as part of the Horizon 2020 programme. The key task will be to integrate EU level results at national and regional level.

Textile/clothing/leather/ footwear - Skills4Smart TCLF Industries 2030

The TCLF project coordinator opened the workshop by presenting employment trends in the sector.

Textile/leather/clothing/footwear production has been moving to low-wage countries during the past decades, which has translated into decreasing sectoral employment rates across the EU. However, around 2014 the trend began to reverse and **part of the production has now relocated to Europe**. Some of the underlying reasons for this change include new **consumer preferences, high-value production, and growing Asian markets**. Now the **key challenge is to re- and upskill people**, and promote motivation to learn.



The TCLF Blueprint has done an **analysis of skills gaps in 100 companies and 50 training institutes** during the first year of the project. The partners underlined the need to assess the skills needs both through quantitative and qualitative measures. Regional differences must be taken into account as well as differences between the four sub-sectors within the TCLF sector.

The participants discussed how **data could be more effectively used** to support skills development. The participants underlined the relevance of Cedefop's sectoral data and the need for more precise sectoral evidence. For instance, 'manufacturing' might be too broad as a sector category. While unemployment is easy to measure, unfilled vacancies and related skills needs are not. New measures are needed.

Regarding **cooperation for data management**, it is necessary that employers and education and training stakeholders would sit around the same table on a regular basis. Coordination and cooperation in using and collecting data remains vital and public authorities can help in this regard.

Maritime technology – MATES

The MATES project has **mobilised over 125 experts** from industry, academia and other key stakeholders for the creation of the pool of experts.

The project is currently **mapping the offer of training and education opportunities** for shipbuilding and offshore energy. However, information on VET programs is mostly available in national language which has complicated the exercise. Overall, the idea is to identify potential training gaps by mapping the currently offered curricula and occupational profiles, and to compare them with new sectoral skills needs.



The project has found that the **training offer in the sector is largely generic** (i.e. electrician, engineers, welders, maintenance) and not tailored to the specificities of the maritime industry. Engineering presents currently the only profession with higher education studies in the sector. There is a need to reshape the offer and provide **higher-level training opportunities** (EQF levels 6 or 7) for workers other than engineers.

There are also significant regional differences between Northern and Southern Europe regarding the range of training offers. The sector is in particular **lacking professionals with digital skills, and skills related to AI, 3D printing, big data, IOT, mechatronics, green technologies, and green fuels**. VET curricula are not frequently updated and hence, education and training programmes struggle to keep pace with technological developments.

Best practice from Germany related to **company-specific training** was discussed. Big shipbuilding companies have created internal training programmes involving SMEs.

The European Vocational Training Association, EVTA, introduced ATLAS, the Italian regional-level classification of competences and qualifications. The classification links skills and competences with job activities. It is developed at a regional level with the support of the industry and social partners, and updated every 2 years. Links with the European Classification

of Skills and Occupations (ESCO) were discussed.

Tourism – New Tourism Generation Skills Alliance

The tourism Blueprint has focused on the **inclusion of the industry, building bridges among the partners**, and finding ways to connect with the education world. Data availability has not been a problem since plenty of evidence is already available, including from the OECD.

The project is finalising a **matrix of key skills** in order to produce new training modules and curricula. The desk research suggests a need to develop **soft skills such as learning to learn or adaptability**. Skills needs in the tourism sector were described as "**high tech with a human touch**". Technical skills are essential but in a service industry, they must be combined with customer orientation, soft skills and 21st century competences such as critical thinking and understanding of sustainability.



Social partners have contributed to skills development in the tourism sector already for decades, producing a Skills Passport, for instance.

Trade unions highlighted that 85% of jobs in tourism are for low and medium level of qualifications. The challenge is

to support workers to improve their careers and to make the sector attractive. The Commission underlined the importance of addressing low-skilled people and offering **better opportunities for learning and career development**.

The employers' association highlighted the issues of **employee retention and matching people and jobs**. They see training and attractive apprenticeships as fundamentally important approaches to **facilitating transitions** between education and labour market. It is also essential to raise **awareness about the skills needs in terms of training**. Companies and employees do not always know what are the skills needed in order to be successful.

The OECD remarked how the tourism sector is "people-based" and therefore relatively **resistant to automation and job losses**. They noted that the Blueprint should not be too specific to avoid becoming obsolete. The OECD report "Megatrends shaping the future of tourism" will be updated soon, and they are ready to share best practices beyond the EU.

The **issue of seasonality** in the tourism sector could be transformed into an opportunity through mobility and regional cooperation. Furthermore, SMEs need additional support and information. It will be vital to bring together technology and education providers, improve access to data analysis and thereby foster capacity building of SMEs to adapt to the market trends.

Looking ahead, the project is planning to launch three tourism incubators, inspired by the Tourism Paris incubator,

which is managed by municipality and private initiatives.

The workshop concluded with the notion that the Blueprint concept shall be based on **good practices, adaptability** (to different contexts, regional and national level), and on **flexibility to evolve**.

Space geo-information

Relevant qualifications for the space geo-information sector are mostly provided by **higher education institutions**. The Blueprint project has a great potential to create new job profiles at lower education levels. In addition, employers in the sector underline that training should have a wide enough focus to incorporate both job-specific expertise and transversal skills.

A specific character of the sector is the **application of geo data in other economic sectors**. There is a need to raise awareness of innovation and business potential of space data and the applications in relevant sectors. The workshop highlighted three key messages.



Europe. It takes a learning outcomes approach, which changes the way we think about qualifications.



The EQF is not a tool for automatic recognition of qualifications, nor a tool for setting European standards. The Blueprint projects are intended for VET at any EQF level between 3-8.

ESCO

Francesco Losappio presented ESCO, the European Classification of Skills, Competences and Occupations. ESCO includes almost 3000 occupations, over 13 000 skills and 2400 qualifications. The tool supports "transactions" in the labour market (e.g. online job matching) with a common language. The classification builds on data acquired from the Member States. The development of occupational profiles as part of the Blueprint shall build on ESCO.



Europass

William O'Keeffe presented Europass. It has 100 million downloads: every two minutes a new CV is being created. Europass is currently under revision. The new version will include elements of skills intelligence, improved self-

assessment tools, and more tailored messages to users to find employment and training. There will be opportunities for the Blueprint to link up and help testing the new elements.



Plenary III: Skills Policy for the Future

Flash presentation on the European Vocational Skills Week

Sue Bird (European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion) shared highlights from the **European Vocational Skills Week** that took place in Vienna 5-9 November 2018. Over 1500 events were organised in 47 countries, reaching 2.3 million people.



Key policy messages from the week included the importance of **co-ownership of VET** by governments, companies and social partners, and the **need to raise the attractiveness and quality of VET**. EU added value for VET was found in policy initiatives, coordination, mutual learning, funding, mobility, evidence and data.

The next European VET week will take place in **Helsinki 14-18 October 2019**. The Blueprint projects are welcome to participate and contribute!

Policy Workshop

The focus of the second workshop was on future skills policy and on how policies could better interact at different levels.

Future Skills Policy

The importance of **improving intelligence gathering** was stressed to ensure the due training of workers who face considerable changes in their industry. The Commission underlined the need to make skills needs assessments a sustainable methodology for each sector, instead of a one-off snapshot. Some good practices were suggested, e.g. participating bodies in a regular survey would have access to reduced cost training modules or other information.

A lot needs to be done to **improve the image of up- and reskilling**. This relates also to **motivation for learning**. Participants noted that instead of looking for new staff, employers should consider investing in and retraining their current employees.



The participants called for a better **balance between transversal and job-specific skills**. The fact that job markets change constantly makes key competences increasingly essential. Transversal skills can empower people not only as employees but also as active citizens, helping to make

informed decisions as voters and as consumers.

Investment in VET teachers' and trainers' qualifications is necessary and should be incorporated in future skills policies as well.

Policy interactions

The participants stressed the need for **better alignment of skills policy and labour market policy**. A more holistic approach should be developed that not only accounts for the needs of the labour market and employers, but also simultaneously integrates the concerns related to the attractiveness of sectors. The appeal of a sector/company could be increased by, for instance, offering flexible working arrangements.

One size does not fit all and hence policy makers must **take regional and sectoral differences into account**.



The **regional level was typically identified as a crucial** one for achieving change and scaling up the impact, but identifying the right interlocutors was not easy. The Commission's commitment to do more to unlock these contacts was welcomed.

Furthermore, different stakeholders underlined the **need to build bridges between the EU, national and regional levels** and with the general public as a whole. **Continuous dialogue, trust, and collaboration** between different stakeholders and local partnerships as well as speaking

the same language were some of the solutions suggested.

Harnessing the strong interest of external stakeholders to build the projects' impact and outreach was a priority for all Blueprint projects.

Stakeholder groups identified as too often missing included large companies who tend to have their own reskilling programmes and can be hesitant to formally participate. Also regional players were seen as missing.

In addition, **stronger participation of national authorities** was suggested, taking into account the fact that education falls under national competences and therefore the success of Blueprint projects depends inevitably on the support of national, regional and local authorities.

Some good practices to **build up outreach beyond the partnership** were identified. For instance, the tourism Blueprint is building a network of "associate partners" to incorporate intermediaries and to reach the very many SMEs in the branch.



"Transnational sector-based VET training facilities" were mentioned as a new idea to help solve current labour market issues. These European VET campuses could be created across EU countries, each of them focusing on one specific sector (e.g. European Fashion VET Campus).

The participants agreed that the success of the Blueprint would depend on effective cooperation and 'co-

shaping' at regional level, and on its ability to be replicated at national levels. It will be vital to involve the missing players and plug in to existing VET policy frameworks and initiatives.

Plenary IV: Scaling Up and Reaching Out

The final plenary focused on the future implementation of the Blueprint projects.

Resa Koleva-Demonty from the European Commission (DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion) presented the European Social Fund and how it can support the roll-out of the projects.

She shed light on the ESF+ post-2020 budget which reflects the commitment to invest in people and implement the European Pillar of Social Rights. The new ESF+ will bring five funds together and it will have a specific objective on skills development. She encouraged the projects to **find out who to contact about ESF support and activities in relevant Member States** ([link](#)), and to find programming and implementation data for all ESI funds ([link](#)).



Exchange with the Blueprint coordinators

In the final session, the five Blueprint projects took the stage to conclude on how to scale up and reach out the initiative.

Ilaria D'Auria, representing the space geo-information Blueprint, emphasised the power of the diverse partnership, describing the Blueprint as an “**opportunity for transformative cooperation led by the industry**”.

Jakub Stolfa, representing the Blueprint in automotive, highlighted the importance of exchanging on **cross-sectoral issues**. The Blueprint projects should aim to involve as many sectoral stakeholders as possible.

Silvia Barbone, from the tourism Blueprint, stressed the need for a **proper integration of EU tools** (e.g. EQF, ESCO, Europass) in the projects. One common challenge across all sectors is bridging digital skills with social skills.

Evelyn Paredes, representing the maritime Blueprint, called for **bridging the gap between EU and national level skill policies**. She also raised the crucial question of how to communicate the findings.



Lutz Walter from the textile/leather/clothing/footwear Blueprint concluded that **skills, creativity and knowledge are the main thing for Europe**. In the next

year, the focus must be on action and not to lose the link to the ground!

As the final info point, **Anna Barbieri**, from the European Commission (DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion) presented a new initiative '**Centres of Vocational Excellence**' (CoVE).



The CoVEs share a common interest in specific sectors/trades or societal challenges. Operating in a given local context, they will be closely embedded in the local innovation and skills ecosystems. The essential elements of the CoVE include supporting regional development and smart specialisation strategies, being drivers of innovation in local ecosystems, and actively participating in knowledge triangles.

The pilot projects published under Sectoral Skills Alliances are currently open for applications until 28/02/2019. The Commission is exploring new opportunities for funding in 2020. The new Erasmus programme for 2021-2027 includes the CoVEs among its activities. There could be plenty of opportunities and synergies with the Blueprint.

Conclusions

Final take-away messages were shared by Alison Crabb (DG EMPL), Alessia Clocchiatti (DG MARE), and Anja Suknaic (DG GROW).

Alessia Clocchiatti reminded about the challenge of **mapping the VET offer**, which seems fragmented in the maritime sector. The presence of European VET providers in the event was welcomed. She also noted the importance of **speaking the “same language”** – not everyone knows what the Blueprint is. She encouraged the projects to continue engaging with the missing stakeholders, such as big companies and regional authorities.



Anja Suknaic highlighted how **human capital is the key issue across all sectors**. There are indeed several common points across the five projects: the need for soft skills, the need to improve the image of the sector, and the importance of regional level. **The Blueprint is more than a project**, and looking ahead, the implementation and recognition of the results will be key.

Alison Crabb confirmed the notion that a successful Blueprint can be copied across sectors and regions. The seminar proved that we are clearly on the right track but more needs to be done. First, regarding skills intelligence, there is an ocean of statistics but the data is not always well-structured or sectoral. This is also a question of **sustainability and comparability of data**. Second, the **power of diverse**

partnerships testified in the seminar confirms the Blueprint model.

The **next steps** for the projects will be the development of new or updated vocational education and training content and a comprehensive skills strategy for the sector. The Commission is committed to continued support for the Blueprint projects in their next phase of work!

Action points from the seminar

- The Commission to help identify and build contacts between the Blueprint projects and relevant regional and national authorities.
- The Commission/EACEA to further support cooperation among the Blueprint projects, for instance by organising a similar seminar in 2019 (Wave 1 & Wave 2).
- The projects to continue harnessing the external interest and reaching out to missing stakeholders and other players instrumental for a successful roll-out.
- The projects to ensure the sustainability of their skills intelligence methodology (going beyond a “one-off snapshot”).

Annex

List of participants

Mr	Eddy	Adams	Moderator
Mrs	Stelina	Chatzichristou	Cedefop
Dr	Fabio	Roma	National Agency For Active Labour Market Policies (ANPAL)
Dr	Amool	Raina	Institut für Textiltechnik (ITA) at RWTH Aachen
Ms	Jane	Stacey	OECD
Mr	Pascale	Strobel	Automotive Saarland
Ms	Evelyn	Paredes	Ghent University
Mr	Mirek	Pospisil	Linkedin
Ms	Roisin	McKee	Blueprint project partner
Dr	Philippe	Monbet	Pol Mer Bretagne
Ms	Marta	Machado	Hotrec
Mrs	Utimia	Madaleno	Blueprint project partner
Mr	Mariano	Mamertino	LinkedIn
Dr	Rob	Lemmens	University Of Twente - Itc
Ms	Kerstin	Howald	EFFAT
Mr	Petr	Dolejsi	Blueprint steering group board member
Dr	Corné	Dijkmans	Breda University Of Applied Sciences
Mrs	Sandra	de Puig	NECSTouR
Ms	Carmen	Arias	Blueprint project partner
Mrs	Silvia	Barbone	Federturismo Confindustria
Ms	Victoria	Berrocal Ruiz	ESF Spanish Managing Authority (Ministry Of Employment)
Ms	Sarai	Blanc	SeaEurope
Ms	Sofie	Bogaerts	Belgium ESF Managing Authority
Dr	Federico	Brugnoli	Blueprint project partner
Msc	Milva	Carbonaro	GISIG - Geographical Information Systems International Group
Dr	Aline	Conchon	Industrial European Trade Union
Mr	Jeroen	Dries	Vito
Ms	Ilaria	D'Auria	Nereus
Ms	Iraxe	Garcia Bayona	EURATEX - Blueprint coordinator
Ms	Ariane	Gatti	FESI
Mr	Gustavo	Gonzalez-quijano	Cotance
Professor	Ian	Jenkinson	Mersey Maritime Cluster
Mr	George	Tsafonias	CERTH-HIT
Mr	Lutz	Walter	EURATEX - Blueprint coordinator
Dr	Jakub	Stolfa	Blueprint coordinator - DRIVES, VSB-TUO
Mr	Svatopluk	Stolfa	Blueprint coordinator

Mr	Philipe	Chiabai	European VET providers: EVTA
Mr	Janez	Damjan	European VET providers: EURASHE
Director	Matti	Isokallio	European VET providers: EuProVET
Dr	Stefano	Tirati	European VET providers: EfVET
Dr	Margarida	Segard	European VET providers: EVBB
Ms	Kasia	Jurczak	European Commission - Cabinet Thyssen
Ms	Alison	Crabb	European Commission - DG EMPL
Ms	Julie	Fionda	European Commission – DG EMPL
Ms	Minna	Nurminen	European Commission- DG EMPL
Ms	Anna	Barbieri	European Commission - DG EMPL
Mr	Emanuele	Barreca	European Commission - DG GROW
Ms	Sue	Bird	European Commission - DG EMPL
Mrs	Claudia	Bettin	European Commission- DG EMPL
Mr	Koen	Bois d'Enghien	European Commission - DG EMPL
Ms	Alessia	Clocchiatti	European Commission - DG MARE
Mr	Laurent	de Mercey	European Commission - DG REGIO
Mr	Staffan	Ekwall	European Commission - DG MOVE
Dr	Ana-Maria	Grigore	European Commission - DG RTD
Mr	Michael	Horgan	European Commission - DG EMPL
Mr	Roman	Horvath	European Commission -DG GROW
Ms	Resa	Koleva-Demonty	European Commission - DG EMPL
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