



LEVERAGING THE ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPETENCES OF ADULTS TO EXTENUATE THE BUSINESS KNOWLEDGE DIVIDE

Protocol for Certification of Competencies



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INTRODUCTION

About ... Adult Learning

“Adult education is a process through which learners become aware of significant experience. Recognition of significance leads to evaluation. Meanings accompany experience when we know what is happening and what importance the event includes for our and what importance the event includes for our personalities.”

(Malcolm Knowles, informal adult education, self-direction and andragogy)

Adult education helps change lives and transform societies – it is a human right and a common good. Individuals pursue adult learning for a variety of reasons: to enhance their employment prospects, to develop personally or professionally and to obtain transferable skills, such as critical thinking. Adult learning also contributes to improving social cohesion and promotes active citizenship¹.

As declared by the Eu Commission “An agenda for new skills and jobs”, the promotion of entrepreneurship, self-employment and innovation “can offer a source of innovative solutions to respond to social demands in a participative process, providing specific employment opportunities for those furthest away from the labor market”. Increasingly, individuals must rely on continuous professional development to remain competitive on the labour market. From jobs and growth to the digital single market, from climate change to the internal market, from migration to global issues and democratic change, adult education contributes to many European agendas, such as the EU 2020 and President Juncker’s agenda. Additionally, adult education is a key tool for achieving the UN’s Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Specifically, Adult education significantly contributes to European objectives:

- ❖ Developing European strategies for a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.
- ❖ Strengthening the values at the center of the European strategy as equity, social cohesion, active citizenship, and also creativity and innovation.
- ❖ Raising Europe’s employment rate by getting people (back) into work, by validating their skills and competences or upskilling them.

¹https://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/eu-policy-in-the-field-of-adult-learning_en



- ❖ Making efforts to reduce the high number – 80 million – of people with low basic skills who benefit less from lifelong learning than more educated people: adult education does outreach and empowerment actions to reach out to them.
- ❖ Responding to the EU need to reduce the number of people in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion, helping them to gain self-confidence and find ways to be socially included and find a job (or a better job).

Driven by what one needs or wants to learn, the available opportunities, and the manner in which one learns, adult learning is affected by demographics, globalization and technology.² The learning happens in many ways and in many contexts just as all adults' lives differ. Adult learning can be in any of the three contexts, i.e.:

- Formal – Structured learning that typically takes place in an education or training institution, usually with a set curriculum and carries credentials;
- Non-formal – Learning that is organized by educational institutions but non-credential. Non-formal learning opportunities may be provided in the workplace and through the activities of civil society organizations and groups;
- Informal education – Learning that goes on all the time, resulting from daily life activities related to work, family, community or leisure (e.g. community baking class).

The World Bank's 2019 World Development Report on The Changing Nature of Work³ argues that adult learning is an important channel to help readjust workers' skills to fit in the future of work and suggests ways to improve its effectiveness.

In order to achieve this objective, the *Sound of Business* project promotes an approach to learning that supports key and transversal skills. A purely technical approach is in danger of teaching a limited set of skills which might become obsolete soon. If you include learning to learn, innovation and entrepreneurship together with a more in-depth interest in the field in the learning experience and outcomes, one can create lifelong learners who will be able to combine in-, non- and formal learning to stay up-to-date.

²Baumgartner, Sharan B. Merriam, Rosemary S. Caffarella, Lisa M.; Caffarella, Rosemary S.; Baumgartner, Lisa M. (2007). *Learning in adulthood : a comprehensive guide* (3rd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. p. 7. ISBN 978-0-7879-7588-3.

³World Bank World Development Report 2019: The Changing Nature of Work.



The Sound of Business Project's Idea

A consortium of six European organisations from Slovakia, Italy, Greece, Bulgaria, Poland and Hungary is combining its members' efforts and experience in a project entitled "The Sound of Business – Leveraging the Entrepreneurial Competences of Adults to Extenuate the Business Knowledge Divide" (2018-1-SK01-KA204-046325). Funded through the Erasmus+ Key Action 2 Strategic Partnership programme (Adult education), the two year project is running from October 2018 until December 2020. Through a mix of partners with a wide range of different expertise, consisting of a university, a chamber of commerce, a training institution, a consultancy company, a competence certification organisation and a not for profit association promoting non formal education.

The Sound of Business wants to transfer the competencies about the creation and the running of a company to target groups involved, in the first phase to trainers and in the following phase to adults, through the creation of 4 intellectual outputs:

- **Develop training tools to improve the basic/transversal skills of adults**, that will be collected in an e-manual available online and on a learning platform
- **Create a learning platform**, serving as a depository for interactive learning materials, including textbooks, videos, music, assessments and other reference links on entrepreneurship, non-formal education, music and adult work
- **Create a Learning Documentary**, which will be a high quality video documentary learning tool, putting together the contents of the training tools with the non-formal approach based on history of rock music
- **Develop a Protocol for certification of competencies** for validating the competences developed using the innovative learning approach developed by The Sound of Business project.

The project uses an innovative methodology of non-formal education because its approach is based on the idea that music (in particular the history of *Rock music* in the present pilot project) can be used as a cue to train adults about management, business and entrepreneurship. The musical genre is not relevant for the planning of the activities. In this way, the project has a stronger replicability. Project Cycle Management approach, that will be used beside the non-formal approach based on music, will help participants in focusing on real needs, and in providing potential solutions to these needs through their business ideas.

The project's objectives are:

- To provide trainers with practical tools leading to an innovative method of training related to basic and transversal skills, innovative managerial competencies and entrepreneurial spirit;
- To use and promote a non-formal approach based on art and music;
- To stimulate self-employment initiatives among adults, according to identified unemployed people's needs and backgrounds;
- To promote/renovate managerial skills of the adults and foster the awareness of the importance of innovation and life-long learning;
- To recognize and validate non-formal learning at European level.
- To promote entrepreneurship education among adults through an innovative training approach and to validate the transferred competencies.

Target groups

- Trainers for adults;
- Adult learners (age 25-60): Unemployed or employed with the need of a requalification of competencies (mainly basic/transversal skills and entrepreneurship), entrepreneurs (and potential entrepreneurs) looking for innovative management skills and a creative approach to improve their performances.



The Sound of Business expected results

In line with the project's objectives, the Sound of Business results are:

- 1) raising awareness of the importance of basic and transversal skills, innovative managerial competencies and entrepreneurial spirit, as a way to improve the performances at work and in everyday life.
- 2) building the ability of target groups by giving them an innovative set of training tools/competencies linked to entrepreneurship and business innovation. It is expected to transfer to 24 trainers (4 per partner), the competencies provided by the use of the new training tools based on the history of Rock Music. Considering a so called "cascade model" effect, these trainers for adults will transfer to other 2 colleagues these competencies and to 90 adults involved in the National training courses.
- 3) providing training tools and approaches to ensure optimal learning impact to adult people; (it is expected an use of approximately of 1500 training tools and the learning documentary through the learning platform, from trainers for adults and adults people in the partner countries involved and in general in Europe)
- 4) creating an easily transferable training methodology, in addition to easily replicability due to the chosen music genre.

In this way the training facilitates the target group to improve their performances, under the different points of view, in entrepreneurship and innovation of business competences.

- 5) 5 self-employment initiatives among adult people, through the support of the partner staff involved in the project (by 2 years after the end of the project).
- 6) creating a Protocol, containing a scheme for the validation of competencies (according to European Qualification Framework - EQF) in the framework of innovative methodologies for stimulating basic and transversal skills, entrepreneurship and business innovation. (nr of expected adoption of the Protocol by private organizations or public bodies: 6 per partner country + nr of
- 7) trainers/adults requiring the certification of competencies through the procedures contained in the protocol: 150).



The Protocol's objectives

“Entrepreneurship is when you act upon opportunities and ideas and transform them into value for others. The value that is created can be financial, cultural, or social.” (FFE-YE, 2012)

Entrepreneurship as a competence applies to all spheres of life. It enables citizens to nurture their personal development, to actively contribute to social development, to enter the job market as employees or as self-employed, and to start-up or scale-up ventures which may have a cultural, social or commercial motive. These resources can be personal (namely, self-awareness and self-efficacy, motivation and perseverance), material (for instance, production means and financial resources) or non-material (for instance, specific knowledge, skills and attitudes).⁴

ICEP will cross-reference mainly the Classification of European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupation (ESCO) with the Entrepreneurship Competence Framework (EntreComp) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) to certify basic and transversal skills, entrepreneurship and business innovation.

While the assessment of technical skills is relatively straightforward, the assessment of key transversal skills is more problematic as difficult to quantify. Therefore, this Protocol seeks to develop a methodology to develop and to certify basic and transversal skills, entrepreneurship and business innovation skills in accordance with ISO/IEC 17024, *Conformity assessment – General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons*. ISO/IEC 17024 contains requirements a certification body needs to comply with to demonstrate it is competent to certify persons for a specific scope.

ICEP utilizes a Management Manual accredited by the Slovak National Accreditation Service (SNAS), which is the local body designated for the accreditation of certification bodies according to international standard ISO / IEC 17024. This standard defines specific requirements of independence, competence and impartiality ; in order to offer a real guarantee of quality of available certification services.

⁴EntreComp: The Entrepreneurship Competence Framework-Margherita Bacigalupo, Panagiotis Kampylis Yves Punie, Godelieve Van den Brande, 2016

The “Protocol” aims to create a specific and clear validation and certification path of the skills and competencies, testing new approaches to developing and assessing the entrepreneurship competence.

The Protocol, therefore, is focused on the following specific objectives:

- Encouraging system-level development of support for the entrepreneurship competence, including high level curricula reform, strategic partnerships between different sectors etc.;
- Engaging with employers and employment services to support the development and assessment of entrepreneurial competencies in job seeking, in the workplace and during working life;
- Encouraging innovation and new approaches to entrepreneurship competence development in different learning settings (including formal, non-formal and informal settings).
- Highlighting the changing nature of the labour market and education and training, due for instance to digital technology, to support citizens’ innovation and creativity.
- Bringing partners countries (and/or regions, cities) together to exchange experiences and good practices in building a coherent methodology to support the development of entrepreneurial skills at national and local level.

Purpose and field of application

Small Business and Entrepreneurship Certification Regulation is a certification method adopted by ICEP that ensures tomorrow's leaders are prepared with the toolkit they need to get ahead in today's competitive landscape. The certification validates an aspiring Trainer understanding of core business principles, including the essentials needed to launch and maintain a successful business.

After the granting of certification, Trainers will be inscribed in the Register of Certified Trainers specialized in Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development.

This Regulation is binding for both the Parties (Certification body and the aspiring Trainers).



Reference documents and definitions

- The **Sound of Business Methodology Certification Scheme for aspiring Trainer** in Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (Annex II);
- any national, European and / or international rules and laws referred to in the Certification Scheme in Entrepreneurship and Small Business.

Conditions for the concession and maintenance of certification

Business and Entrepreneurship aspiring trainers, without any discrimination for nationality, sex, religion, race and political orientation, can submit Certification of Competences Request in Business and Entrepreneurship Education if they are accepted by the ICEP CERTIFICATION BODY, (after ad-hoc examination).

To obtain and maintain certification over time, the aspiring Trainer must:

- a) identify and comply with all the requirements specified in the Sound of Business Methodology Certification Scheme for Trainer in Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (Annex 2);
- b) provide ICEP (Certification Body) with any necessary and mandatory information and / or documents;
- c) respect, even over time, all the provisions of Sound of Business Methodology Certification Scheme for Trainer in Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (Annex II);
- d) keep the conditions for the entire period of validity of the certification;
- e) in case of complaints, provide ICEP (Certification Body) with all information and / or documents necessary for the correct management and resolution of them;
- f) undertake to use the certificates and / or logos and / or ICEP (Certification Body) certification marks in a proper way, as explained in this document;
- g) respect the deontological code unconditionally (see Annex V) read and accepted by signing the Certification of Competences Request (Annex I).



Certification of competences procedure

Trainers who want to obtain the Certification of Competences, must make a specific written request to CERTIFICATION BODY (Certification of Competences Request – Annex 1), which must be dated, signed and transmitted to CERTIFICATION BODY, with all the attachments.

The signing of the Request implies acceptance of the procedures for the use of certificates and / or logos and / or certification marks and the deontological code.

Once the Request has been received, CERTIFICATION BODY proceeds to carry out a preliminary examination, informing the aspiring Trainer of the acceptance or refusal of the Request. The Certification Body can request additional documentation, in order to gain more useful information to the assessment.

It is also possible to request CERTIFICATION BODY support for the correct completion of the Certification of Competences Request.

Phase 1: Document verification

Once received the Request with all the required documentation, CERTIFICATION BODY starts the verification procedure.

In the case of lack of documentation, a formal request is sent by mail or fax to the aspiring Trainer, who has 10 working days to provide for the integration.

CERTIFICATION BODY, after receiving all the complete documentation, provides the reject or the acceptance of the request by giving an official communication by mail to the Trainer with the related reasons.

In the case of rejection, the Trainers may ask to re-examine the decision by giving detailed explanations of the re-examination request. If the reasons are deemed acceptable, the Certification Body can re-evaluate the Certification of Competences Request by confirming or modifying the decision taken. In the latter case, the decision is final.



Phase 2: Assessment and verification of skills

Phase 2 of verification is carried out under the direct responsibility of the Examiner, delegated by the Certification Body.

This phase consists in the verification, by the Examiner, of the truthfulness of all the information contained in the Certification of Competences Request and in the enclosed documents, through telephone interviews or "face-to-face" with Institutes, Universities, organizations, companies, bodies and / or organisms, etc. or even through research and / or by directly interviewing the aspiring Trainer.

The aspiring Trainer must accept and authorize CERTIFICATION BODY to contact organizations and / or persons mentioned in the documentation provided.

The purpose of this phase is to ascertain the truthfulness of information and to assess the Trainer's competences.

At the end of this evaluation process, the Examiner can either express a positive opinion or carry out additional surveys.

Exam and Competences assessment

The Exam and Competences assessment are parts of the second Phase of the certification process. It is carried on by the identified Examiner and monitored by Certification Body staff (Witness).

The exam has the aim to evaluate the Competences of the candidate related to the use of his specific knowledge, skills and tools in the Entrepreneurship Competences, as explained in the Certification Scheme (Annex II).

The exam is conducted by the Examiner assigned by certification body.

The exam can be done in two ways:

Written test: is a questionnaire made up of 40 multiple choice questions covering all the topics covered by the CPS. You are asked to find the correct answer on a basis of 3. A point is given to each correct answer (and no points to wrong or missing answers).

THE EXAM IS INTENDED TO PASS after reaching a minimum percentage of 70%

As an alternative

Practical exam:

consists of an interview with the Examiner in order to ascertain the real Competences of the Trainer. The exam can be carried out either in the classroom or remotely with video mode (eg Skype video) and always in the presence of Certification Body (Witness) supervisory staff.

An evaluation with a maximum of 100% is foreseen (case well exposed and key topics fully defined). THE EXAM IS INTENDED TO PASS after reaching a minimum percentage of 60%

The practical examination, after the written test,, it will ensure the independence and impartiality of the Examiner and the Witness. Each part of the exam provides a score.

The examination is considered to be passed if the Trainer obtains a minimum score, established by each Certification.

The Examiner and CERTIFICATION BODY staff will guarantee the correct management of the exam, such as:

- ensuring compliance with all health and safety requirements;
- verifying that any need for special assistance beforehand request is met;
- illustrating the methods of conducting the exam and the criteria for passing them.

Independent Evaluation of the Certification Re-Examiner

The evaluation and ratification activity is carried out by a Re-Examiner that - after having examined the entire documentation of the first evaluation - who ratifies or not the Examiner's assessment.

Findings

The results of all the phases of verification and evaluation conducted by the Examiner and the Re-Examiner are kept in electronic form for a period of at least 5 years. Security backups are systematically carried out.



Grant of certification of Competences

The achievement of the certification is communicated by CERTIFICATION BODY to the Trainer. Granted the certification, the Trainer will be included in the Register of CERTIFICATION BODY - Register of Certified Trainer in Small Business and Entrepreneurship Competences. This information from now on becomes public.

Together with the Certificate of Competences, the CERTIFICATION BODY logo and / or mark is sent to the certified Trainer in electronic format.

The issued Certification of the Competences is valid for THREE years from the date of issue and is subject to annual surveillance activities in correspondence with the interim annual deadlines.

At the end of the three-year period of validity it is necessary to fill in and send again the Certification of Competences Request only for the necessary parts (personal data, registration of activities related only to the last three years), before the expiration of the Certificate of Competences validity.

The process of evaluation and granting of renewal is exactly the one described up to now with the only difference that the written and / or oral examination is re - carried out only in the case of a new edition of the reference standards.

Maintenance and monitoring

During the entire period of validity of the Certificate of Competency issued, CERTIFICATION BODY will conduct control and monitoring activities in order to verify the maintenance of compliance with all the requirements of the Sound of Business Methodology Certification Scheme for Trainer in Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development; If, during the period of validity, discrepancies emerge from the requirements defined by the Certification Scheme, the CERTIFICATION BODY certified aspiring Trainer must comply with the instructions to keep the certification.

Failure to comply with the commitments will cause the temporary suspension, reduction or revocation of the issued Certificate of Competences.

Modification, extension and/or reduction of the granted certification of the competences

At any time the aspiring Trainer can request to modify the certification of the Competences. For this purpose, it is necessary to complete the Certification of Competences Request in the necessary parts and send it to CERTIFICATION BODY enclosing the additional documentation aimed at objectifying the possession of the requisites.

Once the request has been received, CERTIFICATION BODY carries out the verification activities according to the previously described procedures and communicates whether the modification and / or the extension and / or the requested reduction can be granted. Due to the reduction of a certification, the aspiring Trainer is required to:

- return the original of the certificate of Competences, ie in the case of temporary reduction, do not use the certification and / or logo and / or certification mark during the reduction period;
- delete documents that refer to the certification currently in force with the specific area before the reduction;
- do not use the certification outside the scope specified in the certificate following the reduction.



Modification of rules, guidelines, regulations and laws in the context of The Sound of Business Methodology Certification Scheme for Trainer

The CERTIFICATION BODY will implement the appropriate actions to ensure the validity of certification, if the Certification Scheme and the Regulations are modified by:

- changes in the professional and / or legal status of the CERTIFICATION BODY;
- directives, regulations and laws in the framework of Entrepreneurship competences.

The aspiring Trainer for the aforementioned changes, must adapt and acknowledge all the requirements modified in the times and methods deemed appropriate and / or envisaged.

Validity and renewal of the certification contract

The Certification Contract and the Certification of Competences are valid for three years and runs from the date of submission of the Request.

After this period the aspiring Trainer has to send a new Request, completed in the necessary parts, and send it to CERTIFICATION BODY, following the instruction above mentioned.

Once the request has been received by CERTIFICATION BODY, the staff and the Examiner carry out the verification and evaluation activities.

The obtainment of the renewal of the certification is communicated by CERTIFICATION BODY to the aspiring Trainer.

Waiver, suspension and revocation of the certification

Waive

Certified Trainer may waive the Certification of Competences in the following cases:

- if the Trainer does not accept any changes to these Rules;
- if the Trainer does not accept any changes introduced by CERTIFICATION BODY in the Sound of Business Methodology Certification Scheme for Trainer

- at any time depending on Trainer' needs.

The Trainer must communicate in writing (mail) his own decision within three months from the date of notification of the changes by CERTIFICATION BODY.

The Trainer until that moment will:

- give back the Certificate;
- no longer declare the possession of the certification of Competences and delete from all documents any reference or symbol relating to this;
- immediately cease the use of the certificate and / or logo and / or certification mark and the distribution of any material.

Upon receipt of the waiver, CERTIFICATION BODY provides immediately to:

- delete the Certificate of Competences;
- delete the Trainer from the Register of Certified.

Suspension

The validity of the Certification can be suspended by the CERTIFICATION BODY in the following cases:

- if the certified trainer has misused the certificate and / or logo and / or certification mark;
- if the certified trainer has not put in place suitable corrective actions, required by CERTIFICATION BODY;
- if the certified trainer does not send, during the annual assessment phases, the documentations required or send incorrect documentation.

The suspension is communicated to the certified trainer in writing by mail, specifying the conditions and the deadline for the restoration of the certification.

During the suspension period, the certified trainer cannot use the certificate and / or the logo and / or mark on the documentation, nor use the Certificate of Competences in any form. The suspension can also be the consequence of an agreement between a certified trainer and CERTIFICATION BODY; in any case it is formally notified by CERTIFICATION BODY by mail or fax.

The suspension does not change the validity period of the certification.

Revocation

The revocation is decided and communicated in writing, by mail or fax, to the certified trainer, in the following cases:

- when the causes that led to the suspension of the Certificate of Competences are not removed within six months;
- in the presence of violation of the deontological code (Annex V);
- ascertained non-compliance with the provisions of this document and the annexes;
- for sending false and / or counterfeit documentation;
- for misusing the certification and / or the logo and / or the trademark.

Following the revocation, the trainer undertakes to:

- Give back the original of the Certificate of Competences;
- Do not use the Certificate of Competences and immediately cease using the logo and/or certification mark by removing them from all documents.

Withdrawal means that CERTIFICATION BODY must delete the certified trainer by the Register of Certified Entrepreneurship Trainer specialized in Small Business and Entrepreneurship Creation.

Notifications of revocation are formalized by mail or fax to the Trainer by CERTIFICATION BODY.



Claims, complaints, appeals and disputes

Claims

Certified trainer may file a claim with CERTIFICATION BODY in writing if he believes that the quality of the offered certification, maintenance or renewal services do not comply with the provisions of this regulation.

The claim must be presented to CERTIFICATION BODY always in writing (e-mail or fax or by post), reporting exactly the subject of the complaint and documents that support the complaint itself.

The Certification Body, by verifying the completeness of the information, decides on the validity of the claim, in a constructive, impartial and timely way (max 5 working days).

CERTIFICATION BODY communicates in writing (e-mail, fax, mail) the decision of the treatment process.

Complaints and appeals

The certified Trainer may complaint/appeal against CERTIFICATION BODY decisions, explaining the reasons for dissent, within 5 working days from the date of notification of the decision. In that way, the certified Trainer does not accept the decision taken by CERTIFICATION BODY.

CERTIFICATION BODY, received the complaint / appeal, starts to examine it within 10 working days of its presentation, even hearing the certified trainer and/or other people involved.

CERTIFICATION BODY always provides to notify the applicant in written form (e-mail, fax or mail) of the receipt, progress and outcome of the appeal itself.



Processing of personal data and authorization for use

In terms of processing personal data and authorization for use, CERTIFICATION BODY will apply the provisions of the REGULATION (EU) 2016/679 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL, of 27 April 2016 “on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation)”.



ANNEXES

Annex I - Sound of Business Certification of Competences Request

Annex II - Sound of Business Method Certification Scheme for Aspiring Trainer

Annex III - Personnel Certification Regulation

Annex IV - Policy

Annex V - Code of Ethics

Annex VI - Privacy Policy- Each partner Organization

Annex VII- Declaration of the aspiring Trainer