

Development of a Workforce Competence Assessment System by Sectors and Regions (CASSY)

Разработване и внедряване на информационна система за оценка на компетенциите на работната сила по браншове и региони“, изпълняван от БСК в партньорство с КНСБ и КТ Подкрепа



1 Description

Timespan 2009-2014

Stage

OTHER

Although formally concluded in 2014, the Competence Assessment System initiative continued within the framework of a 2-year project “MyCompetence”, started by MLSP in September 2016 under “Development of National System for Competence Assessment – MY COMPETENCE” of OP HRD 2014-2020, co-funded by ESF.

Focus area



MATCHING SKILLS FOR TODAY'S JOB MARKET



MATCHING SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE OF WORK

2 Foundations

Policy area



ACTIVE LABOUR MARKET POLICIES

The Competence Assessment System project was implemented under Priority Axis 2: 'Increasing the productivity and adaptability of employed', areas of intervention 2.1 'Improving the adaptability of employed', 2.2 'Encouraging labour market flexibility', 2.3 'Improving the working conditions at the workplace' of Operational Programme 'Human Resource Development' 2007-2013 (OP HRD).

Policy goal

The overarching objective of the initiative was to enhance labour market adaptability and effectiveness, as well as to strike a greater balance of labour market demand and supply by developing a system for workforce competence assessment by sectors and regions. The rationale of the Competence Assessment System can be defined, as follows: Forecasting the demand for labour force with specific qualification levels in specific sectors and regions. The policy goal, defined in section 2 were achieved through:

- Analysing and defining workforce competence requirements by considering EU, national and sector requirements and standards;
- Establishment of a Bulgarian Competence Assessment Network by sectors and regions and improvement of the coordination and information exchange of workforce competence assessment among national, branch and regional structures of the employers and trade unions and the responsible government institutions;
- Gaining national recognition and fostering prerequisites for the integration of the workforce competence assessment system in the future e-government so as to enhance adaptability and effectiveness, and to achieve a balance of the labour market demand and supply.

Mismatch

EXPLICITLY DESIGNED TO ADDRESS SKILL MISMATCH

The project idea of developing a national system for workforce competence assessment arose as a result of a dialogue between the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and social partners on areas where the latter could contribute to the implementation of specific labour market-related measures. The Bulgarian Industrial Association has chosen and elaborated on activities that can help to tackle a number of challenges related to skills and competencies mismatch.

Aim of policy instrument

-  ADDRESS SKILL SHORTAGES
-  UPSKILL EMPLOYED ADULTS
-  FACILITATE JOB/CAREER TRANSITIONS

Legal basis

OTHER

Administrative level

NATIONAL

Main responsible body

Bulgarian Industrial Association (BIA)

Stakeholders

-  TRAINING PROVIDERS (PUBLIC/PRIVATE)
-  CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
-  EMPLOYER FEDERATIONS
-  GOVERNMENT (CENTRAL & REGIONAL)
-  GUIDANCE COUNSELLORS
-  RESEARCH CENTRES AND UNIVERSITIES
-  SOCIAL PARTNERS
-  TRADE UNIONS

National Employment Agency - contracting authority in its capacity of Intermediate Body for OP HRD, performing monitoring and control on the implementation of the project.
Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria - project partner.
Confederation of Labour "Podkrepa" - project partner.
Government institutions, employers, trade unions, education providers, NGOs - participants in the National Competence Assessment Network, which operated as an institutional infrastructure facilitating social dialogue and encompassing all relevant stakeholders. Within its framework, 20 Sector Skills Committees were set up in the pilot sectors, 10 Regional Competence Assessment Centres were established, together with a National Competence Assessment Centre and a National Competence Assessment Council.

Funding

The total project budget for the period 2009-2014 was BGN 8 902 959 or €4.552 million, financed by OP HRD 2007-2013, co-funded by ESF.
Another BGN 2.5 million was committed to a follow-up initiative of MLSP, which started in September 2016 under Procedure No. BG05M9OP001-1.013 "Development of National System for Competence Assessment - MY COMPETENCE" of OP HRD 2014-2020, co-funded by ESF, Project No. BG05M9OP001-1.013-0001 "MyCompetence".

Intended beneficiaries

Employers - facilitates a competence-based approach in human resource management.
Employees and job seekers - allows them to determine whether they satisfy the requirements laid down in sectoral professional labour standards.
Education institutions - supports them in their efforts to better position their learning outcomes in the context of labour demand.
Students - can become familiar with the employers' expectations and requirements for given professions, hence choose the most suitable career path and education institution for themselves.
Labour market-related institutions - the Competence Assessment System lays the foundations for developing a comprehensive system for sustainable forecasting of the demands for new skills and qualifications on labour market in Bulgaria.

3 Processes

Use of labour market intelligence

-  **INFORM JOB-SEARCH DECISIONS OF UNEMPLOYED**
-  **INFORM CAREER-MAKING DECISIONS OF STUDENTS**
-  **ENABLE STRATEGIC BUSINESS DECISIONS**
-  **INFORM THE DESIGN OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORKS (NQFS)**
-  **DESIGN STANDARDS AND ACCREDITATION**

A Workforce Competence Assessment System MyCompetence.bg was established and updated in accordance with the current and future labour market demand.

Financial schemes

The initiative was financed by a grant subsidy amounting to 100% of eligible costs.

Frequency of updates

The sectoral analyses on the state of each of the 20 pilot economic sectors covered by the project were first prepared in 2011 and were subsequently updated every year.

Development

As Competence Assessment System was a single-project initiative, its approach remained unchanged during the period of its implementation.

Barriers	No barriers to the implementation of the initiative were identified.
Success factors	BIA is a nationally representative employers' organisation in Bulgaria, capable of involving the business and all relevant stakeholders in the implementation of activities. Being a social partner, BIA is called upon to assist and cooperate with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in the implementation of labour market related policies. BIA mobilised the necessary in-house expert potential to implement such a significant project.
Monitoring	The indicators used to measure progress of the initiative included: the number of economic sectors covered; the number of sector competency models developed; the number of models of key positions for respective sectors; described tasks related to the job operation; described and defined skills; identified and described competencies; descriptions of the competence demonstration levels; identified and classified competence assessment tools and development pathways; specialties identified and classified by professional fields; vocational schools; universities and regions; analyses and surveys. The above indicators and descriptors were measured upon the conclusion of project activities in 2014.
Innovativeness	VERY INNOVATIVE The Competence Assessment System project resulted in a unique and innovative instrument for providing an effective and sustainable link between labour market demand and the system of vocational education and professional qualification. It can assist the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the Ministry of Education and Science in drafting policies for the gradual convergence of State Educational Requirements and professional standards, as well as in adapting academic curricula and syllabi to labour market trends. More specifically, research and approbation of innovative approaches to competence assessment and development were conducted throughout the project's duration, including through: - studying innovative approaches to testing individual competencies via simulation modelling; - approbating simulation models for competence assessment in working environment.

4 Sustainability

Evidence of effectiveness	Over 120 analysis and surveys were made by more than 200 experts during the project, including the accumulation of data bases about leading enterprises and educational centres and surveys on topical issues. In addition, the skills assessment activities resulted in a user friendly classification of competences for each
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a user-friendly classification of competences for each of the 20 pilot sectors in 3 categories: 1) specific competences, 2) core competences, 3) managerial competences.

The skills assessment activities, carried out produced the following results regarding competence models, standard, skills, etc, found on the MyCompetence online portal:

- 20 sector competency models;
- 485 models of positions which are key for the sectors;
- 1,760 described tasks related to the job operation;
- 2,900 described and classified knowledge bits;
- 2,200 described and defined skills;
- 3,560 identified and described competencies;
- 14,240 descriptions of the competence demonstration levels;
- 530 identified and classified competence assessment tools;
- 710 identified and classified competence development pathways;
- 2,300 specialties identified and classified by professional fields, vocational schools, universities and regions.

Overall, the benefits for the project's target groups were as expected, namely:

- Identifying the degree of compliance with workforce competence requirements and fostering favourable conditions for enhancing productivity and adaptability;
- Improving initial recruitment and continuously assessing workforce competence at company level;
- Increasing possibilities and workforce degree of participation in lifelong learning;
- Fostering favourable conditions for improving personal and company career perspectives and enhancing workforce employability and participation in the learning economy;
- Enhancing company activities for continuing vocational training based on an adequate staff competence assessment and the demand for VET;
- Improving employees' abilities to face the forthcoming challenges related to restructuring of the national economy and labour market;
- Encouraging investment in human capital both by employers and employees;
- Providing analytical information and forecasts about the demand for qualified workforce at sector and regional level for the purposes of secondary and tertiary education, vocational training, identification and management of labour market challenges and trends by the responsible state institutions.

In February 2017, BIA presented a newly developed electronic module "Personal profile of the job seeker" – web application for integrating MyCompetence's system and the NEA information system. The developed module will give NEA the opportunity to deliver new high-quality services to every job seeker, who would be able to actively and effectively participate in the process of describing their skills, development and implementation of their recommended plan for development, and also to use free of charge, in their full functionality, all of the instruments for competence assessment and e-learning resources of MyCompetence

Engagement of stakeholders

There is cooperation among relevant stakeholders, namely government institutions, operating in the field of labour market and education and training; employers and employer organisations; trade unions; education providers; and NGOs within the framework of the already established 20 Sector Skills Committees and there are 5 new Sector Skills Committees to be set up under the follow-up MLSP initiative "MyCompetence".

Transferability

EASILY TRANSFERABLE

As the Competence Assessment Information System is available in both Bulgarian and English language at <https://mycompetence.bg/>, it can be easily transferred to other countries. It has to be noted though, that the system has been elaborated to facilitate skills matching in the labour market in Bulgaria in particular, and if transferred to another country, it has to be adapted accordingly to respective labour supply and demand specifics.

Sustainability

Skills assessment is expected to evolve into a sustainable policy instrument, as BIA's Competence Assessment System initiative was continued within the framework of the 2-year project of MLSP. The project's main goal is improving the effectiveness of national policies and measures on the labour market by providing relevant data and analysis of skills and competencies needs of the workforce. The main activities build upon the results of the Competence Assessment System and include the selection of 5 new economic sectors and identification of key occupations in the selected sectors, updating developed and approved sectoral competencies models in the previous 20 economic sectors developed in the period 2009-2014, as well as the elaboration, piloting and validation of electronic module (already launched) for analysing and evaluating the training needs of the workforce.
