

# WE-Qualify: Improving Skills and Qualifications for the Building Workforce in Cyprus

**WE-Qualify: Βελτίωση δεξιοτήτων και προσόντων των τεχνιτών για κατασκευή κτηρίων με αυξημένη ενεργειακή απόδοση**



Cyprus

## 1 DESCRIPTION

**Timespan** 01/11/2013 to 31/10/2016

**Stage** **PILOT**  
 The aim of the initiative was to be implemented as a pilot project and as such it was tested. During the pilot stage it went through improvements. The documentation and the material produced is available for full-scale implementation. At present a number of organisations are making use of it providing training programmes in the area of energy efficiency in buildings.

**Focus area**  **MATCHING SKILLS FOR TODAY'S JOB MARKET**

## 2 FOUNDATIONS

**Policy Area**  **ADULT EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

The "Build Up Skills" initiative, co-funded by the European Commission through the program "Intelligent Energy for Europe" aims at providing continuous vocational education and training of workers in technical professions in the construction and related fields for installation and maintenance of systems for energy savings and use of renewable energy sources in buildings.

**Policy Goal** According to the current national labour statistics there is lack of a sufficient number of skilled workforce for the implementation of measures relating to the construction of energy efficient buildings, and furthermore, a lack of appropriate training programmes for the training of the workforce in this area is evidently present. The project primarily aims at achieving national targets 2020 (Buildings and RES technologies) concerning renewable energy sources technologies in buildings through training of workers in the building and related sectors. In order to achieve this policy targets, there is a need of a qualified workforce with appropriate knowledge, experience, skills, and attitudes not only in the building sector, but in all sectors related to the building industry.

**Mismatch** **EXPLICITLY DESIGNED TO ADDRESS SKILL MISMATCH**  
 Focuses on the building sector, which lacks a qualified workforce that meets the European criteria and standards of Energy performance of Buildings, and in particular in meeting the 2020 targets.

**Aim of policy instrument**  **FACILITATE JOB/CAREER TRANSITIONS**

 **ADDRESS SKILL SHORTAGES**

**Legal basis** **OTHER**

**Administrative level**

**NATIONAL**

**Main responsible body**

Cyprus Energy Agency

**Stakeholders**

-  **GOVERNMENT (CENTRAL & REGIONAL)**
-  **TRAINING PROVIDERS (PUBLIC/PRIVATE)**
-  **EMPLOYER FEDERATIONS**
-  **RESEARCH CENTRES AND UNIVERSITIES**
-  **OTHER**

The following stakeholders are involved in advising/consulting, monitoring, and control of the programme; and as they come from different background areas, each contributes to the implementation of the programme within the context of their capacity: - Cyprus Productivity Centre: a training and consulting institution operating under the Ministry of Labour - Cyprus Organisation for Standardisation: the National Standardisation Body of Cyprus, whose principal activity is the production of standards and the supply of standards-related services - Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus: its mission is to create the conditions for planned and systematic training and development of the human resources of Cyprus at all levels and in all areas to meet the needs of the economy within the framework of the social and economic policy of the state - The Cyprus Scientific and Technical Chamber (ΕΤΕΚ): the statutory Technical Advisor to the State and is the umbrella organisation for all Cypriot Engineers - Energy Service, Ministry of Energy, Commerce, Industry And Tourism: the responsible body promoting energy efficiency in the country

**Funding**

The Social Partners are actively involved in the decision making for all the HRDA initiatives. Employers' and workers' organisations and the social partners are directly involved in policy and strategy formulation through their representation on HRDA's Board of Governors. They, being part of the Board, receive reports about the scheme's progress and, if necessary, they participate in the decisions making for modifications that bring the scheme up-to-date.

**Intended beneficiaries**

Construction workers are the beneficiaries of the instrument by acquiring specialised skills in the construction of energy efficient buildings. Another beneficiary is the society at large, who can enjoy energy efficient buildings.

**3 PROCESSES**

**Use of labour market intelligence**

-  **INFORM THE DESIGN OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORKS (NQFS)**
-  **DESIGN TRAINING PROGRAMMES TO ACTIVATE UNEMPLOYED**
-  **DESIGN STANDARDS AND ACCREDITATION**

The instrument was implemented on the basis of the results and lessons learned from the initiative "BUILD UP SKILLS CY", whose objective was to pave the way for significant improvement of the skills of the workforce in the building sector in occupations capable of achieving the EU 2020 targets for energy efficiency buildings and certifying these skills. In order to achieve this, the national state of affairs was thoroughly analysed, the barriers, and gaps identified, and a roadmap was developed. The "BUILD UP SKILLS CY" project identified the workforce skills needed in the building sector and other ancillary sectors relating to the energy efficiency and the utilisation of Renewable Energy Sources in buildings, and also identified the areas of intervention. This paved the way and contributed significantly towards achieving Cyprus' energy targets by 2020 and at the same time complying with the EU directives on Energy Performance of Buildings and the EU2020 targets. The project "We-Qualify" utilized the findings of the national roadmap ("BUILD UP SKILLS CY") and the knowledge of other European countries in relation to buildings energy efficiency and through partners consultations and meetings, to develop a series of documents such as manuals, reports, training programmes and materials, for both trainers and trainees, and implemented the training programmes and several other critical and crucial actions, all of which contributed to the constitution and implementation of the initiative. All of the material and reports produced are recorded on the website of the partner who led the instrument (the Cyprus Energy Agency, website [http://www.cea.org.cy/we\\_qualify/](http://www.cea.org.cy/we_qualify/)) and all the other partners sites.

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**Financial schemes**

The participants enjoyed free training in a new highly promising and high quality programme in the building sector, and had the opportunity to acquire a certification of their achievement.

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**Frequency of updates**

The instrument was implemented once as a pilot project and no updating has been effected since its completion. However, the project is leading other organisations to similar ideas and scope, but in other areas of energy efficiency in buildings, for example of the use of photovoltaic technology to be used in buildings.

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**Development**

During the course of the implementation the training material was reviewed, taking into account feedback from the trainers and trainees and the views of several stakeholders.

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**Barriers**

Convincing technicians to attend training provided by the instrument was a major issue as stereotypes are strong in the building industry. Technicians were reluctant to register due to objecting/not favouring the combination of theory and practice. A lot of effort was exerted to overcome this issue. Registration for thermo panes and exterior sunshades training was below target. Two sessions of training were expected to be held, but in the end only one session was held, due to reduced interest expressed by technicians.

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**Success factors**

The well functioning collaboration of the partners and the background set-up of the instrument. Also the knowledge gained from other European initiatives and instruments.

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**Monitoring**

Targeted 125 trainees; achieved 74% of target Targeted 100 certified trainees; achieved 76% of target Establishment of a consultative committee comprising of universities representatives, Ministry Education and Culture, Energy service and Employers and Industrialists Federation The intervention was run as a pilot project only once and consequently the above achievements are the results of the pilot intervention. Assessing the results achieved against the original targets, the leaders of the intervention consider them quite satisfactory, because it was implemented against a culture of strong stereotypes in the construction industry. However, they do believe that through the role of the partners in the construction sector and the cooperation of the technical training bodies, the pilot achievements shall have a multiplier effect.

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**Innovativeness**

**VERY INNOVATIVE**

The design and implementation of the instrument followed a process in which different partners of different disciplines jointed forces, effort and knowledge to set it up and implement it. The "WE-Qualify" project was distinguished among the 3 top nominations of the most successful European Projects for the year 2016. It was judged to contribute to the promotion of clean, safe, and efficient energy in Europe in the Public Sector category.

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**4 SUSTAINABILITY**

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## Evidence of effectiveness

The completion of the instrument as a pilot project has brought about several positive impacts in the construction of energy efficient buildings in Cyprus. Two fully equipped laboratories were created for the training of technicians as part of the pilot project, one in the area of training in thermal insulation and thermo-panes and the other in the area of training in the installation and maintenance of biomass boilers and stoves. These labs are the only ones of their kind in the country. The labs in question are currently being used for training technicians in their respective areas. Training material produced by the instrument included training methodology for each skill covered, guides for trainers, training presentations for each skill various training bodies also use them. The secondary technical education system has adopted the training material and introduced training of skills for energy efficient buildings in its curriculum. Also one of the project partners, the Cyprus Productivity Centre, which is a state training institution, is offering training in the areas covered by the project. Upon completion and under the influence of the results of the pilot project, legislation was passed for the certification concerning the installation and maintenance of small units of biomass boilers and stoves. Qualified installers must be registered on the official register provided by law. Efforts are being made for similar legislation to cover the other skills as well. Upon completion, a survey was conducted among the participants in the training programmes. The majority of them (88%) indicated that their knowledge and skills improved much to very much; and of those who received certification, 85% considered this qualification as a competitive advantage. Recently, one of the main banking institutions established a loan scheme for the conversion of existing houses to energy efficient ones, provided that the technicians involved are certified installers. This post-project requirement is considered by the leader of the project as a recognition of their effort. The cost of the lab equipment was unexpectedly higher than it was initially estimated, thus the partners covered the extra costs.

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## Engagement of stakeholders

One of the partners, namely the Cyprus Productivity Centre, which is a government organisation under the Ministry of Labour, is delivering training to technicians based on the training material produced by the instrument. Furthermore after consultations, the Department of Secondary Technical and Vocational Training has introduced to its curriculum teaching of technicians for energy-conservation, making use of the manuals and material generated by the instrument concerning house thermal insulation and the use of biomass as energy material for boiling water.

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## Transferability

### **EASILY TRANSFERABLE**

The instrument We-Qualify relies on the BUILD UP initiative, which was established by the European Commission in 2009 to support EU Member States in implementing the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD). The scope and idea of this instrument is easily transferable, however the market, social economic and other conditions in other countries could require adjustments to the topics covered, content or context. Similar instruments have been implemented in other countries, drawn from the BUILD UP initiative as well.

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## Sustainability

The instrument as such is not expected to continue. It was initially introduced as a pilot project, which proved not to be feasible to go into full-scale implementation in the sector of the construction of buildings conforming to the energy efficiency requirements.

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