



**CEDEFOP**

European Centre for the Development  
of Vocational Training

---

**Workshop Continuing Vocational Training Survey:  
relevance, lessons learnt and ways forward**

**29 / 30 June 2009, Cedefop**

15 May 2009

**CONTINUING VOCATIONAL TRAINING SURVEY - WORKSHOP  
29 / 30 JUNE 2009, CEDEFOP, GREECE, THESSALONIKI  
MEETING ROOM MONTESSORI**

**- AGENDA -**

<b>09:00 – 17:15</b>		<b>Monday, 29 June 2009</b>
<b>09:00 – 09:30</b>	<b>Registration</b>	
		<p><i>Chair: Mr Manfred Tessaring, Head of Area Research and Policy Analysis, European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop)</i></p> <p><b>The relevance of the Continuing Vocational Training Survey for European and national education, training and employment policies</b></p> <p><i>Within the process of enhanced cooperation in vocational education and training (VET) in the European Union, the improvement of VET statistics is defined as a priority, as adequate statistics and indicators are the key to reviewing developments in VET, and to understanding what additional interventions and decisions are required from all parties involved to achieve the Copenhagen objectives. New policy and data needs require a thorough review of the current scope and coverage of the survey.</i></p>
<b>09:30 – 10:15</b>	<b>Welcome and Introduction</b>	<p><i>Ms Aviana Bulgarelli, Director, European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop)</i></p> <p><b>Content and objectives of the workshop</b></p> <p><i>Ms Katja Nestler, European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop)</i></p> <p><b>Roadmap to CVTS4</b></p> <p><i>Mr Sylvain Jouhette, European Commission, Eurostat</i></p>
<b>10:15 – 11:15</b>	<b>Evidence-based European education and training policy – the relevance of CVTS data</b>	<p><i>Mr Oyvind Bjerkestrand, European Commission, DG EAC</i></p> <p><b>The role of CVTS data for monitoring European employment policy and skill development</b></p> <p><i>Mr Anastasios Bisopoulos, European Commission, DG EMPL</i></p> <p><b>CVTS beyond Europe – a chance to set a standard</b></p> <p><i>Mr Jens Johansen, European Training Foundation (ETF), Italy</i></p> <p><b>Discussion</b></p>
<b>11:15 – 11:45</b>	<b>Tea / coffee break</b>	

11:45 – 13:00	<p><b>Anticipating skill demand and supply – the relevance of European data sources</b> <i>Ms Alena Zukersteinova, European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop)</i></p> <p><b>Measurement of skill needs in enterprises – CVTS and experiences from the UK National Employer Skills Survey</b> <i>Mr Anthony Clarke, United Kingdom, Department for Children, Schools and Families</i></p> <p><b>Discussion</b></p>
13:00 – 14:00	<p><b>Lunch break</b></p> <p><i>Chair: Mr Alex Stimpson, European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop)</i></p> <p><b>The relevance of the Continuing Vocational Training Survey for VET analysis</b></p> <p><i>The Continuing Vocational Training Survey is a particular and specific source of information for VET research. Analytical results might substantiate hypotheses on training behaviour of enterprises, different forms of continuing vocational training, organisational and human resources development, and returns from training.</i></p>
14:00 – 15:45	<p><b>The quality of CVTS3 – a European perspective</b> <i>Mr Renaud Descamps, France, Centre d'Études et de Recherches sur les Qualifications (Céreq)</i></p> <p><b>Professional approach to training in European enterprises – results of cluster analysis with CVTS3 micro data</b> <i>Mr Bernd Käßlinger, Germany, Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung (BIBB)</i></p> <p><b>Non-training enterprises in Europe</b> <i>Ms Friederike Behringer, Germany, Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung (BIBB)</i></p> <p><b>Discussion</b></p>
15:45 – 16:00	<p><b>Tea / coffee break</b></p>
16:00 – 17:15	<p><b>Training from the perspective of employees and employers in France - linking CVTS and AES</b> <i>Ms Agnès Checcaglini, France, Centre d'Études et de Recherches sur les Qualifications (Céreq)</i></p> <p><b>Discussion</b></p> <p><b>Returns to in-service continuing vocational training in Austria</b> <i>Ms Petra Völkerer, Austria, Arbeiterkammer Wien</i></p> <p><b>Discussion</b></p>

09:30 – 14:00	<i>Tuesday, 30 June 2009</i>
09:30 – 11:30	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Chair: Ms Katja Nestler, European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop)</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>From CVTS3 to CVTS4: learning from countries' experiences ensures success</b></p> <p><i>The evaluation of past surveys, both from the European and national perspectives, will reveal the potential for improved data: clearer concepts and definitions; suitable national questionnaire design, including necessary explanations and relevant examples; motivation and comprehensive follow-up of respondents; adequate data collection methods; compliance with methodological requirements. Responsiveness of enterprises is crucial towards data quality.</i></p> <p><b>Ways forward to improve CVTS – lessons learnt in the Czech Republic</b> <i>Mr Josef Kotýnek, Czech Republic, Czech Statistical Office</i></p> <p><b>Comparison of response rates, respondents and responses - some evidence from the Norwegian CVTS3</b> <i>Mr Kjartan Steffensen, Statistics Norway</i></p> <p><b>Do small enterprises spend less time to responding to the questionnaire? – Indications from CVTS3 in the Netherlands</b> <i>Mr Jeroen Nieuweboer, Netherlands, Statistics Netherlands</i></p> <p><b>Enterprises – the decisive point in the data collection process</b> - Statements by <i>Mr Hans-Joachim Blömeke, Germany, Vereinigung der Arbeitgeberverbände der Deutschen Papierindustrie e.V./ Confederation of European Paper Industries (CEPI); Mr Werner Auracher, Austria, Fachverband der Papierindustrie; Mr Hans-Detlev Küller, Germany, Confederation of German Trade Unions (DGB)</i></p> <p><b>Discussion</b></p>
11:30 – 11:45	<i>Tea / coffee break</i>
11:45 – 13:30	<p><b>Sweden's approach to improving CVTS</b> <i>Mr Anders Ljungberg, Statistics Sweden</i></p> <p><b>Extension of NACE and size coverage in CVTS – experiences in Bulgaria</b> <i>Ms Reni Dimitrova, Bulgaria, National Statistical Office</i></p> <p><b>How to collect and process CVTS data more efficiently – practices in Germany</b> <i>Mr Daniel Schmidt, Germany, Statistisches Bundesamt</i></p> <p><b>Discussion</b></p>
13:30 – 14:00	<p><b>Key conclusions relevant to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Eurostat CVTS4 Task Force meeting and closing remarks</b> <i>Ms Katja Nestler; Mr Manfred Tessaring</i></p>

Thessaloniki, 6 March 2009  
Area Research and Policy Analysis/KNE

## **CONTINUING VOCATIONAL TRAINING SURVEY - WORKSHOP 29 / 30 JUNE 2009, CEDEFOP**

### **- CONCEPT NOTE -**

#### **BACKGROUND**

The European Continuing Vocational Training Survey (CVTS) gives a unique insight into the conditions and provision of training in enterprises. It is the only data source that provides internationally comparable, detailed statistics on the volume, content and cost of training in enterprises, and on enterprises' training policy and management. From the first round in 1994 to the third round in 2006, the survey went through several phases of development to extend the coverage and to improve the data quality. As of the implementation of CVTS3, a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council and an implementing Regulation of the Commission provide a solid basis for the regular and stable implementation of the survey over the coming years.

#### **OBJECTIVE**

After three rounds of CVTS, and considering new emerging policy priorities and data needs, the CVTS workshop intends to take stock of achievements in CVTS, and at the same time to conclude how to further improve the acceptance, relevance and feasibility of the survey. The workshop will be a place for countries to exchange experiences and know-how, and to share good practices.

The workshop will cover a wide range of key elements of the whole data collection, beginning with the relevance of the survey, ending with the timely dissemination of results. Important points of discussion will be the availability of data in enterprises, how to increase the acceptance of this survey and to increase its utility for policy and research, for enterprises themselves and for employers' associations and trade unions. Other important points will be how to reduce response burden and facilitate data provision for enterprises, improving response rates and data quality. Last but not least, the appropriate and well-timed dissemination of results is the linchpin of the entire data collection.

The next survey will take place in 2011; the preparation process has started now. Therefore, it is the right moment to contribute to this process.

#### **TARGET GROUP**

The workshop intends to bring together different actors in the field: data users from policy and research, enterprises that provide the data, social partners that are key stakeholders of continuing vocational training in enterprises, and statisticians that finally gather, and process and disseminate the data.

## **CONTENT AND STRUCTURE OF THE WORKSHOP**

The workshop will be divided into two main parts: the first will cover the relevance of CVTS from the political and research perspective, both at European and national levels; the second will cover countries' experiences in CVTS, and aim to provide recommendations for future surveys.

### **1. RELEVANCE OF THE CVTS FOR EUROPEAN AND NATIONAL TRAINING POLICY, AND FOR RESEARCH**

#### **1.1. Importance of the CVTS for assessing the impact of European education, training and employment policies**

Adequate and internationally comparable statistics and indicators data on education, training and skills have acquired particular importance with the Education and Training 2010 work programme. Within the process of enhanced cooperation in vocational education and training (VET) in the European Union, the improvement of VET statistics is defined as a priority, as adequate statistics and indicators are the key to review developments in VET, and to understand what additional interventions and decisions are required from all parties involved to achieve the Copenhagen objectives.

- Key issues for presentation and/or discussion:
  - Coverage of actual and new emerging policy needs;
  - The use of CVTS data for monitoring education, training and employment policies, both at European and national levels;
  - CVT in enterprises - key part of lifelong learning;
  - Skill requirements in enterprises - the role of CVT;
  - CVT for employment and social inclusion;
  - Relationship between initial vocational training and CVT in enterprises;
  - CVTS - part of a modular system of VET/LLL statistics at national and European levels.

#### **1.2. Importance of CVTS for VET research**

The Continuing Vocational Training Survey is a particular and specific source of information for VET research: data are indispensable to analyse the conditions, structure and development of continuing vocational training in enterprises. Characteristics of enterprises and participants in CVT broaden the basis and enlarge the scope for detailed analysis. Analytical results might substantiate hypotheses on training behaviour of enterprises (and to a certain extent individuals), different forms of continuing vocational training, organisational and human resources development, and the impact of public measures on in vocational education and training.

- Key issues for presentation and/or discussion:
  - Research results on VET/CVT - input for evidence-based policy measures;
  - Important research issues for which CVTS data are needed, e.g. organisation and management of CVT in enterprises, the role of social partners, assessment of skill/training needs, volume of CVT and possible interaction with IVT, incentives and obstacles for enterprises to provide CVT, costs and financing of CVT in enterprises;

- Complementarity with Labour Force Survey and Adult Education Survey data – requirements and limits;
- Added value of microdata analysis – making better use of resources by granting access to the anonymised European data set.

## **2. FROM CVTS3 TO CVTS4: LEARNING FROM COUNTRIES' EXPERIENCES ENSURES SUCCESS**

Though there is an increasing demand for more and more detailed data on training in enterprises as a key component of lifelong learning, there might be also a need to strengthen the focus of the survey, and definitely to accelerate the production process. Practical experiences and data quality provide evidence that the current pattern of the survey is too burdensome for enterprises. Data requests do not comply with the realities in enterprises, and as a consequence, do not provide the desired output, in terms of complete, valid and reliable data.

Considering new policy and data need requires a thorough review of the current scope and coverage of the survey, the claim for extending the survey might not be realistic. Solutions have to be found if new important items should be inserted into the survey. There is a need to evaluate which of the current survey items brought little added value, or were not suitable for providing reliable data via an enterprise survey.

Reducing response burden and increasing response rates might not necessarily and exclusively be linked to the number of items in the questionnaire. They might also require clearer questions that are more understandable for enterprises. There is a need for common understanding on items that relate to data that are available or not too burdensome to gather in enterprises. Evaluation in countries is needed to clarify how data collection modes and tools impact and might facilitate data provision for enterprises.

There is an absolute need to accelerate the production and dissemination process of CVTS results. Statistics and data not available in time diminish the acceptance of and interest in the survey. This holds also for the access to the anonymised European data file for research purposes.

The overall acceptance and relevance of CVTS is strictly linked to the quality approach in statistics and the agreed criteria: accuracy, comparability, coherence/consistency, accessibility and clarity, cost and burden.

### **2.1. Enterprises - the decisive point in the data collection process**

Data provision by enterprises is crucial towards the quality of the survey. Overall data quality is in principle predetermined at the top of the survey - in enterprises. Once this data collection process is finished, the completeness, validity and reliability of the data cannot be improved anymore. At the most, well justified, adapted and controlled imputation processes might remedy deficits, but not necessarily. Imputations are “last chance” but no alternative to a thorough follow-up with respondents.

- Key issues for presentation and/or discussion:
  - relevance of statistical information on CVT and on skill needs for enterprises - motivation of enterprises to participate in CVTS;
  - data availability in small, medium and large enterprises - from “on-the-spot” to “black hole”;
  - survey burden and enterprises' responsiveness - what makes the difference;

- data collection methods and how to facilitate data provision.

## 2.2. Experiences and recommendations: ways forward to improve the overall survey approach and, with it, data quality

National Statistical Offices bear an especially heavy responsibility for the success of the CVTS; they have the necessary expertise and experience to appropriately implement the survey. A thorough evaluation of the surveys, both from the European and national perspectives, will certainly reveal the potential for improvement: clear concepts and definitions; suitable national questionnaire design, including necessary explanations and relevant examples; motivation and comprehensive follow-up of respondents; adequate data collection methods; compliance with methodological requirements (e.g., up-dated sampling frame, representative sample); timeliness of data delivery to Eurostat.

There are many possible approaches and measures to increase acceptance and improve quality. Revisions solely oriented towards the reduction of items in the questionnaire will be as unsuccessful as the exclusive change of the survey design or the data collection mode. There is a need to consider the complexity and internal structure of the entire production process, whilst taking into account national characteristics and particularities.

- Key points of presentation and/or discussion:
  - Improve timeliness – how to organise and manage data collection and processing efficiently: the perspective of enterprises and NSIs;
  - Response burden vs response rates and quality (validity, reliability, completeness);
  - Reducing burden and survey cost - use of registers and other sources to complete the data;
  - Change the survey design - reduce response burden (phasing, modularisation);
  - Data collection mode(s) – is the Internet the future;
  - Other specific issues -
    - extension of NACE coverage;
    - extension of size coverage.

Katja Nestler  
Senior Expert - Statistics and indicators

## Cedefop Workshop on the Continuing Vocational Training Survey

### Roadmap to the fourth CVTS

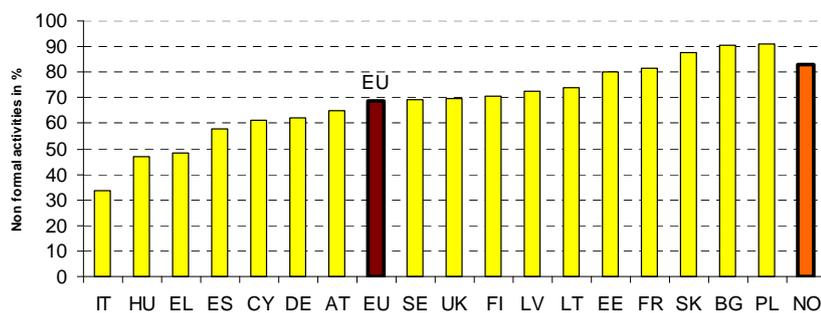
Sylvain Jouhette  
Unit F4 – Education, science and culture statistics  
sylvain.jouhette@ec.europa.eu

29-30 June 09



## 1. EU surveys on lifelong learning

Non-formal education and training activities sponsored fully or partially by the employer, age 25-64



Source: Adult Education Survey, 2007

29-30 June 09 CVTS Workshop



## 1. EU surveys on lifelong learning (Cont.)

EU surveys on participation in education and training (Regulations):

Survey	Main use	Reference period
AES	Provides detailed information on the participation of individuals in education and training activities	12 months
LFS	Provides annual evolutions for a limited set of indicators (structural indicator 'lifelong learning')	4 weeks
CVTS	Focusses on enterprise strategies for employee skill developments	12 months

## 2. Coherence of the three surveys

### ■ Impact on the LFS

- Distinction formal and non-formal education and training (CLA<sup>1</sup>)
- Discussion also on the possible use of a 12 months reference period

### ■ Impact on the CVTS

- Simplification of the CVTS questionnaire (incl. coherence with CLA)
- Few additional questions on skill needs
- Extension of the NACE sectors covered

### ■ Impact on the AES

- Extension of the survey to individuals aged 15-24
- Variables required for the coherence with CVTS

(1) CLA: Classification of learning activities

### 3 – Planning

#### ■ Timing for draft AES & CVTS4 Commission Regulations:

- European Statistical System Committee: May 2010
- 3 meetings of the Task Force in 2009 for CVTS (2 meetings for AES)
- Other aspects discussed in parallel and early 2010 if necessary.

#### ■ The CVTS workshop: at the ideal moment

- Scope of the changes discussed once within the CVTS4 Task Force
- Stakeholders views is crucial for the improvement of the next CVTS...  
...besides further ideas to enhance the use of CVTS data

Thanks for your attention

More information is available  
on Eurostat website at

<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/>



**CEDEFOP**

European Centre for the Development  
of Vocational Training

---

**Workshop Continuing Vocational Training Survey:  
relevance, lessons learnt and ways forward**

**29 / 30 June 2009, Cedefop**

**The relevance of the Continuing Vocational training Survey for  
European and national education, training and employment policies**

ZBW

*Zeitschrift für Berufs- und Wirtschaftspädagogik*

*Forthcoming, 2009*

**Katja Nestler / Alena Zukersteinova, Cedefop**

### The relevance of the Continuing Vocational Training Survey for monitoring the impact of education, training and employment policies

**KURZFASSUNG:** Die betriebliche Weiterbildung ist ein wesentlicher Teil des lebenslangen Lernens and fördert die kontinuierliche Anpassung der Fähigkeiten und Fertigkeiten der Beschäftigten an die Erfordernisse des Arbeitsmarktes sowie der Wirtschaft insgesamt. Informationen und statistische Ergebnisse zur betrieblichen Weiterbildung sind unerlässlich, um Fortschritte bei Investitionen in das Humankapital der Unternehmen zu erkennen, und somit auf Europäischer Ebene eine entsprechend kohärente und zielgerichtete Politik umzusetzen. Aktuelle und vergleichbare Statistiken zur betrieblichen Weiterbildung haben eine zentrale Bedeutung für alle betroffenen Interessengruppen – die Beschäftigten, Unternehmer, Sozialpartner und Regierungen.

Die Erhebung über betriebliche Weiterbildung (CVTS) liefert wertvolle Informationen, die für die verschiedensten Bereiche der Aus- und Weiterbildungspolitik sowie der Beschäftigungspolitik relevant sind. Die statistischen Ergebnisse werden zur Berechnung verschiedener Indikatoren benutzt, mit denen die Wirkung politischer Maßnahmen in diesen Bereichen eingeschätzt werden kann. In dieser Hinsicht ist allerdings das eigentliche Potential von CVTS – nämlich ein komplexes Bild der betrieblichen Weiterbildung zu zeichnen – noch nicht voll ausgeschöpft worden.

**ABSTRACT:** Continuing vocational training provided by enterprises is a key part of lifelong learning and supports the continuous adaptation of employees' skills to the requirements of the labour market and the economy as a whole. It is essential to have information and statistical data on continuing vocational training to monitor progress on investment in human capital in companies, as to implement a coherent and targeted policy at European level. Up to date and comparable statistics on vocational training in enterprises is a central dimension for all stakeholders involved – individuals, employers, social partners and governments.

The Continuing Vocational Training Survey (CVTS) provides valuable information that is relevant to several areas of education, training and employment policy. The statistical results are used to calculate various indicators that allow assessing the impact of these policies. In this respect, the inherent potential of the CVTS – namely providing a complex reflection of continuing vocational training in enterprises – has not been fully exploited yet.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Lisbon European Council in March 2000 set the strategic goal for Europe to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010. It stressed the central role of education and training in improving human capital and its impact on growth, productivity and employment, and emphasised the importance of investment in education and training throughout working life.

The Lisbon strategy and the Open Method of Coordination<sup>1</sup> provided a basis for discussing education and training policy at European level, and for establishing a European policy framework while respecting the responsibility of Member States for their education and training systems, as laid down in the Maastricht Treaty in 1992.<sup>2</sup>

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of February 2002 the Council and the Commission adopted a detailed work programme<sup>3</sup> for education and training systems up to 2010, which was welcomed by the Barcelona European Council in March 2002. The European Council set the objective of making education and training systems a world quality reference by 2010, and agreed on the three strategic objectives, as:

- *“improving the quality and effectiveness of education and training systems in the EU,*
- *facilitating access of all to education and training systems,*
- *opening up education and training systems to the wider world”.*

The European Council of March 2005<sup>4</sup> re-launched the Lisbon strategy by refocusing on growth and employment in Europe and even more on investment in human capital. The aim, at both European and national levels, is to take the necessary action to promote knowledge, attract more people into the labour market and create more jobs. In accordance with the request from the 2005 Spring European Council, the first integrated guidelines for growth and jobs for the period 2005 – 2008<sup>5</sup> were developed and consequently reviewed for the period 2008 – 2010.<sup>6</sup> The Integrated Guidelines represent a concrete way of refocusing and

1 The open method of coordination is a relatively new and intergovernmental means of governance in the European Union. Based on the voluntary cooperation of the Member States, it provides a new framework for cooperation between them. In this way, national policies can be directed towards certain common objectives. The Commission's role is limited to surveillance. The open method of coordination is used in areas which fall within the competence of the Member States, such as employment, social protection, social inclusion, education, youth and training.

2 THE MAASTRICHT TREATY. Maastricht, 7 February 1992 (<http://www.eurotreaties.com/maastrichtec.pdf>).

3 Council. Detailed work programme on the follow-up of the objectives of Education and Training systems in Europe. OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES, C 142/1, 14.6.2002.

4 EUROPEAN COUNCIL of 22 and 23 March 2005. Presidency conclusions. Brussels, 2005 ([http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/84335.pdf](http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/84335.pdf)).

5 Integrated guidelines for growth and jobs (2005 - 2008). Brussels, 2005 ([http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/pdf/COM2005\\_141\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/pdf/COM2005_141_en.pdf)).

6 Integrated guidelines for growth and jobs (2008-2010). Brussels, 2007 ([http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/pdf/european-dimension-200712-annual-progress-report/200712-annual-report-integrated-guidelines\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/pdf/european-dimension-200712-annual-progress-report/200712-annual-report-integrated-guidelines_en.pdf)).

embracing the Lisbon strategy. They provide broad directions for economic policy at three levels: macroeconomic (1 – 6), microeconomic (7 – 16) and employment (17 – 24). The following list of employment guidelines for 2005 – 2008 and 2008 – 2010 shows that all of them are related to continuing training:

- (17) Implement employment policies aimed at achieving full employment, improving quality and productivity at work, and strengthening social and territorial cohesion.
- (18) Promote a lifecycle approach to work.
- (19) Ensure inclusive labour markets, enhance work attractiveness, and make work pay for job seekers, including disadvantaged people and the inactive.
- (20) Improve matching of labour market needs.
- (21) Promote flexibility combined with employment security and reduce labour market segmentation, having due regard to the role of the social partners.
- (22) Ensure employment-friendly labour cost developments and wage setting mechanisms.
- (23) Expand and improve investment in human capital.
- (24) Adapt education and training systems in response to new competence requirements.

The renewed Employment Guidelines (2008 – 2010) stress the need to address the priority areas of attracting and retaining more people in employment, increasing labour supply and modernising social protection systems, improving adaptability of workers and enterprises, and increasing investment in human capital through better education and skills.

Similarly, the renewed Social Agenda<sup>7</sup>, proposed by the Commission in July 2008, seeks to empower Europeans, especially young people, to deal with rapidly changing developments that are shaped by globalisation, technological progress, and ageing societies. The Agenda is based on three interrelated and equally important policy goals:

- create opportunities by generating more and better jobs and facilitating mobility;
- provide and improve access to good quality education with the aim to ensure access for all European citizens to education and skills throughout their lives;
- demonstrate solidarity and foster social inclusion and integration.

Current European education, training and employment policy objectives are strongly linked to improving adult learning and continuing vocational training.

## 2. THE CONTINUING VOCATIONAL TRAINING SURVEY AS A TOOL FOR MONITORING IMPLEMENTATION OF DIFFERENT POLICIES

It has been recognised that evidence-based policy-making<sup>8</sup> is a long-term investment. Since the 1980s there has been a growing need for data on the European labour market and vocational training provision. European and national indicators of investment in human capital are increasingly important, as they reflect the economic and social

7 Renewed social agenda: Opportunities, access and solidarity in 21st century Europe. Brussels, 2008 (<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=547&langId=en>).

8 Evidence-based policy-making stands for an *approach* to base policy development, implementation and monitoring on robust evidence, such as facts, indicators and data from research and statistics.

conditions in the society as a whole. Such indicators are now playing an ever more important role in evidence-based policy-making.

In general, indicators should be relevant to current policy debates and genuinely indicate performance relative to policy objectives. They should be cross-nationally valid and feasible in the given field, and should yield comparable data. Indicators should be as simple as possible but also sufficiently complex, comparable and country-specific, if necessary.

The ‘Education and Training 2010 work programme’ as a consistent political framework defines not only the key issues to be addressed to achieve the agreed strategic objectives, but it also defines the main themes for exchanging good practice and experiences. For the first time, it also proposes a list of indicators for measuring progress. Though the proposed indicators have been linked to 13 detailed objectives within the overall strategic framework, they have not yet been determined to be feasible and appropriate. To further review the proposed indicators and to achieve their implementation, the European Commission set up the Standing Group of Indicators and Benchmarks (SGIB), with representatives from the Commission, Cedefop, Eurydice, ETF and all Member States.

Indicators should reflect key aspects of how education and training systems function in the Member States, and should build on continuously available, reliable and comparable data. Though such data should allow valid comparisons, there is also a need to determine and interpret a set of indicators to reflect the variety of systems in the Member States. A focus on complex patterns in a wider context is more useful in this context than a straightforward comparison of “figures”.

One of the key issues for further consideration was the availability of relevant data sources. The European Continuing Vocational Training Survey (CVTS) attracted notice as one of the possible data sources. Several indicators linked to the detailed objectives could potentially be covered by the CVTS:

- “Percentage of working time spent by employees on training per age groups” linked to objective “2.2 *Making learning more attractive*”, evidence
- “investment in human resources” linked to objective “1.5 *Making the best use of resources*”, but also

- “percentage of teachers and trainers who follow continuous professional training” linked to objective “1.1 Improving education and training for teachers and trainers” (if coverage of CVTS would be extended to the education sector).

To monitor the Employment Guidelines, a set of annually updated indicators has been developed by the Employment Committee (EMCO). The EMCO monitors the employment situation and employment policies in the European Union and promotes the coordination of employment and labour market policies between Member States. The set of indicators (around 60), which follows the structure of the Employment Guidelines, is at present further divided into indicators for monitoring and indicators for additional employment analysis (former key and context indicators respectively). The CVTS is currently used to analyse guideline “No 23 Expand and improve investment in human capital”.

## 2.1 Benchmarks and the possible integration of the CVTS

The Council Conclusions on reference levels of European average performance in education and training (benchmarks)<sup>9</sup> strengthened the role of indicators and benchmarks in monitoring and measuring the role of education and training within the overall Lisbon strategy. Within Europe, Member States will be able to compare their achievements to an average. Such benchmarks have been established for early school leavers; graduates in mathematics, science and technology; upper-secondary education attainment; literacy of 15-year-olds; the participation of the adult working age population (25 – 64 years) in lifelong learning (LLL indicator and benchmark). Without going into the details, there is some evidence that the LLL indicator, currently derived from the European Labour Force Survey, underestimates participation in lifelong learning. Both the results for the LLL ad-hoc module 2003 and the just published first results from the Adult Education Survey show higher participation rates. Methodological constraints, like the short reference period of four weeks and possibly proxy interviews contribute to the underestimation of LLL in the EU-LFS. In addition, because of the strict input orientation of this indicator, it considers neither the multiple dimensions nor the social and economic impact of lifelong learning, either in terms of individual benefits or societal benefits. A new initiative, supported by the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission, aims at developing a European Lifelong Learning Index (ELL Index); this is based on a forerunner model, the Canadian Composite Learning Index, developed in 2006 by the Canadian Council of Learning<sup>10</sup>. Specific indicators used in the 2008 Canadian Composite Learning Index are participation in job-related training and availability of workplace training. As a composite measure, the ELL Index will cover the different aspects of lifelong learning, and should be linked to the socio-economic outcomes of learning. The feasibility study on the ELL Index (BERTELSMANN STIFTUNG 2007) considers the CVTS as one of the data sources for drawing indicators on the supply and volume of continuing

9 Council Conclusions on Reference levels of European Average Performance in Education and Training (benchmarks); May 2003, 8981/03.

10 [www.ccl-cca.ca/cli](http://www.ccl-cca.ca/cli).

vocational training in enterprises. CVTS data on forms of training, training costs, but also on enterprises' training policy are now being considered for the ELL Index.

## 2.2 Short about CVTS

It is worth recalling that, from its starting point, the CVTS was designed to reflect enterprises' contribution to lifelong learning and their role in resolving labour market and employment problems. The Council Resolution of 2003<sup>11</sup> on social and human capital underlined the

“importance of ensuring that all workers [...] are fully involved and properly trained [...] which can help to facilitate change, and are thus aware of the benefits in terms of improved competitiveness and quality of working life [...]”.

The Council Resolution of 2007<sup>12</sup> on the new skills for new jobs invites the Member States and the Commission, among others,

“to equip people for new jobs [...] through providing and encouraging initial and continuing education and training for skills and competences of the highest quality [...]”.

The CVTS is the only international data source that provides detailed comparable statistics on:

- enterprise policy to manage and provide continuing vocational training (CVT), including measures to identify skill and training needs,
- the types, content and volume of CVT,
- enterprises' own resources and use of external providers, and
- the cost that enterprises bear for providing CVT.

From the first round in 1994 (CVTS1; reference year 1993) to the third round in 2006 (CVTS3; reference year 2005), the survey went through several phases of development to extend the coverage and to improve data quality. As of the implementation of CVTS3, a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council and an implementing Regulation of the Commission<sup>13</sup> provided a solid basis for the regular and stable implementation of the survey over the coming years. It will provide not only data on continuing vocational training (CVT), but also basic data on initial vocational training (IVT) in enterprises.

## 2.3 The CVTS and its use for reporting, monitoring and analyses

Following-up “Education and Training 2010”, the SGIB was also given the mandate to assist and support the European Commission in continuous reporting on its implementation. In February 2004, the Council and the Commission approved the first

11 COUNCIL RESOLUTION on social and human capital, June 2003; 9688/03.

12 COUNCIL RESOLUTION of 15 November 2007 on the new skills for new jobs; 2007/C290/01.

13 COMMISSION REGULATION (EC) No 198/2006 of 3 February 2006 implementing Regulation (EC) No 1552/2005 of the European Parliament and the Council on statistics relating to vocational training in enterprises. (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:032:0015:0033:EN:PDF>).

“Joint Interim report on the implementation of the detailed work programme on the follow-up of the objectives of education and training systems in Europe”<sup>14</sup>. In the underlying Commission Staff Working Document “Implementation of the “Education & Training 2010” programme”<sup>15</sup>, results from the second CVTS were considered for the first time in such a policy context, and have been used as a data source for deriving the following indicators:

- “*hours in CVT courses per 1000 working hours*”, both for enterprises providing courses and in all enterprises, and
- “*enterprise expenditure on CVT courses as percentage of total labour cost*”.

Subsequent developments were focussed on improving the relevance and quality of indicators while reducing their number. In its Conclusions of 24 May 2005 on “New indicators in Education and Training”<sup>16</sup>, the Council asked the Commission to

“assess progress made towards the establishment of a coherent framework of indicators and benchmarks for following-up on the Lisbon objectives in the area of education and training, including a reconsideration of the suitability of existing indicators for monitoring progress”.

The driving force for the establishment of such a framework was the Standing Group on Indicators and Benchmarks (SGIB). Finally, in its conclusions of May 2007 on a coherent framework of indicators and benchmarks<sup>17</sup>, the Council confirmed that

- the monitoring of performance and progress through indicators and benchmarks is an essential part of the Lisbon process,
- the development of new indicators shall fully respect the responsibility of Member States for their education systems and should not impose undue burden on the institutions concerned,
- the five benchmarks are of continuing relevance,
- there is a need to improve the quality of data produced by the European Statistical System.

14 THE COUNCIL. "Education & Training 2010": the success of the Lisbon strategy hinges on urgent reforms, March 2004.

15 COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT, Implementation of the “Education & Training 2010” programme; SEC (2003) 1250.

16 COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS of 24 May 2005 on new indicators in education and training. (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2005:141:0007:0008:EN:PDF>).

17 COUNCIL CONCLUSION on a coherent framework of indicators and benchmarks for monitoring progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training; 25 May 2007.

## The Council

“invites the Commission to make use of, or further develop, sixteen of the proposed core indicators”; and “invites the Member States and the Commission to closely cooperate in the development and implementation of the coherent framework, including the improvement of the statistical basis; [...]”.

With regard to employment policies, the implementation of the European Employment Strategy is monitored by Employment Committee (EMCO). In line with the revised Lisbon strategy, it examines employment policies within the context of the Integrated Guidelines. Results of the CVTS are currently used in two indicators designed to analyse Employment Guideline “No 23: *expand and improve investment in human capital*”:

- “*investment by enterprises in training of adults*” as an investment by enterprises in continuing vocational training in relation to labour costs, and
- “*participation in continuing vocational training*” as a share of employees participating in continuing vocational training.

### 2.4 Reflection on VET within the overall process

The May 2007 Council Conclusions substantiate, for the first time, a clear political framework, and set the terms and guiding principles for further indicator development. They determine the scope of future possible achievements, but also point out limitations in developing education and training statistics. Regarding statistics on vocational education and training (VET), the Council made reference to the development of the VET component within the coherent framework of indicators and benchmarks.

Since the 2002 Copenhagen Declaration<sup>18</sup>, improving vocational education and training systems is embedded within the overall Lisbon strategy. The Ministers agreed that the implementation of enhanced cooperation in VET should be part of the follow-up of the objectives report. Since Copenhagen a ministerial meeting reviews progress every two years – so far in Maastricht in 2004 and in Helsinki in 2006. The Communiqués agreed at these meetings between Ministers, the Commission, and European social partners underline the importance of adequate and consistent VET data and indicators for evidence-based training policy. At the Ministerial follow-up Conference in 2008, the Commission should give attention to

“improving the scope, comparability and reliability of VET statistics”, the “development of the VET component within the coherent framework of indicators and benchmarks” and “the development of statistical information on investment in and the financing of VET”.

### 2.5 The coherent framework, policy reporting and the CVTS

An examination of the framework of sixteen indicators and reporting practices does not make visible that the CVTS will constitute a major source of data for the policy

18 DECLARATION OF THE EUROPEAN MINISTERS OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING, AND THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION, convened in Copenhagen on 29 and 30 November 2002, on enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training.

reporting system. After 2004 the survey was used in Commission Staff Working Documents to follow progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training (2005, 2006), and in the Maastricht study “Achieving the Lisbon goal: the contribution of VET” (2004). Since then, however, the second CVTS has become outdated. Provisional results from the third round (reference year 2005) started to be published since autumn 2007, and could be used for policy analysis and reporting from 2008 onwards.

One of the obstacles that could prevent the use of the CVTS as a regular major source in policy reporting is the relatively low frequency of the survey, which is implemented only every five years. Another one is that the CVTS does not cover all enterprises or the whole economy. The survey is conducted only in companies with 10 or more persons, excluding micro enterprises, which, however, are enormously important to the European economy as they account for about nine out of ten enterprises, almost three out of ten jobs, and just over one fifth of value added in the EU<sup>19</sup>. Thus, policies targeted towards the provision of continuing vocational training in micro enterprises cannot be currently supported by data provided by the CVTS. The survey also does not cover enterprises working in primary sector and in non-marketed services (public administration, education, health and social work). As an example, the inclusion of the education sector, which as yet is not covered, would provide data on the continuing training of teachers and trainers. A further problem with the survey is that the full set of results on the European level is available too late after the reference year.

There are no easy ways of overcoming these obstacles. Still, the CVTS is indispensable as a unique source of data on continuing training in enterprises. If the CVTS is seen as part of an integrated system of statistics on lifelong learning, other data sources, effected between rounds of the CVTS, may close the survey’s gaps. Alternate surveys, for example the CVTS and the European Adult Education Survey (AES), could provide regular information on continuing vocational training over time, provided that the concepts applied in the CVTS are reflected in the conceptual approach of the AES.

Another solution might be to implement a “core CVTS” more frequently, in between full-scale surveys. A short version with a low burden on respondents could improve data quality, make results available more quickly, and better respond to policy information needs.

### 3. THE POTENTIAL OF THE CVTS AND EMERGING POLICY ISSUES

Providing a set of high quality data to monitor the continuing vocational training activities of European enterprises is essential for education, training and employment policies. These data add value to the assessment of enterprise competitiveness and workforce employability. In the context of the Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs, it is important to ensure that education and training systems become more responsive to the labour market, and reflect our increasingly knowledge-based economy and society. Several other objectives could also be served by policies targeted towards continuing

19 EUROSTAT. Enterprises in Europe – does size matter? STATISTIC IN FOCUS, theme 4 – 39/2002.

vocational training. Continuing training can support flexicurity<sup>20</sup> policies by equipping people with relevant skills (BRED-GAARD / LARSEN 2007). This would make labour markets more dynamic, improve occupational mobility, and help to reduce social exclusion and income inequalities by increasing the human capital of workers at risk (particularly low paid / low skilled workers, workers with disabilities, and workers from disadvantaged or minority groups). Continuing training can also help to sustain our social protection systems (pensions and healthcare) by keeping older workers active in the labour market. Allowing workers to continually upgrade their skills can also increase the innovation capacity of enterprises. Results from the second CVTS show that participation in and intensity of training was higher in enterprises that introduced technological changes than in those that did not.<sup>21</sup> It is after all in enterprises that labour market and employment problems are solved, as it is mainly in enterprises that competences and skills are developed through continuing vocational training (EC 2007c).

The potential of the CVTS – combining quantitative data on volume and content with qualitative data on the management and organisation of training – has not been fully exploited yet for policy. Still, the use of CVTS is limited to a number of basic indicators, such as participation rates or training hours per employee. But there is a need of better understanding the complexity of training provision in enterprises and identifying policy-relevant patterns, within the various “patterns”, whilst considering the variety of systems in the Member States systems; it is still a challenge to be met. However, the CVTS can still respond to several emerging policy issues, e. g.:

- what are the general and specific conditions that affect the provision of training in enterprises, relevant to policy conclusions, public measures and incentives;
- what is the relation between initial and continuing training provision;
- how does the relation between non-formal and informal training change in enterprises;
- what is the link between training provision in enterprises and in the training market, and what is the role of public training providers;
- what is the role of social partners in providing enterprise training.

There is evidence from the second CVTS that agreements between employers and employees’ representatives improve participation in and intensity of continuing vocational training. This is specifically true for small enterprises.<sup>22</sup>

A report of the Business Forum for multilingualism<sup>23</sup>, published in July 2008, shows that employees’ language skills constitute a competitive advantage – they are an asset for new business opportunities in the globalised world. Thus, companies need to form language strategies and invest in language training. CVTS results on language training in enterprises are now available.

20 Globalisation and technological progress are rapidly changing labour markets, both for enterprises and workers. Flexicurity is a policy strategy to enhance the flexibility of labour markets, work organisations and labour relations on the one hand, and employment and income security on the other.

21 Eurostat on-line database: Education and training / Training / Continuing Vocational Training.

22 Eurostat on-line database: Education and training / Training / Continuing Vocational Training.

23 Business Forum for multilingualism, established by the European Commission in 2007. ([http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/index_en.htm)).

The knowledge, skills and competences Europe needs to compete successfully in a global labour market is nowadays one of the major issues on the European Union policy agenda. The CVTS provides relevant information on how enterprises perceive skill needs and how they gather information about the training needs of their employees. The questions on skill needs form only a small part of the questionnaire; in CVTS3 they are only asked to training enterprises. This variable does not provide information on the kind of skills needed, but there is information on the fields in which the company provides training. According to the results of the CVTS (BEHRINGER 2009), a disturbingly high proportion of enterprises is not aware of any “new” skill needs emerging in a period of three years. In view of the fact that technological or organisational changes that require new skills occur in many enterprises, this raises some concerns about the understanding of “new skill needs”, and possibly the availability of relevant information, in enterprises. The question on future skill needs in the CVTS should perhaps be asked in a different way. Although the CVTS does not address (yet) directly the question on the type of future skill needs, it helps to monitor training needs and training provision in different fields at the workplace, and thus indirectly provides useful information on skill needs in enterprises.

With the further development of the CVTS, it could emerge as one of the ways of monitoring the implementation of common European tools in VET that focus on the identification and recognition of learning outcomes, regardless of how these have been acquired. The CVTS results could help identify the role that enterprises play in this process.

#### Literature:

- BEHRINGER, F.: Skill needs in enterprises: CVTS results. In: CEDEFOP: Skills for Europe’s future: anticipating occupational skill needs. Luxembourg, Publications Office, 2009.
- BERTELSMANN STIFTUNG: European Lifelong Learning Index (ELLI). Monitoring lifelong learning and its effects on economic prosperity and social well-being in the European and regional context. Feasibility Study – Final Report. 13. December 2007, URL: [http://www.elli-project.bertelsmannstiftung.de/ELLI-Feasibilitystudy-final\\_080213.pdf](http://www.elli-project.bertelsmannstiftung.de/ELLI-Feasibilitystudy-final_080213.pdf) [09.12.2008].
- BREDGAARD, T. / LARSEN, F.: Comparing Flexicurity in Denmark and Japan. Aalborg University, Denmark, 2007, URL: <http://www.tilburguniversity.nl/faculties/law/research/flexicurity/publications/papers/fxp2007-13jiltpreport-final.pdf> [09.12.2008].
- COUNCIL OF THE EU: Resolution on social and human capital, 9688/03, June 2003.
- COUNCIL OF THE EU: Conclusion on a coherent framework of indicators and benchmarks for monitoring progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training, 25 May 2007.
- COUNCIL OF THE EU: Council conclusions on reference levels of European average performance in education and training (benchmarks) (8981/03), 2003.
- COUNCIL OF THE EU: Council conclusions of 24 May 2005 on new indicators in education and training. Official Journal of the European Union, 10.6.2005, C 141, 2005a, S.7 – 8, URL: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2005:141:0007:0008:EN:PDF> [09.12.2008].
- COUNCIL OF THE EU: European Council Brussels, 22 and 23 March 2005: Presidency conclusions (7619/1/05 REV 1), 2005b, URL: [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/84335.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/84335.pdf) [13.01.2009].
- COUNCIL OF THE EU: Council resolution of 15 November 2007 on the new skills for new jobs. Official Journal of the European Union, 4.12.2007, C290, 2007, S. 1 – 3, URL: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2007:290:0001:0003:EN:PDF> [13.01.2009].

## Cedefop Workshop – CVTS: relevance, lessons learnt and ways forward – 29 / 30 June 2009

- EUROPEAN COMMISSION: Declaration of the European Ministers of Vocational Education and Training, and the European Commission convened in Copenhagen on 29 and 30 November 2002, on enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training, 2002a.
- EUROPEAN COMMISSION (ED.): Continuing training in enterprises in Europe – Results of the second European Continuing Vocational Training Survey in enterprises, Luxembourg, Publication Office, 2002b.
- EUROPEAN COMMISSION: Commission’s action plan for skills and mobility (COM(2002)72), 2002c.
- EUROPEAN COMMISSION: Declaration of the European Ministers of Vocational Education and Training, and the European Commission, convened in Copenhagen on 29 and 30 November 2002, on enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training, 2002d.
- EUROPEAN COMMISSION: Implementation of the “Education & Training 2010” programme (Commission Staff Working Document, SEC(2003)1250), 2003.
- EUROPEAN COMMISSION: Integrated guidelines for growth and jobs (2005 – 2008) (COM(2005) 141 final), 2005a, URL: [http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/pdf/COM2005\\_141\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/pdf/COM2005_141_en.pdf) [13.01.2009].
- EUROPEAN COMMISSION: Progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training. 2005 Report (Commission staff working paper), 2005b.
- EUROPEAN COMMISSION: Progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training. Report based on indicators and benchmarks. Report 2006 (Commission staff working paper), 2006a.
- EUROPEAN COMMISSION: Commission regulation (EC) No 198/2006 of 3 February 2006 implementing Regulation (EC) No 1552/2005 of the European Parliament and the Council on statistics relating to vocational training in enterprises. Official Journal of the European Union, 4.2.2006, L 32, 2006b, S. 15 – 33, URL: <http://eur-ex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:032:0015:0033:EN:PDF> [09.12.2008].
- EUROPEAN COMMISSION: Business Forum for multilingualism, established by the European Commission in 2007, 2007a, URL: [http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/Focus/doc1460\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/Focus/doc1460_en.htm) [13.01.2009].
- EUROPEAN COMMISSION: Communication from the Commission to the Spring European Council. Integrated guidelines for growth and jobs (2008 – 2010) (COM(2007)803 final), 2007b, URL: [http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/pdf/european-dimension-200712-annual-progress-report/200712-annual-report-integrated-guidelines\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/pdf/european-dimension-200712-annual-progress-report/200712-annual-report-integrated-guidelines_en.pdf) [09.12.2008].
- EUROPEAN COMMISSION: Directorate-General for Employment Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. Employment in Europe. Luxembourg, Publications Office, 2007c.
- EUROPEAN COMMISSION: Renewed social agenda: opportunities, access and solidarity in 21st century Europe (COM(2008)412 final), 2008, URL: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=547&langId=en> [09.12.2008].
- EUROPEAN COUNCIL: Detailed work programme on the follow-up of the objectives of Education and Training systems in Europe. Official Journal of the European Communities, C 142/1, 14.6.2002.
- EUROPEAN COUNCIL: ‘Education & Training 2010’: the success of the Lisbon strategy hinges on urgent reforms, March 2004.
- EUROSTAT: Enterprises in Europe – does size matter? STATISTIC IN FOCUS, theme 4, (39) 2002.
- LENEY, T. / AMMERMAN, P. / BRANDSMA, J. / BEHRINGER, F. / COLES, M. / FEENSTRA, B. / GROLLMANN, P. / GREEN, A. / SHAPIRO, H. / WESTERHUIS, A.: Achieving the Lisbon goal: the contribution of VET. Final report to the European Commission, 01.11.2004. QCA, London, 2004, URL: [http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/studies/maastricht\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/studies/maastricht_en.pdf) [09.12.2008].
- MAASTRICHT TREATY: Maastricht, 7 February 1992, URL: <http://www.eurotreaties.com/maastrichtec.pdf>[09.12.2008]

## Evidence-based European education and training policy

### The relevance of CVTS data

**Oyvind Bjerkestrand, European Commission, DG EAC**

As part of the overall Lisbon strategy, the Council set out broad common objectives for the education and training systems of the EU. The Copenhagen process is an important component of the strategy. It is implemented through the open method of coordination, using indicators and benchmarks to support evidence-based policy making and to monitor progress.

The Copenhagen process calls for a review of progress every two years. This has taken place in Maastricht in 2004, in Helsinki in 2006 and in 2008 in Bordeaux. The Bordeaux communiqué underlined that *"the cooperation process launched in Copenhagen in 2002 has proved effective. It has contributed to create a more positive and more dynamic image of VET, while preserving the wealth of the diversity of systems."*

Through the Copenhagen process, it is essential to have information on VET to monitor progress in the field. There are several sources that provide data on VET, for example through surveys like the Labour Force survey (LFS) the Adult education survey (AES) and through the common UNESCO, OECD and Eurostat (UOE) data collection. The Continuing Vocational Training Survey (CVTS) is the main source of data on vocational training in enterprises and a common European questionnaire is used. Users should note the differences in methodologies (collection method, sample, time scale, definition, etc) between the various sources.

In the yearly Commission Staff working document "Progress Towards the Lisbon Objectives in Education and Training", the area of VET is covered in a separate chapter and the most recent CVTS data has been analysed. The next report will aim at analysing further the data available from the different surveys and sources and evaluate if results can be combined in order to get a broader view on the development of continuing vocational training.

Even if there are data-sources available in the area of VET, the Bordeaux communiqué highlights the importance of developmental work in this field. It is recommended to focus on improving the scope, comparability and reliability of VET statistics, and the development of a more explicit VET component within the coherent framework of indicators and benchmarks. Moreover, the Bordeaux communiqué introduces the new objective of strengthening the links between VET and the labour market. This ties in with the "New skills for new jobs" initiative on anticipating and matching labour market and skills needs and this initiative should also be analysed in view of data available from the next rounds of the CVTS.

My presentation will focus on initiatives taken or underway to improve the evidence-base for policy making in the area of vocational education and training.

# Evidence-based European education and training policy - the relevance of CVTS data

Oyvind Bjerkestrand  
DG Education and Culture  
Unit "Analyses and studies"



## Policy background

---

### Copenhagen process

- Integrated part of the overall Lisbon strategy
- Based on a voluntary approach and providing concrete and practical results
- Based on agreement between 33 countries, European social partners and the Commission
- Based on a Lifelong learning perspective



## Copenhagen process cont.



- Strategy for improving the performance, quality and attractiveness of VET
- Promoting enhanced European cooperation in VET
- Develop common tools
- Foster mutual learning
- Take stakeholders on board



## European cooperation in VET



- Strengthen the European dimension
- Improve transparency, information and guidance systems
- Recognize competences and qualifications
- Promote quality assurance
- Review every two years



## Demand for indicators and statistics

---

- **Maasticht:** Improve the scope, precision and reliability of VET statistics
- **Helsinki:** “Adequate and consistent data and indicators are the key to understanding what is happening in VET, to strengthening mutual learning, to supporting research and to laying the foundations for evidence-based training policy”
- **Bordeaux:** Develop a more explicit VET component within the coherent framework



## Implementation of Common Tools; main developments

---

- **Promoting mobility**
  - Europass;
  - European Qualification Framework (EQF);
  - European Credit system for VET (ECVET)
- **Promoting quality**
  - European quality assurance reference framework (EQARF) mechanism to establish mutual trust whilst promoting the modernisation of education and training systems.



## Indicators in the area of VET



- There are key surveys providing data on VET at European level:
  - Continuing vocational training survey (CVTS);
  - Labour Force survey (LFS);
  - Adult education survey (AES);
  - Through UOE (enrolments, expenditures)
- New surveys needed in order to get data on outcome and output, like the German initiative LSA VET



## Why do we need CVTS?



- Growing policy interest in the field
- Essential to have information on CVT to monitor progress
- Central for all stakeholders, individuals, employers, social partners, governments



## Why do we need CVTS cont.



- CVTS designed to reflect enterprises contribution to Lifelong Learning
- CVTS an important international source of data on vocational training in enterprises in Europe; Common European variable list is used
- Development since 1993 to extend the coverage and to improve quality - Fourth round in 2010 - longitudinal data



## Why do we need CVTS cont.



- The CVTS is the only international data source that provides detailed comparable statistics on:
  - Enterprises providing CVT,
  - the types, content and volume of CVT,
  - enterprises' own resources and use of external providers, and
  - the cost that enterprises bear for providing CVT.



## Use of CVTS results



- Yearly Progress report make use of data from CVTS
- In 2008 report:
  - Training duration
  - Cost of CVT (per employee and % of total labour cost)
- Used for briefings and projects for ex. results like:
  - Older workers less likely to participate in CVT, differences stronger in small firms
  - On job training more frequent in large than in small enterprises
- Analyse further in 2009 report also in relation to other available sources



## Challenges



- Low frequency (every five year)
- Does not cover all enterprises (not less than 10)
- Improve the link to other data sources like LFS and AES.
- Potential of CVTS has not been fully exploited by DG EAC
- Future skill needs?



## **The role of CVTS data in monitoring developments within the European initiative New Skills for New Jobs**

**Anastasios Bisopoulos, Employment Analysis Unit  
DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities  
European Commission  
e-mail: [Anastasios.Bisopoulos@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Anastasios.Bisopoulos@ec.europa.eu)**

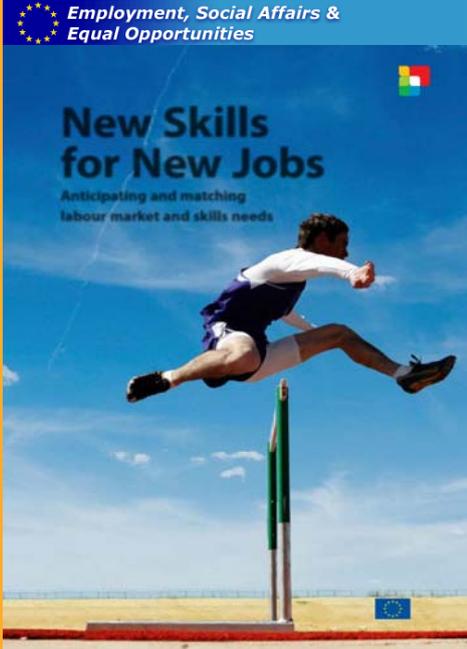
### *Abstract*

In this presentation, I will reflect on the ideas put forward by the European initiative New Skills for New Jobs and more specifically in what regards its relevance with the CVTS survey. The main aim of the initiative is to create the appropriate conditions for employability and social-mobility of workers. With persistent upgrading of skills and matching skills to jobs, both employability and productivity can be improved simultaneously. Moreover, the initiative aims at helping the vulnerable low-skilled workers, at reducing the cost of skills gaps and at improving prospects for internal and external mobility of workers. All the stakeholders need to be involved for this effort to have any chance of success. Their needs should be taken into account when designing surveys. In this respect, the next round of the CVTS survey should help SMEs to deal with labour shortages by gathering information on quantitative as well as qualitative aspects of skills' acquisition in SMEs. It should also encourage SMEs as well as larger companies to provide high quality apprenticeship and traineeship places for young people. It could help companies to better assess the competencies of employees, something that will create incentives for the improvement of their employability. Questions that will help to focus training activities to skills in demand as well as better integration of lifelong learning activities inside companies are very useful. The significance of discovering gender imbalances on skills in demand should not be underestimated. It could become an essential service of the survey in filling job vacancies. Finally, the connection of CVTS with other surveys and studies supported by the New Skills for New Jobs initiative will help the coherence of the European Employment Strategy. Sample questions in line with the above ideas are suggested.

### **Reference:**

*European Commission, Communication 'New Skills for New Jobs. Anticipating and matching labour market and skills needs', COM (2008) 868 final*

Employment, Social Affairs & Equal Opportunities



**New Skills for New Jobs**  
Anticipating and matching labour market and skills needs

The role of CVTS data in monitoring developments within the European initiative New Skills for New Jobs

-1-

Employment, Social Affairs & Equal Opportunities

*Key aims of NS4NJ*

**Employability & social mobility**

*How?*

**By skills upgrading, by matching skills to jobs**

*Immediate benefits?*

- **improves employability and productivity**
- **helps vulnerable low-skilled**
- **reduces costs of skills gaps**
- **improves internal & external mobility**

-2-

## Who is involved ?

### Main Stakeholders

Enterprises

Employees

Public and Private Employment Services

Educational, Training, and LM institutions,  
researchers, policy analysts, economists ...

## What do stakeholders want?

- keep people at work (by subsidies, reduced working hours etc.) instead of having them redundant.
- incentives that encourage enhancement of qualification during the times of inactivity
- help for mobility

most critical: increased transparency in labour  
market.....(information, trends, institutions, ...)

## In detail...

- ⇒ SMEs understand the benefits of CVTS
- ⇒ all info widely available
- ⇒ exchange views on data and trends
- ⇒ understanding of candidates' qualifications
- ⇒ info at local level
- ⇒ quantitative as well as qualitative data
- ⇒ preventing shortages by eliminating gender imbalances

## More...

- ⇒ involvement in forecasting skills needs
- ⇒ design targeted training courses
- ⇒ Participate in:
  - ⇒ social dialogue,
  - ⇒ business-education dialogue,
  - ⇒ bilateral dialogue with third countries,
  - ⇒ policy dialogue with neighbourhood countries
- ⇒ Policy makers interested in evaluating effectiveness of NS4NJ measures

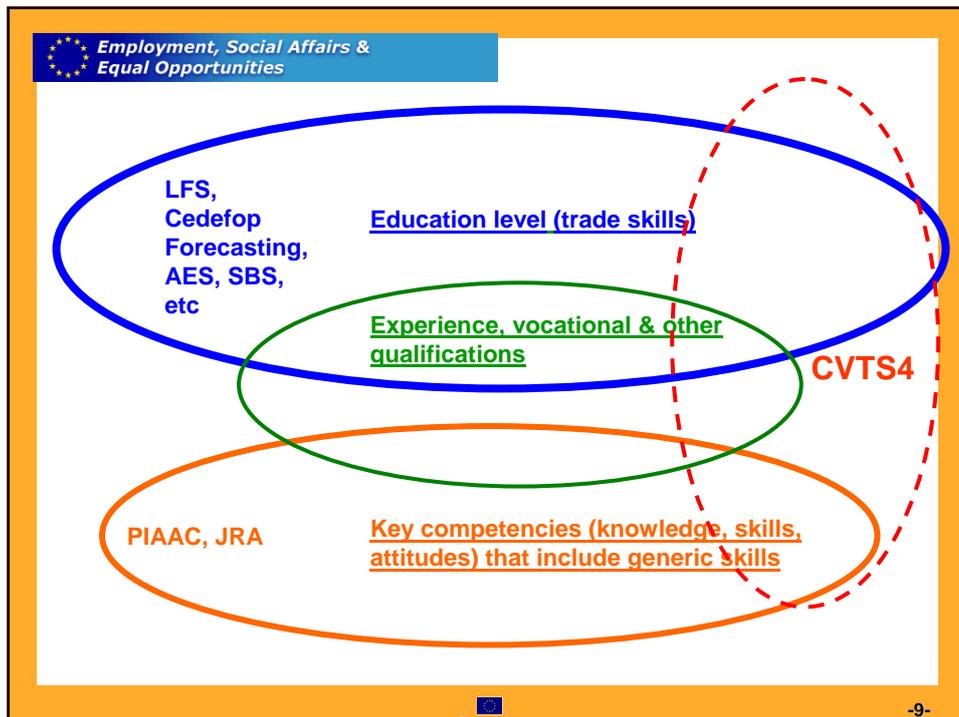
## What is the added value of CVTS?

**If skills forecasting is validated with information from enterprises, it would become a critical strategy element**

- ⇒ Helps SME's to deal with labour shortages (quantitative and qualitative)
- ⇒ Encourage companies to provide high quality apprenticeship and traineeship places to young people
- ⇒ Better assessment of competences => employability
- ⇒ Guidance for employees, managers and owners of companies
- ⇒ Focus training on skills in demand => Better integration into LLL

## What elements in CVTS?

- Reflect NS4NJ priorities
- Reflect Needs of stakeholders
  
- But without imposing excessive burden
  
- In other words questions that:  
=>connect CVTS + current surveys =“validation”  
=>reply to the stakeholders



- Employment, Social Affairs & Equal Opportunities
- ### Examples for CVTS questions
- Percentage of personnel at the three levels of education
  - What level of education is (and/or will be) in demand (to select from the three levels)
  - What qualifications or additional education are in demand (to select from a list)
  - or they think will be in demand (separate column for indirect forecasting)
  - What skills are (and/or will be) critical for the company? To select several from a list where generic skills are explained
  - What skills are in shortage in your company?
- 10-

### Examples for CVTS questions cont...

- What is the existing gender distribution in the company for skills in shortage? (an approximate percentage in relation to the previous question)
- What skills are often missing from new recruits? (to select from same list as in question 3)
- What qualifications are missing particularly in young recruits? (select from a list of qualifications e.g. chartered accountant, chartered surveyor, etc.)
- If you decide to expand your business in the next two to five years either horizontally or vertically, what kind of skills, would you consider indispensable for the persons you will recruit? (to select from the same list)
- Are there skills or qualifications that you need less or more as a result of the crisis? (select from same lists)

Ευχαριστώ για την προσοχή σας!

Thank you for your attention

Anastasios.Bisopoulos@ec.europa.eu



## CVTS beyond Europe – a chance to set a standard

Jens Johansen

Cedefop CVTS Workshop, 29 June 2009, Thessaloniki



### The challenge of collecting data outside of Europe

- Few countries carry out enterprise surveys
- Vocational education and training have a low priority
- Large number of national stakeholders
  - more than 20 ministries involved in Egypt and Syria
- National definitions of central concepts are not harmonised
- Large informal economies lead to gaps in knowledge about what takes place in enterprises



## MEDA-ETE (Education and Training for Employment)

- ETF undertook a 3 year project (2006-2009) to collect data on education and training as well as on labour market issues in ten Mediterranean countries
- All countries were represented by several stakeholders:
  - Ministries of education
  - Ministries of labour (or employment)
  - National Statistical Offices



## ETF's partner countries



## 'Harmonised' data collection

- First data collection undertaken to take stock of national data → age brackets and other definitions harmonised on that basis for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> data collection
- 19 indicators agreed upon for collection (context, i.e. largely labour market; access and equity; investment in education and training) plus 3 questions concerning the involvement of social partners in the organisation of VET
  - 1 explicit indicator on continuing education and training



## Coverage varied tremendously amongst the ten countries

- Very good coverage of macro-economic data and basic labour market indicators
- Investment in education and training reasonably covered (2 countries unable to provide data)
- Data on TVET poor (only 4 could provide more than half of the agreed indicators)
- **Continuing training only covered by two countries**
  - Tunisia and Turkey



## But we know that vocational training takes place...

- Inventories of available programmes carried out by ETF in seven countries, incl. informal programmes
  - apprenticeship is often informal (Mahgreb)
  - enterprise funded training not covered explicitly
- Training funds exist in several countries, even if the funds flow very slowly into training activities
  - e.g. Jordan (1% of payroll)



## What next?

- Both EU member states and non-EU member states would benefit from conducting similar surveys
  - Comparisons allow for possible benchmarks
  - Broader coverage will further test the universality of CVTS
- CVTS experiences from Europe could be actively disseminated in several ways
  - through technical assistance and advice to interested countries
  - and - why not? - through financial support of surveys





For further information on ETF activities

- Visit our website:

[www.etf.europa.eu](http://www.etf.europa.eu) or

[www.meda-ete.net](http://www.meda-ete.net)

Email: [jens.johansen@etf.europa.eu](mailto:jens.johansen@etf.europa.eu)



## **Measurement of skill needs in employer surveys: applications for the Continuing Vocational Training Survey (CVTS)**

**Anthony Clarke, Department for Children, Schools and Families, England**

### **Abstract**

This paper presents evidence from England on the extent, causes and implications of employers' skills needs and how they are measured. It then presents options for collecting similar information in future rounds of the *Continuing Vocational Training Survey* (CVTS).

In response to an employers demand for skills, a range of options are open to them, most commonly the provision of training, but in other cases by recruitment or by changing strategy.

CVTS measures the supply of, and to a lesser extent the demand for employee training, but to more fully understand the demand for skills in an economy we also need to measure the skill requirements of employers. UK surveys have for some years been measuring skills shortages in the form of skills-shortage vacancies (recruitment difficulties due to a lack of applicants with the required skills, qualifications or experience) and skills gaps (current employees not fully proficient at their job). In addition, the causes and implications of these skills deficiencies are also measured in order to inform policy development. Taking examples from the most recent surveys in England, we can explore the possibility of including similar indicators in the next CVTS.

### **1. Introduction**

The skills of a country's workforce contribute to its economic and social health. When faced with a mismatch between the skills required to produce the necessary goods and services required by their business and the skills of their current workforce, employers face a choice between investing in human capital, recruiting new people or changing strategies to better suit their current resources. These skills requirements of employers take on an increasing importance as we enter economic downturn and face increasing competition on the global market.

Skills shortages can be split into two groups: internal and external. That is skills lacking in the workforce currently employed by a company – internal, and those lacking due to their inability to recruit people with the required skills – external. Employer surveys in the UK make such a distinction when asking employers about their skills shortages, labelling internal shortages as *skills gaps* and external shortages as *skills-shortage vacancies*.

### **National Employers Skills Survey (NESS)**

Since the 1990s, the skills needs of employers have been measured by a variety of

surveys in the UK. Most recently in England, NESS 2007 explores the issues of recruitment, skills gaps and training provision for employers.

The 2007 survey was the largest yet, interviewing 79,000 employers with 2 or more employees. Interviewing was undertaken by telephone at establishment level in England. Analysis is available by employer size, industry sector (4 digit NACE) and geographically down to below NUTS4 area.

### **Continuing Vocational Training Survey (CVTS)**

CVTS3 interviewed 4,300 employers across the UK with 10 or more employees. Interviews were conducted at the enterprise level via phone and face-to-face, supplemented via a self-completion postal methodology. The reference period for the survey was the calendar year 2005.

As interviews were conducted at the enterprise rather than establishment level, and smaller employers were excluded, the results of CVTS3 are not directly comparable with NESS 07. However, we can draw information from both surveys to explore how CVTS could be developed in the future.

As a pilot exercise, the UK extended CVTS3 coverage to include enterprises in industry sectors (A, B, L, M & N: Agriculture, Fishing, Public administration, Education and Health). This wider coverage also means the results published in the UK differ from those published by Eurostat, which focus on the core of industry sectors covered in all countries.

## **2. The incidence and extent of skills gaps**

**Skills gaps** are defined as existing where employers consider that employees are not fully proficient at their job. NESS 07 asked employers what proportion of their staff within each occupation group were fully proficient.

*Thinking about these broad categories of employees, for each, I'd like to know how many you think are fully proficient at their job. A proficient employee is someone who is able to do the job to the required level.*

*How many of your existing [occupation type] would you regard as fully proficient at their job?*

A full list of skills shortage questions is given in Annex 1.

One in seven employers (15 per cent) reported skills gaps. Overall, they reported 6 per cent of the total workforce considered to be not fully proficient in their job.

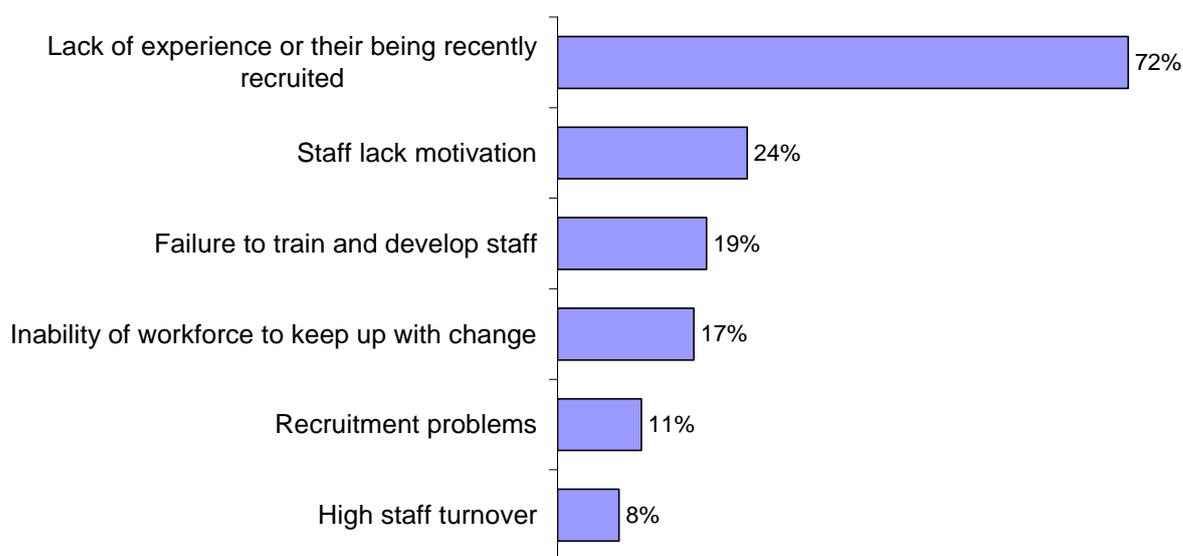
The incidence of reported skills gaps increases with increasing size of employer, as does the proportion of their workforce lacking skills: 4 per cent of the workforce employed by the smallest establishments is described as not being fully proficient, compared with 8 per cent among the largest employers.

The prevalence of skills gaps also varies by occupation and by industry sector, reflecting differences in the workforce employed.

## 2.1 Causes of skills gaps

By far the most common reason cited as a cause of skills gaps is a lack of experience and/or staff having been recently recruited – accounting (at least in part) for over two thirds (72 per cent) of skills gaps overall. However, other causes were reported by a sizable minority of employers: staff lack motivation (24 per cent); failure to train and develop staff (19 per cent); inability of the workforce to keep up with change (17 per cent); recruitment problems (11 per cent); and high staff turnover (8 per cent).

**Figure 1. Main causes of skills gaps, 2006 (NESS 07)**



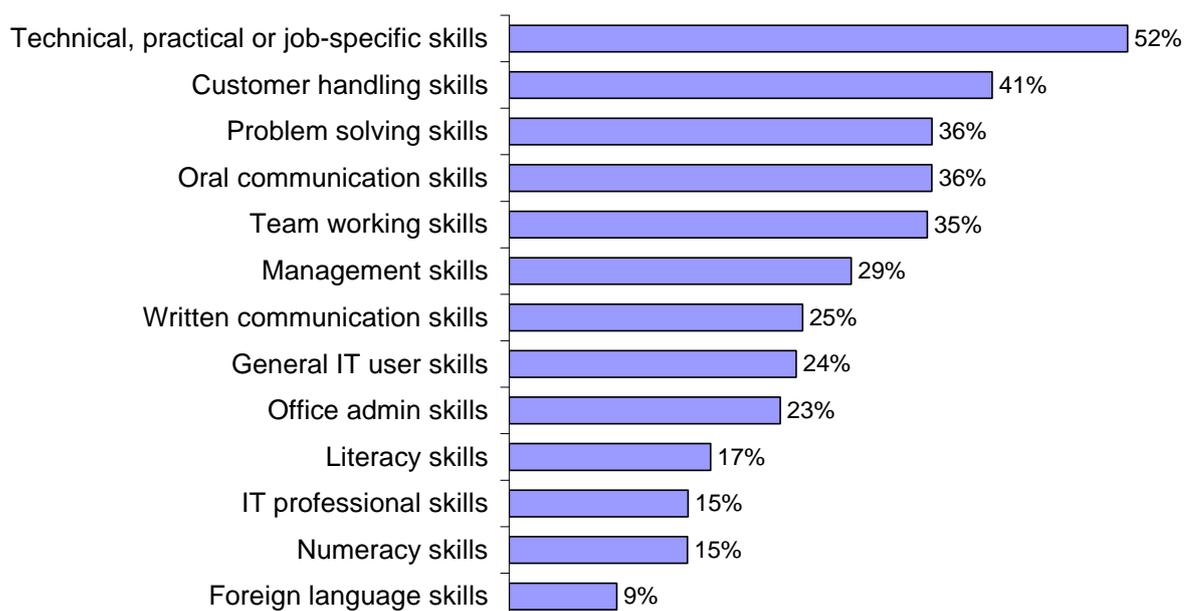
*Base: All skills gaps followed up*

## 2.2 Which skills are lacking?

Of those (15 per cent of) employers reporting skills gaps, half (52 per cent) reported Technical, practical or job-specific skills as lacking. Next most commonly reported was Customer handling skills (41 per cent), whilst one in three reported Problem solving skills (36 per cent), Oral communications skills (36 per cent) and Team working skills (35 per cent).

Less common, though still found in around a quarter of cases where staff lacked proficiency, were a lack of Management skills (29 per cent), Written communication skills (25 per cent) and General IT user skills (24 per cent).

**Figure 2. Skills lacking amongst staff, 2006 (NESS 07)**



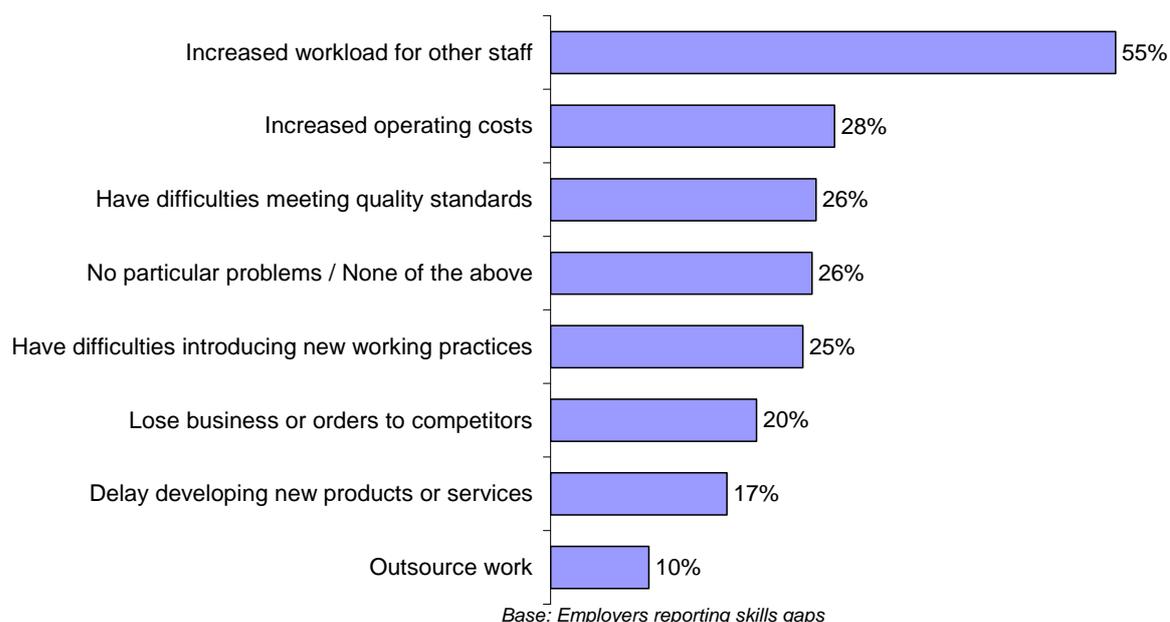
*Base: Employers reporting skills gaps (multiple responses allowed)*

### 2.3 How do skills gaps affect employers?

The most common negative impact experienced as a result of staff having skills gaps was an increased workload for other staff (reported by 55 per cent of establishments with skills gaps). Increased operating costs (28 per cent), difficulties meeting quality standards (26 per cent), and difficulties introducing new working practices (25 per cent) were each reported by around a quarter of those with skills gaps, although a similar proportion also said that having skills gaps was having no particular negative impact on the business (26 per cent).

Of particular note, one in five employers (20 per cent) with a skills gap reported that they had lost business or orders to competitors, whilst 17% reported a delay in developing new products or services.

**Figure 3. Impact of skills gaps, 2006 (NESS 07)**



## 2.4 Response to skills gaps

By far the most common reaction to skills gaps is for employers to increase training activity or spend, with nearly three-quarters (72 per cent) of employers with skills gaps taking this action. In comparison, just one in ten react by providing greater staff supervision (11 per cent), or by providing more staff appraisal (9 per cent), the next most common responses. A similar number (9 per cent) of employers with skills gaps are taking no action to overcome their staff's skills deficiencies.

## 3. Vacancies

Whilst one in six (18 per cent) establishments reported a vacancy, less than half of these (7 per cent overall) reported a vacancy that was proving hard-to-fill, and only one in twenty (5 per cent overall) reported a vacancy that was proving hard-to-fill for a skills related reason – a skills-shortage vacancy.

**Hard-to-Fill Vacancies** are defined as those vacancies described by employers as being hard-to-fill. Reasons often include skills-related issues, but can simply involve such aspects as poor pay or conditions of employment, or the employer being based in a remote location.

**Skill-Shortage Vacancies** are defined as those hard-to-fill vacancies which result from a lack of applicants who have either the required skills, work experience or qualifications.

For NESS they were measured initially through an unprompted question asking for the reasons for vacancies being hard to fill, and then through a follow-up prompted

question asked if skills, experience or qualifications were not spontaneously mentioned.

*How many vacancies, if any, do you currently have at this establishment?*

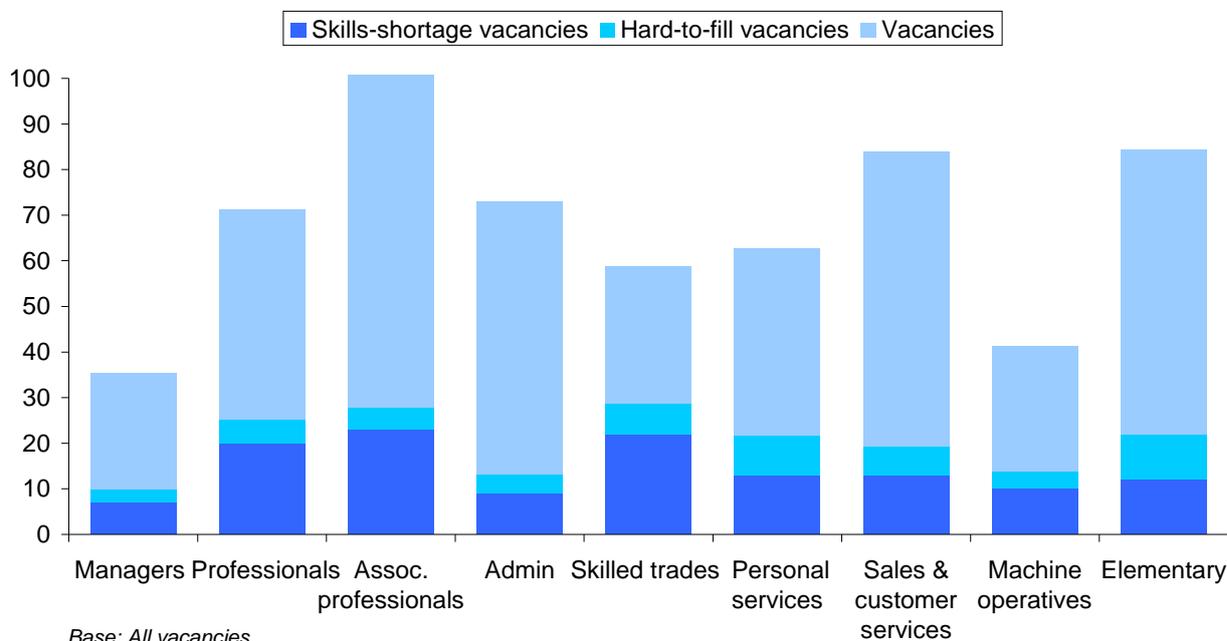
*Are any of these vacancies proving hard to fill?*

*What are the main causes of having a hard to fill vacancy?*  
*[Skills-shortage options are:]*  
*Low number of applicants with the required skills*  
*Lack of work experience the company demands*  
*Lack of qualifications the company demands*

Smaller establishments experience a disproportionate degree of difficulty when recruiting. Unsurprisingly, larger employers are generally more likely to report having vacancies and recruitment difficulties than smaller ones. However, smaller establishments account for a disproportionately high proportion of hard to fill vacancies and skills-shortage vacancies.

Employers report a disproportionately high number of skills-shortage vacancies in associate professional and skilled trades occupations. These two occupations account for approximately a third of all skills-shortage vacancies (34 per cent) as compared with only 14 per cent of employment.

**Figure 4. Overall number of vacancies, hard-to-fill, and skills-shortage (000s), 2006 (NESS 07)**



### 3.1 Skills lacking in connection with skill-shortage vacancies

The most commonly reported skills lacking in skills-shortage vacancies were Technical, practical and job-specific skills, reported in more than half (53 per cent) of cases. Whilst they were cited in at least half of skills-shortage vacancies in each occupation this rose to 63% in skilled trades occupations.

**Table 1. Skills reported as lacking in connection with skill-shortage vacancies by occupation, 2006 (NESS 07)**

	Total	Managers	Professionals	Associate professionals	Administrative	Skilled trades	Personal service	Sales & customer services	Machine operatives	Elementary
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Technical and practical skills	53	53	55	57	55	63	51	53	58	52
Customer handling skills	34	34	27	26	30	30	38	42	27	34
Oral communication skills	34	34	28	27	32	31	37	37	28	35
Problem-solving skills	29	30	25	27	28	31	30	31	23	31
Written communication skills	27	27	25	27	26	26	30	28	21	27
Team-working skills	27	27	20	19	24	29	34	26	22	31
Literacy skills	24	24	21	21	23	23	28	23	21	25
Management skills	23	24	27	28	24	22	28	25	17	25
Numeracy skills	20	20	16	17	19	21	19	20	18	21
Office admin skills	15	15	15	15	15	12	13	19	14	13
General IT user skills	14	14	13	16	15	11	16	15	16	14
IT professional skills	13	13	16	14	13	11	9	15	12	10
Foreign language skills	12	12	11	9	12	11	11	12	10	14

*Shading indicates highest values*

### 4. Reasons for not providing training

The most common reason employers gave for not providing training was their workforce being fully proficient already (64 per cent). Turning this round, we could hypothesise that those employers providing training (a large majority in the UK) do so in order to improve the skills of their employees to become more proficient, and therefore more productive, in their work. This may seem obvious, but on closer inspection we see that Health and safety training and Induction training are widespread and account for around a quarter of the training delivered. Such training may be provided in order to meet an employers' obligation to legislative requirements, and may not contribute much to the kind of skills development that enhances a company's productivity.

## 5. Implications for CVTS

CVTS collects a variety of information in relation to the supply side of skills in terms of the types of training offered, the numbers of employees being given training, the costs of training provision, and its management and delivery. We can add value for policy makers by expanding our understanding of the demand side issues such as the current skills requirements faced by employers and their implications.

The most recent round of CVTS asked respondents the reasons why they did not provide training and also whether they make an assessment of future skill needs of the organisation as a whole. In addition, CVTS2 also asked whether enterprises assessed the skills needs of individuals, and to which occupations (managers/supervisors, and/or to other employees) this applied.

We can build upon this to produce a more rounded picture of the skills issues facing employers. By adding simple questions on the prevalence of skills gaps, vacancies, hard-to-fill vacancies and skills-shortage vacancies and their associated causes and impacts we can better inform policy interventions.

### 5.1 Measuring skills gaps

There are two basic options for presenting a direct question on the prevalence of skills gaps. The response coding can either use a simple grouping, or can request a specific proportion or number of employees.

The *Learning and Training at Work* survey used the following simple grouping measure, asking:

*Thinking about the skills within your existing workforce, what proportion of your existing staff in [each occupation employed] would you regard as being fully proficient at their current job? Would you say...*

- All of them*
- Nearly all of them*
- Over half*
- Some but under half*
- Very few*
- None of them*

Whilst easier to answer by respondents, these response codes don't allow more detailed analyses and for example don't provide an accurate estimate of the total volume of employees with skills gaps.

This issue was partly tackled in the first *Employer Skill Survey* (the forerunner to NESS) which asked all respondents to code in a similar manner to *Learning and Training at Work*, but in addition posed a further question to half the sample. They were asked to quantify the proportion signified by the phrases 'nearly all', 'over half' etc. Values of 85% (nearly all), 65% (over half), 35% (some but under half) and 15% (very few) were derived from the results. This allowed researchers to estimate an overall number in the whole workforce who were not fully proficient.

The NESS surveys have since further developed these questions to now instead ask more specifically for the number of employees within each occupation group that are not fully proficient:

*How many of your [insert number] existing [insert occupation] would you regard as fully proficient at their job?*

This question has been used successfully in several rounds of surveys in England covering hundreds of thousands of respondents.

## 5.2 Measuring vacancies

There are three main measures of employer vacancies in the UK: the *Vacancy Survey*, administrative data from employment offices and NESS.

The **Vacancy Survey** asks one single question of 6,000 businesses each month. Responses are made using a telephone data entry system by which employers phone a specified number and use their keypad to indicate their response. Sampling is mainly at the enterprise level although some larger organisations are collected at establishment level. Similar data are supplied by a majority of EU Member States as part of the job vacancies indicator published by Eurostat.

*How many job vacancies did your business or organisation have on [ ] for which you were actively seeking recruits from outside your business or organisation?*

An accompanying data sheet gives respondents a full description of which vacancies should and shouldn't be included in their response. Whilst this survey provides the most up-to-date estimates of vacancies in the economy it does not shed any light on the skills shortages that may be associated with them.

Management information available from an employment office is attractive due to its availability and in the UK such data from **Jobcentre Plus** provide a useful time series of activity. However, this again measures the volume of vacancies and doesn't record the reasons a vacancy is available. In addition, it is estimated that little more than a third (35-40%) of all vacancies are advertised with Jobcentre Plus, and it is generally accepted that those that are advertised under-represent high skilled occupations.

**NESS** initially measures skills-shortage vacancies through an unprompted question asking for the reasons for vacancies being hard to fill, and then through a prompted follow-up question that is asked if skills, experience or qualifications were not spontaneously mentioned. NESS tends to provide a higher estimate of overall vacancies than that produced by the Vacancy Survey although the many differences in methodology make direct comparisons problematic. It is however, encouraging to see both surveys producing similar trends over time.

## 6. Conclusions

The investments made in large scale employer surveys focussing on skills shortages are an indication of the policy appetite for such information. By building on the established

CVTS questionnaire by introducing questions exploring skills gaps and vacancies, hard-to-fill vacancies and skills-shortage vacancies, we would increase the relevance to policy makers of CVTS data.

The questions used in NESS have been tested in various surveys over several years and are shown to work well, e.g. that respondents can give answers that produce comparable results from one year to the next. A full list of the relevant questions is given in Annex 1.

## References

Bradford, S. (2003) *Employer-Provided Training in the UK 1999 (CVTS2)*. Department for Education and Skills, Nottingham.

Dent, R. and Wiseman, J. (2008) *Continuing Vocational Training Survey 2005 (CVTS3)*. Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills.

Bunt, K., McAndrew, F. and Kuechel, A. (2007) *Jobcentre Plus Annual Employer (Market View) Survey 2006-07*. Department for Work and Pensions, Leeds.

Hogarth, T. and Wilson, R. (2000) *Employers Skill Survey: Statistical Report*. Department for Education and Employment, Nottingham.

Learning and Skills Council (2008) *National Employers Skills Survey 2007: Main Report*. Learning and Skills Council, Coventry.

Machin, A. (2003) *Labour Market Trends*, July 2003, pp. 349-362.

Spilsbury, D. (2003) *Learning and Training at Work 2002*. Department for Education and Skills, Nottingham.

## Annex 1: Selected questions from NESS 2007, England

### Vacancies

- C1. How many vacancies, if any, do you currently have at this establishment?
- C2. In which specific occupations do you currently have vacancies at this establishment?
- C3. How many vacancies do you have for [each occupation at C2]?
- C4. Are any of these vacancies proving hard to fill?
- C5. How many of your vacancies for [occupation at C2] are proving hard-to-fill?
- C5a. What are the main causes of having a hard to fill vacancy for [occupation with hard to fill vacancy at C5]?

- Too much competition from other employers
- Not enough people interested in doing this type of job
- Poor terms and conditions (e.g. Pay) offered for post
- Low number of applicants with the required skills
- Low number of applicants with the required attitude, motivation or personality
- Low number of applicants generally
- Lack of work experience the company demands
- Lack of qualifications the company demands
- Poor career progression / lack of prospects
- Job entails shift work/unsociable hours
- Seasonal work
- Remote location/poor public transport
- Other
- No particular reason
- Don't know

- C6c. Have you found any of the following skills difficult to obtain from applicants for [occupation with skills shortage vacancy] ...?

- General IT user skills
- IT professional skills
- Oral communication skills
- Written communication skills
- Customer handling skills
- Team working skills
- Foreign language skills
- Problem solving skills
- Management skills
- Numeracy skills
- Literacy skills
- Office admin skills
- Technical, practical or job-specific skills

Any other skills  
No particular skills difficulties  
Don't know

C8. Generally speaking, are hard-to-fill vacancies causing this establishment to...

Lose business or orders to competitors  
Delay developing new products or services  
Have difficulties meeting quality standards  
Increase operating costs  
Have difficulties introducing new working practices  
Increase workload for other staff  
Outsource work  
None  
Don't know

C9. What, if anything, is this establishment doing to overcome the difficulties that you are having finding candidates to fill these hard-to-fill vacancies?

Increasing salaries  
Increasing the training given to your existing workforce  
Redefining existing jobs  
Increasing advertising / recruitment spend  
Increasing/expanding trainee programmes  
Using NEW recruitment methods or channels  
Other  
Nothing  
Don't know

## Skills Gaps

*Thinking about these broad categories of employees, for each, I'd like to know how many you think are fully proficient at their job. A proficient employee is someone who is able to do the job to the required level.*

D2 How many of your existing [insert occupation] would you regard as fully proficient at their job?

D3 What are the main causes of some of your [occupation] not being fully proficient in their job...?

Failure to train and develop staff  
Recruitment problems  
High staff turnover  
Inability of workforce to keep up with change  
Lack of experience or their being recently recruited  
Staff lack motivation  
Any other cause

D4. Thinking about your [occupations] who are not fully proficient which, if any, of the following skills do you feel need improving... ?

D4b. And which of these skills that are lacking for [occupation] is having the greatest negative impact on the establishment?

- General IT user skills
- IT professional skills
- Oral communication skills
- Written communication skills
- Customer handling skills
- Team working skills
- Foreign language skills
- Problem solving skills
- Management skills
- Numeracy skills
- Literacy skills
- Office admin skills
- Technical, practical or job-specific skills
- Any other skills
- No particular skills difficulties
- No individual skills having the greatest impact (D4b only)
- Don't know

D5b Is the fact that some of your staff are not fully proficient causing this establishment to...?

- Lose business or orders to competitors
- Delay developing new products or services
- Have difficulties meeting quality standards
- Increase operating costs
- Have difficulties introducing new working practices
- Increase workload for other staff
- Outsource work
- No particular problems / None of the above
- Don't know

D6. What action, if any, is this establishment taking to overcome the fact that some of its staff are not fully proficient in their job?

- Increase training activity / spend or increase/expand trainee programmes
- Increase recruitment activity / spend
- More staff appraisals / performance reviews
- Implementation of mentoring / buddying scheme
- More supervision of staff
- Other action
- Nothing
- Don't know

## **Workforce training and development**

E1a. Does your establishment have a business plan that specifies the objectives for the coming year?

E1b. Does your establishment have a training plan that specifies in advance the level and type of training your employees will need in the coming year?

E1c. Does your establishment have a budget for training expenditure?

E2. What percentage of your staff have a formal written job description?

E3. Does this establishment formally assess whether individual employees have gaps in their skills?

E3a. What percentage of your staff have an annual performance review?

E6d. And how much of the on-the-job training that you have funded or arranged has been for health & safety or induction training?

E7 Thinking now about qualifications, how many people that you have funded or arranged training for over the past 12 months are or were being trained towards a nationally recognised qualification?

E13. And does this establishment formally assess whether the training and development received by an employee has an impact on his or her performance?

# Measuring employer skill needs

**Tony Clarke**

Strategic Analysis: International Evidence Team  
Department for Children, Schools and Families

tel: +44 114 259 1087

email: [anthony.clarke@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:anthony.clarke@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk)



Cedefop CVTS workshop, 29-30 June 2009, Thessaloniki



## Overview

- **National Employers Skills Survey**
- **Skills gaps**
- **Vacancies**
- **Hard to fill vacancies**
- **Skills-shortage vacancies**
- **Conclusions**



## National Employers Skills Survey

- Explores the issues of recruitment, employee proficiency and training provision
- 79,000 telephone interviews with establishments with 2 or more employees
- Analysis by:
  - Industry sector
  - Employer size
  - National, regional and local



## Skills gaps

***Q. How many of your existing [occupation type] would you regard as fully proficient at their job?***

- Volume of skills gaps by establishment / occupation



## Skills gaps - causes

**Q. What are the main causes of some of your [occupation] not being fully proficient in their job...?**

*Failure to train and develop staff*

*Recruitment problems*

*High staff turnover*

*Inability of workforce to keep up with change*

*Lack of experience or their being recently recruited*

*Staff lack motivation*

*Any other cause?*

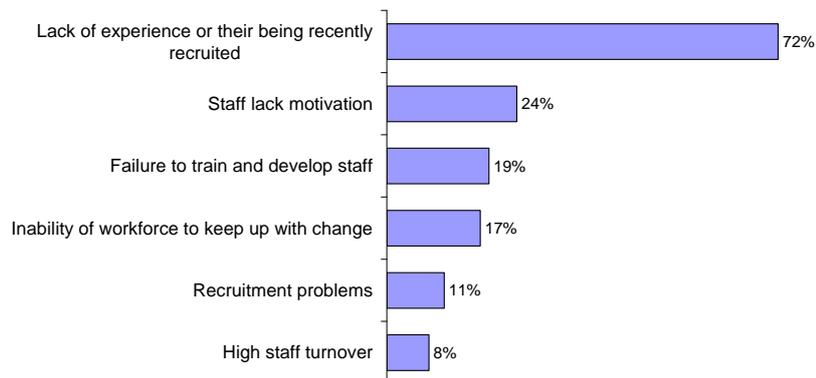
■ What are the causes?



department for  
children, schools and families

## Skills gaps - causes

Figure 1. Main causes of skills gaps, 2006 (NESS 07)



Base: All skills gaps followed up



department for  
children, schools and families

## Skills gaps – skills lacking

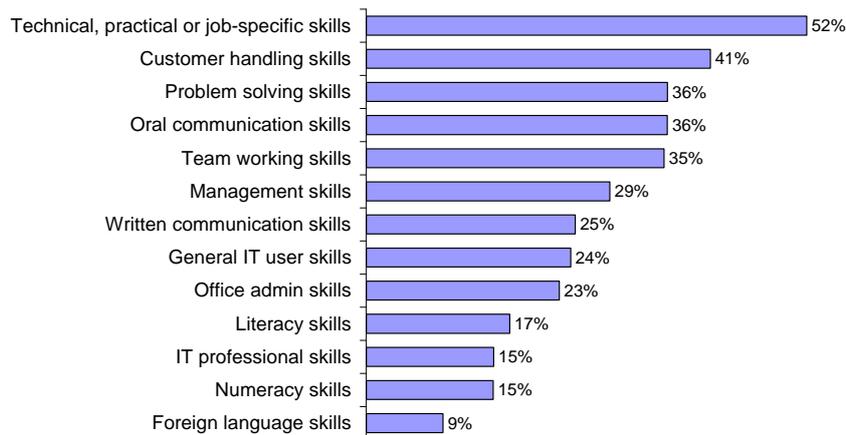
**Q. Thinking about your [occupations] who are not fully proficient which, if any, of the following skills do you feel need improving... ?**

- |   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| General IT user skills                      | IT professional skills            |
| Oral communication skills                   | Written communication skills      |
| Customer handling skills                    | Team working skills               |
| Foreign language skills                     | Problem solving skills            |
| Management skills                           | Numeracy skills                   |
| Literacy skills                             | Office admin skills               |
| Technical, practical or job-specific skills | No particular skills difficulties |
| Any other skills                            |                                   |



## Skills gaps – skills lacking

**Figure 2. Skills lacking amongst staff, 2006 (NESS 07)**



## Skills gaps - impact

**Q. Is the fact that some of your staff are not fully proficient causing this establishment to...?**

*Lose business or orders to competitors*

*Delay developing new products or services*

*Have difficulties meeting quality standards*

*Increase operating costs*

*Have difficulties introducing new working practices*

*Increase workload for other staff*

*Outsource work*

*No particular problems / None of the above*



## Skills gaps - impact

**Figure 3. Impact of skills gaps, 2006 (NESS 07)**



*Base: Employers reporting skills gaps*



## Skills gaps - actions

**Q. What action, if any, is this establishment taking to overcome the fact that some of its staff are not fully proficient in their job?**

*Increase training activity / spend or increase / expand trainee programmes*

*Increase recruitment activity / spend*

*More staff appraisals / performance reviews*

*Implementation of mentoring / buddying scheme*

*More supervision of staff*

*Other action*

*Nothing*



## Vacancies

**Q. How many vacancies, if any, do you currently have at this establishment?**

- **volume of vacancies by establishment / occupation**



## Hard-to-fill vacancies

**Q. Are any of these vacancies proving hard to fill?**

- **volume of hard-to-fill vacancies by establishment / occupation**



## Skills-shortage vacancies

**Q. What are the main causes of having a hard to fill vacancy?**

*[Skills-shortage options are:]*

***Low number of applicants with the required skills***

***Lack of work experience the company demands***

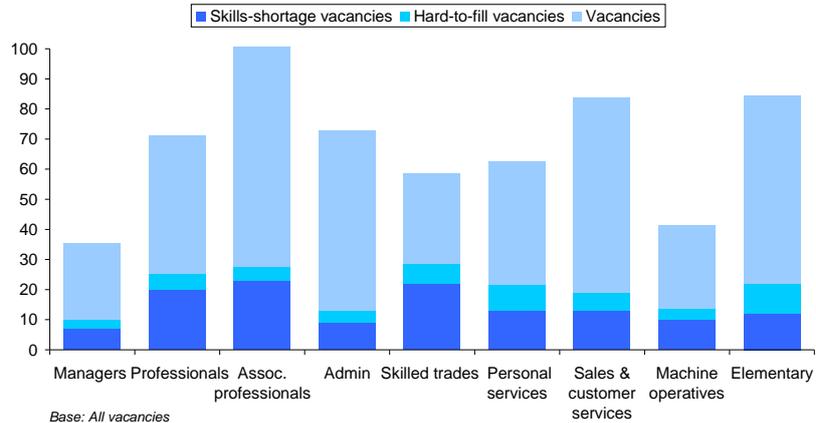
***Lack of qualifications the company demands***

- **volume of skill-shortage vacancies gaps by establishment / occupation**



## Skills-shortage vacancies

Figure 4. Overall number of vacancies, hard-to-fill, and skills-shortage (000s), 2006 (NESS 07)



Base: All vacancies



## Conclusions

- High policy interest
- Questions successfully used in UK



Dr. Winfried Heidemann

Background paper for CVTS Workshop on 29 – 30 June at Cedefop, Thessaloniki

---

## **Skills requirements of enterprises and personal development requirements of employees – the role of cvt: collective and local agreements in Germany**

### *(1) Survey data are stuff for macro-economic discussion, but do not provoke action on micro-economic level*

Transnational statistical and survey data – cvts, OECD, Eurostat - show for Germany comparatively low participation rates of enterprises and of individuals in cvt. National surveys reinforce these findings (with partly different figures, depending on the respective research design). This kind of benchmarking is stuff for governments and social partner organisations in the macro-economic discussion on LifeLongLearning strategies. But obviously they do not provoke actors in the enterprises to change. Why so?

This is the case because training activities of enterprises and individuals depend on skills requirements (of the organisations) and on personal development requirements (of individuals) as well. Furthermore, they depend on the framework conditions of resources: time, money, motivation on demand side, organisation, quality and recognition on supply side.

### *(2) Bottleneck for implementation of training: periodic micro-economic survey and planning procedures*

Against the background of low cvt participation in Germany, it is surprising that, after a 2008 poll of works councils in the metal industry in the state of North-Rhine-Westphalia (Germany) (Lenz/Voß, 2009), only 3,5 % answer that there is no possibility of participation in enterprise based cvt at all. Especially traditional forms of training like internal and external seminars, visit of trade fairs and external workshops belong to the regular offers in most of the enterprises. A clear contrast to this is that “modern” forms of learning in self control are not wide-spread so far.

This survey indicates that structural conditions for cvt obviously are given but training offers as such are not implemented. Going deeper into the survey, it reveals that the “bottlenecks” for successful implementation of training strategies in enterprises seem to be:

- The procedures of planning training
- The steady or periodic identification of or survey on training requirements

After this poll, survey on total training needs of the organisation and on needs of individual employees is carried out in less than the half of enterprises; in two thirds of enterprises training is carried out spontaneously or follows only urgent needs instead of being based on foresight planning or on “looking ahead”.

### ***(3) Planning and anticipation procedures are subject of collective agreements***

Procedures of planning and the identification of training needs in Germany are partly subject of collective sector and local agreements between social partners (trade unions and employers' organisations resp. works councils and management).

Some collective sector agreements deal with anticipation and identification of training needs in enterprises. They set up rules for procedures and establish claims of employees for placing their personal development needs. This is the case in metal, electro, chemical and print industries and in the public sector. The typical procedure, following these agreements, is as follows:

- Every employee has a right for an annual personnel progress interview with his superior
- In some cases, this right is bound to a preceding training plan agreed upon by management and works council
- In the interview, training needs are assessed, according to the skills and training needs of the enterprise
- In some cases, the employee has the right to submit his own and personal requirements
- The interview can be organised on an individual or a collective basis (group interview)
- In some cases, the employee has the right to consult a member of the works council
- At the end, there is an agreement between management and employee on the training measures to be undertaken in the period following. The agreement should contain a definition of rights and duties of the two parties in organising and financing the training course

The sector agreements have to be implemented on enterprise level, where local agreements between management and works councils set up rules for the procedure. In sectors without collective agreements, this is partly organised by the local social partners. There are examples of good practice which show some progress in this field in recent years, though implementation in practice is not so widespread as one might hope. (Hans-Böckler-Stiftung, 2009)

### ***(4) Skills requirements and training needs: organisational vs. individual dimension***

Data from a representative survey on smaller and medium enterprises in Germany (basis: 2002) (Winge/Wiener 2008) show that enterprises have alternatives to company organised training: they can recruit labour from the labour market. A second result of this survey: Whenever they have urgent training needs and if they are not willing or not able to use supply from the labour market, enterprises organise training in various forms, matched with the concrete training needs they identify.

So one could come to the conclusion that “training follows needs” and that there is no lack of training, expressed in terms of skills requirements. But this conclusion is misleading: The widespread pattern of action can satisfy current and urgent needs and is able to react flexibly but it has lack of “continuity” and “steadiness” of training in a learning organisation and of sustainability. The burdens of such corporate approach have to be born by the employees. The survey quoted, like most other surveys, shows that training is offered to those groups of

employees which are of current strategic importance for the enterprise (mostly the higher and best-qualified employees) whilst other groups of internal stakeholders don't get training. The organisational action behind fortifies the pattern of inequality which we find all over society.

Beyond the dimension of spontaneous versus continuous training organisation, there is one more crucial dimension: that of skills requirements of the organisation versus training needs of individuals for their sustainable employability. The consequence: we should not focus only on organisational requirements but also refer to the training needs of the individuals.

***(5) Upcoming surveys: Focus on both types of requirements and include all stakeholders in enterprise***

To refer it to the methodology of coming surveys:

- Skills requirements of the organisation as background for enterprise training can be investigated by asking management, but individual training needs can not. For inclusion of these, the survey must address at least to representatives of employees, or even to employees themselves. In order to widen the horizon of cvts, it should be deliberated to question also these stakeholders.
- Besides organisation training needs, questions should focus also on implementation of training and of training organisation in the enterprise.

A survey which questions all groups of stakeholders in the enterprise, can provoke more interest of the actors. A survey which takes into account not only global data but also puts questions concerning implementation of training, has chances that stakeholders take notice of the results.

**References:**

Hans-Böckler-Stiftung 2009: Case studies on lifelong learning in the enterprise  
[http://www.boeckler.de/29509\\_30299.html](http://www.boeckler.de/29509_30299.html)

Lenz/Voß 2009: Katrin Lenz, Anja Voß, Analyse der Praxiserfahrungen zum Qualifizierungstarifvertrag der Metall- und Elektroindustrie NRW. Düsseldorf (Hans-Böckler-Stiftung, Arbeitspapier 172)

Winge/Wiener 2008: Susanne Winger, Bettina Wiener, Lernen in kleinen und mittleren Unternehmen. Halle (Zentrum für Sozialforschung), unpublished