



Conditions for a future EU survey

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CEDEFOP

European Centre
for the Development
of Vocational Training

THIRD POLICY LEARNING FORUM

Assessing the feasibility
of a pan-European survey
of VET teachers and trainers

22 and 23
November 2022

Virtual event



 **Ockham** | IPS

PPMi

Contents

- Outline of feasibility study approach
- Pre-test findings
- Pilot findings
- Recommendations for up-scaling
- Q&A and discussion

A photograph of a vocational training workshop. In the foreground, two female students in blue overalls are focused on working on a large, dark-colored engine block. One student is pointing at a part of the engine while the other looks on. In the background, two male students are also working on engines. A green chalkboard with some faint diagrams is visible behind them. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting an indoor workshop environment.

The feasibility study

Objectives of the feasibility study

- **Develop a survey on initial VET (ISCED level 3) to cover four target groups:** school principals, teachers, in-company trainers and learners
 - Research topics and questionnaires
 - Survey concept (methodology)
- **Direct assessment of the survey concept in Austria, Croatia, Greece, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Spain**
- **Assess the feasibility for upscaling the survey on IVET at EU level**

Stages of development of the survey

- **Advisory group established** to guide the work (5 meetings from March 2021 to July 2022)
- Established **target group definitions** (April 2021)
- **Questionnaire development and testing** (April – November 2021)
- **Pre-test survey** to test planned survey approach (November – December 2021)
- **Pilot survey** to test revised approach (February – July 2022)
- **Analysis and reporting** (from July 2022)

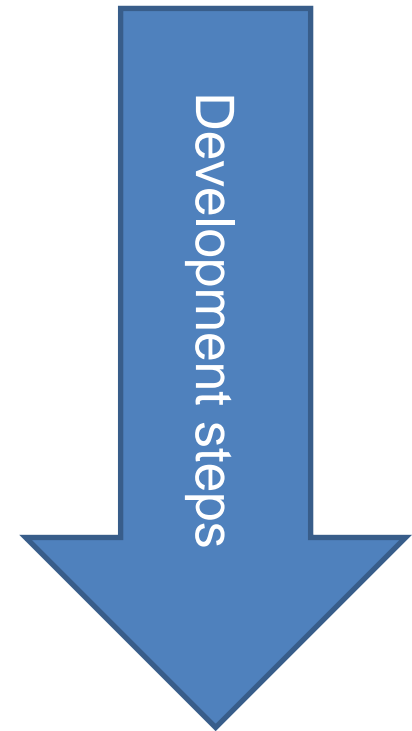
FEASIBILITY STUDY TIMELINE AND METHODOLOGY



Questionnaire development

The following steps were undertaken to deliver high quality questionnaires in the main languages of the six survey countries

1. Master questionnaires developed in English
2. First translation – professional translation agency
3. Review by thematic VET experts
4. Review by local survey agency
5. Agreement stage, decision on final text
6. Cognitive testing in the survey languages
7. Validation by AG members for the pre-test stage
8. Quantitative testing and revisions (pre-test and pilot)



Survey concept: overview of survey design

Survey through schools providing VET at ISCED level 3

Mostly online self-complete questionnaires

- 'Mobile first' design: ensure questions work on smartphones
- Flexible approach to accommodating schools – direct emails to participants or schools forward invites

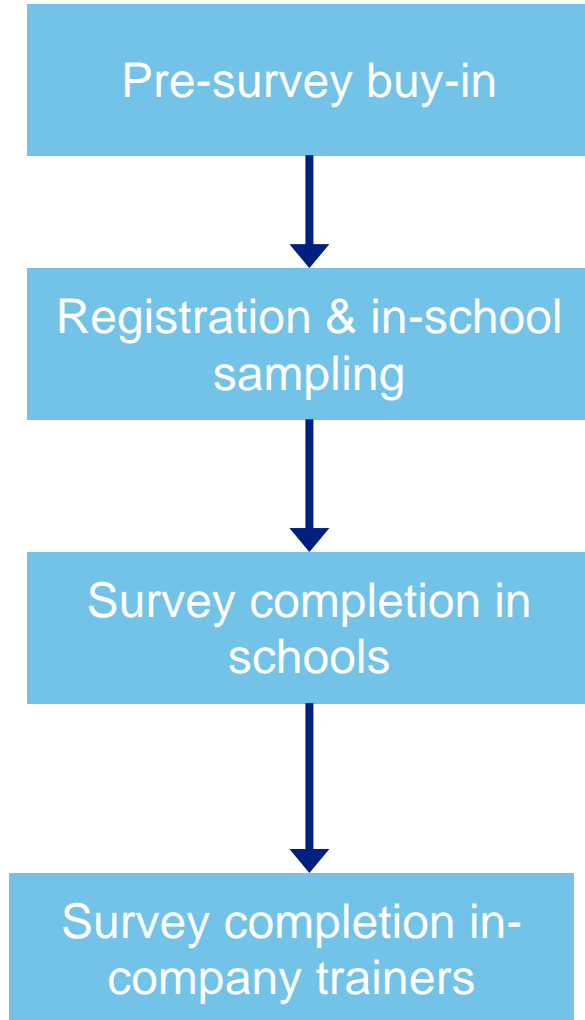
Mode test for in-company trainers (online and video-calls)

- More uncertainties on how to best reach and survey this group

Target groups and pilot survey approach

Group	Basic definition	How to sample the group	Target Interviews per school	Survey mode
Schools	Offer courses in VET at ISCED level 3	Identified directly on sampling frames. Eligibility confirmed during registration	Registration survey	Online or phone
Principals	The principal of an in-scope school	Established during school registration	1	Online
Teachers	Teaches VET courses/subjects	Established during school registration. <i>Sample multiple teachers per school</i>	15	Online
Learners	Learners of VET courses	Established during school registration. <i>Sample two classes/groups per school</i>	40	Online
In-company trainers	Workplace trainers of VET learners	Established during school registration (ideal) plus additional recruitment (where necessary)	20	Online or phone/video

Fieldwork concept multi-stage process



Support of relevant national bodies to establish legitimacy

School registration

- Written pre-survey communications & phone contact
- Registration survey (online or phone) drives target group selections

In-school surveys

- Target groups emailed directly or instructions & survey links provided
- School facilitates CAWI (online) surveys
- Support provided by national contact points (survey agencies)

In-company trainers

- Recruitment through schools (where feasible) – mode option offered
- Alternative sources to boost pilot numbers

A photograph of a man with a beard and glasses, wearing a dark blue sweater, looking towards the right. He is in a meeting room with a whiteboard covered in colorful sticky notes (red, yellow, blue, purple). Another person is partially visible behind him. A dark blue semi-transparent banner is overlaid at the bottom of the image.

Pre-test findings

Pre-test: summary of survey results

Aimed to field the survey in two schools per country

- Achieved in Austria, Croatia, Greece, Lithuania
- Only 1 school participated in the Netherlands and in Spain after late refusals

Interviews with principals, teachers & learners

- Targets achieved in all countries except in the Netherlands – late participation of this school meant insufficient time to complete learners and principal interviews
- Survey approach workable in schools: positive feedback from schools

Interviews with trainers

- Very few interviews: at most 3-6 per school
- Video mode not effective (low numbers)

Changes following the pre-test to improve survey process

- Netherlands: sample fewer schools, with 2 departments recruited per school (instead of 1) – fewer, larger schools
- Improvements to invitation letters
 - More motivating, greater emphasis on benefits (survey uses, findings, certificates of participation).
 - Greater clarity on what it involves ('frequently asked questions')
- Reduce questionnaires' lengths for principals, teachers and trainers
- Changes for trainers
 - Ask learners to forward survey invitation or provide contact details (online only)
 - Telephone interviews and optionally video
 - Efforts to secure databases for direct access to trainers

A photograph of three people in a workshop setting. On the left, a young man in a dark blue shirt looks at a control panel. In the center, a young woman with blonde hair in a ponytail, also in a dark blue shirt, looks towards the right. On the right, an older man with grey hair, wearing a dark blue shirt, is gesturing with his hands as if explaining something. The control panel they are looking at has a small screen displaying a table of data, several buttons, and a large yellow emergency stop button. A semi-transparent blue banner with the text "Pilot findings" is overlaid on the bottom half of the image.

Pilot findings

Pilot survey: methodology

- Representative samples of each of the four target populations, through **two-stage sampling**
 - random sampling of schools (first stage)
 - random sampling of the target populations within schools (second stage)
- Different variables were considered when sampling the schools, including their size, shares of public/private schools, geographic distribution
- The aim was to sample **15 schools per participating country** to take part in the pilot, data collection March – July 2022
- **Austria** did not participate in school pilot survey
- Also through **trainer databases**: Austria, Croatia and the Netherlands

Pilot survey: school-level response rates

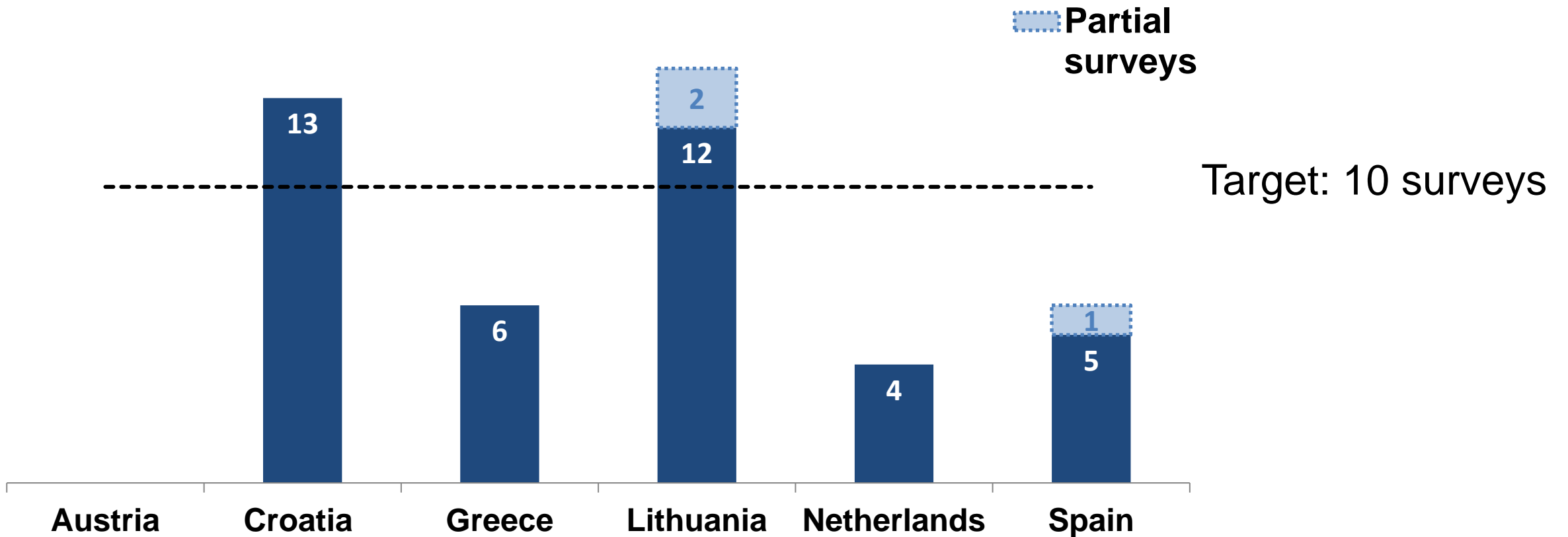
Country	Contacted	Recruited (% contacted)	Registered (% recruited)	Participated (% registered)	Net response rate
Croatia	31	16 (67%)	14 (88%)	14 (100%)	45%
Greece	40	17 (43%)	7 (41%)	7 (100%)	18%
Lithuania	31	17 (55%)	12 (71%)	12 (100%)	39%
Netherlands	18	6 (33%)	5 (83%)	4 (67%)	22%
Spain	38	15 (39%)	9 (60%)	8 (89%)	21%
Total	151	71 (47%)	47 (63%)	45 (96%)	30%

Pilot survey: complete interviews through schools

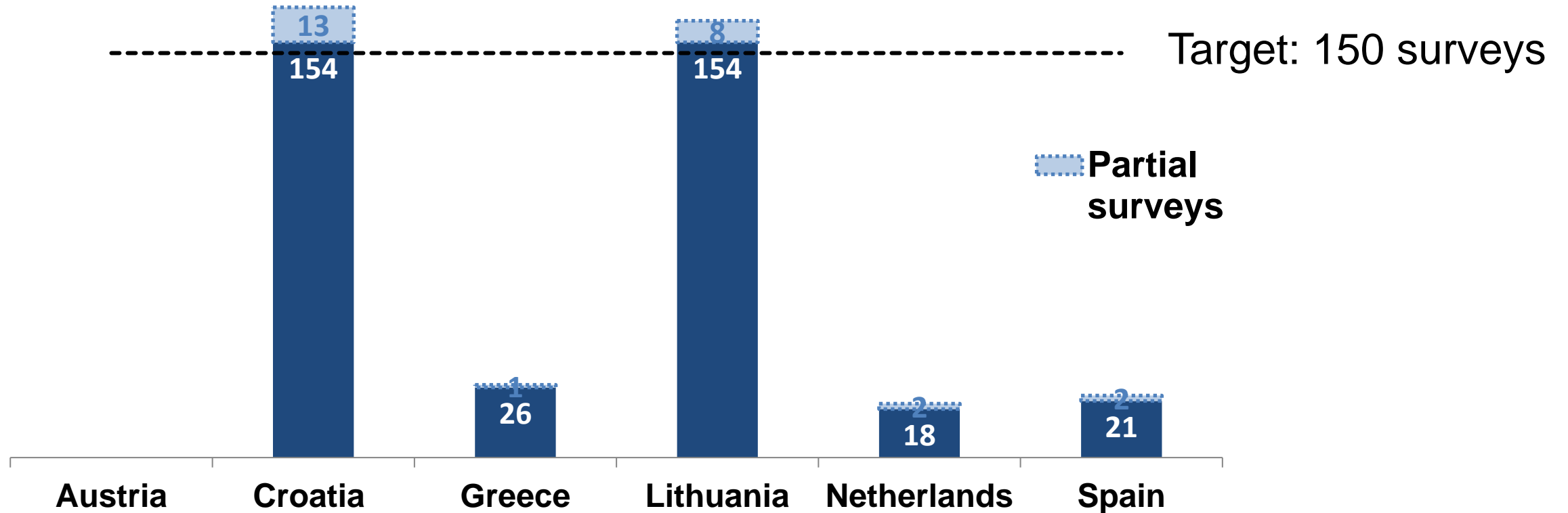
Country	Schools recruited	Schools registered	Principals	Teachers	Learners	Trainers	Total <u>complete</u> interviews
Croatia	16	14	13	154	286	4	457
Greece	17	7	6	26	62	6	100
Lithuania	17	12	12	154	317	39	522
Netherlands	6	5	4	18	1	1	24
Spain	15	9	5	21	52	6	84
Total	71	47	40	373	718	56*	1187

* Of which 10 interviews via video/phone: 9 in Lithuania and 1 Greece

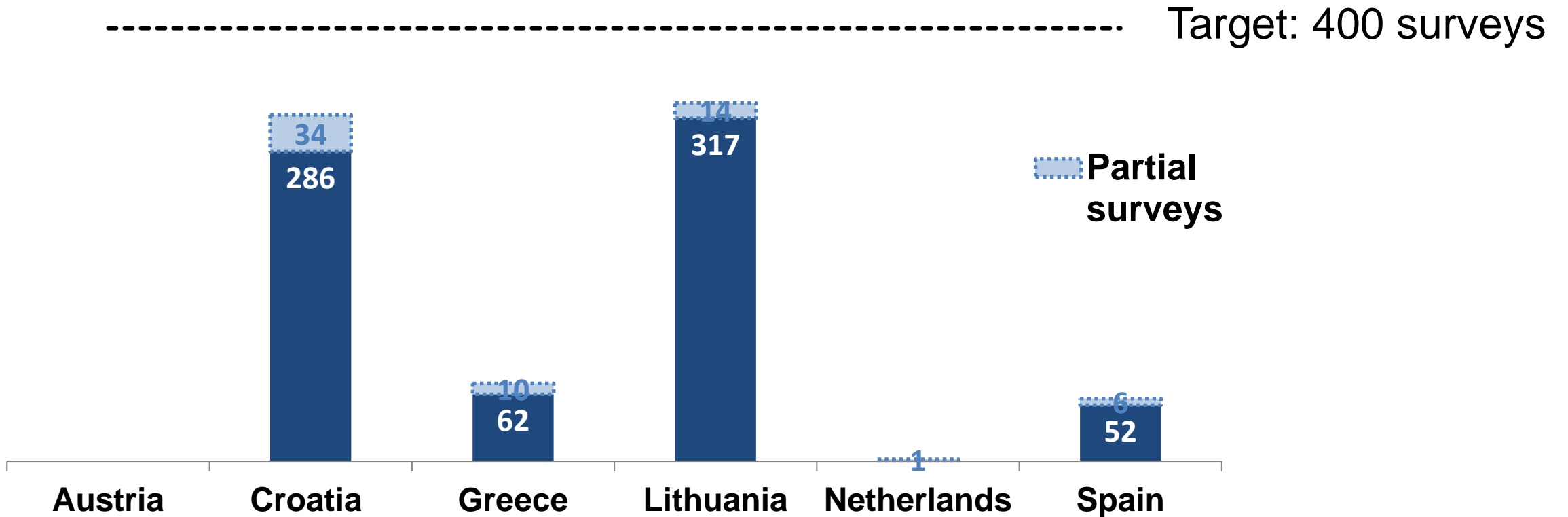
Pilot outcomes: principals' survey



Pilot outcomes: teachers' survey



Pilot outcomes: learners' survey



Pilot survey: alternative trainer approaches

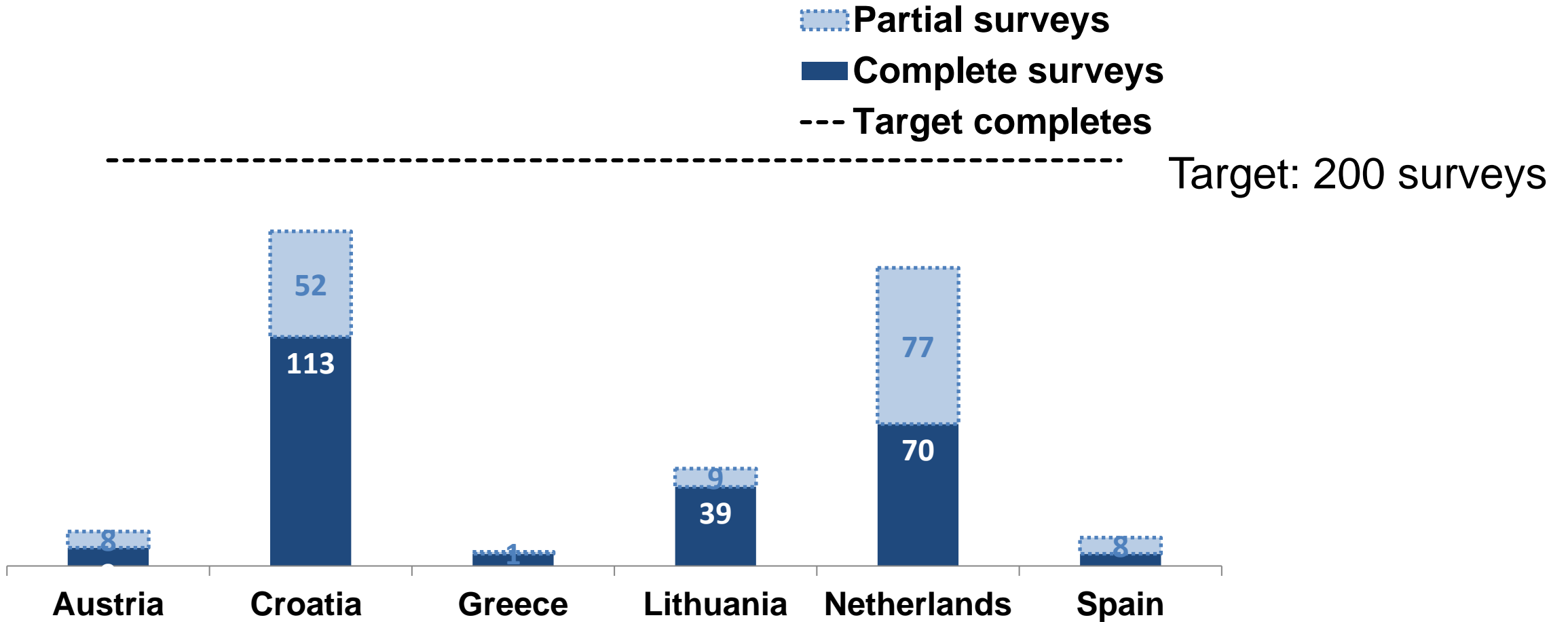
Able to access databases in Austria, Croatia and the Netherlands

- Croatia: 109 interviews out of 570 contacts (19%)
- Austria: 9 interviews out of 2100 contacts (0.4%) – also offered EUR 20 incentive
- Netherlands: 69 out of 5000 contacts (1%)

Accessing trainers through learners

- All interviewed learners asked to forward CAWI survey invitation to their trainer (6% agreed to do so)
- Of these, 3 trainers started (7% of those invited) and none completed the survey

Pilot outcomes: trainers' survey (schools and databases)



Pilot survey: incentivisation approaches

Official endorsement

- Relevant ministries or VET bodies approvals and endorsement

Incentives for schools and participants

- Added value of the survey (more difficult to convince as was a feasibility study)
- Certificates of completion
- School-level report offered in Netherlands
- Austria: EUR 20 trainer incentive

Pilot survey: data quality considerations

Questionnaire lengths within planned range

- Principals, teachers, trainers 20-25 minutes
- Learners <10 minutes

Large numbers of trainer 'break-offs' (partial completes)

- Principals, teachers, learners 7-8%
- Trainers 39%

Other quality metrics OK (item non-response, straightlining)

Main results: Croatia and Lithuania

Went well

- Started on time, Ministry approvals quickly in place
- Successful recruitment & highest school response rates
- Targets met for principals & teachers
- High trainer response rate in Lithuania (45%)
- High trainer response rate through database in Croatia (19%)

Main issues

- Small schools/classes, insufficient learners to reach targets
- Few trainers known to schools: average per school 13 (Croatia) and 10 (Lithuania)
- Very low trainer response rate through schools in Croatia (5%)

Main results: Greece

Went well

- EPAS schools started on time and recruited quickly, provided nearly all of the interviews in Greece
- Advisory Group very supportive with recruitment, target numbers of schools recruited by the end
- Good trainer response rate (24%)

Main issues

- Slow approvals by IEP for EPAL schools to proceed, meant insufficient time for the survey before exam period in June
- EPAS schools mostly small, average 9 eligible teachers, small classes and limited trainers (4 per school)

Main results: the Netherlands

Went well

- Able to access trainers' database – although very low response rate (1%)
- Although recruitment was difficult, Advisory Group support was very helpful in reaching the achieved numbers

Main issues

- Very difficult recruitment and no schools agreed to survey more than one department. Main reasons: lack of interest due to available data, over-researched, no formal pressure
- Registered schools provided few interviews (3 schools provided teachers, 2 provided learners), lacked the time to arrange
- Very low trainer response rate (3%)

Main results: Spain

Went well

- Recruited the targeted number of schools despite challenging circumstances, great support from the Advisory Group

Main issues

- Multi-body approvals through Autonomous Communities which took more time – most schools recruited in May, leaving limited time for carrying out the survey
- Several recruited schools did not participate (7/15) due to lack of time/interest, low school response rate
- Few schools arranged the teachers' (3 schools) and learners' (2 schools) surveys
- Very low trainers' response rate (4%)

A close-up photograph of a person's hand with fingers resting on a silver laptop keyboard. The background is blurred, showing a desk and a window with greenery outside.

Recommendations for up-scaling

Essential: highest impact

Obtain relevant permissions before data collection

- Establish an advisory group focused on navigating procedures

Incentivise schools

- Clear purpose and benefits of participation
- Certificates, school-level reports and other incentives

Options to reduce school workloads

- Consider dropping target groups to simplify the survey
- Provide in-person assistance in a selection of countries
- Longer fieldwork period and flexibility

Other considerations: schools

Adjust targets to country characteristics

- Country size (e.g. in Lithuania as a small country we interviewed 1/5 teachers)
- Size of schools (e.g. more schools if small as in Greece)

Random sampling appears workable

- Reasonable school response rates
- Main barriers lack of time/commitment from schools – a significant challenge – and compact fieldwork period

Interviewing trainers

A range of approaches called for

- School-based appears most feasible in countries with mainly school-based learning (e.g. Lithuania, Greek EPAS schools) but small numbers/sample sizes
- Trainer databases should be considered wherever available – likely in countries with profession requirements (registration, training) - but need to overcome low response rates

Shorter questionnaire with key items

- High break-off rates suggest lack of topic interest

Motivational aspects

- Clear purpose/relevance (in practice appears difficult to achieve)
- Promoting the survey through relevant bodies



Q&A and Discussion

Parallel sessions:

How to make the future EU survey a success?

Discussion of possible scenarios for upscaling the survey in 3 breakout rooms

- Room 1: Scenario 1
- Room 2: Scenario 2
- Room 3: Scenario 3





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