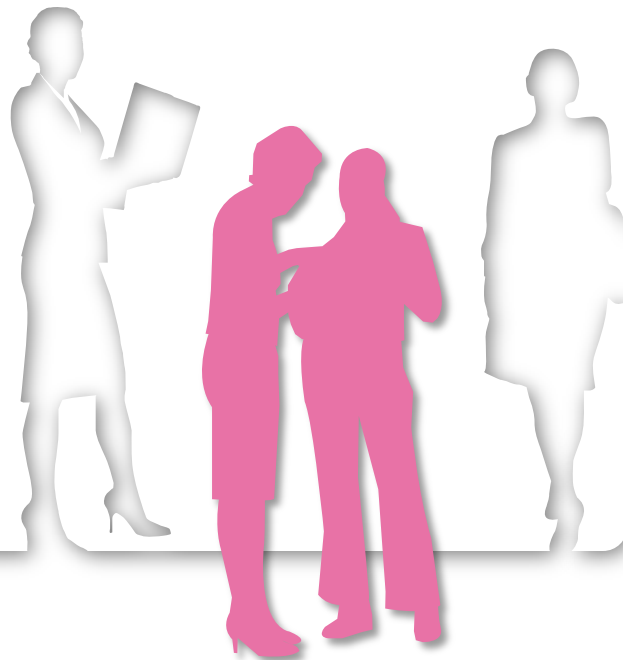


## **MATCH project: GUIDE on Tracer Studies - preparatory phase**

### **GETTING YOUR SUGGESTIONS**

Thessaloniki

05/07/2013



# GUIDES series 2013-2014

## Tracer studies

- “Graduate tracer study which focused on identifying where and the conditions under which the graduates were employed, by course and by institution. It also considered the length the graduates take before they get gainful employment and the relevance of courses offered by tertiary institutions from the perspective of the graduates. Analysis took into consideration equity issues such as gender and socio- economic status” (example)
- Graduations do not necessarily lead to employment, therefore need to understand links btw training and employment: tracer studies (explore post-training behaviour in LM and further education; and reverse tracer studies of employees, which explore how they entered certain occupations and the role therein of training providers and enterprises)
- The advantages of tracer studies are their relatively low cost, easy execution and ability to provide useful information for improving planning and programming. Their major weakness is the demand for detailed information about sample groups or national/regional averages for groups with the same age, gender and educational compositions. In addition, this technique is typically confined to workers’ early market experience and findings may be biased (Gasskov)

# Consultation: your experience, opinions, recommendations

## Questions:

- State of play in member states / PCs:
  - Who commissions and carries out TS? National/ local levels; researchers, schools / providers...
  - Methodology support? Capacity (where is it located)
  - Do donors invest in capacity in national institutions (various levels)?
  - Levels of education and training covered? VET, HE
  - Main questions studied (what for)
  - How are results used?
- Your opinion:
  - Need for TSs and for this type of Guide?
  - Problematic questions / aspects in TS organisation?

## Why do we need your inputs?

- Justification and relevance of Guide: is there need / demand? **For which important purposes?**
- Guide: what, how, for whom? What questions, what focus, what to avoid, how to adjust to our PCs needs
- Guide: who should be involved in accompanying the process (consultation on proposed outline and approach; review drafts; validation)
- Seek added-value and complementarity - not overlaps and duplications (ex: Transition methodology ILO)...
- ... and also: adjusted to PCs realities and present / future needs

# Some feedback collected among ETF colleagues

## State of play

- Several examples of TS (incl ETF activities also) in various regions
  - One-off exercises or long intervals...
  - But some PCs systems require evidence from tracing students' LM insertion - for programme approval / accreditation; and for VET statistical / monitoring systems
- Donors' led and funded: design, organise, provide expertise and funding. Often - for internal use (analysis for project planning / evaluation)
  - Not always linked with capacity building (but 1 case of a project for capacity and methodology design)
  - Research institutions (private, public, NGOs) do many TSs
  - Schools usually not involved in the making
- National bodies-led: HE councils, VET institutions or their associations
  - Sometimes with international expertise for design, techniques and analysis
- VET and HE graduates (Unis and HE councils)
- Uses: curriculum improvement; guidance and post-training support; strengthen contacts with employers; students' enrolment process
- Armenia VET TS case: visible discrepancies of results (2 international organisations; government accepts and publicises the most favourable...)

## Issues and recommendations:

- Clear objectives and questions for study
- Capacity for the technical aspects (e.g: survey techniques)
- Problems: classification (grouping by sectors)
- If schools in the lead: WG, special attention to pilot and create capacity; active role to practitioners (rather than administration); ensure that techniques are understood and can be applied; proportionality (questionnaires) of tool to objectives; careful with data analysis and interpretation (causes - effect); database respondents checked; IT tools accessible; ensure proper response rate; inform respondents
  - Sample: local sample can be more relevant than wider national - for use in students' enrolment process

Guide is needed: fit for purpose + support in using it.

# Questions that Tracer studies answer

## Education and training community:

- ✓ Graduate feedback on quality / relevance of study / school context
- ✓ Know success / failure / degree of difficulty of graduate transition to employment / further education & training
- ✓ Understand factors behind success / failure

- Measures
- Adjust curriculum
- Assistance for employment
- Public funding
- External QA (accreditation)
- Reputation, ranking

Risks: Objectivity? Credibility? Open information?

# Questions that Tracer studies answer: wider issues

QuickTime™ and a  
decompressor  
are needed to see this picture.

Source: Uni  
Kassel,  
Handbook,  
2003

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# TS Guide: for whom (implementers, owners)

## - Bodies / groups directly interested in training

- ✓ Schools / providers
- ✓ National, regional bodies
- ✓ Associations, unions



## - National researchers

- ✓ NGOs
- ✓ Research and analysis groups

- Trend? More schools doing TS?
- Different needs, aims
- Transparency
- Precautions



# Sources

- **Cereq:** <http://www.cereq.fr/>
- **Kassel Uni:** <http://www.uni-kassel.de/einrichtungen/en/incher/research/research-area-students-and-graduates/dies-training-course-university-graduates-tracer-study-course-unitrace.html>
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- **Graduate Tracer Study, Mauritius...** [www.tec.mu/.../pubrep/Graduate%20Tracer%20Study%202008.pdf](http://www.tec.mu/.../pubrep/Graduate%20Tracer%20Study%202008.pdf)
- **V. Gasskov,** Managing Vocational Training Systems - A Handbook for Senior Administrators (ILO; 2000)...<http://collections.infocollections.org/ukedu/uk/d/Jh2416e/6.4.3.html>