



CEDEFOP

European Centre for the Development
of Vocational Training



Ex-post evaluation 2016:

ReferNet framework partnership agreements 2012-2015

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Chair of the ex-post evaluation working party

Rationale and objectives of the ex-post evaluation

In accordance with the procedure for carrying out ex-post evaluations, three activities underwent ex-post evaluation in 2016:

- ▶ ReferNet framework partnership agreements 2012-2015;
- ▶ Skills obsolescence and mismatch among EU workers;
- ▶ Travel Agency services - Eurostar ATEBE.

Objective: in line with the European Commission's 'Better Regulation agenda', ex-post evaluations should assess the following evaluation criteria:

- effectiveness
- efficiency
- coherence
- relevance
- EU added value of the projects/actions

Additional evaluation criteria have been added for ReferNet and Skills obsolescence.

Outcomes of the ex-post evaluations

- ▶ The ex-post evaluations were carried out by an external contractor, Moore Stephens, selected through the European Commission's BUDG-15-P0-03 framework contract, under the supervision and guidance of an Ex-post Working Party nominated by the Director
- ▶ The three ex-post evaluation reports were finalised in May 2017
- ▶ GB members have received the final report for each project
- ▶ Main recommendations were presented to the GB, with no further comment for the Travel Agency contract
- ▶ ReferNet members received a copy of the final ex-post evaluation report

Main recommendations (priority high)

Ex-post evaluation 2016 : ReferNet FPA 2012-2015

- update Charter for the ReferNet project
- review ReferNet tasks and ensure that these remain proportionate to the grants and other resources available
- revisit the tasks in the Framework Partnership Agreements (FPAs) between Cedefop and ReferNet partners, and ensure that these support the mutual benefits originally enshrined in the ReferNet Charter

Action plan: based on selected/open recommendations, the action plan should be practical, useful and proportionate

Follow up ex post evaluation 2016: proposed action plan

Sylvie Bousquet, *ReferNet Coordinator*

| CLUSTER | Main recommendations | Re c. | Priority | Action |
|-----------|---|--------|----------|---|
| Cluster 1 | Update the ReferNet project CHARTER | 1 | High | a) Charter should contain overall objectives for ReferNet, formulated in accordance with the SMART best practice model. Cedefop should ensure that the objectives of the Framework Partnership Agreements align with those of the updated Charter, and vice-versa. Updating thorough consultation with internal and external stakeholders, to reflect the entire network's potential benefits its overarching purpose and the needs of its users – both actual and potential; |
| Cluster 2 | Review of the TASKS AND REQUIREMENTS under FPA and/or SGA | 3 & 12 | High | a) Reinforce the consultation with the partners on their capacity to carry out the annual activities as well as revisit the tasks as currently described in the Framework Partnership Agreements (FPAs) between Cedefop and ReferNet partners; |
| | | 16 | Medium | b) review its current funding model for ReferNet partners, including both the choice of financial mechanism and the value of payments relative to the outputs required; |
| | | 21 | Medium | c) carry out detailed mapping of current ReferNet partners' capacity to fulfil not just 'core' ReferNet data requirements, but also the wider needs of all Cedefop staff and projects; |
| | | 22 | Medium | d) consider investing further time and resources in developing national consortia and/or cooperative networks in the field of VET, with links to the labour market, employment and research. It should consider focusing Cedefop missions on those countries where such consortia are most needed; |

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| Cluster 3 | COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS | 17 | High | a) cost/benefit analysis of those activities and outputs which our survey identified as only marginally better than “not very” useful, and investigate the merits of improving these elements, or alternatively cancelling them in favour of more useful alternatives; |
| Cluster 4 | Improve communication, MARKETING AND VISIBILITY of ReferNet outputs (R #8, 9, 10, 23) | 8 | Low | a) work together with ReferNet partners to review and, where appropriate, redesign ReferNet national websites to improve their visibility and functionality. In doing so, Cedefop and ReferNet partners should consider the potential advantages of implementing a single common website hub; |
| | | 9 | Low | b) employ a consistent indexing system for search and navigation of publications and other information on ReferNet websites; |
| | | 7 | Medium | c) Cedefop should develop a comprehensive strategy for systematic marketing of ReferNet outputs and VET products, based on the outcomes of preparatory activities. This strategy should include exploring the full potential of social media as a means of reaching a wider audience and disseminating VET-related information more successfully to various target groups |
| | | 23 | Low | d) better showcase the relevance of ReferNet as a key source of information for Cedefop publications on VET policies, VET systems and development and thematic studies. It should emphasize that ReferNet is also relevant to external stakeholders’ needs, in particular at the level of individual countries / national governments; |

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| Cluster 5 | Improve ReferNet as a PLATFORM TO EXCHANGE INFORMATION and best practice amongst members | 13 | Medium | a) Cedefop should conduct needs analysis and research to understand how ReferNet might be better used as a platform to exchange information and best practice amongst members, with a particular focus on the relatively weak performance reported in the Central and North regions; |
| | | 10 | Low | b) enhancing ReferNet websites with interactive tools to foster discussion and interaction within the VET community. This should include using social media to reach the VET community and the wider public; |
| Cluster 6 | Dissemination results of the evaluation (R #15) | 15 | Low | a) Disseminate the results of the current evaluation to its staff working on ReferNet, including the extent to which ReferNet partners benefit from systematic and privileged access to information, publications and data; |