



# **SUMMARY OF THE PILOT TESTING WITHIN THE EPANIL PROJECT IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC, POLAND AND THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC**

Hana Čiháková (NÚOV)

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
2. PREPARATION OF THE ASSESSMENT STANDARD FOR THE BRANCH COOK .....	1
3. PREPARATION AND REALIZATION OF THE COURSE FOR ADVISORS AND ASSESSORS:.....	4
3.1 TITLES OF MODULES: .....	4
3.2 ROLES OF ADVISORS AND ASSESSORS .....	5
4. REALIZATION OF THE RECOGNITION PROCESS.....	7
4.1 INTRODUCTION .....	7
4.2 TASKS OF ADVISORS AND ASSESSORS DURING THE PILOT ...	8
4.3 PREPARATION OF RECOGNITION PROCESS.....	8
4.4 IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS OF COMPETENCIES ACQUIRED IN THE FRAMEWORK OF PRIOR LEARNING .....	9
4.5 EVIDENCE ASSESSMENT (DECISION-MAKING PROCESS) AND CERTIFICATION OF IDENTIFIED AND RECOGNIZED COMPETENCIES .....	9
4.6. GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING AFTER THE TERMINATION OF RECOGNITION PROCESS .....	10
5. CONCLUSION .....	11

# 1. INTRODUCTION

In the framework of the pilot testing, we have complied with the legal provisions of each country and followed the framework of the Common European Principles for the Identification and Validation of non-formal and informal learning (May 2004).

Pilot testing took place in the Moravian-Silesian Region of the Czech Republic where unemployment is high due to the process of economic transformation. Pilot testing took place also in Poland and in Slovakia in regions neighbouring with Moravian-Silesian Region and where there is a similar economic situation – in Upper Silesia in Poland, and in the Nitra Region in Slovakia. Pilot testing of the system of identification and validation of prior learning has taken place in the partners' schools that are members of the regional network. In these schools the required specialist resources is available

The members of the target group were people with lower or no qualifications, but with work experience in the branch cook gained either through employment or voluntary work. The target group composed mainly of people who were unemployed, disadvantaged or at risk of becoming unemployed.

The Pilot testing took place in three phases:

- Preparation of methodical material and assessment standard for the branch cook;
- Preparation and implementation of the educational course for assessors and advisers;
- Implementation of the process of identification and validation of prior learning.

## 2. PREPARATION OF THE ASSESSMENT STANDARD FOR THE BRANCH COOK

The assessment standard [AS] for the branch **Cook** was created for needs of the EPANIL Project with the aim to enable the identification and validation of the non-formal and informal learning outcomes. This approach was designed to provide the clients with faster achievement of the outcomes of the formal training and/or gaining employment in the labour market.

This document was prepared in consultation with social partners in each country, before the pilot verification of clients' achievements.

The development of the Assessment Standard [AS] for the vocational branch Cook is based on following materials:

- Draft of the concept of assessment standards for the technical and vocational part of education (PhDr. Olga Kofroňová);
- Occupational profile for the branch Nr. 6551H Cook-Waiter;
- Assessment standard: Cook-Waiter, version 4 (NUOV 2004);
- Framework educational program for the branch Nr.65-51-H/01 Cook-Waiter (NUOV 2005);
- ISTP (Integrated system of type positions), Cook, code 163.1;
- Curricular documents for secondary vocational schools, vocational course 65-52-H/001 Cook (approved by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports on May 30,2003, Nr. 20 736/03-23, valid from September 1, 2003 starting with the first grade);
- City & Guilds Level 2 NVQ in Food Preparation and Cooking [Q1051650];
- City & Guilds Level 3 NVQ in Food Preparation and Cooking (Kitchen and Larder) [Q1051708];
- French profile of the branch Cook (ANPE).

For the creation of AS we were inspired by similar materials prepared in NUOV, as well as by experience from Great Britain (NVQ system), from France and other project partners. The system of NVQs was chosen as a system of reference standards for the development of national standards comparison (in the Czech and Slovak Republic and in Poland). We compared the description of the chosen standard NVQ 2 for the branch analogous to our branch 65-51-H/01 Cook - Waiter with available curricular documents and the description of the occupation/profession Cook in ISTP (Integrated System of Typical Positions is a system of information, methods and tools to describe the world of labour - a vast database containing up-to-date information about particular jobs (work performance aspects, requirements on the workers).

Unlike curricular documents (i.e. the Framework Educational Programs, FEP, at the national level, and current school curricula at the school level), for the needs of the EPANIL Project the AS will not contain the general education part (i.e. language education, social science and natural science education, etc.). Another difference is that the AS will not primarily concentrate on skills and knowledge, as they are defined in the FEP,<sup>1</sup> however on practical competencies

---

<sup>1</sup> In the document Draft of the concept of assessment standards for the vocational part of education, the assessment standard (AS) is applied both to the occupational profile and to the Framework educational program (FEP). The AS should apply to required competences. In FEP competences are described as „defined structures of competencies and skills and relating attitudes and value orientations that are the prerequisite for the achievement of the subject in defined field of activities.“ FEP-draft, NUOV, Prague 2002, p.6

(qualification requirements) needed for a qualified carrying out the occupation (work activities concerned).<sup>2</sup> There are, in particular, two types of competencies: **occupational** (first of all functional, i.e. skills, besides cognitive, i.e. knowledge), which can be demonstrated; **personal** (first of all social, i.e. behaviours and attitudes, besides meta-competences, facilitating learning), which cannot be demonstrated, but only referenced – e.g. by the previous employer.

For the purpose of the prior learning recognition, these key competencies will not be assessed. The presumption is that the client acquired them during the period of previous learning. In the framework of recognition only so-called vocational competencies will be assessed.

The assessment standard was several times assessed by experts from the branch HORECA and by all project partners with the aim to include all relevant requirements on the performance of branch cook. All assessors involved in the pilot testing were trained for working with this standard in order to guarantee their concerted approach towards assessment.

Assessment standard, prepared for the pilot verification in the Czech Republic, was used without fundamental modification during the pilot verification in Slovakia. Slovak partners (Nadácia Aspekt- Aspekt Foundation) addressed social partners and researchers from SIOV (Štátny inštitút odborného vzdelávania - State Institute of Vocational Education) in Bratislava and asked them to revise the assessment standard developed in the Czech Republic; this standard was adapted on the basis of comments and afterwards recommended for pilot verification in Slovakia.

With respect to different educational conditions in the Czech Republic and Poland – project partner (GCE Gliwice) prepared own assessment standard, which had to undergo a review procedure in the framework of the project partnership. Partners from Gliwice also prepared comprehensive Methodical material, describing the set of methods and tools for identification, validation and recognition of non-formal education and informal learning. Creation of this material was based both on experience partners from the old EU 'countries and information received from the European Inventory on Validation of non-formal and informal learning.

The process of recognition uses different evidence and methods of verification, e.g. references from employer (i.e. structured statement on job performance and eventually on different personal characteristics of the client) substantiate an outcome - product of work (produced by client outside the process of recognition), observation (scan) of client's practical activity in simulated or in real work situation, etc. Methodical

---

<sup>2</sup> CEDEFOP Glossary 2002 „ability to apply knowledge, know-how and skills in a habitual and/or changing work situation”.

material prepared by Polish project partner contains the description of these methods and instructions for unified realization of pilot verification.

Methodical material was presented at the international partners' meeting in Arras (France), and consequently commented by all partners, adapted and used in the framework of pilot verification in all three countries where the pilot verification was realized.

### **3. PREPARATION AND REALIZATION OF THE COURSE FOR ADVISORS AND ASSESSORS:**

Since the process of recognition is new in new EU member countries, we suppose that it is necessary for those countries offering this process to be well prepared for its realization. The necessity of preparation is obvious not only of above mentioned fact, but is also recommended by the Common European Principles for the Identification and Validation of non-formal and informal learning.<sup>3</sup> The Principle of "Responsibility of stakeholders" obliges stakeholders to assure guidance and counselling as well as information provision on the system of recognition and used approaches to individuals (clients).

The preparation of advisors and assessors course for the process of identification and recognition of prior learning outcomes was accredited by the Ministry of education as a course of further education of pedagogic staff. This course is conceived as a three-day course and divided into three modules:

#### **3.1**

##### **Titles of modules:**

- Module A- Lifelong Learning and the process of the recognition of prior learning
- Module B- Counselling and guidance of the candidate/client in the process the recognition of prior learning
- Module C- Assessment of prior learning

---

<sup>3</sup> 9175/04 EDUC 101 SOC 220 Draft Conclusions of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on Common European Principles for the identification and validation of Non-formal and Informal learning (May 2004)

## 3.2 Roles of Advisors and Assessors

An assessor is a person capable to make a professional, high-quality and independent judgement about documents proving the client's previous personal and work experience, certificates of non-formal training and education, as well as formal education- parts or entire qualifications.

As well as final (leaving) examinations, the process of recognition should involve a commission or another form of assessment board. Each prospective assessor has to be very well prepared for working in assessment board, because of his/her responsibility for quality, objectivity and accuracy of the process of verification and assessment. For purpose of the pilot verification of the process of prior learning outcomes recognition using the assessment standard for branch cook, an assessment board (composed of at least three members) was set up. The members of these boards were recruited from experts in branch cook and trained for this activity in the framework of the EPANIL project.

An adviser is capable of motivating the candidate/client during the process of identification (formative assessment) and to its' successful conclusion (summative assessment). The main aim of this process is to support the candidate/client to identify and formulate prior learning outcomes in the widest extent, including the possibility to produce (eventually to gain) relevant evidence to support a claim, which is successful in gaining credit for the chosen outcomes.

For example:

- An adviser helps the client to identify the possibilities of further training and education, based on the process of recognition.
- Advisors and assessors can promote access to accreditation and assessment by being prepared for, and capable of communicating with a wide range of clients with different social background and environment and have to be capable to adapt own communication characteristics for clients from different socioeconomic environments.
- In the framework of pilot verification pedagogic staff (teachers and instructors of practical training) and one social partner for a high-quality performance of the role of advisor and assessor during the pilot verification of clients competencies (for numbers of trained people see the chart Nr.4)

Chart Nr.4: Number of people trained in the framework of the course for advisors and assessors

	<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE</b>
<b>CZ</b>	6
<b>SK</b>	7
<b>PL</b>	22
<b>TOGETHER</b>	<b>35</b>

After the successful course completion all participants received Certificate of course completion. From the group of trained people were selected workers performing role of assessors during the pilot testing and worked in assessment board and workers performing role of advisors.

## 4. REALIZATION OF THE RECOGNITION PROCESS.

### 4.1 Introduction

For the purposes of the pilot verification, applicants were selected who gained competencies through practice without previous formal education in the branch cook (apprenticeship certificate). The chart below presents the total number of clients who participated in pilot verification (67 persons). 48 of them had initial basic education, 16 had secondary vocational education with apprenticeship certificate in other branch, 3 persons reached secondary vocational education with final upper-secondary leaving examination in other branch. Number of men and women was evenly balanced.

Chart Nr.5: Initial education and sex of clients who participated in pilot verification

	TOGETHER	BASIC EDUCATION	SECONDARY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION WITH APPRENTICESHIP CERTIFICATE IN OTHER BRANCH	SECONDARY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION WITH FINAL UPPER-SECONDARY LEAVING EXAMINATION	WOMEN	MAN
<b>CZ</b>	11	5	3	3	9	2
<b>SK</b>	13	0	13	0	10	3
<b>PL</b>	43	43	0	0	15	28
<b>TOGETHER</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>33</b>

## **4.2 Tasks of Advisors and Assessors during the pilot**

In the framework of the pilot verification, Advisors fulfilled following tasks:

- Cooperation with labour offices and employers within the process of recruitment and clients selection;
- Interview with client before the process of recognition;
- Communication with employers in evidence (testimony) acquisition;
- Creation of portfolio;
- Guidance during the process of verification;
- Interview with client after the process of recognition.

In the framework of pilot verification, Assessors fulfilled following tasks:

- Analysis and assessment of portfolio;
- Preparation of practical verification/ examination specification;
- Preparation of appropriate workplace;
- Observational method of client work activity;
- Work in assessment board;
- Recognition of competencies

Pilot verification of the recognition process was realized through:

1. Preparation of the recognition process;
2. Identification and analysis of competencies acquired in the framework of previous learning, creation of portfolio;
3. Evidence assessment (decision-making process) and certification of recognized competencies;
4. Counselling after the completion of recognition process;

## **4.3 Preparation of recognition process**

Preparation of recognition process was one of the most fundamental activities, realized in the framework of pilot verification. Selection of suitable candidates took place as described above. Advisors implemented an information campaign with the intention of informing the target group about the project objectives. The aim was to contact prospective applicants interested in recognition of competencies in the branch cook. Advisors addressed labour offices, school canteens and other employers, students (early school-leavers in the branch cook), etc. Advisors succeeded in realization of information meetings with applicants and in selection of suitable candidates for purposes of pilot verification. Criteria for selection of candidates were

no formal education in the branch cook and evincible practice in this branch.

At an information meeting, clients met advisors who guided them through the whole process and they were also acquaint with the system of prior learning outcomes recognition, with requirements which were imposed on them during the pilot verification, with workplace where the practical verification/examination later took place.

#### **4.4 Identification and analysis of competencies acquired in the framework of prior learning**

In the next phase of pilot verification advisors together with clients created their portfolios of competencies (advisors enquired within directed interviews with clients what competencies clients have and decided about the mode of evidence - testimony acquisition). If possible, clients proved their prior formal and informal education. Advisors cooperated with former and current employers in data acquisition of information and evidence regarding clients' competencies.

Based on requirements set by the assessment standard for the branch cook, assessors prepared the content of pilot verification/examination. They created a list of menu where each dish was composed of starter (appetizer), salad, fish dish, soup, main course (basic meat dish) and side dish. Menu are listed in Pilot verification Reports and are part of project outcomes. Assessors set a time limit for menu preparation, including the service. Assessors also prepared an assessment sheet containing results of observation and assessment board findings.

#### **4.5 Evidence assessment (decision-making process) and certification of identified and recognized competencies**

Practical verification of clients' competencies (examination) took place in partner schools with adequate equipment for purposes of this verification. Schedule of practical verification/examination was prepared in advance and approved by assessment board. Preparation of menu took place in four model kitchens fully equipped for cooks work. Clients selected menu by lot and they had to perform all competencies contained in the assessment standard.

Verification of competencies (i.e. preparation of dishes, technologic process, presentation of dishes) took about 5 hours. Members of the assessment board observed the clients work, assessed fulfilment of criteria set by assessment standard and continuously made notes of observation results. Verification of knowledge, which could not be identified through observation, was realized in the form of directed questioning interviews. At the end, each client presented own menu and served one sample portion and two tasting (degustation) portions. The assessment board tasted all meals and carried out overall assessment. Results were noted into assessment sheets.

After the completion of practical verification/examination, the assessment board decided if individual clients fulfilled all conditions of pilot verification (according to methodical material). Based on this decision, certificates were awarded to clients during a ceremony.

#### **4.6. Guidance and counselling after the termination of recognition process**

After the termination of assessment process, advisors discussed with clients (directed interviews) to investigate the client's feelings and impressions from pilot verification. Clients who participated in pilot verification also filled in assessment questionnaires. This approach helped to analyse and evaluate the process of pilot verification. At the very end of interview, clients were motivated by counsellors to participate in further education and professional development.

From questionnaires and from directed interviews, it emerged that:

- All applicants supposed that recognition of their prior learning outcomes is necessary for retaining their work position.
- All applicants addressed by the offer of recognition supposed that sufficient timely information was received at the information meetings and contributed to successful process of pilot verification.
- All applicants considered conditions of prior learning outcomes recognition as understandable.
- The atmosphere of verification/ examination as well as the attitude of assessors satisfied all applicants.
- Guidance and counselling after the termination of the recognition process helped applicants to orientate themselves in possibilities of further education.

Process of pilot verification of prior learning outcomes in the branch cook was video recorded or photographed. Individual project partners prepared reports from pilot verifications. These reports belong to project outcomes.

## 5. CONCLUSION

All clients selected for participation in pilot verification successfully received certificate of competencies in the branch cook. It is possible to claim, that their competencies were comparable and in many cases were even deeper and wider than was required by the assessment standard. We can assume that the reason was good selection of clients invited to participate in the project. During interviews at the end of pilot verification, clients were informed of the possibilities of further education including the possibility to acquire an apprenticeship certificate in the branch cook. In the Czech Republic, these possibilities will be realized as soon as the Act Nr. 179/2006 Coll. on verification and recognition of further education outcomes will come into force, it means after August 1<sup>st</sup> 2007.

Project partners observed further steps of clients, their successes or failures on the labour market. It is possible to claim, that employers accepted a certificate from pilot verification in a different way, sometimes with positive and sometimes with negative views. It is probably caused by the fact, that in the “new” member countries the systems and procedures of recognition have not yet been implemented and information on them are insufficiently distributed. On the other hand, EPANIL Project certificate secured a job for eight clients. However, we have to emphasize, that the EPANIL project was realized at a time, when there existed no legislative prerequisites for the creation and development of the recognition system in the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovak Republic. In the time of the preparation of the project proposal there even did not exist the draft law of the act on recognition of further education outcomes and on the change of some other acts in the Czech Republic. For that reason the EPANIL Project has only the status of an experiment.

Czech television (CT) filmed report about pilot verification in the Moravian-Silesian region for program “Nemám práci” (I´ m unemployed) which was broadcasted on 13.th June at 5p.m. on CT1 channel (see <http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/vysilani/1185333262-nemam-praci/22411.html>).

Pilot verification which was organized by Aspekt Nadácia and realized in Nové Zámky, Slovakia, was filmed by the regional television Nové Zámky and broadcasted from 23<sup>rd</sup>.- 31<sup>st</sup>.March 2006 (CD with programme is also on of the EPANIL project outcomes).

On the basis of information from project partners and experiences from pilot verification, that for quality assurance of the process for identification and recognition of prior learning outcomes and complying with framework of Common European Principles it is necessary:

- To extend the process of recognition beyond examination performance, and take into account that this is a long-term process (e.g. in France the recognition of prior learning outcomes may take even half a year), which involves the other steps described in this report;
- To establish the role of guider considered as a very important person for a successful verification process;<sup>4</sup>
- To train advisers/guiders and assessors (according to the Act Nr.179/2006Coll. on verification and recognition of further education outcomes and about the change of some acts is assessor authorized person), so that these would be able to perform their roles in the process of recognition on a qualified level.
- To assure the accessibility of the recognition system for everyone;
- To create common assessment standards containing only necessary competencies required by the labour market, which will be verifiable through performance of working activity;
- To involve social partners (especially employers) into the entire process of recognition, including development of assessment standards;
- To ensure that authorised persons have adequate workplace resources for recognition;
- That clients entering the process of recognition should be at least 18 years old.

---

<sup>4</sup> This task is the responsibility of Leonardo da Vinci Thematic Action project, EuroguideVAL (2005-2007) which has three common partners with EPANIL. See <http://www.euroguideval.org/choix.html>