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Recommendations based on analysing the implementation of the Outdoor Sector's Certifications across the EU - Project report -



Report: The ROC project: Recommendations based on analysing the implementation of the Outdoor Sector's Certifications across the EU

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Belgium, 29.05.2023

Introduction and background

According to the ATTA (2021¹), the outdoor and adventure tourism sector is huge business: They report the global adventure tourism expenditure for 2020 at 683 billion US dollars or 30% of all tourism expenditure. However, despite this economic significance, the outdoor sector consists mostly of small- and medium-sized enterprises with unique sector-specific challenges.

One of the key concerns of those enterprises is staffing; for two main reasons:

- Only well-trained staff will be able to deliver the service in a safe manner, keeping both him-/herself but also the customers as safe as possible. With safety being paramount for any outdoor activity, the importance of this cannot be stressed enough.
- The outdoor animators looking after the customers greatly shape the very service they deliver: Only knowledgeable, entertaining and professional guides will make sure customers have a great time and hopefully return again as customers to the business.

As such, the availability of good staff are paramount to the success and sustainability of any tourism enterprise. However, finding – and keeping! – good and well trained staff is not easy. Work is often seasonal and fluctuates during the year. Many employees consider the outdoor industry as a stepping stone to other jobs, working only temporarily and/or part-time. Staff are often mobile – looking for work in other countries, however, the recognition of qualifications across even EU member states remains complex and fraught.

For that reason, over the last years, the EC-OE and various organisations concerned with the outdoor sector, both industry associations and training providers, have been working on several EU projects addressing the training of outdoor animators in the EU:

Project	When	Aim	Main output and deliverables
EQFOA	2006 – 2008	Describing the sector and collecting necessary competencies	Functional map and competence framework
CLO2	2008 – 2010	Developing learning outcomes from the competencies identified in EQFOA	Learning Outcomes Framework
ELESA	2013 – 2015	Developing a number of teaching modules from CLO2	Comprehensive syllabus / curriculum
ROC	2022 – 2023	Investigating the extent of adoption of the ELESA curriculum	Research report, fact sheets, recommendations

Table 1: EU projects about the training of Outdoor Animators (further information about all projects can be found on www.ec-oe.eu)

Early on in the process across the various projects, two things became clear:

- The certification needed by a fully qualified and independent Outdoor Animator with key responsibility for a tour would have to be at EQF level 5.
- The learning outcomes identified across the projects need to be divided into soft skills (non-technical) and hard skills (technical), in order to clearly differentiate all the generic competencies involved in outdoor animation from the pure technical competences linked to an activity. Typically, training courses tended to over-focus on technical skills, while employers clearly stressed the need for complementary soft skills in order for the animator to be able to deliver the best possible service.

¹ ATTA (2021): *Adventure travel overview and market sizing*. <https://learn.adventuretravel.biz/research/adventure-travel-overview-and-market-sizing>.

With those findings in mind, the work of the three first projects culminated in a comprehensive training curriculum that could be used by any training provider to start and train Outdoor Animators at EQF level 5.

In 2022, seven years after the publication of the ELESAs curriculum, the Erasmus+ ROC (*Recommendations based on analysing the implementation of the Outdoor Sector's Certifications across the EU*) project set out to analyse the level of implementation of and also satisfaction with the ELESAs syllabus across the EU. It sought to both evaluate the achievements of this ELESAs work as well as identifying recommendations for further adoption of the curriculum by the sector and the training providers. The project was funded by the Belgian Erasmus+ National Agency *Epos* under the action "KA210-VET - Small-scale partnerships in vocational education and training". In order to facilitate the best possible outcomes, a number of well-recognised organisations came together for this project:

- [EC-OE: European Confederation of Outdoor Employers \(lead\)](#)
- [Munster Technological University](#)
- [University of Thessaly](#)
- [Hungarian University of Sport Science](#)
- [BFNO: Beroepsfederatie van natuursport ondernemingen](#)
- [HATEOA: Hellenic Association of Tourism Enterprises in Outdoor Activities](#)
- [France Plein Air](#)

In addition to the thematic work described above, the project had complementary goals; it was developed to specifically bring together stakeholders from the commercial outdoor activity sector, both industry associations and training providers, across Europe. In addition, it was the first time for EC-OE to lead a project and the organization greatly benefitted from the expertise of the more experienced partners, mainly the training providers.

With these two goals in mind in terms of content and organisation, the project was designed to build capacity in the sector through a number of actions; by developing new relationships; strengthening existing partnerships; gathering reliable data on the sector; establishing recommendations for a future action plan; and disseminating the findings across the stakeholders through events in five Member States.

This report will summarize the work done; it will critically describe the methodology used, the insights gained and the results achieved.

Methodology

The methods used to address the project objectives were varied. They can be broken down into two categories:

- A. Methods to gather data for analysis and to aid the formation of concrete action planning.
- B. Methods to build capacity and relationships;

A. Methods to gather data for analysis and to aid the formation of concrete action planning

One of the key objectives of the ROC project was the collection of data as a base for the development of recommendations around future training in the outdoor sector. These methods were developed in response to the objectives of the project. Three data gathering methods were identified:

1. Interviews with training providers.
2. Interviews with representatives of employers' groups.
3. Online survey of qualifications available in the EU.

1. Interviews with training providers

The first area for exploration was the level of implementation of the ELESa project across the EU since its launch in 2015. This was explored through 15 qualitative interviews with training providers in vocational education (VET) and Higher Education (HE) settings in 11 countries over a period of 16 weeks. Interviewees were recruited through the database of EC-OE and through the project partners.

Following discussions by the partners and a piloting of the interview protocol, a formal structure for contacting the interviewees and conducting the interviews was followed. This process included submitting the research design for ethical approval at a University in Ireland. Following appraisal by the ethics in research committee at Munster Technological University (MTU), ethical approval for the research process was granted.

The workload associated with the recruitment of interviewees, the transcription of audio recordings and the management of transcripts were divided fairly between the partners. Partners with extensive research experience guided and supported those new to these methods to ensure every partner had agency in the process and achieved a sense of ownership of the outputs. Once the interview plan and protocol were agreed upon, a pilot interview was conducted with a training provider in Portugal. This led to minor adjustments and improvements to the interview plan. Partners then agreed the allocation of responsibilities for conducting interviews in different countries.

2. Interviews with representatives of employers' groups

Similar to the interviews with the training providers, interview questions for the employers' representatives in 11 countries were designed by the partners to seek pertinent information on the trends and developments in the training of outdoor animators in each country. Interviewees were recruited through the membership database of EC-OE which identifies organisations representing employers' organisations from the sector.

3. Online survey of qualifications available in the EU

A quantitative online questionnaire was designed to establish indicators of the range of qualifications used within the sector to gain employment. The questionnaire was designed by the project team to establish details of which EQF level was most frequently used to accredit training and education for employment in the sector. It also sought to identify any relationship with qualifications from other bodies. The level of regulation of the sector in each country was also examined. The questionnaire was piloted for to assure its clarity and then distributed by email using a link to a Google form. The data returned was managed in Microsoft Excel.

B. Methods to build capacity and relationships

This project involved partner organisations who had never met before as well as organisations who had previously collaborated to advance the sector through the development of tools and programmes. In order to build and consolidate relationships among the partners, a series of online meetings and transnational partnership meetings were organised. These meetings allowed partners who had not previously worked together to get to know each other through the sharing of information about each organisation and through collaborative tasks which helped to build insights into each other. Partners gained insights into each other's organisation and their sectoral context and their organisational culture.

As some partners in the project had greater experience in working on Erasmus+ projects, they acted as mentors to the first-time project participants and openly shared their practice and their experience. While the online meetings allowed for the development of knowledge of each other, the face-to-face meetings were pivotal in gaining a greater understanding and mutual respect for the commitment of partners to their organisations, to the sector and to this project. It was during these transnational meetings that the structure of the project, the task lists, the methods for the gathering of the data as well as the development of the recommendations and conclusions took place.

The participation of project partners in small working groups and in feedback sessions where partners presented their shared findings built cooperative capacity within the partnership. It could be seen that over a few short months, partners developed trusting relationships and gained new skills for gathering data and reporting findings about our sector. The process of working together on tasks related to the needs of our sector builds a skillset within the partners that has the potential for application in defining a future path of development for the sector. It paves the way for more efficient and productive collaboration on common goals in the future.

Gathering the data: meeting the challenges

During the gathering of data, the partners experienced various challenges. Some of them may have been accentuated by the very nature of the outdoor industry.

One big challenge had been clear to the partner from the outset, that is the **large scale and fragmentation of the sector**: With the number of organisations and qualifications and in fact, member states itself, it became clear that we need to limit our investigation as specified already in the original project application. But even with the sample of 11 countries it was not possible to investigate each country in depth as we needed to rely on samples due to the limited scale of this project. Mapping the sector on a bigger scale thus remains one of our future aspirations. And while our sample was big enough to arrive at meaningful conclusions, the data collection process brought with it some additional difficulties.

One of the key issues proved to be **connecting with people**. On the one hand, in several cases, it proved complicated to find the right contact person. In other cases, it was not possible to identify a suitable and knowledgeable contact person at all. In many cases, it proved challenging to arrange the actual online meeting to gather the data since the research phase of the project coincided with the summer high season and many of the contact persons being busy and/or on fieldwork and hard to connect with. Or - in the case of the training providers - were on annual leave and not immediately availability.

However, once designated persons were found and contact was made, the interviews proved to be very motivating and often extended beyond the original questions of the surveys. Thus, the interview process

often helped in re-establishing and enlarging the outdoor industry networks, especially after the Covid-19 Pandemic.

A third challenge we had not identified was that sometimes our interviewees and respondents did not possess all the relevant knowledge surrounding the terminology and concepts we were using to describe the sector. We found that some contact persons had not heard about ELESAs and were less familiar about the EQF and its levels. In several cases, this hampered data gathering.

The three avenues of data collection undertaken brought with them a unique set of challenges and hurdles.

1. Interviews with training providers

The training providers were in some cases hard to contact and less available over the summer months. However, once interviews were arranged, they - not surprisingly - proved most insightful and knowledgeable about concepts of training, qualifications, EQF and so on.

2. Interviews with representatives of employers' groups

Unfortunately, many member States still do not have representative bodies for our employment sector. Where such organisations existed, we were able to conduct the interviews as planned - with the aforementioned difficulties in arranging appointments due to the high season and the outdoor work of the interviewees (it is easier to arrange video conferences with people working in offices on a daily basis...). Also, mostly coming from a very practical background, several interviewees did not know about ELESAs or EQF but were still able to contribute robustly after explanations.

3. Online survey of qualifications available in the EU

For the online survey, even more than for the other avenues of investigation, we had to rely on samples due to the limited scale of this project. As such, our survey could be considered as a form of pilot study for a much wider sector mapping exercise in the future.

The response rate was low even though we had sent the link of the online survey to many contacts and across many networks. This might have to do also with the questions - it is conceivable that in this survey in particular, questions about EQF levels and ELESAs might have put people out of their depth. Clearly, the questionnaire would require further adaptation and testing before any future reiteration of the online survey.

After listing the challenges of the data collection process, it seems only fair to also mention two very welcome and valuable insights:

While many member states do not have industry associations, we managed contacts in three countries (Italy, Hungary, Bulgaria), where our network can support the future organisation of the outdoor industry in their respective countries.

We also achieved one of the goals set out in the project application, namely to develop research capacity within the project partner network. As such, we discussed and developed research protocols, methodologies, approaches, organisation, documentation and even new skills utilising software (e.g. transcription software Otter).

Analysis, findings and results

After having gathered the data, all three research parts were analysed separately. Working groups reviewed and processed the data, collected the insights. These contributed to the final **recommendations**. The analysis as well as those recommendations are reported in this chapter. After completion of the three different research elements, the recommendations were formed, reviewed and re-ordered thematically in order in advance of dissemination. The final set of recommendations, as they were presented during the dissemination events, can be found in Appendix 1.

Parallel to the work on the recommendations, a lot of thought was given about how to best present the findings of the mapping of the sector. As identified in our project proposal, country factsheets were designed that would facilitate the visualisation of a lot of information about the current state of affairs for each country. The country factsheets can be found in Appendix 2.

Analysis, findings and results part 1: Interviews with training providers

Interviews with training providers in VET and HEI settings

In this part of the research, interviews were conducted with 15 training providers in vocational education (VET) and Higher Education (HE) settings. Interviewees from 11 EU member states were conducted. The data gathered were in the form of pseudonymised transcripts. An inductive form of qualitative analysis was used to identify broad themes in the data. Summaries of the information shared by interviewees were extracted and themes were then distilled from this analysis. Recommendations have been made by the project partners based upon the themes from these interviews.

Summaries of the experiences of training providers

Of the 15 training providers interviewed, most have been aware of the ELESAsyllabus since 2010. Some had been involved in preceding EU projects which were precursors to the ELESAsyllabus. The majority of the training providers were delivering programmes across a variety of disciplines but predominantly at EQF level 6. This would suggest that the training providers were mostly in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). A number of providers stated that their HEI provided applied-practice programmes across a number of EQF levels. Several providers worked at institutions which offered programmes at levels 4,5 & 6. Seven providers indicated that it was possible to take studies which included aspects of outdoor animation and subjects related to active leisure at EQF level 7. One institution was capable of providing programmes at EQF level 8, though no learners were engaged in studies related to outdoor animation at this level at this time.

The interviewees reported that the programmes delivering VET and HE awards specific to outdoor animation were offered at level 4, 5 and 6. The majority of interviewees stated that level 4 was the most common level of programmes in outdoor animation across the 11 countries.

Themes which emerged from the interviews

THEME 1: ELESAs is not uniformly applied across the sector in VET/HE settings.

It would appear that there is no singular approach being adopted by the 11 countries involved in this research. In Ireland, ELESAs are used as a precursor and an accreditation process to access a bachelor's degree (EQF level 6). In Portugal, there is a partial implementation. However, there are some regional regulation issues that are juxtaposed to the ELESAs structure, and therefore they have implemented as much of it as they possibly can, but have had to manage aspects like the work placement, in keeping with the local regulations in that country. In Hungary, discussions on the implementation of ELESAs are in progress, but no agreement had been finalised. It was noted that in a number of countries, there are challenges to getting agreement across the sector for stakeholders to accept a significant change from current practices to incorporate ELESAs into their training programming. In Switzerland, local regulation and the structuring of vocational awards have blocked the immediate or total adoption of ELESAs. The particular language to describe training and education that is used in defining Swiss Education Awards is different to the language and to the constructive alignment used in the ELESAs syllabus. The Swiss training providers have worked with a consultant to try and match the content from ELESAs to the requirements of their qualifications authority to establish the qualification within the VET structure in Switzerland.

THEME 2: ELESAs as a trans-European Licence to practice.

The lack of unity of stakeholders within individual countries and lack of homogeneity across the VET/HE providers challenges the idea of applying a singular syllabus and training programme across the EU. However, nine interviewees highlighted how the creation of a trans-European standard for practice would be an advantage. A number of respondents also suggested that if completing ELESAs led to a trans-European Licence to practice, it would generate unity of purpose in the promotion of increased mobility opportunities for workers. However, due to the diversity of regional regulation, it would be a substantial task involving legislative changes in each member country to achieve a singularity in terms of the remit of a professional to practice in this domain across the EU. While some areas of EU regulation have homogenous application across all member states, many areas such as taxation are decided autonomously by each member state. Significant leverage would be required to initiate such a large scale of legislative change which may have unintended consequences which might impact on other employment sectors.

THEME 3: Complexity and training time commitment

A number of interviewees stated that they had partially implemented the programme. Where VET and HE providers have programmes in place to service the sector in their country, it is challenging to change an established programme to include 120 ECTS of new content. Many providers said they had gone through some process of 'mapping' ELESAs to their sector requirements or to their existing awards. Some stated that while elements were 'a good fit' with existing practice and local sector/industry standards, other aspects were not in keeping with their programmes which were specific and had been localised. A number of providers acknowledged that they could see clear connections between ELESAs and their programme or that they had already adopted the elements which were feasible to adopt. Several training providers stated that the industry or sector in their country perceived that learners/trainees/employees would be ready for independent work in the sector with a shorter period of training than that indicated in the ELESAs programme. However, a significant number of them were also training future outdoor animators to degree level which would take even longer than the ELESAs programme.

THEME 4: Time to develop: as a sector; as a training organisation

When asked what was necessary to facilitate greater integration of the ELESAs programme in to their Active Leisure business sector and to their VET /HE setting, many acknowledge the slow pace of development of the sector or sub-sector. This was particularly the case in some emerging economies in Eastern

Europe where active leisure tourism had only developed in recent years and the commensurate growth of an employer's union was not advanced. However, some central European countries with highly developed and long-standing heritage in guiding and leading services outdoors had underdeveloped training structures for their experienced sectors. Some mentioned the slow pace at which National Qualifications Agencies moved to adopt new systems or practices from training providers.

THEME 5: ELESAs as a toolkit

The ELESAs syllabus is being used in Ireland to allow professionals from the sector to access HE. In fact, through recognition of prior experiential learning (RPEL), the learners are able to reduce their workload for their degree award through the accreditation of their ELESAs defined experience at the workplace. There are parallels with the Europass CV system where a structure is used to capture vocational experience from across the EU member states and express it in a manner which is compatible and identifiable across borders. Viewed in this way, a theme emerges of ELESAs as a resource for comparison and grading of similar programmes in different countries.

THEME 6: Gap between the sector's wish for short programmes at level 4 and the sector's predominance of providing level 6 programmes

At a number of junctures, the interviewees expressed the opinion that feedback from stakeholders suggests that their preferred training structure would be shorter level 4 programmes. ELESAs is a 120-credit two-year programme at level 5. The majority of providers interviewed were offering programmes up to level 6. However, a number of interviewees stated that the commencement point for work in the sector was seen to be set at a lower level with a shorter formation or training period.

Recommendations that were derived from above themes

Recommendation: Consider utilising ELESAs as a conversion and comparison tool

Reframe ELESAs as a way to record your training and achievement using language/ terms and levels of competence which can be compared across borders at learning unit level or activity discipline level. It could be modelled on the Europass system.

Recommendation: Explore opportunities to support the mobility of learners for work experience/work placement through the ELESAs network.

Create a coordinated approach to trans-national work placement experiences for learners engaged with VET/HE training providers. Make the mapping of their skills/experience/ training and work placement to the ELESAs syllabus to be part of the mobility experience.

Recommendation: Review the existing ELESAs syllabus in terms of content which might be divided between EQF levels 4 & 5.

Through engagement with the VET/HE providers and the employers within the sector, identify the most frequently referenced ELESAs competencies. Then explore which might be redefined at an EQF level 4, while others remain at level 5.

Recommendation: The ELESAs network should continue to support the sector by connecting outdoor training providers across the EU.

The influence of ELESAs can be extended by the continued support to emerging employers unions in the south and east of the EU. The sector and the position of ELESAs can be further enhanced by connecting

training providers and employers across the EU as a network to facilitate trans-national work placement opportunities and opportunities for the mobility of training providers from one country to another.

Recommendation: Consider a quality mark to be available to training providers who use significant elements of the ELESAsyllabus.

Create a branded quality mark for training providers who adhere to the principles of ELESAsyllabus training and who have integrated significant tranches of the ELESAsyllabus in their national training programmes for outdoor animators.

Summary of this research activity

Six themes emerged from the data generated by this research with 15 training providers across 11 countries. The data indicates that the training aspect of the active leisure sector continues to be somewhat fractured or disjointed. While there is strong support for the vision of a pan-European training, award and licence scheme, the reality is that localization of practices and national regulations present significant barriers to the achievement of this goal. There is strong support from training providers for the concept of ELESAsyllabus, though it would appear to be used by training providers as a framework and structure to be adopted in part, only where it is expeditious to do so, and only where it fits with national training and employment structures. Training providers identified significant opportunities to reframe ELESAsyllabus to have a continued and enhanced role in the training of outdoor animators to a uniformly high standard across Europe. Five recommendations have been drawn from the themes which were captured from the 15 interviews. These can now be added to the information drawn from the other research activities of the project.

Analysis, findings and results part 2: Interviews with representatives of employers' groups

The following lead questions were asked to a sample of Sectoral Employer's organizations:

In Belgium : WANT & BFNO

In France : France Plein Air

In Switzerland : SOA

In Greece : HATEOA

In Ireland: IAAT

Since Hungary has not yet had a sectoral employer's organization it was not involved in this part of the research.

1. What are the most relevant qualifications for your members / the country's outdoor employers?

The issue behind this question is not to get an exhaustive list of the qualifications available in each member State but rather to get a feedback of what the industry is currently "using". Indeed, there are numerous qualifications available in the outdoors, including different ones for one single activity or even covering 1, 2 or more activities, but due to historical, professional & cultural aspects, the actors of the sector are employing / contracting a workforce that tends to focus on certain qualifications.

Five member States reported on their current trends: Belgium (French & Flemish), France, Switzerland, Greece and Ireland. The general trends are as follows:

- Most Outdoor professionals are working at EQF (European Qualification Framework) levels 3 and 4 (or equivalent when the existing qualifications are not registered with the National Registration Authority) and when the profession is not regulated, many professionals are working with no formal qualification or training at all;
- Registered qualifications (when required by law or profession) tend to start at level 4 up to level 6 (France and Switzerland starting at 5);
- Many level 4 and 5 qualifications, and in fact, even many non-EQF-registered qualifications, are currently organized by the sport sector more than by the Outdoor Sector;
- Several member States in the process of creating further outdoor qualifications are aiming at level 5 (France, Switzerland, Belgium, Greece).

2. At what EQF level are they positioned?

This question was originally determined to complement the previous one as it was anticipated that the first answer would only focus on the type of qualifications mainly available rather than their EQF level but in the end, the levels were also addressed previously.

However, the key panel of qualifications across the concerned member States are spread as follows:

- entry level is commonly made at EQF Level 3, sometimes EQF Level 4;
- many employees hold qualifications that are not registered to the NQF/EQF;
- the levels currently most used in the EU are EQF 3 and 4;
- registered qualifications in creation or newly developed qualifications / diplomas are at EQF 5 and some “managers” are at EQF 6;

NOTE: On this topic it is important to note that some member States have recently moved towards EQF Level 5 for protectionism reasons, since this was done on pure technical issues, whereas the profession requires more and more “soft skills” rather than “hard skills”.

3. Is this level appropriate? Please explain.

The bulk of the workforce is currently considered to be operating at the right level that is to say mainly at EQF 3 for the “Assistant animators” and EQF 4 for the “Animators”, EQF 4 being the first level of responsibility / autonomy necessary in The Outdoors.

Although Level 5 is of great interest to many member States, the interrogated employers’ Unions confirmed that current leveling at EQF 3 and 4 is correct for different reasons:

- It is historical and cultural and hence corresponds to the “habit” of the sector although as mentioned previously, employers are also now seeking for EQF Level 5s,
- Level 3 & 4 present the specificity of requiring less training than what is required by a qualification at EQF level 5; this corresponds to the employment situation. Indeed, the Outdoor Sector is a sector where staff turn-over is quite high due to positions that are only kept for a few years, between the age of 20 to approximately 30; the seasonality of the job also prohibits – or at least makes it difficult – to impose lengthy, extensive – and expensive - training. In short: recurrent seasonality and high staff turn-over are not easily compatible with long training.
- The typology of staff in the outdoors is also clearly more recruited amongst “doers” than “thinkers” and long training courses are not easy to impose to such categories of employees who are more inclined to jump in a canoe and row down the river than study the behaviour and psychology of their customers – even if the latter is more and more necessary and relevant.

Finally, when and if these levels are sufficient according to national legislation, the legality “drives” the choice of the training level; in other words, if the law requires/imposes/allows minimum training at EQF 4, then training is organized at EQF 4; it works a bit the other way round as speed limits where if speed is limited at 130 K/h, then most people do in fact drive at 130 K/h and not at 110 or 120, although 130 is only a max.

4. Are the professions/commercial activities regulated by law? Which activities?

This is a difficult topic and interviewees reported various situations which are known to also exist in other member States, with the following different situations being observed:

- Some member states (MS) do not regulate Outdoor activities at all (Portugal, ...);
- Some member states do regulate the sector and amongst those regulating MS, some:
 - regulate the owner of the company (Czech Republic, Austria, ...),
 - regulate the animator in all activities (France, ...),
 - regulate the animator in certain activities (Italy, Slovenia, Hungary, Switzerland...)
 - regulate the conditions of delivery of the activity (Belgium, Switzerland, Spain, Finland, Netherlands, Ireland...)
 - regulate companies with regards certain participants (UK, ...),
 - regulate certain areas where service is being delivered (Switzerland, ...),
- There are also MS which regulate a combination of the above, including those used as examples.

There is also a difference in the level of regulation: Some countries have generic yet somewhat soft regulations of the entire commercial outdoor sector (Ireland, Belgium,...) with rules such as “any outdoor guide requires sufficient training”) while others (France, Switzerland,...) have very detailed regulations spelling out what exact, mostly national, qualifications are deemed acceptable for the purpose of the regulation.

This has been established previously through a study carried out by EC-OE in 2012 for the EU Commission, looking at “Non-regulatory measures related to the safety of outdoor leisure activities in the EU”.

Although concentrating on “Non-regulatory measures” this study has drawn comparison charts about safety issues linked to the way the sector is being organized by the trade (non-regulatory measures) AND by the State (legislation) and therefore also addressed the issues mentioned herein. The key outcome of this study is that amongst the various regulatory and non-regulatory models that exist throughout the EU only the overall auditing system developed in particular in Belgium corresponds to a relevant option both in terms of safety – which is the ultimate objective of regulation in the Outdoors – and implementation possibilities for the Sector’s key stake holders. This study certainly reflects the above mentioned interview results and can be consulted on www.ec-oe.eu.

Summary of this research activity

The Outdoor Sector (regulated or not) is currently employing staff (qualified or not) at EQF Level 3 – or equivalent - for incoming staff who tend to then be employed as professionals at EQF Level 4, whilst employers have recently been working on the implementation of EQF level 5 qualifications for the more senior animators. Some supervisors operate at EQF Level 6.

These levels are adequate and sufficient as far as the employers are concerned and the limit to further and higher “mass” qualification certainly finds its limits in the relatively limited duration of the exercise of the profession by the staff of the Outdoors.

Historically, outdoor animators were working at level EQF 4 (even before the introduction of EQF). Recent developments in various member states show a shift towards EQF 5 and even EQF 6. Many qualifications, particularly in nationally regulated environments, created in the last years or in the process of being created on national levels tend to be EQF 5; however, the bulk of the work force remains at EQF 4.

The regulations of the Sector are varied across the EU, ranging from no regulation at all, to some regulation of the activities / and / or of the animators and/or of other issues and the only general trend that can be pointed out is that no regulation and no non-regulatory measure seriously covers the issue of safety in the Outdoors.

Above findings have led us to the following **recommendations**:

Recommendation: In response to the needs of the employers in the sector, any future development of qualifications should include programmes at EQF levels 3 and 4.

Whilst those are of less interest to HEI, they do, however, play a large role in the daily life of the commercial outdoor sector.

Recommendation: HEIs should try to support the development of lower-level awards (EQF 3 & 4), as they play a significant role in the formation of more junior staff within the commercial outdoor sector. These can also provide pathways to EQF levels 5 & 6 awards.

Not only are the EQF levels 3 and 4 important to the sector and the employers, but it was recognised during discussions that in actual fact those programmes can provide stepping stones for Outdoor Animators into higher education programmes – thereby validating their initial lower level training and work experience and providing opportunities for continuing learning.

With the multitude of different qualifications available and the organisational fragmentation of the training landscape with many countries having one organisation in charge of the training for 1-2 activities, working towards ONE qualification remains valid but a somewhat noble aspiration. It seems therefore more fruitful to A) work on an “add-on” qualification covering the soft skills that are typically somewhat neglected by organisations focusing on technical skills, and B) work on standards or frameworks rather than entire curricula – leading to the following two additional recommendations:

Recommendation: Working towards a singular qualification for profession in Europe remains a noble but challenging aspiration. It seems more pragmatic to develop an “add-on” qualification. This needs to address the soft skills that typically required by professionals in the sector but which are frequently less prominent or absent in qualifications focusing on technical skills.

Recommendation: Refocus the international cooperation surrounding ELESA to be more centred on standards or frameworks for practice rather than a singular curriculum for the formation of animators.

Analysis, findings and results part 3: Online survey of qualifications available in the EU

With the diversity of approaches to outdoor training and qualifications within Europe, it would be fruitful to have access to a comprehensive mapping of this training field. However, this was beyond the scope of this project, we designed a survey of outdoor qualifications which was meant to serve two purposes:

- achieve an insight over the qualifications delivered in selected countries; and
- pilot a survey which can later be used (or adopted) for a wider mapping of the training landscape.

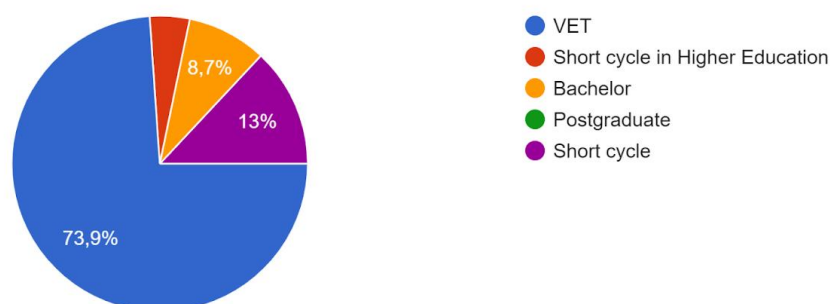
The survey was sent out to 5 of the 7-8 countries that are organised enough at a national level to have contact persons with a broad knowledge of the outdoor training sector. A total of 23 answers were collected. The answers stem from the following countries: 8x France, 6x Greece, 6x Switzerland, 2x Hungary, 1x Belgium

Table 1 on the following page gives a more detailed overview over the answers per country, while the following text and graphs offer a summary of the answers.

The type of qualification is mostly VET, with only about ¼ of qualifications being higher education.

Type of qualification

23 Antworten



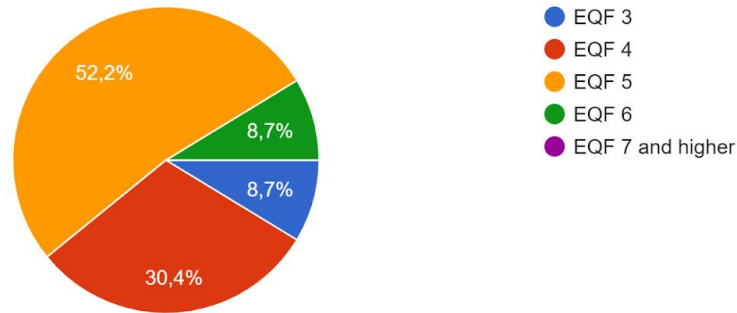
About half of the qualifications are level EQF 5, with about 40% being lower and only about 9 % being EQF 6. No EQF 7 was reported. This corresponds to the findings of the interviews with the industry organisations. It needs to be kept in mind, however, that many qualifications used in the outdoor sector are not federal or national diplomas and might actually not be officially registered to the NQFs of their countries.

# reponses per country	Training provider /organisation	EQF level	Type of qualification	Activities
1x Belgium	1x PXL, College-University	1x EQF 6	1x Bachelor	Hiking/walking/trekking; Biking; Kayaking/canoeing (lake, sea & stream); Ski-/Snowboarding; Others
8x France	2x Sports Sector Social Partners 6x Ministry of Sports & subdelegated Training Providers	2x EQF 3 2x EQF 4 4x EQF 5	8x VET	Hiking/walking/trekking; Biking; Kayaking/canoeing (lake, sea & stream); Ski-/Snowboarding
6x Greece	2x University of Thessaly - 2x HATEOA - DQS 1x University of Thessaly with HATEOA 1x Trekking Hellas	1x EQF 6 5x EQF 5	1x Bachelor 1x VET 4x Short cycle in	Hiking/walking/trekking; Biking; Ski-/Snowboarding; Others
2x Hungary	2x Hungarian University of Sport Science, VET Center	2x EQF 4	2x VET	Biking; Kayaking/canoeing (lake, sea & stream); Ski-/Snowboarding;Others
6x Switzerland	3x Swiss Outdoor Association SOA 1x Swiss Snowsports 1x Several hiking associations in Switzerland (VerbandSchweizerWanderleiter(ASAM-SWL) & Verband Bündner Wanderleiter (BWL) & Associazione Operatori Turistici di Montagna (Guide OTM)) 1x Swiss Mountain Guide Association	3x EQF 4 3x EQF 5	6x VET	Kayaking/canoeing (lake, sea & stream); Ski-/Snowboarding; Hiking/walking/trekking; Others

Table 2: Overview over the origin and content of the answers of the online survey

EQF level of qualification

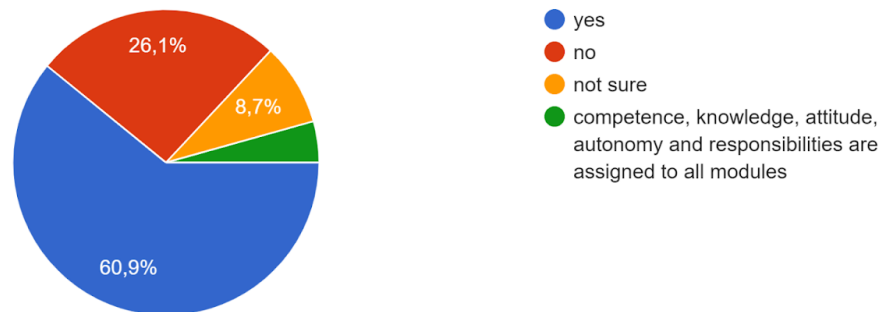
23 Antworten



Over 60% of the qualifications are constructed on the basis of determined “learning outcomes”.

Is your qualification/programme documentation constructed on the basis of determined "learning outcomes"

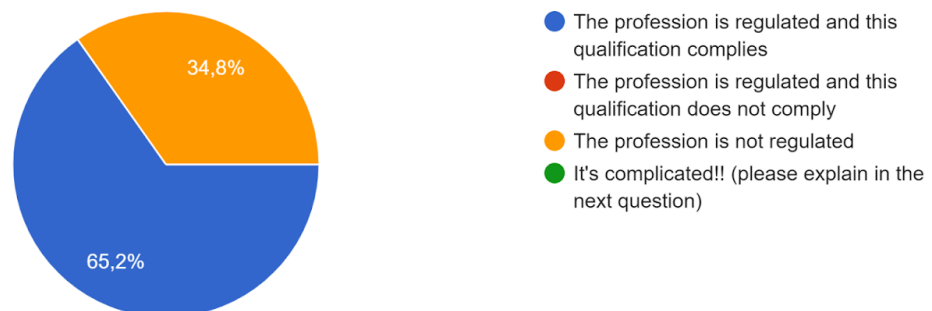
23 Antworten



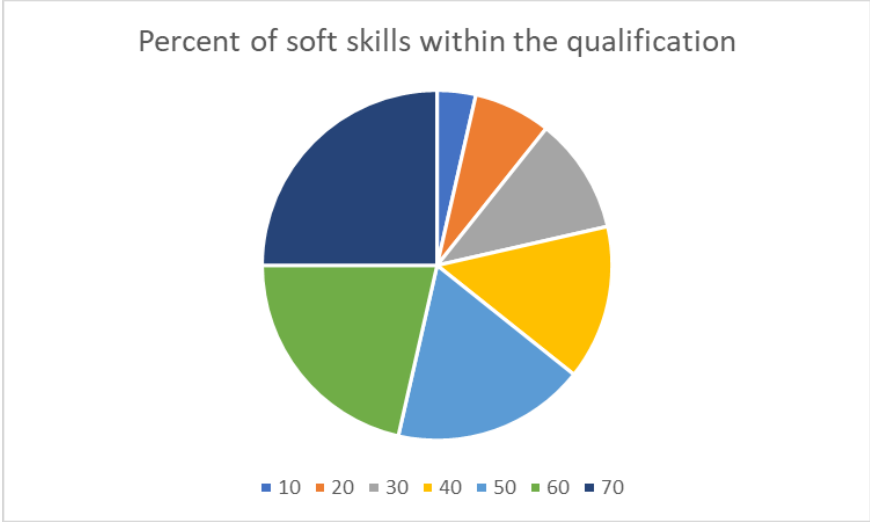
In 15 cases, the activity is regulated in the country and the qualification complies with those regulations; in 8 cases the activity is not regulated. This number is influenced by the fact that two of the countries most represented, namely France and Switzerland, have got strict regulations. Not surprisingly, no qualification was reported that did not comply with existing regulations within a country.

If the profession/commercial activity related to your qualification is regulated in your country, does your qualification comply with these regulations?

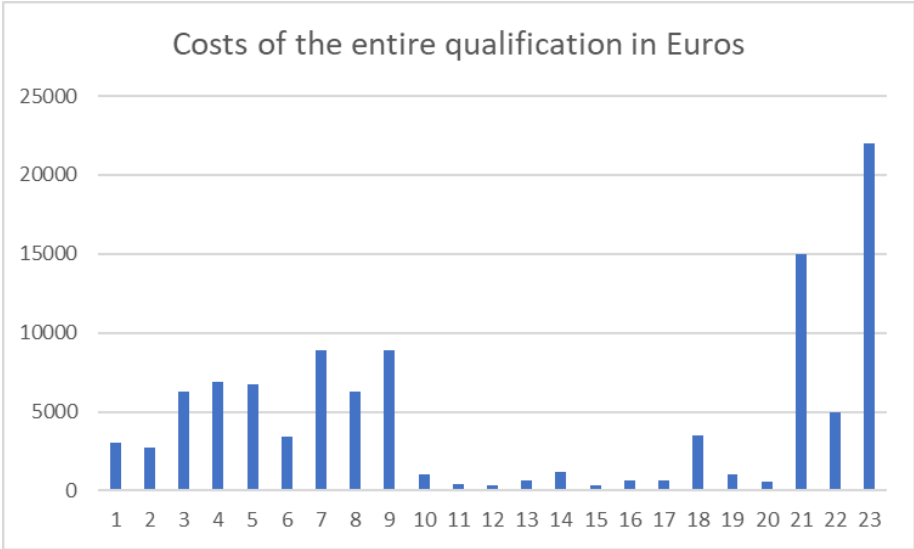
23 Antworten



There is a big difference between the percentage of soft versus hard skills within the reported qualifications, ranging from 10 to 70% of soft skills. ¾ of the qualifications are estimated to focus 40% or more on soft skills.



In the case of the costs, the differences are also notable. They differ from 350 Euros (for 1-2 day exams only) to 22'000 Euros (for a 2-3 year long training and qualification).



Unfortunately, the quality of the answers about the duration is so low that no sensible graphs can be created. However, it can be said that - similarly to the costs - the duration also differs greatly. They vary from 1-day-assessment-only qualifications to entire training courses over up to 3 years full-time duration.

Summary of this research activity:

The information that can be extracted from the survey matches the findings of other parts of the desk research. In particular, the survey yielded the following key findings:

- Where regulations apply, the qualifications designed for the sector match those regulations in the majority of cases.
- Soft skills are relevant across the qualifications identified. This is an endorsement of the prominent role of soft skills in the ELESa program.
- The training sector responds with qualifications at EQF levels 3, 4, 5 and 6 to suit different roles in the execution of commercial outdoor activities.

- Directed learning, independent learning and workplace experience are separate but key elements to the formation of professionals for the outdoors.

In addition to above findings, one more technical **recommendation** can be made: If a larger scale survey was to be made, the questionnaire would need to improve in various manners:

- answers need to be scalable in order to facilitate easy statistical analysis
- key concepts and terms such as duration, soft/hard skills, costs etc. need to be clarified in order to achieve comparable answers
- the inclusion of the contact details of the respondents seems a useful tool for follow up questions on unclear answers.

Beyond those methodological consideration, it became clear that a lot more can be learned about the current status of affairs in the training of Outdoor Animators in Europe. The fragmentation and diversity that already became clear from our small-scale project would warrant a more thorough mapping of the training landscape, which led us to a final recommendation:

Recommendation: While the data from the qualifications survey was insightful, the complex and diverse nature of the sector would merit a larger scale and comprehensive survey. This would create the opportunity to host a live online database of qualifications related to the sector which can then be referenced as a comparison tool.

Analysis, findings and results part 4: Collaboration within and beyond the partner network

One of the key aims of this project was to bring together stakeholders from the European commercial outdoor activity sector, both industry associations and training providers. Beyond the analysis of the data research and the thematic findings around the adoption of ELESAs, we also took some effort to consider the organisation effects of the project, both through formal evaluation surveys of most phases of the project as well as honest discussions about the structure and effectiveness of collaboration around the research and project processes.

As such, a number of findings and results were achieved over the year of the project:

- It became clear that digital cooperation has now earned its fix spot in the arsenal of collaborative tools. After Covid, most of us are by now used to video conferences, digital meetings and joint working on digitally shared documents – allowing for fast and efficient working together, with flexibility in location and timing, and minimal environmental impact due to reduced need for travelling.
- However, having said this, it became equally clear that digital cooperation has severe limitations for building up meaningful relationships and indeed interpersonal and therefore interorganisational trust beyond the scope of the technical agenda. No amount of online exchange can replace the social and organizational and in fact even emotional benefits of in-person-meetings.
- The selection of partners both more and less experienced in EU projects greatly enable interorganisational learning. The mentoring role of the expert partners allowed the less experienced stakeholder to gain valuable practice in all aspects of the projects.
- For EC-OE as the lead organisation, this project constituted a perfect opportunity for trying our hand in running a EU project. The small scale of the project nevertheless allowed us to significantly increase our organisational and administrative capabilities thereby equipping us with better understanding for the participation in or even running of future projects.
- The data collection process has, in addition, been very helpful for rekindling former relationships and establishing new ones. This project therefore allowed our network to grow, both in terms of potential partners for future projects, new members for our organization and in general contacts with interested parties for collaboration in various future actions.

Discussion

The commercial provision of Outdoor Adventure activities is a **complex sector with many variations across Europe**. This diversity has been reflected in the responses of our interviewees and the responses to our survey. The data generated shows clearly that there are a number of issues which continue to challenge and frustrate the organisation of training for this sector both at national levels and at an EU level:

1. The dichotomy of seasonal work and well trained staff

Although professionals employed in the Outdoors sector are convinced that overall well-trained staff are key to the development of the Outdoor commercial service sector, there are some intrinsic aspects of the sector that do not encourage heavy investment in the training of professionals.

“The Outdoors” is a sector clearly determined defined by seasonal activities and by two seasons in particular : winter and summer. Due to the natural succession of the seasons, the nature of activities that can be developed, promoted and sold due at any one time during the year is determined by the presence of “sun & water” and “snow”. This, combined with “classic” school holidays in EU countries, makes summer and winter the most importance seasons economically for the sector.

Key economic outdoor activities are therefore exploited over three-four months in the winter and/or three months over the summer, which represent a definitive limitation in comparison with classic economic activities which run over 12 months : generally, most outdoor companies only operate 30-40% of the time (for one of the seasons). This limits the potential income generation of the companies and offers less working opportunities for workers compared to an average business, unless they effectively create a second business for the other main economic season with alternative activities.

Staff entering the sector tend to be relatively young employees who possess strong Emotional Intelligence (Gardner, 1984²) but who are not drawn to work which requires conventional technical academic awards and backgrounds. This means that employees are less attracted to pursuing awards in further/higher education. Furthermore, many professionals have a reasonably short careers which is less compatible with long initial professional training. Such situations create a dichotomy between the characteristics of employment in the sector and the requirements in terms of training.

The development of the soft skills required at EQF level 4 or 5 may require around two years of training. This is certainly a challenge – for the reasons mentioned above – to attract newcomers into a training programme that is perceived as rather long in the light of a career which is anticipated to be relatively short. Certain areas of work (mountain guide, ski instructor, ...) which offer longer career opportunities do justify a greater initial investment of time, but for the rest, the above certainly applies.

As a consequence of this, the ratio between the duration of the ideal required training and the actual employment duration in the sector is far from ideal.

2. The impact of international mobility requirements on the structure of the qualifications

The Outdoors is part of the tourism sector, which is based on travel and mobility. In order to operate, the sector needs its employees to be mobile to be able to move from one resort to another and to move

² Gardner, H. (1999). *Intelligence reframed: Multiple intelligences for the 21st century*. Basic Books.

from one season to the other. Such issues go beyond borders and mobility is therefore a 'given' sectoral requirement.

Furthermore, the sector is committed to the implementation of mobility and employment policies from the EU, particularly, in terms of the opportunities and benefits it creates. An example of this is the fact that in Greece, there is a need for staff from all around the EU to cater for their summer holiday makers who are EU wide, whilst similarly, the Austrian outdoor sector caters for the very same customers as the Greeks but in the wintertime. They require staff capable of speaking various different languages but for different activities (e.g. skiing versus seakayaking). In fact, such examples are practically the rule in the Outdoor sector.

Since many EU member States regulate the service or provision of outdoor activities, there is a direct consequence to mobility: the need for recognition of the qualifications of employees and sub-contractors. Or, in other words, across the EU, tourism requires mobility which in turn requires recognition of qualifications for work, which unfortunately, many member states continue to hinder.

Such issues, however, require that qualifications should be easily comparable; they should be constructed with comparable learning outcomes; be visible on the EQF levels; and comparable in terms of duration of formation or training. However, our project collaboration and our research results would suggest that, in general, outdoor professionals are not specialists in designing training programmes and even more, sometimes have a limited knowledge/experience in this area.

Another challenge facing the harmonisation and mobility related to training is the legal aspects that regulate VET & HEI training in different member states. These vary from one member states to another which further complicates the organisation of the training and it's compatibility/transferability.

In a sector where mobility is intrinsic, regulation in the member states has a definite impact on the structure and content of qualifications and certainly makes the issue more complex.

3. The EQF level issue with regards access to the profession

As was indicated in the EQFOA occupational map developed in 2010, the results of research in this project support the reality of the lived experiences of employers and training providers. There are multiple levels of operation within the sector and the singular level addressed by ELESIA does not meet all the needs of the sector. Programmes for employees at lower and higher levels are required to meet the needs of a maturing sector. The ROC project research has clearly highlighted yet again this situation.

But such a situation implies a definitive need for the sector to understand well the operation of qualifications at different EQF levels.

Unfortunately, knowledge of the European Qualification Framework (EQF) is still not of common in the Outdoor and many other sectors. This does not help when dealing with the issue of mobility.

The Outdoors sector operates across four different EQF levels :

- Level 3 for those starting in the profession and those engaged in low-risk activities = campsites, holidays camps etc..
- Level 4 for short-duration programmes and where the animator is operating semi-autonomously in a controlled manner.
- Level 5 for full professionals delivering activities completely autonomously, in remote locations or for extended periods of time.
- Level 6 for team managers; service managers or expedition leaders.

The application of EQF levels offers the opportunity for a classic professional progression for employees and sub-contractors in the outdoor sector. In order to properly deal with the EQF and the professional level requirements in the context of mobility and comparability of the qualifications, the sector needs to build its competence and capacity to apply the architecture of the EQF to their systems of training and qualifications. This implies that, for training programmes and qualifications to meet the criteria of the EQF, they need to be defined not only by the duration of the training, but by their learning outcomes and the action verbs which differentiate learning outcomes at different EQF levels.

Now, with the existence of the ELESAs programme, the Outdoor sector is serviced by a standard for training professionals at EQF 5. The sector must now continue to address its training and qualifications needs at other EQF levels in order to meet the needs of the sector for suitably competent professionals. It will need to cope with the challenges and complexity of different EQF levels; appropriate duration of training; a Learning Outcomes and a generally competency-based system which will support comparability and mobility.

If EQF is a central aspect of qualifications, the stakeholders (namely companies, training providers and industry associations) must continue to develop their mastery of training design to build a better training infrastructure for the sector.

This leads to the 4th key issue that needs to be addressed:

4. The need for closer ties between employers and training providers

The need for close cooperation between employers and training providers was well identified in the ELESAs programme. The responses of the interviewees in this research has reiterated the importance of closer cooperation through dialogue, through the sharing of practice and through exchanges, job shadowing and trans-national meetings between stakeholders.

Whilst exchanging with the stakeholders during the various phases of the ROC project, certain hurdles have been identified:

- The cooperation between employers and HEIs and/or other training providers is an emerging issue. The Outdoor sector is relatively a relatively young sector in Europe. The growth of training programmes and qualifications for the sector has been organic and reactive rather than structured and planned. More strategic relationship building on national and EU-wide basis is needed.
- Another hurdle can be seen in the fact that traditionally, outdoor professionals and employers come from an applied practice background whilst traditional HEIs have had a more theoretical approach. The expansion of the VET sector and the development of universities of applied sciences and technological universities have paved the way for more compatible approaches to meet the needs of the professional Outdoor Animators employed in the sector.
- Finally, there is an understandable difference between VET programming focused on EQF 3 & 4 and the undergraduate and postgraduate focus of HEIs.

The potential for collaboration between VET providers, HEIs and the sector can lead to the further development of successful education programmes which service the Sector at EQF levels 3-7.

All of the above means that it takes patience, commitment and mutual respect to construct the set of qualifications that the Outdoor requires. Which brings us to a fifth and last issue to consider – the need for further collaboration.

5. The need for continuing inter-organisation cooperation and increasing the network

This project has been pivotal in reconnecting organisations and in fact people, some of which had worked together before. However, Covid had – more than we had even realised – thrown a spanner into the works not only of the tourism and outdoor enterprises themselves but also of the representing bodies and industry associations. So, this project came at the right time to rekindle relationships between us and give us new momentum on our path of reforming the training for the Outdoors in Europe.

But there is more to take away from this project: As it has been said earlier on in this report – working together remotely, connecting via video conference and working on shared digital projects has been fruitful and educational, with the newer partners greatly benefitting from the mentoring of the more experienced partners. However, the real benefit showed itself during the three transnational meetings. Sitting together at the same table, discussing issues in a lively manner and the opportunity for exchange beyond strict thematic agendas have given rise to a mutual understanding, respect and trust that would not have been possible to form through digital cooperation alone. This is an important lesson for future projects and inter-organisational collaboration.

In addition, this project, through the contacts made both in the process of gathering the data as well as the five dissemination events held across France, Greece, Ireland, Hungary and Belgium, has already led to new interest in our topic, the training of Outdoor Animators, as well as new contacts and indeed members to our network in general and the EC-OE in particular. This, coupled with the organisational learning through leading an Erasmus+ project for the first time, has greatly enhanced the capacities and capabilities of our network.

Conclusions

From the discussion above and indeed the entire project, a number of key conclusions can be drawn:

- A. Finding an employee-training solution that meets the needs of the employers and their individual clients is a clear priority, but this can run contrary to the structures for qualifications and quality assurance in individual countries. It can also run contrary to the mobility needs of employees/the sector, where the seasonal aspect of business requires personnel to be employed in one geographical location in one season and in another region in the next season. These employment locations may or may not be in the same country and therefore having a transparent system for employee accreditation and dynamic system for mutual recognition of well-engineered awards across internal EU borders becomes a priority.
- B. While the 2013-2015 EU supported programme ELESAs designed a programme for homogenous training of outdoor animators across the EU, the realities of 27 member states has meant that such a scheme has not gained traction in many countries. The results of the data gathering exercises in the project had confirmed this. However, what this research has confirmed is that there continues to be a strong desire by both employers groups and training providers to see closer ties and cooperation across the sector. One area that has come into particular focus is the relative isolation of some training providers and the benefits to the whole sector in supporting training providers to share practice and experiences through bilateral exchanges of ideas, of training staff and of trainees.
- C. Another area which has become clearer from this research and from the conversations with both training providers and employers is that the sector is recruiting at a variety of levels of qualification when mapped onto the EQF. While the ELESAs syllabus was drawn at EQF level 5, in some countries employers recruit new staff at different levels. Particularly important would be the large number of

employers reporting that in their countries, employees are often recruited with qualifications and training at EQF level 4 with an entry point at EQF Level 3.

- D. Cooperation and exchange between project partners has proven to be extremely fruitful for the entire partnership and will help to both strengthen and broaden the European Outdoor network. Several areas for future research and action have been identified within the recommendations developed and will hopefully give rise to future collaboration and projects.

Appendix 1: Final recommendations

As described above, the recommendations derived from the three different research parts were later reshuffled and thematically sorted for didactic purposes and ease of dissemination. The following set of recommendations was used for the dissemination events:

Recommendation #1: In response to the needs of the employers in the sector, any future development of qualifications should include programmes at EQF levels 3 and 4.

Recommendation #2: Review the existing ELESAsyllabus in terms of content which might be divided between EQF levels 4 & 5.

Recommendation #3: HEIs should try to support the development of lower-level awards (EQF 3 & 4), as they play a significant role in the formation of more junior staff within the commercial outdoor sector. These can also provide pathways to EQF levels 5 & 6 awards.

Recommendation #4: Refocus the international cooperation surrounding ELESAs to be more centred on standards or frameworks for practice rather than a singular curriculum for the formation of animators.

Recommendation #5: Consider utilising ELESAs as a conversion and comparison tool

Recommendation #6: Consider a quality mark to be available to training providers who use significant elements of the ELESAsyllabus.

Recommendation #7: Working towards a singular qualification for profession in Europe remains a noble but challenging aspiration. It seems more pragmatic to develop an “add-on” qualification. This needs to address the soft skills that typically required by professionals in the sector but which are frequently less prominent or absent in qualifications focusing on technical skills.

Recommendation #8: Explore opportunities to support the mobility of learners for work experience/work placement through the ELESAnetwork.

Recommendation #9: The ELESAnetwork should continue to support the sector by connecting outdoor training providers across the EU.

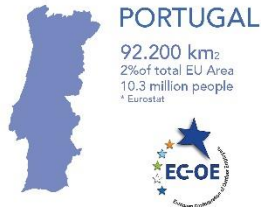
Recommendation #10: While the data from the qualifications survey was insightful, the complex and diverse nature of the sector would merit a larger scale and comprehensive survey. This would create the opportunity to host a live online database of qualifications related to the sector which can then be referenced as a comparison tool.

Appendix 2: Country factsheets

 <p>ROC Outdoor VET Project</p> <p>BELGIUM 30.500 km² 0,7% of total EU Area 11,4 million people <small>* Eurostat</small></p>    	<p>No minimum requirements for work, but frequently employees possess Sport-related awards at level 6 and 7.</p> 	<p>LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION</p>  <p>REGULATION: While there is no regulation of outdoors work, there are strong regulations for outdoor safety.</p>	<p>MARCH 2023</p> <p>5 university colleges have applied to the government to deliver an ELESA-based programme and are awaiting approval.</p> <p>Sectoral Representative Bodies:</p>  
 <p>ROC Outdoor VET Project</p> <p>NETHERLANDS 37.400 km² 0,8% of total EU Area 17,1 million people <small>* Eurostat</small></p>    	<p>The generally accepted minimum requirements in the sector are EQF level 4 and 6.</p> 	<p>LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION</p>  <p>REGULATION: No regulation nationally, but since a lot of education already existing, minimum requirements are already being used.</p>	<p>MARCH 2023</p> <p>Currently one training is already based on the ELESA Learning Outcomes; others working towards it.</p> <p>Sectoral Representative Body:</p> 
 <p>ROC Outdoor VET Project</p> <p>FRANCE 663.200 km² 14% of total EU Area 67 million people <small>* Eurostat</small></p>    	<p>EQF L3 is used for “assistant animators” (staff at campsites, summer camps); L4 is the predominant level in use and L5 is used in newly created qualifications and in ELESA.</p> 	<p>LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION</p>  <p>REGULATION: For all commercial activities, both the practice of the profession and the training for the profession are regulated.</p>	<p>MARCH 2023</p> <p>While there is one university offering the full ELESA programme and one private training provider is offering some modules, The sector does not generally utilise ELESA in its training of professionals for work in the sector.</p> <p>Sectoral Representative Body:</p> 

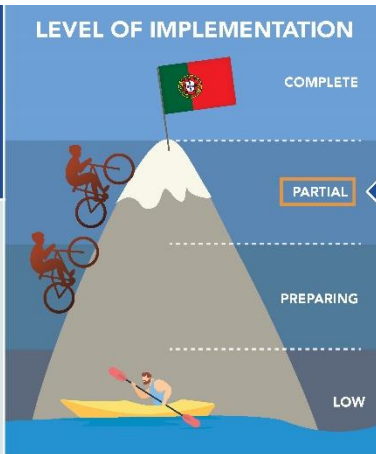


ROC Outdoor VET Project



Erasmus+

The closest to match to the ELESAs framework can be found in a vocational education college for Tourism activities. Training providers offer in several types of related training including 3 Training programmes in Nature and Adventure Tourism.



REGULATION:
Activities are generally not regulated, with the exception of surfing and diving.

ELESAs has been the foundation syllabus for the implementation of the existing curricula.

Sectoral Representative

Body:



MARCH 2023



ROC Outdoor VET Project



Erasmus+



Training providers delivering programmes as EQF Levels 3-6 but predominantly at level 4.



REGULATION:
No statutory or voluntary regulation in place for the sector. Qualifications and awards used are frequently sport-related or are on the NQF at EQF level 3 or 4.

1 training provider utilising ELESAs for access to an EQF L6 award as Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL) since 2012.
1 training provider preparing for partial implementation in a EQF L5 award in 2024.

Sectoral Representative

Body:



MARCH 2023



ROC Outdoor VET Project



Erasmus+



The curriculum of the training process has been challenged by the difference between the related EQF levels. The sector is struggling with the duration of the time needed to complete the ELESAs curriculum.



REGULATION:
Selected activities (e.g. mountain guiding, sea kayaking, skiing) are regulated, most others are not.

Existing certification of qualifications has been based on ELESAs. However the whole training process needs adaptation to the needs of the market.

Sectoral Representative

Body:



MARCH 2023



ROC Outdoor VET Project

HUNGARY

93.000 km²
2,1% of total EU Area
9,8 million people
* Eurostat



The minimum level is regulated according to the activity and the role.



LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION



REGULATION:
Certain commercially organised and guided outdoor activities are regulated (level 3). Outdoor sports activities involving instruction are also regulated but at a higher level (level 4).

ELESA is used as the basis of discussions to meet European standards in the long term.

Sectoral Representative Body:
No specific Outdoor sectoral representative body acts as an umbrella organisation.

MARCH 2023



ROC Outdoor VET Project

BULGARIA

111.000 km²
2,4% of total EU Area
7,1 million people
* Eurostat



EQF 6 and 7 are related to the National Sports Academy bachelor programmes for tourism animators and water animators.



LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION



REGULATION:
Generally no regulation for the Outdoor Sector, with the exception of mountain guiding activities.

Translation of ELESA framework has been completed in 2019. The dissemination process of ELESA has been postponed due to COVID19 pandemic.

Sectoral Representative Body:
No specific sectoral representative organization. The only one existing is the Mountain Guiding representative body.

MARCH 2023



ROC Outdoor VET Project

SWITZERLAND

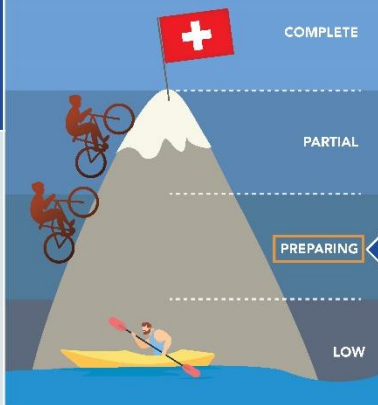
41.000 km²
8,7 million people



All federal diplomas concerning the outdoors are on level EQF 5; however most employees work with non-federal qualifications at EQF level 4.



LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION



REGULATION:
Selected activities (e.g. mountain guiding, off-piste skiing, canyoning and bungee jumping) are strictly regulated, with lists of accepted qualifications. All other activities are governed by common 'duty of care' regulations.

In the process of creating a Federal Diploma titled Outdoor Guide, based on ELESA but adapted to Swiss requirements.

Sectoral Representative Body:



MARCH 2023

Appendix 3: Names and organisations of the project partners

Katrin Blumberg, Dipl. Geogr.	EC-OE: European Confederation of Outdoor Employers (lead)
Prof. Charis Kouthouris	University of Thessaly
Dr. Gyöngyvér Lacza	Hungarian University of Sport Science
Tomás Aylward	Munster Technological University
Jean-Yves Lapeyrère	France Plein Air
Stefanos Sidiropoulos	HATEOA: Hellenic Association of Tourism Enterprises in Outdoor Activities
Servaes Timmerman	BFNO: Beroepsfederatie van natuursport ondernemingen
Paraskevi (Evi) Koutsospyrou	EC-OE expert advisor
Helene Prablanc	EC-OE administrative & logistical coordinator

For further information about this project, we welcome inquiries to EC-OE: www.ec-oe.eu.