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Executive Summary

This report offers the potential post-project eCF Council's governance scenario and related operational model which is designed to maintain functioning of the partnership and its Stakeholder Committee after the life-span of the project.

Based on the feedback and recommendations collected from the stakeholders, a new entity, the so called eCF Stakeholder Authority shall emerge on the core basis of the eCF Stakeholder Committee. It will support the continuous update and promotion of project's outputs, their use for developing further services, it will also remain a point of reference for the national and European policy makers, etc.

The new body shall include more diverse stakeholders compared to the existing Stakeholder Committee, and have a structured governance model. Therefore, the suggested composition of the new stakeholder body is described in this deliverable, in addition to its governance model, and example of its functioning.

Introduction

One of the main goals of the eCF Council has been to establish the governance mechanism which would remain as the reference point after the end of the project's lifetime. Such structure would serve for multiple purposes: as the platform for further policy debates, as a reference point for the European Commission and other decision makers, as an expert group for eCF-related initiatives, as a support body for the further exploitation and improvement of the project's outcomes, etc (more about the goals – below).

A need for the creation of such reference point has also been expressed by the stakeholders, and stressed in the Final Conference by presenting different practical applications of the eCF, where variety of the stakeholders is involved. Not all of these stakeholders could have participated in the eCF Council, but a need of their engagement in the further processes related to the eCF Framework (e.g., development of the training courses for workers and for other teaching personnel, creation of the quality label, etc.) has been clearly expressed.

Stakeholder Committee of the eCF Council has brought together internal and external stakeholders (project partners and external interested parties), and has prepared the ground for the further development of such structure. Therefore, the given report presents the suggested governance operating model for the new body (further called eCF Stakeholder Authority) which could develop from the Stakeholder Committee.

This report includes the provisioned goals and activities of the new eCF Stakeholder Authority, the composition of such body and suggested participants, as well as the detailed description of the governance model: its structure, decision making process, basics for the transparency, and example of functioning.

Goals and activities of the eCF Stakeholder Authority

The main goal of the proposed eCF Stakeholder Authority is to support all types of initiatives related to the development, promotion, and encouragement of the eCF Framework in particular, as well as ICT professionalism and digital skills in general.

More specifically, the eCF Stakeholder Authority could undertake the following activities (this list refers to the suggested activities, it is not exhaustive, and would be adopted based on the stakeholders' interests):

- facilitate engagement of the key stakeholder groups (VET providers and other education institutions, regulatory bodies, sectoral organisation, public administrations, industry companies – users of eCF, etc.);
- serve as a platform to debate, exchange views and best practices regarding digital skills in Europe, including eCF Framework and related initiatives;
- collaborate with the European Commission, CEN, national decision makers and standardisation bodies regarding policy initiatives related to the digital skills and eCF Framework;
- promote and support digital skills development in Europe, including eCF-based solutions;
- promote ICT education, specifically eCF-based trainings (developed by the eCF Council);
- create eCF-based quality label and support its uptake throughout Europe;
- advocate for a wider application of eCF among the key stakeholders (especially public administrations and industry);
- encourage public administrations to use eCF Framework for public procurement.

Composition of the eCF Stakeholder Authority

The Stakeholder Committee of the eCF Council has included three main types of the stakeholders: regulatory bodies, VET providers and sectoral organisations (see the explanation below).

However, such grouping has been slightly too broad and identified groups have covered too many different stakeholders. In example, sectoral organisations cover SMEs and big multinational entities as well as industry associations, while interests and needs of such stakeholders may sometimes vary quite extremely).

Moreover, in order to achieve the full representation of all the stakeholders using the eCF framework, or otherwise involved in its development or deployment, additional stakeholder categories shall be added. A need for this has also been approved by the stakeholders during the discussions in the Final Conference and project meetings. It was particularly stressed that the main targeted users of the eCF Framework must be better represented in the eCF Stakeholder Authority: big companies and public administrations. In addition, stronger involvement of the EU member states is also crucial – inclusion of the regulatory bodies, especially higher level decision makers from the national ministries, would strengthen their commitment.

Existing stakeholder categories used for the eCF Council project

Stakeholder Committee of the eCF Council Project consisted of representatives from the three main stakeholders, as explained below.

- 1. Regulatory Bodies (RB):** public or private entities that have a regulatory function for education and training systems. This group could comprehend the entities such as national VET agencies, Labour or Education ministries (agencies or councils), public or private employment services, etc.
- 2. Sectoral Organisations (SO):** Public or private entities that have sector-specific expertise and represent or are present in a given sector. This category is composed of the big multinational companies, SMEs and the SMEs and industry associations. Such as: small, medium or large enterprises (including social enterprises); sectoral or

professional associations of employers or employees; European or national sectoral umbrella organisations, etc.

- VET Providers**, such as training or education providers at local, regional or national levels; sector-based research institutes; bodies providing career guidance, professional counselling and information services, private training providers, etc.

The following table demonstrates the representation of the eCF Council's members in the three described categories:

	ITALY	NETHERLAND	SPAIN	BULGARIA	EU
REGULATORY BODIES	ADFOR FPM	EXIN (has left the project in the half)	DG de Formacion - Comunidad de Madrid	NAPOO (NAVET)	
SECTORAL ORGANISATIONS	CNA ICT FIOM-CGIL	CIONET	CCOO Servicios	BASSCOM	EUROPEAN DIGITAL SME ALLIANCE DIGITAL EUROPE
VET PROVIDERS	CEFRIEL	bITa Center	UAH	ESI CEE	

In addition, eCF Council's Stakeholder Committee has been joined by the external stakeholders during the months 20-22. The external stakeholders included:

- European e-Skills Association (sectoral organisation);
- Certiport: Pearson VUE (consultancy);
- The Irish Computer Society (sectoral organisation);
- Council of European Professional Informatics Societies (sectoral organisation);

- Agenzia Nazionale Politiche Attive Lavoro (regulatory body);
- All Digital (expert Laurentiu Bunescu) (sectoral organisation);
- ITWNET (VET provider);
- TEZA ltd (VET provider).

Suggested stakeholders' categorisation for the eCF Stakeholder Authority

Suggested new member categories for the eCF Stakeholder Authority are as following:

Key targeted eCF users:

1. Big **multinational companies** which deploy eCF to assess of personnel's individual and/or organisational ICT competences.
2. **SMEs** that use eCF for internal competences assessment and/or provide services based on the eCF (e.g. competence assessment for other companies or public administrations).
3. **Public administrations** – any public body which uses eCF for the internal assessment.
4. **Any public or private education providers**: colleges and universities, VET centres, companies and consultancies providing trainings, institutes, associations of education providers, etc.
5. **Regulatory and decision making bodies (local, regional or national)**: education or labour ministries of any level; local education committees/councils/agencies, VET agencies, recognised accreditation institutions or similar bodies.
6. **ICT professionals**: regional, national or European professional associations and ICT workers' unions.

7. **Certification providers:** any public or private certification providers.

8. **Associations, clusters, Digital Innovation Hubs, Competence centers:** any local, regional, national or European bodies, designed to support businesses, and having an expressed interest in digital skills.

Identified stakeholders – potential members of the eCF Stakeholder Authority

Besides the eCF Council project partners and eight external stakeholders, other potentially interested organisations have been identified. The identification has been made based on their engagement with the eCF Council project, e.g., through social media, requests of information, participation in eCF Council's events, etc. Furthermore, some of the organisations have been identified due to their particular interest in digital skills and endorsement of eCF Framework (by using or promoting it).

Identified organisations have already been categorised based on the classification suggested above. The list is not exhaustive, it only provides organisations that shall be contacted first should the new eCF Stakeholder Authority emerge.

1. **Multinational companies:** Deutsche Telekom, SoftNet Group, SAFRAN, Randstad Italia SpA, Euro Disney, Poste Italiane, Mapfre, Airbus, Amcor Flexibles Europe, Capgemini, Jobnomads.

2. **SMEs:** WINGS ICT Solutions, ICT Human Capital, itSECURITY, iTRACK, Explain.

3. **Public administrations:** The Dutch Central Government, Pôle Emploi, Kauno miesto savivaldybe.

4. **Any public or private education providers:** Academy for Teacher In-Service Training and Staff Development (ALP, Germany), ECDL Lithuania, Ninja Academy, YNOV, Hogeschool Utrecht, Université de Toulouse and Université de Grenoble, Sofia University, FZI Research Center for Information Technology, netmind, QiBit, etc.

5. **Regulatory and decision making bodies** (local, regional or national):
Fundación EUCIP España, Estonian Qualifications Authority, VIT emprende -
Valencia City Council, Agencia para el Empleo de Madrid,
6. **ICT professionals:** Vri, CIONET, CEGRIF, El Consejo General de Colegios de
Ingeniería Informática, KNVI, LInMA.
7. **Certification providers:** BCS Koolitus AS, Accredia, Spanish Association for
Standardization and Certification.
8. **Associations, clusters, Digital Innovation Hubs, etc.:** GAIA, CENFIM, Mittelstand
4.0-Kompetenzzentrums, Giffoni Innovation Hub, BASSCOM, CAN ICT, CONETIC,
BITMI, it-forum Midtjylland, BBS ICT, CLUSIT.

Requirements for joining the eCF Stakeholder Authority will be set up in the Statues, and will be specific for different categories. Specific rules on how to become the members of the eCF Stakeholder Authority, how to terminate or suspend the membership, etc. shall be elaborated in the Statues of the eCF Stakeholder Authority, as well as the types of membership which might include full members (those having voting rights), observing members (having no voting rights, but possibility to get involved into some of the activities or participate in certain meetings, General Assembly, etc).

Stakeholder governance model

This chapter describes the structure suggested for governing of the eCF Stakeholder Authority, decision making and transparency mechanisms, financial contributions, as well as provides the example of functioning of the eCF Stakeholder Authority.

Structure of the eCF Stakeholder Authority

The main **governing structures** of the eCF Stakeholder Authority would be the General Assembly and the Governing Board.

The main eCF Stakeholder Authority's **activities would be supported** by the Secretariat (which would be led by one or few eCF Council's partners that have a good organisational capacity and have experience in providing secretariat services, e.g. FPM and European DIGITAL SME Alliance), and Working Groups. If needed additional management support structures can be created, such as Treasury, Strategic Committee, etc.

General Assembly (GA) would be responsible for the main strategic decisions, approval of budget and financial results, approval of the new members, termination of the memberships, approval of the membership fees, nomination of the representatives to the Governing Board. Each member of the eCF Stakeholder Authority (no matter their category) would have a voting right in the GA. Further details regarding the GA, such as quorum and decision adoption rules, organisation of the GA, appointment of the chairperson, etc. shall be further defined in the Statues of the eCF Stakeholder Authority.

Governing Board (GB) shall be composed of one elected representative from each member category. The Governing Board will set the objectives and prepare annual work plans of the eCF Stakeholder Authority (which shall be approved by the GA and follow the strategic guidelines set by the GA), adopt bylaws (if any) of the eCF Stakeholder Authority, create Working Groups, appoint or discharge the Secretary General, monitor financial issues, etc. Further functions of the GA, election of its chairperson, decision adoption rules shall be further specified in the Statues of the eCF Stakeholder Authority.

The Governing Board can create Working Groups (continuous standing bodies) and ad-hoc Working Groups (short-term bodies created for one specific purpose and dismissed after its objective is achieved). The objective of these Working Groups is to prepare recommendations in various fields of their expertise, support Secretariat in the implement strategic activities of the eCF Stakeholder Authority. Examples of such Working Groups might

include: ICT education and professionalism group, eCF certification group, etc. Each Working Group will have the appointed chairperson (if needed, more than one). Further details on the functioning of the Working Groups, appointment of the chairpersons, etc. shall be specified in the Statues or the bylaws.

The Secretariat would execute the day-to-day management of the eCF Stakeholder Authority, and implement the working plan approved by the Governing Board. Secretariat would be led by the Secretary General appointed by the Governing Board.

Decision making process of the eCF Stakeholder Authority

The eCF Stakeholder Authority seeks to work by consensus among its members. Therefore, both the General Assembly and the Governing Board shall, ideally, adopt their decisions based on the unanimous consensus.

All members of the General Assembly as well as the Governing Board shall have equal voting rights. In cases when consensus isn't reached among the stakeholders, specific rules regarding quorum or majority votes will be set out in the Statues of the Governing Authority, such rules might be differ based on the importance of the decision (e.g. in cases of special or ordinary decisions).

In addition, if any of the categories unanimously does not agree with the decision of the GA, they would have a right to block them.

All the decisions made by the GA and GB are bounding and must be implemented by the Secretariat.

Transparency and accountability of the eCF Stakeholder Authority

The eCF Stakeholder Authority seeks to be transparent internally and vis-à-vis outside world. It will strive at implementing its goals in a fair way, respecting its Statues and bylaws.

Therefore, all the decisions taken by the Governing Board and the General Assembly have to be clearly communicated to all the members and the Secretariat.

Secretariat and working groups will be accountable towards the members of the eCF Stakeholder Authority. They will have to periodically prepare financial and activity reports, outlining activities carried out, main objectives achieved and the barriers faced,

demonstrating impact and financial costs of their work. Such reports shall be approved by the Governing Board (periodic) or General Assembly (Annual reports).

In addition, annual activity reports shall be made public and accessible for any interested party.

Membership fees

The eCF Stakeholder Authority shall strive self-financed organisation sustained through the membership fees, service contracts, grants or other similar means of funding to be determined in the Statutes.

Each full member willing to have voting rights in the eCF Stakeholder Authority shall pay the membership fees that would ensure smooth functioning of the eCF Stakeholder Authority. It will be used to sustain the Secretariat and fund the main activities of the eCF Stakeholder Authority.

Membership fees will be determined by the Governing Board, and will be based on: 1) the turnover for the big companies and private certification providers, 2) number of the employees and the turnover for SMEs, 3) organisational budget for the public administrations, education providers, public certification bodies, regulatory bodies (not including national administrations, such as ministries), organisations of the ICT professionals, associations, clusters and similar bodies; 4) annual pro-capita GDP for the national administrations.

Example of the functioning of the eCF Stakeholder Authority

EU schemes for harmonised definitions of digital skills, such as eCompetence Framework (EN 16234-1) and ESCO, are increasingly recognised and used on the market. Public administrations in several countries as well as large companies are assessing and mapping their own internal ICT competences towards those schemes. These skills assessments are either performed internally by the organisations or outsourced to external entities such as VET providers and skills experts. In both cases, internal and external assessment, there is no recognised mechanism to ensure the quality of the assessment itself. Thus, there is an increasing need of the Quality Label that would give assurance that the assessment of ICT competences and their mapping towards eCF and ESCO fulfils quality criteria.

Therefore, the General Assembly might decide that the creation of the eCF Digital-Skills Quality Label (“DS Quality Label”) is one of the top strategic priorities and potential sources of income for the eCF Stakeholder Authority. Following such decision, the Governing Board shall establish the Working Group on the eCF Digital-Skills Quality Label.

In such case, the Working Group on the eCF Digital-Skills Quality Label would perform a market analysis, and prepare the strategy for the DS Quality Label. It would also chose its members who could serve as an internal Scientific expert group, composed by the interested experts from the Working Group. The Scientific expert group would be responsible for developing the standard methodology for assigning the DS Quality Label. This Methodology shall explain how the DS Quality Label is obtained, what are the criteria, etc. Meanwhile, the long term goal of the Working Group would be to create the CEN standard based on this methodology.

Experts composing the Scientific expert group would agree to offer their contribution to draft the methodology standard on a voluntary basis. However, they would receive a monetary compensation every time a DS Quality Label is assigned to an organisation, for instance in the form of a royalty. The remaining revenues from the DS Quality Label would go directly to the budget of the eCF Stakeholder Authority.

The Working Group would provide timely reports on the implementation of its activities (drafting market analysis, creation of the methodology, DS Quality Labels assigned, etc.) to the Governing Board.

Conclusions

One of the main goals of the eCF Council project has been to bring together various European stakeholders interested in digital skills, and particularly in eCF Framework. Such 'body' shall remain vivid after the life-span of the project. Importance and need of creating such structure has also been identified by the main stakeholders (represented in eCF Council's Stakeholder Committee).

Therefore, in order to ensure the further functioning of the prospective new eCF Stakeholder Authority, the governance mechanism has been suggested in this deliverable. It has identified the possible goal and activities of the eCF Stakeholder Authority, described the potential governance structure, decision making principles, membership fees, and example of activity.

In addition, the concept of different stakeholder categories that must be presented in the eCF-related debates, has been re-defined, adding new stakeholder categories, limiting the scope and concretising the three categories (sectoral organisations, VET providers and regulatory bodies) that have been used for the Stakeholder Committee. Finally, even new potentially interested stakeholders have also been identified, and could be approached should the eCF Stakeholder Authority be brought to life.