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SOLITY
VET SOCIAL UTILITY

SOLITY – VET SOCIAL UTILITY MONITOR
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SOLITY STAKEHOLDERS REPORT (D9)

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Introduction

The SOLITY project involved relevant stakeholders for VET provision at all stages of the project. During the framework development phase (WP3), a first-stage validation phase saw the crucial involvement of a panel of VET experts coming from EU countries not directly involved in the project, with the aim to improve the very first draft of the SOLITY model proposed by the partnership and make it applicable to all EU Member States.

Furthermore, the second-stage validation phase (foreseen under WP4) has been carried out by the partnership with the objective to collect data and feedback from relevant target groups in order to further improve and adjust the SOLITY model. More specifically, the set of activities foresaw:

- The organisation of 3 national workshops for partner country (namely, Italy, France, Germany, Belgium), each addressing one specific target group relevant for the project: entrepreneurs; trainers; stakeholders and policy makers.
- The organisation of 1 international workshop seeing the participation of 2 representatives for country having attended the national workshop.
- The opening of an online consultation addressed to VET professionals/customers/stakeholders interested in weighting each axis and indicator developed in the SOLITY framework, according to their point of view and role in the VET system.
- The implementation of a testing of the framework in 2 VET centres per each country directly involved in the project, i.e. 2 VET centres per each VET project partner¹.

The Stakeholders Report (D9) aims to gather and present the feedback collected during the aforementioned validation activities by the partners, with a special focus on the national and international workshops carried out².

Being each national workshop addressed to a specific target group (VET trainers; Entrepreneurs; Other stakeholders, namely decision-makers, politicians, institutions involved in VET training, funding providers etc., which shall be called "stakeholders" for the purpose of this report), a common framework and agenda was shared within the partnership to facilitate the collection and comparison of the inputs and suggestions received.

In the following chapters, all workshops and their results will be presented, offering as a final contribution a list of recommendations summarising the core concepts arisen.

¹ The four VET partners involved in the project are big VET providers managing more than one VET centre in their country.

² The results of the testing will be detailed and commented in the Validation Report.

National Workshops

Description of set-up and topics covered

Per partner country, several workshops were held starting from June until December 2019. For each of the three target groups – VET trainers, stakeholders, entrepreneurs – one workshop should have taken place in each country as expressed in the application form. However, considering the difficulties encountered by some partners in scheduling target-focused workshops, a solution adopted enabled them to engage with representative from more than one target group during a single workshop and replicate the format in order to reach the proposed numbers (a total of 30 people per country). This solution was adopted by LE FOREM and IB.

The workshops were organised using a kit of documents, setting a common framework amongst partners (i.e. topics to be touched on during the workshop, attendance list sample, questionnaire sample). Furthermore, a preliminary Stakeholder Report index was provided, with a list of key questions to be discussed with the target groups and summarised as follows:

- Are the areas covered by the indicators relevant to you?
- Do you think the indicators are clear, easy to understand?
- Are there indicators that you find useless or, on the contrary, are there indicators that you consider crucial but are not included in the framework?
- How relevant are the results for your purposes? What is the benefit in using the tool for you?
- Do you consider it useful/relevant for your professional activities that VET providers are able to measure their social utility? In other words, whether or not a VET provider is committed to measure its social utility (and possibly performs well) would have an impact on your professional choices? (e.g. trainers: would you prefer working in such a VET provider? Entrepreneurs: would you prefer cooperating with such a VET provider? Policy-makers/stakeholders: would you prefer funding such a VET provider?)

National Workshops in France

AFPA carried out 5 workshops, engaging a total of 36 people.

WORKSHOP FOR VET TRAINERS (04.09.2019, AFPA Montreuil, 4 participants)

Comprehensive summary of the feedback received by all participants in the workshop:

1. Are the areas covered by the indicators relevant for you?

The indicators are relevant and cover all the spectrum of the social utility. However, Axis 2 and 5 could be reformulated. Indeed, without any complementary information it is difficult to know what it is all about.

2. Do you think that the indicators are clear, easy to understand?

Most of the indicators are clear and understandable. However, a few of them should be clarified:

- Indicator 1.1: The indicator does not clearly show that it includes people on professional reconversion neither in the title nor in the explanation.
- Indicator 2.3: The indicator should specify what a short training is (e.g. one week, one month). A range of time should be mentioned, as well as the intended audience.
- Indicator 4.3: The indicator should be more precise, e.g. Number of hours of training devoted to the themes of respect for the environment or Number of hours of training devoted to environmental awareness.
- Indicator 5-4: The title of the indicator should specify: "work accident".

3. Are there indicators that you find useless or, on the contrary, are there indicators that you consider crucial but are not included in the framework?

- Indicator 1.2: This indicator may not be relevant particularly in the field of catering and hotels. Lots of people chose to have seasonal jobs or temporary contracts. People come to a training centre to acquire competences but not necessarily a permanent contract. Permanent contracts no longer have the value they were given a few years ago. Training centres specialized in said services will have a poor score on this indicator since most of the proposed jobs are seasonal or non-permanent.
- Indicator 3.3: the indicator itself is not useless, but it can be dangerous if the tool does not offer the possibility to explain the reason why the trainees gave up their training pathway. Sometimes trainees can give up because they find a job. Therefore, this indicator can sometimes be disadvantageous for training centres based on the reasons behind the dropouts. This indicator should be deemed as important for funding bodies.

New indicators proposed:

- Indicator showing the capacity of the training centre to accompany his trainees beyond the training (creating loyalty, networking, jobs proposals, etc.)
- Indicator assessing trainees' satisfaction rate, as trainees do have a driving force to attract new trainees.

4. *How relevant are the results for your purposes? What is the benefit in using the tool for you?*
No contributions.

5. *Do you consider it useful/relevant for your professional activities that VET providers are able to measure their social utility? In other words, whether or not a VET provider is committed to measure its social utility (and possibly performs well) would have an impact on your professional choices?*

- Trainers have a support role, so they are sensitive to the social utility of their work and can benefit from such a tool to target training centres that best meet their aspirations.
- The SOLITY tool, intended as a quality label, is an interesting element to analyse the performance of a training centre.

WORKSHOP FOR ENTREPRENEURS (05.09.2019, AFPA Montreuil, 5 participants³)

Comprehensive summary of the feedback received by all participants in the workshop:

1. *Are the areas covered by the indicators relevant for you?*

The areas covered by the indicators are relevant and the axes cover all fields of social utility. Axes and indicators can be interpreted by all actors in the field of vocational training but also easily understood by the general public.

2. *Do you think that the indicators are clear, easy to understand?*

Indicators presented are easy to understand. There is, however, concern that training centres may have difficulties in collecting the data. Moreover, the whole system is based on self-declarations and some centres might be tempted to provide erroneous data to get a good score and thus attract customers and funding institutions.

Given the variety of types of training organizations, there may be a problem of readability of the results. If centres are to use the comparative system, it will be necessary to develop a differentiated research system in order to make comparisons more accurate. For example, a training centre specialized in the training of people with disabilities should be able to make a comparison with this type of training organization, likewise a specialized centre on refreshing courses should be able to sort out this type of organization. It may not be necessary to

³ 5 participants in presence + 2 participants attended via Skype

provide raw data for each indicator but levels of excellence, acceptability and adequacy, that may differ from one type of training organization to another.

3. *Are there indicators that you find useless or, on the contrary, are there indicators that you consider crucial but are not included in the framework?*

There is no shortage of crucial indicator. No indicator seems unnecessary; some are a little ambiguous or need to be modified. If some indicators taken in isolation may seem irrelevant, they become relevant when they are crossed with others.

- Indicator 1.4: A high score on this indicator is not indicative of social utility. Indeed, a low rate may be the mark of trainees' autonomy and a high rate of the fact that the centre has been unable to empower these trainees. The workshop participants at first proposed as indicator "the number of trainees accompanied / the total number of trainees" but it did not solve the problem raised above. A consensus was reached on an indicator that would reflect the training centre's ability to individualize the training courses.
- Indicator 1.9: This indicator was deemed too reductive. Participants would prefer the weight of work/study training programs, which is more global.
- Indicator 2.2: The indicator as it is written is not accurate as the provision of that service often does not depend on the VET centre but on regional/national rules. In fact, all training centres located in the same territory should have the same score.
- Indicator 2.6: The number of hours devoted to a given training is not a guarantee of the performance of this training. Depending on the teaching methods used, the acquisition of skills can be done more or less quickly. This remark also applies to indicator 4.3.
- Indicator 3.3: It could be misleading to use this raw indicator. A high dropout rate may mean that the training centre is not performing well but it can also mean that it is so efficient that these trainees find work even before the end of training. It should be possible to distinguish a positive dropout rate from a negative dropout rate. It is also necessary to define what is meant by positive, meaning if we can really consider that the voluntary departure of a trainee for a fixed-term contract of one month is a positive index. It is also conceivable to create a dropout rate in the first 10% of training time, which reflects a misdirection and a dropout rate beyond this period.
- Indicator 4.3: cf. Indicator 2.6.
- Axis 5: The axis in itself is debatable: indeed, the idea of exemplarity is undoubtedly good but the social utility of the training provided is not directly related to the internal practices of the training centre, although we can imagine that an organization that does not apply sustainable management measures for its staff is unlikely to do so for its customers too.
- A CSR indicator could be added to axis 5.

New indicators proposed:

- Indicator about trainees' follow-up after the training, including consideration of the trainees' future after continuing training, and the opinion given by the companies that hosted the trainees in their traineeships.
- Indicator related to educational objectives.
- Indicator related to the geographic location of the training centre, a training centre located deep in a remote province may have a social utility stronger than a centre in the suburbs of Paris, for instance.
- Indicator related to the amount of training that can be done completely or partially at a distance (e.g. online) available in the training offer of the centre.

4. How relevant are the results for your purposes? What is the benefit in using the tool for you?

In any case it is a source of information that we do not have today and that can be very useful in different ways, depending on whether you are a training provider, customer, entrepreneur or decision maker. There remains the question of the reliability and veracity of the data.

5. Do you consider it useful/relevant for your professional activities that VET providers are able to measure their social utility? In other words, whether or not a VET provider is committed to measure its social utility (and possibly performs well) would have an impact on your professional choices?

The social utility score could have a strong impact as a guarantee of data reliability. However, social utility is only a criterion for choosing a training centre. For example, the choice of a VET centre is often based on proximity to one's own house or place of work, or – if we take into account enterprises - on the company's training needs.

WORKSHOP FOR STAKEHOLDERS (12.09.2019, AFPA Montreuil, 6 participants)

Comprehensive summary of the feedback received by all participants in the workshop:

1. Are the areas covered by the indicators relevant for you?

Indicators are relevant and cover the whole field of social utility but they do not have the same importance according to the type of training organization.

Some participants perceive axis 5 as less important, while others deem it as essential.

2. Do you think that the indicators are clear, easy to understand?

Globally the indicators are clear and understandable.

Only indicators 3.1 and 3.2 can be confusing, as more information is required to accurately

understand their results. Anyway, it should be interesting to have this qualitative data but the on-line tool that will be implemented should allow to add comments about indicators.

3. *Are there indicators that you find useless or, on the contrary, are there indicators that you consider crucial but are not included in the framework?*

All indicators are useful.

New indicators proposed:

Axis 1

- Indicator that characterises the easiness to access to the training (from an administrative and financial point of view).
- Indicator on the number of trainees who found a job, whether or not they obtained their qualification.
- Indicator related to the amount of training that can be done completely or partially at a distance (e.g. online), available in the training offer of the centre.
- Indicator comparing the number of customized and standard training pathways.

Axis 3

- Indicator on the number of trainees with foreign parents who access the training.
- Indicator on the number of people from disadvantaged areas who access the training.

Axis 4

- Indicator about territorial development: the number of trainees who found a job in the region after the training.
- Indicator about cross-sectoral mobility: the number of trainees who change their employment domain thanks to the training and find a job in the same region (conversion of employees who are working in struggling sectors).
- Indicator on the number of companies involved in the design of the training pathways.
- Indicator of density (number of training institution / km²), giving some clues about the geographical situation.
- Indicator on the number of accommodation for trainees offered inside the training organisation.

4. *How relevant are the results for your purposes? What is the benefit in using the tool for you?*

No contributions.

5. *Do you consider it useful/relevant for your professional activities that VET providers are able*

to measure their social utility? In other words, whether or not a VET provider is committed to measure its social utility (and possibly performs well) would have an impact on your professional choices?

Participants are interested in the project. They think social utility could be one of the choice criteria but would like to answer the two last questions after having seen a demonstration of the online tool. The information on the structure of the tool is too fragmented. The tool will be of interest only if it makes it possible to make comparisons on training structures of the same type or in the same region, or of the same importance. Browsing in the tool will be essential.

Participants also regret that users can only see the data provided by training providers without being able to give their opinion. They would have liked to have a kind of "TripAdvisor" tool adapted to vocational training.

SECOND WORKSHOP FOR ENTREPRENEURS AND STAKEHOLDERS (04.12.2019, AFPA Montreuil, 4 participants)

Comprehensive summary of the feedback received by all participants in the workshop:

1. Are the areas covered by the indicators relevant for you?

Indicators are relevant and cover the whole field of social utility. A few remarks were made on indicator 5.5 (job-security), as the long-term contract is not perceived as an assurance of "well-behaviour" from an enterprise: a company can display a total workforce of one person with long term contract (so 100%) and employ a large amount of temporary workers, who have a precarious employment.

2. Do you think that the indicators are clear, easy to understand?

Globally the indicators are clear and understandable, but the differences among VET centres are not taken into account and that is not entirely satisfactory.

3. Are there indicators that you find useless or, on the contrary, are there indicators that you consider crucial but are not included in the framework?

All indicators are useful, but a few more could be added.

New indicators proposed:

Axis 1

- Indicator related to the amount of training that can be done completely or partially at a distance (e.g. online), available in the training offer of the centre.
- Indicator on the number of tailored training pathways offered by the VET centre.

4. *How relevant are the results for your purposes? What is the benefit in using the tool for you?*

No contributions.

5. *Do you consider it useful/relevant for your professional activities that VET providers are able to measure their social utility? In other words, whether or not a VET provider is committed to measure its social utility (and possibly performs well) would have an impact on your professional choices?*

Participants consider the tool to be interesting and useful. They, however, would like to have some assurance on the truthfulness of the data entered by the VET providers.

SECOND WORKSHOP FOR VET TRAINERS AND VET MANAGERS (11.12.2019, AFPA Vénissieux, 17 participants)

Comprehensive summary of the feedback received by all participants in the workshop:

1. *Are the areas covered by the indicators relevant for you?*

Indicators are relevant and cover the whole field of social utility. A few remarks were made on indicator 3.3 (drop-out rate), as the indicator should allow to differentiate the different reasons for trainees to drop-out . Sometimes a trainee can drop-out because he/she finds a job or because other external causes (e.g. he/she moves to another region or country) that do not depend at all on the VET centre).

2. *Do you think that the indicators are clear, easy to understand?*

Globally the indicators are clear and understandable. However, it is not clear how to quantify the indirect benefits that trainees have when they attend a training course: the tool does not seem to be able to measure that.

3. *Are there indicators that you find useless or, on the contrary, are there indicators that you consider crucial but are not included in the framework?*

All indicators are useful, but a few more could be added.

New indicators proposed:

Axis 2

- The rate of people kept in employment or reintegrated in the labour market thanks to training, after a long-term sick leave.
- The number of professional projects developed, after career guidance or refreshing courses.

4. *How relevant are the results for your purposes? What is the benefit in using the tool for you?*

No contributions.

5. *Do you consider it useful/relevant for your professional activities that VET providers are able to measure their social utility? In other words, whether or not a VET provider is committed to measure its social utility (and possibly performs well) would have an impact on your professional choices?*

Participants consider the tool to be interesting and useful. They, however, would like to have some assurance on the truthfulness of the data entered by the VET providers as they fear that some training centres may be tempted to cheat to give a good image of their centre. If the tool were to become widespread, they recommend to add the possibility/the obligation to upload documents that could justify the data, or even combining the tool with the use of audits.

National Workshops in Germany

IB carried out 3 workshops, engaging a total of 26 people.

WORKSHOP FOR VET TRAINERS AND ENTREPRISES (14.08.2019, IB Neuenhagen, 7 participants)

Comprehensive summary of the feedback received by all participants in the workshop:

1. Are the areas covered by the indicators relevant to you?

The areas are relevant and useful for all target groups.

2. Do you think the indicators are clear, easy to understand?

A lot of them are not that easy to understand and require lengthy explanations. For example, Indicator 1.3, 2.3, 2.4, 4.3 and several others. There should be an explanation in the tool for each indicator. The data for some of the indicators will be very difficult and time-consuming to collect.

3. Are there indicators that you find useless or, on the contrary, are there indicators that you consider crucial but are not included in the framework?

Crucial (and they are included): 1.1, 1.2, 3.3.

There are several indicators that were found to be not applicable or not useful in Germany:

- 1.9. is not applicable to the dual VET system of Germany and is, therefore, confusing to German users of the tool.
- 2.2. is not applicable to the VET centres in Germany (only certification bodies can formally recognise skills and qualifications).
- The participants were unsure why there were indicators for courses for migrants (3.4&3.5). This is for sure an important target group, but so are others.
- The participants expressed their views that it would be okay to have the abovementioned indicators with the possibility to leave these fields blank without having the final score reduced.

4. How relevant are the results for your purposes? What is the benefit in using the tool for you?

For entrepreneurs, the relevance is linked to the possibility to choose VET centres to cooperate with based on the score they receive. However, entrepreneurs also expressed regret that the tool is only targeted at the use for VET centres and not companies, as the latter are an essential part of in the VET dual system in Germany.

Decision-makers and other stakeholders expressed their interest because they think it will give an added value when evaluating the quality of a VET provider.

VET trainers stated that their VET centres would probably want to use the tool in order to show their quality.

All target groups said that the most important is the local level: they are not really interested in benchmarking at European level or even the national level but only at local level, due to the differences among VET system in different territories.

5. *Do you consider it useful/relevant for your professional activities that VET providers are able to measure their social utility? In other words, whether or not a VET provider is committed to measure its social utility (and possibly performs well) would have an impact on your professional choices?*

All participants agreed that the tool would be useful, however the results need to be displayed in an easily understandable way. The adoption of a "graphic" system showing the results in a glimpse could ease the understanding by the VET provider (i.e. traffic light system where green is for high performance, yellow is for average performance and red is for low performance).

WORKSHOP FOR VET TRAINERS, ENTREPRISES, STAKEHOLDERS (31.08.2019, IB Neuenhagen, 7 participants)

Comprehensive summary of the feedback received by all participants in the workshop:

1. *Are the areas covered by the indicators relevant to you?*

The areas are relevant and useful for all target groups.

2. *Do you think the indicators are clear, easy to understand?*

It is a very complex project that is not easy to understand without in-depth explanation. It might also be difficult to collect all data.

3. *Are there indicators that you find useless or, on the contrary, are there indicators that you consider crucial but are not included in the framework?*

Crucial (and included): 1.2, 3.3, 4.2.

There are several indicators that were found to be not applicable or not useful:

- Indicator 1.9 does not apply to the dual VET system in Germany. It is, therefore, very confusing for German users.
- Indicator 2.2 cannot be considered by VET centres in Germany (only certification bodies can formally recognise skills and qualifications), so is also confusing and not applicable.
- Indicator 3.8 (female participation rate) differs from sector to sector. Comparing sectors as child-care to electronics might yield very different results that may not be comparable.

- The participants expressed their views that it would be okay to have the abovementioned indicators with the possibility to leave these fields blank without having the final score reduced.

4. *How relevant are the results for your purposes? What is the benefit in using the tool for you?*

Overall, the results would be considered useful. However, there was some doubt if the results could really reflect the German dual vocational training system well, because the tool is only to be used by VET centres not companies. Furthermore, there are several indicators which clearly do not apply to Germany. There was some doubt expressed why this project was done on a European level instead of a local level as this would give more accurate indicators.

5. *Do you consider it useful/relevant for your professional activities that VET providers are able to measure their social utility? In other words, whether or not a VET provider is committed to measure its social utility (and possibly performs well) would have an impact on your professional choices?*

All participants agreed that the results turn out to be useful at the time of choosing partners with whom collaborate and of checking the training quality of other VET providers. They expressed the wish to have clear results (i.e. not a score because that is not readable for people not familiar with the project). They stressed how important that is in order for companies and decision-makers to take the results into consideration when planning future actions and/or implementing new strategies.

WORKSHOP FOR VET TRAINERS, ENTREPRISES, STAKEHOLDERS (06.11.2019, Abgeordnetenhaus⁴ of Berlin, 12 participants)

Comprehensive summary of the feedback received by all participants in the workshop:

1. *Are the areas covered by the indicators relevant to you?*

The tool is very relevant. Participants think that currently it is most relevant to VET centres; it could be more relevant for stakeholders (especially decision-makers) if it was combined with an external quality check, which is indeed not currently feasible within the SOLITY project.

2. *Do you think the indicators are clear, easy to understand?*

It might be difficult to collect the data. The tool is a lot of work for a VET centre but it will be worth it.

3. *Are there indicators that you find useless or, on the contrary, are there indicators that you consider crucial but are not included in the framework?*

⁴ The "Parliament"

There are some indicators that do not apply to the German dual VET system. The indicators also do not apply to companies (as they are only for VET centres), but companies are part of the VET system in Germany.

4. How relevant are the results for your purposes? What is the benefit in using the tool for you?

It is a good tool for self-evaluation of VET centres. It will be important to use the tool regularly (e.g. annually) because it is important to see the progress made. As a next step, it is necessary to expand the tool to all VET actors (i.e. companies), not just VET centres. The tool is now more relevant to VET centres and not so much for stakeholders as there is no external check of the data input. Once the data put into the tool can be verified, it would be a very good tool for stakeholders to assess the quality of VET centres.

5. Do you consider it useful/relevant for your professional activities that VET providers are able to measure their social utility? In other words, whether or not a VET provider is committed to measure its social utility (and possibly performs well) would have an impact on your professional choices?

All participants agree that it is a useful and comprehensive tool. It would have a stronger impact on professional choices if the results of the tool could be verified. It is important to have clear results.

National Workshops in Belgium

LE FOREM carried out 3 workshops, engaging a total of 39 people.

WORKSHOP FOR VET TRAINERS, ENTREPRISES, STAKEHOLDERS (09.09.19, FOREM CEPEGRA, 16 participants)

Comprehensive summary of the feedback received by all participants in the workshop:

1. Are the areas covered by the indicators relevant for you?

All participants agree on the relevance of measuring the social utility of VET and on the strategy developed to achieve it. The axes were validated by the participants.

2. Do you think that the indicators are clear, easy to understand?

The indicators are relevant, but some improvements must be implemented. All participants agree on the fact that the indicators included within the online consultation are not sufficiently clear. For instance, the titles of indicators are not well explained. They should be better defined within the tool. For the moment, it is quite difficult to understand their meaning. This could lead to bias in the final results.

Many participants also consider that some indicators will be difficult to measure. For instance: interregional cross-border cooperation. The GDPR can also be a barrier to the collection of several data.

Moreover, all vocational training operators do not necessarily have at their disposal a statistical service capable of providing the requested data.

There is a risk that certain centres could be discriminated should they be unable to provide the figures requested by the SOLITY model.

3. Are there indicators that you find useless or, on the contrary, are there indicators that you consider crucial but are not included in the framework?

New indicators proposed:

- An indicator on the satisfaction rate of trainees at the end of the training must absolutely be added.
- An indicator on social mobility should also be added.
- Some qualitative indicators should be included in the framework (for example, if a VET provider sets up a quality system or foresees a social assessment).
- An indicator about services provided to support the development of an activity as a self-employed person.

4. How relevant are the results for your purposes? What is the benefit in using the tool for you?

The results will be relevant. However, some points of attention are highlighted regarding this

topic: the benefit in using the tool will depend on the way the results are presented. It is really important to make recommendations on the basis of the results and not just give a "good" or a "bad" score. The benefit in using the tool will come from the capacity of the platform to allow for the exchange of good practices. An overall score per centre risks damaging little centres, which could nevertheless bring a real added value to the social utility of a territory.

There is a significant risk that the implementation of the framework may lead to competition between operators, which is not the real focus of the project. This fear is shared by all participants. Several questions arose in relation to this competition: all operators seem to be put "in the same bag", but there are major differences between operators (public/private, purposes, means, size, etc.). The majority of the indicators are relevant for the training sector, but less for the education sector. Therefore, having the same model for measuring the social utility for all operators can be a challenge. Operators do not want this competition. Some participants think that the framework should take into account the main purpose of each operator.

With certain indicators (such as, for example, the volume of trainees, participation in local committees, etc.) there is a risk that the results may vary according to the size and socio-economic environment of the centre, leading to a risk that small centres located in a less favourable socio-economic environment may be discriminated against by the tool.

However, other participants consider that if a SOLITY "label" is to be established, it will not be possible to take into account all the specificities of the centres.

In conclusion, the indicators must be comparable between VET providers. It is important to avoid that some centres are discriminated against by the model simply because they have fewer financial resources or are located in a more disadvantaged economic area.

5. Do you consider it useful/relevant for your professional activities that VET providers are able to measure their social utility? In other words, whether or not a VET provider is committed to measure its social utility (and possibly performs well) would have an impact on your professional choices?

Some participants answered positively to this question. One participant considered that SOLITY would allow companies to have a "pool" of VET centres using the same social/societal self-assessment tool, and to choose with whom cooperate on the basis of these social criteria.

However, other participants considered that the tool should above all be a tool for VET providers. For example, a company representative said he would not choose SOLITY, because he would rather use existing sector certifications that take into account user satisfaction to choose the VET provider where to attend the training courses needed by his company. SOLITY is more interesting for the network of Competence Centres.

6. What do you expect from a model to measure the social utility of vocational training?

No overall rating and no tool that will list the "good" on the one hand and the "bad" on the

other. It must be a tool that allows a centre to use the model for its own purposes, to self-assess, to receive recommendations and good practices, to evaluate its progress. The tool must also allow stakeholders and beneficiaries to have a better visibility of what exists in the market and to find the operator that best meets their needs and quality criteria.

WORKSHOP FOR STAKEHOLDERS AND ENTREPRISES (11.09.19, EVBB Office Brussels, 11 participants)

Comprehensive summary of the feedback received by all participants in the workshop:

1. Are the areas covered by the indicators relevant for you?

All participants agree on the relevance of measuring the social utility of VET.

The axes were validated by the participants.

2. Do you think that the indicators are clear, easy to understand?

The indicators are relevant, but some improvements must be implemented:

- Many participants consider that the online consultation is very difficult to understand. The indicators are not clear. It is really important to better define the indicators within the final tool.
- Many participants consider that some indicators will be difficult to measure. For example, indicator linked to the "volume of initiatives". The term "initiative" should be very well defined.

3. Are there indicators that you find useless or, on the contrary, are there indicators that you consider crucial but are not included in the framework?

- If we want to measure the social utility of a VET centre, a quantitative approach will not be sufficient. According to several participants, it is necessary to integrate a qualitative analysis of the performance of VET providers. For example, VET providers may be asked to give examples or describe their activities. However, some participants acknowledged that this would bring problems in terms of comparing and processing results.
- An indicator about transversal skills/soft skills (other than digital skills) should be included within the model.
- In order to be able to compare indicators from one operator to another, the observation dates should be correctly defined.
- It would also be interesting to have an indicator to see how people have had the opportunity to use what they have learned during their training in their daily lives. For this purpose, an indicator of trainee satisfaction at the end of the training should be included in the model.

- The model should not be based solely on the results of the centres. It should be completed with indicators that evaluate the processes implemented by a VET centre in order to achieve its objectives.

4. *How relevant are the results for your purposes? What is the benefit in using the tool for you?*

The results will be relevant. However, some points of attention are highlighted. In the same way as what was said in the Walloon workshop of 9th September, some participants consider that there is a risk that the implementation of the model may lead to competition between operators.

Once again, many participants consider that the benefit in using the tool will depend on the way the results are presented. It is really important to make recommendations on the basis of the results and not just display a "high" or "low" score. The benefit in using the tool will come from the capacity of the platform to allow for the exchange of good practices. An overall score per centre risks damaging little centres, which could nevertheless bring a real added value to the social utility of a territory.

It will be very important that the results are not summarized in an overall rating, and that the results are contextualized according to the mission and the situation experienced by each centre.

One participant considered that the benefits in using the model will come from the ability of the model to allow a centre not only to self-assess itself, but also to see its progress in terms of social utility.

5. *What do you expect from a model to measure the social utility of vocational training?*

As in the workshop of 9th September, participants agreed that there should be no overall rating and no tool that will list the "good" on the one hand and the "bad" on the other. It must be a tool that allows a centre to use the model for its own purposes, to self-assess, to receive recommendations and good practices, to evaluate its progress.

One participant made a link between the SOLITY project and another label, «Certified B Corporation». Certified B Corporations are businesses that meet the highest standards of verified social and environmental performance, public transparency, and legal accountability to balance profit and purpose. B Corps are accelerating a global culture shift to redefine success in business and build a more inclusive and sustainable economy. Link: <https://bcorporation.net/>

WORKSHOP FOR VET TRAINERS AND, STAKEHOLDERS (14.11.19, Centre de compétence FOREM Pigments – Strey- Bracquenies, Belgium, 12 participants)

Comprehensive summary of the feedback received by all participants in the workshop:

1. Are the areas covered by the indicators relevant for you?

One participant thinks that the last axis (internal practices) is less important than the other axes. On the contrary, other participants consider this axis as fundamental because it represents the good internal governance of the centres.

From a general point of view, all participants agree on the relevance of measuring the social utility of VET and on the strategy developed to achieve it. The axes were validated by the participants.

2. Do you think that the indicators are clear, easy to understand?

All participants received a description of the indicators. The description was considered satisfactory and clear enough by everyone so no specific remark was made on this topic.

3. Are there indicators that you find useless or, on the contrary, are there indicators that you consider crucial but are not included in the framework?

The indicators are relevant, but some improvements must be implemented:

- Some qualitative indicators should be included in the model ;
- The indicators included in axis 2 are still very much linked to the employment and skills dimension, while other dimensions, such as self- confidence increase after the attendance of a training course, could have been included in the model.
- According to one participant, the "environmental" aspect should appear more prominently in the indicators.

4. How relevant are the results for your purposes? What is the benefit in using the tool for you?

Opinions differ at this level. Some believe that it will be too time-consuming to collect the data. Some indicators are considered as not easily not calculable.

Once again, fears appear linked to the fact that there is a significant risk that the implementation of the model may lead to competition between operators.

The environment of the centre and its overall strategy should also be taken into account in the result. For this reason, a qualitative component should be added to the model. This opinion, however, is not shared by all participants. Other stakeholders believe that it is useful tool for self-assessment as it is.

5. Do you consider it useful/relevant for your professional activities that VET providers are able to measure their social utility? In other words, whether or not a VET provider is committed to

measure its social utility (and possibly performs well) would have an impact on your professional choices?

Many participants consider that some indicators will be difficult to measure or that it would take them an enormous amount of time to gather all the necessary data to complete the model.

Moreover, all vocational training operators do not necessarily have at their disposal a statistical service capable of providing the requested data.

Other stakeholders believe that the tool is useful as it is and are happy with it.

6. What do you expect from a model to measure the social utility of vocational training?

As in the previous Belgian workshops, participants said that much of the benefit in using the tool will depend on the way the results are presented, which will increase as much as the platform will allow to measure self-progress across the years and the exchange of good practices.

In conclusion, participants acknowledged the value of getting involved in this type of process (self-evaluation of social utility). They agree on the importance of highlight the social dimension of vocational training when measuring centres' performance. The SOLITY model is a first step in this direction and this kind of initiative should be encouraged.

National Workshops in Italy

ENAIP NET carried out 3 workshops, engaging a total of 30 people.

WORKSHOP FOR ENTREPRENEURS (20.06.2019, ENAIP LOMBARDIA CANTU, 6 participants)

Comprehensive summary of the feedback received by all participants in the workshop:

1. Are the areas covered by the indicators relevant for you?

All the entrepreneurs involved in the workshop positively replied to this question, but they also highlighted that entrepreneurship is not considered. The development of entrepreneurial skills is a central theme for European policies. Entrepreneurial competencies are considered as important to business growth and success as other skills. Entrepreneurship education cannot be lacking in the actions of VET providers.

2. Do you think that the indicators are clear, easy to understand?

All the entrepreneurs involved in the workshop positively replied to this question.

3. Are there indicators that you find useless or, on the contrary, are there indicators that you consider crucial but are not included in the framework?

Some indicators were considered not so crucial for the social utility assessment:

- 1.9 Weight of apprenticeship
- 3.5 Success rates for courses adapted to migrants (refugees, asylum seekers)

On the other hand, the experts outlined the relevance of the following indicators not included in the SOLITY model:

- axis 5: organizational climate assessment: the assessment of the general atmosphere within the organization is important, which means looking at the perceptions of the employees in relation to the organization and their workplace;
- axis 4: evaluation of the territorial collaboration in terms of the amount of budget invested by the VET Provider. E.g. budget invested/ turnover.

For the indicators 5.1, 5.3, 5.6, 5.7 and 5.8 the suggestion is to use the annual work unit (AWU) with the same meaning in the European SME definition (small medium enterprise).

4. How relevant are the results for your purposes? What is the benefit in using the tool for you?

All the entrepreneurs involved in the workshop agreed on the high relevance of the model as a good and complete one. The main benefits are: quality improvement of VET provision, more information for an enterprise to decide with whom cooperate.

5. *Do you consider it useful/relevant for your professional activities that entrepreneurs could have access to the social utility's measure? In other words, whether or not an entrepreneur has this information is committed to measure its social utility (and possibly performs well) would have an impact on your professional choices?*

All the entrepreneurs involved in the workshop agreed on the relevance of the model for their professional activities.

WORKSHOP FOR VET TRAINERS (27.06.2019, ENAIP FVG Udine, 11 participants)

Comprehensive summary of the feedback received by all participants in the workshop:

1. *Are the areas covered by the indicators relevant for you?*

All the VET experts involved in the workshop agreed on this point.

2. *Do you think that the indicators are clear, easy to understand?*

All the VET experts involved in the workshop agreed on this point.

3. *Are there indicators that you find useless or, on the contrary, are there indicators that you consider crucial but are not included in the framework?*

Some indicators were considered not so crucial for the social utility assessment of VET providers:

- 1.7 Duration of internships.
- 2.5 Number of learners involved in interregional or international mobility experiences
- 3.4 Number of courses tailored to migrants (refugees, asylum seekers)

On the other hand, the experts outlined the relevance of the following indicators, which are currently not included in the SOLITY model:

- An indicator on the satisfaction of trainees;
- An indicator on entrepreneurship of indicator: trainees who have started a business after training/ total number of trainees;
- An indicator that could detect all the activities that VET providers do in order to help people re-enter the labour market (not only career guidance, but also organising job interviews, cooperate with employment agencies, and so on): as this is an important social function of VET providers, it should be in the framework somehow.

4. *How relevant are the results for your purposes? What is the benefit in using the tool for you?*

All the VET experts involved in the workshop agreed on the high relevance of the model for their own VET organizations. The main benefits identified are: quality improvement, easy self-

assessment tool helpful to analyse the annual performances; a first European platform where to promote the activities of VET Centres; effective report to be used also when negotiating with decision makers and funding bodies; useful tool to be enclosed in the social balance sheets.

5. *Do you consider it useful/relevant for your professional activities that VET providers are able to measure their social utility? In other words, whether or not a VET provider is committed to measure its social utility (and possibly performs well) would it have an impact on your professional choices?*

All the VET experts involved in the workshop agreed on the relevance of the model for their professional activities. The assessment of the social utility allows VET Providers to perform better and to provide people with more efficient answers to their needs.

WORKSHOP FOR STAKEHOLDERS (17.09.2019, ENAIP VENETO Padova, 13 participants)

Comprehensive summary of the feedback received by all participants in the workshop:

1. *Are the areas covered by the indicators relevant for you?*

The participants generally agreed on the relevance and importance of the SOLITY framework, deeming it very intuitive and understandable for operators of the VET field. They noted that it is crucial to be aware of framework final goal in order to fully understand it and use it correctly. It was appreciated that also representatives of categories not directly working in vocational training were taken into account in the validation of the framework, given the added value that they can bring with another kind of technical approach and given the fact that they all cooperate to some extent with VET centres.

The following remarks were shared by the participants:

- some data may be difficult to retrieve (e.g. NEETs data), also because interpretations of the same word or methods of collection and/or calculation of the same data may differ from country to country;
- it must be clear to the users/beneficiaries of the model that the tool represents a way for self-assessment and not a competition among VET providers. This is why the development of a "best practices" section would be useful in making it clear that the final goal is to share knowledge and methods for improvement and raising quality standards. The platform should also be a place for interaction and exchange for VET providers (beyond being a tool for self-assessment).

2. *Do you think that the indicators are clear, easy to understand?*

Some participants agreed on the fact that some indicators are not fully clear and readable,

i.e.:

- indicator 1.3 might not be representative enough of the current situation of the labour market, and it should take into account different ways of measuring it. It is furthermore needed to focus not only on job profiles, but also on the contents and exact type of the jobs that are emerging;
- indicator 3.4 should refer to the number of migrants attending usual courses and not to the number of courses tailored to migrants;
- indicators referring to data on NEETs may be unclear at EU level, as different Member States use different ways of collecting these data;
- "best score" should be changed into "highest score";
- the interpretation of refresher courses might be different in different member states;
- indicators on sustainable development need to be expressed more clearly in order to avoid misunderstandings.

3. *Are there indicators that you find useless or, on the contrary, are there indicators that you consider crucial but are not included in the framework?*

The participants do not find any indicator to be useless and would not propose to add any more indicators. Someone even highlighted that 37 (the total number of indicators in the framework) is already quite a high number.

4. *How relevant are the results for your purposes? What is the benefit in using the tool for you?*

The results are relevant for the participants' purposes because they provide a fair, objective and proof-based self-assessment that is extremely easy to compare. Given that many of the concepts are referenced by using internationally-accepted definitions, they appear to be easily transferable to a transnational level.

Furthermore, it is crucial for a VET provider to share the results obtained from the tool not only internally (management systems and strategies), but also externally so as to expand the benefits created in using the tool.

5. *Do you consider it useful/relevant for your professional activities that VET providers are able to measure their social utility? In other words, whether or not a VET provider is committed to measure its social utility (and possibly performs well) would have an impact on your professional choices?*

First of all, all participants deemed the results given by the tool extremely useful in order for VET providers to self-assess their level of social utility and take profitable actions in their organisations. It is also a very important way for them to understand which are the areas of their activities that are or are not in need of improvement.

As a consequence,, such information can be crucial for the other actors that play a major role in the territory and that collaborate with said VET providers.

It is also noted that knowing the impact and efforts that are put forward by a VET provider has repercussions on all the subjects that collaborate with that VET provider, in a comprehensive perspective that takes into account the concept of social responsibility. By giving a "label" to VET centres that have a good social utility performance, stakeholders could better direct their collaboration choices. It is, however, necessary to explain this in the right way to local interlocutors, so that it is clear to them too which the real benefits are.

International Workshop

Description and set-up

The international workshop took place on 26th September 2019 in Berlin, Germany. A total of 15 participants took part, 6 from Italy, 3 from France, 5 from Belgium and 1 from Germany. All of the participants had already taken part in the national workshops.

2 participants (1 from Germany and 1 from Belgium had to cancel their participation at short notice) and therefore did not attend.

In total, there were 5 participants representing the entrepreneurs target group, 5 representing VET trainers and VET centres, and 5 stakeholders.

The agenda for the day:

- 10.45 - 11.15 Arrival and Registration
- 11.15 - 11.30 Opening Speech
- 11.30 - 11:45 Presentation of the working group
- 11.45 - 12.00 Re-introduction of the SOLITY project
- 12.00 - 12:15 Introduction of the online tool
- 12.15 - 13.00 Presentation of results of the national workshops
- 13.00 - 13.45 Lunch
- 13.45 - 15.15 Working groups
- 15.15 - 15.30 Coffee break
- 15.30 - 16.00 Presentation of results of working groups
- 16.00 - 16.15 Evaluation and Conclusions

3 working groups took place; one for VET trainers, one for entrepreneurs and one for stakeholders.

The following questions were discussed:

- 1) Do you think that the adoption of the SOLITY framework at EU level is feasible?
- 2) If looking at the 2030 scenario of the VET in Europe, an urgent need to develop a monitoring framework against a set of indicators to benchmark VET performances has been expressed. According to you and your role within society, can the SOLITY Tool represent a first step towards the development of a more transparent and European model? What do you think can be any hindrances and relative solutions to ensure a diffusion of the model at all levels?
- 3) Taking into account the UN SD goals and the ongoing and upcoming challenges of the labour market as seen in the video before, how do you perceive the link between social responsibility and vocational education? A necessity, an added value, a non-priority, etc.
- 4) Thinking about the European socio-economical context (Brexit, tensions on immigration

policies, increase of anti-EU feelings, etc.), how much do you think it's necessary to invest on the promotion and implementation of international projects focusing on social responsibility and on the development of common frameworks and practices?

5) In order to strengthen the capacity of VET actors to act in all type of partnerships (from local to international ones) and thus facilitate the adoption of best practices for the final benefit of their society, the proposal to create a LABEL linked to the concept of valorisation of best performers in Europe can be seen as an added value for you in a medium/long-term view? Does it make sense to link the label to the wider concept of SOCIAL UTILITY and ensure it is understood/valued by all stakeholders? Do you think it would influence your willingness to cooperate with the VET centres/strengthen the collaboration you might already have in place?

OPTIONAL QUESTIONS:

6) A sustainable development cannot take place without a strong cooperation among different actors. However, cooperation is not always easy (see difficulties we had sometimes encountered in the SOLITY project in engaging external actors in active cooperation), so how can we make cooperation among different actors easier and more regular?

7) If you were to create a European framework to measure the social utility of a VET Centre, what would you have done? Where would you have started from? What would have prioritized? Would you have done something differently? What exactly?

Results

ENTREPRENEURS WORKING GROUP

The participants of the entrepreneur workshop agreed that the SOLITY model is good, though they would like some improvements:

- The tool seems too generalist, and not adapted to the specificities of the various training sectors. The setting up of such a model requires having a list of European training centres classified by sector typology, size, etc., though this may be indeed not feasible for the single SOLITY project.
- To encourage training organizations to use it, they should have an obvious advantage in doing so, which may not always be so clear.
- There should be the possibility for respondents to supplement their answers with qualitative comments

There were also some suggestions for further development:

- Create subsidiary questions in the case of very low scores on an indicator to identify the measures envisaged to overcome its shortcomings. This could be a possible solution to better clarify the benefits in using the tool.

- Once the tool is finalized, its dissemination will require the EU to launch a new call for proposal to provide a substantial budget for its communication and dissemination throughout Europe.
- The success of the tool and its sustainability could be achieved by setting up incentives for training organizations that use it.
- A label could be a good tool for promotion and a guarantee of sustainability but it needs audit, control and lot of money.

STAKEHOLDERS WORKING GROUP

The main point of the discussion in this group was whether to have less quantitative and more qualitative indicators (e.g. not "rate "female employees / rate total employees" but "do you have measurements/initiatives which promote female employees"). Stakeholders also agreed that SOLITY could also be further developed in a label but that would require the action of the EU. They also all agreed that the idea of highlighting the social impact of VET provision is a good one and that this initiative should be promoted and further advanced/improved as it goes in the direction of developing a sustainable labour market.

VET TRAINERS WORKING GROUP

The VET trainers group was quite happy with tool though they also raised some questions:

- Some indicators may be quite difficult to measure. A critical point could be the data collection because of the lack of standardization at EU level. That is also why it may be difficult for the tool to be extensively adopted at EU level, as VET national systems are so different.
- The interpretation of the final result should be better explained.
- It is not much clear if and how best practices among VET providers will be shared.
- The creation of SOLITY label would be good idea but how will it look like?

VET trainers also expressed a high interest in seeing the results of the testing phase (which were not available yet at the time of the workshop).

Final recommendations

This is a summary of the final recommendations that the partnership put together analysing the results of all the workshops that were carried out (nationally and internationally):

- Need for an easy system for displaying results:
 - o For example: plague with stars (1 stars good, 3 stars excellent)
 - o Need for positive results (i.e. not bad vs good but needs improvement vs very good)
 - o Or, if the current way is maintained (score), it must be well clarified how to read and interpret it.
- SOLITY would be more accurate if it could take into account different VET sectors, differences in size and ownership (i.e. public vs. private).
- The advantages of using this tool for VET centres should be well described or conveyed in the dissemination activities.
- The local level is very important for most stakeholders so this is something that the SOLITY tool needs to take into account.
- Some terms have different definitions or meaning in some countries and the differences among VET systems can also be quite high. Though this was taken into account by SOLITY from the beginning, it may still make collecting data very difficult for VET providers. In order to reduce ambiguity or misinterpretation of terms and indicators, a clear description for each indicator should be provided to the users of the tool as well as clear instructions on how to proceed when data cannot be found or collected or are simply not available in a specific VET system.
- There should be the possibility of adding qualitative comments while filling in indicators.
- The main message around the SOLITY tool should be that it is a self-assessment tool, in order to avoid from the very beginning any risk of competition among VET providers and/or an improper use of the tool from them. It should also be stressed that the tool allows VET providers to enter their data annually, so as to record their progress.
- A label could be the further development of the tool, but it would require the intervention of EU bodies and some external check of the data entered by VET providers.
- Once the tool is finalized, its dissemination throughout Europe will require a substantial budget and a possible endorsement by EU bodies.
- Some indicators should be added to the framework, as suggested repeatedly by the different participants in the workshops:

- An indicator on the satisfaction of the trainees
- An indicator on entrepreneurship
- An indicator on the possibility to have part or all the training carried-out at a distance (e.g. online).

All these recommendations will be taken into account by the partnership together with those coming from the testing. A feasibility discussion (especially in terms of budget and technical issues) will be developed about them and the partnership will then decide which ones of them will be implemented. The final account of these decisions will be included in the Validation Report.