

European LEarning Syllabus for outdoor Animators

ELESA Project

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Policy Context of the ELESA project



EACEA

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INTRODUCTION

To better understand the policy context of this ELESa project for Outdoor Animators, this 'policy context' document will first of all focus on some key elements as described in the grant application.

- The aim of the ELESa project is to collect good practices, both in education and in the outdoor sector, in order to develop a learning syllabus for Outdoor Animators. This syllabus should help to explore how the educational environment can better connect with the labour market.
- Therefore - and as a follow-up of two other EU co-financed projects; EQFOA and CLO2 – the ELESa project will attempt to apply the findings of the former projects into a sector specific curriculum that incorporates the (academic) knowledge and best practices of the sector.
- Throughout the whole development process the syllabus will attempt to cope with the standards set by the European Qualification Framework (EQF) at level 5.
- As the consortium strongly believes that for the Outdoors, only a curriculum at European level can solve the challenge of the mutual recognition of qualifications, the ELESa project places a strong emphasis on this European added value dimension.

Apart from describing the educational environment, the professional environment will also be elaborated upon and finally a brief overview on some major gaps and barriers encountered by the outdoor sector throughout Europe will be included in this 'policy context' document.

Anyone operating in the European outdoor sector should be aware of these sector related issues. Consequently, the ELESa project, focussing on the training of Outdoor Animators, should also pay substantial attention to these sector issues.

Reading this 'policy context ' document should therefore facilitate a better understanding of the unique and sector specific approach of the **European LEarning Syllabus for Outdoor Animators (ELESa)**.

In relation to the ELESa Project and in the context of this document, the term " The Outdoors" is universally used to describe the professional, occupational and entrepreneurial sector engaged in the commercial provision of adventure activities also know as Outdoor Active Leisure. While many aspects of ELESa will be useful or operable in the context of Education, Sport or the voluntary sector, the ELESa Project is primarily addressing the needs of the commercial Active Leisure sector.

1 - Historical issues relating to the Outdoors

The Outdoors in its commercial aspect is a relatively young sector that developed in the 70's and more so in the 80's in certain countries whilst in others the sector only started to peak in the late 90's. In some eastern EU countries the concept is in fact just emerging.

Skiing for instance, started as early as the 60's in France, Italy, Austria and Switzerland and rapidly developed a domestic mass market. On the other hand this commercial outdoor activity only developed mass market appeal in the 80's for British holidaymakers while other nations such as Russia became mass consumers as late as the early part of the 21st century.

Rafting was introduced from the United States into France and Switzerland in the mid 80's, at the same time as windsurfing for example.

If certain activities were developed fairly early in the post second world war period, others are only 10 to 15 years old. That is the case of High Rope Courses created in the late 90's. Similarly, such activities as canyoning and kite surfing are relatively new and some activities are literally invented to feed the tourism markets in demand for new attractions (jet ski, quad, paintball, ...etc.).

It is interesting to note that some activities in their original format emerged from a somewhat 'technical' and 'sporty' background whilst others emerged due to a historical background. In France for instance, the armed forces have always been - and still are - to a certain extent involved in the development of horse riding.

However, the Outdoors activity market has been driven by tourism growth.

International tourist arrivals (ITA) worldwide step over 1.0 billion in 2012 (51.6% in Europe) with a global average annual growth of 4.1% from 2009 to 2012.

ITA were estimated to reach 1.2 billion in 2014 (51.9% in Europe) and forecasted to achieve 1.8 billion arrivals in 2030 (41.1% in Europe) leading to an average annual growth rate of 2.6% (1.2% in Europe).¹

Despite this significant increase, the outdoor tourism potential growth is even bigger, which is well portrayed in several studies that reflect this global trend. Extensive documentation and statistical analysis on 'adventure tourism' can be found in publications by the 'World Tourism Organisation' (UNWTO)² as well as in publications by the Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA).³

¹ idtour analysis, based at UNWTO (2014) and Euromonitor (2014) : (to be published late 2015)

http://idtour.pt/pdfs/Tourism_and_Outdoors_Trends_ELESA.pdf

² <http://media.unwto.org/press-release/2014-11-04/unwto-and-adventure-travel-trade-association-release-global-report-adventure>

³ <http://www.adventuretravel.biz/>

At European level the ‘Flash Eurobarometer 392’⁴ - a study conducted annually by EC - stated that about 13% of the European tourists have travelled in 2013 for nature reasons (mountains, lakes, landscape...) and 5% were motivated by sport-related activities (e.g. diving, mountain biking...) which leads to a figure around 18% – both representing an average annual growth rate of 15.9% and 5.2% from 2009 to 2013).

Low cost flights, mobile phones and internet have widely contributed to the expansion of commercial outdoor activities since the beginning of the 21st century. The recent development of both concepts of service and of leisure industry has certainly opened many opportunities for the outdoor sector over the last decades.

Whatever examples may be cited or discussions may be engaged on the subject, the Outdoors as an economic sector is chronologically closer in its development to say the computer industry or the aeronautic industry than to the steel sector (18th century) or to the carpentry/building sector.

Nowadays, and as far as Europe is concerned, the Outdoors is a vast market with increasing numbers of EU citizens willing to move from one country to the other for an outdoor vacation with friends and family, for a week-end break, a team building session or a stag/hen party, ... etc.

Due to the fairly ‘young age’ of the Outdoors, the sector is in need of definition⁵, of organisation and of professional standardisation⁶; similarly, the sector is addressing issues such as consumer safety⁷ as well as standards for the delivering of services, staff training and minimum skills and competences.⁸

Indeed, in a service industry, one key aspect of quality assurance relates to the staff’s ability to deliver the service in such a way that consumers will be safe and happy to further purchase the service on offer.

This is the reason why themes like Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP), European Qualification Framework (EQF), National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) and Quality Assurance are of prime concern to all professionals and their trade organisations.

Competence and skills in the Outdoors consequently were a prime driver in the development of the EQFOA⁹ and the CLO2¹⁰ projects and today the ELESa¹¹ project.

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_392_en.pdf

⁵ H. Smulders (2010), Defining the outdoors, EC-OE, <http://www.ec-oe.eu/defining-the-outdoors/>

⁶ The European Confederation of Outdoor Employers (EC-OE), 2008, www.ec-oe.eu

⁷ H. Smulders, J-Y Lapeyrère & Ann O’Connor (2013), Non-regulatory measures related to the safety of outdoor leisure activities in the EU, DG Sanco, <http://www.ec-oe.eu/publications/>

⁸ EU ELESa project (2013-2015) : www.elesa-project.eu

⁹ EQFOA: European Qualification Framework Outdoor Animators (2006-2008), <http://www.ec-oe.eu/projects/eqfoa/>

¹⁰ CLO2: Bridging the gap between Competences and Learning Outcomes (2008-2010), <http://www.ec-oe.eu/projects/clo2/>

¹¹ ELESa: European LEarning Syllabus for outdoor Animators (2013-2015), www.elesa-project.eu

Another issue that needs to be addressed in this policy context is what does the consortium mean by ‘Outdoors’? This debate has taken place during the EQFOA project and it is important that the agreed definition of the Outdoors is clearly presented within the present document.

Defining the Outdoors

The Outdoors provides an expansive and diverse range of experiences that span the spectrum of human activity and in particular learning and recreation.

The outdoor sector uses outdoor related activities (canoe, rafting, horse riding, ... etc.) as the basis for the delivery of a recreational service. The outdoor sector uses qualified animators or instructors to deliver these outdoor activities in a context of fun, recreation, tourism, outdoor learning or engagement with the natural environment. Outdoor providers do not generally offer competition, or performance coaching.¹²

A common feature of the Outdoors is the use of the natural environment, with some notable exceptions, such as artificial climbing walls.

Outdoor activities can be used for a wide range of outcomes most planned, but sometimes, and equally valuable, not planned.

The outdoor activity outcomes may range from personally recreational, through to social recreation, to the use of the outdoor activity and the environment as a vehicle for learning and development of personal and interpersonal attitudes (and even into relatively new areas such as adventure therapy). Finally, an activity can be used as a basis for formal school-based learning in areas such as science, natural history, geology, mathematics etc.¹³

Within EQFOA the main thematic areas of the Outdoors were described as:

- **Outdoor Recreation:** In some countries, the word ‘adventure’ is used as a positive addition in terms such as adventurous activities, adventure travel, adventure tourism, outdoor adventure. However, in some countries, adventure is not a positive term, so care must be taken. Our generic term is ‘the Outdoors’;
- **Outdoor Education** (or outdoor learning), including formal, informal, personal, interpersonal learning;
- **Development Training** (often cited as the adult/corporate/organizational version of children and young people’s personal and interpersonal education).

To these traditional three, at least three additional areas can be added:

- **Sports Development** (relatively limited area for gaining formal outdoor sports qualifications and skills for educators and trainers);

¹² Definition used by ESCO (European Classification of Skills/Competences, Qualifications and Occupations), EU DG Empl.

¹³ U.Dettweiler, A. et al. (2014), Teaching science in an alpine setting – Understanding some core factors influencing pupils’ motivational behaviour, Technische Universität München.

- **Expeditions and Exploration:** a rapidly growing area that is now seen as having its own specific characteristics and needs, but with strong links to the other areas such as recreation and education;
- **Adventure Therapy:** new and developing: utilizing the Outdoors and outdoor activities as the basis for therapeutic interventions to promote healing and learning in the area of psychological and personal problems.

It is true to say that the Outdoors can be subdivided into many differing sets and subsets. However, most can be located along a simple recreation/education continuum.



There are extensive overlaps between these areas, depending on exactly the activity chosen and the purpose for which it is being used.

For those looking in from ‘outside’, the Outdoors sector can appear difficult to understand in terms of activities, structure, organisations, etc. To help map out what is meant by the Outdoors, it is useful to think of it through three key variables:

1. Outdoors Activity Purpose/Objectives

- Recreation
- Outdoor sport
- Personal/interpersonal learning and development
- Outdoors/adventure therapy
- Education (curriculum/academic related – schools)
- Corporate/work performance

2. Participants/Customers/Clients

- Individuals

- Families
- Groups (social, education, work)
- Children, young people/youth groups
- Adults

3. **Outdoors Activity Delivery – Organisations/Types**

- Participants themselves
- Sole traders/individual service providers
- Small, medium and large organisations
- Commercial, public, not-for-profit/charities, voluntary
- Specialist organisations or part of a larger diverse one (e.g. in tourism/hospitality)

Furthermore, many organisations involved in outdoor delivery will provide services to more than one client sector. For example, an outdoor centre owned and operated by a local council/local government will provide outdoor recreation and/or education activities for school groups from that council area during term-time, but will also offer outdoor development programmes to business/corporate groups and run summer outdoor recreation programmes for individuals – often children or adults. It is a rich and complex picture.

It must be emphasised that this picture varies greatly across the whole sector. Some outdoor providers have a more simple, less varied delivery structure and system.

Specific desires and requirements of participants/clients in most instances drive the delivery of successful outdoor activity provision. Of course, this impacts on what providers do with regard to staff qualifications, capability and other related issues.

The above has also lead the consortium to concentrate on the core of what it represents in terms of employment, that is to say the outdoor recreation/adventure tourism part.

2 – Pathway to ELESa

2.1 - The LifeLong Programme, objectives, general context

The LLP initiated in 2007 by the EU was designed to support learning opportunities from childhood to old age in every single life situation, including Vocational Education & Training (VET).

LLP can be summarised as follows:

« The Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) ran from 2007-2013 and was built on four pillars, or sub-programmes, together with Erasmus these included:

- *The Comenius programme for pupils, teachers, schools and related institutions/ organisations (pre-school and school education up to the level of the end of upper secondary education)*

- *The Leonardo da Vinci programme for apprentices, workers, employees and related institutions/organisations (vocational education and training).*
- *The Grundtvig programme for adults, teachers and related institutions/organisations active in the field of adult education.*

Following the LLP (2007 - 2013), the new Erasmus + programme (2014 – 2020) is presented by the EACEA ¹⁴ agency on its web site as follows:

*“ The new **Erasmus+** programme aims to support actions in the fields of **Education, Training, Youth and Sport for the period 2014-2020**. Erasmus+ replaces seven programmes bringing together*

- *The Lifelong Learning Programme (Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci, Comenius and Grundtvig)*
- *The Youth in Action programme*
- *Five international cooperation programmes (Erasmus Mundus, Tempus, Alfa, Edulink, the programme for cooperation with industrialised countries)*
- *The new sport action.*

*Erasmus + provides grants for a wide range of actions and activities in the fields of **education, training, youth and sport**. The programme gives opportunities to students, trainees, staff and volunteers to spend a period abroad to increase their skills and employability. It supports organisations to work in transnational partnership and to share innovative practices in the fields of education, training and youth. The new **sport** action will support grassroots projects and cross-border challenges such as combating match fixing, doping, violence and racism.*

*The actions of the Erasmus + programme are divided into **decentralised actions** and **centralised actions**. The decentralised actions are managed in each programme country by **National Agencies** that are appointed by their national authorities. The centralised actions are managed at a European level by the **Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)** located in Brussels. “*

2.2 - The EQFOA project, philosophy, deliverables,

The application form for the EQFOA project reads as follows:

*“ 1. The **target sector** for this proposal is: ‘**The Outdoors**’.*

*The key **target group** covered by this proposal includes those working and involved in the Outdoor sector across Europe. The footprint covers the ‘Animators’. The target group therefore includes a mix of stakeholders such as Employers organisations, Employees, Social Partners Organisations and Training Providers involved in the Outdoor Leisure and Tourism activity in the European Union.*

Potential users of the project results will be those currently employed within the sector and also potential new employees. As a rapidly growing sector, it is important that the project partners

¹⁴ EACEA : Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/index_en.php

develop a common framework to manage the increasing demands within the sector for more professional qualifications, and the demands of the public for high quality well trained professionals. Employers will be users of the project results as they will be able to recognise qualifications of the professionals who are capable of supporting their company needs and operations.

The expected and potential users of the results will be Training Providers across Europe wanting to align the content of their programmes with the transparent process developed and agreed through the project by the current countries.

Potential users of the project's results also include policy makers and decision takers at the European and National level.

2. The outdoors is a young and fast growing sector with increasing clients' demands that necessitate developing a professional structure for the outdoor industry. In France, SNEPSALPA, the French Employers' Union for the Outdoors together with the University Claude Bernard Lyon 1, established a strong dialog to develop quality of the Vocational Education Training system and practices in the outdoor sector in Europe. In order to do so, various meetings were organised and a group of European Employers' Union, Training Providers, and European organisations has been constituted. A major meeting was held in Lyon in June 2005, where all these potential European partners were invited to discuss the VET system in the outdoors over Europe. Led by UCBL and SNEPSALPA, this group of a mix of key national and European partners from the Outdoors industry confirmed the need for the Outdoor Industry to develop and promote the implementation of common references to clarify the situation of Vocational Education Training across Europe. It was agreed that the actual vocational education and training systems needed to be transformed and modernised

*So, **the need** of all the stakeholders involved in the Outdoor industry was identified through the consultation process above. The results, agreed by the European partners, were to provide a transparent, comparable and transferable structure of competences and skills to be developed through referential documents and standards such as 'Industry maps', 'Jobs description' and 'Competence Framework'. This will enable individuals and employers to compare and contrast the programme structure against their own requirements. (...) The fast growth of the industry and its on-going rapid changes poses many human resource and quality challenges for the sector. This project has emerged from this need to come up with new solutions to meet the increasing demands for appropriately trained professionals in a changing labour market.*

*3. The **specific aims** of the project are:*

- To develop and validate the **Industry Occupational Map** for the Outdoor sector across Europe. (...)*
- To research and produce **Individual Job Descriptions** and profiles for the current job activities of Outdoor professionals in the partner countries. Each of these '**Individual Job Descriptions**' needing to include: 'General Description', 'Basic Tasks', 'Entry Requirements', 'Competence Fields' in terms of level as per the new European Qualification Framework (EQF). (...)*

- To develop and agree the **Industry Functional Map** for the whole Outdoor sector across Europe (Work package 5). (...)
- To produce and sign off a **Competence Framework** with technical and non-technical competences ('Environmental Competences' in the 'Blue', 'Green' and 'White' sub-sectors) for Outdoor Animators in Europe. This key product of the project, to increase the chance of integration and implementation inside VET systems and practices across Europe will be produced in English and then translated into French and Spanish.
- To explore the **Feasibility of Developing a Verification Process** to validate qualifications of professionals in the Outdoor sector within each country involved in the project based on the Copenhagen Declaration supported by the new EQF. (...)
- To research the **Labour Market** so as to establish the number of enterprises and employment patterns as well as the **Vocational Training Systems**, organisations and programmes linked to the outdoor sector in the partner countries. (...) ”

2.3 - The CLO2 project

The following description is an extract from the application form of the CLO2 project:

“ The main aim of the new European project in the Outdoors is to bridge from the ‘Competence Framework’, that is being finalised under the EQFOA project, to the skills and learning outcomes delivered by the training providers in the field. The objectives of the CLO2 project will be to first establish the importance and level of the competences required by the employers in line with EQF, secondly develop the learning outcomes and match them with the competences required bringing them together in a Unit and Credit Framework, and finally set a methodology for accreditation and verification process together with an organised pilot to test all of the above developments.

The partnership being put together to achieve those ambitious and so crucial activities has been selected for their particular competences in the fields addressed: firstly a group of Outdoor employers’ unions that will analyse and fine-tune the results of the EQFOA (Occupational map, Functional Map and Competence framework for Outdoor Animators) in order to present it to training providers on a logical and detailed way and secondly, two groups of training providers that will, for the first one establish the learning/knowledge outcomes to be acquired by future graduate in order to match the competences requested and for the second one to set a coherent methodology for quality assurance framework in the field in Europe. A third group constituted of the main European organisations will help and support the consortium with both desk research and primary research on the one hand and also consultation, dissemination and coordination into the wider landscape of Sport and Active Leisure Sector on the other.

The tangible outcomes of this project are the description of the Learning Outcomes required to support the identified competences for Outdoor Animators, together with a methodology handbook and a formal accreditation process, whereas the intangible outcome is of course the transparency and effectiveness of the VET system in the Outdoor sub-sector, the recognition and mobility issues, for the benefit of all the stakeholders, namely the employers, the employees and

the training providers. It will undoubtedly impact the whole sector and largely participate in its development, professionalization and growth. ”

3 – Educational and training environment

3.1 - Introduction

By researching the educational environment in which - to the opinion of the consortium - the training of the Outdoor Animator could and should be integrated, it gradually became clear that this environment is quite extensive. Besides the traditional educational structures such as secondary and higher (non-university and university) education, links to the future Outdoor Animator training program are definitely also to be found in the sphere of vocational educational and training.

Moreover, as indicated in table A (*other related trainings*), useful links can also be found in e.g. sport education and tourism training programs.

3.2 – Mapping the educational and training environment

Through its partnership the ELESa consortium researched the education and training environment in the represented EU Member States.

The purpose of this research was to establish a coherent picture of the current training setting of Outdoor Animators. The latter is positioned within the context of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the *Europe 2020 Strategy* for training and education in the EU. As an occupational subsector, the Outdoors is also visible across a number of education and training domains from Sport Education to Higher Education.

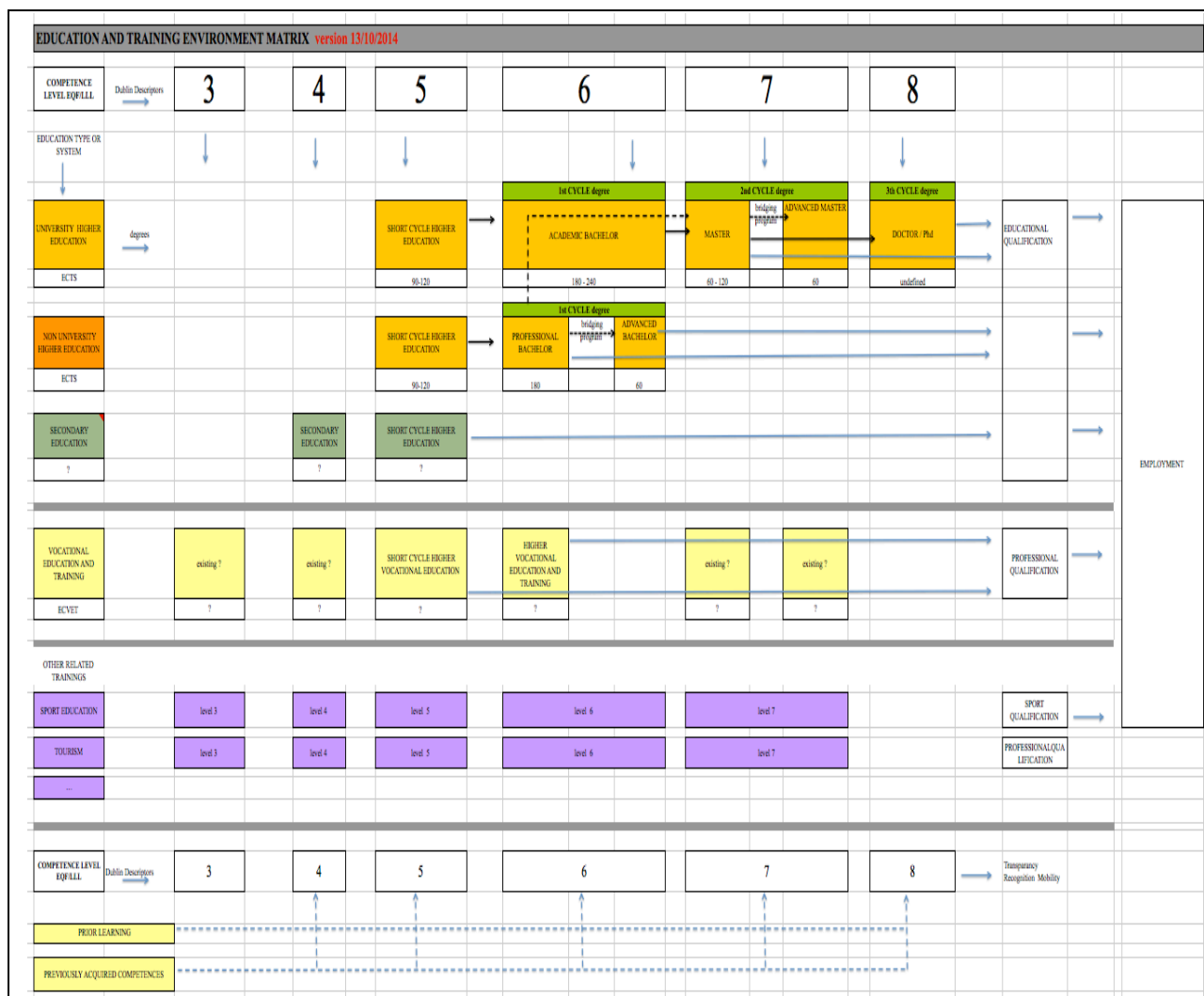


Table A: Education and training environment for ‘Outdoor Animators’

(ANNEX 1)

From the very beginning (EQFOA, 2008), the competence of the professional Outdoor Animator has been positioned at EQF level 5 (EQFOA & CLO2). Therefore the functioning of education and training structures at this EQF level are of particular interest for the ELESa project.

In order to interpret this map, the readers’ attention is first drawn to the top row of Table A. The six levels identified across the Education and Training environment are drawn from the eight levels identified in EQF. These levels are used by individual EU nations to benchmark their own National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) and thus the level of individual training and education programmes. The competence of individuals holding awards at these levels is articulated in the EU document known as the *Dublin Descriptors*.¹⁵ These descriptors are indicated further down in the model.

¹⁵ <https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/content/descriptors-page>

THE EUROPEAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

DESCRIPTORS DEFINING LEVELS IN THE EUROPEAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (EQF)

		KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	COMPETENCE
Each of the 8 levels is defined by a set of descriptors indicating the learning outcomes relevant to qualifications at that level in any system of qualifications.		In the context of EQF, knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual.	In the context of EQF, skills are described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) and practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments).	In the context of EQF, competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy.
LEVEL 1	The learning outcomes relevant to Level 1 are	➤ basic general knowledge	➤ basic skills required to carry out simple tasks	➤ work or study under direct supervision in a structured context
LEVEL 2	The learning outcomes relevant to Level 2 are	➤ basic factual knowledge of a field of work or study	➤ basic cognitive and practical skills required to use relevant information in order to carry out tasks and to solve routine problems using simple rules and tools	➤ work or study under supervision with some autonomy
LEVEL 3	The learning outcomes relevant to Level 3 are	➤ knowledge of facts, principles, processes and general concepts, in a field of work or study	➤ a range of cognitive and practical skills required to accomplish tasks and solve problems by selecting and applying basic methods, tools, materials and information	➤ take responsibility for completion of tasks in work or study ➤ adapt own behaviour to circumstances in solving problems
LEVEL 4	The learning outcomes relevant to Level 4 are	➤ factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study	➤ a range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study	➤ exercise self-management within the guidelines of work or study contexts that are usually predictable, but are subject to change ➤ supervise the routine work of others, taking some responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work or study activities

LEVEL 5*	The learning outcomes relevant to Level 5 are	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> comprehensive, specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work or study and an awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> exercise management and supervision in contexts of work or study activities where there is unpredictable change review and develop performance of self and others
LEVEL 6**	The learning outcomes relevant to Level 6 are	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> advanced knowledge of a field of work or study, involving a critical understanding of theories and principles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialised field of work or study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable work or study contexts take responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups
LEVEL 7***	The learning outcomes relevant to Level 7 are	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> highly specialised knowledge, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge in a field of work or study, as the basis for original thinking and/or research critical awareness of knowledge issues in a field and at the interface between different fields 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> specialised problem-solving skills required in research and/or innovation in order to develop new knowledge and procedures and to integrate knowledge from different fields 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or for reviewing the strategic performance of teams
LEVEL 8****	The learning outcomes relevant to Level 8 are	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of work or study and at the interface between fields 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the most advanced and specialised skills and techniques, including synthesis and evaluation, required to solve critical problems in research and/or innovation and to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate substantial authority, innovation, autonomy, scholarly and professional integrity and sustained commitment to the development of new ideas or processes at the forefront of work or study contexts including research

Table 2 : The European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning ¹⁶

While competence at the different levels identified by the EQF is usually achieved and defined within the context of training and education awards, competence can also be established and referenced to individual awards and NQF's through a process of *Recognition of Prior Learning/ Accreditation of Prior Learning*. This process is a core concept in Life Long Learning and therefore is a key tool in promoting the *Europe 2020 Strategy*. In the lower most rows of the model, this capacity for individuals (including those from the outdoor sector) to access accreditation for their work-based competence at different levels is indicated.

Five different types of institutions/ organisations delivering training and education across the EQF levels are identified in the model. These are Sport Education, Vocational Education & Training, Secondary Education (post-primary), Non University Higher Education and University Higher Education. It can be seen that not all types of organisations deliver training and education programmes at all levels. As the Outdoor Animator has been defined as an occupation with a

¹⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/sites/eac-eqf/files/leaflet_en.pdf

competency of EQF level 5, the main focus of the model is on organisations that deliver training and education programmes at this level.

Across the EU, there is a diversity of programmes and awards offered at EQF level 5. Some of these are aligned with the *Bologna process*, and are classed as **Short Cycles in Higher Education (SCHE)**. Although not every Member State in the EU offers SCHE programmes at this time, more than 50% do; as SCHE is a recognised element of the *Bologna process*, each country is in a position to recognise such SCHE awards that originate in other EU member states. Across the European Higher Education Area, learners with SCHE awards exit the educational system and enter the workplace. However, in several countries, SCHE is used as an access point to the first cycle in the *Bologna process*, the bachelor award (EQF level 6). This can involve a bridging program or the incorporation of the accumulated ECTS from the program into the EQF level 6.

3.3 – European Qualification Framework (EQF)

On its websites, the European Commission presents EQF as follows:

*“The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is a translation tool that helps communication and comparison between qualifications systems in Europe. Its eight common European reference levels are described in terms of learning outcomes: knowledge, skills and competences. This allows any national qualifications systems, national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) and qualifications in Europe to relate to the EQF levels. Learners, graduates, providers and employers can use these levels to understand and compare qualifications awarded in different countries and by different education and training systems.”*¹⁷

*“In order to make the EQF work, European countries participating in "Education and Training 2020" are invited to relate their national qualifications levels to the appropriate levels of the EQF and to indicate in all new qualification certificates, diplomas and **Europass** documents the relevant EQF level.”*¹⁸

*“The EQF portal provides the results of the national process for relating national qualifications levels to the levels of the EQF. In “Compare Qualifications Frameworks” it is possible to verify how national qualifications levels of countries that have already finalised their referencing process are been linked to the EQF.”*¹⁹

¹⁷ [https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/search/site?f\[0\]=im_field_entity_type%3A97](https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/search/site?f[0]=im_field_entity_type%3A97)

¹⁸ <https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/about>

¹⁹ <http://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/en/compare>

France	Country	England & Northern Ireland
Commission Nationale de la Certification Professionnelle [¶] NQF/NQS NCP: Commission Nationale de la Certification Professionnelle Referencing Report (Wednesday, 13 October, 2010)	Information Referencing Report	Ofqual & CCEA [¶] NQF/NQS NCP: Ofqual & CCEA Referencing Report (Monday, 1 March, 2010)
certification de niveau 1 par formation continue - doctorates	EQF Level 8	QCF Level 8 Vocational Qualifications level 8
certification de niveau 1 - master (masters) Master in Management Sciences in the field of Corporate	EQF Level 7	QCF Level 7 National Vocational Qualifications Level 5 Vocational Qualifications level 7
certification de niveau 2 - licence (bachelor) Licence Professionnelle : Licence Professionnelle Vocational degree, Management of organisations	EQF Level 6	QCF Level 6 Vocational Qualifications Level 6
certifications de niveau 3 Accommodation Manager (brevet de technicien supérieur) TP : Titre professionnel Bilingual English-French import-export assistant, trilingual English-German-French option. Nouvel intitulé : Assistant(e) import-export	EQF Level 5	QCF Level 5 Level 5 Vocational Qualifications Higher National Diplomas (HND) QCF Level 4

Table 3 : Compare Qualifications Frameworks

In order to share a common understanding of key concepts related to the EQF, the recommendation establishing the EQF defines these key terms that are shared by all EU Member States, EEA and candidate countries participating in the EQF.

‘Qualification’ means a formal outcome of an assessment and validation process that is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards.

‘National Qualifications System’ means all aspects of a Member State's activity related to the recognition of learning and other mechanisms that link education and training to the labour market and civil society. This includes the development and implementation of institutional arrangements and processes relating to quality assurance, assessment and the award of qualifications. A National Qualifications System may be composed of several subsystems and may include a National Qualifications Framework.

‘National Qualifications Framework’ means an instrument for the classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for specified levels of learning achieved, which aims

to integrate and coordinate national qualifications subsystems and improve the transparency, access, progression and quality of qualifications in relation to the labour market and civil society.

‘Sector’ means a grouping of professional activities on the basis of their main economic function, product, service or technology.

‘International Sectoral Organisation’ means an association of national organisations, including, for example, employers and professional bodies, which represents the interests of national sectors.

‘Learning Outcomes’ means statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process, which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence.

‘Knowledge’ means the outcome of the assimilation of information through learning. Knowledge is the body of facts, principles, theories and practices that is related to a field of work or study. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual.

‘Skills’ means the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, skills are described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) or practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments).

‘Competence’ means the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy.”

4 – Professional environment

4.1 - Service delivery characteristics

There are a few key aspects that historically distinguish the Outdoors from other industry and service sectors; these specificities can be viewed as the ‘Outdoors contingencies’.

Mobility of consumers

Outdoor activities are in essence located ‘out of the doors’ of the cities; of course a few dry ski slopes, inside climbing walls ... are built within towns but most outdoor activities are run in the country side. Consequently, outdoor companies are very often located in remote rural settings and as such are key to improving local livelihood and in improving rural economic sustainability.

Whilst about 75% of the EU population live in towns and cities, outdoor activities induce a high level of consumer movement into the countryside. This results in a relatively high turnover of clientele on the one hand, and on the other hand, a diversity of consumers for a given outdoor organisation. In terms of competences, this means that a given outdoor company may have to cater for many different EU nationals; this is not the case for say a city dentist or a baker who cater mainly for local costumers.

This also means that consumers have rapidly gained an international overview of the outdoor sector, to the point that they may even know more about the options offered throughout the EU than the professionals themselves: while a ski animator operates every winter on the slopes of his local village, some of his clients may have tried ski locations in several different countries.

Communication

Due to cultural and linguistic issues, the sector needs to employ staff with specific competences. Indeed, a company catering for a large number of a given clientele (Dutch, English, Flemish, Russian, ...etc.) necessarily will greatly benefit from animators and other members of staff who not only speak a common language but who also share the visitors' culture.

This is an issue that is often ignored. A local animator may be seriously competent in terms of knowing the local area and the technical skills of a given activity, however, if the animator due to his/her language limitations and/or due to a misunderstanding of cultural references, cannot communicate effectively with the client, he/she will be perceived as a poor service provider if not as a dangerous one in certain cases.

In the Outdoors, no matter how good your technical skills may be, if you are unable to communicate with your clients, it simply does not work.

Seasonality & the mobility of workers

The seasonal nature of many outdoor activities can provoke the mobility of outdoor workers. To ski one needs snow, to raft one needs white water, for canyoning one needs a combination of suitable terrain and nice weather, ...etc.

In order to earn a living, an Outdoor Animator specialised in for example rafting, therefore has either to migrate – even out of Europe – according to the white water conditions, or to specialise (invest) in other activities that he/she can animate closer to home.

In many cases seasonal mobility also causes a handicap for the sustainability of local outdoor employers, be they private or public employers. Very often local employers, year after year, have to restart an expensive and stressful quest for Outdoor Animators.

In order to enable Outdoor Animators to earn a fulltime income, a proper and adapted training which increases their competence across a number of outdoor activities, and hence their geographic and seasonal mobility, is paramount. On the other hand, proper and adapted training would certainly also significantly reduce the economically harmful ‘dropout’ of seasonal workers in the outdoor sector as animators are more likely to remain in the sector if they can maintain a year round outdoor career.

Impossibility to delocalise

Another specific aspect of the Outdoors is that a lot of Outdoor activities are linked to the place where they are organised and as such they cannot be taken elsewhere. In effect, the location is synonymous with the outdoor activity.

Good examples would be hiking/trekking/climbing in Chamonix, surfing in Nazaré (PT), canyoning in Aragon (ES) or sailing in Greece.

In any case, a small mountain area benefiting from a canoeing river will keep on benefiting from this resource for a rather long time; the river will not disappear. Additionally, and particularly because of the environmental setting, outdoor activities are always very specific and cannot be delocalised.

4.2 - Activities

Outdoor activities are numerous and the main ones have been classified during the first project on the matter. The EQFOA project has indeed produced a table subdividing outdoor activities into 5 “sub-sectors”. It is, however, important to note that the outdoor sector is a very ‘dynamic’ sector and consequently the EQFOA list of activities might vary over time. The latter implies that any ‘Outdoor Animator’ training program de facto has to be flexible.

Lakes & sea	Snow	Earth	Stream	Air
<i>Main Activities</i>	<i>Main Activities</i>	<i>Main Activities</i>	<i>Main Activities</i>	<i>Main Activities</i>
Beach games	Alpine skiing	Group A	Canoeing	Hot air balloon
Board surfing	Crosscountry skiing	Hiking - Walking	Fishing	Parachuting
Body board surfing	Ice fishing	Nature discovering	Hydro speed	Paragliding
Buggy sailing	Ice skating	Nordic walking	Kayaking	Parapenting
Canoeing	Kick sledding	Orienteering	Rafting	ULM flying
Deep sea fishing	Kite skiing	Group B	Rapid swimming	
Diving	Mountaineering	4X4 driving		
Jet skiing	Musher	ATB biking		
Kayaking	New tools	Cycling		
Kite surfing	Ski joering	Horse riding		
Parasailing	Ski trekking	Quad riding		
Sailing	Sledging	Roller skating		
Wake boarding	Snow shoes trekking	Group C		
Water skiing	Snowboarding	Abseiling		
Wind surfing	Snowmobile	Bungee jumping		
	Telemark skiing	Canyoning		
		Caving		
		High ropes parks		
		Rock climbing		
		Via ferrata		
		Group D		
		Archery		
		Assault courses		
		Paint ball		
		Shooting activities		

Table 4 : List of outdoor activities (EQFOA)

5 - Barriers to the development of the Outdoors

Due to the specificities – or contingencies – of the Outdoors as a sector, legal and political barriers have emerged throughout the years in many different countries, namely in those countries which are the main outdoor destinations in Europe, France being the typical example but certainly not the only one.

The situation presented below is in no way a theoretical one; indeed, the European Confederation of Outdoor Employers (EC-OE) and other national organisations, namely from the UK, the Netherlands, Switzerland and France - have been involved in disputes and even legal battles that make the situation described below very real and individuals as Simon Butler (British ski instructor), Mathias Prinz (German Snowboard instructor) or Florence Bonnier (French snowboard instructor) are well known judicial cases at the European level.

5.1 – Competition for ‘the place’

The fact that most Outdoor activities are delivered ‘on the spot’ creates a sentiment that the place and even the activity ‘belongs’ to those who were there first, that is to local nationals.

The fact that the Dolomites are in Italy means that tourists willing to purchase a journey and/or an outdoor activity in the Dolomites, MUST travel to Italy and nowhere else. Only Chamonix can sell Chamonix and only Slovakia can sell a ski and/or a bike holiday in the Tatras.

- In certain locations, this has clearly created a spirit of ‘ownership’ of the place amongst the locals. This ownership is positive in that it guarantees the local population a livelihood, a place to live and even a certain pride of being ‘the locals’.

Due to financial and economical benefits linked to the development of tourism in these areas, this local ownership has been of paramount importance over the last three decades.

In fact, this local ownership has also lead to a situation where the locals have developed very strong lobbying power to protect this situation. This pride and sense of ownership has rapidly transformed major destinations in the EU into ‘protectorates’ organised around strong corporations using their lobby power to keep the labour market as closed and as exclusive as possible to ‘the locals’.

- The drawback of this situation is that it does not help the entry of newcomers, especially if these newcomers are perceived as ‘stealing’ the local jobs, such as the ‘Outdoor Animator’ or ‘instructor’. Why should a Dutch immigrant be allowed to buy the local bar or the local shop? How can a German snowboard instructor dare think he will challenge

the local ski instructors for employment, is even more of a question to (some of) the local population.

Local or national qualification and training barriers can and have been erected to protect this local ownership such that for instance a snowboard instructor from another EU state finds it difficult to gain employment in one of these 'protectorates'.

The fact that Zermatt (CH), Chamonix (FR) or the Lake District (UK) are 'the product', therefore means that it cannot be sold elsewhere and hence that everyone must 'share' the same product, or indeed at least deliver the service on the same mountain or on the same river.

- The proximity of the (commercial) competition and the uncertain conditions of immigration (mobility) and recognition of qualifications within the EU aggravate a corporatist / protectionist behaviour. Moreover, issues such as 'mutual recognition of i.e. qualifications' are locally even harder to understand.

The least to say is that the EU Dir. 2006/123 (Bolkestein) on services in the internal market and the EU Dir. 2005/36 / **Dir. 2013/55 on the recognition of professional qualifications**, are not well known nor appreciated in many remote European areas.

5.2 – Competition for 'jobs'

The situation described above is even worse when high profile local jobs are taken on by foreigners, namely such jobs as 'guide', 'instructor' or 'teacher' in activities like skiing, climbing, rafting or mountain biking.

- The strong mobility of consumers brings a brand new model into the equation of staff competences and of the feeling of local ownership.

In effect, when EU citizens move into a new destination, they are at first perceived by the locals as a touristic and economic opportunity for local businesses. At the same time the newcomers, who are completely outnumbered by the locals, often try their best to fit in, especially with regards to cultural and linguistic issues.

The increasing mobility of tourists however, creates a completely new and different dimension to tourism when numbers grow.

Consumers may be 'educated' when they are in small numbers. The first British holidaymakers in Chamonix were of small numbers, and probably made the effort to speak French in order to be understood, but when British holidaymakers travel to the French ski resort Méribel in such numbers as 15.000 to 20.000 per weekend, the concept of 'mass education' becomes somewhat more complex. The globalisation of tourism certainly requires a new type of service provision since the ability of local staff to speak foreign languages is not necessarily obvious.

- This is where the concept of ‘quality of service’ takes its full meaning: how can the service be considered good if the staff involved in its delivery do not understand the way of life of their clientele but also cannot communicate properly in an outdoor environment?
- Furthermore, the latter also questions the safety of consumers in an outdoor situation.

Indeed, the key question is no longer whether the local staff have an intimate awareness of the local outdoor environment, nor is it whether the local staff are technically good in what they are doing.

- The key question becomes: can these staff communicate effectively with their clients ?

In order to develop a business in the Outdoors and also to cater for consumers in a safe way, communication is an essential part of the required competences. Any outdoor provider is much better off with a technically adequate instructor who can converse with his customers than with a world champion who can hardly express himself in a second language.

This situation encourages foreign companies to ‘import’ their own members of staff as they are better able to communicate with the incoming client / tourist.

In conclusion, in a sector where mobility is key, mutual recognition of competences and qualifications is not the easiest issue.

6 - Other issues

6.1 – Safety

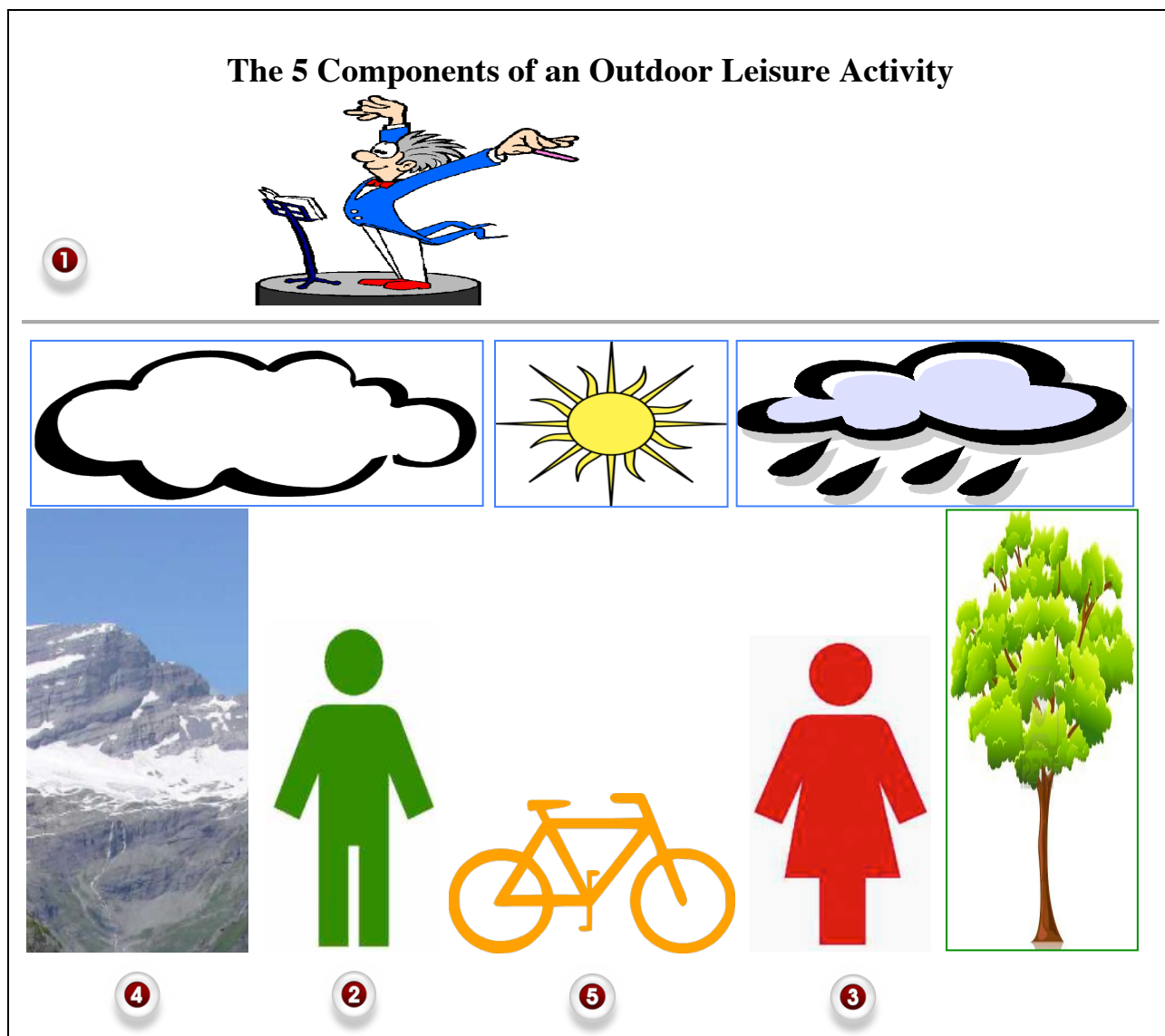
Within the context of employment and staff training, skills, competences and qualifications are only one part of the issues that must be addressed.

The issue of safety is of equal importance to the outdoor employers and their clientele. In a study commissioned by DG SANCO on *Non-regulatory measures related to the safety of outdoor leisure activities in the EU* ²⁰ five interrelated components of outdoor activities were identified. The study also stated that all of these components must be addressed at the same time in order to ensure an appropriate level of safety for both the customers and the members of staff involved.

²⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumers_safety/safety_of_services/outdoor_leisure_activities/index_en.htm

The five components are:

1. Management;
2. The animator – the professional delivering the service;
3. The client;
4. The environment;
5. The tool – equipment used during the service delivery.



As the animator is the member of staff in charge of delivering the service in the field, adequate training in safety and risk management is of extreme importance. Communication skills

(languages), technical skills, environmental awareness and knowledge of (in-company) safety procedures, are issues that need to be addressed in his/her training program.

6.2 - Access to nature

By definition the natural environment is required for outdoor activities and, not surprisingly, beautiful and remote areas often offer the best scenery to enjoy outdoor activities in. Hence the conservation of the natural environment is essential but ‘outdoor leisure’ can by its presence, compromise the sustainability of the local environment.

Access to nature must therefore be regulated and such regulation can take place in several ways.

The most inefficient method is by simple legal restriction. In many cases and in many Member States, EU regulatory measures such as Natura 2000 and the Habitats Directive ²¹ are used (misused) to restrict access to nature. Though without doubt a EU conservation policy framework is an indispensable tool for environmental protection and sustainability, the **effectiveness** of such regulation should also be taken in to account. If people do not understand (or are not willing to understand) why they should not enter a certain area to practice their favourite recreational activities, the effectiveness of regulatory measures will be very poor.

Respecting the natural environment can also be promoted by non-regulatory measures such as e.g. the ‘Leave no Trace’ award ²². Though for some people the rather idealistic ‘Leave no Trace’ merit is that it suggests and promotes several principles for good practice in the Outdoors:

- Plan ahead and prepare;
- Travel and camp on durable surfaces;
- Dispose of waste properly;
- Leave what you find;
- Minimise campfire impacts;
- Respect wildlife;
- Be considerate to other visitors.

An interesting ‘third way’ to regulate access to nature and in the meantime rendering active leisure possible in a precious natural environment, is the Scottish Land Reform Act (2003) ²³ that gives everyone statutory access rights to most land and inland water. People only have these rights if they exercise them responsibly by respecting people’s privacy, safety and livelihoods, and Scotland’s environment.

²¹ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/habitatsdirective/index_en.htm

²² <https://lnt.org/learn/7-principles>

²³ <http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/The-Act-and-the-Code/Legal>

The Scottish Outdoor Access Code (2005) ²⁴ provides detailed guidance on the responsibilities of those exercising access rights and of those managing land and water. The code is based on three principles and these apply equally to the public and to the land managers:

- Respect the interests of other people;
- Care for the environment;
- Take responsibility for your own actions.

From the above, it is clear that when it comes to providing services in the Outdoors or when it comes to the training of Outdoor Animators, knowledge, respect and understanding of environmental considerations is indispensable.

CONCLUSIONS

To understand the context in which the ELESa project (European LEarning Syllabus for Outdoor Animators) is to be situated, first of all an overview of related EU projects such as EQFOA and CLO2 is provided.

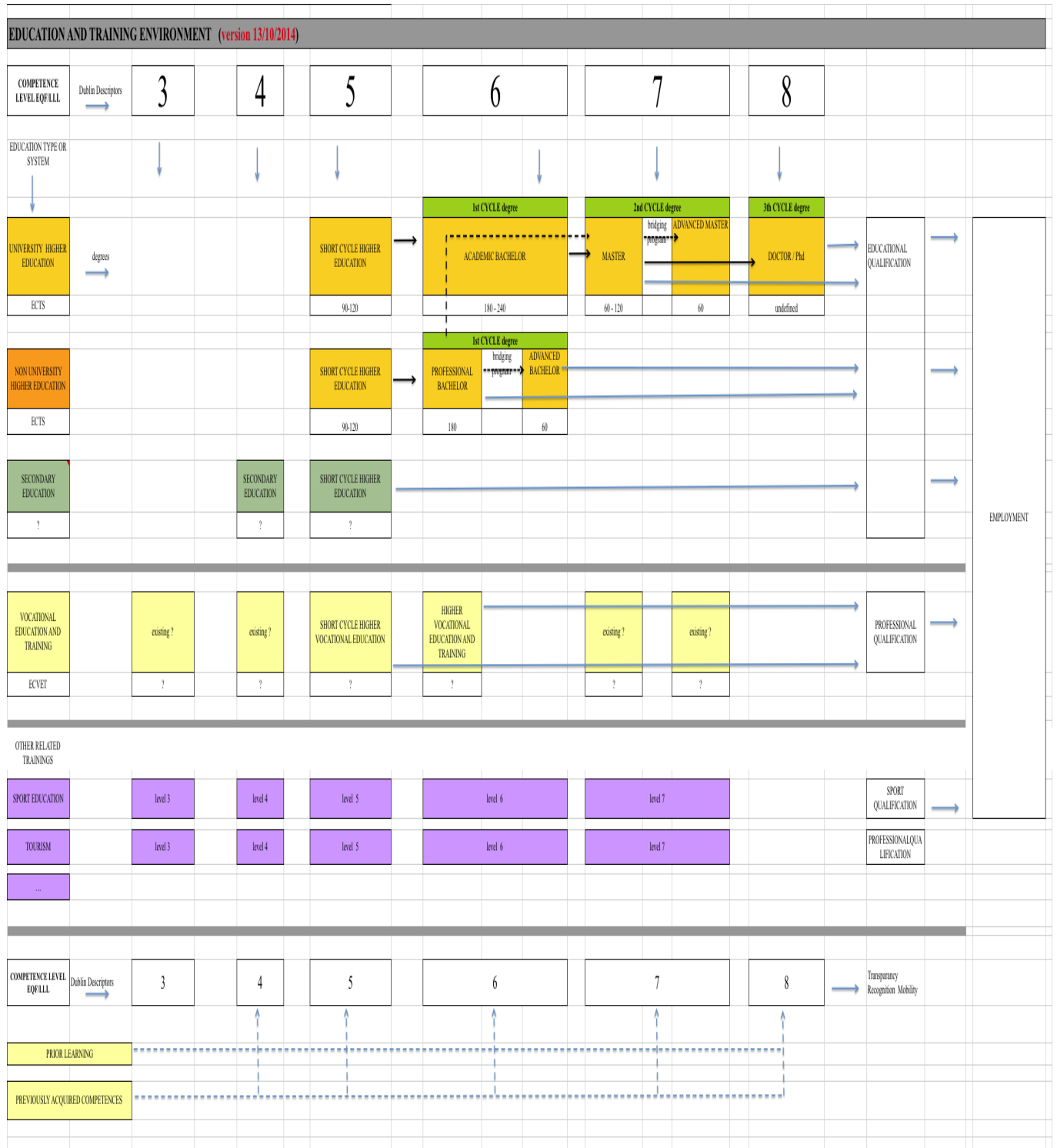
The main purpose of this document however, is to provide a brief overview of the ‘policy context’ in which the ‘Outdoors’ operate. Particularly the exercise in mapping the educational environment – which is an original research outcome of the ELESa consortium – provides a useful insight of the complexity of this educational environment. On the other hand, it is clear that the European Qualification Framework (EQF) turns out to be a very useful tool to compare and thus validate qualifications at European level. Regarding the EQF, the ELESa consortium confirms its position to focus on EQF level 5 for the Outdoor Animator; an option already put forward during the CLO2 project.

Finally this ‘policy context’ document scrutinised very briefly the most important issues both characterising and hindering the development of the professional environment of the ‘Outdoors’. It is obvious that every single issue discussed in this document could be elaborated in much more detail. The aim however, of this policy document is to indicate the issues that certainly should be taken into account whilst developing a ‘European LEarning Syllabus for Outdoor Animators’, for example:

- Safety;
- Environmental awareness;
- Communication skills (languages);
- Technical skills.

²⁴ <http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/the-act-and-the-code/introduction>

ANNEX



Education and training environment for 'Outdoors Animators'