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¹ List includes protagonists of the WP8 D8.16 activities. Also activists in chairs with an active role in conceptualizing the PTF event; rapporteurs; etc. are included in this list

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Abstract:

The deliverable D8.16 includes the description of sustainability solutions chosen for the Professional Training Facts conference series and the Virtual Competence Center platform (VCC). As basis for adequate and feasible sustainability activities after the project funding the achievements and the results of joint activities for the Professional Training Facts international conference and the PROLEARN VCC are illustrated in this document.

In addition to D8.15, the Flash-Folio service will be described in its final version. For this activity Open University, UK and KTH, Sweden is responsible for.

The proceedings of the conference can be downloaded in the Virtual Competence Centre www.prolearn-online.com.

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1 Professional Training Facts 2007 and proceedings

1.1 General approach of the conference series according to the achievements manifested in D8.14

Conferences held in professional training, learning and education focus on interlinking the community of experts in this area. Indeed, many conference activities so far have been not only focused on experts from research. Nevertheless, the industry participation rate is still an issue for many conferences that want to address industry, too, and to interlink industry with research in an active way.

Furthermore, as can be learned from discussions with many experts from industry and intermediary organisations, there is a need for tailoring an industry-oriented conference in professional training and learning.

This motivates Fraunhofer IAO as an applied research institute with the mission to interlink research and industry to take the responsibility of developing a conference addressing and interlinking industry requirements and solutions as well as latest research activities.

The aim of this chapter is ...

...to illustrate the operative activities, and

...to describe first evaluation results about the satisfaction of the participants and contributors.

As the Professional Training Facts is a conference series, the concept underlying is the one already described in D8.14. This concept was also the basis of this year's conference and the operative activities, which were done in order to reach the goal of bridging the gap between industry and research. Additionally, this concept was enriched with several incentives, from both an organisational e.g. one and a half days conference, intensive addressing of intermediary and a content-related view, e.g. special sessions, Learning Café, Pecha Kucha method, interactive expert survey. In the next paragraph, the event and the enhancements done in 2007 is outlined.

1.2 Professional Training Facts 2007 – the event

As already described in D8.14 the main objective of the Virtual Competence Centre is to establish a sustainable integration between research and economy. The Professional Training Facts conference supports this aim by developing and establishing a well-organised conference for industry and research, organising of industry-meets-research activities in the context of the conference and by integrating the PROLEARN network in an adequate way. This should enhance the communication and cooperation between research and industry.

This chapter illustrates the event in general. First, the main topic of the event is illustrated. Then the conference programme is outlined and the conference tracks are described. Finally, the

additional activities to support the communication and information flow between research and industry are outlined.

1.2.1 Professional Training Facts – focus of the 2007 conference

A dynamic market environment makes it necessary for companies to adapt their organisation and performance profiles. Moreover, it calls for a targeted development of competences of both staff and senior management. Nowadays, excellent executives and employees with entrepreneurial thinking are seen as crucial success factors in competition. Developing and retaining employees is especially important when new markets and areas of business opportunities emerge. The development and implementation of new production processes and services can only be successful, if both staff and executives are prepared to develop their abilities and to solve new tasks. In this respect, the systematic and anticipatory management of the required competences plays a decisive role. Competence management increases companies' competitiveness by reducing the time that is necessary to bridge competence gaps and acquire skills that are specific for the company and the workplace. Thus the objective of competence management is to increase company performance through mastering new and changing services, production and development processes more quickly.

To be able to meet these demands it is necessary to adapt existing learning, training and education offers to company and personnel demands. In many cases further training measures and courses are offered too late to support business process changes or they are not adapted to the needs of the employees. Moreover, educational planning and training offers are often only loosely linked to time critical or future requirements in the company. The ability to accurately handle knowledge and information in an accelerated competition is getting more and more important; to transform and implement new knowledge into practical action is as important. Work oriented learning supports an effective competence management and serves to develop new solution strategies with regard to the work process.

The 3rd international conference »Professional Training Facts 2007 Learning – Competence – Performance« offers a forum for information and exchange to potential users and developers. It shows new trends and challenges as well as solutions and practice examples from a company perspective. Speakers from companies as well as research institutes will present methods, concepts and solutions with regard to the question of how the triad of »Learning – Competence – Performance« can be designed today and in the future. As it is an international conference in cooperation with the European PROLEARN Network of Excellence, the main conference language will be English. Additionally, there will be several tracks and offers in German.

This year's focus on "Learning – Competence – Performance" was chosen for quite some reasons. First of all there was an expert survey by the Fraunhofer IAO in the end of 2006 dealing with competence management. The study showed that competences are regarded as highly relevant for the success of a company and that their meaning for the performance of a company is seen as crucial. But also in talks held with experts from the NoE as well as external ones the relevance of competences and competence management was stressed. Further there were inquiries via the Virtual Competence Centre, asking for more information, regarding this topic. On this basis the conclusion was drawn that the triad of "Learning – Competence – Performance" is very relevant. From January till March the title was discussed with key partners from the PROLEARN network confirming the focus of the conference and further more pointing out that, within this topic the thematic priority should be new approaches on research side and the illustration of requirements on industry side.

1.2.2 Conference programme in detail

This paragraph illustrates the conference programme. According to the concept of the conference it is balanced between the keynote speeches, and the provided tracks and the breaks to strengthen networking activities. Detailed information is also available on the internet: www.professional-training-facts.com.

Tuesday, 13th November

12.00 Registration and Snack

13.00 Welcome

13.15 – 15.00 Track 1 international; Track 2 international; Track 3 national		
TRACK 1	TRACK 2	TRACK 3
Competence management - Requirements, Concepts, Solutions	Social Software: Web 2.0 and Competences	Wer? Wie? Was? Wissen anwenden leicht gemacht
Developing Competencies - an European Topic <i>Claudio Zettel, PT-DLR, Germany</i>	Creativity and Innovation <i>Nalin Sharda, Erasmus Mundus Visiting Research Professor at RWTH Aachen University from Victoria University, Australia</i>	Erste Erfahrungen aus Firmenanwendungen und Vision <i>Khaled Azzam, ComNetMedia, Dortmund, Deutschland</i>
Competency Oriented Human Resource Development: Towards Learning on Demand <i>Christine Kunzmann, Kompetenzorientierte Personalentwicklung & Prozessberatung, Andreas Schmidt, Forschungszentrum Informatik FZI, Karlsruhe, Germany</i>	ePortfolios: just another social software application or the next step of bringing business processes (in educational and business setting) online <i>Paul Meinel, factline Webservices GmbH, Austria</i>	Der Learn@Work Ansatz und erste Prototypen <i>Stefanie Lindstaedt, Know-Center, Graz, Österreich</i>
Systematically Developing Competencies at Work in Small and Medium Sized Enterprises <i>Jürgen Wilke, Fraunhofer IAO, Germany</i>	Using Social Network Analysis in Competence Management <i>Claudia Müller, University of Potsdam, Germany</i>	Organisationale Rahmenbedingungen <i>Michael Kaiser, Career Center der TU Wien, Österreich</i>
	Communities of practice and competence management <i>Ralf Klamma, RWTH Aachen, Germany</i>	Anforderungen an Arbeitsintegriertes Lernen <i>Reinhard Willfort, innovation service network, Graz, Österreich</i>
15.00 – 15.30	Coffee break	
15.30 – 17.45 Track 4 international; Track 5 international; Track 6 national		
TRACK 4	TRACK 5	TRACK 6
E-Cooperation and Competence Management with	Improving Performance in Industry Through Tailored	IT in der Weiterbildung

Webconferencing and Virtual Classrooms	Technology Enhanced Learning Arrangements	
<p>Success factors for implementing web conferences Karin Hamann, Fraunhofer IAO, Germany</p>	<p>Finding the right mix for effective technology enhanced learning. The results of an international Delphi-Study Sabine Moebis, Dr. Stephan Weibelzahl, National College of Ireland, Dublin, Ireland</p>	<p>Digitale Medien in der beruflichen Qualifizierung - Neue Anwendungen kreativ gestalten Wolfgang Reuter, Q-Verband, Deutschland</p>
<p>Socially aware Informal learning support: Potentials of the Social Dimension Simone Braun Forschungszentrum Informatik, Universität Karlsruhe, Germany</p>	<p>Tailoring technology enhanced learning arrangements to individual needs Ludger Thomas & Sonja Trapp, Fraunhofer Institute Experimental Software Engineering, Germany</p>	<p>Unternehmenssimulation - Arbeitsprozesse spielerisch verstehen Till Becker, KORION, Deutschland</p>
<p>Efficiency in selecting IP communication tools Birk Siegmund, T-Systems Multimedia Solutions GmbH, Germany</p>	<p>Improving performance and personnel competencies in industry through technology enhanced learning Matthias Rückel, time4you GmbH, Germany; Bernd Wiest, Deutsche Telekom Kunden Service, Germany</p>	<p>IT Netzwerke - Lernen neu gestalten Heinz Koopmann-Horn, Conciety AG, Deutschland</p>
<p>Trends in using new technologies for competence development Marcus Specht, Open University of the Netherlands, The Netherlands</p>		<p>Microsoft IT-Zertifikate - Aussagekräftig und anerkannt Rainer Römer, Microsoft, Deutschland</p>

Special Sessions - Presentation of laboratories

17.45 – 18.15	<p>Special Session 1 : ServLab Presented by: Sibylle Hermann, Fraunhofer IAO</p> <p>Special Session 2: CAVEEE Presented by: Günter Wenzel, Fraunhofer IAO</p> <p>Special Session 3: Business Game "LIFE!" Presented by: Peter Rally, Fraunhofer IAO</p>
18.15	Break
20.00	Conference Dinner

Fig. 1: The first day of the Professional Training Facts – Tuesday, 13th November 2007

Wednesday, 14th November

8.30	Registration
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9.00 Keynotes

Prof. Dr.-Ing. Dr. E.h. Dieter Spath; IAO, IAT
Learning - Competence - Performance

Karlheinz Lindner, Schaeffler KG
Competence Development at Schaeffler KG - an International Perspective

10.45 – 11.00 Coffee break

11.00 – 12.30 Track 7 international; Track 8 international; Track 9 national

TRACK 7	TRACK 8	TRACK 9
Learning Café Future Trends in Competence Management and Learning	Identifikation of Needed Competences and Skills	Von nix kommt nix: Kompetenz, Stolz und Anerkennung als Basis für exzellente Dienstleistungen

**Learning Café
Future Trends in Competence
Management and Learning**
*Chaired by: Vana Kamtsiou,
NCSR Greece, Tapio Koskinen,
HUT Finland*

**Identification of competences
at company level**
*Bernd Dworschak, Fraunhofer
IAO, Germany*

**Von nix kommt nix: Kompetenz,
Stolz und Anerkennung als
Basis für exzellente
Dienstleistungen**

*Chaired by: Sibylle Hermann,
IAO, Deutschland*

**Enterprise surveys as a tool
for identification of skill needs**
*Alena Zukersteinova, Cedefop,
Greece*

**CM ProWork - A software tool
for the identification and
development of competences
in production systems**
*Rainer Uhrmann-Nowak,
Technische Akademie
Esslingen; Elmar Witzgall,
wissen-koennen,
Projektforschung und Beratung,
Germany*

**Competence management and
"project competence" studies**
*John Erpenbeck, Annette
Schulten, Silke Keim, Steinbeis
Hochschule Berlin, Transfer-
Institut Business Administration
and International
Entrepreneurship, Germany*

12.30 – 13.30 Lunch & Exhibition

13.30 – 15.00 Track 7 (continuation) international; Track 10 international; Track 11 national

TRACK 7 cont.	TRACK 10	TRACK 11
Learning Café Future Trends in Competence	Vocational Competence for a	Kompetenzmanagement aus soziodemographischer

Management and Learning	Sustainable Development	Perspektive
Learning Café Future Trends in Competence Management and Learning <i>Chaired by: Vana Kamtsiou, NCSR Greece, Tapio Koskinen, HUT Finland</i>	Sustainable Development - Good-Practice in Vocational Education and Work <i>Matthias Hilgers, Institut für Umweltschutz in der Berufsbildung e.V., Hannover, Germany</i>	Herausforderungen des demographischen Wandels für Unternehmen <i>Hartmut Buck, Fraunhofer IAO, Deutschland</i>
	Instruments for a Sustainable Economic Management in Business Practice <i>Herbert Klemisch, Klaus Novy Institut, Köln, Germany</i>	Arbeitsprozessintegrierte High-Tech-Qualifizierung älterer Beschäftigter <i>Dagmar Israel, ATB GmbH Chemnitz, Deutschland; Volker Braun, BZE-Bildungszentrum GmbH Erzgebirge, Deutschland</i>
	Vocational Education Services for a Sustainable Development <i>Marion Wadewitz, BWAW Thüringen gGmbH, Erfurt, Germany</i>	Altershomogene firmenübergreifende technische Fortbildung im Rahmen des Modellprojektes IFFA im Raum Stuttgart <i>Bertram Pelkmann, Handwerkskammer Region Stuttgart, Deutschland</i>

Fig. 2: The first day of the Professional Training Facts – Tuesday, 13th November 2007

1.2.3 Converting issues to conference topics – illustration of the different tracks

Based on the requirements collected in 2006 and early 2007 11 different tracks and 3 special sessions have been developed for the conference. In this paragraph, the focus of the tracks and the special sessions will be described².

Track 1: Competence management - Requirements, Concepts, Solutions

In this track there will be a discussion about how the performance of small and middle-sized organisations can be brought to excellence, by using competence management systematically. After the presentation of the results of a study on the state-of-the-art of competence management and the needs of companies, different competence management approaches will be pointed out. Team oriented, local solutions will be discussed as well as software-supported systems. By means of software supported systems tasks can be systematically assigned to employees and, from the organisational perspective, can help to manage the human resources development. One aspect of the discussion will be competence management solutions that grow in line with the expansion of the company. It will be illustrated which contents have how to be prepared in order to transfer them to management systems and to use them properly.

Track 2: Social Software: Web 2.0 and Competences

² The description of the tracks in German language has not been translated.

Web 2.0 technologies, such as wikis and blogs, are more and more used by companies in order to improve internal communication. Furthermore, social software can be used to strengthen the competencies of employees, to develop competencies needed by the company, and generally speaking to maintain and enhance the innovative ability of an enterprise, in particular of medium sized ones. Therefore, a detailed structural analysis of the different roles within the competence management of the company and the possibilities to support them with Web 2.0 technologies is needed. This track will interlink latest examples from the practitioners' perspective and the research perspective trying to give an outlook on the impact of social software for competence management.

In German: Track 3: Wer? Wie? Was? Wissen anwenden leicht gemacht

In diesem Tutorial stellen wir einen neuen Ansatz für die Kompetenzentwicklung der Mitarbeiter am Arbeitsplatz vor: Arbeits-integriertes Lernen. Dieser Ansatz und relevante Unterstützungswerkzeuge sind Fokus des großen integrierten EU Projekts APOSDLE (Advanced Process-Oriented Self-Directed Learning Environment, www.aposdle.org). Unsere Lösungen unterstützen Mitarbeiter direkt in ihrem persönlichen Arbeitskontext und in ihrer Computergestützten Arbeitsumgebung.

Ziel ist es, automatisch auf relevantes Wissen aufmerksam zu machen, die Anwendung dieses Wissens in der konkreten Situation zu unterstützen und den Wissenstransfer signifikant zu erleichtern. Wissen beinhaltet hier einerseits dokumentierte Informationen z.B. in Form von Dokumenten und andererseits ebenso Hinweise auf Experten und Kollegen innerhalb einer Organisation.

Track 4: E-Cooperation and Competence Management with Webconferencing and Virtual Classrooms

Synchronous and mobile communication tools considerably extend the possibilities for technology-based learning and cooperation and thus also the competition for competences. In an increasingly accelerated world they contribute to an increased, spontaneous interaction between individuals and work teams, besides reducing costs for travel and staff spending valuable working time travelling. At present, however, there are still psychological, technological and organisational obstacles that have to be overcome in order to achieve a widespread integration of new ways of communication and learning into existing structures. This track will present examples and solutions

- concerning the identification of the appropriate communication tools for specific demands
- concerning the success factors for implementing web conferencing,
- concerning methods for increasing the efficiency of communication and learning
- concerning future usage scenarios of new technologies for developing competences.

Track 5: Improving Performance in Industry Through Tailored Technology Enhanced Learning Arrangements

Technology enhanced learning has proven to be one of the most efficient ways for fast and sustained competence build-up in industry. It allows companies to scale training programs to a worldwide community. But even if technology enhanced training is a priori more efficient and sustainable than traditional classroom training, its potentials in delivering truly personalized learning experiences e.g., for specific job profile, are still underdeveloped. Within this track the

usage of tailored technology enhanced learning arrangements is being addressed and its implications for competence management in industry are discussed.

In German: Track 6: IT in der Weiterbildung

Mit zunehmender Bedeutung von IKT an den Arbeitsplätzen, gewinnt die Vermittlung von IKT und mit IKT in der Weiterbildung immer mehr an Bedeutung. Die Bildungsunternehmen müssen in die Lage versetzt werden, effiziente Lernangebote in diesem Umfeld anzubieten. Nur unter dieser Voraussetzung kann sichergestellt werden, dass dem schnell wachsenden Qualifizierungsbedarf sowohl in qualitativer als auch in quantitativer Hinsicht ein adäquates Angebot gegenüber steht. Bei den neuen Weiterbildungsangeboten stehen nicht mehr Zentralisierung und Systematisierung, sondern Flexibilisierung und Orientierung an realen Arbeits- und Geschäftsprozessen im Vordergrund. Ausgewiesene Experten in den ausgewählten Feldern geben hier wichtige Hinweise und praktische Hilfen. Im Ergebnis sollte deutlich werden, dass es im Qualifizierungsbereich noch erhebliches Einspar- und Entwicklungspotenzial gibt.

Special Session 1: ServLab, Presented by: Sibylle Hermann, Fraunhofer IAO

Services make a significant contribution to the creation of value, not only in classic service sectors, but more and more also in manufacturing. This is a known fact. However, many companies still lack structures, processes, methods and also competencies in order to implement service engineering systematically. Fraunhofer IAO's ServLab now offers new possibilities to design services in an integrative way and to test them thoroughly at a very early stage. In the protected surrounding of the unique laboratory the overall concept of a service (architecture, equipment, processes, qualifications and especially the interaction with the customer) can be developed stepwise and quickly improved till it reaches market maturity. How this is accomplished will be illustrated by way of a practical example during a tour of the laboratory.

Special Session 2: CAVEEE, Presented by: Günter Wenzel, Fraunhofer IAO

Virtual Reality gives you an experience of environments, buildings or objects that have been existing, that exist far away, that will exist in future or maybe of space that only is a construct of abstract human thoughts. The highest grade of visual immersion within a virtual world can be reached in a 6-sided CAVE-Environment. Worldwide, only a handful of these environments exist. The HyPI-6 at the Fraunhofer IAO is one of them. You are invited to have your own VR-experience in the field of virtual architecture: Visit a building of the future - the "Center of Virtual Engineering" (ZVE) at the IAO that will be realized in 2009.

Special Session 3: Business Game "LIFE!", Presented by: Peter Rally, Fraunhofer IAO

LIFE! is our brand for configurable haptic business games with varying learning content. So far there are seven haptic (objective) business games for different uses. All of our business games are non-competitive team games without an opponent. It is the participating team's sole objective to comply with the demands of customers and the market in order to first point out the required competences and then to address them in more detail. Business games are often complemented by group exercises. Process chains are usually mapped by means of lego bricks and forms.

Track 7: Learning Café – Future Trends in Competence Management and Learning

The Café is built on the assumption that people already have within them the wisdom and creativity to confront the most difficult challenges. There is an introduction by an expert: a short approximately 20 minute provocative presentation of key concepts and questions. The participants then interact with each other, what means there is a 15-20 minutes of structured, facilitated discussion in small groups. Participants are seated around tables with 6-9 persons per table. The group discussions are then reported in detailed. After each interactive session there will be a reporting session. The table facilitators will then briefly present the core findings of the discussions in their table. Others may add comments.

Track 8: Identifikation of Needed Competences and Skills

The issue of a profound identification of competence and skill needs is becoming increasingly important. Technological change and innovation demand new competences and skills at company level and on the labour market in general. Some qualifications are becoming obsolete but emerging new competences and skills require specific education and training. The availability of reliable and accurate information on trends allows to respond promptly to new and changing requirements. The scope of this track ranges from trends on the labour market concerning competences and skills to the depiction of different national enterprise surveys used for skill needs analysis and the presentation of specific tools of identifying needed competences and skills at company level and on the "shop floor".

In German: Track 9: Von nix kommt nix: Kompetenz, Stolz und Anerkennung als Basis für exzellente Dienstleistungen

Angeregt durch kurze Impulsvorträge im Pecha-Kucha-Stil, setzt sich das Forum mit dem Zusammenspiel von Kompetenz, Stolz und Anerkennung bei Dienstleistungstätigkeiten auseinander. Diskutiert werden unter anderem: Was bewirkt, dass Beschäftigte nicht nur gute, sondern exzellente Dienstleistungen erbringen können und wollen? Gibt es spezifische „Service Skills“ jenseits der bekannten Schlüsselkompetenzen und wie werden diese vermittelt bzw. erworben? Welche Dienstleistungstätigkeiten werden hinsichtlich ihrer Anforderungen und Wertschöpfungsbeiträge unterschätzt? Kann für die qualifizierte Dienstleistungsarbeit ein ähnliches (Selbst-)Bewusstsein erzeugt werden, wie für die industrielle Facharbeit? Was könnte ein solches "Leitbild" bewirken?

Track 10: Vocational Competence for a Sustainable Development

Education is attributed a crucial role for achieving a sustainable development. Within the framework of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014, DESD), a lot of activities and projects have already been initiated at all levels of education, which are all aimed at making the idea of sustainability the basis of as many people's action as possible. This track focuses on projects from the area of vocational education and training. Vocational education has to pay special attention to the economic perspective so as to be able to adequately consider the social and ecological aspects of companies that are involved in production or the development of services. Special emphasis will be placed on additional potentials for innovations and opportunities which the concept of 'sustainable development' has to offer to companies.

In German: Track 11 Kompetenzmanagement aus soziodemographischer Perspektive

Die Alterung der Gesellschaft und der Arbeitskräfte stellt spezifische Anforderungen an das Personalmanagement und das Management von Kompetenzen. Gerade ältere Arbeitskräfte verfügen häufig über zahlreiche Fähigkeiten aus verschiedenen Tätigkeitsfeldern, die durch jahrelang angesammeltes Erfahrungswissen exzellent bewältigt werden. Zwar haben einige hoch entwickelte Kompetenzen älterer Arbeitskräfte in der heutigen Arbeitswelt an Bedeutung verloren, andere dagegen sind immer noch effizient nutzbar. Somit stellen ältere Arbeitskräfte gerade aus Perspektive des Fachkräftemangels, ein wichtiges Reservoir für fachlich anspruchsvolle Arbeit dar. In diesem Track wird diskutiert, wie ältere Arbeitnehmer motiviert und qualifiziert werden können, um mit aktuellen Kompetenzen hochwertige Arbeit leisten zu können.

1.2.4 Given presentations in the tracks

This paragraph outlines the keynote speeches and presentations in each track. Each presentation covers at least one facet of the focus given to the presenters (requirements, challenges, best practices, solutions).

In the tracks, all the different facets were stressed. Furthermore, the balance of ...

- ...presentations between research and industry in the tracks was observed,
- ...industry presenters from both SMEs and global players was taken into consideration,
- ...PROLEARN network presenters and non-PROLEARN participants was incorporated,
- ...providers and end-user from industry as well as intermediary organisations was taken into account and
- ...presentation parts and discussion parts was established.

Based on this balancing process, the following organisations, presenters and topics could be provided for the participants of the conference:

1.2.5 Rapporteur reports

In accordance to the activities for the last years Professional Training Facts rapporteurs have provided reports for each track. The recruiting process of the rapporteurs and the co-organisation of their activities were made with the PROLEARN Academy³. So, at least one rapporteur summarised the given presentations, thereby giving an overview of the contents presented and discussed in the track. The reports are standardized according to requirements, solutions, good practices and challenges out of a track perspective. One rapporteur report is given here as an example of a very good report, the others will be published on the forthcoming ISBN proceedings CD-ROM in 2008 and can also be found in the annex of this document. The rapporteurs were won over with the support of GET/INT, Katherine Maillet and RWTH Aachen, Ralf Klamma.

³ RWTH and INT really did a great job to find the right PhD students out of the participants from the last summer schools. That guaranteed a high motivation to work out the reports and a high degree of competence from the rapporteurs side to understand the topics and issues discussed in the tracks.

Challenges

At first, the track presentations and discussions acknowledged a challenge to the identification of competences and skills which becomes particularly evident in an international context: a longstanding confusion around the meaning of the concepts “qualifications” and “competences” along with different meanings given to the concepts “competences”, “competencies” and “skills”.

Questions on the ability of enterprises to identify and evaluate future skill needs and on the methods which they are using to assess future skill needs were raised. These gave a first impression of the enormous challenges to companies when trying to record their needs, especially with regard to the future. Furthermore, the issue of what are the assessment methods that are used usually refer to (particular occupation, qualification, concrete skill) was pointed out.

Moreover, there are still challenges in identifying which competences individual workers possess at present and which individual competences are going to be needed in the future as an indispensable basis for recording needs at company level. It has been stated that competences cannot be identified directly but can be inferred analytically.

Finally, competence management has been considered as one of the key HR challenges in the future. With regard to competences, there seems to be a special challenge in describing capabilities of self organisation in problem solving and decision making situations.

Requirements

Classification of competences and defining competence classes could help categorizing and therefore identifying at least individual competences. As examples, different classifications of competences (specialized, methodological, social and participatory; professional, methodic, social and personal) were presented to conclude that demand defines the internal structure of every competence.

A further requirement regarding the identification of competences is to assess strengths and weaknesses of the methods for identification and assessment of competences in order to select the most appropriate one. Such methods are, e.g., interviews, questionnaires, self and external assessment and observation.

To find a common European approach to enterprise surveys was introduced as a requirement for addressing the challenges of competence identification at company level. Some discussion was conducted in this point where the issue of the process of participating with various countries along with the issue of dealing with several terminologies and definitions as used by every country-participant were brought up. Survey mapping based on common templates seems to be a first instrument to deal with such issues. Questionnaires and already existing surveys should be modified and/or enriched to achieve interoperability across selected volunteering countries. The ultimate objective is to initiate a European-wide enterprise survey.

Furthermore, a standardized task inventory was discussed as a key requirement for the identification and management of individual competences in production systems.

Solutions

As instruments to deal with the challenges and requirements of competence and skill identification two different kinds of software tools were presented.

The CM ProWork software tool enables production management and human resources development in industry to identify and develop individual competences of workers. It allows to register and describe competences and to identify learning requirements related to tasks and individuals. Furthermore, it adapts competence development strategies according to companies' plans and optimises task allocation and the corresponding work organisation. Some questions were raised about the tool regarding the workers' and works councils' acceptance of the tool. The presenter replied that although the workers and the unions were a bit suspicious at the beginning, they accepted it once they were introduced to the benefits the tool could offer to the companies and their employees. Since the tool has been already used and standardized to a wide extent, it guarantees comparability of task-related competences beyond department barriers.

The KODE and KODEX software tools were introduced as solutions for identifying, measuring and evaluating basic and advanced competences. Examples from Project-Competence-Studies of the Steinbeis University Berlin were presented where students were evaluated while working in companies and studying at the same period of time. The goal was to identify and develop competences in order to apply them in their work and studies. Some relevant questions were addressed to the speakers regarding the differentiation of meaning of the concepts "talents" and "competences" as it was discussed in the presentation along with the subject of the categories of competences that were used for the evaluation of students and the methods used to derive them. The presenters replied that the categories were carefully selected after interacting with students and institution experts.

1.2.6 Proceedings

All proceedings with the slides of the speeches can be found on the PROLEARN Virtual Competence Centre www.prolearn-online.com. First one can find the keynotes followed by the tracks, sorted by track number. Furthermore, a publication of well-chosen articles based on the presentation will be released on CD-ROM (with an ISBN)⁴.

1.2.7 Additional activities to support communication and information flow between research and industry at the conference

In order to support a more intensive interaction between industry and research experts the following actions were additionally implemented in the Professional Training Facts this year:

- Learning Café⁵: Here participants from industry and research had the possibility to get into a lively discussion about future trends in competence management and learning. That it enables active interaction is also the reason why it took the whole day, contrary to the other tracks which took place either in the morning or in the afternoon.

⁴ The proceedings from the last years conference has already been published via the IRB-Verlag (October 2007)

⁵ For the description of the Learning Café concept, see chapter 1.2.3 Converting issues to conference topics – illustration of the different tracks of this document

- Track 9 was stimulated by the Pecha Kucha method, meaning that the presentations given lasted only 6 minutes and 40 seconds and each was composed of 20 slides. So the presentation time was very short, giving more time for discussion and exchange between participants.
- Interactive expert survey: In the entrance area there were short expert interviews during the breaks dealing with “Challenges of Professional Competence Management”. The results were presented at the end of the event. These expert interviews illustrated additionally the different perspectives of intermediaries, research and industry.

1.3 Professional Training Facts 2007 – the results

This chapter outlines a first evaluation of the participants’ satisfaction and the addressing of target groups. This includes:

- a participation list outlining whether the projected objective – having a balance between research and industry – has been achieved
- a first analysis of the evaluation questionnaire of the Professional Training Facts

1.3.1 About the participants

98 experts participated in the Professional Training Facts 2007. 30 of those were from the industry, 7 from intermediary organisations and 61 from research. The participants from industry side are marked blue; those from intermediary organisations are marked yellow, both according to the colours of the target groups on the Virtual Competence Centre. That means, in this year there were a little less participants from industry than in the last two years. This year almost a third of all participants came from the industry. Therefore industry-related networks have to be addressed more intensively in the next year. Intermediary organisations have this year already been very good integrated, but it is important to win them over to support us in the invitation management and so to reach more experts from industry side. The challenge is though to come up to a participation from industry side of 50% again, as it already was in the last year.

The complete list of participants can be found in the annex.

1.3.2 Feedback from the participants⁶

An evaluation of the Professional Training Facts was carried out, as already in the both last years. Aim was to find out how participants assess the event.

All in all about two-thirds of the participants estimated the tracks as useful for their work and about three-fourths regarded them as interesting. Considering both interestingness and usefulness the three very highly evaluated tracks were “TRACK 1 - Competence management - Requirements, Concepts, Solutions“, „TRACK 2 - Social Software: Web 2.0 and Competences” and the German one “TRACK 11 - Kompetenzmanagement aus soziodemographischer Perspektive”. But the other tracks also received a fairly good evaluation from those who had

⁶ Feedback of the participants does not include votings of employees from Fraunhofer IAO

attended them. Participants regarded the tracks as both interesting and useful and were quite satisfied with them.

Most of the participants to this evaluation are pretty satisfied with the organisation of the conference. 18 of 20 participants would recommend a colleague to take part in the next Professional Training Facts.

The participants generally agreed to a very high degree with the aspects which were mentioned in the questionnaire, like timing and arrangement of activities, atmosphere, opportunity to establish contact and dissemination.

1.3.3 Additional Evaluation remarks

The “Professional Training Facts 2007” was regarding to its aim of bridging the gap between industry and research, a very successful conference. As already in the last year, the conference offers a forum for bringing together industry and research by different means:

- The different tracks were designed in such a way that their topics addressed industry as well as research and invited a discussion between the different participants.
- Referents from both industry and research were invited. So issues were presented and discussed from both perspectives and with a specific focus.
- There were lively discussions within the tracks, animated and moderated by the different chairs.
- The participants used the breaks to visit the exhibition, to inform themselves about, and discuss with, the represented organisations. Both groups were of course represented. in the exhibition itself.
- And of course the breaks were also used for continuing discussions with others expert and establishing new contacts.

Although the conferences in the last two years were already a very successful and very well received by the participants, the “Professional Training Facts 2007” could even increase its acceptance and popularity. Nearly 100 experts from industry and research attended the “Professional Training Facts 2007”. Furthermore, the participants came from 13 different countries, showing that the Professional Training Facts is gaining more and more publicity.

Moreover, this year’s conference included more offerings than last year, e.g. due to the fact that the conference lasted two days, there was a conference dinner, giving participants to get known and associated to each other.

1.4 Outlook

This chapter describes the ideas for the future of the conference series. Though already three conferences were successfully held, there are still some challenges for the Professional Training Facts conference series that should be taken into consideration for follow-up activities.

From the perspective of the PROLEARN VCC activists who contributed to this event, the Professional Training Facts 2007 was so successful that there will definitely be another one in 2008. The next Professional Training Facts 2008 will be at 11th-12th November 2008, at Fraunhofer IZS, in Stuttgart, Germany.

The following aspects could be named to summarise the success of the event:

- The concept of the conference is attractive for the target groups: 98 participants from 13 countries participated in the event. This is a continuous increase compared with the last years' conferences.
- The speakers, track chairs and responsible actors have been recruited to a large extent out of the PROLEARN consortium. So, the expertise of the PROLEARN consortium is represented in a more powerful way than last years and
- The questionnaire-based feedback of the Professional Training Facts showed (as it was already at the last conference) a high acceptance among the participants regarding the topics, the tracks, the organisation and – best of all – that they even recommend the event to colleagues.

Furthermore in D8.14 some challenges regarding the development of the Professional Training Facts were formulated.

- *Challenge 1* described the need to enhance the exchange of information and communication transfer between industry and research. This was realised by offering together with Vana Kamtsiou, NCSR Greece and Tapio Koskinen, HUT Finland a “Learning Café” (Track 7). The “Learning Café” dealt with the issue “Future Trends in Competence Management and Learning” and gave participants the possibility to discuss very intensively.
- *Challenges 2 and 3* were to transfer the conference concept to other countries and to broadcast the activities via contemporary tools developed in PROLEARN. These aims could by now not be reached and are going to be retried in the future.

2 PROLEARN VCC

2.1 About the PROLEARN VCC

2.1.1 Technology

The major idea of the technical and technological setup of the VCC is to enable a modular configuration with the aim to integrate additional services from partners more easily. This includes, for example the following technical and technological aspects of the Virtual Competence Centre:

- **RSS feeds:** With the RSS feeds (short for “Really Simple Syndication”) members can subscribe the latest contents of www.prolearn-online.com. Since RSS Feeds function without design, pictures or banners users can inform themselves quickly and uncomplicatedly on latest contents.
- **Flash:** By means of the Flash technology visitors can watch interviews with experts (e-views) from the area of professional learning and training. So, visitors and members have the possibility to hear the opinion of experts on interesting topics.
- **Conzilla:** This tool was developed by the KMR group at the Royal Institute of Technology (PROLEARN core partners) and is a knowledge management tool which facilitates the establishment of an efficient and collaborative knowledge environment. The tool makes it possible to search and find experts and their expertise quickly and easily.

- **Online Assessment Tool:** This tool was developed by the Fraunhofer IAO and allows carrying out online surveys. The Online Survey Tool makes it possible to carry out a survey in a very rapid and economic way. This tool can be used for all kinds of studies as it is customisable according to requirements.
- **Polls:** The channel “forums & polls” was split up, leading to an increase of the clearness of the Virtual Competence Centre. The polls area is structured as it was before the re-launch, but the forum area is now integrated in the channel “expert talks” under the label “discussion board”.

2.1.2 Content & Organisation

A basic target of the Virtual Competence Centre is to enable and to optimize the transfer and the interaction between economy and research. This can be ensured by the following activities:

- *Identification of the target group a member belongs to:* the member profiles were modified. The field “industry”, appearing when the menu item “profile” is chosen, was specified. A member has the possibility to say to which target group she or he belongs to. As this categorisation appears also in the member card it enables visitors to make out to which target group a member does belong to.
- *Getting in contact with the right person:* due to the user structure and categorisation it is obvious to visitors and members to which target group the posting person does belong to. This simplifies the search of adequate persons, for instance to start a new cooperation or to find partners for projects.
- The first two issues lead to an *appropriate Community Relationship Management*, e.g. by motivating “sleepers” in the VCC to become more active and address potential new members by means of target-group specific offers.
- The *international offline conference* – the PROFESSIONAL TRAINING FACTS – as an additional outreach to industry activities of the PROLEARN VCC has been established.
- *Monthly information mail* about latest activities and announcements in the VCC.

Content-oriented activities in the context of the VCC refer to the continuous integration of new fields and topics in the area of professional learning and training. This includes, e.g., to react on new trends in the area or to address new issues. Content-oriented activities were made out of two perspectives:

- **Quantity:** The number of postings on the whole is pretty high. Measures aimed at raising the quantity of posting on the Virtual Competence Centre even more. So for example by the implementation of the RSS feeds: although the amount of posted news is very high, nevertheless the RSS feeds were integrated in order to increase this number. Additionally, web statistics were used to encourage different community member groups (e.g. by mail/ face-to-face) to focus their provision activities on different topics, issues, etc.
- **Quality:** The quality of postings was actively evaluated every day. So, if new postings were uploaded, a first formal check (right channel, information necessary integrated, information already uploaded) was done. If necessary, the community management addressed the responsible person for the upload and asked for modifications. Additionally, by giving formal categories to each channel, the information is provided to community members and visitors always in the same way. So, it is easy for community members and visitors to overview postings in different channels. For the content itself and IPRs the provider has full responsibility. So, as long as the VCC is a free of charge community, there is no reviewing process of the content implemented.

2.1.3 Implemented services in the Virtual Competence Centre

In October 2007 a new area (in the context of the Virtual Competence Centre (VCC) called “channel”) has been implemented. In the next chapter the services...

- ... are illustrated from a PROLEARN VCC management perspective⁷,
- ...described according to the attractiveness to choose the channel services and the services itself via the PROLEARN VCC.

2.1.3.1 The new services out of a management perspective

The VCC philosophy has already been illustrated in several deliverables in the last years⁸. The main activities for the management are to attract the community to become “prosumers”. That means not only to be a consuming member but also to provide information and expertise for the benefit of other community members. Furthermore, the idea to implement additional services in the VCC to extend the offers in it from an information platform to a community including communication and interaction elements has been realised in the last years⁹. Within this philosophy, the PROLEARN VCC has been growing steadily with members from research, industry and intermediary organisations.

The new services provide additional resources and services for all community members ...

- ...to identify thematic interlinks in professional learning provided by PROLEARN and the VCC,
- ...to consume and provide offers and
- ...to enhance interaction between community members.

Based on the findings in D8.12 several services were discussed to be implemented to the PROLEARN Virtual Competence Center. Four services have been interlinked and provided by external partners in the VCC:

PROLEARN TV

The PROLEARN-TV delivers a significant living structure comprising a large amount of support materials. These materials are sourced from the PROLEARN consortium and showcased to the community via a streaming media portal. So accompanying documents to PROLEARN workshops such as given presentations, information of newest technologies or current developments and much more can be found here.

The integration of PROLEARN TV aims mainly at improving the networking between PROLEARN work packages. A visitor or a member though has the current trends and information within the whole project at a glance.

⁷ The services itself are going to be described in other chapters of this deliverable

⁸ E.g. D8.12, D8.8

⁹ Interaction activities have mainly been implemented “offline” by the Professional Training Facts conference series. Some minor activities like the discussion boards could be counted under interaction

In this sense, PROLEARN TV is a general information source in the context of professional learning and training, but also a starting point to identify experts and get into contact with experts from research and industry to specific topics:

- Experts can easily advertise their expertise via PROLEARN TV to become more popular in the VCC.
- Visitors and members get a first impression about content and the experts and/or the expert organisation.

FlashMeeting

FlashMeeting is a lightweight videoconferencing applet. VCC users should check out the example recordings of public events via the public part of the site and contact the European Association of Technology Enhanced Learning to discuss contributions to / from this service.

This service aims to improve interaction between partners and groups of partners. Members have the opportunity to use this tool for project purposes, expert discussions etc. As a special offer from OU, the service is free of charge until the end of the project.

PROLEARN MediaBase

The PROLEARN MEDIABASE within the framework of the PROLEARN project, allows users to assess cross-media digital discourses and archives in the field of professional learning. We are gathering the latest information in this field from different reputable sources by monitoring mailing lists, newsletters, websites, and RSS/atom feeds.

This service aims to support members in information retrieval in the field of professional learning.

Conzilla – the Concept Browser

The Conzilla (<http://www.conzilla.org>) concept modelling system allows companies to think about concepts in an entirely new way. Conzilla2 - the second generation concept browser - is a knowledge management tool with many purposes. Among other things, it aims to be an efficient collaborative knowledge environment / modeling tool. It is a versatile interface for editing and styling RDF.

Conzilla presents knowledge in terms of specific maps, so called Context-maps. A Context-map displays nodes and arcs, referred as concepts and concept-relations, with specific box-forms, icons, arrow-heads, linestyles etc.

This service aims to support members in information retrieval. In this context, it is browser to support experts in knowledge work.

To sum up, the services integrated are the outcome of activities provided by the PROLEARN network of excellence. Additional services can easily be integrated to the VCC. How to sustain the services free of charge after the project funding ends will be illustrated in D8.16.

2.1.3.2 Attractiveness of the services

The services have been integrated in the last month, so it is too early to conclude, if they have any positive impact for the PROLEARN VCC.

The following figures show (deadline: end of November), that the interest of members starts and will be raised by specific advertising actions. The use of the services can be seen in each service and will be evaluated separately.

Service	No. of visitors
<i>PROLEARN-TV</i>	82 visitors
<i>FlashMeeting</i>	70 visitors
<i>CONZILLA - THE CONCEPT BROWSER</i>	70 visitors
<i>PROLEARN MEDIABASE</i>	72 visitors

Tab. 1: Visitors of the new services

2.2 PROLEARN VCC – the results¹⁰

2.2.1 Community members

Meanwhile nearly 1100 members are registered on the Virtual Competence Center. Registered members in the Virtual Competence Centre are from 28 different countries¹¹. A great part of the members are from Germany, but also different other European countries like Austria, France, Italy, Switzerland, Sweden, Netherlands and United Kingdom are strongly represented.

Country	%
Germany	54,4
Austria	6,3
France	5,7
Italy	4,2
Switzerland	4,0
Sweden	3,6
Netherlands	3,6
United Kingdom	3,6
Greece	2,7
Slovenia	1,7
other 18 countries ¹²	10,2

¹⁰ Reporting date of the figures: 13th of December

¹¹ From requests via E-Mail we know e.g. that we have also members coming from African countries like Nigeria or Egypt. This gap results a change in the registration mask of the PROLEARN VCC. In the first 12 month the category country was not a mandatory field. Even by data scrubbing and cleansing this is still an minor issue.

¹² The other countries are: Australia, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, China, Costa Rica, Denmark, Luxembourg, Malta, Estonia, Ireland, Yugoslavia, Poland, Norway, Bulgaria, Finland, Russia and Portugal

Tab. 2: Community members and their country of origin ranked in %

Regarding the target groups the members of the Virtual Competence Center belong to, the researcher are with 65,3% of the members the biggest group. But also Industry is with nearly 30% (19,8% providers and 8,5% end users) quite well represented. 6,5% members are from intermediary organisations.

Target group	%
Research	65,3
Industry – end user	8,5
Industry – provider	19,8
Intermediary organisations	6,5

Tab. 3: The target groups ranked in %

2.2.2 Visitors and member activities in the VCC

To outline the success of the activities already done, some quantitative figures are:

Postings	2007	2006	2005	2004
members	1086	999	920	370
news	567	407	241	67
events	653	486	399	174
projects	201	197	165	37
publications	214	189	123	46
links	375	345	260	70
forums	17	15	4	0
polls	7	6	4	3
RSS feeds	9	– ¹³	–	–
documents	252	–	–	–

Tab. 4: Number of postings

Article views	2007	2006	2005	2004
news	263.783	187.175	113.607	6.785
events	462.317	345.942	235.720	35.485

¹³ These services were not available before January of 2007.

projects	204.089	157.473	117.619	21.215
publications	173.895	132.761	82.113	11.034
links	230.085	164.647	96.386	6.772
Documents	454	378	332	116
totally	1.334.623	953.486	645.777	81.407

Tab. 5: Article views

These figures show that the Virtual Competence Centre has had a great increase in both content and members. The content uploaded on the Virtual Competence Centre has increased extensively since its launch in 2004. So did the visits of the channels. The visit of the offered contents by visitors and members has grown significantly, which means that they are of great interest and importance for the visitors.

3 Sustainability of the Professional Training Facts conference series and the PROLEARN Virtual Competence Center (VCC)¹⁴

Based on the activities illustrated in chapter 1 and 2, the question how to sustain the achievements after the funding of the projects stops will be illustrated. So this chapter contains sustainability challenges and solutions for the PROLEARN VCC and the Professional Training Facts conference series will be outlined. Sustainability of the network of excellence itself will be illustrated in another deliverable of the project (D10.10)¹⁵.

3.1 About the meaning of sustainability in the contexts of the Professional Training Facts and the PROLEARN VCC

One of the major challenges for the Professional Training Facts conference series and the PROLEARN VCC is sustainability.

The term "sustainability" became a major issue when the term emerged in 1987 with the publication of Our Common Future, the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development. It was defined as a development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Based on this definition, sustainability applies to information and communication technology (ICT) projects.

One of the problems in funded projects are the contradictory expectations between the donors, and the beneficiary communities. When a consortium starts a project, it usually has a kind of an "exit strategy" in a way, that some of the achievements will remain after the project funding for the benefit of specific target groups (e.g. research communities, industry, society).

The problem is that the actors in consortia usually want to receive funding for new activities and projects. They usually are not interested in taking care about existing projects after the funding period. Unfortunately, this attitude has sometimes fatal effects - fatal in a sense that most of the organisations in funded projects are not willing to sustain horizontal activities like the Professional Training Facts in PROLEARN in future. Some reasons are a lack of fund or human capital or conflicting project priorities.

In PROLEARN, the path to successful and long-lived project results is complex and cannot be described in general for WP8 activities already done. That means, the authors of this deliverable believe that there might be several ways for a successful sustainability.

Unfortunately, under the restrictions mentioned above, the challenge is to define a strategy that is in accordance to these issues and allows "the best solution" out of those institutions that take sustainability serious in this context.

Furthermore, even new organisations interested in sustaining the PROLEARN VCC and the Professional Training Facts conference series are only willing to continue these activities when the process-owners of the PROLEARN WP8 initiative are going to sustain there engagement.

¹⁴ This chapter has also been provided to D10.10.

¹⁵ Moreover, by incorporating the EATEL association and PRO-CL with their understanding to be the successors of the PROLEARN network of excellence might take care about the PROLEARN sustainability in general.

So, the strategy described in the next paragraphs to sustain the Professional Training Facts and the PROLEARN VCC is feasible and robust and will have an enduring impact in the area of professional learning and training issues in Europe. It gives an impressive illustration about the activities to sustain, the contributions which will last, and the protagonists that are going to take care for these activities.

3.1.1 Sustainability plan for the Professional Training Facts conference series

According to the starting words in paragraph 3.1 a robust and feasible strategy how to sustain the Professional Training Facts conference series was chosen. For all PTF conferences done, three axioms were taken into consideration under a sustainability perspective:

- *The conference series should finance itself:* the conference series can only be continued in having enough resources to conceptualise, to organise and to run it in a professional way.
- *The conference series should have an add-value for the organisers:* the conference series can only be continued in having highly motivated and target-oriented members as “motors” that stand behind it. Add value could be to use the conference as an acquisition platform, to address new topics and issues etc.
- *The conference series should address industry as well as research and intermediary organisations:* The mission to interlink these groups with each other is the basis for a more rapid transfer of new solutions and contemporary requirements between these target groups

Based on these axioms several scenarios how to make the conference attractive – not only in the context of co-financing it by EC-funds but also to run it without fundings – has been identified and discussed with experts from research, intermediary organisations and industry for every Professional Training Facts conference. The outcome of these expert discussions are two scenarios:

- The Professional Training Facts conference as an FhG driven activity and
- the Professional Training Facts conference as a multi-actor driven conference.

Both scenarios mentioned will be presented in the next two paragraphs and should outline the sustainability activities for the next 24 month (2008-2009).

3.1.2 The Professional Training Facts conference as an FhG driven activity

In this scenario, FhG is going to be the process-owner of two international conferences in 2008 and 2009. That means, FhG will provide all resources to conceptualize, organise and run the PTF. So, the facilities, manpower, tangible means and liquid financial resources will be raised by FhG.

3.1.2.1 Sustainability for the benefit of PROLEARN network partner

Sustainability out of the network of excellence partners perspective is, that from institutes and experts that are part of the network, recommendations and proposals up to joint activities in conceptual and organisational tasks can be done and will be very welcome.

Such alliances are pre-discussed in several aspects with core partners like RWTH Aachen, INT and HEC France or HUT Finland. E.g., the summer school organisers will continue to facilitate the rapporteurs for the next Professional Training Facts in 2008.

Furthermore, PROLEARN partners in the role of participants are still welcome for this event. Especially participants from research can use this event to enlarge their knowledge about industry needs in the area of professional training. So, the event itself can be used for "PROLEARNers" as a meeting point with former project partners. So, links between the partners can be refreshed with a "face-to-face" event more easily. In addition to that, potential partners from industry can be contacted in a simple way - supported by different "easy-to-meet" activities tailored by the organisers of the event¹⁶.

3.1.2.2 Sustainability of the conceptual framework of the PTF conference

The conceptual framework of the event discussed in previous chapters of the deliverable will be sustained. That means, the general approach of the conference, the target groups addressed, the topic-oriented focus of an event, the main structure of the conference program, the conference website, the rapporteur activity and the support by the FPF association will continue in 2008 and 2009. Indeed, some modifications were identified to improve some aspects to guarantee industry meets research participation and interaction at the event. E.g., intermediary organisations are going to be aligned in a better way to the conference by synchronising and integrating their activities with the PTF more efficiently¹⁷. First discussions to do this have already taken place with experts from intermediary organisations.

In professionalizing marketing activities and allocating new resources the acquisition of sponsors as well as new funding sources are coming in the focus. Banners, logos on marketing material, proceedings and conference material, exclusive technology and product support contracts for the event, sponsoring of catering in specific facilities etc. have already been discussed for next years conference.

3.1.2.3 Conclusion for the sustainability of scenario 1 for the conference

To guarantee sustainability of this conference even if all partners might terminate their supporting engagement, the Fraunhofer IAO is able and willing to continue the conference as described above with their resources in 2008 and 2009.

3.1.3 The Professional Training Facts as an multi-actor driven conference

In this scenario Fraunhofer will give up its sole responsibility of the conference for the benefit of a joint activity, and the conference locations would spread across Europe.

¹⁶ For details compare the previous chapters and paragraphs with relation to these issues

¹⁷ In 2008

The idea discussed so far with HEC, INT, RWTH and HUT is to role-out and localise the conference in different European regions¹⁸.

- Role-out means that the conference, still based on the already developed concept, will be held each year in another European region: Middle-Europe, Scandinavia, South Europe and Eastern Europe. So it will be much easier to reach experts from research and industry from other regions.
- To localise the conference means that the conference will be adapted to the needs of the specific European region: the conference focus and the tracks itself are going to be tailored for the benefit of local experts from research and industry. Language adoption to the target regions is planned at least for a couple of tracks. The alignment of intermediary organisations taking care for their local “clients” can be integrated more easily by offering them a suitable “platform” to widespread their expertise and offers in the area of professional training.

Indeed, this scenario has some implications not solved yet in a satisfying way: The modus operandi for the conference rotation, the local process-ownership in the target regions, the location and the facilities where to organise and to operate this event, monetary issues, European-wide sponsoring concepts. At the moment the discussion about a desired full cost recovery model is still going on. Based on the activities described in the previous scenario, each region-specific process owner is called up to check, if the Fraunhofer model already developed for the Professional Training Facts to allocate resources for such an event could be transferred to other regions or should be modified to the specific constraints and opportunities given. Despite all pitfalls and barriers there is still a market for an industry-meets-research tailored conference, not covered yet in a satisfying way by other conferences in Europe. At least the actors mentioned above are challenged to solve these issues in the next month. Based on the need of such a conference and the high degree of acceptance by participants and contributors of the event additional funding resources are going to be allocated directly from industry, on the national and the EC level.

3.1.3.1 Conclusion for the sustainability of scenario 2 for the conference

To guarantee sustainability of this conference even if all partners might terminate their supporting engagement, the Fraunhofer IAO is not able to continue scenario 2 activity with own resources. Even if this aim would be most attractive for industry and research, for the protagonists mentioned and decision-makers in Europe, without a convincing and cost covering plan a single organisation or institution might not be able to do this without allocating the resources for it. The authors of this deliverable still believe that even the European Commission should be interested to support successful sustainability activities already developed in professional training issues in a reasonable way.

3.1.4 Sustainability planned for the PROLEARN VCC (24 months)

In the last 4 years the PROLEARN Virtual Competence Center has been developed, implemented, modified according community members needs and extended. How it looks like and in which way the community platform is managed has already been illustrated in previous chapters of this deliverable. More than 1100 community members joined this activity with the

¹⁸ First strategy papers have already been developed elaborated on the conceptual level by each interested partners own resources.

intention to find information, to communicate with experts, to provide information for others and “to be part of it”. Even if the degree of activities could be higher by its members, it is a well accepted community and still attractive to join.

Out of this perspective, it would be a pity not to elongate the engagement to sustain the community after the project funding stops. As protagonists of the PROLEARN VCC the Fraunhofer perspective is to guarantee that the PROLEARN VCC will be online at least for the next two years. Nevertheless, by sustaining the infrastructure and the organisational framework, all community members and all PROLEARN partners will have the opportunity to use the PROLEARN VCC after the funding period to provide and consume information, to exchange with other community members, store and advertise white papers (expertise!), become a posting star by frequent posting of news, events, publications, etc. So, the authors of the deliverable believe, that such an activity is a huge measure to sustain the PROLEARN network of excellence idea for PROLEARN core partners and associate partners as well as for community members not involved in the project.

Moreover, out of the project nucleus the following activities and measures are going to contribute to HR experts, providers of tools, intermediary organisations and employees in research institutes in the area of professional training for the next two years. To sustain the PROLEARN VCC the following activities will be made:

3.1.4.1 PROLEARN VCC – sustainability measures out of a technical perspective

First of all, the server with the community software will still be hosted by Fraunhofer until end of 2009. Also technical updates will be made for this period of time and a technical support for the users will be available. Services integrated in the VCC remain interlinked as long as the providers will not change their policy. That includes the following interlinked services:

- RSS feeds collected,
- Flash technology,
- Conzilla web browser and the
- online assessment tool.

The URL will still be valid for the PROLEARN VCC. Furthermore, the URL www.prolearn.eu reserved as the entrance page for the PROLEARN project with all its facets will be re-routed to the PROLEARN VCC in January 2008. The overall functionality will still be guaranteed on the basis of the achievements made so far. Further technical modifications extensions etc. can only be made if additional resources can be allocated.

3.1.4.2 PROLEARN VCC – sustainability measures out of an content & management perspective

The organisational aspects to sustain the community will be guaranteed by Fraunhofer IAO in 2008 and 2009. This includes

- Target group orientation: The target group orientation already done will be continued.
- Community management on a “light level”: Motivation of community members for specific postings, newsletters, documents to upload etc. invitation to events like the PTF

08 and 09, marketing for events¹⁹. So, community management means to support and encourage community members not only to consume but also to provide information to it (“prosumer”).

- Interlinking the PROLEARN VCC with the Professional Training Facts conference: That will work in generating topics for the event requested by the community, for marketing purposes to advertise the event, for recruiting speakers for this event and to store presentations and proceeding in the VCC. Out of this perspective, the PROLEARN VCC is a support unit for this event. Furthermore, all community members can use the VCC for marketing, recruiting, advertising and revealing topics for their own conferences.
- Trend-oriented surveys: Launch trend-oriented online surveys in professional training via the community e.g. to reveal requirements from industry; collect empirical data for research activities etc.

3.2 Sustainability – final summary table

This table sums up the major activities out of WP8 to sustain. Potential partnerships have already been added (incl. potential partners that are associate partners as well as non-registered PROLEARN partners).

Main sustainability measures	Potential partnerships	Period of time
Professional Training Facts as an international conference	HEC, INT, RWTH, HUT, NCSR, FPF, Q-Verband, bmbf, cedefop	2008
Professional Training Facts as an international conference	HEC, INT, RWTH, HUT, NCSR, FPF, Q-Verband, bmbf, cedefop	2009
PROLEARN VCC	KTH, OU, RWTH	2008-2009

Tab. 6: Main sustainability measures and potential partnerships

3.3 Final remarks

Many institutions and companies still believe in the future of the Professional Training Facts and the PROLEARN VCC. Their contributions are already confirmed for future activities that make us confident to continue these activities at least for the next two years.

Although WP8 had a leading role in defining the EATEL association it has not succeeded to synchronise activities between the leading protagonists of EATEL and Fraunhofer IAO as leaders of WP8 after the funding period. Much to our regret we have to inform that a joint solution with the EATEL activists today including the Fraunhofer IAO is not in their focus.

¹⁹ If community relationship management is necessary, new resources should be allocated to do this in a professional way.

Nevertheless, the allocation of resources and the interest of potential (community) partners to sustain the activities and measures illustrated above are critical for success not only to sustain “something” for the EU-commission but also to offer a valuable source supporting the professional training and learning community in Europe.

4 Flash-Folio: The final version

Responsibility KTH, Sweden and Open University, UK