Validation Report regarding FRAMELOG and the Manual for Assessment and Quality Assurance

Motto: "Europe must strengthen the three poles of its knowledge triangle: education, research and innovation. Universities are essential in all three." (Commission 2005, p. 152).

- Executive summary -

Context for validating FRAMELOG

The Knowledge Triangle (KT) aims at bringing together educational institutions, businesses and research centres from the same field or with the same needs with the aim of increasing the contribution of higher education and public research institutions to innovation and economic growth. Thus, the European Framework for Knowledge Triangle in Logistics works now for the tomorrow's Europe, bringing individual benefits and strengths to the three angles (represented by the players) and European added value to its core (the European Union itself).

The KT developed as a result of implementing the European framework created within this project focuses on HEIs' two-way cooperation with businesses and innovation centres in Logistics with regard to:

- Academic curriculum of every study programme (Bachelor, Master and PhD) in Logistics
- Academic syllabus of every Logistics subject taught within any study programme (Bachelor, Master and PhD)

- Resources used to deliver education (human, material and financial)
- Post-education service (quality assessment of skills and knowledge)
- Proper responses to industry needs.

Scope of FRAMELOG validation

Within validation activities of the project, partners checked how much the FRAMELOG would support HEIs (especially qualitatively with regard to increasing the relevance of their academic offer) as well as improve transparent and mutual cooperation between HEIs, business and innovation organizations (research mainly) in developing and recognizing academic qualifications.

Thus, validation of the FRAMELOG responds to partners' need of implementing a 360° assessment approach to updraw its final version. As presented in the project proposal, the European Report on testing and consultation activities implies that after collecting and analysing the national & ELA testing reports, partners will develop the European piloting report that will include the comparable analysis of the national feedback and will indicate commonalities and differences between the different countries/contexts.

Methodology of FRAMELOG validation

In order to test the validity of the resulted FRAMELOG, we designed a mixed method of research consisting of:

Part 1 (at national level): individual directive surveys with HEIs', business' and research institutions' representatives to be used within 3 national workshops (in Bulgaria, Italy and Romania)

Part 2 (at European level): directive focus-group interviews with different players within the European Logistics Association (ELA)

Validation events within the project

There were two sets of events organised:

Part 1: a national workshop was organisedin all the three partner countries: Bulgaria, Italy and Romania

Part 2: the European Logistics Association organised a workshop and focus group so as to identify similarities and differences in attitudes towards FRAMELOG.

Instruments used for FRAMELOG validation

Part 1: Paper-pencil questionnaire for individual use with the scope of testing the Framework and Guidelines.

Part 2: ELA used an interactive tool called 'Mentimeter' which recorded and analysed the responses of the participants in real time. The facilitator was therefore able to question participants further on any of the findings as the meetings progressed.

Results of FRAMELOG validation

Firstly, the Compendium of Good Practice was considered a very useful tool. The case studies provided in it offer a practical view on the link between the participants in the Knowledge Triangle in the area of Logistics. However, due to its lengthy approach, businesses found it rather difficult to use for practical purposes in a quick manner. One example concerning this query was to be able to cross-search through the compendium by key words, wherever they appear in various case studies.

Secondly, cooperation within the Knowledge Triangle in Logistics is important (41.35% for business, 31.70% for HEIs and 26.94% for research participants) and the FRAMELOG would bring benefits for organisations IMPLIED IN THE Knowledge Triangle in Logistics (even if 27.27% of the participants felt that the ICT online tool needs to be further developed). In this regard, Guidelines for Implementation was seen as a very useful "how to collaborate" tool for the universities to use whereas the ICT Assessment Tool was not seen as useful in its current format but, as the widespread opinion about its usefulness in the long-term perspective was positive,

transforming it into a benchmarking tool or a tool for self-assessment of an organisation's compliance to the Quality Assurance document would enhance its practical value.

Thirdly, the Guidelines for Quality Assurance were considered to be a "surplus to requirements" due to extensive QA guidelines already in place at university and national level.

Recommendations of FRAMELOG fine tuning

The Compendium of Good Practices was recommended to be used in its web-based format in the future. Considering the opinions of business representatives to make the compendium easier to manage for a quick search, one suggestion would be to insert a web-based index comprising the most significant items used in the text and to add a short description of each, mentioning its practical purpose for companies.

With regard to the ICT Assessment tool, validation process showed that it would be useful if it was developed into a benchmarking tool or developed as a web based self-assessment tool for compliance to the two guideline documents. In this respect, its continuous updating and maintenance on the web is required so as to provide a modern platform with enhanced inputs from what is happening in the ever-evolving business environment around Logistics.

Furthermore, the Manual for Assessment and Quality Assurance shall be reduced to a more compact version so as to help in accreditations of university programmes based on standards of competence. As participants to the validation process expressed, in several countries, particularly the UK, professional bodies offer accreditation for professional qualifications. Even if all universities need governmental accreditation, in addition, qualifications in professional subjects like Logistics shall have an additional accreditation from their relevant professional bodies, thus continuously aligning the contents of university programmes in the field of Logistics to the needs of the labour market.