



REPORT

The short-term joint staff training event

Structured Democratic Dialogue Co-laboratory

1

16th – 20TH May 2022

Paphos, CYPRUS



Document Details

Project: "Recommendations for international project managers competences recognition and validation for lifelong learning" [AER-V].

Report: The short-term joint staff training event, Structured Democratic Dialogue Co-laboratory.

Developed by the AER-V team: FOUNDATION OF ALTERNATIVE EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES (PL), COOPERATIVA SOCIALE COOSS MARCHE ONLUS scpa (IT), INTERFOLK, INSTITUT FOR CIVILSAMFUND (DK), EDUCULT - DENKEN UND HANDELN IN KULTUR UND BILDUNG ((AT), RIGHTCHALLENGE – ASSOCIAÇÃO (PT), INSTITOUTO NEUROEPISTIMON KAI TECHNOLOGIAS KYPROU (Leg. Rep. for FUTURE WORLDS CENTER) (CY).

Editor: Agnieszka Dadak, Foundation of Alternative Educational Initiatives.

Co-Editors: Dr Yiannis Laouris, Future Worlds Center; Lorenza Lupini & Luca Bordoni, COOSS Marche ONLUS scpa; Hans Jorgen Vodsgaard, Interfolk; Dr Aron Weigl, EDUCULT; Ana Caneiro, Rightchallenge.

The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	4
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
METHODOLOGY: STRUCTURED DIALOGIC DESIGN PROCESS	7
THE CO-LABORATORY/THE SHORT-TERM JOINT STAFF TRAINING EVENT	9
CONCLUSIONS FOR FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS	16
STRUCTURED DIALOGIC DESIGN PROCESS - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS.....	18
ANNEXES.....	21
Table 1: List of Ideas	21
Table 3. List of votes.....	23
Table 2. Clarifications.....	23
REFERENCES	33



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The "**Recommendations for international project managers competences recognition and validation for lifelong learning**" project team would like to thank the participants of the short-term joint staff training event, Structured Democratic Dialogue Co-laboratory, for their contributions, time, energy and expertise they brought to the co-laboratory described in this report.

All 24 participants were willing to dedicate the time necessary to work together with understanding to identify the useful characteristics of a validation system for the EU projects' managers. Their hard work and perseverance made the co-laboratory's experience both richly diverse and productive. The participants are the primary authors of the views expressed in this document.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarises the results of the short-term joint staff training event - Structured Democratic Dialogue Co-laboratory¹ - that took place in Paphos, Cyprus, May 16-20, 2022. The Co-laboratory was organised in the framework of the project "Recommendations for international project managers competences recognition and validation for lifelong learning", acronym: AER-V, co-financed by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. The overall aim of the AER-V project was to produce recommendations to support the recognition and validation of knowledge, skills and competences of the international, European project managers active in Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the adult education sector, acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning.

The short-term joint staff training event was implemented using the Structured Dialogic Design Process (SDDP) methodology². The SDDP methodology was chosen to support this initiative in structuring the stakeholder representatives' ideas on the action options regarding the comprehensive and useful validation system for the EU projects' managers. The SDDP supports democratic and structured dialogue among heterogeneous group of stakeholders. It is especially effective in resolving complex conflicts of purpose and values and in generating consensus on organisational and inter-organisational strategy. It is scientifically grounded on seven laws of cybernetics/systems science³ and has been rigorously validated in hundreds of cases throughout the last 37 years.

5

The participants were asked to respond to a 'triggering question' – which is the main question of the co-laboratory around which at the following discussions are focused. In this particular co-laboratory the triggering question was chosen in order to address the subject of the recommendations for recognition and validation of competences of the European project managers working for Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).

The *Triggering Question*⁴ that was selected in this co-laboratory was: "**What would you consider as useful characteristics of a validation system for the EU projects' managers?**"

After having participated in the structured dialogue it was expected that the participants would learn:

- A. The Structured Democratic Dialogue methodology and its architecture for addressing complex problems with authentic stakeholder participation;
- B. Application of the SDD using various software including Concertina, Cogniscope v3, and IdeaPrism;

¹ <https://www.futureworlds.eu/wiki/Co-Laboratory>

² https://www.futureworlds.eu/wiki/Dialogic_Design_Science

³ https://www.futureworlds.eu/wiki/Laws_of_Dialogic_Design_Science

⁴ https://www.futureworlds.eu/wiki/Triggering_Question



- C. The principles and laws behind SDD as well as theoretical aspects of the pathology of dialogues and the ways by which the SDD process manages to combat them;
- D. Practical applications of the SDD approach to real problems in your context.

Following the presentation and discussion of the results, the participants were expected to develop a roadmap to achieve progress. The results of this short-term training are also expected to assist in further development of ideas and solutions for the recognition and validation of competences for the staff and volunteers of the CSOs active in Europe. First of all – to develop the recommendations for the European project managers competences recognition and validation for lifelong learning – that will be then presented to the relevant EU/ national institutions and organisations and other relevant stakeholders as well as disseminated among a wide public.

The final recommendations⁵ were:

1. Acknowledge that the dimension of mission and purpose is crucial in the 3rd sector.
2. Define clear definitions/understandings of competences, skills and experiences.
3. Build competence validation and recognitions systems encompassing not only theoretical but also practical part of a competence.
4. Allow flexibility that considers diversity of the civil society.
5. Recognise cultural and social differences.
6. Be sensitive of the qualities of values and attitudes.
7. Ensure validation through transparent procedures.
8. Ensure recognition of formal, non-formal and informal knowledge.
9. Ensure simplicity to understand and measure.
10. Allow accessibility for those already working in the area [of civil society] and also those without experience.
11. Take into account the complexity of the individual personality [of the candidates to validate and recognise their competences].
12. Take into account work experience in various areas.
13. Have the recognition and validation system evidence based to achieve recognised status in the European Union.
14. Include references to the already existing, similar/relevant recognition and validation schemes to avoid' reinventing the wheel".

The results of this Co-Laboratory are available online⁶.

⁵ https://www.futureworlds.eu/wiki/AER-V-Recommendations_for_international_project_managers_competences_recognition_and_validation_for_lifelong_learning#Final_Recommendations

⁶ https://www.futureworlds.eu/wiki/AER-V_SDDP_of_the_International_Facilitators_Training_School_2022



METHODOLOGY: STRUCTURED DIALOGIC DESIGN PROCESS

The SDDP is specifically designed to assist inhomogeneous groups to deal with complex issues in a reasonably limited amount of time. It enables the integration of contributions from individuals with diverse views, backgrounds and perspectives through a process that is participatory, structured, inclusive and collaborative.

A group of participants, who are knowledgeable of the particular situation, are engaged in collectively developing a common framework of thinking based on consensus and a shared understanding of the current or future ideal state of affairs. SDDP promotes focused communication among the participants in the design process and their ownership of and commitment to the outcome.

Structure and Process in a typical SDDP co-laboratory

When facing any complex problem, the stakeholders can optimally approach it in the following way:

1. Develop a shared vision of an ideal future situation. This ideal vision map serves as a magnet to help the social system transcend into its future state.
2. Define the current *problématique*, i.e. develop a common and shared understanding of what are the obstacles that prevent the stakeholders from reaching their idealised vision.
3. Define actions/options or a roadmap to achieve the goals.

The three phases are done using exactly the same dialogue technique. Each phase completes with similar products:

- (1) A list of all ideas [SDDP is a self-documenting process].
- (2) A cluster of all ideas categorised using common attributes.
- (3) A document with the voting results [erroneous effect = most popular ideas do not prove to be the most influential].
- (4) A map of influences. This is the most important product of the methodology. Ideas are related according to the influence they exert on each other. If one is dealing with problems, then the most influential ideas are the root causes. Addressing those will be most efficient. If one is dealing with factors that describe a future ideal state, then working on the most influential factors means that achieving the final goal will be easier/faster/more economic, etc.

In the following, the process of a typical SDDP session with its phases is being described more precisely:

First: The breadth of the dialogue is constrained and sharpened with the help of a triggering question. This is formulated by a core group of people, who are the Knowledge Management Team (KMT) and is composed by the owners of the complex problem and SDDP experts. This question can be emailed to all participants, who are requested to respond with at least three contributions before the meeting.



Second: All the contributions/responses to the triggering questions are recorded in the CogniScope III/Concertina software. They must be short and concise, hence containing one idea in one sentence. The authors may clarify their ideas in a few additional sentences.

Third: The ideas are clustered into categories based on similarities and common attributes. A smaller team can do this process to reduce time (e.g., between plenary sessions).

Fourth: All participants get five votes and are asked to choose their favorite (most important to them) ideas. Only ideas that received votes go to the next and most important phase.

Fifth: In this phase, the participants are asked to explore influences of one idea on another. For example, they might be asked to decide whether solving problem x will make solving problem y easier. If the answer is yes (great majority) an influence is established on a map of ideas. The way to read that influence is that items at the bottom are root causes (if what is being discussed are obstacles), or most influential factors (if what is being discussed are descriptors of an ideal situation or actions to take). Those root factors must be given priority.

Sixth: Using the root factors, participants develop an efficient strategy and come up with a road map to implement it.



THE CO-LABORATORY/THE SHORT-TERM JOINT STAFF TRAINING EVENT

On 16-20 of May 2022, 24 participants from Europe, met in Paphos, Cyprus to engage in a structured dialogue focusing on the triggering question:

What would you consider as useful characteristics of a validation system for the EU projects' managers?

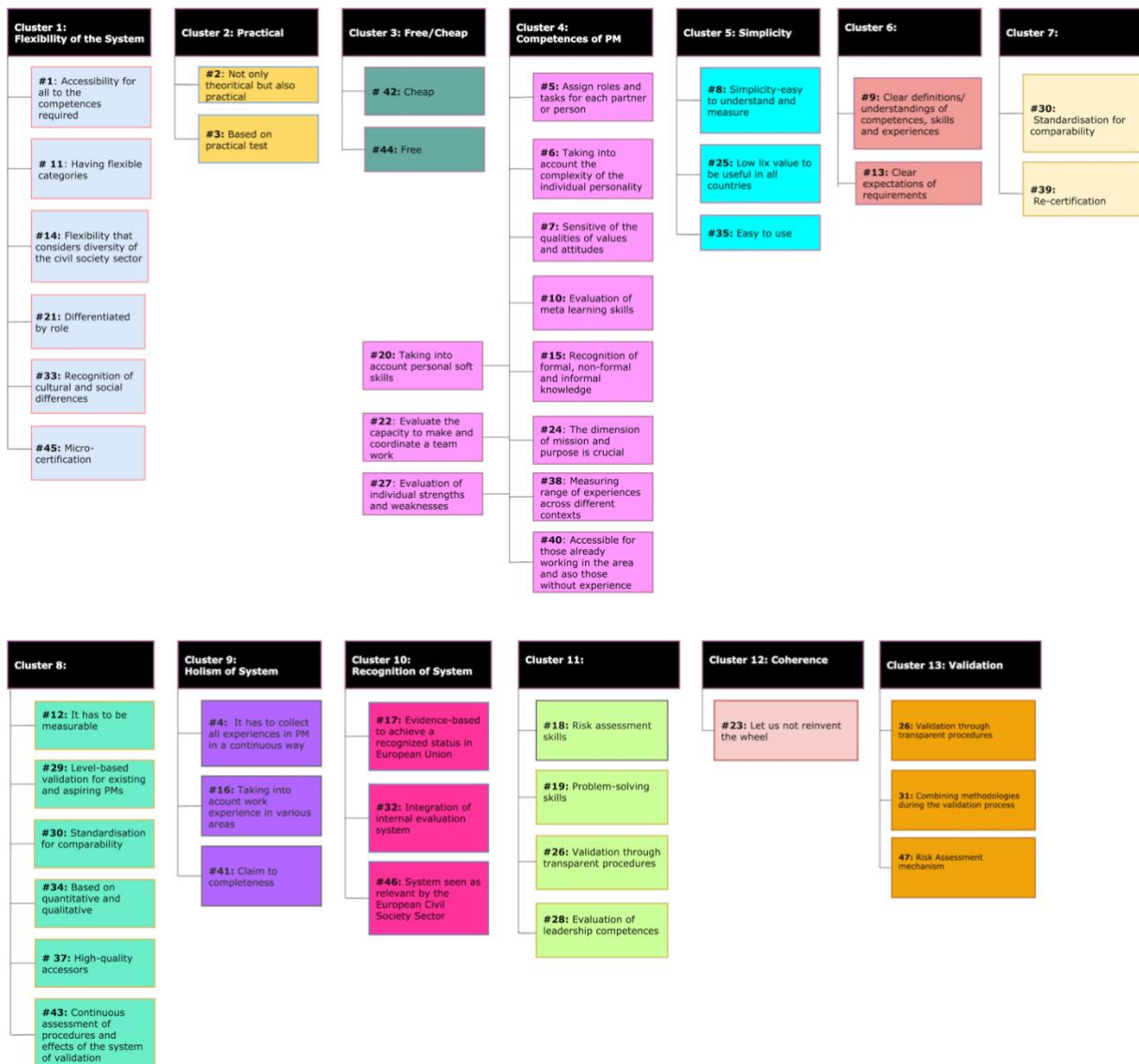


Factors proposed by participants

The participants described 46 ideas during the dialogue with the entire group. Table 1 'List of Ideas' (see the annexes) summarises all options and factors proposed by the group, which, if achieved, would contribute significantly to develop useful and complete validation system for the European projects' managers.

Clustering the Factors

Clustering took place after clarifying the factors. This part of the process is where ideas get tested against each other in order to form groups. Participants discussed among each other and formed the following clusters.



Prioritising the factors

During this phase participants voted on the factors they believed were a priority in achieving the goal of encouraging engagement and participation in democratic processes. Each participant could vote for 5 different factors. There was a total of 90 votes casted. From the 46 factors, the 25 received votes.



This is described scientifically by the parameter of Spreadthink⁷ or divergence (ST or D respectively), whose value in this case is 47% of disagreement. According to numerous studies, the average degree of spreadthink is 44%. Spreadthink is defined as $(V-5)/(N-5)$ where N is the total number of ideas and V is the number of ideas that received one or more votes.

The following ideas received the most votes:

- 8:** (9 Votes) Simplicity-easy to understand and measure
- 9:** (9 Votes) Clear definitions/understandings of competences, skills and experiences
- 14:** (9 Votes) Flexibility that considers diversity of the civil society sector
- 15:** (8 Votes) Recognition of formal, non-formal and informal knowledge
- 16:** (8 Votes) Taking into account work experience in various areas
- 6:** (6 Votes) Taking into account the complexity of the individual personality
- 17:** (6 Votes) Evidence-based to achieve a recognised status in European Union
- 2:** (5 Votes) Not only theoretical but also practical
- 26:** (4 Votes) Validation through transparent procedures

Influence Map

The factors in the map were structured on seven levels and are related according to the influence they exert on each other. The ideas which appear lower and are positioned at the root of the influence tree have more impact in terms of influence than those at the higher level. That means that if we achieve the ideas that lies deeper within the structure, that would influence the achievement of ideas higher on the tree with less effort and resources. Therefore, one should focus on ideas that are on the bottom.

11

The influence map defining had two stages:

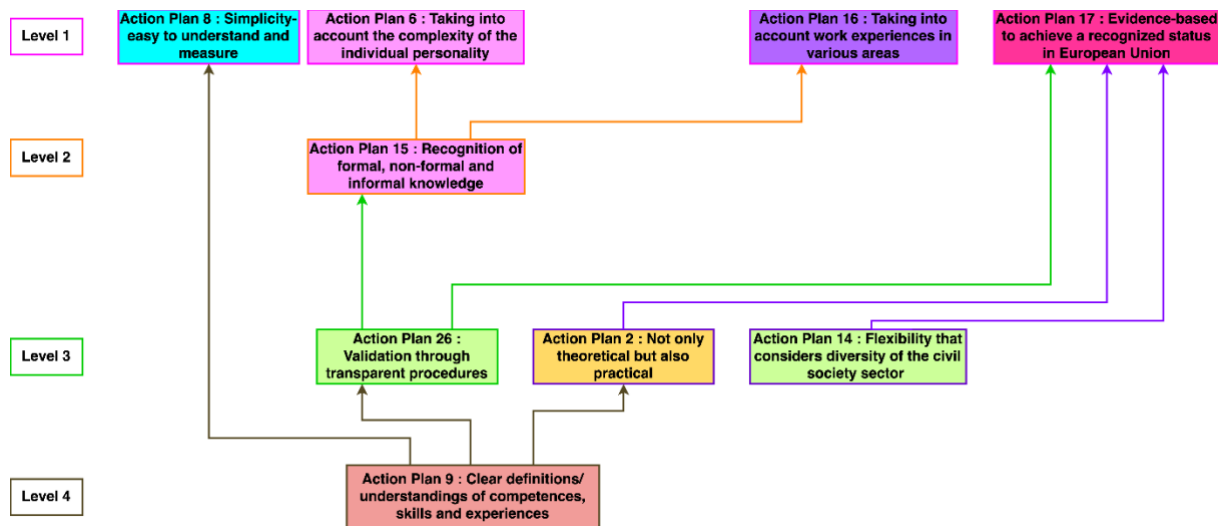
At the physical co-laboratory in Paphos, the analysis of influence was made for the ideas that received 4 or more votes. As the effect, the factors on the map were structured on 4 levels:

- Level 1 = [8, 6, 16, 17]
- Level 2 = [15]
- Level 3 = [26, 2, 14]
- Level 4 = [9]

⁷ <https://www.futureworlds.eu/wiki/Spreadthink>



Recommendations for international project managers competences recognition and validation for lifelong learning [AER-V]



Graph 1. Influence map, v1.

This process was continued in a smaller group at the online, follow-up co-laboratory workshop that took place the 8th of July 2022. The analysis of influence was made, adding also the ideas that received 3 and 2 votes. As a result, the factors on the map were structured on 7 levels:

- Level 1 = [16, 6, 17, 1, 23]
- Level 2 = [8, 15, 40]
- Level 3 = [26, 7]
- Level 4 = [33]
- Level 5 = [14, 2]
- Level 6 = [9]
- Level 7 = [24]

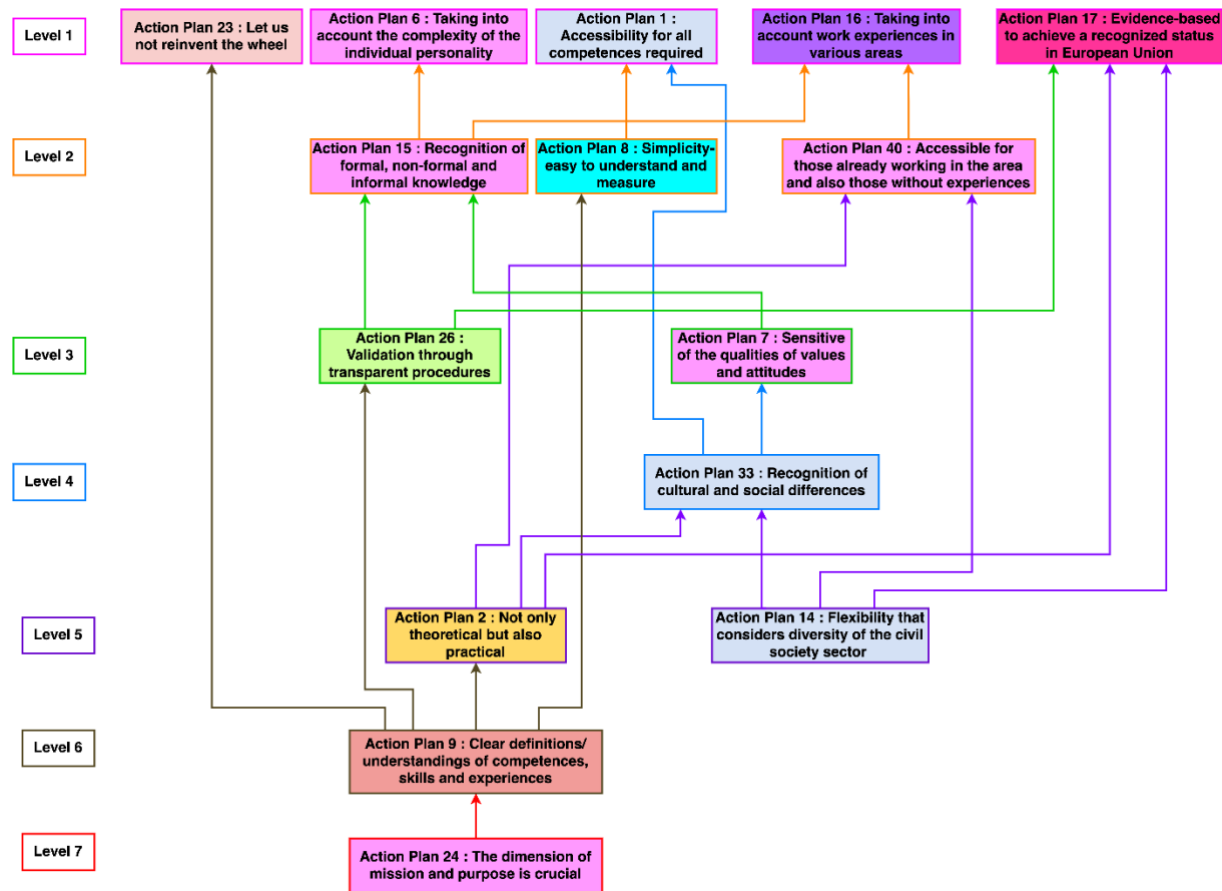
According to this map the most influential idea that according to the collective wisdom of the participants needs to be addressed with priority is:

Idea 24: The dimension of mission and purpose is crucial

Clarification: The wanted validation system is not for project management in general, but more specific for project management in a civil society (3rd sector), where the value-driven approach is essential both for the NGOs and their volunteers contrary to the project management in the market area (2nd sector) where the economic rationality of profit is essential; and the public area (1st sector), where the bureaucratic rationality is essential. Even though many of the needed technical skills may be the same in the three sectors, the leadership competences in the third sector may need a more clear focus on the purpose and meaning of the activities, and the strategic competences may be aware of the importance of the content-related mission and purpose as the main driver to engage and motivate the volunteers who are active not as employees but as active citizens.



The ideas are illustrated in the influence map below:



Graph 2. Influence map, v2.



CONTRIBUTORS

Participants:

1. Lorenza Lupini
2. Luca Bordoni
3. Francesco Turchetti
4. Lucia Fraticelli
5. Hans Jørgen Vodsgaard
6. Ole Meldgaard
7. Steen Finsen
8. Lis Hazel Nielsen
9. Niels Bendix Knudsen
10. Aron Weigl
11. Oliver Löscher
12. Rida Arif Siddiqui
13. Michael Wimmer
14. Sandra Marisa Esteves
15. Artur Pinto
16. Agnieszka Dadak
17. Jerzy Kraus
18. Rafał Dadak
19. Gabriela Abratowicz
20. Mateusz Dadak
21. Yiannis Laouris
22. Camille Lechoux
23. Kevin Dye
24. Clara NG

The Facilitation Team of the AER-V co-laboratory consisted of:

1. Yiannis Laouris (Lead Facilitator/Trainer)
2. Agnieszka Dadak (Co-Facilitator/Trainer)
3. Rafał Dadak (Assistant Facilitator)
4. Jerzy Kraus (Assistant Facilitator)
5. Camille Lechoux (Organisational Support)
6. Clara NG (Organisational Support)



Participants the follow up workshop online that took place the 8th of July 2022:

1. Agnieszka Dadak
2. Rafał Dadak
3. Jerzy Kraus
4. Rida Arif
5. Steen Finsen
6. Ole Meldgaard
7. Lucia Fraticelli
8. Camille Lechoux

The Facilitation Team, follow up online workshop:

1. Yiannis Laouris (Lead Facilitator)
2. Kevin Dye (Mentor/Expert)



CONCLUSIONS FOR FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The co-laboratory has given the opportunity to citizens from across Europe to express their ideas in a structured form, decide which ones are the most efficient and examine how these ideas (solutions) influence each other.

The proposed solutions/ recommendations have been structured in the influence map illustrated in the previous chapters and shows how by making progress (i. e promoting/implementing) in the idea that is located at the 7th level we will make progress in achieving the ideas at the 6th, 5th, 4th, 3rd, 2nd and 1st level. The idea that is the most influential one is: **The dimension of mission and purpose is crucial** (24). During the structuring process, many participants have seen a strong link between idea 24 and the ideas that received votes. It was the idea with the strongest connection between the one that received votes.

Participants have seen a strong connection between understanding of the mission and purpose in the civil society organisations sector and the possible solutions for validation and recognition of competences of the European project managers active in this sector and believed by capitalising on the promotion of the idea that the dimension of mission and purpose is crucial we will be more efficient: a) in defining clear definitions/understandings of competences, skills and experiences [9], b) in building competence validation and recognitions systems encompassing not only theoretical but also practical part of a competence [2], c) in including "flexibility that considers diversity of the civil society" [14] in this system, d) in "recognition of cultural and social differences" [33], e) being "sensitive of the qualities of values and attitudes" [7] – measuring also the most intangible component of a competence (understood as composition of knowledge, skills and attitudes/values/awareness) – and f) delivering "validation through transparent procedures" [25].

Such approach would allow to build the recognition and validation system for the European project managers working in the 3rd sector ensuring: "Recognition of formal, non-formal and informal knowledge" [15], characterised by "simplicity – easy to understand and measure" [8] – described in simple words, including graphical and contextual aspects – and accessible both for those already working in the area and those without experience [40] – i.e. including various levels of recognition and validation.

Having ensured that, the validation and recognition system would be "taking into account the complexity of the individual personality" [6], have inbuilt "accessibility for all competences required" [1], "taking into account work experiences in various areas" [16] and being "evidence based, to achieve a recognised status in European Union" [17].

Last but not least, while building such a system it should be taken into consideration to "not reinvent the wheel" [23] – since there are likely to be some similar certification schemes already in place. These would have to be included in the development of this system, and reference would have to be made to them for the sake of coherence.



During the structuring process, the above-mentioned solutions have been paired with all of the ideas that received 2 or more votes and most of the participants have agreed that by implementing them we will achieve the desired results.

Based on the above presented statements our recommendations for the validation and recognition system for the European project managers working in the civil society organisations are to:

- 1) Acknowledge that the dimension of mission and purpose is crucial in the 3rd sector.
- 2) Define clear definitions/understandings of competences, skills and experiences.
- 3) Build competence validation and recognitions systems encompassing not only theoretical but also practical part of a competence.
- 4) Allow flexibility that considers diversity of the civil society.
- 5) Recognise cultural and social differences.
- 6) Be sensitive of the qualities of values and attitudes.
- 7) Ensure validation through transparent procedures.
- 8) Ensure recognition of formal, non-formal and informal knowledge.
- 9) Ensure simplicity to understand and measure.
- 10) Allow accessibility for those already working in the area [of civil society] and also those without experience.
- 11) Take into account the complexity of the individual personality [of the candidates to validate and recognise their competences].
- 12) Take into account work experience in various areas.
- 13) Have the recognition and validation system evidence based to achieve recognised status in the European Union.
- 14) Include references to the already existing, similar/relevant recognition and validation schemes to avoid 'reinventing the wheel'.

By making progress in the above mentioned areas we will address the most important and useful root characteristics of the useful and practical validation system for the European projects' managers and achieve change in many other areas such as the ideas illustrated in the levels VII-I in the influence map.



STRUCTURED DIALOGIC DESIGN PROCESS - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What does SDDP stand for? What is the difference with SDP?

The Structured Design Process (SDP) or Structured Dialogic Design Process (SDDP) is a methodology that enables groups of stakeholders to discuss an issue in a structured democratic manner that enables them to achieve results. It is a deeply reasoned, scientific, psychosocial methodology that has evolved from over 37 years of development to its current implementation as a software-supported process for large-scale, collaborative design.

When was the first time that structured dialogue was considered necessary?

The need for such an approach was first envisioned by systems thinkers in the Club of Rome ([Ozbekhan](#), 1969, 1970), and systematically refined through years of deployment in Interactive Management (IM), to emerge as methodically grounded dialogue practice that now is supported by software specifically designed for the purpose (e.g., [CogniScope](#) system). Interactive Management, originally developed by John Warfield and [Alexander Christakis](#) in the early 1970's (Christakis, 1973; Warfield & Cardenas, 1994), has evolved into its third generation as SDDP.

What does Agoras mean?

The agoras were the vital centres of the Greek cities. The outdoor markets and convention halls of Athenian Agoras is where gossip mixed with politics. The agora of Athens was the birthplace of democracy. Here the town's citizens discussed pressing issues and made decisions on the basis of popular vote.

What is the Institute for 21st Century Agoras?

The [Institute for 21st Century Agoras](#) is a volunteer-driven organisation dedicated to vigorous democracy on the model of that practiced in the agoras of ancient Greece. It employs Co-Laboratories of Democracy that enable civil dialogue in complex situations. Systems thinkers who were also presidents of the International Society for Systems Science ([ISSS](#)), such as Bela Banathy and [Alexander Christakis](#), founded the Institute.

What is the Club of Rome?

The [Club of Rome](#) was founded in April 1968 by [Aurelio Peccei](#), an Italian industrialist, and [Alexander King](#), a Scottish scientist. The Club of Rome is a global think tank and centre of innovation and initiative. As a non-profit, non-governmental organisation (NGO), it brings together scientists, economists, businessmen, international high civil servants, and heads of state and former heads of state from all five continents who are convinced that the future of humankind is not determined once and for all and that each human being can contribute to the improvement of our societies. [Hasan Özbekhan](#), [Erich Jantsch](#) and [Alexander Christakis](#) were responsible for conceptualising the original prospectus of the Club of Rome titled "The Predicament of Mankind." This prospectus was founded on a humanistic architecture and the participation of stakeholders in democratic dialogue. When the Club of Rome



Executive Committee in the summer of 1970 opted for a mechanistic and elitist methodology for an extrapolated future, they resigned from their positions.

How are co-Laboratories different from workshops?

Many group processes engender enthusiasm and good feeling as people share their concerns and hopes with each other. Co-Laboratories go beyond this initial euphoria to:

- Discover root causes;
- Adopt consensual action plans;
- Develop teams dedicated to implementing those plans; and
- Generate lasting bonds of respect, trust, and cooperation.

Co-Laboratories achieve these results by respecting the autonomy of all participants, and utilising an array of consensus tools including discipline, technology, and graphics that allow stakeholders to control the discussion. Co-Laboratories are a refinement of Interactive Management, a decision and design methodology developed over the past 37 years to deal with complex situations involving diverse stakeholders. It has been successfully employed all over the world in situations of uncertainty and conflict.

What are usual purposes applications of SDDP?

SDDP is the perfect tool to support a diverse group of stakeholders resolve conflicts and work together in designing by consensus a new vision/solution/strategy/roadmap. It is perfect for:

- Resolve issues among diverse stakeholders
- Democratic large-group decision-making
- Policy design & decision-making
- Complex (wicked) problem solving
- Strategic planning & effective priority setting
- Portfolio & business asset allocation
- Problem identification

How many hours does a group need to invest on a co-laboratory?

The duration of a typical co-laboratory ranges from a minimum of 10-20 hours to over 100 hours. The application of virtual technologies has made it possible to shorten the time required for an SDDP application, while securing the fidelity of the process and of the products. Parts of the co-laboratory are done asynchronously (e.g. through email communication having the facilitators compile and share all data) and others synchronously, in a physical or virtual environment. The virtual SDDP model has been described in a paper by [Laouris& Christakis](#).

Is the SDDP grounded on solid science?

The SDDP is scientifically grounded on seven laws of cybernetics recognised by the names of their originators:

1. Ashby's Law of Requisite Variety (Ashby, 1958);



2. Miller's Law of Requisite Parsimony (Miller, 1956; Warfield, 1988);
3. Boulding's Law of Requisite Saliency (Boulding, 1966);
4. Peirce's Law of Requisite Meaning (Turrisi, 1997);
5. Tsivacou's Law of Requisite Autonomy in Decision (Tsivacou, 1997);
6. Dye's Law of the Requisite Evolution of Observations (Dye et al., 1999) and
7. Laouris Law of Requisite Action (Laouris& Christakis, 2007).

Which are the four Axioms of Dialogic Design?

1. COMPLEXITY: We live in a world that is very complex. Problems are complex & interconnected.
2. PARSIMONY: Human cognition & attention is limited. Attention and cognition is usually overloaded in group design.
3. SALIENCY: The field of options in any evaluation is multidimensional. "Salient synthesis" is difficult.
4. ENGAGEMENT: Disregarding the participation of the stakeholders in designing action plans is unethical and the plans are bound to fail.



-ANNEXES

Annex 1: List of Ideas

- 1: Accessibility for all the competences required
- 2: Not only theoretical but also practical
- 3: Based on practical test
- 4: It has to be collected all experiences in PM in a continuous way
- 5: Assign roles and tasks for each person or partner
- 6: Taking into account the complexity of the individual personality
- 7: Sensitive of the qualities of values and attitudes
- 8: Simplicity-easy to understand and measure
- 9: Clear definitions/understandings of competences, skills and experiences
- 10: Evaluation of meta learning skills
- 11: Having flexible categories
- 12: It has to be measurable
- 13: Clear expectation of requirements
- 14: Flexibility that considers diversity of the civil society sector
- 15: Recognition of formal, non-formal and informal knowledge
- 16: Taking into account work experience in various areas
- 17: Evidence-based to achieve a recognised status in European Union
- 18: Risk assessment skills
- 19: Problem-solving skills
- 20: Taking into account personal soft skills
- 21: Differentiated by role
- 22: Evaluate the capacity to make and coordinate a teamwork
- 23: Let us not reinvent the wheel
- 24: The dimension of mission and purpose is crucial
- 25: Low lix value to be useful in all countries
- 26: Validation through transparent procedures
- 27: Evaluation of individual strengths and weakness
- 28: Evaluation of leadership competences
- 29: Level-based validation for existing and aspiring PMs
- 30: Standardisation for comparability
- 31: Combining methodologies during the process
- 32: Integration of internal evaluation system
- 33: Recognition of cultural and social differences
- 34: Based on quantitative and qualitative data
- 35: Easy to use
- 36: Assessment of effects of the validation system
- 37: High quality accessors
- 38: Rating range of experiences across different contexts



- 39:** Decision about re-certification
- 40:** Accessible for those already working in the area and also those without experience
- 41:** Claim to completeness
- 42:** Cheap
- 43:** Continuous assessment of procedures of the system of validation
- 44:** Free
- 45:** Micro-certification
- 46:** System seen as relevant by the European Civil Society sector
- 33:** Recognition of cultural and social differences



Annex 2. Clarifications

Idea 1: Accessibility for all the competences required

The competences that are supposed to follow this validation system and that has to be validated by this, we have to keep in mind that there are accessible to everybody. Here, we're talking about things like experience so some people may have years of experience in European project, other may not but maybe wanted to have that experience so that can be a determined factor. Other things like leadership is something that is access by competence, the leadership skills they might have a chance to do something like that and how can they prove that they have this skills or not.

Idea 2: Not only theoretical but also practical

In some evaluation about a project manager should not only evaluate how much notions the person knows about project management but also how much things he can do or his attitude brings him to do.

Idea 3: Based on practical test

Practical test that can evaluate the knowledge of a project manager but also the way they can manage a situation like problem solving skills, all the kind of skills that can be tested in a practical way not in a test or multiple-choice test.

Idea 4: It has to be collected all experiences in PM in a continuous way

A validation is also for renewing of recognition of validation after, for example, five years or ten years after the course, because during the project we also speak about it. So, I think that it's important that this system of recognition may collect in a continuous way so I managed a project, I coordinated a project, I took part in a workshop conference about project management, I can update my curriculum of management of international project during my job, my life.

Idea 5: Assign roles and tasks for each person or partner

The capacity of the coordinator of the main project manager to assign roles and tasks. Then, the validation system must be up to evaluate this kind of ability.

Idea 6: Taking into account the complexity of the individual personality

It is of utmost importance that the many facets of a person are considered in the certification process. Especially characteristics that are of great importance for this work are not always easy to determine, but must not be left out. Therefore, the process must be flexible enough.

Idea 7: Sensitive of the qualities of values and attitudes

The validation system is based on a definition of competences as including knowledge, skills and attitudes, and especially in the area of civil society organisations the attitudes or values are important for the goals of the organisations and the engagement of the volunteers. Furthermore, while validation of the needed knowledge and skills may be more tangible, it may be more demanding to validate the needed attitudes.

Therefore the system must include validation methods that are sensitive to measure and validate these more intangible qualities of attitudes.

Idea 8: Simplicity-easy to understand and measure

All international works are going on in English, English is a very dominating language and people that are talking English by native language are "dominating" and then one the language is being more and



more difficult, and this is being more and more long and it's always, often a mess about what to understand. So, simplicity is important, if you have possibility to replace one word to another one for the same meaning, chose the simplest, make points so it's easy to see graphically. So, everything is simple graphically, understandably, contextually

Idea 9: Clear definitions/understandings of competences, skills and experiences

My departure for this idea is we always into the certification system we're on a European level and that means different cultures and understanding, etc, in the European Union. This difficulty should be somehow transferable from one European conference to another one. That's why these elements of competences, skills and experiences will be basic elements in any validation and certification system and that's why this is necessary that's we agree on a common definition and a common understanding of these words.

Idea 10: Evaluation of meta learning skills

Gauging how an individual can process, understand, meaningfully reflect on their experiences would be a helpful indicator of their adaptability to new situations and contexts, as well as their problem-solving skills

Idea 11: Having flexible categories

The certification needs to create categories enough flexible-general to include everyone particularities.

Idea 12: It has to be measurable

I believe the validation system for the EU projects managers should be created to review skills of future project managers in a clear, fair and understandable way. VS should be able to measure various project managers competences, both soft-skills and technical skills. It is important to evaluate essential project managers skills in an appropriate way to get a measurement system fit for all participants and taking into account their unique skill set.

Idea 13: Clear expectation of requirements

Participants should have free and immediate access to whole curriculum of validation system and have a understanding of required knowledge and what is expected of them to complete validation.

Idea 14: Flexibility that considers diversity of the civil society sector

I'm not talking about individual level, personal level but I'm talking about sector and organisation level and I think it's really important in this case that we consider the diversity of the sector. It's different from other sectors where you've some clear rules, here it's very difficult to manage. So this is probably a big challenge for the system to stay flexible.

Idea 15: Recognition of formal, non-formal and informal knowledge

Formal knowledge such as background in social science are very important for project manager and in terms on non-formal knowledge, IT expertise for instance or language skills are very important for a project manager. And it terms on informal knowledge, soft skills are keeping in this area such as empathy because of the relation we go on partners.

Idea 16: Taking into account work experience in various areas

During the validation process, the professional (and even personal) experiences of each candidate should be considered even if they are not directly related to the role of EU Project Manager. Sometimes, these experiences are an added value in this process. Lifelong experiences are different from academic qualifications, so they can and should complement each other.



Idea 17: Evidence-based to achieve a recognised status in European Union

Not only the system should recognise competences, but it should also exert be recognised and especially by the European Union on the target group for the validation system are EU project manager and that can be made through evidence-based approach.

Idea 18: Risk assessment skills

Now, I feel for every topic we have been talking about over here, all the previous point and the discussions, I want to be sure that the validation system is a quality and is relevant. I think we need a good risk assessment of mechanism for this system. Risk assessment is something that is not only identified but also analysed and control risks or like troubles that could arrived by using this validation and this system, and that could normally identify the competences or analysing people or project manager's competences, it can also be in the validation system itself. That's why I think it's important, you know the different factors that can disturb or having effect on the use of the validation system, anything from cultural differences, personal understanding.

Idea 19: Problem-solving skills

European projects have been probably made to improve life of European people and for an evaluation system like that, it would be very crucial to test the ability of project manager to make a project and write down that he made a project which has actually an impact on everyday problem at local vision or national level for partnership of the project.

Idea 20: Taking into account personal soft skills

When we evaluate persons, the knowledge and the competences of the person, we can just look at the technical competences and I heard that many others talked about personal competences or personal characteristic or something that came from the experience of the person so maybe someone could do another job in the past, very different from the project manager but from that experience, he learned something that could be useful in project manager job. So, takin into account personal soft skills but skills that came from the experience of the person in many different ways not just technical competences but in a larger way.

Idea 21: Differentiated by role

It's important that recognition system has to take in account different roles that a project manager may have. The sense, the name, of project manager may have because the project manager, maybe the person who designs the project and for example coordinate a group which is not from his own organisation but also a coordinator of the national teamwork or the sort of supervisor, so this useful validation system has to considered different kind of certification for each job.

Idea 22: Evaluate the capacity to make and coordinate a teamwork

The validation system could be to evaluate the capacity of the project manager to be a leader, a good coordinator with the partnership and the teamwork. The capacity to sign the rules, the activities and duty: a leadership competence.

Idea 23: Let us not reinvent the wheel

There are likely to be some similar certification schemes already in place. These would have to be included in the development of this system, and reference would have to be made to them for the sake of coherence.



Idea 24: The dimension of mission and purpose is crucial

The wanted validation system is not for project management in general, but more specific for project management in a civil society (3rd sector), where the value-driven approach is essential both for the NGOs and their volunteers contrary to the project management in the market area (2nd sector) where the economic rationality of profit is essential; and the public area (1st sector), where the bureaucratic rationality is essential.

Even though many of the needed technical skills may be the same in the three sectors, the leadership competences in the third sector may need a more clear focus on the purpose and meaning of the activities, and the strategic competences may be aware of the importance of the content-related mission and purpose as the main driver to engage and motivate the volunteers who are active not as employees but as active citizens

Idea 25: Low lix value to be useful in all countries

It can be given the idea of it's easy to understand or not easy to understand. Academic text as high level in a lix calculator and magazines as low one. It takes this text here (*pointed at the triggering question*) into a lix calculator. One sentence, 21 words: this is not good. 7 difficult words and if you take academic text, most difficult texts are out the point 55 and up. This test is 54 and very near to very difficult. So, I would say again, simplicity.

Idea 26: Validation through transparent procedures

If we decide to create a validation and certification system, it will take something to do this and in my first round, I mentioned the clear definition and understanding which is to my opinion an evidence. Now, we're going to a systemic level, I would like to create a system with procedures and processes. It is important that these processes and these procedures are transparent. If such a validation system or certification system will have a value not only for NGO but also the European Union, it is important that the all structure of the process is transparent and cannot be manipulated. Transparent procedures when they come to validation system and certification system are important.

Idea 27: Evaluation of individual strengths and weakness

It would be valuable to have an idea of the areas in which an individual is most/least skilled, so as to gauge their suitability for project work across different contexts and with certain groups of people (age, background, language barriers etc.)

Idea 28: Evaluation of leadership competences

One of the relevant characteristics of the validation system is ability to evaluate leadership skills. To run every company towards success it is important to gain the knowledge how to do it and managing people is an integral part of it. VS needs leadership competences curriculum and ability to evaluate them properly.

Idea 29: Level-based validation for existing and aspiring PMs

I think that validation system should be divided into levels for different target groups: people who want to be a PM and groups who already are a PM and want to refresh/expand knowledge, qualifications and skills of a successful PM. Another idea of Level-based validation would be to further divide system into: soft skills and and more formal e.g documentation, budgeting.

Idea 30: Standardisation for comparability



The purpose of validation system is comparability. We have to compare what different individuals have to be certified for and here that's a need.

Idea 31: Combining methodologies during the process

During the validation process, I think it would be ideal to use different methodologies to ensure a greater (and better) involvement of all candidates. We are all different and we all have different ways of expressing ourselves and adapting to 'pressure' situations. Sometimes some express themselves better speaking, others prefer to write, and others prefer to demonstrate their knowledge in practice. Therefore, the validation process should integrate different methodologies to assess and then evaluate the knowledge and skills of each participant.

Idea 32: Integration of internal evaluation system

The system itself should have a quality standard as well and that can be made through an internal evaluation system or self-reflexion and for the development of the system and the methods which are used and so one.

Idea 33: Recognition of cultural and social differences

This can be anything from differences in accessibility in what we talk about before work experience, understanding of competences, language skills play an important role here.

Idea 34: Based on quantitative and qualitative data

It has to be based on evidence so what we decide to choose as items that can be evaluated and validated as to be based on evidence. But on the other hand, what I meant was that the evaluation has to combined evaluation in quantitative data like how many projects someone has managed but also what kind of projects so it's also qualitative way.

Idea 35: Easy to use

This validation system has to validate and recognise a complexity of competences, so with skills, attitude, knowledge but also experiences, the personality of people, training, etc. So the methodology, the process to validate, to apply for this recognition has to be easy in order to do step by step all this process. I imagine a person who wants to be recognise as project manager enter in this system, register him.her.self and then interpret something with all his experiences, works ... Then, he thinks that he needs something else because he understood he missed something and then he can update his curriculum with competences as project manager and then submit his request of recognition. So, I imagine that the system of recognition has to try to be most easy as possible.

Idea 36: Assessment of effects of the validation system

We come to authority and this is what I meant by high quality assessor. We need to give some people, some institutions, the authority to make the assessment of project managers. What qualification this assessor has or this institution to make assessment. It should also be high quality persons who have more skills and competences, inside or outside the civil society sector.

Idea 37: High quality accessors

In order to make a validation and certification system you must have accessors to validate after established and defined criteria. Accessors should be familiar with the World of NGO, have been certified themselves and have analytical senses. Accessors must be independent of any influence and have a high degree of personal integrity.



Idea 38: Rating range of experiences across different contexts

Might be a good indicator of versatility, adaptability and openness to new experiences.

Idea 39: Decision about re-certification

For a functioning validation system, it would be needed to clarify the re-certification options. They shall allow project managers to keep their certification up-to-date.

Idea 40: Accessible for those already working in the area and also those without experience

One of the purposes of the Erasmus program is inclusion. In this sense, the same should be considered in the validation system for EU project managers. That is, anyone who meets the 'minimum requirements', should be able to apply for this validation process regardless of having professional experience or not. For example, a young graduate who is interested in becoming an EU project manager should have the same opportunity to apply for this process as a project manager in a company who wants to validate his competences.

Idea 41: Claim to completeness

I mean the absolutely purpose to include every for the target groups relevant experiences/facts/categories from the field in the system.

Idea 42: Cheap

What I meant was that, in my opinion, such evaluation system should have a non - profit base: for the PM who needs to get it, it should only cost as much as it's needed to cover its own direct and indirect costs.

Idea 43: Continuous assessment of procedures of the system of validation

The validation system must be assessed continuously to be updated and adapted to new circumstances for project managers, new demands, challenges and opportunities for instance every third year to be relevant for project managers and those who allocate the money.

Idea 44: Free

When I say "Free", I mean accessible to those who, despite having competences/skills, may not have the financial capacity to pay for this type of certification. By this I do not mean that trainers should work for free, but the idea is to understand if, in very specific and very well justified cases, this certification can be included in some nationally or internationally supported/financed training programme.

Idea 45: Micro-certification

The users of the validation system might be interested in only certify certain parts of the whole spectrum of competences. Therefore, the system should include the possibility to get certifications for each unit that will be defined.

Idea 46: System seen as relevant by the European Civil Society sector

For the relevance of the validation system, it is crucial that the European Civil Society sector sees it as useful. We should make sure that the organisations in the field want to use it and see it as an added-value if their project managers have this certification.



Annex 3. Clusters

Cluster 1: Flexibility of the System

- 1: Accessibility for all to the competences required
- 11: Having flexible categories
- 14: Flexibility that considers diversity of the civil society sector
- 21: Differentiated by role
- 33: Recognition of cultural and social differences
- 45: Micro-certification

Cluster 2: Practical

- 2: Not only theoretical but also practical
- 3: Based on practical test

Cluster 3: Free/Cheap

- 42: Cheap
- 44: Free

Cluster 4: Competences of PM

- 5: Assign roles and tasks for each partner or person
- 6: Taking into account the complexity of the individual personality
- 7: Sensitive of the qualities of values and attitudes
- 10: Evaluation of meta learnings skills
- 15: Recognition of formal, non-formal and informal knowledge
- 20: Taking into account personal soft skills
- 22: Evaluate the capacity to make and coordinate a team work
- 24: The dimension of mission and purpose is crucial
- 27: Evaluation of individual strengths and weaknesses
- 38: Measuring range of experiences across different contexts
- 40: Accessible for those already working in the area and also those without experience

Cluster 5: Simplicity

- 8: Simplicity-easy to understand and measure
- 25: Low cost value to be useful in all countries
- 35: Easy to use

Cluster 6: N/N

- 9: Clear definitions/ understandings of competences, skills and experiences
- 13: Clear expectations of requirements

Cluster 7: N/N

- 30: Standardisation for comparability



39: Re-certification

Cluster 8: N/N

12: It has to be measurable

29: Level-based validation for existing and aspiring PMs

30: Standardisation for comparability

34: Based on quantitative and qualitative data

37: High-quality assessors

43: Continuous assessment of procedures and effects of the system of validation

Cluster 9: Holism of System

4: It has to collect all experiences in PM in a continuous way

16: Taking into account work experience in various areas

41: Claim to completeness

Cluster 10: Recognition of System

17: Evidence-based to achieve a recognised status in European Union

32: Integration of internal evaluation system

46: System seen as relevant by the European Civil Society sector

Cluster 11: N/N

18: Risk assessment skills

19: Problem-solving skills

26: Validation through transparent procedures

28: Evaluation of leadership competences

Cluster 12: Coherence

23: Let us not reinvent the wheel

Cluster 13: N/N

26: Validation through transparent procedures

31: Combining methodologies during the validation process

47: Risk Assessment mechanism



Annex 4. List of votes

- 8: (9 Votes) Simplicity-easy to understand and measure
- 9: (9 Votes) Clear definitions/understandings of competences, skills and experiences
- 14: (9 Votes) Flexibility that considers diversity of the civil society sector
- 15: (8 Votes) Recognition of formal, non-formal and informal knowledge
- 16: (8 Votes) Taking into account work experience in various areas
- 6: (6 Votes) Taking into account the complexity of the individual personality
- 17: (6 Votes) Evidence-based to achieve a recognised status in European Union
- 2: (5 Votes) Not only theoretical but also practical
- 26: (4 Votes) Validation through transparent procedures
- 1: (3 Votes) Accessibility for all the competences required
- 7: (3 Votes) Sensitive of the qualities of values and attitudes
- 23: (3 Votes) Let us not reinvent the wheel
- 40: (3 Votes) Accessible for those already working in the area and also those without experience
- 24: (2 Votes) The dimension of mission and purpose is crucial
- 33: (2 Votes) Recognition of cultural and social differences
- 3: (1 Votes) Based on practical test
- 4: (1 Votes) It has to collect all experiences in PM in a continuous way
- 13: (1 Votes) Clear expectations of requirements
- 19: (1 Votes) Problem-solving skills
- 25: (1 Votes) Low value to be useful in all countries
- 27: (1 Votes) Evaluation of individual strengths and weaknesses
- 28: (1 Votes) Evaluation of leadership competences
- 30: (1 Votes) Standardisation for comparability
- 32: (1 Votes) Integration of internal evaluation system
- 43: (1 Votes) Continuous assessment of procedures and effects of the system of validation
- 5: (0 Votes) Assign roles and tasks for each partner or person
- 10: (0 Votes) Evaluation of meta learnings skills
- 11: (0 Votes) Having flexible categories
- 12: (0 Votes) It has to be measurable
- 18: (0 Votes) Risk assessment skills
- 20: (0 Votes) Taking into account personal soft skills
- 21: (0 Votes) Differentiated by role
- 22: (0 Votes) Evaluate the capacity to make and coordinate a team work
- 29: (0 Votes) Level-based validation for existing and aspiring PMs
- 31: (0 Votes) Combining methodologies during the validation process
- 34: (0 Votes) Based on quantitative and qualitative data
- 35: (0 Votes) Easy to use
- 36: (0 Votes) [DELETE] Assessment of effects of the validation system
- 37: (0 Votes) High-quality assessors
- 38: (0 Votes) Measuring range of experiences across different contexts



- 39: (0 Votes) Re-certification
- 41: (0 Votes) Claim to completeness
- 42: (0 Votes) Cheap
- 44: (0 Votes) Free
- 45: (0 Votes) Micro-certification
- 46: (0 Votes) System seen as relevant by the European Civil Society sector
- 47: (0 Votes) Risk Assessment mechanism
- 48: (0 Votes) [DELETE] Risk assessment mechanism



REFERENCES

Christakis, A.N. and Bausch, K. (2006). *How People Harness Their Collective Wisdom and Power to Construct the Future in Co-Laboratories of Democracy*. Information Age Publishing, Inc.

Flanagan, T. R., and Christakis, A. N., (2009). *The Talking Point: Creating an Environment for Exploring Complex Meaning*. Information Age Publishing Inc.

Laouris, Y. (2022). Method to integrate asynchronously produced individual influence maps into an extrapolated population influence map following the face-to-face stage of a structured democratic dialogue. *Systems Research and Behavioral Science*.

Laouris, Y., & Romm, N. R. (2022). Structured dialogical design as a problem structuring method illustrated in a Re-invent democracy project. *European Journal of Operational Research*, 301(3), 1072-1087.

Laouris, Y., & Romm, N. R. (2022). African Youth's Visioning for Re-inventing Democracy in the Digital Era: A Case of Use of Structured Dialogical Design. *World Futures*, 78(1), 18-61.

Laouris, Y., Romm, N. R., Abdallah, A., Akomea, B. G. O., Kimbi, M., Mavura, A., ... & Wairimu, R. (2022). Rendering Africa more resilient, sustainable, and better prepared for COVID-analogous pandemics: Proposals from across seven African countries. In A.L. Fymat, N.R.A. Romm and J. Kapalanga (Ed.) *COVID-19 Pandemic: Perspectives across Africa*. Ch 2 (pp.36-61).Victoria, British Columbia, Canada: Tellwell Talent.

Laouris, Y., & Michaelides, M. (2018). Structured Democratic Dialogue: An application of a mathematical problem structuring method to facilitate reforms with local authorities in Cyprus. *European Journal of Operational Research*, 268(3), 918-931.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejor.2017.04.039>

Laouris, Y. (2012). The ABCs of the science of structured dialogic design. *International Journal of Applied Systemic Studies*, 4(4), 239-257.

Laouris, Y., Laouri, R. and Christakis, A. (2008). *Communication praxis for ethical accountability; The ethics of the tree of action*. *Syst Res BehavSci* 25(2), 331–348.

Laouris, Y., Siita, G, Roe, P., Emiliani, P-L., Christakis, A. (2011). *Virtual Structured Dialogic Design as Tool for Analysis of Threats before Implementing European Dialogues Aiming to Identify R&D Gaps in Assistive ICT*. In C. Stephanidis (Ed.): *Universal Access in HCI, Part I, HCII 2011, LNCS 6765*, pp. 492–497, Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg.

Laouris Y., Underwood, G., Laouri, R., Christakis A. (2010). *Structured dialogue embedded within a emerging technologies*. In: *Using Emerging Technologies in Distance Education*, Veletsianos G. (Ed), Distance Education series, Athabasca University, Canada Ch 8, 153-173.



Laouris, Y., Michaelides, M., Damdelen,, M., Laouri, R., Beyatli, D., & Christakis, A. (2009). *A systemic evaluation of the state of affairs following the negative outcome of the referendum in Cyprus using a structured dialogic design process*. Systemic Practice and Action Research 22 (1), 45-75.

Laouris, Y., Erel, A., Michaelides, M., Damdelen, M., Taraszow, T., Dagli, I., Laouri, R. and Christakis, A. (2009). *Exploring options for enhancement of social dialogue between the Turkish and Greek communities in Cyprus using the Structured Dialogic Design Process*. Systemic Practice and Action Research, 22, 361–381.

Laouris, Y., Michaelides, M. and Sapio, B. (2008). *A Systemic Evaluation of Obstacles Preventing the Wider Public Benefiting from and Participating in the Broadband Society*. Observatorio Journal, 5, 21-31.

Laouris, Y. and Christakis, A. (2007). *Harnessing collective wisdom at a fraction of the time using Structured Dialogic Design Process in a virtual communication context* Int. J. Applied Systemic Studies, 1(2), 131–153.

Roe, P., Gill, J., Allen, B., Boyle, B., Heck., H., Siitta, G., Laouris, Y. (2011). *Towards a technology transfer roadmap from the Coordination Action in R&D in Accessible and Assistive ICT (CARDIAC)*. Technology and Disability 23, 171–181 DOI 10.3233/TAD-2011-0325.

Romm, N. R., Laouris, Y., Abdallah, A., Akomea, B. G. O., Ehagi, D., Gondwe, J., ... & Wairimu, R. (2022). The role of people as individual and collective agents in making a difference to societal outcomes, also in the COVID-19 era: African insights. In A.L. Fymat, N.R.A. Romm and J. Kapalanga (Ed.) COVID-19 Pandemic: Perspectives across Africa. Ch 6 (pp.97-138).Victoria, British Columbia, Canada: Tellwell Talent.

Schreibman, V., Christakis, A., *New Geometry of Languaging and New Technology of Democracy, Int. J. Applied Systemic Studies, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp.15–31*





