



NATIONAL REPORTS ON THE NATIONAL CONTEXTS

SPAIN



By
FOREM

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1. OVERVIEW OF THE CONTEXT.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK.

In Western Europe, and specifically in Spain, the crises of the 70s and 80s generated a significant index of unemployment as a result of the successive reconversions of the traditional production sectors and the incorporation of new workers into a job market that lacked the capacity to absorb them.

The first political measures to remedy unemployment came about as a result of this, focusing first on subsidies and unemployment payments to maintain the people affected, later evolving into more active proposals: Occupational Training - which is intended to facilitate the recycling of unemployed workers - and little by little, vocational or employment guidance initiatives, also aimed at the unemployed population, began to appear.

These **Vocational Occupational Training** actions were channeled through a nationwide plan, the *National Training and Vocational Insertion Plan*¹, with the goal of providing unemployed workers the qualifications required by the production system and facilitating insertion into the employment market, when workers lacked specific vocational training or their qualifications were insufficient or inadequate. The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, and the Regional Governments which assumed the transfer of responsibilities managed this Plan, taking into account the characteristics of the job market and the training needs in the different Regions and production sectors.

Within the framework of this regulation, vocational insertion and guidance promoters of the State Public Employment Service have the following function, among others: promote and carry out information and vocational guidance activities for unemployed workers in order to facilitate vocational insertion.

The gradual incorporation of active policies with respect to unemployment in turn established new guidelines tied to the need to provide structured and systematic responses to the reality of the employment situation. This resulted in the creation of the *Continuous Vocational Training System*² for active workers, which is fed by an increasingly complex and specialized Guidance system.

The purpose of these **Continuous Vocational Training** actions is to provide employed workers with the training that they may need over the course of their working life, in order for them to acquire knowledge and practices suited to the requirements of companies at any given time, and to make their increased competitive level compatible with the improvement of vocational training and individual promotion of the worker.

These actions gave shape to the active employment policies³ promoted by the National Employment System, which developed programs and measures focused on guidance, employment, and training. The idea was to improve the possibilities of unemployed workers to access employment on the job market, as self-employed or employed workers, and adapt training and qualification for the employment of workers.

Also, the goals of providing information and guidance in the job search for those with special difficulties in terms of integration into the job market were also given priority, including the following groups: young people, women, long-term unemployed, people over 45 years of age, the disabled, and immigrants.

¹ Royal Decree 631/1993, which regulates the National Vocational Insertion and Training Plan.

² Royal Decree 1046/2003, of 1 August, which regulates the Continuous Vocational Training Subsystem.

³ Regulation as stipulated in the Employment Act 56/2003 of 16 December

A fundamental step in promoting life-long training (and consequently, for the development of an integrated guidance system) was the creation of the *National System of Vocational Training and Qualifications*¹, which integrates the different training offerings and organizes the recognition and accreditation of vocational qualifications.

The instruments and actions of this System include providing information and guidance in the area of vocational training for employment, for the purpose of:

- Providing information on the opportunities for access to employment and the possibilities for acquiring and certifying skills and abilities.
- Providing information and advice on the vocational training offerings and the possible training itineraries to facilitate insertion or reinsertion into the job market.

Services from the following, among others, may provide vocational information and guidance: educational and labor administrations, local governments, and social agents, with the General State Administration responsible for developing the formulas for the cooperation and coordination among all of the agents involved. These services will provide vocational guidance and information to students in the educational system, families, unemployed and employed workers, and society in general.

We are currently facing a new model of **Vocational Training for Employment**, which as a whole is connected to both regulated training systems as well as the demands of the job market itself, and integrating training for both employed and unemployed workers.

The development of people's vocational skills through adequate qualification is one of the most important factors in the current system of production. As active policy instruments, training is being given more and more consideration for employment and vocational guidance, as the means best suited to adapt vocational qualifications to the needs of the job market.

Vocational training for employment must provide workers with the training that they may need over the course of their working lives, in order for them to acquire the knowledge and practices suited to the requirements of the job market and society as a whole at any given time.

In this context, **Vocational Guidance** processes are strategic counseling instruments for workers to promote adaptation to socio-economic and labor changes, access, promotion, and/or mobility, and to define the qualifications, profiles, and training itineraries that are best suited to the reality of the job market.

The improvement of worker qualifications must serve to protect them against unemployment and to defend their position in the job market; in addition, this improvement in their qualifications must, above all, contribute to their personal realization, vocational development, social integration, and exercise of their citizenship.

After the European commitments at the Lisbon Summit, the labor union organizations UGT, CCOO, and the business organizations CEOE-CEPYME committed themselves, with Spain's Prime Minister in the Declaration for Social Dialogue of July 2004, in which education and training were specified as basic elements to achieve a model of stable and sustained growth based on the competitiveness of companies.

¹ Regulated in accordance with General Act of Parliament 5/2002, of 19 June on Vocational Training and Qualifications.

In keeping with this, they agreed to analyze the current worker training model, with the aim of encouraging life-long training as a way to ensure vocational qualification.

On 23 March 2007, the Council of Ministers approved the text of Royal Decree 395/2007 which regulates the *Vocational Training for Employment subsystem*. This Royal Decree formulates the integration of Training for unemployed and employed workers, establishing training for workers that extended beyond their work situation and facilitating access especially to those persons in the most precarious employment situations.

Also, this new model is inserted within the framework of the Vocational Training and Qualifications Act, and respects the management framework at both the national and regional levels.

The following are some of the most significant aspects in the Royal Decree:

- The substantial improvement in the personal right to training, by allocating specific funds for Individual Permits, the expansion of access to these to participate in training processes in connection with the Qualifications Catalog, in processes to recognize skills and abilities, and in training processes that lead to other types of official government accreditations.
- The drive to certify training is another aspect strengthened in this new Royal Decree, a key element for later accreditation and recognition.
- The rights of the legal representatives of workers to participate in training processes within companies were maintained.
- Training quality is improved through system and student evaluations, while also improving the control and tracking mechanisms for training actions, with the coordination and definition of common plans for management actions for the pertinent administrations and institutions.
- New economic resources are added, in addition to the vocational training fee and the Government's commitment to seek legislative formulas for the re-annualization of unused funds.

In terms of Guidance, General Act of Parliament 5/2002, of 19 June, on Vocational Training and Qualifications, and this royal decree, *Article 31. Vocational guidance and information*, address the following aspects:

- The Government will develop an integrated vocational guidance and information system that ensures that advice is provided to unemployed and employed workers regarding training and employment opportunities and the possibility of recognizing and certifying their qualifications.
- The integrated vocational guidance and information system will define and put into action individual career itineraries to improve worker employability, and develop the entrepreneurial spirit and support business and self-employment initiatives.
- To encourage the development of an integrated vocational training and guidance system, Public Job Placement Services will be strengthened, determining the actions to be carried out with the active population, how they will be financed, and the participation of social agents, as well as the role of the Integrated Vocational Training Centers and the National References in this area.

Also, within the Spanish Educational System, standards¹ are being developed with the basic principle, among others, of providing continuous education, and specifically educational and vocational guidance to students as a necessary action to achieve

¹ Regulated by General Act of Parliament 2/2006, of 3 May, on Education.

personalized training, which guarantees integrated education in terms of knowledge, skills, and values.

The following are considered to be the purposes of the vocational guidance and information as part of the vocational training in the educational system:

- Inform and publicize the offerings of this instruction, as well as the established academic requirements and the possibilities of access to them, responding to the conditions, needs, and interests of the people who demand the information.
- Inform and orient in regard to the different learning opportunities and the possible training itineraries to facilitate insertion and reinsertion into the job market, improvement in employment, as well as vocational mobility in the job market.
- Provide information on academic degrees and provide guidance regarding the possibilities of acquiring, evaluating, and accrediting vocational skills and qualifications required by the job market.
- Guide students toward the training cycles that are best suited to their personal situations, so that the selected option allows them to achieve the objectives of the vocational modules and complete the entire training cycle.

PRACTITIONER PROFILE

The guidance practitioner is a new figure that has appeared as a result of the large-scale socio-economic transformations that have taken place during the final decades of the 20th century and in recent years (this analysis is covered in point 1 of this report).

We are currently faced with new model of Vocational Training for Employment that is connected as a whole to both regulated training systems as well as the demands of the job market itself, and that integrates training for both employed and unemployed workers. In this context, Vocational Guidance processes are strategic advisory instruments for workers to promote their adaptation to socio-economic and labor changes, access, promotion, and/or mobility, and to define the qualifications, profiles, and training itineraries that are best suited to the reality of the job market.

To describe the Guidance Practitioner Profile in this context, we will focus on the following study: "Vocational Profile of Employment Guidance Practitioners" (prepared by CSCCOO, in AACC 20060102), since it is open and flexible in following the philosophy of the new model for Training for Employment.

The profile was been prepared in the following order:

- *Vocational skills*: This refers to the basic specific framework that characterizes the functions of the profile of the guidance practitioner.
- *Activities connected with the skills*: the activities connected with the skills describe the basic elements that define each vocational skill, and are therefore assigned to conduct or knowledge of the practitioner.
- *Specific tasks*: for each vocational activity connected with the skill, a series of specific tasks are defined, which correspond to both the actions required to carry out the activity optimally as well as criteria, procedures, or guidelines that correspond to them.

Based this organization, three vocational skills have been proposed for the profile:

1. **Knowledge of the environment.** Generate a stable, permanent framework of knowledge of the environment from which the guidance process is

developed, based on the information and research of the environment to detect its resources.

2. **Programming of the guidance process.** Design, plan, coordinate, organize, and evaluate the overall guidance processes.
3. **Direct intervention.** Establish and develop the specific process for user attention and intervention for vocational promotion and qualification and for socio-labor insertion.

➤ **VOCATIONAL SKILL 1:**

GENERATE A STABLE AND PERMANENT FRAMEWORK OF KNOWLEDGE OF THE SECTOR IN WHICH THE GUIDANCE PROCESS TAKES PLACE, BASED ON THE INFORMATION AND RESEARCH OF THE SECTOR AND THE DETECTION OF ITS RESOURCES. *KNOWLEDGE OF THE SECTOR.*



VOCATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND SPECIFIC TASKS CORRESPONDING TO SKILL 1:

A 1.- Detect, gather, and systematize the information from the existing resources in the sector that are suitable for employment guidance.

SPECIFIC TASKS:

- The selection and information from the sources is reliable and makes it possible, through analysis, to ensure that useful data for the guidance process is obtained.
- Information on sector resources is continually gathered and updated to adjust to the needs of the guidance process.
- The study of sector information sources and resources is carried out in accordance with the methodologies and procedures that best guarantee their quality and pertinence.
- The information obtained from the sector will guarantee a flow of local variables along with other more global ones that make it possible to properly focus on the needs of the user population.
- The sector analysis will make it possible to prepare adequate documentation that is useful for the work processes.

A 2.- Actively participate in the design and preparation of technical studies on the job market and sector.

SPECIFIC TASKS:

- Sector research will have the express agreement of the guidance professionals, especially in the phases to identify the needs and contribute variables that are closely tied to the real situation of the user population.
- The research on the sector and the job market will be done with the involvement of professionals with different origins and qualifications, emphasizing the multi-faceted, multi-disciplinary focus.
- The analysis model will guarantee a diachronic view that is continually updated based on existing sources.
- The analysis methodology of the guidance specialist will be coordinated with the basic qualitative criteria and the participatory research tools.

A.3.- Create and maintain connections with institutions in the sector, facilitating a framework of fluid and continuous communication.

SPECIFIC TASKS:

- Relations with sector institutions are fluid and are established through direct and systematic contacts.
- Communication with sector institutions allows the establishment of work itineraries that facilitate an improvement in the situation of the potential user population.
- The communication framework is an active element in prospecting the job market.
- A stable information environment is generated, which makes it possible to determine the reality and opportunities of the local/regional job market, as well as the potential of the user population.
- The promotion of existing services is a continuous initiative for guidance.

➤ **VOCATIONAL SKILL 2.**

DESIGN, PLAN, COORDINATE, ORGANIZE, AND EVALUATE THE OVERALL GUIDANCE PROCESSES. PROGRAMMING THE GUIDANCE PROCESS.



VOCATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND SPECIFIC TASKS CORRESPONDING TO SKILL 2:

A.1.- Design, plan, and program the objectives and actions of the overall guidance process.

SPECIFIC TASKS:

- The determination of the overall objectives of the guidance process will be done taking into account the characteristics of the users and the guidance model of the institution that is responsible.
- The objectives will respond to expected, measurable, and assessable results.
- The design and overall timing of both individual and collective actions will conform to the proposed objectives, the existing resources, and the chosen methodology.

A 2.- Plan, organize and manage the Resources (material, economic, technical and human).

SPECIFIC TASKS:

- Proper assignment of technical, economic, and material resources allows accurate planning of activities, implementing the mechanisms for coordination with other services in each case.
- The management and application of economic resources is done within the established deadlines and in accordance with the prepared planning.
- The distribution of functions and tasks of people dedicated to the guidance process makes it possible to guarantee the process.
- The internal systems for organizing people who for part of the guidance process make it possible to achieve the expected results.

A.3.- Design and adapt methodological instruments that are suitable for the guidance process.

SPECIFIC TASKS:

- The selection of the work methodology that is best suited to the guidance process will be done according to the previously defined objectives.
- The methodology will be closely tied to the characteristics of the user population and the existing resources in the process.
- The tools used to develop the process will be based on a holistic view that places the user in the center of the process, starting with prior methodological keys such as capacity for empathy and assertiveness.
- The use of specific, adapted techniques (decision making and conflict resolution, analysis of skills and needs, searching for and improving employment, group dynamics, interviewing, social research, general communication, conflict resolution, etc.) will form part of the guidance process.
- Techniques and tools must guarantee both the active participation of the user population and the feedback on the process.

A.4.- Establish the general procedures and standards for providing service to the user population, as well as the process quality criteria.

SPECIFIC TASKS:

- The procedures for attending to the user population will be re-elaborated and defined for the set of actions included in the intervention process.
- The established standards and protocols identify the interaction attitudes that must be observed with the user population, depending on its idiosyncrasies, and adapted to the principles of professional ethics.
- The procedures for action must guarantee the existing occupational safety and hygiene regulations.
- The preliminary preparation of information and the creation of the organizational systems allow existing resources to be put to good use.
- The classifications, filing, and inventory of the **documentation generated**, in accordance with the **existing privacy standards**, guarantees easy access to the information.
- The generation of quality protocols in accordance with the regulations in effect facilitates both suitable responses and continuous improvement..

A.5.- Evaluate the guidance process and its results, as well as the impact of the actions in order to guarantee the best modifications.

SPECIFIC TASKS:

- The definition of overall indicators for the process makes it possible to carry out a general evaluation of the process.
- The process must be evaluated according to the criteria of effectiveness, efficiency, pertinence, and feasibility.
- The evaluation techniques and activities must be determined in accordance with the process objectives, also establishing a continuous evaluation process.
- The evaluation of the process as a whole is done with the active participation of the parties involved and must allow reprogramming and feedback.
- The continuous tracking mechanisms should enrich the evaluation process and allow corrective measures or modifications to be made.
- For the reprogramming and continuous improvement of the guidance process, the impact of

PLAN AND DEVELOP PLANS OF ACTION TO RESPOND TO AND ASSIST USERS IN SOCIAL-LABOR QUALIFICATION, PROMOTION, AND INSERTION. *DIRECT INTERVENTION.*



VOCATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND SPECIFIC TASKS CORRESPONDING TO SKILL 3:

A.1.- Establish the action plan jointly with users, taking into account the user's professional goals.

SPECIFIC TASKS:

- The basis for the individualized action plan or itinerary is obtaining the most relevant information on each user in regard to formal and non-formal training, professional experience, individual skills, aptitude scope, expectations, and socio-cultural factors, among others.
- In order to *adjust guidance*, the professional expectations and goals of the user must be detected and the person's objectives identified, establishing possible alterations and laying out the objectives of the action plan by mutual agreement.
- Establishment of actions in the Plan or Itinerary in accordance with the previously established objectives.
- Implementation of motivational tools for active participation and decision making by the user over the course of the action plan.

A.2.- Provide users with tools and resources to implement their plans of action.

SPECIFIC TASKS:

- Provide users will all of the available information on training resources in the sector and tie into advice in this regard, always according to the needs of the users.
- Provide users will all available information on employment and self-employment resources and tie into advice in this regard, always according to the needs of the users.
- Advise users and set up the mechanisms and instruments to actively search for employment.
- The information on the real situation of the job market will be directly connected with the employment intermediation actions, which will make it possible to connect the needs and potential of the users with the demands of companies and institutions.
- The motivation of the users is a key element in the guidance proposal. The independence and decision-making capacity of the user must therefore be guaranteed throughout the process.

A.3.- Carry out the tasks to track the personalized Itineraries or Action Plans.

SPECIFIC TASKS:

- Periodic, direct contact with users guarantees the possibility of rectification and reprogramming when necessary.
- The observation of attitudes and the capacity to use the tools provided allows the continuous flow in the guidance practitioner/user relationship.
- To do this, objective process tracking and control mechanisms must be designed and implemented, in the first place to evaluate the capacity for independence of the user, the level of satisfaction, suitability of the proposed activities, etc.
- The control, processing, and information provided about job openings facilitate the tracking of the employment intermediation processes.

A.4.- Evaluate the personalized guidance itinerary/action plan, taking into account the results generated.

SPECIFIC TASKS:

- The definition of specific indicators for each personalized itinerary allows the concrete evaluation of the plan.
- The process must be evaluated according to the criteria of effectiveness, efficiency, pertinence, and feasibility.
- The evaluation process must be continuous in the itinerary, starting with the preliminary evaluation, the process evaluation, and the post-evaluation.
- The level of satisfaction of the users is a central element, though it is not the only one, to evaluate the process. It is also a precise source for reprogramming the process and for process feedback.
- The mechanisms for continuous evaluation must enrich the evaluation process and allow modifications or corrective measures, always based on the independence of the user.
- For the continuous reprogramming and improvement of the guidance itinerary and the quality and suitability of the job, the impact of the actions carried out must be evaluated with the user in both modifications to the user's social-professional life and to their environment.

The Profile presented for the Employment Guidance Practitioner attempts to identify, group, systematize, and establish internal categories with respect to the skills that can characterize guidance professionals. Skills, in the sense not only of abilities acquired from training and cumulative experience, but also skills in the sense of “areas of knowledge”, which in turn allow knowledge management.

However, this system should not be understood as a closed universe or a proposal that characterizes the Profile as a Vocational qualification automatically. Rather, it is intended to create a Route sheet that in the near future will allow specific preparation for the proper instances.

In terms of the academic training required to exercise this vocational activity, the Practitioner profile calls for an Advanced or Mid-level University Degree in a course of study in the Social Sciences branch, with post-graduate training (expert or master’s) and/or complementary training in guidance to provide specific knowledge regarding this discipline (job market, job areas, attention groups, job search tools and techniques, management of information and resources in the environment, diagnostic, tracking, and evaluation techniques, etc.).

According to the National Occupations Code (CNO) prepared by the State Regional Employment Service, this occupation is referred to in three ways: Vocational Insertion Guidance Counselor (associated with an advanced university degree), Mid-level Vocational Guidance Practitioner (associated with a mid-level university degree), and School Guidance Counselor (associated with an advanced or mid-level university degree, with a scope of action within the regulated school system).

In the National Vocational Qualifications Catalog (an instrument developed within the National Vocational Training and Qualifications System), specific qualifications have been defined as requirements for carrying out guidance practitioner activities. These form part of the Socio-cultural Services Vocational Family and the Region, and they have been defined as: Insertion of Persons with Disabilities into the Workforce.

Knowledge (acquired through training for employment or professional experience) of the use of ICT tools, employment policies, social intervention, social and communication abilities, legal labor and social organization, social fabric, conflict resolution, etc. is also valued.

This is the general academic profile of this type of professional, but there is currently no technical definition of the guidance vocational profile in the regulations that cover guidance services and actions.

The table below includes an example of possible training itineraries that allow the acquisition of skills and abilities that qualify a person to carry out the activities of guidance professionals.

REGULATED TRAINING	UNIVERSITY DEGREE	ADVANCED (GRADUATE)	- Sociology - Psychology - Psychopedagogy
		MID-LEVEL (GRADUATE)	- Social Education - Social Work - Pedagogy
	VOCATIONAL TRAINING	ADVANCED LEVEL	- Social Integration

	<p>UNIVERSITY POST-GRADUATE</p> <p>MASTER'S (for GRADUATES)</p> <p>EXPERT (for DEGREE HOLDERS)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vocational guidance - Labor Guidance - Educational guidance - Educational guidance and socio-labor insertion - Socio-labor guidance - Employment guidance and employment promotion - Psycho-educational guidance and intervention - Educational guidance and intervention in disabilities
<p>TRAINING FOR THE SPECIFIC JOB OF VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vocational guidance - Vocational guidance for immigrants - Guidance, disability, and employment - Guidance and intervention for excluded groups 	
<p>TRAINING FOR COMPLEMENTARY EMPLOYMENT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National qualifications system - Analysis of the job market - Information and communications technologies - Psychological problems of employment 	

2. E-PRACTITIONER PROFILE AND TRAINING.

The purpose of the ICT Skills 2 Project is to develop innovations in training based on Information and Communications Technologies and vocational instruments for professionals who work in life-long learning systems.

More specifically, the project designs a standard profile of e-guidance practitioners, which in addition to being shared in the international context, has been designed to be flexible enough to conform to national and regional contexts, as in the case of Galicia.

Through the project, educational and social-employment guidance professionals will have the opportunity to pursue the following specific objectives:

1. Explore, locate, and evaluate the ICT skills acquired through academic or vocational training and experience in formal, informal, and non-formal contexts.
2. Acquire new ICT skills integrated as part of guidance skills.
3. Evaluate, register, recognize, and certify ICT skills acquired through training and/or experience.

“INTEGRATED VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE SERVICES” Project. CCOO Labor Union Confederation – FOREM Network

This project is based on the framework of the National Vocational Qualifications System and has been designed to build on a vocational guidance experience for employed workers that began in 2006, establishing training itineraries so that workers can reinforce and acquire vocational skills.

The project includes the following activities:

- Development of guidance tools based on new technologies that support the vocational guidance process:

Computer tool for guidance management. Computerized interviews for worker analysis and diagnostics. Database of people who are assisted.

Guidance web portal www.orienta-ccoo.es

Online guidance tools. For the last year, FOREM has been carrying out a pilot remote guidance program using ICT to carry out the activities (guidance management tools, telephone, e-mail, website, etc.).

Virtual workspace on the internet for coordination of guidance teams. Discussion forums, chat, email, etc. Management environment based on Moodle.

Computer application for qualification queries (National Qualifications Catalog)

Participation in the “Second Life” software. The CCOO is currently developing a project to increase awareness of training for employment titled “Connect to Training”. One of the activities in this project is the creation of a virtual space for the labor union, providing information on its structure, employment and guidance services, etc. Within this space, the guidance team will participate by providing information on guidance and vocational qualifications.

- Startup of 14 guidance services in all regions to advise workers.

The guidance practitioners in the service use all of the computer tools and internet spaces created as part of the project. More than 50 guidance practitioners are taking part in this project.

- Another activity that forms part of this project is the definition of the vocational skills of guidance practitioners (as mentioned in point 1) and this year, we will examine the possibility of designing a curriculum for guidance practitioners (specifically for guidance): regulated training, non-formal training, and informal training.

3. CERTIFICATION PROCEDURES

The certification and evaluation of occupational skills in Spain is regulated by **General Act of Parliament 5/2002**, of 19 June, **on Vocational Training and Qualifications**, the purpose of which was to create a National System of Vocational Training and Qualifications (SNCFP). This System has been defined as *“the set of instruments and actions required to promote and develop the integration of the available vocational training through the National Catalog of Vocational Qualifications, and to evaluate and certify the corresponding occupational skills, so as to promote the vocational and social development of individuals, and cover the needs of the production system”*.

This System (which is currently under development) is being created in order to:

- Integrate vocational qualifications into the National Catalog of Vocational Qualifications (organized by vocational groups and qualification levels), which covers all of the qualifications identified in the production system, and which is associated with a Modular Catalog of Vocational Training (which is made up of training modules associated with the skill units that correspond to the qualifications).
- Adjust training and qualifications to the criteria of the European Union, according to the objectives of a unified market and the free circulation of

workers.

- Officially evaluate and certify vocational qualification, regardless of how it is acquired.
- Train workers to exercise their professions and promote quality training offerings.

The National Vocational Qualifications Catalog (CNCP) has been prepared according to a series of methodological bases approved by the General Board for Vocational Training, with the participation and collaboration of the General Administration, Regional Governments, and business and labor organizations.

It is organized into 26 Vocational Families (with a Vocational Family understood to be the broad set of qualifications that have a common denominator in terms of knowledge, qualities, characteristics, and vocational outlets) and five levels of qualification (depending on the level of knowledge, initiative, autonomy, and responsibility required to carry out a particular work activity).

Within the framework of this context, vocational qualification is defined as the set of occupational skills (knowledge and abilities that make it possible to carry out a particular vocational activity) that are significant for employment, which may be acquired through training modules or other types of training, as well as through work experience.

Each qualification is assigned a general skill, which briefly defines the essential functions and tasks of the professional in question. The occupational sector in which the qualification may be developed, the corresponding production sectors, and the relevant occupations or jobs to which the qualification allows access are also described.

Also, the qualification is organized into skill units, which are defined as the minimum combined total of occupational skills eligible for partial certification and recognition. Each skill unit is associated with a training module, which describes the training required to acquire the unit in question.

This structure makes it possible to evaluate and certify each one of the skill units (obtained through training and/or work experience) for the worker. This way, they can be accumulated until the worker received complete certification of qualification through a *Vocational Training Degree* or an *Occupational Proficiency Certificate*.

This system of evaluation and certification of vocational qualifications developed within the framework of Law 5/2002 (on Vocational Training and Qualifications) has been governed by two regulations:

1) **Royal Decree 34/2008, on Occupational Proficiency Certificates** (developed taking into account the system of Vocational Training for Employment, R.D. 395/2007), which includes the following objectives:

- Certify vocational qualifications or the skill units that make them up, regardless of how they were acquired.
- Facilitate life-long learning through modularly structured open, flexible training through the training offerings associated with the certificate.
- Encourage transparency in the job market, at both the national and European levels.
- Organize the training offerings in the subsystem for Vocational Training for Employment, associated with the National Catalog of Vocational Qualifications.
- Contribute to the quality of the offerings of Vocational Training for Employment.
- Contribute to the integration, transparency, and recognition among the different vocational training opportunities described in the Catalog.

This Royal Decree defines Occupational Proficiency Certificates as the Labor

Authority's instrument for certifying vocational qualifications. They certify the ability to carry out a particular work activity with significance for employment, without regulating the exercise of vocational functions. They are official and valid throughout Spain and will be issued by the State Public Employment Service and the competent bodies of the Regional Governments.

Each certificate defines a vocational profile, understood as a set of skills, and will, except in exceptional cases, certify a vocational qualification of the CNCP. Consequently, the skill unit is the minimum certifiable unit to obtain an occupational proficiency certificate.

The training modules included in the Occupational Proficiency Certificates will be those in the Catalog of Vocational Training Modules, which will specify the content, parameters of the training context, and the duration. To obtain the Occupational Proficiency Certificate, the training modules included in the certificate must be completed, or the evaluation and certification procedures of the occupational skills acquired through vocational experience and informal training must be applied, whose regulations (within the framework of art. 8.4 of Act 5/2002) has not yet been developed. When the duration of these modules exceeds 90 hours, they will be subdivided into training units, which, in turn, may not have a duration of less than 30 hours. The completion of these units, provided that at least one per year is passed, shall entitle the person to certification of the module and accreditation of the corresponding skill unit.

The set of occupational proficiency certificates shall make up a *Repertoire of Occupational Proficiency Certificates*, organized by sector and by levels (according to the structure of the CNCFP).

2) **Royal Decree 1538/2006**, of 15 December, which establishes the **General Organization of Vocational Training in the Educational System** (according to the objectives established in art. 40 of General Act of Parliament 2/2006, of 3 May, on Education).

Vocational training in the educational system is defined as the set of training actions that prepare individuals for the qualified exercise of different professions, access to jobs, and active participation in social, cultural, and economic life.

Vocational Training Degrees (divided into two levels: Technical and Advanced Technical) serve as the instrument to certify the qualifications and skills that correspond to each one and to ensure a particular level of training, including occupational, personal, and social skills, to encourage competitiveness, employability, and social cohesion.

The degrees have been grouped into the 26 Vocational Families that make up the National Catalog of Vocational Qualifications, and the teaching of them have been organized into mid-level (to obtain Technical Degrees) and advanced level training cycles (to obtain Advanced Technical Degrees). These cycles are made up of vocational modules (which are, in turn, divided into training units), the certification of which shall be official and valid nationwide, within the scope of the Education Administration.

Together, these Degrees make up the educational system's *Catalog of Vocational Training Degrees*, which respond to the needs for occupational skills required by the production sectors and economic development at the national, regional, local, and European levels, as well as the societal demand and the interests and expectations of the citizens.

These two decrees, established in accordance with the same regulatory framework (Act 5/2002 on Vocational Training and Qualifications), make it possible to manage equivalencies between the two training systems in effect: regulated vocational training

system and the vocational training system for employment. Consequently, the Labor Authorities will issue the corresponding Vocational Certificate to anyone who requests it, provided that they have obtained academic certification that demonstrates successful completion of all of the vocational modules of the Vocational Certificate through the courses taken in the educational system.

Also, the skill units accredited by an occupational proficiency certificate or cumulative partial certification, issued by the corresponding Labor Authorities, shall be recognized by the Educational Administration, and shall suffice for the purposes of ratification of the corresponding vocational module of the Vocational Training Degrees.

4. OBSTACLES AND PROPOSALS FOR TRAINING PILOTS.

The FOREM Network's activity focuses on the management, execution, and research into vocational training and guidance for both employed and unemployed workers who need to improve their vocational qualifications to obtain, maintain, or advance in their jobs.

The vocational guidance activities that we provide include the design, execution, evaluation, certification, and justification of actions to provide information and guidance to workers whose proposed objective is occupational insertion or improved employability.

The FOREM Network's guidance activities include the following:

- Guidance actions for employment and assistance for self-employment, within the framework of the OPEA programming of the State Public Employment Service and the Regional Public Employment Services.
- Actions to provide information, guidance, and advice to employed workers, within the framework of the training plans for employment.
- Vocational guidance in remote or semi-attended training, such as the accompaniment module.

A team of 20 to 30 guidance practitioners from different areas of professional activity (professional, labor, educational, etc.) and who work with different groups (employed workers, unemployed workers, students, persons at risk of exclusion, etc.) will participate in the pilot training experience.

One obstacle that we have noted in carrying out this activity is that it is difficult to use attended sessions due to the extension of the Internet itself and the high number of participating advisers. Nevertheless, we have the necessary ICT tools to effectively manage this, for example, through the Guidance Forum, Video Conference, or Second Life (among others). We also hold coordination meetings with the professionals who form part of the Forem Network, in which we propose the execution of directly attended training credit.

The basic group for the project in the Region of Galicia is made up of guidance professionals who work in the life-long learning programs and systems at the Santiago de Compostela, A Coruña, and Vigo Universities; in Guidance Services under the Consellería de Educación (Specific Guidance Teams, Guidance and Tutoring Departments); in the Employment Services under the Consellería de Trabajo (Galician Placement Service); in Labor Unions (Forem, Forga, Luis Tilve Foundation), in the Local Administration (City Councils and City Halls); in the Federation of Associations of disabled persons (COGAMI, FADEMGGA, ONCE); in the Chambers of Commerce and Business Owner Association; in social institutions (Cáritas, Red Cross), and in private foundations for social and community purposes.

All of these institutions use ICT to provide information, advice, assistance, and support

and guidance services to their recipients.

There will be a group of fifteen Guidance practitioners who work in life-long learning systems, such as School, Employment, Social, and Occupational Guidance Practitioners, and Educational and Professional Guidance Trainers. This group will work on a network system using Delphi techniques and ICT (Internet, Chat, etc.) in the project actions: preparation of the standard e-practitioner profile in the presentation of services to recipients using ICT; use of the resources platform; use of e-portfolio; in the use of the online skill self-assessment tool; collaboration on the pilot design of Practitioner training and the evaluation of the project, etc.

5. ICT SKILLS 1 AND ICT SKILLS 2: FEED-BACK FROM INTERVIEWS

The conclusions included in this report are the result of the nine interviews held by guidance professionals who carry out their activities in different geographical areas and in different sectors (school, work, vocational, etc.). Also, their activities were directed at different groups: unemployed workers, employed workers, persons at risk of exclusion, students in school, etc.). We feel that this factor was more enriching in light of the analysis of the results obtained, despite the fact that the general view of the professionals regarding the e-guidance practitioner profile was similar.

All those interviewed agreed that guidance practitioners use ICT tools in their activities, some tools more than others (such as web pages, email, or the telephone) but the use of these tools is undoubtedly a fact, not only of daily life, but also in this vocational sector.

There is also a general view regarding the scant or non-existent specific training to acquire ICT skills for guidance professionals, despite the proliferation in recent years of training actions in the area of the new information and communications technologies.

This is due in part to the lack of recognition of this discipline. Public authorities do not promote training actions in this field because they still do not consider the figure of the guidance practitioner to be essential, especially in regard to the development of integrated guidance services (indispensable services for providing information, counseling, and guidance at all stages of life and for all people).

In terms of the ICT skills map, those interviewed considered the classification and description to be quite concise and clear, which could be helpful in terms of the development of specific training in ICT tools for guidance professionals.

The distribution of a more attractive and specific map model would be helpful, especially taking into account that its content could be understood and assimilated by people not as closely tied to this vocational sector.

Another positive aspect considered was that based on the map of ICT skill as a reference framework, a partial or full certification system (at the European level) for ICT skills for e-guidance professionals could start to be developed.

The biggest obstacle for the adoption of the standardized vocational profile of the professionals who use ICT is the lack of recognition of the figure of the guidance practitioner. This is being transferred to the programs and measures that are being developed to promote training actions (both initial, as well as continuous and occupational), institutional support in guidance projects, the publicity and management of existing guidance services (and the possibility of creating them), certification and validation of skills and the possibility of adopting a vocational profile of e-guidance practitioners.

For this reason, it is very important that the results of the project be publicized, not only within the guidance sector (where the distribution of the information will depend on

coordination and online work) but also in different sectors related to it, such as education, training, and labor.

The idea is for the innovative and experimental guidance projects, like ICT Skills, to not only be known within a vocational context, but for the general population to become aware of them and to demand the figure of the guidance practitioner as a real necessity at any stage of life. This would make it possible for public institutions to support, value, and promote quality guidance services in which the ICT are consolidated as essential tools in the guidance process.

6. NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

All of the practitioners interviewed said that the ICT Skills 2 Project is very interesting, not only because of the impact that could be generated by the publicizing of the results and the objectives achieved, but also because of what would be learned by participating in it. Participation as guidance professionals in the preparation of this interview facilitates reflection and updating of knowledge, in addition to providing us with information on the current situation in this discipline and the general outlook of this figure.

They also agreed that this participation would depend on the adaptation and relation between the vocational profile of each one and the specific tasks on which they could collaborate. In this sense, they all indicated that they were interested and motivated to increase their knowledge of the project and the possible specific collaboration actions.

Also, all of the guidance professionals have a network of contacts, either internal (other professionals in their companies) or external (professionals with which they collaborate or institutions with which they work online), to whom they would be interested in passing on the results of the project, such as private entities with which FOREM collaborates, public employment and training institutions, universities, territorial Forems, etc.

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