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Quality Assurance in Learning Organization in the Banking & Financial Sector in Europe

QUALOBSTER PROJECT LU/07/LLP-LdV/TOI-156005

Partners



Hochschule für
Wirtschaft und Recht Berlin
Berlin School of Economics and Law



ZBS¹ Združenje bank Slovenije
The Bank Association of Slovenia

Relay Partners



Many thanks to all who have contributed with their professionalism to the achievement of this volume.

Mario Spatafora
EBTN President

Quality Assurance in Learning Organisation in the Banking & financial Sector in Europe

QUALOBSTER PROJECT

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1. FOREWORD

The Laboratory of Innovation is an innovative tool designed by EBTN and Partner's Project within Qua.lobster Project (Quality Assurance in Learning Organisation in the Banking & Financial Sector in Europe) that aims to create a virtual community of practice, to foster the exchange of ideas between the various involved actors, to facilitate the sharing of resources such as documents, texts, questionnaires and make them accessible to the whole virtual community.

The major innovation of this tool is that it fits into a context of lifelong learning through the support of every single user who becomes the main actor of a constant changing knowledges.

The Laboratory of Innovation is an interactive site, a powerful device for exchange and cooperation in line with a context, as today's, continually evolving, that requires flexibility, immediacy and friendly use in the movement of informations.

A context where both the training and the online communication have come to the right in the life of every person and are an important part in the future of modern knowledge.

In line with these principles, the Laboratory of Innovation does not stop with the end of this Project but aims to also become a fundamental element for the future activities of EBTN.

2. INTRODUCTION

New demands for the organisations: The power of learning, quality and diversity

Deregulation, reducing or dismantling the monopolies, and the privatization of state owned companies were factors that contributed to increasing the fluidity of markets and competition, leading to a widespread rush to globalization.

In this new context, the internationalization of markets and competition brought many challenges to everyday's life.

Organisations face the need to adjust in a rapidly changing environment. Such concepts like “*learning organisations*”, “*quality assurance*” and “*diversity management*” gained importance in the organisational world. On the other hand the necessity of continuous improvement fostered learning and the benchmark of “best practices”.

Through learning we reperceive the world and our relationship to it and we have the opportunity to become able to do something we never were able to do. Through learning we extend our capacity to create.

Organisations that acquires knowledge and innovation fast enough are more likely to survive and thrive in a rapidly changing environment.

A **learning organisation** creates a culture that encourages and supports continuous employee learning, critical thinking, risk taking with new ideas, allows mistakes and values employee contributions, learns from experience and experiment, and disseminates the new knowledge throughout the organisation for incorporation into day-to-day activities. In other words, we can say that a learning organization is “an organization that is continually expanding its capability to create its future”. (Senge, 1990).

Quality assurance, regarded as a critical issue among EBTN members led to the development of several projects on this subject, which Eurobanqua is a good

example. In fact, Eurobanqua project helped to identify areas of potential development for the Financial Services Sector (FSS), by defining ten guidelines for quality assurance, based upon a model with a circular progression, which guarantees that all actions are part of a “virtuous cycle”.

Quality assurance reflects the application of a methodology to assure and to monitor the achievements of pre-defined objectives for quality, in order to manage organisational changes.

Managing diversity means valorising the aspects related to diversity such as gender, culture, working experience and mind set which can bring added value to the organisation.

Diversity management is the planning and implementation of organizational systems and practices to manage people so that the potential advantages of diversity are maximized while its potential disadvantages are minimized (Cox, 1993).

Promote team learning

Creativity leads to innovation and represents a key feature to personal and occupational development and a driver in the promotion of entrepreneurship, social skills and the well being of individuals in society.

The European Year of Creativity and Innovation is an initiative of the European Commission with the involvement of many EU organisations, aiming at building bridges between arts and technology and the business world, linking the two concepts in several areas such as schools, universities, public and private organisations.

The activities of the Year comprise campaigns and information dissemination, promotion of good practices, debates, meetings, conferences and a number of projects at regional, national and European level.

Meeting this challenge, within the Qualobster project it will be created the

Laboratory of Innovation. This will be a virtual space where different Banks will meet to share their best practices through a Benchmarking approach. It will encourage collaboration among different stakeholders and it will be a place for team learning, collaboration and production of new knowledge.

The Laboratory of Innovation, supported by Internet, will be accessible to all Bank associations interested in confronting themselves with other organisations throughout Europe, and fosters the ultimate objective to involve as many countries as possible in achieving the widest and most comprehensive overview as well as learning experience available, at the moment, in the F.S. sector in Europe.

How to get started

To participate in this project and benefit from the cooperation with other organisations, each organisation must fill in an Identity Card, a form where its main characteristics should be included.

The organisation will then receive the Self-Assessment Questionnaire and Briefing Guidelines that will help to accomplish the self-diagnosis of the organisation. In alternative, a Briefing Session might be scheduled. That diagnosis is the first step in order to understand the current state of the organisation, in what concerns learning organisation, quality assurance and diversity management issues.

After collecting the questionnaires, each organisation will promote a collective face to face interview (Focus Group) to identify if there are discrepancies among the answers referring to the same topic, and then discuss them. This discussion group can also be helpful to collect opinions about the tool.

The organisation will be invited to find and point out its strong and weak points, and to design an improvement plan. All the data collected will represent a “case study” that can be posted in the Laboratory of Innovation.

The case study gives access to the Laboratory of Innovation and to a new tool, the “Benchmarking Questionnaire”, in order to enable benchmarking between

similar organisations. The answers gathered by this new tool can be compared within the virtual space of the Lab, where several kinds of reports are provided.

“GOD WILLS, MAN DREAMS, THE WORK IS BORN”

FERNANDO PESSOA (1888-1935),

Portuguese poet and writer

3. ABOUT THE QUA.LOBSTER PROJECT

3.1 Project objectives, aims and key target

The Financial Services Sector (FSS) is one of the key areas in the EU economy and society. FSS institutes need to adapt in response to a changing global environment; this takes management to invest also in training, being human resources one of the main assets for sustained competitive advantage.

QUA.LOBSTER (*QUALITY ASSURANCE IN LEARNING ORGANISATION IN THE BANKING & FINANCIAL SECTOR IN EUROPE*) adapts and transfers the benchmarking system.

This will represent a useful tool for FSS organisations to assess their development stage towards the Learning Organisation model and to devise strategic actions to become a Learning Organisation.

In this context QUA.LOBSTER wants to adapt and transfer the benchmarking system. This will set the conditions for its extensive use as a support tool for FSS organisations in assessing their own development stage towards the Learning Organisation model, and in devising appropriate strategies and actions to increase effectiveness and become a Learning Organisation.

QUA.LOBSTER embeds a Quality Assurance approach in the benchmarking system, with expected benefits in terms of quality of the training provision and of Human Resources active role within FSS organisations. This will improve Diversity Management by fostering organisational learning.

QUA.LOBSTER's objectives are:

- to enhance the innovative potential of the benchmarking approach to the banking and financial services sector where the role of Human Resources is increasingly considered as an organisational asset to nurture and develop continuously to apply the benchmarking approach to the FSS;
- to improve Diversity Management using a tool based on Learning Organisation and Quality Assurance criteria;
- to define a suitable and validated benchmarking approach and tool;
- to create a European-wide laboratory for innovation as a virtual community of practice;
- to apply the European Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF);

- to increase the cooperation between institutions or organisations;
- to facilitate the development of innovative practices in the field of vocational education and training (VET);
- to improve the transparency of qualifications and competences.

The partnership, led by the EBTN, has the capacity to carry out and valorise this Project by activating the EU-wide sectorial network, as regards the professional sector as well as the broad community of research organisations exploring the evolutionary trends of the Lifelong Learning paradigm and of the Quality Assurance concepts and practices. QUA.LOBSTER is expected to generate impact in terms of: enhanced self-reflection capacity on organisational practices concerning learning, training, Diversity Management and intercultural management; better understanding of quality implications of learning and training provisions at organisational level.

In the medium-term, the proposed benchmarking system and the embedded Quality Assurance perspective should also improve the capacity of individuals to identify learning opportunities and to make the most out of them so to enhance organisational performance.

- ***QUA.LOBSTER aims*** at improving the quality of training provisions in the FSS, integrating the existing benchmarking approach and tool for the Learning Organisation with Quality Assurance principles and methods. This is expected to improve Diversity Management practices, by fostering organisational learning and enhanced continuous professional development programmes.
- ***The primary target group*** comprises Trainers, Human Resources Specialist and other Professional working for the promotion of the Learning Organisation in Human Resources Development, Organisational Development and Organisation Departments, in the Banking and Financial Services Sector.

This holds particularly true in the countries addressed by the transfer of innovation (Luxembourg, Portugal and Slovenia).

The Project also addressed the needs of employees who will benefit from the improved training provisions due to the application of quality management tools and taking into account the results of the benchmarking exercise.

The first beneficiaries of the Project will be FSS organisations in the participant countries. It is planned that thanks to the envisaged guidelines for Transferability, the QUA.LOBSTER model will be ready for being transferred to other FSS organisations in other Europe Members States.

This transfer will be facilitated thanks to the EBTN large and consolidated network and the role of its member organisations in European Countries.

3.2 About the Partners

3.2.1 EBTN – European Banking & Financial Services Training Association

History

The European Bank Training Network A.s.b.l. (EBTN) which changed its name into “European Banking & Financial Services Training Association” in 2007, was established on November 4, 1991 as a non-profit organization made up of the main banking and financial training institutes in Europe. The Association is established for an unlimited duration.

EBTN’s registered office is in Luxembourg. The location of its Secretariat is established on a rotating basis by the General Meeting. Since 2005 the Association “EFFEBI” in Rome (Italy) has been designated as Secretariat. In 1996 the European Bank Training Network (EBTN) and the International Foundation for Computer-based Education in Banking and Finance (IFCEB) joined forces and decided to create a common permanent structure while keeping their own legal identities, in order to create synergies within the framework of an organized co-operation.

- On January 1st, 1998 EBTN and IFCEB merged into one organization, the “new” EBTN. The main objectives of the organization are:
- To accredit and/or certify Degrees, Diplomas and Qualifications in the fields of banking and financial services.
- To promote and co-ordinate actions related to banking and financial services education and training activities with the main aim of developing the professionalism of employees in the banking and financial services sectors.

- To research and establish whether and how a European wide approach to banking and financial services education and training could enhance and add value to the individual approaches of Members.
- To organize conferences, workshops, meetings and study visits and to promote studies, research, projects and publications in the fields of banking and financial services and the related educational area in order to enhance constantly the professionalism of the banking and financial services sectors.
- To liaise with the EU authorities in matters relating to banking and financial services education and training.
- To promote, through education and training, the harmonization of the banking and financial services sectors within the EU and other Countries in Europe.
- To co-ordinate joint activities of the Members where appropriate and to manage the funds at its disposal for these activities.
- To promote programmes based on EU directives.
- To promote interest in and facilitate the exchange of information on the development of multimedia applications in education and training for the banking and financial services sectors of Member Countries.

3.2.2 SCIENTER – Research & Training Services Provider Centre

SCIENTER is a research centre and service provider organisation, active in the field of education and training. It is a non-profit making consortium, which was set up in January 1988. Both Italian and other European public and private organisations involved in training systems innovation have joined it.

SCIENTER is interested in innovation of training systems, with main reference to the field of elearning and organisational learning.

It develops research projects at regional, national, and European level in the following areas: training needs analysis; design and development of open and flexible learning systems; organisational learning design and implementation; training of trainers for the use of new methodologies and new technologies; research and selection of learning materials; market analysis in education and training, particularly concerning the use of new technologies and e-Learning across

all sectors and segments (with sound experience in the vocational and corporate training fields). Its main areas of activities are:

- ∞ Analysis and assessment of local development as well as training and education policies;
- ∞ Training needs and labour market analysis;
- ∞ Innovation of training action methodologies, with special reference to actions design, monitoring, documentation and assessment;
- ∞ Innovation of training pathways by means of Information and Communication Technologies;

SCIENTER takes action in *training and education systems innovation processes*, with special reference to the fields of e-Learning, organizational learning, technology transfer in education, training needs analysis and training design, e-Learning policy analysis, assessment and benchmarking, e-Learning market analysis, training analysis in corporate and vocational settings, future studies in the field of education and training in close co-operation with similar Italian and European public and private organisations.

SCIENTER is equipped with a network of 20 researchers and collaborators grouped in 4 Organisation Units:

- ∞ Learning Technologies Observatory
- ∞ Support to innovation and Policy assessment
- ∞ Knowledge Society and Social Inclusion
- ∞ Training design and assessment

The activities that are traditionally carried out by SCIENTER at a European level, especially those provided by the European Observatory on Education and Training Policies and on Education Technologies, are carried out with the contribution by the European Union (Co-funding Principle).

SCIENTER working languages include the five main European languages (English, French, German, Italian and Spanish).

SCIENTER's expertise with particular reference to the area of e-Learning and Training, HR development and competence certifications has been developed in 20 years of projects for different sectors, among which the Banking and Financial sector is one in which SCIENTER is the most present.

3.2.3 HWR Berlin – University of Economics and Law

Providing the expertise for the new generation of private and public sector managers

The Berlin School of Economics and Law (BSEL) was founded on 1 April 2009 through the merger of the Berlin School of Economics (BSE) and the FHVR Berlin, a university of applied sciences for administration and law. The new Berlin School of Economics and Law (BSEL) decisively strengthens the German capital's position as a location for tertiary level education and research.

The BSEL is one of the largest Universities of Applied Sciences in the city. It can leverage over 30 years of expertise and experience from both former Universities, each widely recognised as expert in their own fields. In the course of the merger, the specialised disciplines within the individual Universities have been strengthened and expanded. While the programmes at the Berlin School of Economics (BSE) and University of Applied Sciences for Administration and Law (FHVR) were already prominent in their field in Berlin, throughout Germany and, in many cases, internationally, the Berlin School of Economics and Law (BSEL) aims to further evolve and promote these competences.

The University has an academic staff of approximately 160 professors and 500 lecturers, plus nearly 230 research and administrative personnel, committed to realising these goals.

3.2.4 IFB – The Portuguese Bank Training Institute

Mission Statement

The Portuguese Bank Training Institute (IFB), with The Portuguese School of Bank Management (ISGB), is the body of the Portuguese Bank Association (APB) that provides ongoing training and specialised higher education. Its mission is to strengthen the culture of the profession and support the development of the Portuguese financial sector by improving the qualifications of its human resources.

IFB Targets

The targets of the IFB's services and products are essentially employees of the APB's member banks. The range of training offered by the IFB is designed for this target population and is segmented as follows:

- **Training of Candidates:** young people aged from 15 to 25 with the 9th or 12th grade, depending on the course, who are candidates for banking jobs;
- **Basic Training:** new employees and those with some experience, management staff, commercial assistants and account managers;
- **Intermediate Training:** managers, middle managers and specialists with substantial professional experience;
- **Higher Education:** professionals from the financial and other sectors and young people completing their secondary education and wishing to obtain academic qualifications in the area of banking;
- **Post-higher Education:** Courses for executives, conferences, seminars.

IFB Profile & Quality standards

IFB is a “banking academy” providing the sector with a flexible range of consistent, integrated training allowing lifelong learning. In fact the IFB provides vocational training for candidates for banking jobs and new recruits and specialised ongoing professional training for bank employees.

The higher education awarding foundation and honours degrees is offered through the ISGB, which also provides post-graduate and executive courses.

The next figure illustrates the IFB/ISGB “broadband” training offer:

Bank Candidates Training	Vocational training	Higher education	Post-higher education
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apprenticeship<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Level 3- Level 4• Education -Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Elementary• Intermediate• Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Honours degrees• Post-graduate courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Courses for executive• Conferences• Seminars

Besides the standard catalogue offer, IFB develops tailor-made programmes according to each client training needs. IFB clients are asked to present a proposal that best suits their needs in terms of subject, date, duration, place, trainee's background, assessment, methodology and many others aspects of the course they want to implement. IFB will do its best to contemplate their suggestions when designing the course.

The IFB offers its trainees flexible training methods to enrich their learning process with a permanent connection between the “academic” and the “professional” components. IFB have a multidisciplinary team including technical, pedagogical, multimedia experts and informatics, who, in a team work, produce teaching materials adapted to the different training IFB methodologies face-to-face, apprenticeship and distance learning (paper-based, e-learning and b-learning).

3.2.5 B.A.S. – The Bank Association of Slovenia

The Bank Association of Slovenia is organised as an Economic Interest Association pursuant to the Law on Commercial Companies, whose primary objectives are to promote the development of banking and financial activities, to improve operations of its members and to establish good business practices and business ethics.

The bodies of the Association include the Annual General Meeting, Supervisory Board and the Managing Director of the Association. The Bank Association of Slovenia has 36 members; 21 banks, 2 saving banks and 13 leasing companies. The Association is financed by membership fee, with the exception of training activities which are fully financed by participation fees for training offered by Training Centre of the Association.

The Association is actively involved in cooperation with the government institutions, particularly with the Ministry of Finance and national committees in the preparation of legislation on banking and finance. With the Central bank, the Association collaborates in preparing the new secondary legislation and other banking issues.

According to the Articles of Agreement the main activities of the Association are:

- to promote the common interests of its members making representation on their behalf before state bodies, monetary authorities, financial organisations and other associations;
- to advise and propose measures designed to foster uniformity of contract agreements and other legal acts in the area of banking operations and other financial activities;
- to advise and propose measures for fostering the uniformity and upgrading the operations of the members, their organisational set-up, operational technology and standardisation;
- to provide financial and legal consulting;
- to engage experts on behalf of its members;
- to assign tasks within the framework of projects in the area of research and development of financial consulting and banking;
- to organise professional training of banking personnel;
- to organise information and publishing activities.

3.3 The Relay Partners:

3.3.1 NLB - Nova Ljubljanska Banka d.d.

Nova Ljubljanska Banka d.d., Ljubljana (NLB) is a part of the NLB Group, which is the largest Slovenian banking and financial group with a special interest in further expansion into South-eastern European markets. As of December 31, 2008, the group consisted of NLB and 54 banks and companies and, in addition, a branch and tree NLB representative offices abroad. At the end of 2008, the entire NLB Group, including associated and controlled companies, employed a total of 9.435 employees, with 4.168 or 44% working abroad.

3.3.2 Caixa Central de Credito Agricola Mutuo

The Group Crédito Agrícola (CA) is a financial group of national scope, composed by a large number of local banks – Caixas de Crédito Agrícola Mútuo (CCAM) – e by specialized companies, in which the central structure is the Caixa Central de Crédito Agrícola Mútuo (Caixa Central), banking institution, also

responsible for the supervision, orientation and accompaniment of the Associated CCAM. Alongside with Caixa Central, FENACAM is the institution responsible for the cooperative representation of the Group and is also a specialized services provider.

With 92 CCAM and more than 670 branches in all the national territory, more than 400.000 Associates and more than 1 million clients, the Group CA is one of the major Portuguese banking groups.

The CA is an EACB-European Association of Co-operative Banks member, organisation composed by 28 members institution, representing 4200 locally operating banks, 50 million members and 750.000 employees.

All the CA activity is based on the CCAM – entities that really support and promote the growth of the local economies - which, with their autonomy and integration on each specific region, has a profound knowledge of each economic sector reality and the challenges that they face towards economic and social progress at local level.

3.3.3 DEXIA

Dexia is a European bank, with 36,760 members of staff and a core shareholders' equity of EUR 17.5 billion as of December 31, 2008. Dexia Group focuses on Public and Wholesale Banking, providing local public finance actors with comprehensive banking and financial solutions, and on Retail and Commercial Banking in Europe, mainly Belgium, Luxembourg and Turkey.

3.4 National overview of the receiving countries

National overview of the Banking Sector in Slovenia

Description of the Banking Sector in Slovenia

The Slovenian financial system (excluding the central bank) had financial assets of 177% of GDP at the end of the third quarter in 2007. Compared with the euro area, the Slovenian financial system is still rather weak and is slowly catching up with the depth of the euro area; the contributing factors include a lower level of wealth, that Slovenia's institutionalised capital market has barely 15 years of

experience and that the notable development of institutional investors has only recently begun. The ratio of financial assets to GDP in Slovenia increased by 18 percentage points over the first three quarters of 2007, having increased by almost the same amount over the first two quarters in the euro area.

Table 1: Overview of the Slovenian financial sector in terms of total assets:

	Assets (EUR million)		Structure (%)		% of GDP		No. of inst.	
	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007
Monetary financial inst. ¹	34,080	42,450	72,3	73,2	111,9	126,6	25	27
Non-monetary financial inst.	13,044	15,508	27,7	26,8	42,8	46,2		
Insurers ²	3,895	4,959	8,3	8,6	12,8	14,8	15	16
Pension companies/funds	893	1,001	1,9	1,7	2,9	3,0	11	10
Investment funds	2,845	4,138	6,0	7,1	9,3	12,3	106	116
Leasing Companies	4,041	4,041	8,6	7,0	13,3	12,0	20	20
BHs, MCs, others ³	1,370	1,370	2,9	2,4	4,5	4,1	-	-
Total	47,123	57,958	100,0	100,0	154,8	172,8		

Note: ¹Excludes the central bank

² The total assets figure relates to the end of the third quarter of 2007

³ The total assets figures are for the end of 2006 only

Source: Bank of Slovenia

The commercial banks account for a prevailing proportion of about 70% of the Slovenian financial system's assets (excluding the central bank). This is significantly higher than the figure of 57% in the euro area overall, where other financial intermediaries (including investment funds and leasing companies) and the insurance sector still play a larger role than in Slovenia.

The assets of other financial intermediaries and banks are increasing: the latter mainly as a result of the high demand for lending generated by the recent high economic growth, which the banks have mostly financed using foreign resources.

Banks maintain a prevailing position in the banking sector's structure with a 99.4% share at the end of 2007, measured by total assets. The remaining market share was divided among the savings banks. Banks had total assets of EUR 42.2 billion, while those of savings banks stood at EUR 255.2 million.

The total assets of banks were thus equivalent to 126% of GDP, those of savings banks to 0.8% of GDP, and those of non-monetary financial institutions to around 45% of GDP.

Table 2: Total assets of banks compared with GDP

	2004	2005	2006	2007
Total assets (EUR million)	23,691	29,287	33,868	42,195
GDP – current prices (EUR million)	26,677	28,243	30,448	33,542
Total assets as % of GDP	88.8	103.7	111.2	125.8
Ratio in growth of total assets and GDP	1.5	4.0	2.0	2.4
Number of employees in banks	11,534	11,632	11,838	

Source: Bank of Slovenia

In December 2007, the number of banks operating in Slovenia was 21, of which 8 subsidiary banks. In addition there were also 3 savings banks and 3 branches operating in 2007.

Eight subsidiary banks and three branches were under foreign majority ownership in 2007, five banks were under full domestic ownership and eight under a majority domestic ownership (of these eight banks two had less than 2% of foreign equity).

Table 3: Ownership structure of the Slovenian banking sector (% of equity)

	31/12/2005	31/12/2006	31/12/2007
Non-residents (over 50% control)	19.4%	27.7%	26.7%
Non-residents (under 50% control)	15.5%	10.0%	11.0%
Central government	18.2%	17.9%	15.1%
Other domestic entities	46.9%	44.4%	47.2%

Source: Bank of Slovenia

Profitability of banks in the Slovenian banking system has increased in recent years. In 2007, the banks' return on equity grew by 1.2 percentage point and achieved 16.3%.

Table 4: Performance indicators of banks in percentages

(%)	2005	2006	2007
ROA	1.00	1.25	1.36
ROE	12.72	15.07	16.28
Costs/Gross Income	61.74	57.76	52.72
Interest margin per interest-bearing assets	2.62	2.37	2.31
Interest margin per total assets	2.42	2.19	2.15
Non-interest margin	1.60	1.67	1.64
Gross income/average assets ratio	4.02	3.86	3.79

Source: Bank of Slovenia

The market shares of domestic and foreign banks remain stable as a result of a steady growth in total assets. The domestic banks hold a 71% and the foreign banks a 28.9% market share.

Nova Ljubljanska Banka d.d., Ljubljana Group holds the largest share, namely over 33%, and Nova Ljubljanska Banka d.d., Ljubljana a 30.7% share.

Table 5: Total assets, growth rate and market shares of banks in Slovenia

Bank	Total assets 31.12.2007 (in EUR 000)	Nominal growth 2007/2006 (in %)	Market share 31/12/2007 (in %)
Nova Ljubljanska Banka d.d., Ljubljana	12,945,034	24.28	30.7
Nova Kreditna banka Maribor d.d., Maribor	4,218,792	14.98	10.0
Abanka Vipra d.d.	3,439,008	20.17	8.2
Banka Celje d.d.	2,305,449	17.64	5.5
SKB banka d.d.	2,295,677	10.08	5.4
Banka Koper d.d., Koper	2,239,211	20.09	5.3

UniCredit Banka Slovenija d.d.	2,132,695	-2.50	5.1
Hypo Alpe-Adria-Bank d.d.	1,906,206	68.30	4.5
Gorenjska banka d.d., Kranj	1,732,976	16.14	4.1
Raiffeisen banka d.d.	1,259,559	31.51	3.0
SID banka d.d., Ljubljana	1,248,711	0.00	3.0
Probanka d.d.	1,041,857	29.47	2.5
Banka Sparkasse d.d.	886,628	23.39	2.1
Dezelna banka Slovenije d.d.	756,905	24.12	1.8
Factor banka d.d.	630,760	20.01	1.5
Postna banka Slovenije d.d.,NKBM Banking Group	626,309	10.85	1.5
Volksbank-Ljudska banka d.d.	618,324	27.55	1.5
Bawag banka d.d.	596,297	54.92	1.4
NLB Banka Domzale d.d.*	451,177	4.59	1.1
NLB Koroska banka d.d.*	364,453	3.19	0.9
NLB Banka Zasavje d.d.*	257,012	1.00	0.6
BKS bank AG, bank branch	196,194	100.37	0.5
Zveza bank, Ljubljana branch	22,776	94.16	0.1
RCI Banque Societe Anonyme, bank branch	22,709	0.00	0.1
Total	42,194,719	24.58	100.0

* Banks becoming part of Nova Ljubljanska banka d.d., Ljubljana as of 1 January 2008

Source: Bank of Slovenia

NLB Group is the largest Slovenian banking and financial group. As of December 31, 2007 it comprised 17 banks and one branch abroad, 11 leasing companies, 11 factoring and forfeiting companies, 5 insurance companies, 1 asset management company, 17 companies performing other activities and 3 representative offices abroad. The Group is present in South-eastern and in Western and Central Europe.

The number of employees in banks at the end of 2007 was 11,860. The largest bank, Nova Ljubljanska Banka d.d., Ljubljana employs 3,548 people, i.e. nearly 30% of all employees in banking. The table below shows that 74.1% of employees in banks are women and only 25.9% men.

Table 6: Number of employees in banks

EMPLOYEES IN BANKS AS AT 31				
Dec. 2007	31/12/2007			
Bank	Men	Women	Total	%
Nova Ljubljanska Banka d.d., Ljubljana	931	2,617	3,548	29.91568
Nova Kreditna banka Maribor, Maribor d.d.	304	1,193	1,497	12.62226
SKB banka d.d.	247	662	909	7.664418
Abanka Vipava d.d.	208	663	871	7.344013
Banka Koper d.d., Koper	193	624	817	6.888702
Banka Celje d.d.	112	493	605	5.10118
UniCredit Banka Slovenija d.d.	170	281	451	3.802698
Deželna banka Slovenije d.d.	77	334	411	3.46543
Gorenjska banka d.d., Kranj	103	305	408	3.440135
Raiffeisen banka d.d.	126	235	361	3.043845
Hypo - Alpe - Adria bank d.d.	114	219	333	2.807757
Probanka d.d.	98	160	258	2.175379
Banka Sparkasse d.d.	92	140	232	1.956155
Poštna banka Slovenije d.d., NKBM Banking Group	56	168	224	1.888702
NLB Koroška banka d.d. *	43	163	206	1.736931
NLB Banka Domžale d.d. *	27	165	192	1.618887
Ljudska banka – Volksbank d.d.	73	110	183	1.543002
NLB Banka Zasavje d.d. *	30	144	174	1.467116
SID banka, Ljubljana d.d.	22	47	69	0.581788
Factor banka d.d.	21	46	67	0.564924
BKS Bank AG, bank branch	9	15	24	0.202361
Bawag banka d.d.	11	9	20	0.168634
TOTAL	3,067	8,793	11,860	100

* Banks becoming part of Nova Ljubljanska banka d.d., Ljubljana as of 1 January 2008

Source: Reports by banks, members of the Bank Association of Slovenia

There is a strong believe in Slovenian banks that permanent training and staff qualification is a key factor in attainment of their set business goals.

Training systems differ from bank to bank in line with their business policy and internal organisation. Certain banks have set up the so-called training centres, schools or departments etc., responsible for staff training and development, while others use services of specialised training institutions.

The banks make use of both internal and external training. Internal training comprises training organised in the bank (seminars, workshops,...). The trainers conducting internal training courses may be either bank employees or external trainers engaged by banks for a particular training. Internal training seminars are usually adjusted to a bank or a group of employees to ensure a higher level of practical application of new skills.

In addition to internal training the bank employees also attend the external training, mainly of a more general nature, not particularly adapted to the needs and wishes of a specific bank. The topics of seminars, workshops and other types of training are in line with the latest developments in the banking sector.

The Training Centre of the Bank Association of Slovenia plays an important role in the provision of training to bank employees and other employees in the financial sector. In cooperation with the Training Committee at the Bank Association of Slovenia, whose members are HRM representatives of the Bank Association of Slovenia's member banks, pursuing the training needs in their institutions; the Training Centre ensures a quality and timely transfer of skills to the employees in banking and other employees in the financial sector.

In addition to functional training the banks also support formal education of their employees and they may fully or partially cover tuition fees to their employees, grant them sabbatical leave and other benefits.

Practices towards Learning Organization and Quality Assurance

Learning Organisation

The Learning Organisation concept has been well investigated and documented in Slovenia. Researchers have published their articles in journals and

on thematic web pages and a number of conferences and seminars have been held. A more complex source of information, however, is provided by books as well as diploma and master theses covering this field.

The Centre for Organisational and Human Resources Research at the Faculty of Social Sciences within the Ljubljana University is one of the central research institutions involved in the international project on Integration of Work and Learning. The project was financed by the ETF (European Training Foundation). The researchers taking part in the project came from Slovenia, Hungary, Germany and the Netherlands. They designed various work and learning integration forms in companies and schools aimed at developing learning organisation concepts and practices.

At the Faculty of Economics in Ljubljana, two courses of studies are provided concerning learning organisation, namely »learning organisation« for undergraduates and »learning organisation and knowledge management« for postgraduates.

However, the learning organisation concept is not developed only theoretically. In 2000, the Institute for Learning Company Development (‘USP Institute’) was set up by 16 successful Slovenian companies in order to develop the learning organisation concept in practice at Slovenian companies and other organisations.

The Institute’s main objectives are the following:

- Provide assistance to organisations in creating a supportive environment for learning organisation and generating positive organisational energy,
- Encourage and train employees to develop innovative thinking,
- Develop new knowledge,
- Transfer knowledge,
- Implement changes,
- Team work, and
- Personal development.

Every year, the USP Institute grants “Moving Towards A Learning Organisation” recognitions to the top ten companies. Nova Ljubljanska Banka d.d.,

Ljubljana, taking part in the Qua.Lobster project, is one of the recipients of this recognition.

The USP Institute has developed the so called USP S-10 standard (Learning Organisation S-10 Standard) to be utilised by any company adopting the learning organisation concept as a method of achieving global competitiveness based on systematic learning, creativity and innovation. The above standard was created on the initiative of local companies – members of the USP Institute, seeking more precise indicators to allow planning and measuring the attained level of the learning organisation development concept.

Thus, the USP S-10 standard has become a comprehensive tool for planning and monitoring the development of companies towards learning organisations.

The learning organisation development is measured in accordance with the following USP S-10 standard elements:

- Vision of knowledge and learning,
- Management in a learning organisation,
- Business performance and attraction,
- Comprehensive, planned and systematic approach to acquiring knowledge,
- Measuring the efficiency of investment in knowledge,
- Personal and business opportunity for each employee,
- Planned development of organisational culture,
- Comprehensive and systematic approach to change management,
- Knowledge management, and
- Motivational environment.

The standard encourages companies to utilise assessments in order to regularly monitor their own progress. It also allows them to make comparison with other learning companies who are using the above mentioned standard.

Other institutions in Slovenia engaged in learning organisation research and promotion are Socius d.d., Slovenian Institute for Adult Education, GV,...

Quality Assurance

In the area of quality assurance and monitoring numerous papers have been written and seminars and workshops held. In 2007, for example, 4 conferences took place, one of which was international.

At the Scientific and Research Institute of the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana, the Quality and life - long education project is currently being conducted to be finalised at the end of this year.

The majority of the articles on Quality Assurance, however, refer to higher and formal education.

The Ministry of Education set up in 2003 a Commission for quality assurance in nurseries, primary and secondary schools and adult training organisations. The purpose of this commission was to identify best practices in quality development and monitoring in Slovenia and abroad through various forms of cooperation with schools and other institutions and to promote such best practises in a coordinated way in our educational system. The commission's plans included the preparation of draft indicators on quality, developing a website aimed at enhancing knowledge (a web classroom) and information on development of quality in education, preparation of quality development manual,..

In 1996, the National Higher Education Quality Assessment Commission was set up in Slovenia ('NKKVS'), with its legal basis for higher education quality assurance provided by the Higher Education Act. This Act required all higher education institutions to assess the quality of each institution, its courses as well as scientific & research, artistic and professional work. The Commission's main objective were to provide quality assurance and monitoring in higher education (use of self-assessment questionnaires on a yearly basis, workshops and seminars on higher education quality, training of staff and NKKVS members as well as members of commissions,...).

In 2006 the role of the evaluation body was assigned to The Higher Education Council of the Republic of Slovenia. In addition to the previously performed tasks it also assumed the higher education quality assurance. To this end, the criteria were adopted required for the membership in ENQA (European Network of Quality Assurance) as in line with the ENQA requirements, an independent body responsible for external assessment is to be established in each country.

The Senate for Evaluation at Higher Education Council of the Republic of Slovenia performs the tasks as follows:

- Form criteria for monitoring, establishing and assuring quality of higher education institutions, their courses, research & scientific as well as artistic and professional work,
- Form criteria for monitoring, establishing and assuring quality of schools of higher vocational education, their courses, research & scientific as well as artistic and professional work,
- Cooperate with higher education institutions and schools of higher vocational education and encourage the use of self-assessment,
- Cooperate with foreign assessment institutions or bodies,
- Organise training of external assessment committees,
- Analyse, prepare and publish reports on external assessments
- Collect and analyse self-assessment reports of higher education institutions and schools of higher vocational education,
- Conduct external assessment procedures and provide background documents,
- Appoint commissions for external assessment of higher education institutions and schools of higher vocational education, their courses, research & scientific as well as artistic and professional work,
- Control external assessment procedures, prepare relevant reports and encourage self-assessment of higher education institutions and schools of higher vocational education.

One of the most widely used quality assurance systems are internationally recognised and established ISO standards, successfully applied recently not only in manufacturing but also in service industry.

The quality management system in Slovenia is also prescribed by ISO 9001:2000 standard, comprising the following main parts:

- Quality management system
- Management responsibility
- Resource management
- Product realisation
- Measurement, analyses and improvement.

This standard stresses the focus of organisations on customers and the management's objective approach to decision-making. Its advantages include:

- It is a flexible management system,
- It is based on process rather than procedures,
- It promotes continuous improvement,
- It motivates individuals to achieve common goals and it ensures cooperation,
- It focuses on efficient internal communication,
- It requires training performance and quality management assessment.

A translation of the Guidelines for the application of ISO 9001:2000 in education is under preparation. The translation is expected to be published at the end of 2008.

To one of our member bank has been awarded the ISO 9001:2000 certificate.

To conclude, we can summarise by saying that both concepts, the Learning Organisation and Quality Assurance are well investigated and documented as well as established in practical use.

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National overview of the Banking Sector in Portugal

Overview over the Portuguese Banking Sector

«The Portuguese Financial Services Sector (FSS) is **solid, well managed, and competitive**.

Its comparison with other EU countries FSS shows a good ranking in what concerns to **efficiency, asset quality and solvability**».

“Portugal: Financial System, Stability, Assessment Country Report ”,
IMF – International Monetary Fund, October, 2006

In spite of the advanced development achieved by the banking sector in Portugal, where it is one of the most competitive, the companies in it cannot slow down their rate of improvement.

We have to recognise the growing importance of intangible assets, such as portfolios of customers and suppliers, structural capital (patents, processes, databases and networks) and human capital (employees’ competences and knowledge).

Increasing and consolidating the company’s stock of competences and fostering an increase in its employees’ capabilities are, today, a central goal for management in spite of the economic slowdown, or perhaps even because of it.

The vast developments in information and communication technologies and the internationalisation of economic areas have resulted in an abundance of information. However, this situation alone cannot guarantee the advancement of knowledge. Promoting it requires, on one hand, the existence of a corporate culture that is prepared to take on board intangible assets and, on the other hand, programmes that are suited to the specific needs of each segment of the available human resources.

Description

The Banking Sector in Portugal comprises around 38 banks, 5 Mutualist Banks and 125 Mutual Agricultural Credit Banks.

Is important to enhance that the five large universal groups operating in the Portuguese Banking Sector with multi-channel distribution represent:

- 71% of Market resources in Portugal;
- 68% of Loan Market Share in Portugal;
- 67% of the Total Assets of the sector.

The banks are universal banks and according to their own strategy can act in several sectors such as investment or retail.

As for ownership — share of foreign capital by countries —, CGD is S.A. of public capital ownership; all the others have private capital (national, foreigner, or both).

Opportunities and challenges

- The Portuguese Banks managed a deep restructuring of its HR with:
- Reduction of employees;
- Qualitative improvement of HR;
- Technological innovation and intensive use of IT.

The Portuguese banking sector is perfectly aware of the special, strategic role of vocational training and has continued to use it to develop its human resources and improve their qualifications.

However, the downsizing of personnel and budgetary restrictions imposed by the existing competition and operating conditions have led banks to reduce their demand for training services in comparison with previous years. This reduction has naturally affected both the Portuguese Bank Training Institute (IFB) and its Portuguese School of Bank Management (ISGB). They, in turn, have sought to guarantee the high standards of quality, suitability and opportunity with which they have always responded to the demand for their services.

As a whole, it has been a question of staying on the path to high performance taken by the two institutes and pursuing the ambitious objectives of constant improvement, adjusting services to actual and potential demand, promoting high

quality modernisation and innovation, optimising the use of available resources and never giving in to the most obvious solutions.

For the Banking Institutes, there are new market opportunities and new challenges coming.

The relevance of human resource development/training

Trends in employment

The recent years have been marked by the reorganization of several financial groups as well as by the decreasing in the number of banking employees. In a context moved by the redefinition of strategies and priorities, new competences and new behaviours are expected.

Touched by this environment, the human resources politics represented a real challenge to the banks, due to the fact that banks human resources possessed, a general low level of qualifications and training, not coping, at all, with the new functional exigencies.

Portuguese Banking Sector	1987	1995	2008
Number of employees	58 463	63 888	54 189
Number of branches	1 509	4 369	5 539
Average number of employees in the branches	39	15	10

Figure 1: Number of Employees and Branches in the Banking Sector

The number of branches have been increasing over the years, while the average number of employees in Portuguese branches have been decreasing (9,8 in 2008).

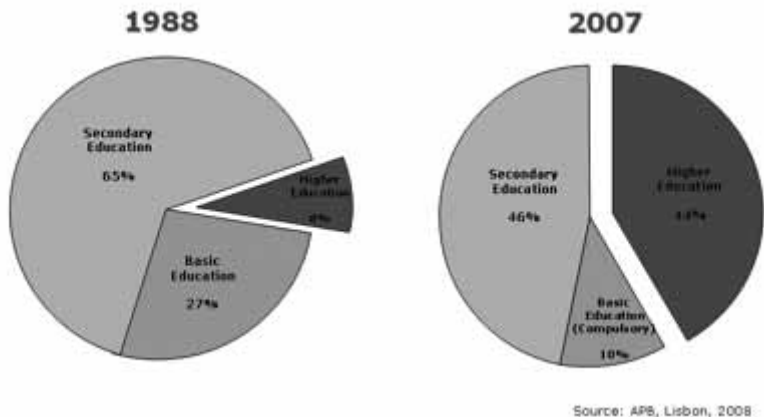


Figure 2: Improvement in Vocational Qualifications in the Portuguese Banking Sector

There has been an improvement in vocational qualifications in Portuguese Banking Sector, which means that in 2007 the banks reached a percentage of 44% of banking employees with higher education, as compared to a percentage of 8% banking employees with higher education in 1988.

Institutional environment

A slight increase in the number of female banking employees (44,5%), has been reached for the first time.

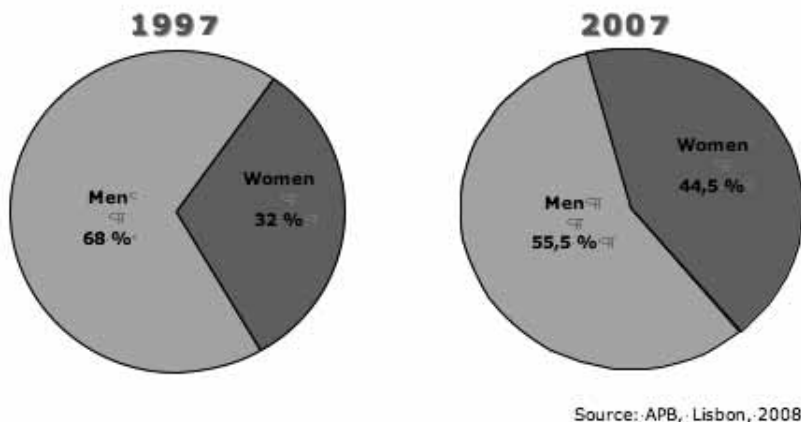


Figure 3: Evolution by Gender in the Banking Sector

One can observe, in fact, general tendencies in the sector, but the stress relies on the employed human resources qualifications improvement. This conclusion

can be reached not only by observing the increasing number of banking employees with higher level of education but also with the increasing of banking employees with specific functions.

Training practices

All banks have their own training structure, that support the internal training but all of them make use of outsourcing as well, whenever they consider they don't have proper know-how in a particular area. This outsourcing can be supplied by universities or training institutes or enterprises.

All the outsourcers try to keep up with new approaches in teaching and learning, taking advantage of the technologies at disposal. Thus, the training practices have been changing as well.

Training Practices - Methodologies	2005	2007
Classroom Training	82%	79%
Distance Learning (paper-based)	1%	4%
e-Learning	12%	15%
Outdoor Training	3%	0%
Other Training Activities	1%	2%
Σ	100%	100%
Number of Courses	10 745	10 136
Expenditure on Training (€ 1 000)	25 072	22 472
Out of which with External Entities	59%	60%

} + 4,6%

Figure 4: Comparison between 2005 and 2007 in terms of courses' methodology adopted, employees attendance and expenditure on training

e-Learning methodology emerged as a valuable way of learning anytime and anywhere. In fact, in the last few years, e-learning was adopted in a significant number of courses.

Banks and Financial Institutes maintain the investment in the qualification of their human resources. In 2008, the expenditure on training was over ? 25 million, and the number of courses was over 14.736, of which a significant number in external entities.

An average of 89% of the employees attended those courses.

The permanent markets' change and the growing competition have impact on the courses' contents. Training programmes aim to develop in bank sector's employees the competencies that are necessary to an optimal performance. Thus, training is looked upon as a fundamental component of banks' efficiency.

Approach to Quality Assurance and Learning Organisation

Quality at IFB and the role of certification

The Portuguese Bank Training Institute (IFB), together with its The Portuguese School of Bank Management (ISGB), belongs to the Portuguese Bank Association (APB) and is responsible for training and specialised higher education. The IFB has official certification from the **DGERT**, which is the state body responsible for certifying quality at training institutions.

The IFB is certified in the following areas:

- Planning of training courses and activities;
- Design of training courses, programmes, instruments and supports (with specific validation for distance learning);
- Organisation and promotion of training courses or activities (with specific validation for distance learning);
- Development and implementation of training courses and activities (with specific validation for distance learning).
- The IFB recognises quality as part of everyday practice, in order to be able to meet the high expectations of those using its services.

The IFB's quality policy is based on the following premises:

- The competence and dedication of its employees, combined with the experience

and prestige of the specialists, executives and academics making up the institute's teaching staff;

- The use of high-quality teaching materials produced within the framework of appropriate research and development policies;
- The use of state-of-the-art information and communication technologies, making it possible to create online student training and support processes;
- The principle of assessment and certification, with a view to lending consistency and credibility to the diplomas awarded, making them a truly meaningful credential for their holders, attesting to the level of knowledge acquired.

Listening to the Banking Sector

In order to matching the current demand, IFB has two main lines of action:

- The evaluation of training courses
- The close contact to participants and stakeholders

For better respond to the sector needs, it was established a Training Advisory Council.

The Training Advisory Council meets four times a year and constitutes an important interface between the IFB and the banks. Its members include representatives of training and human resource departments and trade unions in the sector.

Practices Towards a Learning Organisation

The Portuguese Bank Training Institute (IFB) and The Portuguese School of Bank Management (ISGB) have supported studies conducted by researchers that usually cooperate with these two Institutions. Some good examples of this work are the following:

Assistant Professor Teresa Pereira

Teresa Pereira is researcher and Assistant Professor at the Portuguese Banking Management School. She has published several articles in the Human Resources field.

Assistant Professor Maria do Rosário Cabrita

Maria do Rosário Cabrita is researcher at the Universidade Nova de Lisboa and Assistant Professor at the Portuguese Banking Management School and

Universidade Lusíada, in Lisbon. Involved in international projects, she also works as consultant in private and public sector. She has several years of experience in various management positions in international banks. She is member of the Editorial Board of the International Journal of Business and Systems Research and has published several articles in the intellectual capital field.

Maria do Rosário Cabrita received her PhD in Business Administration from the Institute of Economics and Business Administration, Lisbon Technical University. Her research interests are focused on concepts such as strategy, intellectual capital and human capital. In January 2005, Maria do Rosário received the Edvinson-Saint Onge's best paper award at the 26th McMaster World Congress. She was Conferencist at the 9th European Conference on Knowledge Management, in Southampton Solent University, Southampton, UK, that took place in 4th and 5th September 2008.

Literature

These two researchers have their studies published by national and international publications. Herewith are some examples of their studies:

Maria do Rosário Cabrita, Jorge Landeiro de Vaz, Nick Bontis (2007). Modelling the creation of value from intellectual capital: a Portuguese banking perspective. Int. J. Knowledge Learning 3 (2/3): 266-280.

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Teresa Pereira (2006). “Boas Práticas” de Gestão de Recursos Humanos. Estudo Empírico: Caracterização e Objectivos.

Conferences and Workshops

The Portuguese Bank Training Institute (IFB) and The Portuguese School of Bank Management (ISGB) are represented in conferences and other training related events like the following:

Maria João Lima e Paula Diogo

Presentation of Poster at: Challenges 2009 – VI International Conference on Information and Communication Technologies in Education – (In)Formal Learning in the Social Web, Universidade do Minho, Braga, PT, 14-15 May 2009

Paula Diogo

Conferencist at: 1st National Training Symposium
ISCTE, Lisbon, PT, 21-22 January 2009

Rita Machado

Conferencist at: 1st National Training Symposium
ISCTE, Lisbon, PT, 21-22 January 2009

Teresa Pereira

Conferencist at: 1st National Training Symposium
ISCTE, Lisbon, PT, 21-22 January 2009

Practical examples

There are some case studies conducted by Portuguese Universities related to learning organisations.

Example:

Ydreams – a technology company that was chosen because there was prior information of the existence of certain practices of learning that made this organisation become a good subject of research. The study is published in a Portuguese publication:

Franco, M. J. & Ferreira, T. S. (2007). Um estudo de caso sobre as organizações que aprendem. In *Comportamento Organizacional e Gestão*, 2007, VOL. 13, N.º 2, pp. 169-189.

See: <http://www.scielo.oces.mctes.pt/pdf/cog/v13n2/v13n2a03.pdf>

Conclusion

The rapid changes that continue to occur all over the world, intensifying the globalisation of economies and generating increasing competition between companies have increased the need for innovation and the demand for knowledge. As a result, in open markets, identifying and improving intellectual capital and managing knowledge are at the top of the list of company managers' concerns.

The Portuguese Bank Training Institute (IFB) and its Portuguese School of Bank Management (ISGB) continue to guarantee the high standards of quality, suitability and opportunity with which they have always responded to the demand for their services. This is a challenge that the IFB and the ISGB have to face from the sector to which they belong, where they are important, supportive partners of the banks and provide permanent support in the anticipation of training needs and the creation and provision of the necessary courses.

4. WHY THE LABORATORY OF INNOVATION

4.1 The concept and the practice of Laboratory of Innovation

The Laboratory of Innovation is a virtual space where different Banks meet to share their best practices through a Benchmarking approach. The choice of the Benchmarking approach aims at facilitate the collaboration among Organisations of the sector, providing them with a space and a tool easy to access, use and interpret.

Based on the Internet it is accessible to all Bank associations that are interest in confronting themselves with other organisations throughout Europe on different themes regarding the HR Management and Development, and also exploring other themes that might be crucial to share and discuss within the Banking sector.

In the starting phase the Country involved were 2, Portugal and Slovenia, represented by different Banks and the ultimate objective of the project and therefore of the Laboratory of Innovation is to start involving as many countries as possible in order to have the widest and most comprehensive learning experiences available at the moment in the Banking sector in Europe.

4.2 Definition and criteria of Learning Organisation, Quality Assurance & Diversity Management

- LEARNING ORGANIZATION

In a context characterized by globalisation, international competition and fast technological change, the focus on Human Resources development becomes strategic for the enterprises and for Banks Sector, in particular due to the importance of service provision and customer satisfaction.

The “learning” in a Learning Organization does not concern only individuals, but also take place in teams, and all the levels or the organizations with a continuous, strategically used process, integrated with and proceeding parallel to work developing the capacity of innovation and growth in the organizations. Learning Organization has strategic value in facilitating learning processes for its members and continuously transforming the organizations. So the implementation of

Learning Organization in the Banking Sector becomes necessary and implies the need of organisations to be adaptable, flexible and to incorporate total quality management systems into all processes.

To support this change it becomes relevant to redefine the contents of **leadership** and **empowerment**. *Leadership*, getting over the Taylor's theories based on the business results, as a new process aimed at favouring more autonomies, flexibility and managerial approaches is necessary to obtain competitive results.

The *Empowerment* as a process based on individual attitudes, collective models and entrepreneurial values. The components of this new meaning in a Learning Organization could be the following:

- autonomy
- flexibility
- business relationship culture
- internal creative capacity

Autonomy and flexibility may be more useful if we focus on the basic H.R. methodologies and then on the empowerment. The business relationship culture and internal creative capacity are the bases of a Learning Organization.

The Human Resources potential, together with the development of strategic people knowledge, will have a key-role in the future. In particular, the value on the market of the "front line" resources will be continuously amended as the market requires.

An increasing number of companies and organizations uses processes of total quality which are the natural way to implement a Learning Organization.



1. Learning approach to strategy

- Employee Relations Management (ERM) solutions
- Internal climate survey
- Formative evaluation approach to strategic and operational activities
- Openness to collect new ideas from staff (individuals and units)

2. Participative policy making

- Systemic approach to feedback and suggestions
- Transparency of the policy agenda (strategic planning)
- Contributions to the making of the policy agenda (strategic planning)

3. Access and transparency of information

- Circulation of information
- Existence/accessibility of ICT-based tools/mechanisms generating participation
- Existence/accessibility of traditional tools/mechanisms generating participation
- Possibility to have personalised information (tailor-made according to target groups' needs)

4. Formative approach to planning objectives and monitoring results

- Co-participation in setting (quantitative and qualitative) professional objectives
- Transparency of control and evaluation systems
- Analysis of external customers satisfaction
- Customer Relation Management (CRM) solutions

5. Internal exchange and dialogue

- Collaborative approaches to work
- Existence of support mechanisms providing advice and counselling in goal implementation
- Solutions for managing organisational knowledge
- Internal communication structure

6. Reward flexibility

- Existence of a specific reward and compensation system linked to innovation and individual performance

7. Inter-organisational learning

- Systematic ways for learning from others
- Ways in which the knowledge learned/skills acquired are processed to become the “capital” of the organisation

8. Professional development opportunities

- Management by competence
- Existence of mechanisms (tools and procedures) to support individual learning
- Periodic evaluation of HR based on competences
- Systematic ways to collect training needs and arrange coherent training plans at unit level

- QUALITY ASSURANCE

Quality Assurance (QA) is a methodology that, by focusing on corporate macro – processes instead of single procedures, allows a better control of internal quality, in particular in the initial and final phases of the process. QA assures the

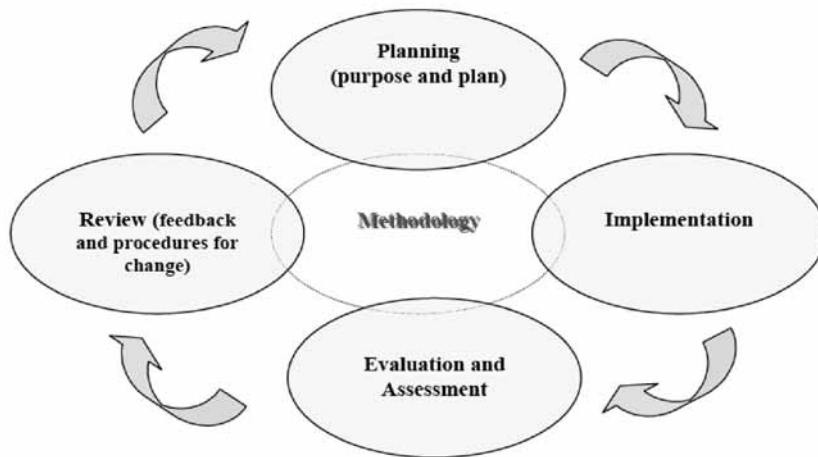
existence and effectiveness of processes that attempt to make sure that the expected levels of quality will be reached.

The Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF)

The CQAF includes the following interrelated elements:

- **Planning**
- **Implementation**
- **Evaluation and Assessment**
- **Review**

DIAGRAMM QUALITY ASSURANCE MODEL



“As result of an inquiry from EBTN, the EUROBANQUA project has developed “Ten Guidelines” meant to support the improvement of Quality Assurance in training Institutions of the FSS. The Ten Guidelines map the process of a quality cycle in accordance with the Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF), referring to the different phases”.

PLANNING

GUIDELINE 1¹

Establish a Responsible position for Quality Assurance management (appoint a Person or set up a Committee) within the Institution

The responsibility for Quality Assurance has to be structurally anchored in an organisation either as an individual position (quality management Representative) or as a Committee. Their task is to introduce the demands for Quality and to supervise the implementation of Quality processes. Although it is recommended the Quality management to be supported by External Advisors, a Responsible position within the Institution is an absolute prerequisite to ensure effective internal coordination.

GUIDELINE 2

Agreement on Objectives, including establishment of processes for monitoring and auditing results

Agreements on Objectives are a common element to all Quality Management Systems. To head successfully by those agreements they should cover all levels of the organisation, from the Top management level to the single workplace. All employees have to be informed about the strategic and operational quality objectives of the Institution. In addition, processes are essential to check the achievement of the mutually Agreed Objectives and to adjust Processes if necessary.

¹ All the Quality Assurance Guidelines are an extract of the EUROBANQUA Project (European Banking Network for Quality Assurance).

GUIDELINE 3

Express defined and agreed Objectives in term of department units and individual positions/functions

The objectives of an organisation have to be defined at all organisational and departmental levels and for individual positions or functions, otherwise they won't be implemented successfully. This demands an appropriate communication and information policy on the one hand and motivation, commitment and compliance of the employees on the other hand. It is of vital importance that plans and Objectives are translated into concrete plans, tasks and actions for departmental units and workplaces.

IMPLEMENTATION

GUIDELINE 4

Set Criteria for the selection of Teachers and trainers and match with the needs of the Trainees

Quality of training depends on highly qualified Trainers. Therefore highest possible care should be applied on the selection of Teachers, Trainers and Pedagogic Advisers. Quality standards can refer to their qualification and/or to their professional experience. The level of training courses and the teaching methods must fit the needs of the Trainees, too. They depend on the knowledge and abilities of the participants. The Selection of participants according to specific Criteria will help to successfully complete the training programme.

GUIDELINE 5

Implement and overall Training Plan for further education of staff and training providers

The need to participate in Training Programmes should be identified from an individual point of view, i.e. the employees, but also from an organisational perspective. These two perspectives converge in the individual career paths within the organisation and the organisational development goals. The analysis of needs for further training

should induce a concept (overall plan) for human resources development and for individual career planning. In terms of using professional development as a management tool, an overall plan for the whole organisation is appropriate.

EVALUATION & ASSESSMENT

GUIDELINE 6

Regular Inquiry to evaluate training outcomes (former students/customers)

In order to get information about the Outcomes it is necessary to analyse the medium and long-term effects of training courses. For that purpose Inquiries of graduates/follow-up studies are appropriate to get information about the career development of graduates and their retrospective assessment of the training course. As important as the Inquiry of students is the request of customers (e.g. banking or financial institutions). This request will provide information on the quality of the training courses and their Outcomes for the organizational workflow/ increased efficiency and better performance of employees.

GUIDELINE 7

External Audit and/or Peer Review

Assessment made by students can cover their satisfaction, self-assessment of learning outcomes, teaching quality and learning atmosphere. Beyond these, other criteria also exist for the quality of training e.g. technical correctness, up-to-dateness (“state of the art”), quality of teaching material and others. These criteria have to be assessed by an External Evaluator (External Audit) and/or through a Peer Reviews undertaken by experts from similar contexts.

Advantages of applying Guideline no. 7:

- Getting feedbacks from outside the organisation / objective comparison
- Finding appropriate standards for the own performance
- Counselling of specialists in the field (Peer Review)

GUIDELINE 8

Analysis of internal and External Data, Exam result and Final grades

Usually training institutions have a lot of data at their disposal, which can be used to assess certain quality aspects of training courses, e.g. attendance rate, drop-out rate, Exam Results, Final Grades. Data like these should be inter-related and related to inquiry results about customer satisfaction. The Data Analysis gives information about the acceptance of training courses as well as about their effectiveness.

REVIEW (Feedback and procedures for change)

GUIDELINE 9

Internal and External Recognition/Consensus on the need for change : Incentives and Rewards

Building a Consensus on the need for change is on the one hand a precondition for implementing change, on the other hand it is necessary to achieve the goals which were set in the quality assurance process. Internal and External Recognition has several functions, acting as legitimation for stakeholders as well as strengthening the institution's reputation. It is important to maintain the motivation and the commitment of the employees to keep up a level of high quality in the long term. Recognition of good performance (financially, personally, with respect to career options) plays a significant role in this context.

GUIDELINE 10

Evaluation of Process which have been changes. Lesson learned. Feedback to the system.

Quality Assurance should be organised as a quality cycle, that means Evaluation and adjustment/improvement of processes is a never-ending Processes. There should be a continuous reflection and documentation of "Lessons learned" and a respective feedback to the Quality Assurance system of the organisation in order to improve its function.

- Diversity Management

The *Diversity* has different interpretations. Diversity can be defined as a “collective mixture characterized by differences and similarities that are applied in pursuit of organisational objectives”.

Diversity Management can be defined as the planning process to organizing, directing and supporting these collective mixtures in a way that adds some measurable differences to organisational performance.

An integral and essential feature of individual differences is the concept of *diversity*. Individual differences are basis the Diversity Management.

The basic concept of managing accepts that the workforce is made of different kind of people. The *diversity* consists of visible and not visible differences which include sex, age, background, race, disability, personality and work style.

To harness these differences will create a productive environment in which everybody feels valued, where each talent is fully utilised, and where organisational goals are met.

In the recent years major attention has been given to the Diversity Management, for the following reasons:

- demographic changes in the workforce
- equal employment opportunities legislation
- programmes of affirmative action and positive discrimination
- increasing number of women entering the workforce
- changing social attitudes
- a more global environment and increasing internationalisation

Valuing the differences is not easy. It means relating and working with people who hold different perspectives and views, bringing different qualities to the workplace, having different aspirations, different customs and different traditions.

Differences are challenging; they require views, perceptions and attitudes and require individuals to see things from a different frame of reference.

The concept of diversity encompasses any sort of difference between two or more persons. Differences might exist in term of race, age, gender, disability, geographic origin, family status, education, social background, anything that can affect workplace relationship and achievement.

The management of diversity involves the implementation of strategies through a network of varied individuals into a dynamic workforce.

Diversity embraces a wide range of characteristics unique for each individual. It is possible to distinguish between primary categories of diversity and secondary that together influence organisational behaviour.

The primary categories are genetic characteristics that affect person's themselves and socializations and over which the individual has relatively little influence

- age;
- race;
- ethnicity;
- gender;
- physical abilities and qualities;
- sexual orientation.

The secondary categories are characteristics that a person acquires and modifies throughout life and over which the individual has relatively more influence

- education;
- marital status;
- parental status;
- work experiences;
- religious beliefs;
- personal style;
- geographic location.

In the global market place of the twenty-first century, the change in business practice is faster than ever before. Organisations are striving to keep one step ahead of competitors to gain and sustain market share and to appease the increasingly voracious appetites of customers regarding products and service delivery. Customers are fickle when it comes to loyalty and in recent years many leading high street names have suffered reduced business performance by failing to connect well enough with customer expectations.

The one certainty in business today is that change is the only thing that is constant: *change is itself changing*.

Against this fluid background, the challenge of organisations is to be able to respond to change in ways that assure survival. A lot of people see managing diversity as an opportunity to improve business performance – and the growing base of case study evidence is showing us that this can be a reality. Creativity, innovation and flexibility are important responses that organisations need to master in the fight for economic survival.

Organisations use definitions of diversity that are almost as diverse as the subject itself, but what is clear is that the central theme of ‘valuing everyone as individuals – as employees, customers, and clients’ extends diversity beyond what is legislated for through to the positively valued.

Business exists in competitive and changing markets, which means that all employees must make significant contributions to business success and add value in every conceivable manner. But everyone is different, so organisations need to be able to harness individual workers’ unique differences and convert them into competitive advantage.

This challenge puts a premium on value systems that are inclusive, fair and ethical. We know from the essential characteristics of the psychological contract that employees expect with their employers that being valued is vital.

Diversity comprehend equal opportunity initiatives because ethical and ‘fair practice’ arguments can be combined with the recognition and valuing of difference for business benefit.

While the empirical evidence that the business case for diversity is still evolving, the mounting anecdotal points out from employers’ practices that diversity is persuasive. Governments, leading employers and employee unions are strongly committed to various diversity agendas and are building best practice into their activities.

Against the background evidence, that suggests that poor diversity practice leads to reduced performance and increased costs, it follows that *Diversity Management is a business imperative*.

Diversity programmes require cultural and organisational change. But change is often unpredictable, multi-dimensional and difficult to manage. The success stories for managing diversity can be classified into four balanced scorecard dimensions:

- ∞customer focus;
- ∞innovation, creativity and learning;
- ∞business process improvement;
- ∞the financial bottom line.

A causal link between Diversity Management and business performance improvements can be both informed and monitored by using a diversity balanced scorecard that identifies diversity objectives, competences and activities that are aligned with business performance objectives.

We can see as the rhetoric from business tells us that creativity, innovation and flexibility are essential to sustainable success and that managing diversity is seen by many as an opportunity to play a winning game to ensure economic survival.

4.3 Benefits from the Laboratory of Innovation

The Laboratory of Innovation aims at being populated by as many Banks and sectoral organisations present in Europe and to become a reference point for those working in the Human Resources department. The benefits coming from accessing to the Lab are related to the different possibilities given to the sector organisations to assess themselves as a first step, and then to compare themselves with other realities of the sector that might have encountered similar problems and found solutions that they are prepared to share.

The Laboratory of Innovation is composed and characterised by the following elements:

- 1) it is the place for **experiments** among organisations of the Banking sector
- 2) it encourages **collaboration** among different stakeholders
- 3) it is the place where to **work** and produce **new knowledge**

Experiment

The Laboratory of Innovation is a virtual space where to carry out experiments related to sharing of good practices and knowledge. The first experiment is represented by the Benchmarking questionnaire produced within the QUA.LOBSTER project: the objective of this experiment is to understand the level

of implementation that different European banks have reached in terms of Learning Organisation, Quality Assurance and Diversity Management policies. Prior to this project, LOBSTER concentrated to find out the state of the Banks in relation to their Learning Organisation approach and system with a self assessment questionnaire. The QUA.LOBSTER project goes a step further, building on the experience of the LOBSTER project: the concept is to provide an environment where developing a benchmarking among banks and where starting a process of learning and improving (learnovation).

Collaboration

The Laboratory of Innovation will be a site for collaboration among the Stakeholders of the Banking sector, it aims indeed to: 1) start a beneficial dialogue between different Banks across Europe to share their experiences in reference to different and emerging subjects linked to the Human Resources development and management; 2) overcoming boundaries related to culture and competition.

The collaboration among different Banks becomes a natural consequence of their involvement into the Laboratory of Innovation: it will facilitate the dialogue among different organisational cultures of the banking sector who will benefit from the sharing of experience and practices. For instance, comparing one another experiences about topics such as Learning Organisation, Quality Assurance and Diversity Management will facilitate them in the process of understand how crucial it is to introduce the implementation of these approaches and policies into their organisations for their competitiveness.

Produce / work

While comparing policies, approaches and structures among organisations, the Laboratory of Innovation will serve multiple aims, among which: working together and producing new Learning to share. The Lab aims to be the place where Banks will find the way of working together, share and produce valuable knowledge that will integrated into the process of the organisation as part of the development strategy.

5. HOW TO JOIN & BENEFIT FROM THE LABORATORY OF INNOVATION

5.1 The qualobster self assesment questionnaire

The self-assessment questionnaire aims at:

- ∞ Providing a fast tool to self-diagnose organisational practices, structures and services according to a Learning Organisation, Quality Assurance and Diversity Management perspective.
- ∞ Verifying how close an organisation is to the “ideal” profile of the Learning Organisation as elaborated on the basis of existing literature and of practical case studies conducted all through Europe.
- ∞ Verifying if and at what level Quality Assurance is integrated in the Organisation’s activity process.
- ∞ Verifying if and at what level Diversity Management is part of the Organisation’s policy.

In order to work with the present self-assessment questionnaire, it is important to keep in mind that:

- ∞ Through desk and field research, 10 general criteria describing the Learning Organisation, QA and Diversity Management in the banking sector have been identified.
- ∞ Following this stage, for each criterion a number of indicators have been elaborated. They describe specific situations or scenarios characterising the criteria, as emerged through field research and direct analysis of bank’s settings.
- ∞ For each indicator, a number of attributes have been identified, on the basis of real cases. So, for instance, under the criterion “Learning Approach to Strategy”, the indicator “Internal Climate Survey” has been identified (among other). It is described by a number of attributes, which coincide with states of the indicator.
- ∞ In order to make it simpler to work with the questionnaire, for each indicator only four attributes are provided, among which it is possible to choose the one, which best mirrors the situation in the organisation. It is important to highlight that for each indicator the possible options are structured according to an order of increased consistency with the selected approaches in banks. Thus, the first option normally refers to an embryonic development stage, whereas the fourth option generally refers to an advanced progress.

- ∞ Also the option “Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)” is provided. It can be chosen in those cases when there is not any coherent scenario among the possible options offered.
- ∞ The answers provided will serve as basis for a self diagnosis, in order to have a clearer idea on how the addressed organisation is performing in terms of Learning Organisation, Quality Assurance and Diversity Management principles and practices, drawing attention to which are its strong points and which are its weak points.
- ∞ The scaling system is simple, ranging from 1 to 4, where score 1 represents the minimum and 4 the maximum. To select, please insert an “X” in the square which correspond to your choice. Option a) corresponds to score 1; option b) corresponds to score 2; option c) corresponds to score 3; option d) corresponds to score 4. Option e) score 0, being the item “Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)”.

Please see example below:

4. Openness to collect new ideas from staff (individuals and units)

Referring to the organisational practices focusing on how new ideas are fostered and collected within your organisation, would you state that your organisation:

[this is the introductory sentence which will be completed by one of the following statements]

4.a	Systematically involves the management team in suggesting new ideas	
4.b	Utilises dedicated tools (such as “suggestion boxes” – also in virtual environments) to collect new ideas proposed by any employees	
4.c	Has set up dedicated committees (such as “excellence committees”) to verify the viability of the proposed ideas	
4.d	Adopts the most promising ideas in pilot experiences	X
4.e	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

Select one of the statements inserting the X as shown above.

In the scale system that answer corresponds to 4 point, the maximum applicable.

Each statement is valid only if the previous one is in place and already implemented (eg. 4d is true only if 4c + 4b + 4a are true)

For reasons of convenience, the table below presents a synthetical overview of the 10 criteria describing a L.O. which also applies QA and Diversity Management principles in the banking sector, and the relevant indicators representing the different possible situations as highlighted in the field research phases.

CRITERIA	INDICATORS
Learning approach to strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∞Employee Relations Management (ERM) solutions ∞Internal climate survey ∞Formative evaluation approach to strategic and operational activities ∞Openness to collect new ideas from staff (individuals and units)
Participative policy making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∞Systemic approach to feedback and suggestions ∞Transparency of the policy agenda (strategic planning) ∞Contributions to the making of the policy agenda (strategic planning)
Access and transparency of information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∞Circulation of information ∞Existence/accessibility of ICT-based tools/mechanisms generating participation ∞Existence/accessibility of traditional tools/mechanisms generating participation ∞Possibility to have personalised information (tailor-made according to target groups' needs).

Formative approach to planning objectives and monitoring results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∞Co-participation in setting (quantitative and qualitative) professional objectives ∞Transparency of control and evaluation systems ∞Analysis of external customers satisfaction ∞Customer Relation Management (CRM) solutions
Internal exchange and dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∞Collaborative approaches to work ∞Existence of support mechanisms providing advice and counselling in goal implementation ∞Solutions for managing organisational knowledge ∞Internal communication structure
Reward flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∞Existence of a specific reward and compensation system linked to innovation and individual performance
Inter-organisational learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∞Systematic ways for learning from others ∞Ways in which the knowledge learned/skills acquired are processed to become the "capital" of the organisation
Professional development opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∞Management by competence ∞Existence of mechanisms (tools and procedures) to support individual learning ∞Periodic evaluation of HR based on competences ∞Systematic ways to collect training needs and arrange coherent training plans at unit level
Quality Assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∞Quality Management as a tool for improvement ∞Establishing a responsible position for quality management ∞Agreement on objectives

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∞Selection of staff ∞Evaluation of processes ∞Evaluation of outcomes ∞External evaluation ∞Evaluation of processes which have been changed
Diversity Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∞Tolerance ∞Inclusion and “facilitation” ∞Valorisation

I. LEARNING APPROACH TO STRATEGY

A Learning Organisation creates a culture that encourages and supports continuous employee learning, critical thinking, and risk taking with new ideas, allows mistakes, and values employee contributions, learns from experience and experiment, and disseminates the new knowledge throughout the organisation for incorporation into day-to-day activities.

1. Employee Relations Management (ERM) solutions

Referring to existing literature and practice on ERM, would you state that your organisation:

1.a	Collects opinions and suggestions from employees from time to time.	
1.b	Collects opinions and suggestions from employees periodically.	
1.c	Has specified processes to collect opinions and suggestions from employees for set criteria.	
1.d	Has a stable system to detect employees' opinions and suggestions and uses them to improve work processes.	
1.e	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

2. Internal climate survey

Referring to the organisational practices focusing on employees' motivation and internal climate, would you state that your organisation:

2.a	Occasionally, in presence of some perception of difficulty, undertakes measures to detect the organisational climate	
2.b	Adopts a non formalised system to detect employees' motivation and opinions regarding their job and the relations with superiors and colleagues/peers	
2.c	Has a stable system to detect employees' motivation and opinions regarding their job and the relations with superiors and colleagues/peers	
2.d	Utilises the results of "Internal climate surveys" to integrate the information collected within the HR Management and Development system (at strategic level)	
2.e	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

3. Formative evaluation approach to strategic and operational activities

Referring to the organisational practices focusing on how **strategy** and **operational issues** are defined and extended to the whole organisation, would you state that your organisation:

3.a	Organises restricted meetings involving employees presenting organisational issues.	
3.b	Organises restricted meetings involving employees presenting organisational issues and asking for their feedback and suggestions.	
3.c	Involves directly all employees in organisational issues by a structure of committees, participation and co-determination.	
3.d	Implements decision-making processes based on the <u>integration of top-down</u> with bottom-up approach.	
3.e	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

4. Openness to collect new ideas from staff (individuals and units)

Referring to the organisational practices focusing on how new ideas are fostered and collected within your organisation, would you state that your organisation:

4.a	Systematically involves the management team in suggesting new ideas	
4.b	Utilises dedicated tools (such as “suggestion boxes” – also in virtual environments) to collect new ideas proposed by any employees	
4.c	Has set up dedicated committees (such as “excellence committees”) to verify the viability of the proposed ideas	
4.d	Adopts the most promising ideas in pilot experiences	
4.e	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

II. PARTICIPATIVE POLICY MAKING

5. Systematic approach to feedback and suggestions

Referring to the organisational practices focusing on how employees’ feedback is taken into account within your organisation, would you state that your organisation:

5.a	Has an informal structure through which employees are consulted on policy decisions that are going to happen	
5.b	Has an informal structure through which employees can contribute with their ideas to decision-making processes	
5.c	Has a formal structure through which employees can contribute regularly with their ideas to decision-making processes	
5.d	Supports processes in which decisions are preceded by suggestions made in mixed working groups, concerning operational as well as strategic questions	
5.e	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

6. Transparency of the policy agenda

Referring to the organisational practices focusing on the visibility given to your organisation's business priorities, would you state that your organisation:

6.a	Publicises its core business priorities	
6.b	Gives visibility to strategic objectives to be attained in a given time span	
6.c	Gives visibility to operational objectives to be attained in a given time span	
6.d	Gives visibility to its core business processes and involves employees in "feedback sessions"	
6.e	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

7. Contributions to the making of the policy agenda

Referring to the organisational practices focusing on the contributions of middle management and other employees to the definition of its business priorities, would you state that your organisation:

7.a	Involves middle management in long-term decisions	
7.b	Involves informally staff and stakeholders in long-term decisions (e.g. blogs, forum, suggestion box)	
7.c	Involves formally staff and stakeholders in long-term decisions	
7.d	Utilises explicitly staff and stakeholders' suggestions as reference material for its decision-making processes, recognising merits for ideas coming from the front line	
7.e	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

III. ACCESS AND TRANSPARENCY OF INFORMATION

8. Circulation of information

Referring to the flows of information concerning strategy within your organisation, would you state that in your organisation:

8.a	Communication flows mainly concern information on services and products available	
8.b	Communication flows sometimes contain beyond that hints on issues concerning the bank's strategic questions	
8.c	Communication channels are used by top management to inform employees about the bank's most visible strategic processes	
8.d	Communication channels are regularly used by top management to share information on the bank's strategic processes	
8.e	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

9. Existence/accessibility of ICT-based tools/mechanisms generating participation

Referring to the organisational provisions in terms of ICT(Information and Communication technology)-based solutions supporting communication and interactivity, can you state if in your organisation:

9.a	ICT is used only to facilitate operational tasks	
9.b	ICT is also used to stimulate peer communication	
9.c	ICT is also used to facilitate communication between the management and employees	
9.d	ICT also supports an integrated system for communication, learning, knowledge-sharing processes, within an "employee portal"	
9.e	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

10. Existence/accessibility of traditional tools/mechanisms generating participation

Referring to the organisational provisions in terms of traditional solutions supporting communication and exchange of information, in your organisation:

10.a	An organisational newsletter or other similar mechanisms to distribute and occasionally receive questions, letters, feedback, is in place	
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10.b	Contributions to the organisation's information tools are systematically encouraged and collected	
10.c	In addition to information tools, communication events (e.g. thematic conventions) are regularly organised	
10.d	Proposals for thematic events are made by employees and approved/sponsored by the management	
10.e	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

11. Possibility to have personalised information (tailor-made according to target groups' needs).

Referring to the possibility to access information responding to one's own particular needs, would you state that in your organisation:

11.a	Employees can access common resource bases (e.g. databases, archives) and retrieve in a standard format the data or information needed	
11.b	Employees have the possibility to search existing resource bases and define the search criteria according to their specific professional needs	
11.c	Suggestions on how to improve existing information sources are verified and implemented	
11.d	Users' needs analysis is carried out on a regular basis to assess specific demands and available information is adapted accordingly	
11.e	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

IV. FORMATIVE APPROACH TO PLANNING OBJECTIVES AND MONITORING RESULTS

C12. o-participation in setting (quantitative and qualitative) professional objectives

Referring to the definition of employees' quantitative and qualitative professional objectives, would you state that in your organisation:

12.a	Employees are assigned professional objectives, according to a top-down approach	
12.b	Employees are informally asked to express their professional expectations and preferences in a development perspective before the management defines professional objectives	
12.c	Employees are informally involved in the identification of the assigned professional objectives (e.g. through informal discussions with the responsible manager)	
12.d	Employees are formally involved in the definition of the assigned professional objectives (e.g. in “development talks”)	
12.e	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

13. Transparency of control and evaluation systems

Referring to the characteristics of the employees’ evaluation systems in place, would you state that in your organisation:

13.a	There is not a system in place but employee evaluation is based on the feedback provided by hierarchical superiors and collaborators (in addition to the achievement of quantitative objectives)	
13.b	Employees are evaluated on the basis of a combination of clear criteria and metrics, implying quantitative goals and qualitative objectives	
13.c	Evaluation system and metrics are public and applied to all employees	
13.d	In addition to the previous conditions, evaluation results are discussed with employees	
13.e	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

14. Analysis of external customers satisfaction

Referring to the analysis of customers’ attitude towards the services and products provided, would you state that in your organisation:

14.a	Customers' feedback is collected only when it is necessary to highlight strengths and weaknesses of the services and products provided	
14.b	Customers' feedback is regularly collected and used by the management to take decisions concerning services and products	
14.c	Customers' feedback is regularly collected and discussed with relevant staff (including front desk employees) to find ways to improve services and products	
14.d	Front-desk employees are expected to collect systematically customers' feedback and to report suggestions on ways to improve services and products	
14.e	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

V. INTERNAL EXCHANGE AND DIALOGUE

15. Collaborative approaches to work

Referring to the working modalities in place, would you state that in your organisation:

15.a	Project teams are seldom created	
15.b	Project teams are only created for complex and strategic assignments, requiring different know-how and expertise	
15.c	Project teams are a normal working modality to handle tasks and assignments	
15.d	Communities of practice are created to discuss specific questions and propose solutions	
15.e	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

16. Existence of support mechanisms providing advice and counselling in goal implementation

16.a	Hierarchical superiors provide their collaborators with directives on how to reach the assigned objectives	
16.b	Tutors/mentors are available to advice employees in their assignments	

16.c	Employees have access to dedicated online support services also providing tutoring and mentoring	
16.d	Dedicated structures (such as a guidance and counselling services) provide the needed support and information for career and training guidance	
16.e	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

17. Systems for managing organisational knowledge

Referring to the management of organisational knowledge, would you state that your organisation:

17.a	Fosters the exchange of experiences and know how among employees and managers in formal events (e.g. thematic meetings)	
17.b	Fosters the exchange of experiences and know how among employees and managers in both formal and informal events	
17.c	Adopts a Knowledge Management approach (in terms of capture, retention and circulation of internal knowledge, regardless of the technological solution adopted)	
17.d	Adopts a Knowledge Management approach and facilitates the creation of <i>communities of practice</i> among workers of different hierarchical levels and belonging to different departments or units	
17.e	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

18. Internal communication structure

Referring to the organisational structure dedicated to internal communication, would you state that:

18.a	The management selects the channels and the contents to be distributed (top-down communication)	
18.b	Middle managers constantly ask employees to provide their contributions on organisational issues	
18.c	Dedicated committees (composed of employees and managers) are responsible for the selection of contents and for the activation of the most effective communication channel	

18.d	”Task forces” are in place, taking care of particular objectives related to internal communication	
18.e	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

VI. REWARD FLEXIBILITY

19. Existence of a specific reward and compensation system linked to innovation and individual performance

Referring to the existing reward and compensation schemes, would you state that in your organisation:

19.a	Outstanding achievements are rewarded and made transparent to all members of the organisation	
19.b	The reward system is oriented also towards long-term achievements	
19.c	The reward system concerns also outcomes of learning activities and initiative	
19.d	The reward system concerns also acquirement of new skills and adaptation to change	
19.e	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

20. Organisational attitude towards mistakes

As regards the attitude towards mistakes, would you say that in your organisation:

20.a	Mistakes are always punished and undermine perspectives of career advancement	
20.b	Sanctions for mistakes are frequent and influence career development	
20.c	Sanctions for mistakes are generally avoided in order to generate a positive climate within the organisation	
20.d	Mistakes are considered as occasions for “learning from experience”	
20.e	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

VII. INTER-ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING

19. Systematic ways for learning from others

Referring to the existing opportunities to learn from others, would you state that in your organisation:

21.a	Employees' learning is mainly focused on internal training processes	
21.b	Participation in mixed training programmes is fostered (i.e. organised by the national Banking Association)	
21.c	Participation in public networks/communities of practice is fostered (i.e. through newsgroups, virtual discussion forum, etc.)	
21.d	Non-formal learning deriving from inter-organisational activities is considered as a fundamental component of human resources development	
21.e	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

19. Ways in which the knowledge learned/skills acquired are processed to become the "capital" of the organisation

Referring to the actions undertaken to disseminate contents and share *practices experienced in inter-organisational events*, would you state that in your organisation:

22.a	The information collected in these events is uploaded onto a database	
22.b	Employees and managers are also asked to contribute to the organisational knowledge base with their suggestions and comments referred to the inter-organisational event they attended. No specific reward is in place	
22.c	Employees and managers are asked to contribute to the organisational knowledge base with their suggestions and comments referred to the inter-organisational event they attended. Specific reward solutions are foreseen	
22.d	Employees and managers having participated in inter	

	organisational events, are involved and supported in upgrading the organisational knowledge base. Specific rewards solutions are in place	
22.e	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

VIII. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

23. Management by competences

Referring to the Human Resources development system, would you state that in your organisation:

23.a	For each professional profile (as defined in the organisational chart or in other detailed documents) the related core competences and skills are described	
23.b	The HR development and training systems are closely related to the competences map	
23.c	Employees are considered as final users; their instances and needs referred to the competence map are taken into account to define development pathways	
23.d	Competences and skills acquired in non-formal settings (both inside and outside the organisation) are also taken into account in employees assessment process and contribute to the definition and upgrading of the organisational competences map	
23.e	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

24. Existence of mechanisms (tools and procedures) to support individual learning

Referring to the structures in place supporting employees' learning, would you state that in your organisation:

24.a	Standard services (e.g. catalogue courses) are provided by the training department	
24.b	Flexible learning systems are available, which allow learning anytime, anywhere (e.g. elearning)	

24.c	Tutors/mentors are available to support employees' individual learning	
24.d	"Learning agents" at branch level provide advice and support to employees in defining, implementing and assessing their individual professional development and learning pathways	
24.e	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

25. Periodic evaluation of HR based on competences

Referring to the actions undertaken to keep up-to-date the competence profile records of employees, would you state that in your organisation:

25.a	Review of the competences system takes place when relevant organisational events take place (e.g. set up of new services)	
25.b	Review and updating of the competences system takes place on a regular basis as part of the strategic activities, irrespective of other developments	
25.c	Employees' competences are evaluated regularly and checked against requirements foreseen in the organisational competences map	
25.d	Employees' competences ¹ are evaluated regularly and organisational competences map is revised accordingly	
25.e	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

26. Systematic ways to collect training needs and arrange coherent training plans at unit level

Referring to the actions undertaken to collect training needs and to elaborate training solution coherent with units' needs, would you state that in your organisation:

26.a	Training needs analysis is carried out at macro level (e.g. at division scale) by collecting inputs from the head of organisational units	
26.b	Organisational units are required to provide training needs analysis on a regular basis and concur to the definition of training plans.	

¹ Where the term COMPETENCE means the combination of knowledge, skills and attitude of the single worker needed to perform his/her job..

26.c	Organisational units are required to provide training needs analysis on a regular basis and concur to the definition of training plans but also have an autonomous budget for specific training activities	
26.d	Every employee participates in training needs analysis and in the definition of medium term individual learning plans	
26.e	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

IX QUALITY ASSURANCE

Quality Assurance means the application of a methodology to assure and to monitor the achievements of pre-defined objectives for quality, in order to manage organisational changes.

The questions referring to quality assurance are based on the ten EUROBANQUA guidelines.

27. Quality management as a tool for improvement

As for the significance and implementation of quality assurance in our organisation, the current state could be described as follows:

27.a	Quality of products, services and processes is a general topic, but there is no formal setting for it.	
27.b	Some kind of quality management is implemented, for some areas the definition of standards is still being discussed.	
27.c	A recognised quality management system (e.g. ISO 9001:2000) in place.	
27.d	A recognised quality management system (e.g. ISO 9001:2000) is applied in everyday life of the organisation.	
27.e	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

28. Establishing a responsible position for quality management in the organisation

Referring to the position of quality assurance in your organisation would you state that:

28.a	Quality assurance is not yet formally implemented.	
28.b	Quality assurance is formally anchored in the organisation by e.g. a quality handbook, guidelines, assessment tools etc.	
28.c	A person or committee was appointed responsible for quality assurance as an additional task.	
28.d	A responsible position (main job) for quality management is established.	
28.e	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

29. Agreement on objectives

Focusing on how you work to achieve your organisational goals, would you state that your organisation...

29.a	...makes use of agreements on objectives for the company level.	
29.b	...makes use of agreements on objectives for all hierarchical levels and departments.	
29.c	...has established operations to monitor processes and thus controls the achievement of agreements on objectives.	
29.d	...has in addition to that established processes to react on non-achievement and to support the achievement in compliance with the agreement.	
29.e	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

30. Selection of staff

Referring to the recruitment of new staff your organisation...

30.a	...has no formally fixed requirements for the recruitment of new staff.	
30.b	...has some kind of general guidelines for the recruitment of new staff.	
30.c	...has clearly defined requirements for each position in the organisation.	
30.d	...has clearly defined requirements for each position in the organisation and defined processes for the recruitment and	

	selection of personnel.	
30.e	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

31. Evaluation of processes

Referring to the quality assurance in organisational processes, would you state that your organisation...

31.a	...established processes for the regular assessment of your core services and products.	
31.b	...ascertains regularly data on the satisfaction of your employees with their working conditions.	
31.c	...informs employees and stakeholders regularly about assessment results of the evaluation of processes.	
31.d	...established - in addition to regular evaluation - processes to draw the conclusions from the assessment results of the evaluation of processes..	
31.e	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

32. Evaluation of outcomes

Referring to the controlling of organisational results, would you state that your organisation:

32.a	...is analysing complaints to improve organisational processes.	
32.b	...occasionally asks your customers for feedback	
32.c	...regularly asks your customers for feedback through a system.	
32.d	...has established processes to draw conclusions from the feedback results.	
32.e	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

33. External evaluation

Referring to external evaluation, your organisation makes use of which of the following tools?

33.a	We use meetings, seminars etc. for the comparison with competitors.	
33.b	We participate in a network or association for benchmarking.	
33.c	We established a system of regular external audits.	
33.d	We established mutual assessment with a partner organisation (peer review).	
33.e	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

34. Data analysis

Referring to the use of data which is at your disposal as e.g. sales data, complaints, ranking of products, would you state that in your organisation:

34.a	Data is evaluated according to demand and used occasionally to answer specific questions.	
34.b	Has installed special software or a controlling tool to generate data for organisational planning.	
34.c	Data is partly used to compare the actual and the targeted state of affairs.	
34.d	Data is at all organisational levels systematically used for controlling with reference to the predefined goals.	
34.e	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

35. Evaluation of processes which have been changed

Summarizing the state of the internal quality management system, which of the following is the case in your organisation?

35.a	The organisation has set up a vision and mission to develop the quality of its products and services.	
35.b	Clearly defined objectives, standards and criteria for quality have been established.	
35.c	Achievement of objectives, standards and criteria of quality is regularly assessed and evaluated.	
35.d	Based on regular evaluation of achievements, the organisation has established a quality cycle allowing for improvement	

	of quality and continuous adaptation to change.	
35.e	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

X DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

Managing diversity means valorising those aspects related to diversity which can bring added value to the Organisation. As for the DM, the main criteria identified to establish the level of implementation that the Organisation has achieved are: tolerance, inclusion and valorisation of difference.

Diversity is intended in any kind, such as: age, gender, physically or psychologically challenged, nationality.

36. Tolerance

As for Diversity Management, can you state that your Organisation...

36.a	Has not yet set up a series of actions to hire according to diversity and equal opportunities.	
36.b	Is starting to set up a series of actions to hire according to diversity and equal opportunities.	
36.c	Has already set up a series of actions to hire a wide range of people according to diversity and equal opportunities.	
36.d	Is hiring and reviewing the actions towards including different people according to diversity and equal opportunities.	
36.e	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

As for creating sensitivity towards tolerance and respect, can you state that your Organisation...

36.f	...has never conducted any awareness campaign to the acceptance of diversity, and everything is left to each person's sensitivity towards the matter.	
36.g	...are going to be educated in the near future.	
36.h	...have been educated.	
36.i	...have been educated and new ideas on how to improve respect among colleagues are welcome and inserted in the HR policies.	
36.j	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

Can you state that employees with some kind of diversity...

36.k	...have been hired in the perspective of merely accomplishing law requirements, and are part of the normal production cycle, but are assigned non-strategic tasks.	
36.l	...are part of the production cycle.	
36.m	...are fully integrated in the production cycle and are in charge of demanding and/or strategic tasks if required.	
36.n	...not only are fully integrated in the production life cycle, but in some cases their presence has been strategic for successful operations (e.g. a woman in charge of an office which has a large female clientele)	
36.o	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

37. Inclusion and “facilitation”

As for attitude towards diversity and envisioning a broader working environment, can you state that your organisation...

37.a	...has no specific consideration of the Diversity issue	
37.b	...has some ideas about the subject but there is no strategy on how to implement them.	
37.c	...is favourable attitude towards Diversity with some ideas which are an integrated part of the HR strategy.	
37.d	...is completely favourable towards Diversity (e.g. Diversity is part the Vision statement)	
37.e	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

Regarding Diversity Management as a role/division in your Organisation, can you state that...

37.f	...a Diversity Management Function has not been set up and there isn't anybody at the moment in charge of this task.	
37.g	...a Diversity Management Function is going to be set up.	
37.h	...a Diversity Management Function has been set up and it is already working on different issues.	

37.i	...a Diversity Management Function has been set up as an intricate part of Human Resources policies and it is regularly reviewed and updated.	
37.j	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

Regarding Diversity Management as regulations and development system in your Organisation, can you state that...

37.k	...a Diversity Management regulations and development system has not been set up and there isn't anybody at the moment in charge of this task.	
37.l	...a Diversity Management regulations and development system has been set up.	
37.m	...a Diversity Management regulations and development system has been set up and it is already working on different issues.	
37.n	...a Diversity Management regulations and development system has been set up as an intricate part of Human Resources policies and it is regularly reviewed and updated.	
37.o	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

38. Valorisation

Can you state that your Organisation has a work environment, stimulating and enriching in its diversity?

38.a	No	
38.b	Not yet	
38.c	Only in some cases and it is spreading in other offices/divisions	
38.d	Yes	
38.e	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

Can you state that your Organisation is...

38.f	...just accepting diversity achievements without any valorisation activity	
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38.g	... valorising people with diversities on occasions in offices/projects	
38.h	... valorising people with diversities systematically in offices/projects	
38.i	...achievements of diversity are given visibility and recognition at organisational level.	
38.j	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

As for perception of diversity, do you feel that...

38.k	...your Organisation although valorising diversity still underlines it as “diversity”	
38.l	...your Organisation thinks of diversity as an added value to increment and that can become “normality”	
38.m	...your Organisation, and therefore all people working in it, do not feel diversity as “something different”, on the contrary it is considered “normality”	
38.n	...your Organisation is making all the efforts to bring diversity to be the normality of the working environment, implementing and enhancing actions towards that goal.	
38.o	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COLLABORATION

Optional information:

The questionnaire is completely anonymous, but you might want to consider providing us with any information you consider relevant.

Age: _____

Gender: _____

Ethnicity: _____

Physically impaired: yes no

5.2 Case Study Guidelines

The case studies will be more descriptive and narrative, based on the results of the self assessment questionnaire including critical elements, transparency and learning approach.

The main points are:

1. Identity card of the bank/organisation [a form]
2. Short introduction
3. Main chapter highlighting:
 - the approach the Bank has towards LO, QA, DV
 - from where and when they started implementing actions leading to LO, QA and DV
 - the kind of support they received in developing the system, if any
 - the evolution of the approach within the organisation
 - present level of implementation and future trends.
4. Windows of examples of good practices
5. Overview of strengths and weaknesses
6. First steps towards an Improvement Plan

It is the faculty of the Self assessment coordinator to indicate some parts of the Case Study that should be kept confidential, while it is recommended to produce 1 to 5 short examples of good practices related to points written in the questionnaire in specific windows available in the Case Study format.

The good practices are intended for circulation to other banks participating in the Innovation Laboratory so they should not contain confidential information.

CASE STUDY FORMAT

1. Identity Card

Name of the Organisation
Type of bank [e.g. local Bank, international bank]
Number of employees
Category [e.g. Private banking, financial bank]
Other information that you consider useful to identify the type of Organisation

2. Short introduction to the self assessment exercise as conducted in the bank

- Who coordinated the Self Assessment and if there has been already a similar experience in the Bank in the past or still in progress
- Who's been invited to carry out the exercise?
- How many replied?
- Whom of the ones that replied took part to the Focus Group session?
- In which period did the self assessment exercise took place?
- Typology of Stakeholders (e.g. HR, branches, top management)

3. Main chapter describing the results of the self assessment exercise

- the approach the Bank has towards LO, QA, DV
- from where and when they started implementing actions leading to LO, QA and DV
- the kind of support they received in developing the system, if any
- the evolution of the approach within the organisation
- present level of implementation and future trends

4. Windows of best practices

- 1 to 5 windows of best practices (max 1 page each)
- Please note that these windows should not contain confidential information because they are intended to be the basis for the Benchmarking / Benchlearning exercise of the Innovation Laboratory

5. Overview of strengths and weaknesses

- Please indicate results of the questionnaire which point out weaknesses and strengths of the Bank

6. First steps towards an Improvement Plan

- What are the concrete steps you are going to take or that you are already implementing towards improvement?

5.3 The QUA.LOBSTER Benchmarking questionnaire

AIMS

The benchmarking questionnaire aims at:

- ∞ Providing a fast tool to **assess** organisational practices, structures and services according to a Learning Organisation perspective.
- ∞ Building a pool of results of European organisations that want to **compare** themselves with respect to their development as a learning organisation, to quality as well as diversity management.

It might be useful to envision the difference between self-assessment and benchmarking:

Self-assessment	benchmarking
Tool to facilitate the reflection within the organisation	Tool to facilitate the comparison with competitors
Aims at improvement	Aims at assessment

In both cases you'll get the utmost benefit, if you answer all questions honestly and close to reality.

What exactly is the benefit for the organisation applying the benchmarking questionnaire?

- You'll get a data-based assessment of the organisational development compared with other organisations of similar size and the same sector.
- You'll identify strong and weak points in relation to reference values.
- The results can support your internal discussions on organisational change.
- The answers provided can serve at the same time as basis for a more detailed self diagnosis.

ADDRESSEES

Who should answer the questions?

The benchmarking questionnaire is designed as a tool for the management level in order to support to overview the organisational development. Thus a member of the board of managing directors or an executive manager with overview-knowledge would be most suitable.

How long will it take to fill in the questionnaire?

Ca. 30 minutes

RESULTS

How to deal with the results?

- Discussion in a focusgroup or quality management steering group
- For more detailed reflection on certain areas that turned out to be weak the Qualobster self-assessment instrument can be used. This questionnaire should be filled in by all relevant departments (heads of ...) and – where applicable - by overall service units and stakeholders.
- Decide on priorities for improvements
- Assign responsibility to employees to supervise change management
- End up in a concrete timetable for concrete action

QUESTIONNAIRE

In order to work with the present benchmarking questionnaire, it is important to keep in mind that:

- ∞Through desk and field research, 10 general criteria describing the Learning Organisation in the banking sector have been identified.
- ∞Following this stage, for each criterion a number of indicators have been elaborated. They describe specific situations or scenarios characterising the criteria, as emerged through field research and direct analysis of bank's settings.
- ∞In order to make it simpler to work with the questionnaire, for each indicator only one item is provided. It is possible to choose between seven answer options, which

are based on the PDCA-quality cycle (**plan-do-check-act**). This means that the organisational assessment is very close to current organisational theory from which results further action can be taken in accordance with recent research findings.

- ∞ It is important to highlight that for each item the possible options are structured according to an order of increased consistency with a learning organisation approach in banks. Thus, the first option (1=not considered) normally refers to a L.O. embryonic development stage, whereas the seventh option (7= regularly updated and finetuned) generally refers to an advanced progress. It is assumed that a higher state of development comprises all states being lower, e.g. if organisational practices are regularly checked it is understood that they had been planned and fully implemented.
- ∞ Also the option “Not applicable” is provided. It can be chosen in those cases when the described process or structure does not match at all your organisational reality.

For reasons of convenience, the table below presents a synthetical overview of the 10 criteria describing a learning organisation in the banking sector, and the relevant indicators representing the different possible situations as highlighted in the field research phases.

CRITERIA	INDICATORS
Learning approach to strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∞ Employee Relations Management (ERM) solutions ∞ Formative evaluation approach to strategic and operational activities ∞ Openness to collect new ideas from staff (individuals and units)
Participative policy making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∞ Transparency of the policy agenda (strategic planning)
Access and transparency of information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∞ Circulation of information ∞ Existence/accessibility of ICT-based tools/mechanisms generating participation ∞ Possibility to have personalised information (tailor-made according to target groups' needs).

Formative approach to planning objectives and monitoring results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∞Co-participation in setting (quantitative and qualitative) professional objectives ∞Transparency of control and evaluation systems ∞Analysis of external customers satisfaction
Internal exchange and dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∞Collaborative approaches to work ∞Existence of support mechanisms providing advice and counselling in goal implementation ∞Solutions for managing organisational knowledge
Reward flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∞Existence of a specific reward and compensation system linked to innovation and individual performance
Inter-organisational learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∞Ways in which the knowledge learned/skills acquired are processed to become the "capital" of the organisation
Professional development opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∞Management by competence ∞Periodic evaluation of HR based on competences ∞Systematic ways to collect training needs and arrange coherent training plans at unit level
Quality management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∞quality management system ∞transparency of responsibilities ∞monitoring and controlling ∞drawing conclusions from assessment results ∞systematic use of data with reference to predefined goals ∞quality cycle
Diversity management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∞hiring according to diversity and equal opportunities ∞full integration and strategic use for successful operations

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∞Diversity Management Function ∞Diversity Management regulations and development system ∞Diversity as normality of the working environment ∞Diversity Management in the ethical code
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THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

What is Benchmarking?

A Benchmark is a reference point of a measured best practice.

Benchmarking is the methodological comparison of processes and products with matchable partners, that were identified as better by using Benchmarks. The matchable partners are found via similarities in the own organisation or in others. Benchmarking's aim is it to improve the own processes and products considerably by the example of the comparable partners.²

The Information Centre Benchmarking (ICB) at the Fraunhofer IPK describes Benchmarking as follows and refers to its founder, Robert Camp:

“Benchmarking is the search for industry best practices that lead to superior performance”.³

This definition by the founder of the benchmarking method describes the central idea of this modern management tool to the point. Enterprises which compete in national and international markets have to strive for potential success factors in the increasingly competitive markets. Today, this is essential for the competitiveness and the survivability of an enterprise.

Benchmarking helps to search consequently and in a structured way for new ideas concerning methods, procedures and processes outside of the own organization structure or even outside of the own branch. Benchmarking aims for the thinking in analogies and the innovation within enterprises. ...

The focus of benchmarking is not only to point out the differences between enterprises. Furthermore, the main objective is to systematically identify best practices. Thus sustainable competitive advantage can be gained.”

² German Benchmarking Centre

³ Robert Camp 1989.

They differentiate inter alia between:

- “Process benchmarking is a comparison between enterprises concerning the applied practices (business processes). These processes can be part of the organisational structure as well as operational structure. With this method, existing solutions from any branch can be analysed and be considered for an adoption to one’s own processes accordingly. One difficulty of process benchmarking lies in finding similarities of processes and defining premises in order to make the selected processes comparable. Process benchmarking is based on the description of business processes within a model by using standardized process elements.”
- Key figure benchmarking by means of a benchmarking index:
By means of a substantial benchmarking questionnaire, enterprises are interrogated about the relevant financial and management key figures as well as about their business excellence evaluations. ... The enterprises whose data-profiles enable a significant comparison of their key figures are selected by means of defined benchmarking criteria like the code of the branch (SIC-Code), the number of employees or the annual turnover.

The aim of Benchmarking is a checking against competitors comparing

- Processes, structures, strategies, outcome
- with other organisations or parts of organisations
- using indicators or standards
- referring to set measurements
- aiming at improvement.

Or in other words:

Benchmarking is the process of identifying and learning from best practices in other organisations. That is to say best practice is the measure of benchmark, other organisations compare their practice with best practice.

The European Benchmarking Code of Conduct mentions nine principles that should be taken into consideration.⁴

1. Principle of Preparation
2. Principle of Contact

⁴ <http://www.efqm.org/Portals/0/Benchmarking%20Code%20of%20Conduct.pdf>

3. Principle of Exchange
4. Principle of Confidentiality
5. Principle of Use
6. Principle of Legality
7. Principle of Completion
8. Principle of Understanding and Agreement
9. Benchmarking with Competitors.

Necessary Conditions

Comparison necessitates certain conditions, otherwise it is like comparing apples and oranges.

- Comparable prevailing circumstances
- Common terms
- Standardisation of results
- Sample with best practice examples (“Benchmarking Club”).

Therefore the following data will be taken into consideration:

- Country
- Type of organisation
- Number of employees.

A Benchmarking Club is a common form of associating with other organisations with the objective of comparison. The more members are available for comparison the more meaningful is the result.

Therefore the Laboratory of Innovation addresses all European organisations in the Financial Services Sector.

Steps of Benchmarking

- Defining the objective of benchmarking
- The first step would be a self-assessment by means of the benchmarking questionnaire (internal analysis). On the basis of the results the organisation is going to identify strengths and weaknesses. Among the strengths possibly “best practice” (certain structures or processes) can be identified.
- Comparing results with reference values

- Defining measurements for improvement
- Realisation of measurements for improvement.

Identifying “best practices”

When do you speak of “best” practice?

Criteria for the transferability of best practice to other organisations are:⁵

- sustainable (successful over time),
- measurable, quantifiable results,
- innovative,
- recognized positive outcome
- repeatable or replicable with limited modifications,
- local or regional importance,
- not linked to unique situations.

As long as practice examples have not been compared to others according to the above mentioned criteria it is recommended to speak of “good practice”.

Qualitative results

Qualitative interpretation is most important. Numbers alone won’t evoke progress within the organisation. The results have to be pulled together with the causal factors.

In a qualitative perspective you should take into consideration:

- Who made the assessment (answered the questions)?
- What are causes for weak results?
- Are some criteria correlated with each other?
- Are benchmarking criteria corresponding with organisational goals?
- How will results lead to organisational improvement?

⁵ Compare: Keehley, Patricia et al.: Benchmarking for Best Practices in the Public Sector: Achieving Performance Breakthroughs in Federal, State and Local Agencies. San Francisco 1996, S. 269.

THE QUA.LOBSTER BENCHMARKING QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire

Please mark with a cross one of the seven possibilities, deciding which one is applicable to your organisation. The options 1-7 are part of a quality cycle, starting with 1 before the first step and 7 being the last step that comprises the first six steps.

Examples:

No. 1 Carries out periodic surveys to detect “employees satisfaction” concerning their job and professional commitment.

If your organisation carries out such surveys and evaluate them on a regular basis, please cross 6 (regularly checked and reviewed), for 6 comprises the states described in 1-5 (e.g. option 4 is true only if option 2 and 3 are in place).

No. 3 Utilises dedicated tools to collect new ideas proposed by any employees and adopts promising ideas in pilot experiences.

If your organisation collects new ideas from employees, but does not adopt them for pilot experiences, please cross 4 (partly implemented).

	1 not consi- dered	2 con- sidered for imple- menta- tion	3 Planned for imple- menta- tion	4 Partly Imple- mented	5 Fully imple- mented	6 Regularly checked and reviewed ⁶	7 Regularly updated and finetuned ⁷	Not appli- cable
1. Carries out periodic surveys to detect “employees satisfaction” concerning their job and professional commitment.								
2. Implements decision-making processes based on the integration of top-down with bottom-up approach.								
3. Utilises dedicated tools to collect new ideas proposed by any employees and adopts promising ideas in pilot experiences.								
4. Gives visibility to strategic and operational objectives to be attained in a given time span.								
5. Communication channels are regularly used by top management to share information on the bank’s strategic processes.								
6. ICT supports an integrated system for communication, learning, knowledge-sharing processes, within an “employee portal”.								
7. Referring to the possibility to access information users’ needs analysis is carried out on a regular basis to assess specific demands. Available information is adapted accordingly.								
8. Employees are formally involved in the definition of								

⁶ According to clearly defined indicators

⁷ according to results of measurement

their assigned professional objectives (e.g. in “development talks”).								
9. Employees are evaluated on the basis of a combination of clear criteria and transparent measure, implying quantitative goals and qualitative objectives.								
10. Customers’ feedback is regularly collected and discussed with relevant staff (including front desk employees) to find ways to improve services and products.								
11. Project teams are a normal working modality to handle tasks and assignments.								
12. Employees have access to online or other guidance support services, also providing individual tutoring and mentoring.								
13. Adopts a knowledge management approach and facilitates the creation of <i>communities of practice</i> among employees of different hierarchical levels and belonging to different departments or units.								
14. A reward system has been established that concerns outcomes of learning activities, initiative, acquirement of new skills and adaptation to change.								
15. Employees and managers having participated in inter-organisational events, are involved and supported in upgrading the organisational knowledge base.								
16. Flexible learning systems are available, which allow								

learning in courses as well as elearning.								
17. Organisational units are required to provide training needs analysis on a regular basis and concur to the definition of training plans.								
18. Employees' competences are evaluated regularly and checked against requirements foreseen in the organisational competences map.								
19. The organisation has set up a formally recognised quality management system (e.g. ISO 9001:2000).								
20. The organisation has created an internal quality management system allowing for continuous improvement and adaptation to change. Respective instruments (e.g. assessment tools) are available and responsibilities are allocated in a transparent way.								
21. The organisation has established operations to monitor processes and thus controls the achievement of agreements on objectives.								
22. The organisation established processes to draw conclusions from the assessment results of the evaluation of processes.								
23. Data is at all organisational levels systematically used for controlling with reference to the predefined goals.								
24. Based on regular evaluation of achievements, the organisation has established a quality cycle allowing for improvement of								

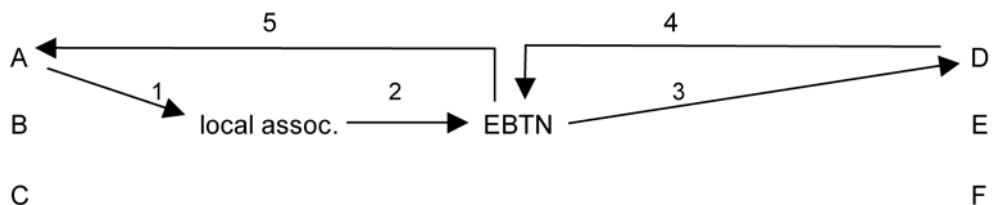
quality and continuous adaptation to change.								
25. Your organisation is hiring and reviewing the actions towards including different people according to diversity and equal opportunities.								
26. Employees with some kind of diversity not only are fully integrated in the production life cycle, but in some cases their presence has been strategic for successful operations (e.g. a woman in charge of an office which has a large female clientele).								
27. A Diversity Management Function has been set up and it is already working on different issues.								
28. A Diversity Management regulations and development system has been set up as an intricate part of Human Resources policies and it is regularly reviewed and updated.								
29. Your Organisation is making all the efforts to bring diversity to be the normality of the working environment, implementing and enhancing actions towards that goal.								
30. Diversity management is part of the ethical code.								

5.4 Collaboration between participating institutions

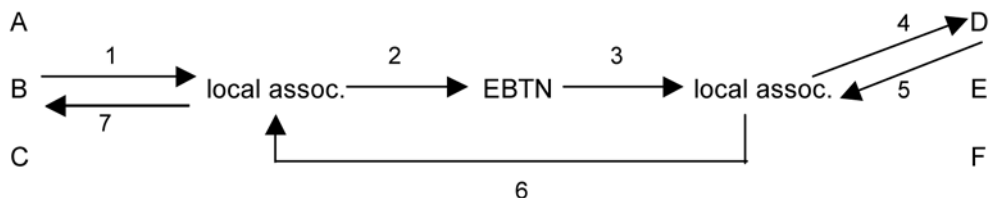
Collaboration between participating institutions is possible after the benchmarking questionnaire has been filled in. Once the participating institution gets the results on benchmarking and would like to get in contact with the best performer or specific participating institution, it should contact the local association or institute, member of European Banking and Financial Services Training Association – EBTN (e.g. The Bank Association of Slovenia in Slovenia) in its own country. The institution should provide the identification number and contact details (name of institution, contact person, phone and email).

The local association or institute will forward the request to the EBTN, who has access to data concerning all the participating institutions in the Laboratory of Innovation and who will then get in touch with:

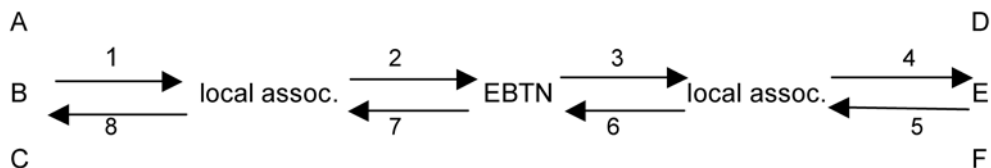
- a) the institution required, asking, if it is willing to share its contact details (name of institution, contact person, phone and email). After receiving the confirmation, the EBTN will put both institutions in contact. If the institution required is not willing to share its contact details and would like to stay anonymous, the other institution will be informed about that by EBTN.



- b) the local institute or association operating in the same country as the institution required. The local association will forward the request to the institution required, asking, if it is willing to share its contact details (name of institution, contact person, phone and email). After receiving confirmation, local associations will get in touch and put both institutions in contact. If the institution required is not willing to share its contact details and would like to stay anonymous, the other institution will be informed about that by its local association.



c) the local institute or association operating in the same country as the institution required. The local association will forward the request to the institution required, asking, if it is willing to share its contact details (name of institution, contact person, phone and email). After receiving confirmation from the local association, the EBTN will inform the local association who forwarded the request in the first place and then both institutions will be put in contact. If the institution required is not willing to share its contact details and would like to stay anonymous, the other institution will be informed about that by its local association.



5.5 Portugal Case Study – Caixa Central de Credito Agricola Mutuo

1. Identity Card

Name of the Organisation CAIXA CENTRAL DE CRÉDITO AGRÍCOLA MÚTUO
Type of bank [e.g. local Bank, international bank] Cooperative and Mutual Bank, operating exclusively in Continental Portugal and in the Azores Islands
Number of employees 470
Category [e.g. Private banking, financial bank] Retail Bank
Other information that you consider useful to identify the type of Organisation Caixa Central de Crédito Agrícola Mútuo is the Head Office of the Crédito Agrícola Group, which has 95 Local Banks (CCAM), representing 660 branches and 7 Instrumental Companies allowing this Group to provide the full financial services required by its customers, from insurance to investment banking. This Head Office is owned by the Local Banks, and its main role is to support them. As far as human resources are concerned, there are 4500 employees in the Group, and it is Caixa Central's HR department responsibility to support all Structures in this matter, especially by providing training and ensuring the necessary recruitment for the entire Group. Beside that, Caixa Central has its own commercial activity, working in the two major Portuguese cities, Lisbon and Oporto.

2. Short introduction to the piloting exercise as conducted in the bank

The piloting exercise was conducted and coordinated by the deputy HR manager, who had already participated in the Lobster project, in 2002.

In order to obtain a broader vision of the organisation, and following the recommendations of the Qua.Lobster Project team, 10 people were invited, including a member of the Board of Administration, 3 department managers and 6 middle managers, responsible for a wide range of areas, with a global vision of the organization, of both genders and aged between 34 to 56 years old.

The exercise took place in the second week of November, and all the participants replied to the questionnaire, with the majority of the answers being consistent with each other or, at least, very similar.

In the focus group session that took place just two days after the deliverance date of the questionnaire, it was possible, after a thorough discussion to agree on a shared vision of the organisation actual status as far as these matters are concerned.

Nevertheless it's important to stress the fact that all the process was very fast, particularly to the people invited to answer the questionnaire, leaving only a short period of time to think about all the questions. This means that probably, during the next few months, our perspective and contributions to this project may be more focused and precise.

3. Main chapter describing the results of the piloting exercise

In order to present the result of the focus group discussion and the current state of our approach to these matters, we will divide the answers by the criteria established in the questionnaire, because that way it will be easier for the readers to keep track of our conclusions.

◦ LEARNING APPROACH TO STRATEGY

Regarding this issue, it's was clear for everyone involved that the organisation collects opinions and suggestions from employees from time to time and adopts a non formalised system to detect employees motivation and opinions regarding their job and the relations with their superiors and colleagues/peers.

In fact, even though there's been a while since a formal internal climate survey as been used in Caixa Central, a non formalised system of permanent contact

with the employees has been set and conducted by the HR department, functioning as an indicators source on the satisfaction levels.

Referring to the formative evaluation approach to strategic and operational activities, Caixa Central organises restricted meetings involving employees, presenting issues and asking for their feedback and suggestions. Despite these meetings, there's no stable system of collecting new ideas from units or individuals. However, occasionally, new ideas are welcomed and fostered, even though this may only happen within specific units.

Anyway, whenever one of these ideas is adopted, its implementation is always preceded by a pilot experience.

◦ PARTICIPATIVE POLICY MAKING

As it may be understood by our previous response, as far as a systematic approach to feedback and suggestions is concerned, we only have an informal structure through which employees can contribute with their ideas to the decision making processes, but once again, particularly within their units.

Despite that, it is also clear for the participants in the focus group that, although this systematic approach isn't in place, the middle management is involved in long-term decisions, since it's usual for them to contribute for the Annual Activities Plan, meaning that, at least in a mitigated way, the employee's opinion are taken into consideration.

Regarding the transparency of the policy agenda, the organisation publicises its core business priorities, not only through the Annual Activities Plan, but also through internal communication channels, such as a magazine or the intranet, or even the internet site.

◦ ACCESS AND TRANSPARENCY OF INFORMATION

In terms of the circulation of information, it's certain that communication flows mainly concern the services and products available, at all the organisation levels and through several channels. This means also that we have an organisational newsletter and other similar mechanisms that are distributed, receiving occasionally questions, letters and feedback.

As far as ICT tools are concerned, we have an integrated system for communication, learning, knowledge-sharing processes within our "employee

portal”, although these two last solutions are still at the very beginning. On this point it’s important to underline the fact that all the HR management system, including payroll, recruitment, career development, training and legal issues like Collective Agreements or the Labour Law, are integrated in a technological platform, designed and managed by HR department employees. And this platform is used not only within Caixa Central, but also throughout all Crédito Agrícola Group.

In addition to this faculty, employees have the possibility to search existing resource bases and define the search criteria according to their specific professional needs. This possibility applies to the HR management system, but also to the specific operational systems available on the intranet, where is possible for one to access specific contents regarding his professional needs or his particular unit.

◦ FORMATIVE APPROACH TO PLANNING OBJECTIVES AND MONITORING RESULTS

Regarding the setting of professional objectives, employees are formally involved in the definition of their own, through development talks that take place yearly, in the performance evaluation of each individual.

In fact, employees are evaluated by a “180°” system, including himself, the respective manager and peers, on the basis of a combination of clear criteria and metrics, implying quantitative goals and qualitative objectives, which are established and agreed with the respective manager. After that, as part of the mentioned performance evaluation, results are discussed with each employee.

As part of our policy, customers feedback is regularly collected and uses by the management to take decisions concerning the services and products provided. At this point it’s important to underline the fact that, being Caixa Central the Crédito Agrícola’s head office, but also the main services and products provider for the whole Group, this feedback is primarily collected within the own Group.

◦ INTERNAL EXCHANGE AND DIALOGUE

Referring to the working modalities, the project teams are a normal working modality to handle tasks and assignments, usually between different units within Caixa Central and other Group Companies, specially the ICT company (CA Serviços).

As far as providing advice and counselling is concerned, hierarchical superiors provide their collaborators with directives on how to reach the assigned objectives, supporting their actions. In addition to this, Caixa Central fosters the exchange of experiences and know how among employees and managers in both formal and informal events. In fact, it's important to stress the fact that most of the training provided to all the employees in the Group is conducted by internal trainers (people that beyond their usual functions and tasks, is also prepared to train others), making possible an effective exchange of cultural values, specific know how and experiences.

As to the internal communication structure, it is the management that selects the channels and the contents to be distributed.

◦ REWARD FLEXIBILITY

Regarding the existing reward and compensation scheme, outstanding achievements are rewarded, even though that may not always be known by the entire organisation and not always related to innovation, but despite that, the individual performance is usually compensated.

On the other hand, sanctions for mistakes, despite being established are, as far as possible, avoided in order to generate a positive climate within the organisation, in the presumption that this not only makes the positive climate possible but also may result in a learning experience capable of harness better performances in the future.

◦ INTER-ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING

In order to enhance the learning from others and in addition of the mentioned in the “Internal Exchange and Dialogue” topic, the participation in mixed training programmes is fostered, not only within the Group but also in those organized by IFB, the Portuguese Bank Training Institute.

Furthermore, employees and managers are asked to contribute to the organisational knowledge base with their suggestions and comments referred to the inter-organisational event they attended. This is a standard procedure, having no specific reward associated. This process has made possible the institution of an internal “Training Library”, where all the supports received in the training sessions are collected, and made available for all the other employees. Beside this “Training Library”, there's another system in place, consisting in the filling

of a short memo, destined to clarify others about the specific contents of a given training course. However, this last mechanism is not yet being fully enhanced, since it's not in place a database with all the gathered information.

◦ PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Regarding the HR development system, for each professional profile, defined in the organisational chart, the related core competences and skills are described. It's according to these competences that employees are evaluated regularly, in a yearly base, and this organisational competences map is revised accordingly.

As to the mechanisms supporting individual learning, there are flexible systems available, which allow every employee to access training courses anytime and anywhere. The needs are collected appealing for the organisational units to provide the training needs analysis on a regular basis, which then reflects in the yearly Training Plan and Budget. It is important to stress the fact that employees also participate in this training analysis, through the performance appraisal system, more specifically in the development talks associated to the system of appraisal, where they can, together with their manager, define which courses or which subjects are they in need.

◦ QUALITY ASSURANCE

Regarding this criterion, at Caixa Central, quality of products, services and processes is a general topic, but there is no formal setting for it. However, quality assurance is anchored in the organisation, especially through internal regulations and guidelines, that are available to all employees in the intranet and in the "employee's portal".

In order to achieve the organisational goals, we make use of agreement on objectives for all hierarchical levels and departments, which are defined at the end of each year, concerning the following one.

Regarding the recruitment of new staff, Caixa Central is responsible for the process for the whole Group and there is a clear definition of the requirements for each position in the organisation and of the related processes.

At the organisational processes level, we have established processes for the regular assessment of our core services and products, one of which is to regularly ask our actual or former students/trainees for feedback. It's important to

underline that Caixa Central has also the responsibility of providing training courses to the whole Crédito Agrícola Group, and in this case, is of the up-most importance to permanently evaluate the result of these actions.

Beside this, we participate in several networks or association, namely for benchmarking, like the EACB- European Association of Co-Operative Banks and have in place a system of regular external audits, providing us with the information needed to keep improving our performance.

This is also the case of data analysis, since it is evaluated according to demand and used occasionally to answer specific questions.

Therefore, we may say that our organisation has set up a vision and mission to develop the quality of its products and services.

◦ DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

Regarding this issue, Caixa Central has not yet set up a series of actions to hire according to diversity and equal opportunities, nor has ever conducted any awareness campaign to the acceptance of diversity, leaving everything to each person's sensitivity towards this matter.

This attitude is consistent with the fact that employees with some kind of diversity are not only fully integrated in the production life cycle, but in some cases their presence has been strategic for successful operations.

Anyway, although Caixa Central has some ideas about the subject of diversity, there is no strategy on how to implement it, nor a Diversity Management Function has been set up or someone is in charge of this task at the moment.

This is also true as far as regulations and development systems are concerned, at least beyond what is established in the Labour Law. That is why at our organisation, and for the people working in it, diversity isn't felt as "something different", but only as "normality".

From this point of view we believe that our organisation has a work stimulating and enriching environment, accepting diversity achievements without any valorisation activity, just because these achievements are considered "normal".

As mentioned earlier in this text, Caixa Central was involved in the Lobster Project, in 2002, and following that participation, some things have changed until now.

So, looking back on our contribution to that project and comparing what we were then with what we are now, is possible to say, without no doubt, that we have proceeded our path to become a true LO. The main differences are:

- Approach to strategy – Beside everything that was mentioned at that point, like “open door policy”, the periodically internal climate surveys and the virtual suggestion box at our “employee’s portal”, we’ve set up a non formalised system for permanent contact with employees, which is one of the “best practices” we are presenting ahead.
- Policy making – In general, everything works the same way it did in 2002, except that the ways available to publicize our core business priorities are wider, since our internet and even the intranet went through an important development process and were created a newsletter and a magazine in this period of time. In addition to this, and still in comparison with the 2002 state, there were a substantial change, because the Training Council no longer exists, being replaced by a Commission for HR and Training Issues, composed by high representatives of the Whole Group, that not only discuss matters concerning training, that were the Training Council purpose, but has an integrated vision of the human resources management in the organisation, contributing for the permanent development of Crédito Agrícola’s employees.
- Access and transparency of information – The intranet, which, as the internet, is accessible for all employees, is still the most powerful way to spread information, all training events for the Group are still organized by the Head Office, through a Training Centre that was created in 2004, but the centralised personnel management system is now responsible for whole Group, allowing the employees to access their own information and the managers to access professional records of their subordinates.
- Approach to planning objectives and monitoring results – As far as this issue is concerned, there are three major differences; the first is that the performance appraisal system is only applied once a year; the second is that the training needs analysis, at Caixa Central, is now included in the performance appraisal system, as a way to involve the employees in their own development. As far as the Local Banks are concerned there’s still an autonomous process to identify their training needs; the third is that the training results evaluation is in place, regarding qualitative and quantitative indicators.

- Internal exchange and dialogue – From 2002 until now, the major change were the enlargement of the internal trainers number and their proper preparation in order to ensure the most of our training effort, within the Group. As for the e-learning system, we are now using one, based on Moodle, simultaneously with the IFB's, WebBanca.
- Reward flexibility – The system still remains generally the same, but the reward for outstanding achievements is relatively new (since 2004).
- Inter-organisational learning – Concerning this matter the only change is that the majority of our training courses are now conducted by internal trainers. This “Internal Trainers Team” has representatives of all the Group structures, including some Local Banks.
- Professional development opportunities – Still the access to specific training courses is available, the support for higher education was increased and at the present moment, internal mobility is fostered within the whole Group.

4. Windows of best practices

Regarding the Best Practices in place at Caixa Central, we will describe two, namely the Training Model and the Active Relation Process.

THE TRAINING MODEL

In Crédito Agrícola was established, in 2004, a model, in order to provide systematic training to all the employees in the Group. This Model is based upon four pillars: Continuous Training – taking in the consideration de need for LifeLong Learning, since the entrance in Group, Polyvalence – for all categories and functions, Evaluation – Satisfaction, Knowledge, Behaviour and Results and Completeness – including the entire Crédito Agrícola universe.

Upon these four pillars, the Model properly said, has got four layers, enclosing all the transversal subjects that were considered fundamental for a employee to know, with each layer having a specific purpose.

The first one, intents to provide Basic Training and includes the three major courses within our Group, that will be thoroughly developed ahead in this report.

The second is the Development Training, since its main objective is to provide a wide range of subjects, divided in 5 specific areas: Commercial, Behaviour, Credit and Risk, Finances and Management Information. For each area is defined

a set of courses, destined to different categories, with the necessary adjustments as far as contents are concerned. These two first layers are recurrent, meaning that these courses are repeated with due updates, as long as it is necessary.

The Third one is the Complementary Training, intends to answer to specific needs, limited in time, and is divided in two areas: Services and Products and Emergent Issues. The first one takes care of the spreading of new services and products. The second one encloses every subject that needs to be quickly trained throughout the organisation, but after that doesn't have to be retrained.

Finally the fourth layer is the Specialisation Training and is destined to enhance the acquisition of university degrees by employees that want to improve their qualifications, by providing financial support and sometimes the possibility of special absence periods for study purposes.

In this Model, there's no specific path for any employee and although the layers rest on top of each other, that doesn't mean that the right way in from bottom to top. In fact, the whole idea is for any individual to cover all the layers, up and down, and all the different areas, from right to left, regardless of anything, beside his specific needs in a given time spam.

As mentioned earlier and concerning the basic training, there are three training programmes which we consider our “anchor courses”, because they're meant for the fulfilment of needs that are present in most of our employees.

The first one was created in 2004, destined for new employees of the CA Group and is called FORBASIC. It's important to underline that until then, there were no specific training programmes for newcomers, and that made it quite hard for any new employee to quickly adjust and perform as expect in the recruitment process. The FORBASIC is divided in 10 modules, lasts for four interpolated weeks and its contents includes banking operations, services and products available, visits to some departments of Caixa Central in order to apprehend practical issues, that are usually only presented in theoretically terms, time management, sales techniques and technological systems. Finally, this training programme is fully conducted by internal trainers in the Head Office premises, in Lisbon.

The second “anchor course”, named FORCOORD, was designed in 2005 and is about leadership, destined to all the actual and future managers. Its contents

include the leader competences, motivation, and time and conflict management. It lasts for 6 days, divided in two modules of three days in two interpolated weeks, taking place in 4 different Crédito Agrícola premises throughout the Country, being conducted by a specialised company that designed the contents with us.

As for our third major course, SABERES+, it was created in 2006 and is quite similar to FORBASIC,(with identical contents but adjusted to other trainees, with other demand level), except that this one is destined for employees with more than 3 years of experience and that takes place in 4 other locations, different than the ones used for FORCOORD. In this case the trainers are a mix of 90% internal and 10% external resources.

THE ACTIVE RELATIONS PROCESS

Following an internal discussion within the HR department, it was suggested that, in order to provide a closer support to the Caixa Central Employees, was necessary to establish a process that made possible for them to easily present their professional questions, building a “communication bridge” between the HR department and the employees.

This way, in 2007, a set of HR technicians was assembled to work as “Interlocutors” of a specific number of employees (around 30/each), conducting individual interviews with all of them, explaining the process objectives, asking for an overview of their professional path until then, hearing the eventual complaints they had and applying a psychological evaluation instrument. Also in this first interview was underlined the fact that from then on, if in need of some explanation or support as far as the HR department was concerned, the employee should get in touch with his “interlocutor”, that then was in charge of addressing the issue and providing the respective answer to the interested.

After that, a short report, resulting of the interview and of the evaluation instrument, was delivered and explained individually to every employee, causing a good impression in the large majority of them, since it was perceived as a true effort to be close to them and eventually solve some of their problems.

That is why even though there’s been almost two years since the beginning of this process there are still a significant percentage of employees that maintain contact with their “interlocutors”, seeking through them answers to professional and sometimes even personal problems.

Furthermore, this process allowed gathering an important amount of information about the functioning of the Caixa Central's departments, and to learn about the relations between subordinates and managers and even between colleagues.

These results were discussed among the set of "interlocutors" and with the HR management, making possible some actions in order to correct, improve or exceed some specific situations.

5. Overview of strengths and weaknesses

Following the questionnaire results it's possible to point out the major weaknesses and strengths of our organisation.

WEAKNESSES:

- The collecting of the new ideas and its spreading around the organisation isn't systematic, nor is common to all Caixa Central's departments, which limits the possibilities of a faster response to new challenges or even may cause some frustration in employees willing to contribute with their creativity to the business performance.
- The limited assessment of external customer's satisfaction may hide eventual mistakes that are being made repeatedly or other complaints that are silent, just because it's not usual to ask our customers to speak out their opinions.
- The lack of a formal structure in charge of quality assurance may be a threat in the near future because in the financial sector it's getting harder to fulfil all the requirements in order to provide a quality service to the customers.

STRENGTHS

- The ICT tools available that not only allow every employee to access a wide range of information, but also allows the learning and knowledge exchange and the use of powerful and fast means of communication.
- The employee's participation in the definition of their own objectives, making them feel responsible for their achievement and always aware of what's expected from them.
- The fact that, usually, no sanctions are systematically used to punish mistakes reinforces a positive climate within the organisation and allows that those

mistakes are used as a learning experience, not only by the one that made the mistake, but also by the others.

6. First steps towards an Improvement Plan

- ° Enhance the access to e-learning throughout the entire Group, by creating the necessary conditions, both technologically and pedagogically;
- ° Spread the training results evaluation to a wider number of courses, in order to determine what's the real impact training has, upon the organisation performance;
- ° Formalise the existent "Active Relations Process", changing it into an anchor process as far as competences and career development is concerned;
- ° A Compliance Department and a Customer Complaints Department has been recently created, being therefore expect that, some of our current weaknesses will be overcome by the work of these two new structures.

5.6 SLOVENIA CASE STUDY – Nova Ljubljanska Banka d.d.



Workshop
"Towards a laboratory of innovation: ideas put into practice"

Witnessing from the pilot bank

The case of Slovenian bank(s)

Irena Lavric
Vijanka Markic Simoneti

Luxembourg, May 8, 2009



1

Nova Ljubljanska banka d.d., Ljubljana

- Universal bank
- The largest bank in Slovenia
- 166 branches in Slovenia
- 4.097 employees (31.12.2008)
- Market share in Slovenia 30%
- Total assets 14.477 million € (31.12.2008)



2

NLB Group

- 12 banks,
- 11 leasing companies,
- 11 factoring and forfeiting companies,
- 5 insurance companies,
- 1 asset management company and
- 15 companies performing other activities

Operating in:

- Southeastern Europe
 - Slovenia
 - Bulgaria
 - Bosnia and Herzegovina
 - Croatia
 - Macedonia
 - Serbia
 - Montenegro
 - Kosovo

- Western and Central Europe
 - Austria
 - Czech Republic
 - Italy
 - Germany
 - Slovakia
 - Switzerland



- The piloting exercise took place in November 2008 and was conducted by Deputy HR Manager.
- Following the recommendation from the Qua.Lobster project team, employees with different function within the bank were invited

- The questionnaire was completed by 13 employees:
 - Retail banking (2):
 - branch manager
 - head of section
 - PR (1)
 - Education and Training (2)
 - HR Development (4)
 - HR Management (3)
 - Security (1)

- the group consisted of:
 - 4 managers and
 - 9 experts
- educational structure:
 - 12 university degree
 - 1 secondary school
- average age : 40 years
- average banking experience: 14 years

- the employees provided answers in electronic form
- the questionnaire was translated into Slovene

Participants provided also info about

- Understanding the contents of the questions (yes/no)
- Rationality of questions related to contents (yes/no)
- General assessment of the questionnaire (description)
 - Terminology
 - Time component
 - Complexity of contents
 - Understanding of instructions

Other SLO banks, BAS

Questionnaire was also reviewed by employees from 5 banks & BAS:

- UniCredit Banka Slovenia (3),
- Banka Koper d.d. (3),
- SID banka d.d., Ljubljana (3),
- Dezelna banka Slovenije d.d (2),
- Abanka Vipava d.d. (0),
- Bank Association of Slovenia (4).

Recommendations/findings during piloting phase

- Reduce No of questions,
- Avoid/ explain abbreviations
- Regarding scaling in few cases
- Use of terminology, need for simplification in some cases, need for translation in national language (?)
- Some technical clarifications for filling in the questionnaire
- Approximate time for filling in the questionnaire: 30 minutes

Conclusions

Qualobster Self-assessment questionnaire

- is new tool for SLO banks (BAS was not a partner in Eurobanqua and Lobster LdV Projects)
- in some cases language difficulties (demand for translation in national language: material, guidelines, questionnaire)

- Major reason of Nova Ljubljanska banka for participating in the project is the idea of benchmarking in the FSS
 - on the national level
 - EU level and
 - possibility to share a good practice
- LdVQualobster Project offers this possibility
 - Laboratory of innovation w/
Qualobster Benchmarking Questionnaire

5.7 Work Locally, Compare at EU level

At the present days we are, gradually, being more conscious of what really means and what impact does imply the so called “Globalization”.

In fact, until quite recent times, when thinking about globalization, we usually thought about something distant, whose impacts was being felt smoothly, but weren’t still determinant for our daily activity, specially in economies as the Portuguese one. Well the reality proved us, as it frequently does, thru the present world crisis and maybe in the harsher way, that globalization is truly here, affecting in a brutal way all the markets, economies and cultures!

But the evidence that we are all being affected by the profound relationship that bonds all countries, regardless of the laws in place in each one, of the different cultures that embodies them and the distinct stages in which their economies are, allow us to draw one conclusion.

If with different governance standards, with diverse management approaches nothing and no one can stay away of its impacts, then its not enough to only focus in our local market, but its decisive to compare our reality with what is being made in a wider space, meaning particularly the European Union.

In Portugal, this perspective of comparability with the competitors has always been a major concern of the financial system as a whole, mainly due to the role played by the Associação Portuguesa de Bancos (Portuguese Bank Association), who encouraged the sharing of practices among all Banks. This allowed us to conclude, although in the beginning this practice was only at national level, that there is no “one better way” for doing things and reach success, but it’s possible to find a better way to accomplish results, given a specific context.

That is why we find so relevant knowing and understanding what’s in place at our European competitors, regarding management in general, but particularly regarding the human resources management, since is, each time more obvious, that it’s people performance that truly makes the difference between reaching success or not on organisations, or in this particularly case, on banks.

As far as Crédito Agrícola is concerned, this is a very important issue, since we’re members of European Association of Co-Operative Banks, where these comparisons are also in order, allowing us a better understanding of the European “State of the Art” on these affairs.

And it's on this scope that the QuaLobster emerges, continuing and deepening Lobster, widening the discussion to themes as relevant these days as the Quality and Diversity Management, making possible significant improvement, particularly because of one of its components: the Laboratory of Innovation.

When in place, and fed by a significant number of institutions, will by possible for companies to know what Real organisations are doing, in the Real market, identifying "best practices", sharing them in the community and allowing their implementation in other contexts, with the necessary adaptations.

We believe that conditions are in place for, preserving the sole characteristics of each institution and their individuality, to encourage the use and integration of European practices, already adopted by congenerous, boosting markets, being once more, the financial sector the pioneer and instigator of a new competition concept, each time more focused on a win-win logic, concept that can, and should, be used and transferable to other activity sectors.

6. LABORATORY OF INNOVATION: HOW IT WORKS

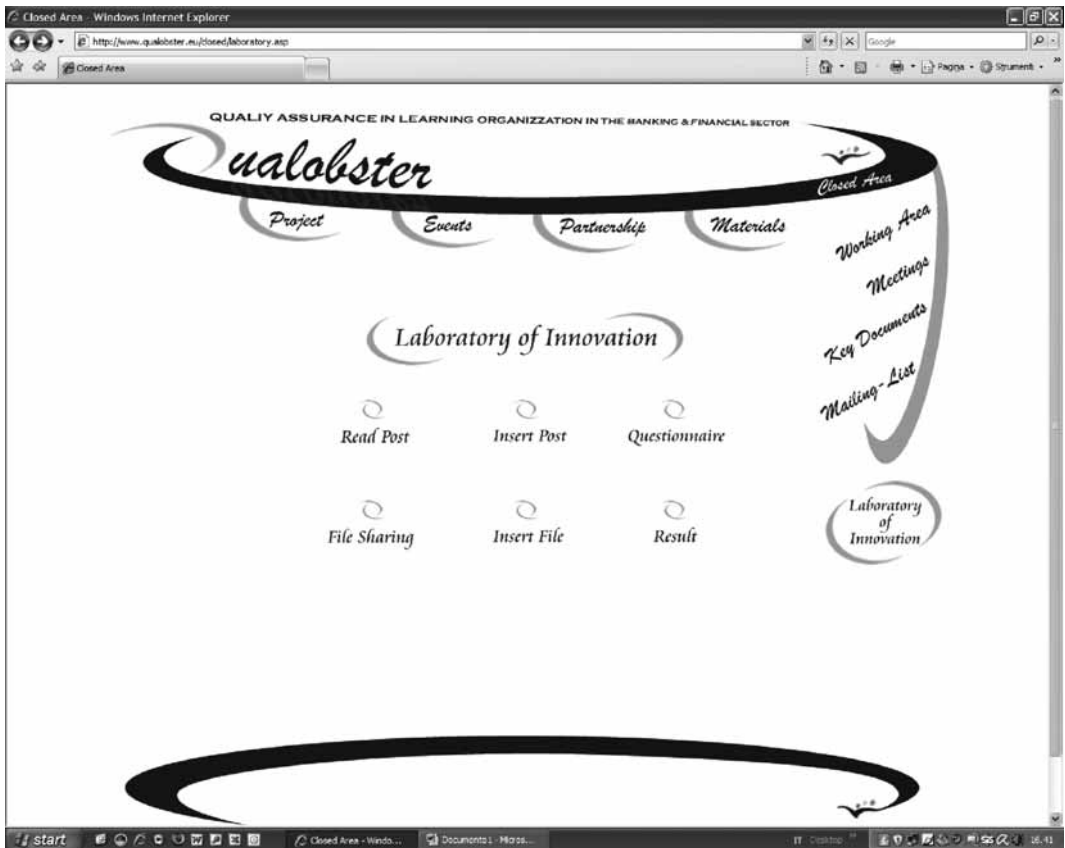
6.1 The web platform and context



First steps

Following it will be shown on the display screen of the web site and the single steps to access it:

- Enter in the web site www.qualobster.eu and click on “Closed Area”
- Insert UserID and Password and click on “Enter”
- Successively click on “Laboratory of Innovation”
- Welcome to the Laboratory!



1. Read post: this is a section to insert posts. In this section the User can insert a post and choose if to insert this post in an already existing category or to create a new one.

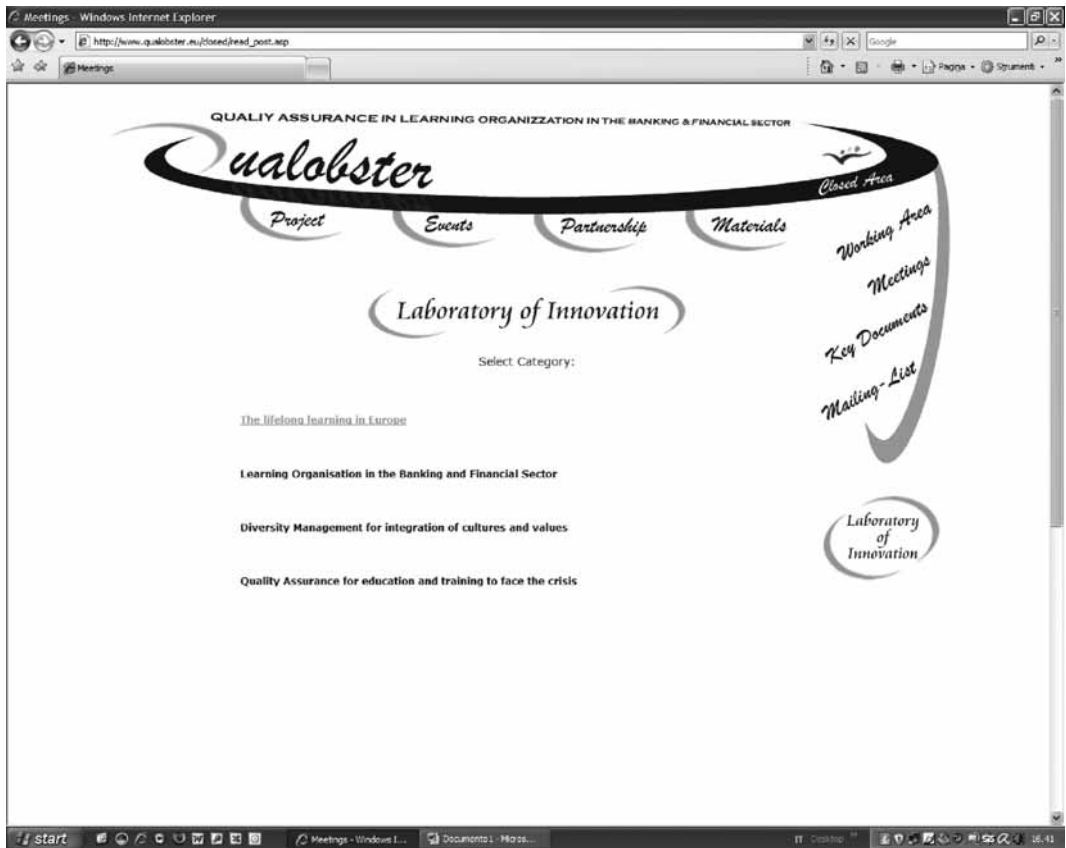
2. Insert File: in this section the User can insert some files from its own pc.

3. File Sharing: in this section the User can read all the loaded documents on the website; this section is divided in some categories, so the user can directly find his subject of interest.

4. Questionnaire: in this section there is the Benchmarking Questionnaire.

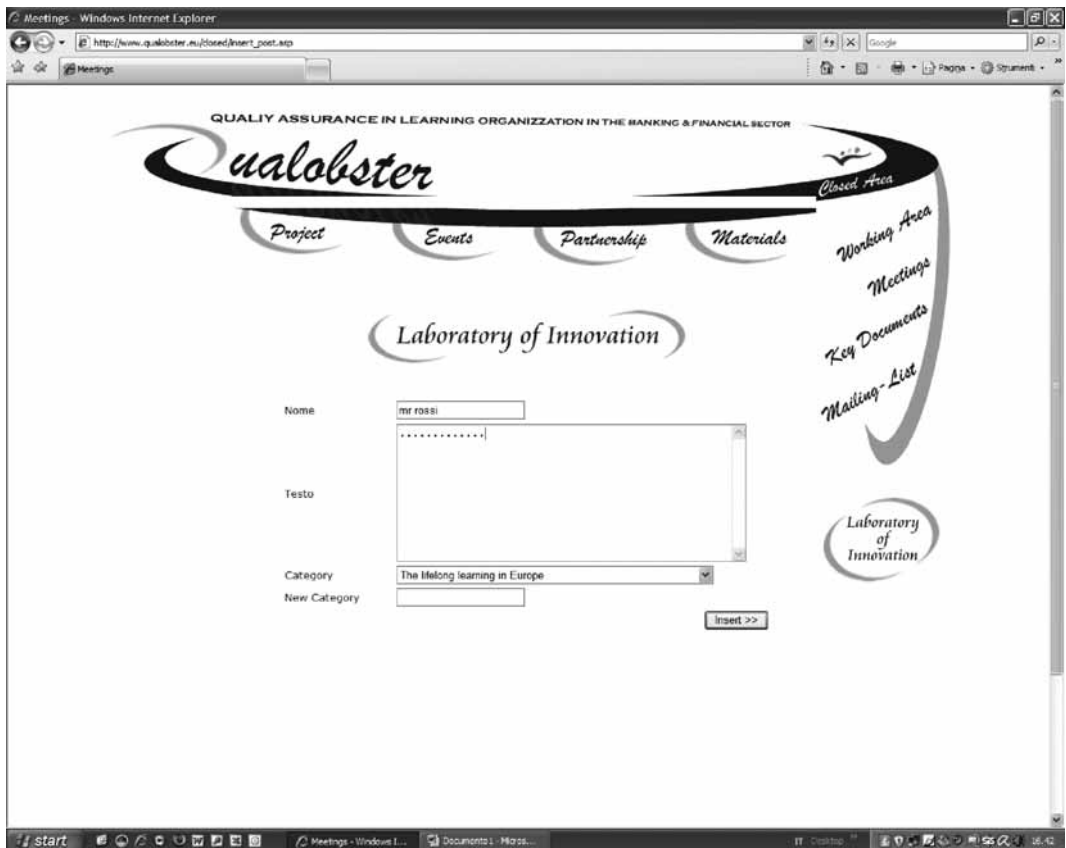
5. Result: this section shows the results of the Benchmarking Questionnaire.

READ POST



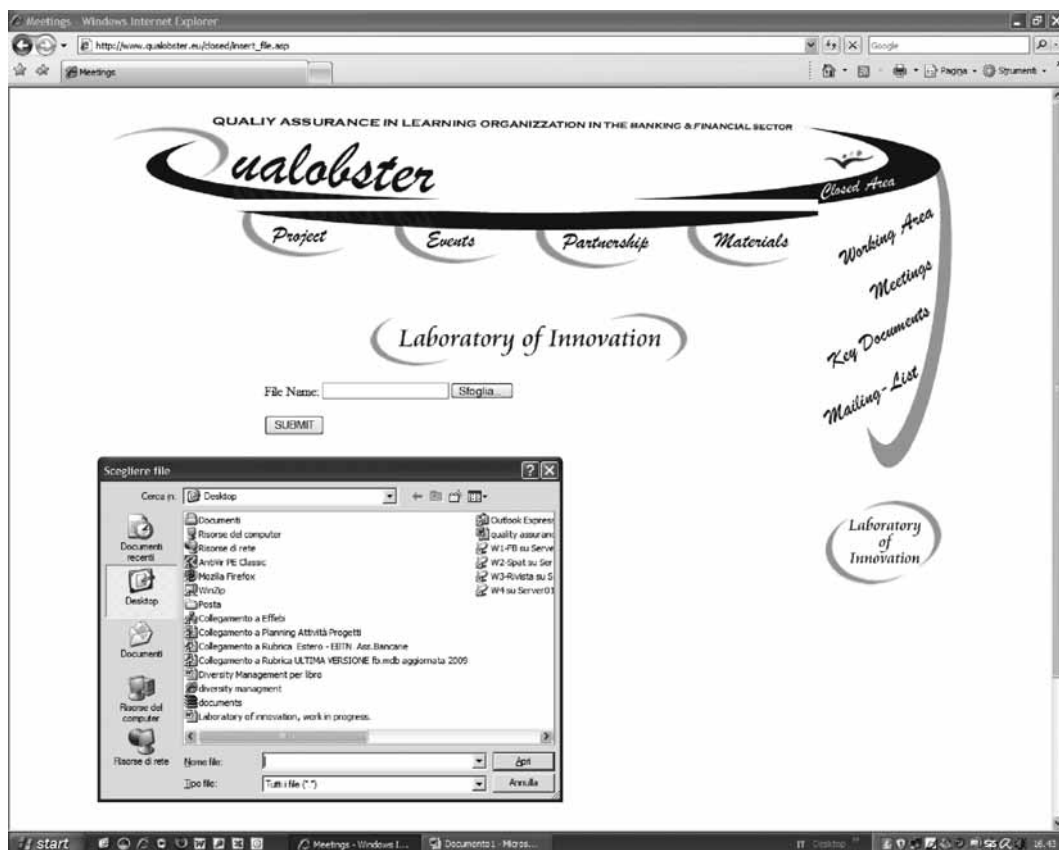
- The User has to click on his post of interest, to read the related discussions.

INSERT POST



- The User has the possibility to write a post and to insert it within its categories of interest.
- It is possible to create new categories.

FILE SHARING



- The User has the possibility to insert the file, choosing some files from its PC.

QUESTIONNAIRE

The screenshot shows a web browser window titled "Meetings - Windows Internet Explorer" with the address bar displaying "http://www.qualobster.eu/does/questionnaire.asp". The website header features the "Qualobster" logo and the tagline "QUALITY ASSURANCE IN LEARNING ORGANIZATION IN THE BANKING & FINANCIAL SECTOR". A navigation bar includes links for "Project", "Events", "Partnership", and "Materials". On the right side, a vertical menu lists "Closed Area", "Working Area", "Meetings", "Key Documents", and "Meeting-List". The main content area is titled "Laboratory of Innovation" and "Questionnaire". It contains a form with the following fields: "Country:", "Istituto:", "Dimension:" (with a dropdown menu showing "< 400.000 €"), "Employees:" (with a dropdown menu showing "0 - 300"), and "Data: 27/05/2009". Below these fields is a list of six statements, each followed by a dropdown menu labeled "Planned for implementation":

1. Carries out periodic surveys to detect "employees satisfaction" concerning their job and professional commitment.
2. Implements decision-making processes based on the integration of top-down with bottom-up approach.
3. Utilises dedicated tools to collect new ideas proposed by any employees and adopts promising ideas in pilot experiences.
4. Gives visibility to strategic and operational objectives to be attained in a given time span.
5. Communication channels are regularly used by top management to share information on the bank's strategic processes.
6. ICT supports an integrated system for communication, learning,

The browser's taskbar at the bottom shows various icons, including the Start button, and the system clock displays "15:35".

- After the compilation of the “Identity Card”, the User will obtain a password to access the Questionnaire (Benchmarking Questionnaire).
- It’s possible to draw up the Questionnaire, selecting between some of the already existing answers.
- Then the User has to click on “insert” to upload the Questionnaire in the database.
- Once completed the Questionnaire an additional password will be provided to access the database in the section “Result”.
- The Questionnaire is divided in three areas: Learning Organization, Quality Assurance and Diversity Management.
- The Questionnaire is anonymous.

RESULTS

Questionnaire Results - Windows Internet Explorer

http://www.quickster.eu/loaded/result.asp

Search the web

Go + Traduttore Google Giphy GreenCard Sunrise Cresce BEE Vendita Lotto TV

Questionnaire Results

Page Signum

Laboratory of Innovation

Questionnaire Results

Country	Institute	Dimension	Employee	Date	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27	Q28	Q29	Q30
Germany	22	small	big	02/02/2009	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Italy	23	big	small	04/03/2009	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Italy	24	small	small	04/02/2009	4	5	3	1	4	1	4	1	1	1	3	1	1	3	1	2	1	4	3	2	3	1	4	1	2	1	5	2	3	5
France	25	small	medium	04/02/2009	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	3	1	5	2	2
Germany	26	medium	medium	04/03/2009	2	1	1	1	3	1	2	1	2	5	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	5	5	1	2	1	4	5
Luxembourg	27	big	big	05/03/2009	1	2	3	4	5	5	1	5	2	4	4	3	4	4	3	2	4	4	5	4	1	2	5	2	4	4	2	1	0	
Brazil	28	big	big	09/04/2009	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Massimo	30	medium	small	09/04/2009	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	
Mirano	31	small	small	09/04/2009	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Italy	32	medium	small	14/04/2009	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	
Italy	33	small	small	14/04/2009	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	
Italy	34	small	small	17/04/2009	5	4	3	2	1	1	0	3	0	1	1	4	1	3	1	1	0	3	0	3	0	3	0	2	3	2	2	4	0	4
Greece	35	big	big	30/04/2009	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	
Greece	36	medium	small	30/04/2009	2	3	3	5	5	5	3	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
	37	small	small	05/05/2009	0	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	
	38	small	small	19/05/2009	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	
	39	small	small	27/05/2009	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	

Total

Country	Institute	Dimension	Employee	Date	Learning Organization	Quality Assurance	Diversity Management	% Learning Organization	% Quality Assurance	% Diversity Management	Totale
Germany	22	small	big	02/02/2009	0	0	3	0 %	0 %	10 %	2 %
Italy	23	big	small	04/03/2009	18	6	9	20 %	20 %	30 %	22 %
Italy	24	small	small	04/03/2009	42	14	18	47 %	47 %	60 %	49.33333333333333 %

start

THE WEB P...

Facebook

area - baby...

Closed Area...

Questionnaire...

IT Desktop

15:50

- Clicking on Result a screen with two graphics will be displayed: in the first there are the single answers for each question; in the second there are the summations of the answers for each of the three categories of all Institutes.
- It is possible, clicking on the pertinent word keys, to see the graphics for each single country, dimension or employees.

6.2 Laboratory of Innovation as community of practice

Laboratory of innovation has been created for to favourite a community of practice.

Communities of practice are formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of common work: a group working on similar problems, a network of persons sharing their know-how.

In a nutshell:

Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.

Note that this definition allows for, but does not assume, intentionality: learning can be the reason for the community to come together to an outcome of member's interactions. Not everything called a community is a community of practice. A neighbourhood for instance, is often called a community, but is usually not a community of practice.

Three characteristics are crucial:

- 1. *The domain:*** A community of practice is not merely a club of friends or a network of connections between people. It has an identity defined by a shared domain of interest. Membership therefore implies a commitment to the domain, and therefore a shared competence that distinguishes members from other people. The domain is not necessarily something recognized as “expertise” outside the community.
- 2. *The community:*** In pursuing their interest in their domain, members engage in joint activities and discussions, help each other, and share information. They build relationships that enable them to learn from each other. A website in itself is not a community of practice. Having the same job or the same title does not make for a community of practice unless members interact and learn together. The members of a community of practice do not necessarily work together on a daily basis, but their interactions were essential to make a community of practice.
- 3. *The practice:*** A community of practice is not merely a community of interest - people who like certain kinds of movies, for instance. Members of a community of practice are practitioners. They develop a shared repertoire of resources:

experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems -in short a shared practice. This takes time and sustained interaction. The development of a shared practice may be more or less self-conscious.

It is the combination of these three elements that constitutes a community of practice. And it is by developing these three elements in parallel that one cultivates such a community.

Communities develop their practice through a variety of activities. These are a few typical examples:

- 4 Problem solving
- 4 Requests for information
- 4 Seeking experience
- 4 Reusing assets
- 4 Coordination and synergy
- 4 Discussing developments
- 4 Documentation projects
- 4 Visits
- 4 Mapping knowledge and identifying maps.

Communities of practice are not called that in all organizations. They are known under various names, such as learning networks or thematic groups.

While they all have the three elements of a domain, a community, and a practice, they come in a variety of forms. Some are quite small; some are very large, often with a core group and many peripheral members.

Some are local and some cover the globe. Some meet mainly face-to-face, some mostly online. Some are within an organization and some include members from various organizations.

Some are formally recognized, often supported with a budget; and some are completely informal and even invisible.

Communities of practice have been around for as long as human beings have learned together. In fact, communities of practice are everywhere. They are a familiar experience, so familiar perhaps that it often escapes our attention.

Yet when it is given a name and brought into focus, it becomes a real perspective to create common vision, knowledge and experiences.

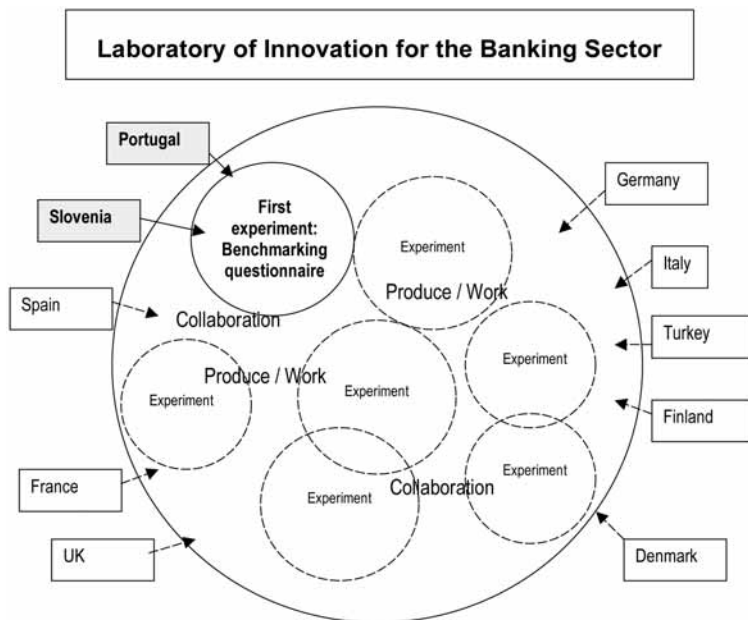
6.3 Examples of collaborative activities in the Laboratory

The project Qua.Lobster has worked as a piloting experience to test the Laboratory of Innovations and to learn from this experience in order to improve, to correct and to insert comments and contributions deriving directly from our piloting organisations.

The first piloting Countries, Slovenia and Portugal (shown in green) have experimented the benchmarking referring to Learning Organisation, Quality Assurance and Diversity Management policies. The final goal is to involve a wider and wider number of European Countries which will compare their Banking organisations in the same experiment and/or other experiments.

In the form it is conceived the Laboratory of Innovation allows a wide range of collaborative actions: from the benchmarking on Learning Organisation, Quality Assurance and Diversity Management systems status, to training systems and training solutions to other relevant topics related to the HR development and management in the Banking sector. Each organisation will be able to start their own benchmarking on an identified topic that is considered important to explore and compare with other sectoral organisations in Europe.

The of Innovation can be represented as in the following graph:



Main innovation

The main innovation of the Laboratory is based on a new methodology for learning and to learnovation (as a combination of learning achievements and innovation).

Methodology

The Innovation of the Lab stands in the approach to benchmarking and learning: using the web as a virtual arena where different realities of the Banking sector meet and share their experience across borders is a definite trait of innovation, not just for the tool adopted but for the approach itself, a new way of conceiving benchmarking not as a mere competitors analysis, but as a way to understand where the Organisation stands in terms of development and ultimately learn from other experiences developed in the sector.

Link better learning to innovation: Learnovation

Learning is a process that implies change. Change in its positive attribution of value means growth, evolving into something better. The Laboratory of Innovation intends to pursue this objective: Learning meant as an experience which will bring positive change, therefore innovation.

It can be reassumed as a simple correlation: sharing experience _ learning _ design change _ producing innovation.

7. LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE PILOTING PHASE

The piloting phase, which involved banks of Slovenia and Portugal, aimed at understanding the areas of improvements of the Laboratory of Innovation and of its tools and to insert all relevant suggestions and feedback coming from the stakeholders involved in the experiment.

This process has allowed to take into account the feedbacks and needs of the users for whom the Lab has been conceived.

The main findings can be reassumed as follows:

1. impact feedback for improvements for the proposed tools: the self assessment and the benchmarking questionnaires, the usability of the Lab, the link with the Banking sector needs.
2. impact feedback for improvement for the organisations involved in the exercise.

• **Impact feedback from the organisations involved for the improvement of the tools**

Qua.Lobster project allowed to assess the Laboratory of Innovation and its tools during the piloting phase to better reflect the needs of the Banking sector and to modify the tools in a way that they were usable and understandable from the stakeholders involved. The process, based on the concept of Quality Assurance, was conceived as an open progression that included several moments of consultation between the partners and the stakeholders in order to include their feedbacks and suggestions and to increase the quality of the tools in a spiral development.

There are some remarks regarding the questionnaires and its use that need to be pinpointed and reuse for the future development of other experiments within the Lab:

1. the use of the English language should be preferred to a translated version of the tools since it might produce misunderstanding and mislead the results;
2. do not give anything for granted: concepts might not be clear to everyone although widely used. It is recommended to explain the main concepts contained in the questionnaire in order to have a clear and common understanding of what it is the subject of the analysis;

3. it is essential that the language used is close to the sector and to the stakeholders, including those to the HRD and the training department: this would facilitate understanding and useful comparison among different organisations in Europe;
4. attention should be paid to the fact that the best benchmarking exercises can be conducted among organisations which have similar characteristics: sector, number of employees, presence on the territory, etc.

• **Impact feedback for the improvement of the organisations**

The Qua.Lobster experience was perceived by all the Banks involved during the project and the seminars as a positive and innovative learning experience which would help Banks in Europe to have a constructive comparison using the Lab. Even when it was difficult to find a common language and to understand how to use the tools, it was clear from the very beginning that the organisations involved saw the potentialities of the Laboratory of Innovation and of its approach as a useful and powerful instrument to find solutions to different problems in a collaborative way.

Reusing and applying successful experience of other Banks will help the participating Banks to be more effective, without a waste of resources, implementing strategies that will help increasing the valorisation on the Human Capital of their organisations.

8. GLOSSARY

Term	Definition
Assessment	The sum of methods and processes used to evaluate the attainments (knowledge, know-how, skills and competences) of an individual, and typically leading to certification.
Competence-based assessment	A Competence Based Assessment is an assessment process based on the collection of evidence on which judgements are made concerning progress towards satisfaction of the three elements of competence, i.e. knowledge, skills and attitudes. [NB the competency-based assessment of an individual takes no account of the performance of others in the wider group being assessed (as is the case in norm-referenced assessment), and can be limited to mastery/non-mastery].
Attitude	Attitudes are the motivators of performance, the basis for continued competent performance. They include ethics, values, and priorities. They can also include responsibility and autonomy as in EQF for competence element. Attitudes tend to operate at the subconscious level and are not consciously learned; attitudes can be assessed by psychometric tests, or inferred from behaviour.
Certification (of knowledge, skills and competences)	Relates to individuals: the process of formally validating (i.e. assessing and confirming) knowledge and/or skills and competences, acquired by an individual, following a standard assessment procedure. Certificates or diplomas are issued by accredited awarding bodies
Change Management	The future perspectives through ICT & TLC. Creating a vision of change. Overcoming obstacles & resistance. Evolution towards entrepreneurial models.
Competence	Commonly competence is defined as knowledge, skills and attitudes. It is the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy.
Continuing education and training	Education or training after initial education or entry into working life, aimed at helping individuals to: improve or update their knowledge and/or skills, acquire new skills for a career move or retraining, continue their personal or professional development.
Credits/credit points	Credits express the volume or size of learning outcomes achieved in a learning process. It refers to the content of a qualification, the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences, i.e. the codified results of learning activities which might be aggregated in learning units. The term credit points is used in reference to the numerical and accountability system of points towards the value of a full training programme. Credits and credit points are based on a convention.
Culture	The integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief and behaviour. Corporate values/sense of membership. Cross cultural links and management of diversity. Comparing cultures: what makes one company more successful than other.
Curriculum	In formal education, it is the set of courses and their content offered at an institution such as a school or university. In some cases, a curriculum may be partially or entirely determined by an external body (e.g. awarding body). The term curriculum describes the collective teaching, learning and assessment materials that are available for a particular course or programme. A crucial part of the

	<p><i>curriculum</i> is the definition of the course objectives which are often expressed in terms of learning outcomes and normally includes the assessment strategy for the program. These learning outcomes (and assessments) are often grouped into modules and the curriculum, therefore, comprises a collection of such modules, each specialising on a specific part of the curriculum.</p>
Designation	<p>A <i>professional designation</i> is a title/status that is conferred by a <i>professional body</i>, which indicates the professional status of an individual and may also indicate the right to offer certain services under the governance of that body (i.e. if the body is a regulatory body). Retention of this status is dependent upon compliance with the stated requirements of the body concerned. These requirements would typically include compliance with a Code of Professional Conduct, compliance with Continuing Professional Development requirements and the payment of fees. An important corollary to this is that a designation is not a permanent status and may be revoked if non-compliance with any of the specified requirements occurs. A <i>designation</i> is normally post-nominal (after the name) letters or titles.</p>
Diversity	<p>The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing our individual differences. These can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs...</p> <p>It is about understanding each other and moving beyond tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual.</p>
Diversity Management	<p>Methodology to promote the perception, acknowledgement and implementation of diversity in organisations and institutions. It is based on the idea that diversity opens up alternative ways of perceiving, thinking and acting and thus enriches the life of the community.</p>
Employability	<p>The degree of adaptability an individual demonstrates in finding and keeping a job, and updating occupational skills; the ability to stay employed.</p>
Entry requirement	<p>An entry requirement is a pre-requisite for entry to a particular learning programme. This prerequisite can be expressed as a competence, a course, a qualification or learning outcome that must have been already achieved in order to begin the new learning programme. To estimate the credit value for a learning programme (e.g. ECTS or ECVET) it is necessary to specify both the entry requirements and the learning outcomes. Entry requirements facilitate the learning process for a given programme.</p>
European Qualification Framework EQF	<p>The EQF is a translation device for comparing qualifications in Europe. The core of the EQF are eight reference levels describing what a learner knows, understands and is able to do – 'learning outcomes'. Levels of national qualifications will be placed at one of the central reference levels, ranging from basic (Level 1) to advanced (Level 8). The EQF applies to all types of education, training and qualifications, from school education to academic, professional and vocational. The system shifts the focus from the traditional approach which emphasises 'learning inputs' such as the length of a learning experience, or type of institution. It also encourages lifelong learning by promoting the validation of non-formal and informal learning.</p>
EQF level	<p>Each of the 8 EQF levels is defined by a set of descriptors indicating the learning outcomes relevant to qualifications at that level in any system of qualifications. The levels are described by learning outcomes defined through knowledge (theoretical and factual), skills (cognitive and practical) and competences (expressed as responsibility and autonomy).</p>
Formal learning	<p>Learning that occurs in an organised and structured environment (in a school/training centre or on the job) and is explicitly designated as learning (in terms of objectives, time or resources). Formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view. It typically leads to certification.</p>

Functional analysis	The analysis and specification of competence according to functions which today provide a broader conception of competence than earlier task analysis approaches. The concentration on function shifts the focus of competence from tasks and procedures to the purpose and outcome of work activity. These are more likely to endure as technology and work procedures change rapidly. There is also less likelihood to neglect the non-technical aspects of competence, to the degree these are required to achieve a successful outcome.
Informal learning	Learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support. Informal learning is in most cases unintentional from the learner's perspective. It typically does not lead to certification.
Innovation	The conversion of knowledge and new ideas into business benefits. Links with other organisations to secure special expertise. Innovative organisational structures. The key to competitiveness of business.
Non-formal learning	Non-formal learning is not provided by an education or training institution and typically does not lead to certification. However, it is intentional on the part of the learner and has structured objectives, times and support.
International sectoral Organisation	An association of national organisations, including, for example, employers and professional bodies, which represents the interests of national sectors.
Knowledge	The cognitive outcome of the assimilation of information through learning. Knowledge is the body of facts, principles, theories and practices that is related to a field of work or study. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual.
Laboratory of Innovation	The Laboratory of Innovation is a virtual space where different Subjects will meet to share their best practices through a Benchmarking approach.
Learning outcomes	Statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process. Learning outcomes constitute a fundamental element of EQF, where they are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence. Can also be defined through knowledge, skills and attitudes.
Lifelong learning	All learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and/or qualifications for personal, social and/or professional reasons. Lifelong learning is also a call to constantly renew people's skills to enable them to meet the challenges of ever-evolving technologies, increasing internationalisation and demographic changes. Nowadays, lifelong learning is key to jobs and growth, as well as to allow everyone the chance to participate fully in society. Motivating and enhancing lifelong learning is a fundamental goal of EQF.
Occupational standards	Usually in plural. Define requirements for competent performance in the workplace for a particular professional role/occupation. Specify required body of knowledge/understanding, performance criteria /outcomes of performance and underpinning behaviours needed to perform according to the standards. They often encompass best current practices and are typically issued by regulatory authorities.
Professional body	A <i>professional body</i> is a body appointed to represent a recognised 'community of expert practitioners' and as such it devises, informs, monitors and continually updates the benchmark standards of competence, both academic and practical, required in the practice of a given profession.

Professional certification	<i>Professional certification</i> is usually awarded by a <i>professional body</i> . Requirements will be a certain level of qualification and membership of the body. Possible requirements may be years of experience, signing up to a code of conduct or ethics, commitment to continuing professional development (CPD) and payment of a membership fee. Certifications, generally, need to be renewed periodically, or may be valid for a specific period of time. There is usually a requirement that the financial advisor show evidence of continual learning.
Professional profile	The set of standards of competence required to perform a professional role.
Programme (of education and training)	An inventory of activities, learning content and/or methods implemented to achieve education or training objectives (acquiring knowledge, skills or competences), organised in a logical sequence over a specified period of time.
Qualification	<p>A formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to a given standard.</p> <p>An official record (certificate, diploma) of achievement which recognises successful completion of education or training, or satisfactory performance in an assessment process.</p> <p>The requirements for an individual to enter or progress within an occupation.</p>
Quality Assurance	Is a methodology that, by focusing on corporate macro-processes instead of single procedures, allows a better control of internal quality, in particular in the initial and final phases of the process.
Recognition	<i>Formal recognition</i> : the process of granting official status to knowledge, skills and competences either through the award of certificates or through the grant of equivalence, credit units, validation of gained knowledge, skills and/or competences.
Regulated profession	Professional activity or group of professional activities access to which, and the practice of which (or to one of its forms) is directly or indirectly subject to legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions concerning the possession of specific professional qualifications.
Sector	A grouping of professional activities on the basis of their main economic function, product, service or technology.
Sectoral qualification	A qualification implemented by a group of companies belonging to the same sector in order to meet common qualification needs.
Skill	The ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, skills are described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) or practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments).
Validation (of non formal and informal learning)	Refers to non-formal and informal learning. The process of assessing and recognising a wide range of knowledge, know-how, skills and competences, which people develop throughout their lives within different environments, for example through education, work and leisure activities. Identification and validation are key instruments in enabling the transfer and acceptance of all learning outcomes across different settings. Identification records and makes visible the individual's learning outcomes. This does not result in a formal certificate or diploma,

	but it may provide the basis for such formal recognition. Validation is based on the assessment of the individual's learning outcomes and may result in a certificate or diploma.
Vocational Education & Training (VET)	Education and training which aims to equip people with skills and competences that can be used on the labour market.



LU/07/LLP-LdV/TOI-156005

DISSEMINATION CONFERENCE

PROCEEDINGS

BRUSSELS 17th JUNE 2009

***“Human Resources involvement: the key factor
to overcome the crisis”***

Dissemination Conference of LdV Project:

"Quality Assurance in Learning Organization in the Banking &
financial Sector in Europe - Qualobster"



17th June 2009
Espace Monte Paschi Belgio
Avenue d'Auderghem 22-28
Brussels (Belgium)

AGENDA

8.30 *Participants' Registration – Welcome coffee*

Welcome

Mr. F. Giannotti
General Manager - Monte Paschi Belgio

Mr. M. Spatafora
President - EBTN

9.30 *Opening Session*

Professionalism and ethics: to build the future

Mr. S. de Brouwer
Chief Legal Advisor - European Banking Federation

Quality and the Lifelong learning programme

Mrs. K. Pundel
Director - LdV Agency Anefore

The impact of lifelong learning on innovation

Mr. J. Delgado
Head of Unit – EC Directorate General for Education and Culture LdV Programme

The European Network for Quality Assurance

Mr. G. Allulli
Vice President - ENQAVET

11.00 *Coffee break*

Learning Organisation to innovation in the FSS

Mr. M. Spatafora
President – EBTN, European Banking & Financial Services Training Ass.

Self assessment and benchmarking as sources of learning

Mr. C. Dondi
President - SCIENTER

The role of Banking Institute as a promoter of change

Mr. L. Vilhena da Cunha
General Manager -The Portuguese Bank Training Institute

The power of Networking: the experience of a pioneer Bank

Mr. N. Cristino
HR Deputy Manager - Caixa Central de Credito Agricola Mutuo

13.30 *Lunch Buffet*

“Which HR strategies to overcome the crisis?”

Mr. C. Scharff

Member of the Management Board - HR Dexia BIL

Round Table:

“Creating a European community of practice: the EBTN Laboratory of Innovation”

Coordinator: Mr. E. Seyfried

Director - HWR Berlin

Discussants:

Mrs. S. Kocar

HR Deputy General Manager - Nova Ljubljanska Banka d.d.

Mrs. V. Simoneti

Head of the Bank Association of Slovenia Training Center

Mr. N. Cristino

HR Deputy Manager – Caixa Central de Credito Agricola Mutuo

Q. & A.

17.00 Conclusion by Mr. M. Spatafora
President - EBTN

WELCOME

F, Giannotti

Nel ringraziare la EBTN e il Prof. Spatafora in particolare per l'organizzazione del convegno e tutti Voi per essere intervenuti, ho il piacere di porgerVi il saluto a nome della Monte Paschi Belgio S.A., appartenente al Gruppo Monte dei Paschi di Siena. Le lezioni che ci vengono dalle grande crisi finanziaria tuttora in atto, ci riportano alla necessaria concretezza economica che deve sempre rappresentare il nostro core Business, di cui la Banca è emblema essendo nata nel 1472 come associazione laica di solidarietà rispetto all'economia rurale (dei "Pascoli" e quindi dei Paschi), che caratterizzava Siena e il suo territorio.

I tempi di crisi, che comportano spesso tagli indiscriminati nei costi, vedono tuttavia soccombenti quelle attività di studio e di formazione che invece a parere mio rappresentano investimenti irrinunciabili, ancor più necessari nei momenti in cui occorre trovare nuove soluzioni e strumenti per superare le difficoltà ; per questo siamo lieti di averVi qui, nella speranza di fornire un modesto contributo a questo modello di reazione alle difficoltà che deve esser fatto di studio, impegno e concretezza.

Buon lavoro.

Fabio Giannotti
General Manager
Monte Paschi Belgio

PROFESSIONALISM AND ETHICS: TO BUILD THE FUTURE

S. de Brouwer

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thanks for inviting EBF to share its views.

Apologies on behalf of Guido Ravoet.

Ethical dimension more and more important and looked at from all sides, by politicians, by the public AND by employees.

Never has the human dimension of banking been more at the forefront of our preoccupations. Throughout the crisis, in most countries affected by banks' failures to various extents, the finger has been pointed at banks and at their staff. And yes, banks do bear a responsibility in the crisis, and are making every effort to help minimise the consequences.

In the midst of the current confidence crisis, the role of banking employees is crucial to help restore this very trust that both investors and customers have been lacking for the last 6 months, and without which it will be impossible to restore business to normal. The human capital of our industry is one of its greatest riches and we must be able to rest on it, to invest in it and to rely on it in order to re-dynamise our industry.

Projects like Qua-Lobster are vital in this context. Organisational learning will help our HR departments improve diversity management, which in turn is a key aspect to be considered by all in the coming years. The diversity of staff is – and will be to a greater and greater extent – unavoidable in the years to come, whether gender, racial or religious diversity. It must be facilitated at all levels, seen as part of our evolving environment and taken into account in short-term future planning if not already done.

Another advantage of organisational learning is that employees for their part can enjoy improved training provisions thanks to the validated benchmarking approach adapted to the financial services sector. Better training services help employees meet the public's demand for more precise information and establish more accurate and efficient best practices. It is the sum of every individual's performance and competence that builds a banks' overall performance, something we must not forget, particularly in the current circumstances.

This sum of competences and sound approach reflect a bank's professionalism. I do not believe that our sector has ever been unprofessional, but it is clear that certain practices have led to abuses.

I would first of all reflect upon the one thing which the current crisis has highlighted: banking staff needs to have a broad enough understanding of issues and products so that they can understand the complexity of some of the products they sell. One of the very causes of the crisis is, in fact, that some banking products had become so complex that only a handful of investment bankers could understand what they really entailed.

I have heard many a banker – and I am talking of very high level, experienced bankers – say that the reason why they did not invest in toxic products is because they did not understand them in the first place. Thank God for that! It shows that there are a lot of sensible people in our industry. But not everyone has shown the same care and this is certainly something which must be avoided when shaping the banking landscape of the future. This is why I believe that a project like Qua lobster follows the right avenue, thanks to its benchmarking approach.

My second point of focus would be some remuneration policies which have been pointed at as being the source of part of the crisis. Or at least, there seems to be a political consensus that remuneration practices may have been a contributory factor to the market crisis, as they were not adjusted to risk and had a short-term focus. This accusation has definitely cast a shadow on the ethics of our profession, but I believe further research would be necessary before establishing for sure a correlation between the two.

In any case, a lot of work has already been carried out, at international, European and national levels. In several countries, governments directly linked those measures to their support schemes aimed at banks.

Banks themselves, and banking associations, have also taken measures to ensure the sustainability of their incentive policies.

Our industry is so much the focus of attention for the time being that it provides a good example of do's and don'ts. In that sense, ethics must remain rigorous. High level principles have been adopted at EU and international levels. They aim at aligning incentives to the performance of market instruments, for leading management personnel taking financial risks. The G20 and the Basel Committee are already working on the basis of all staff in organizations. The EBF for its part has endorsed the principles on remuneration published by CEBS, the Committee of European Banking Supervisors, with a specific view on executives' remuneration and intends to keep remuneration in line with risk management, while we insist that final decisions should be left to individual companies and shareholders.

Professionalism and ethics in our profession go further. We naturally have a duty to inform consumers, and this is embedded in legislation Europe-wide. At the same time, many of our financial services organisations have put in place specific educational services, thus helping consumers to make the right decisions when buying financial products best suited to their needs.

Others have focused on well developed Corporate Social Responsibility policies, be they sustainable investment, carbon neutral policies or climate change issues more generally speaking. This ethical approach has made our sector – or at least some individual banks – forerunners in the CSR field. It has allowed several financial institutions to make a name for themselves as sustainable institutions, leaders in their sector. This CSR approach obviously has a positive impact on the staff of the institution. On top of the obvious benefits of a sound CSR policy for a financial institution in the outside world's perception, internally the staff is educated in sustainability issues, feels more involved and more committed, therefore more motivated. It is also a way of investing in our human capital and its future.

This is a more and more commonly shared view. As a proof, I would like to refer to the conclusions of the G8 finance ministers meeting, held last week in Lecce, in Italy. The ministers have committed themselves, amongst other things, to enhancing skills development and to enabling labour markets to respond to broader structural changes. They have also agreed to strengthen their commitment to standards of propriety, integrity and transparency. They want to develop the Lecce Framework – a set of common principles and standards on the conduct of international business and finance – and they intend to reach out to broader fora with this initiative, including the G20 and beyond. As you see, these commitments are directly related to the issues we are discussing here today and show that ethics are not just a political preoccupation but part of a series of practical measures to be implemented at the highest level.

In the banking sector, one thing we do know is that investing in the future has to be a wise decision. I know that lately, some may have doubted that idea, but I am a believer in the traditional values of banking. Investing is usually done with the idea of a Return on Investment in mind. One thing has to be clear: ROI is not just gained in terms of financial capitals. It rests on all the values a bank runs on, including the human capital. Maybe more largely so than we usually imagine, particularly at times of crisis.

Sebastien de Brouwer
Head of Department, Retail, Social & Economic Affairs
European Banking Federation

LEARNING ORGANIZATION TO INNOVATION IN THE FSS

K. Pundel

Mr Delgado from the European commission, Mr Spatafora, distinguished guests....

When Mr Spatafora invited me to give the opening speech of this dissemination meeting I was very honoured. In my quality as director of the National Agency for the Lifelong Learning Programme in Luxembourg, I am not involved on a regular professional basis with the financial and banking sector. Our link to EBTN and to the project presented today has started in 2006, where EBTN presented its first Leonardo project for financing to the National Agency in Luxembourg. Since then we monitor the 2 community funded projects Certified and Qualobster and maintain a regular contact with the project coordinator and follow up of the project activities and results.

The utility of these projects for the banking sector is obvious to me. As I'm rather a client than a provider, I follow the news about the financial crisis and all related items with a lot of suspense and a lot of apprehension. Especially for our country which is extremely dependent on the banking sector the crisis means turning an renown international financial centre into a vulnerable country. And in this scary, fearful environment the seek for excellence, specialization, guarantee for quality, trust, is more important than ever. All these elements are key factors for possible outcomes of the crisis.

But I leave these reflexions to specialists in the field and turn to the lifelong learning. I first want to present you some of the activities of the Lifelong Learning Programme and then show you how this programme focuses on quality illustrating it by the example of the Qualobster project coordinated by EBTN.

Let me first introduce you to my activity sector. As one of the 41 national agencies in Europe there is at least one NA in each participating country which are all the countries of the EU, Liechtenstein, Iceland and Norway and Turkey – our main business consists in promoting the Lifelong Learning Programme of the

European Commission, redistributing European funds among all possible actors in education and training, watching the good use of public money, guaranteeing the Commission and the public authorities that good quality projects benefit from support.

Lifelong learning involves apprentices at all ages, schoolchildren and teachers in COMENIUS, students, Universities and researchers in ERASMUS, senior citizens, special target groups in the informal learning sector in GRUNDTVIG and trainees, enterprises, vocational training institutions and trainers in LEONARDO DA VINCI.

The types of projects we finance in each sub programme are very diversified – and reach from the participation of individual teachers in a training seminar in another European country, to the financing of a study or placement period abroad of students, to multilateral partnerships of schools or adult education institutions or transnational cooperation projects in a variety of subjects and addressing to specific target groups.

Let me give you some concrete examples of projects co financed by the EU to illustrate the multifacetteessness of the lifelong learning scheme – an elearning project with prisoners who set up an online shop to market and sell the products produced in jail, a cooperation project of different European associations in the agricultural sector, who elaborate special training modules for the women in small agricultural enterprises, a collaboration of parents of dyslexic children of 9 different European countries and specialists in that particular field who made a European study about the learning problems encountered by their children resulting in the publication of a manual of specific exercises destined to work with children with dyslexia and presented in an international conference, a collaboration of schools in a trans-regional network in which pupils have produced a set of movies to be presented in a series of European festivals, an exchange of trainees in the hotel and health sector, the financing of a study period abroad and the recognition of the studies in the ECTS scheme.

All these projects have a series of elements in common even if the target public, the specific results, the project activities, the participation of different European countries, the type of institutions, the sectors are different and do not necessarily cooperate in real life. The most important element is without any doubt the effort to develop quality education through European cooperation between actors in the field of education as already stated in article 149 of the treaty of the EC.

The Lifelong Learning Programme , which is the continuation of the former Socrates and Leonardo programme, has the role to help to implement and support the activities described in the articles 149 and 150 of the Treaty of the EEC.

Quality is an inherent objective in the LLP but also a permanent matter of preoccupation in the Lisbon strategy, the Bologna or Copenhagen process just to mention some of the efforts made in Europe.

The measurement of quality, the creation of indicators and quality benchmarks are widely debated in European expert groups and by the stakeholders before being presented to the political authorities. Thus the political consensus is often a long and complicated way, a certain success in the adoption of benchmarks can be registered.

Since it's creation in 2007, the Lifelong Learning Programme has put into practice annual competitions for the best quality projects in each subprogram and actions in order to raise the awareness of the public. Quality criteria have been developed and their revision is part of the process to achieve excellence.

Through the selection process of potential projects each NA must check the content of the presented projects on quality and once a project is selected, we have the obligation to monitor the projects not only financial wise but also content wise. Which is of course not an easy task as it is more difficult to evaluate quality then quantitative and financial aspects.

In this sense we welcome the initiative of the Qualobster project which is a Leonardo project co financed by the EU and monitored by the Luxembourg National Agency as the EBTN siege is located in Luxembourg. Although the co-financing is not very important in comparison to the promethium financing of such projects, 120.000 – the objective of the project and its results match perfectly with the quality expectations of the Lifelong Learning Programme.

The transfer of innovation project Qualobster has been initiated in 2007 under the new Leonardo action transfer of innovation.

When the project was presented to the NA it introduced itself with the following motivation: The Financial Services Sector (FSS) is one of the key areas in the EU economy and society. Within the EU Luxembourg is particularly affected being Europe's key financial marketplace. FSS institutes need to adapt in response to a changing global environment; this takes management to invest in training as human resources is one of the main assets for sustained competitive advantage.

The project promised interesting results for the financial sector as it proposed to adapt and transfer the benchmarking system developed in another Leonardo da Vinci Network called 'LOBSTER' (Learning Organisation in the Banking Sector in Europe) which is a support tool for FSS organisations to assess their own development stage towards the Learning Organisation model, and to devise appropriate strategies and actions to increase effectiveness and become a Learning Organisation.

QUALOBSTER embeds a Quality Assurance approach in the benchmarking system, with expected benefits in terms of quality of the training provision and of human resources active role within FSS organisations. This will improve diversity management by fostering organisational learning.

QUALOBSTER's objectives are: to apply the benchmarking approach to the FSS; to improve diversity management using a tool based on Learning Organisation and Quality Assurance criteria with piloting in Luxembourg and Slovenia; to offer a validated benchmarking approach to the FSS so to increase quality of training services; to create a European-wide laboratory for innovation as a virtual community of practice; to apply the European Common Quality Assurance Framework and management tools to improve Lifelong Learning processes of FSS employees.

This project responds in many ways to the objectives and priorities set by the Leonardo da Vinci programme and the European priorities in vocational education and training. It has managed to develop and to introduce common criteria on quality assessment and transfer it to new actors in the field.

The Luxembourg National Agency is particularly proud to have EBTN amongst its project promoters and to be their interlocutor. Your efforts contribute definitely to a higher quality in Vocational education.

I wish you a lot of success in your future work and especially in today's conference...

K. Pundel
Director
LdV Agency Anefore

The European Network for Quality Assurance in VET

Qualobster Project
Dissemination Conference
June 2009

*Giorgio Allulli
Vicechairperson
of ENQAVET Board*



ENQA-VET

European Network for Quality Assurance
in Vocational Education and Training

Toward a Recommendation on Quality Assurance in Vet

The Commission formally presented a proposal of Recommendation on April 2008. The proposal is based on the results achieved by the member countries at European level (Quality Forum-TWG-ENQA VET)

The European Parliament approved the proposal on December 2008

The European Council approved the Recommendation on May 2009



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The Recommendation (1)

The Recommendation invites Member States to:

1. Use and further develop the *European Quality Assurance Reference Framework*, quality criteria, indicative descriptors and reference indicators to improve Vet systems
2. Devise an approach aimed at improving quality assurance systems at national level



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The Recommendation (2)

3. Participate actively in *the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework network* to develop principles, criteria, indicators and tools for quality assurance
4. Establish a *Quality Assurance National Reference Point for VET*
5. Undertake a review of the implementation process every 4 years.



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The European Quality Assurance Reference Framework

The European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQARF) includes:

- a quality assurance and improvement cycle of planning, implementation, evaluation and review of VET
- common quality criteria
- indicative descriptors
- indicators.

A monitoring process is foreseen, which includes a combination of internal and external evaluation mechanisms

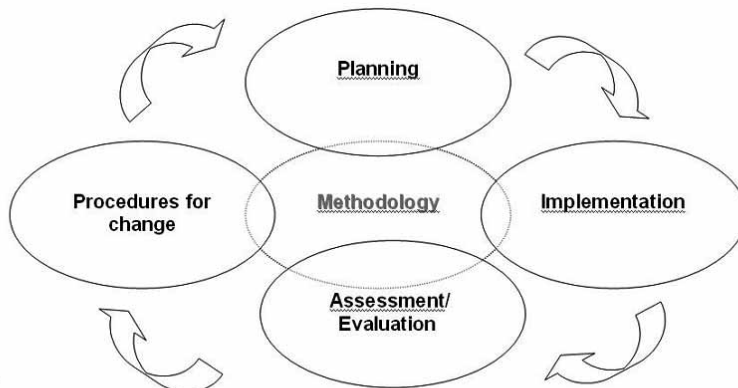


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The Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF)

DIAGRAM: QUALITY ASSURANCE MODEL



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Development of the European cooperation on VET QA

2000: establishment of a "Quality Forum", in the light of the Lisbon declaration

2002: establishment of a "Technical working group", to implement the Copenhagen Process and develop specific tools for QA

2005: establishment of Enqa-Vet to extend the European cooperation

2008: enlargement of the activities (Commission grant + MS co-funding) and establishment of a Secretariat

2010: establishment of the EQARF Network to implement the Recommendation



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What is ENQA-VET

A cooperative platform for structured exchange of information and experience:

- To implement a culture of quality assurance for Vet
- To support the introduction and implementation of quality assurance at system and provider level
- To contribute to raising awareness among the relevant stakeholders
- To design tools and instruments for quality assurance
- To promote the status of VET within Member States



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in Vocational Education and Training

Membership

Designated by:

- Member states
- Candidate countries
- EEA countries
- Social partners.

23 Countries co-financing represented, plus 3 associated countries.

Cedefop and ETF participate to the network as technical and scientific advisers, transferring results to non EU Countries



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in Vocational Education and Training

How the Network works

- A General Assembly, where all the Member States discuss the main issues and take the strategic decisions
- A Board, which is the Network executive; it coordinates and facilitates the Network activities and membership
- National Reference Points, that ensure follow-up of initiatives and dissemination of information at national level
- Technical activities, to discuss and deepen issues linked to Quality assurance



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in Vocational Education and Training

The National Reference Points (QANRPs)

National bodies which bring together existing relevant bodies and involve the social partners and all stakeholders to assure:

- Effective dissemination of information on EQARF
- Support to the European Programme
- Development of concrete initiatives at national level

Support to self evaluation



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in Vocational Education and Training

Technical activities

- Working groups (indicators, peer review, guidelines for implementing QA, making Vet more attractive)
- Peer Learnings
- Thematic studies (indicators, Work based learning, impact of CQAF)
- Thematic Conferences (the next will be in December on Making Vet more attractive)

Website



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European Network for Quality Assurance
in Vocational Education and Training

Peer Learning Topics

1. Quality Assurance procedures for Work based training
2. Evaluation and Monitoring
3. Performance Based Funding / Incentives
4. Quality Assurance procedures for Teacher Training –
5. Quality Assurance procedures for Recognition of Prior Learning
6. Assessment
7. Accreditation
8. Impact of the CQAF
9. The quality label
10. The role of Social Partners



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in Vocational Education and Training

Results

- Stronger involvement and commitment of Member States and SP on QA topics
- Concrete outputs from each working group (definition of indicators, guidelines, etc.)
- Mutual enrichment from Peer learnings and Conferences
- Establishment of National Reference Points
- Broader dissemination of QA topics between stakeholders



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Toward the EQARF Network

A new network will start in 2010 to implement the Recommendation, with some important innovations:

- The Commission will play a substantial role
- All Member States will participate (+ SPs, Cedefop, ETF)
- Full funding by the Commission
- Stronger role of the National Reference Points
- Stronger links with Leonardo Programme (projects on quality)



Stronger sectoral approach

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European Network for Quality Assurance
in Vocational Education and Training

The objectives of the Network

Contribute to the development of:

- Common principles
- Reference criteria and indicators
- Guidelines
- Tools for quality improvement in VET at national, regional and local levels



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in Vocational Education and Training

New specific tasks for the Eqarf Network

- Help Member States in designing their QA approaches (to be formally devised within 24 months)
- Develop the common reference criteria for the implementation report (to be undertaken at national level every 4 years)



Strategic issues

- Assure a strong Commitment of all Member States (at national, regional and local level)
- Involve both technical and political levels (decision makers)
- Involve the main stakeholders (social partners, Vet providers, learners)
- Consider all the levels of Vet (initial-continuing)
- Sectoral approach is crucial!



The European Network for Quality Assurance in VET

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*Giorgio Allulli
Vicechairperson
of ENQAVET Board*



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Education and Culture

Leonardo da Vinci



QUA.LOBSTER PROJECT

"Human Resources Involvement: the Key Factor to Overcome the Crisis"

Dissemination Conference

Brussels, 17 June 2009

Mario Spatafora

EBTN President



3

1

L.O. Process

***"The essence of organisational learning is the organisation's
ability to use the amazing mental capacity of all its members
to create the kind of process that will improve its own"***

Nancy Dixon, 1994

L.O. Strategic Change

“A model of strategic change in which everyone is engaged in identifying and solving problems so that the Organisation is continuously changing, experimenting and improving, thus increasing its capacity to grow and achieve its purposes.”



L.O. Model

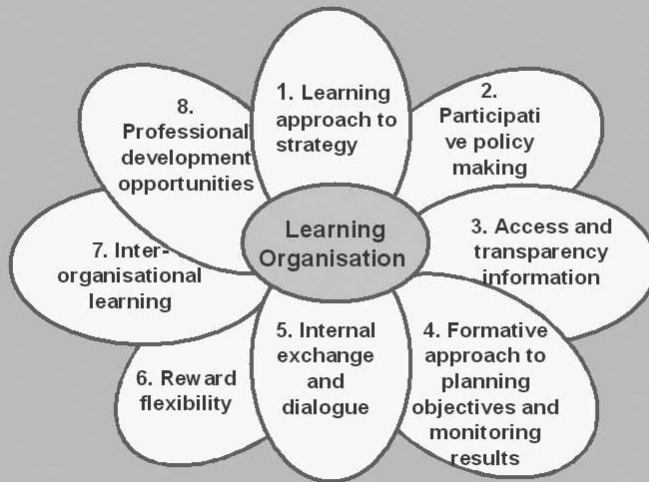
an **organisational model** focused on

“a company that facilitates the learning of all of its members and that continuously transforms itself”

through:

- common corporate vision
- sharing of organisational processes
- involvement and empowerment of people

L.O. CRITERIA



1. Learning Approach to Strategy

- Employee Relations Management (ERM) solutions
- Internal climate survey
- Formative evaluation approach to strategic and operational activities
- Openness to collect new ideas from staff (individuals and units)

2. Participative policy making

- Systemic approach to feedback and suggestions
- Transparency of the policy agenda (strategic planning)
- Contributions to the making of the policy agenda (strategic planning)

3. Access and transparency of information

- Circulation of information
- Existence/accessibility of ICT-based tools/mechanisms generating participation
- Existence/accessibility of traditional tools/mechanisms generating participation
- Possibility to have personalised information (tailor-made according to target groups' needs)

4. Formative approach to planning objectives and monitoring results

- Co-participation in setting (quantitative and qualitative) professional objectives
- Transparency of control and evaluation systems
- Analysis of external customers satisfaction
- Customer Relation Management (CRM) solutions

5. Internal exchange and dialogue

- Collaborative approaches to work
- Existence of support mechanisms providing advice and counselling in goal implementation
- Solutions for managing organisational knowledge
- Internal communication structure

6. Reward flexibility

- Existence of a specific reward and compensation system linked to innovation and individual performance

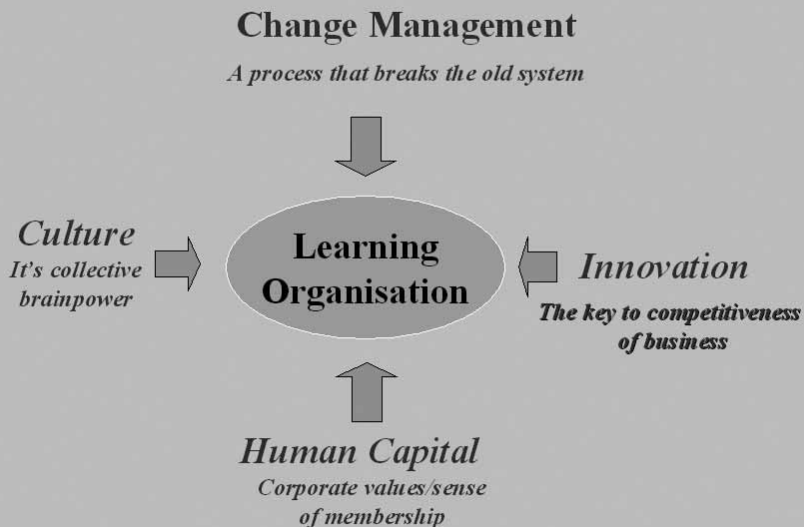
7. Inter-organisational learning

- Systematic ways for learning from others
- Ways in which the knowledge learned/skills acquired are processed to become the “capital” of the organisation

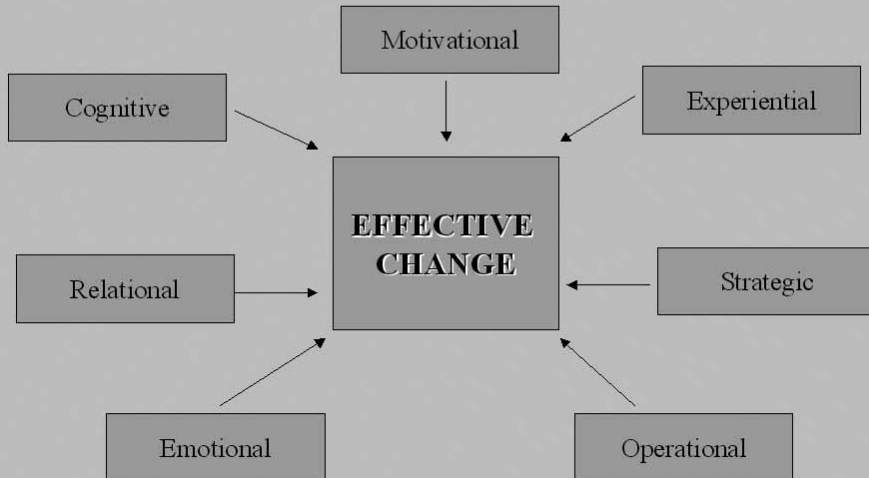
8. Professional development opportunities

- Management by competence
- Existence of mechanisms (tools and procedures) to support individual learning
- Periodic evaluation of HR based on competences
- Systematic ways to collect training needs and arrange coherent training plans at unit level

KEY ELEMENTS

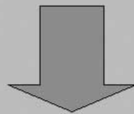


DIMENSION INVOLVED

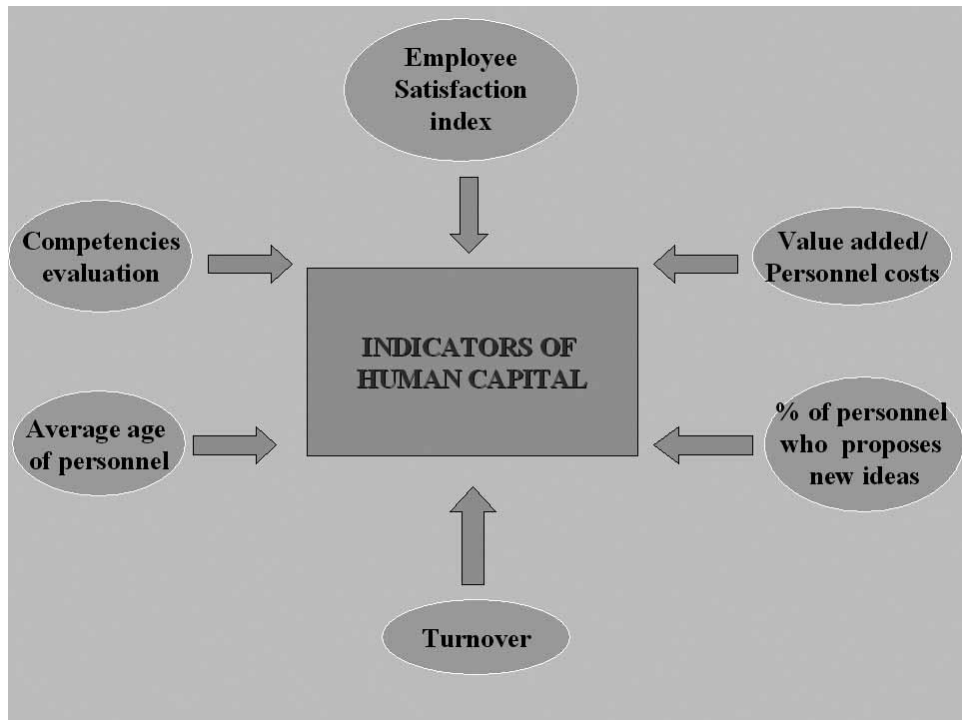


HUMAN CAPITAL VS HUMAN RESOURCES

Human Resources: productive factor



Human Capital: investment



“We need new ways of thinking in order to resolve the problems created by old ways of thinking”

(A. Einstein)



THANKS FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

Self assessment and benchmarking as source of learning

Qua.Lobster Project

Final conference
Brussels 17 June 2009

Scienter

1

Qua.lobster: the first experiment of a Laboratory of Innovation

- A virtual space, called the Laboratory of Innovation, where Human Resources experts of the Banking sector would meet to share their best practices and find solution through a benchmarking approach.
- In order to pilot and test the Laboratory of Innovation, Qua.lobster created and tested:
 - A self-assessment questionnaire and a benchmarking questionnaire
 - A format for case studies
 - A benchmarking system

Scienter

2

The Self-assessment questionnaire

- The self-assessment questionnaire intends to provide, through a set of criteria and indicators, a picture of the organisations in terms of Learning Organisation, Quality Assurance and Diversity Management.

Scienter

3

The Self-assessment questionnaire

1.Employee Relations Management (ERM) solutions

Referring to existing literature and practice on ERM, would you state that your organisation:

1.a	Collects opinions and suggestions from employees from time to time.	
1.b	Collects opinions and suggestions from employees periodically.	
1.c	Has specified processes to collect opinions and suggestions from employees for set criteria.	
1.d	Has a stable system to detect employees' opinions and suggestions and uses them to improve work processes.	
1.e	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

Scienter

4

The Self-assessment questionnaire

1.Organisational attitude towards mistakes

As regards the attitude towards mistakes, would you say that in your organisation:

20.a	Mistakes are always punished and undermine perspectives of career advancement	
20.b	Sanctions for mistakes are frequent and influence career development	
20.c	Sanctions for mistakes are generally avoided in order to generate a positive climate within the organisation	
20.d	Mistakes are considered as occasions for "learning from experience"	
20.e	Not prepared to answer (Please give an explanation to yourself)	

Scienter

5

Case study guidelines

- The case studies is more descriptive and narrative, based on the results of the self assessment questionnaire including critical elements, transparency and learning approach.
- The main points are:
- Identity card of the bank/organisation [a form]
- Short introduction
- Main chapter highlighting:
 - the approach the Bank has towards LO, QA, DV
 - from where and when they started implementing actions leading to LO, QA and DV
 - the kind of support they received in developing the system, if any
 - the evolution of the approach within the organisation
 - present level of implementation and future trends.
- Windows of examples of good practices
- Overview of strengths and weaknesses
- First steps towards an Improvement Plan

Scienter

6

Case study format

1. Identity Card

- Name of the OrganisationType of bank [e.g. local Bank, international bank]
- Number of employeesCategory [e.g. Private banking, financial bank]
- Other information that you consider useful to identify the type of Organisation

2. Short introduction to the self assessment exercise as conducted in the bank

- Who coordinated the Self Assessment and if there has been already a similar experience in the Bank in the past or still in progress
- Who's been invited to carry out the exercise?
- How many replied?
- Whom of the ones that replied took part to the Focus Group session?
- In which period did the self assessment exercise took place?
- Typology of Stakeholders (e.g. HR, branches, top management)

Scienter

7

Case study format

1. Windows of best practices

- 1 to 5 windows of best practices (max 1 page each)
- Please note that these windows should not contain confidential information because they are intended to be the basis for the Benchmarking / Benchlearning exercise of the Innovation Laboratory

2. Overview of strengths and weaknesses

- Please indicate results of the questionnaire which point out weaknesses and strengths of the Bank

Scienter

8

The Benchmarking questionnaire

- The Benchmarking questionnaire intends to give the opportunity to organisations present in Europe to compare to each other on the same topics and to share experience and solutions.

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9

The Benchmarking questionnaire

		1 not considered	2 considered for implementation	3 Planned for implementation	4 Partly implemented	5 Fully implemented	6 Regularly checked and reviewed ¹	7 Regularly updated and finetuned ²	Not applicable
1.	Carries out periodic surveys to detect "employees satisfaction" concerning their job and professional commitment.								
2.	Implements decision-making processes based on the integration of top-down with bottom-up approach.								
3.	Utilises dedicated tools to collect new ideas proposed by any employees and adopts promising ideas in pilot experiences.								

¹ According to clearly defined indicators

² according to results of measurement

Scienter

10

The Benchmarking questionnaire

		1 not considered	2 considered for imple- menta- tion	3 Planned for imple- menta- tion	4 Partly imple- mente d	5 Fully imple- mente d	6 Regularl y checked and reviewe d	7 Regularl y updated and fine-tune d	Not appli- cable
19	The organisation has set up a formally recognised quality management system (e.g. ISO 9001:2000).								
20	The organisation has created an internal quality management system allowing for continuous improvement and adaptation to change. Respective instruments (e.g. assessment tools) are available and responsibilities are allocated in a transparent way.								
26	Employees with some kind of diversity not only are fully integrated in the production life cycle, but in some cases their presence has been strategic for successful operations (e.g. a woman in charge of an office which has a large female clientele).								

Scienter

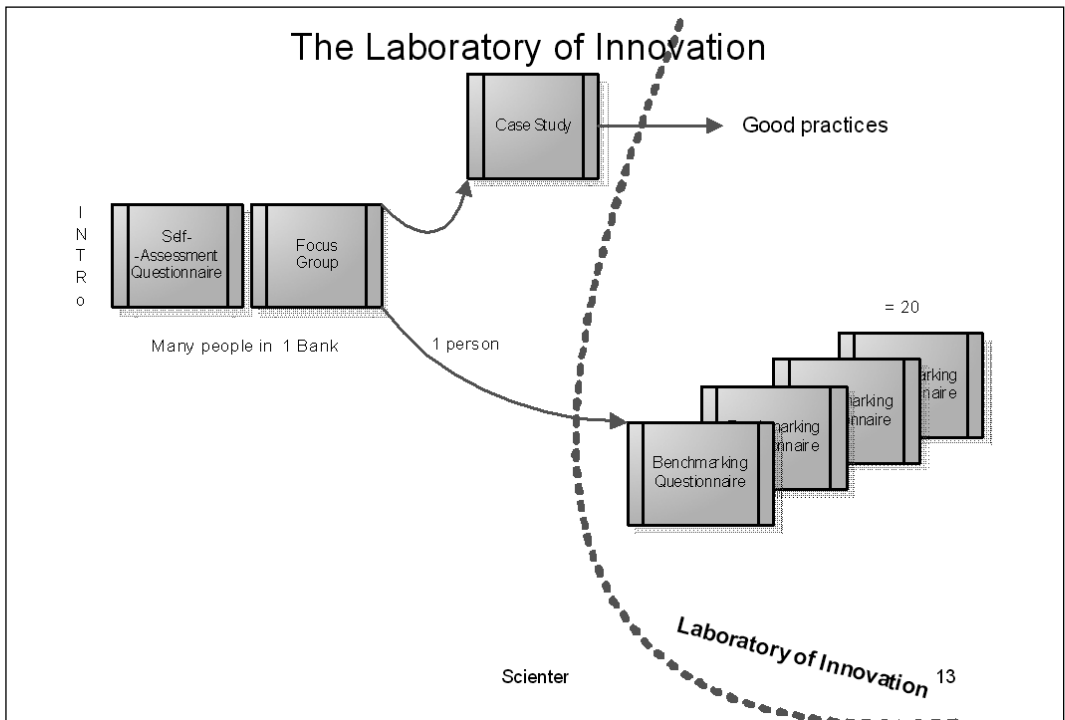
11

The Laboratory of Innovation

- The Laboratory of Innovation is composed and characterised by the following elements:
 - It will be the place for **experiments** among organisations of the Banking sector;
 - It will encourage **collaboration** among different stakeholders;
 - It will be the place where to **work** and produce **new knowledge**

Scienter

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The process

- Step 1: The self-assessment questionnaire (individual answers + focus group)
- Step 2: The case study – my “good practice”
- Step 3: The benchmarking questionnaire
- Step 4: Collaboration in learning and innovation.

The Benefits of the Lol

- The Laboratory of Innovation aims at being populated by many Banks and sectoral organisations present in Europe and to become a reference point for those working in the Human Resources Department.

Scienter

15

The Benefits of the Lol

- To assess themselves
- To compare themselves with other organisations of the sector that might have encountered similar problems
- To contact the “best performers” and work together towards quality and innovation in HRD

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Learning and innovation

Linking better learning to innovation = Learnovation

- Learning is a process that implies change. Change in its positive attribution of value means growth, evolving into something better. The Laboratory of Innovation intends to pursue this objective: using Learning momentum as an experience that will bring positive change => innovation.
- It can be reassumed as a simple correlation:
sharing experience => learning => change => innovation.

Scienter

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Thank you for your attention

Claudio Dondi
SCIENTER President

cdondi@scienter.org



IFB Instituto de Formação Bancária
IFB – *The Portuguese Bank Training Institute*

Associação Portuguesa de Bancos



The Role of Banking Institutes as Promoters of HR Adjustments to FSS New Needs

• Luís V. da Cunha



Brussels, 17-Jun-2009



Index

- The present global financial and economic crisis
- Crisis impact on training in FSS
- Banking Institutes reshaping
- Banking Institutes development
- Bridging the *gap*
- Reminder



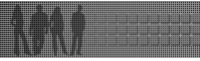
Before 2007

• Impressive growth of Financial Services Sector, mainly in Banking:

- ▣ Increase of assets;
- ▣ Innovation of lending and risk management products;
- ▣ Increased use of Information Technology;
- ▣ Huge values for ROE and ROA.

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Brussels, 2009-06-17



From mid 2007 ...

• Sub-prime crisis & etc.



• Major financial crisis



• Global economic crisis

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...and the *eyes of the world* turned
suspiciously to the Financial Services Sector.



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Crisis impact on training in FSS ... (1)

◆ The *transmission mechanism*

- Reduction of Bank income flows ⇒
 - ⇒ Reduction of Bank net income ⇒
 - ⇒ Need of general cost reduction

◆ The *ultimate consequence*

**Reduction of demand for
training services**

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Crisis impact on training in FSS ... (2)

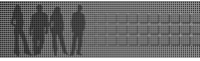
But ...

- ❑ New regulatory wave on FSS activity,
- ❑ More demanding Credit Risk analysis models,
- ❑ Reduction of general level of financial leverage,
- ❑ Stronger competition within FSS (& etc.).

**Creates the need for more
HR qualification**

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Crisis impact on training in FSS ... (3)

- ❖ Reduction of demand for training services,
- ❖ Need for more HR qualification



Vital challenge to Banking Institutes



❑ Need of more flexibility and adequacy in:

- Organizational model
- Production model
- Output



Institutes' reshaping



Innovative, demanded contents & products & services

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Banking Institutes reshaping (1)

Three different main paths:

- **Business Schools**
 - ▣ Business Administration courses general market
 - ▣ Lost of intense, umbilical link to FSS specificities
- **Financial Services Academies**
 - ▣ Special relationship with FSS
 - ▣ Large satisfaction of FSS specific needs
(“Broadband” Training & Specialised Education System)
- **New Banking Institutes**
 - ▣ Traditional organizational model (special relationship with FSS)
 - ▣ New contents, products, services

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Banking Institutes reshaping (2)

• **Choosing reshaping model**

- ▣ **Decisive factors**
 - 1. Sector & Market conditions
 - Bank Sector culture strength
 - Bank Sector level of institutional associative activity
 - Number of Bank employees in the country
 - Development and specificities of financial and business education national market
 - (...)
 - 2. Institute endogenous factors
 - Institute ability to change
 - Institute capacity to innovate output.

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Banking Institutes development (1)

Development (and competitiveness) through Innovation

You need a combination of:

- Technological advances;
- Investment in Institute Human Resources;
- Ability to change
(including the capacity to anticipate Bank HR
real, new training needs).

Source: www.EurActiv.com

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Banking Institutes development (2)

In reality what you are aiming at is the construction of



- «Lifelong learning systems responsive to the
changing needs of the knowledge-based
economy and society ...»

(In Recommendation of the E. P. and of the Council, 2008/0069 — PE-Cons 3746/08)

... particularly in the FSS.

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Banking Institutes development (3)

Understanding the changing paradigms ...

From:

- ⊕ Problems clearly defined;
- ⊕ Confined to a single subject;
- ⊕ One right answer.

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Banking Institutes development (4)

Understanding the changing paradigms ...

From:

- ⊕ Problems clearly defined;
- ⊕ Confined to a single subject;
- ⊕ One right answer.



To:

- ⊕ Problems not so well defined;
- ⊕ Multi-disciplinarity;
- ⊕ Several possible answers.

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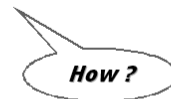
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Banking Institutes development (6)

This means that you have to prepare people to

- Jobs that don't yet exist,
- Using technologies that haven't yet been developed,
- In order to solve problems we don't even know that are problems yet.

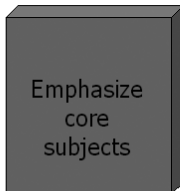




Mind the Gap

Building a bridge to cover the

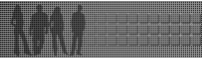
Disconnection between how we prepare
for work and how work actually operates



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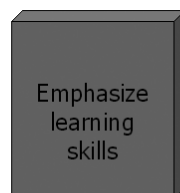
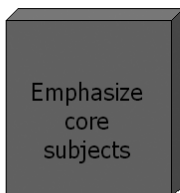
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Mind the Gap

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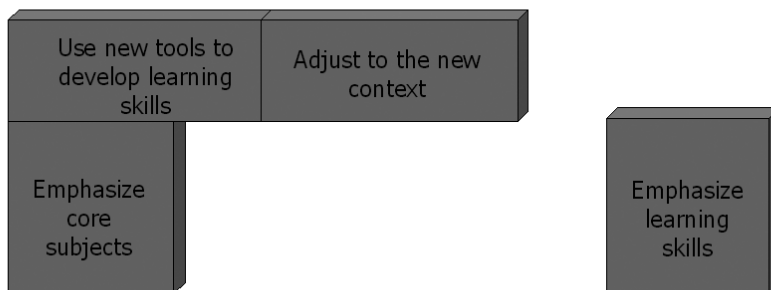
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Mind the Gap

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Disconnection between how we prepare for work and how work actually operates



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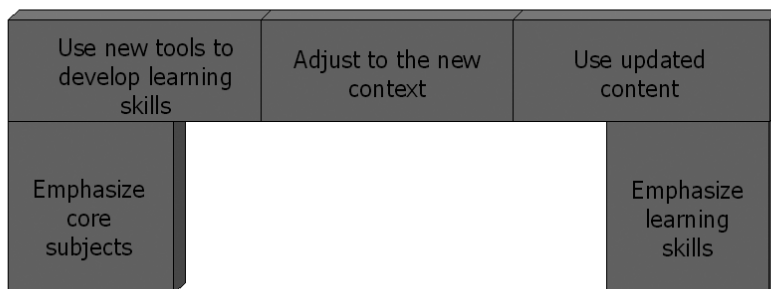
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Mind the Gap

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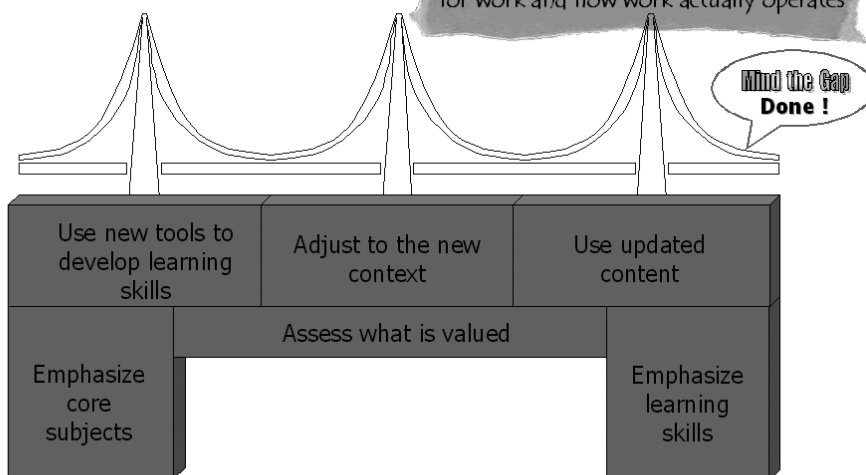
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Building a bridge to cover the

Disconnection between how we prepare for work and how work actually operates



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Examples [*Bridge parts ...*]

▪ Core subjects

- Quantitative methods
- Foreign languages

▪ Learning skills

- Information & communication
- Thinking & problem-solving
- Social skills

▪ New tools

- Digital technology
- Communication tools

▪ New context

- Real world examples
- Meaningful experiences

▪ Significant emerging content areas

- Global awareness
- Financial, economic and business literacy
- Civic literacy

▪ Assessment

- Evaluation at different levels
- Diversity of methods & tools

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Reminder

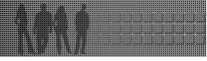
Possible essential role of Banking Institutes:

- ☛ To be Bank best choice to help building the bridge over the (*troubled waters* of the) gap.
- ☛ To act as Bank partner, to promote
 - ☛ Development of competences and social skills (in a lifelong learning perspective),
 - ☛ Professional certification systems,
 - ☛ Evaluation and quality-improvement culture [*Quality Assurance*],
 - ☛ Identification, support, and exchange of best practices [*Learning Organizations*],
 - ☛ Organizational systems and practices that maximize potential advantages of diversity [*Diversity Management*].

▪ *Please, pay attention to QUALOBSTER Project outcomes.*

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Brussels, 2009-06-17





Thank You.

Luís Vilhena da Cunha
General Manager

LVC@IFB.PT

Brussels, 17-Jun-2009

 **Instituto de Formação Bancária**
IFB – The Portuguese Bank Training Institute

Associação Portuguesa de Bancos



Education and Culture

Leonardo da Vinci



THE POWER OF NETWORKING:

THE EXPERIENCE OF A PIONEER BANK

Brussels

17th June 2009

**Nuno Cristino
HR Deputy Manager
Caixa Central de Credito Agricola Mutuo**



Education and Culture

Leonardo da Vinci



FROM LOBSTER TO QUA.LOBSTER

- Enhancement of processes
- Possibility of deeper exchange of experiences
- Learn more and be updated
- Comparability of results and practices



Education and Culture

Leonardo da Vinci

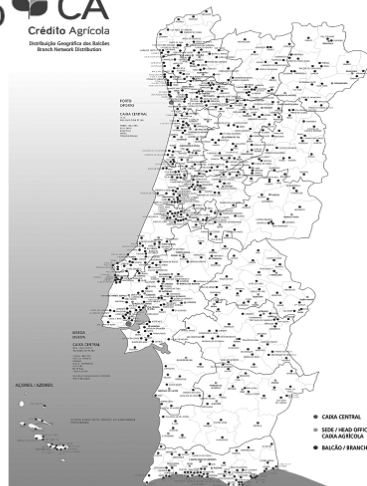


CRÉDITO AGRÍCOLA IDENTITY CARD



Caixa Central de Crédito Agrícola Mútuo
Cooperative and Mutual Bank
490 Employees
Crédito Agrícola Group Head Office

Crédito Agrícola Group
92 Local Banks and a Head Office
7 Instrumental Companies
4500 Employees
670 Branches



3



Education and Culture

Leonardo da Vinci



OUR EXPERIENCE

Learning Approach to Strategy



- Non formalised system to detect satisfaction
- Opinions and suggestions collected from time to time
- Regular meetings within Units/Departments



4

OUR EXPERIENCE

Participative Policy Making

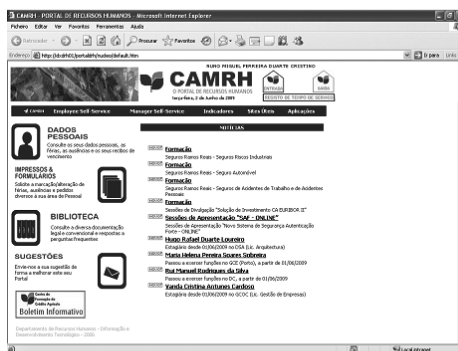
- Middle management involvement in long-term decisions
- Publicizing of core business priorities
- Interfunctional Commissions



OUR EXPERIENCE

Access and Transparency of Information

- ICT - Communication, learning and knowledge-sharing
- Intranet
- Employees Portal





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Leonardo da Vinci



OUR EXPERIENCE

Planning Objectives and Monitoring Results



- Employees formally involved in objectives definition
- Appraisal Systems in place
- Internal customer's feedback collected



7



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OUR EXPERIENCE

Internal Exchange and Dialogue

- Project teams
- Exchange of experiences and know how
- Management selection of channels and contents of communication



8



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OUR EXPERIENCE

Reward Flexibility

- Outstanding Achievements
- Individual performance compensation
- Sanctions for mistakes



9



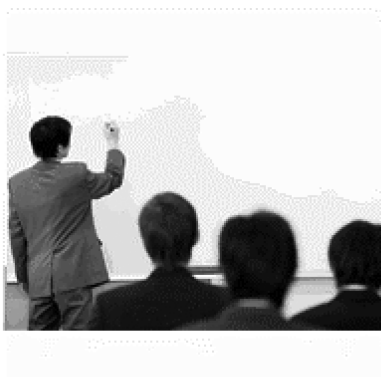
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OUR EXPERIENCE

Inter-Organisational Learning

- Mixed programmes
- Internal Trainers
- Training Library



10



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OUR EXPERIENCE

Professional Development Opportunities

- Competences map in place
- Training needs analysis
- Internal mobility



11



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OUR EXPERIENCE

Quality Assurance



- Internal regulations and guidelines
- Centralised recruitment
- Organisational processes assessment



12



Education and Culture
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OUR EXPERIENCE

Diversity Management

- No specific structure
- Diversity = normality



13



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Leonardo da Vinci



THE FUTURE...

- The Laboratory of Innovation
- New Challenges
- More Qua.Lobster's



14

RESULTS OF THE ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION ON THE LABORATORY OF INNOVATION

E. Seyfried

The laboratory of innovation, which was created in the QUALOBSTER-project, is an open virtual space for exchanging information, for dialogue and communication between banks and banking training organisations. The lab is a result of the QUALOBSTER project but as a modern e-tool for sharing best practices, for enhancing mutual learning and cooperation it is ready to function as a sustainable platform, which goes far beyond the project itself.

The round-table was to explore these future potentials of the laboratory of innovation by taking the QUALOBSTER benchmarking questionnaire on learning organisation, quality assurance and diversity management as a starting point. Sergeja Kocar, HR Deptuy General Manager in the Nova Ljubljanska Banka in Slovenia and Nuno Cristino, HR Deputy Manager in Caixa Central de Credito Agricola Mutuo in Protugal presented the results of their piloting exercise with the self-assessment questionnaire and encouraged other banks and banking training organisations to make use of this instrument also. They both stressed the need to learn from each other and expressed their expectations that in the near future a benchmarking of results and experiences with the questionnaire could take place in the laboratory of innovation, if further banks are ready to insert their results. After registering banks can log in to the lab, download instructions and guidelines and fill in the benchmarking questionnaire. The ultimate goal is to involve as many organisations from as many countries as possible, to have the widest and most comprehensive overview and learning experience available in the sector in Europe. Viljenka Simoneti, Head of the Training Center of the Bank Association in Slovenia, deepened this issue by addressing the potentials of benchmarking via the lab from her point of view and she demonstrated how closer cooperation and exchange of best practice between banks could be organised by using the laboratory of innovation.

Finally, all participants in the round table agreed, that the laboratory of innovation could be much more than a tool for to exchange the results of the benchmarking questionnaire but that in the future many other issues of cooperation between banking training organisations, banks, and financial services institutes could be tackled by making use of this newly created tool.

23 June 2009

Erwin Seyfried
Director
HWR Berlin

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