

The Construction Blueprint project

FIEC, the European association of construction contractors, describes a new strategic approach to sectoral cooperation on skills

At a time where the green and digital transitions have become paramount for Europe's economy and post-COVID recovery, the Construction Blueprint project focuses on how best to match the current and future education and training offer with the rapidly evolving skills' demand in the construction industry. And this approach is based on the creation of a "Sectoral Skills Alliance" involving the main market players, beyond the project itself, in the fields of education, economy, policy, culture and environment, in order to get the largest possible support to this initiative.

At mid-term of the project's roll-out, we would like to present you what has been undertaken so far and the remaining actions in the pipeline.

This EU-funded project (Erasmus+) has been launched in January 2019, under the coordination of the Spanish Fundación Laboral de la

Construcción, with 24 partners: nine EU sectoral organisations – including FIEC – nine national sectoral representatives – eight of which are FIEC's members – and 12 vocational education and training centres. It will last until December 2022 and benefit from an overall budget of €4 million.

STRATEGIC APPROACH

The general objective of the project is to develop innovative instruments to address skills shortages and gaps and to match skills demand and supply, as well as to upgrade professional occupations in terms of green (ie energy efficiency and circular economy) and digital competences.

And for this purpose, the main advantage and benefit of this project is that it brings together the construction industry and the Vocational Education and Training (VET) providers, in an attempt to establish a strategic approach for the coming years.

As regards the specific objectives of the project, they are manifold: the first and main one was the elaboration of a Sectoral Skills Strategy, which is supported by a Sectoral Skills Alliance. The Strategy is composed of a roadmap and an action plan, which will be living documents along the projects' duration. Initially, they have been based on two building surveys: a PESTLE analysis – for "Political, Education, Social, Technological, Legal, Environmental" – and a Status Quo report – which presents the state of play of the construction sector in the partner countries. But in the course of the project, the suggestions of the experts

joining the Alliance will further feed in the Strategy.

Regarding the Sectoral Skills Alliance, the easiest way to join is via our dedicated LinkedIn Group. In the framework of this Alliance approach, the national project partners are also relying on the expertise, support and endorsement of our activities by National Advisory Groups (NAGs), composed of experts from different spheres: education, economy, policy, culture and environment. They are consulted on the project's deliverables on a regular basis.

MAPPING THE GAPS

Once this first phase has been completed, the partnership has illustrated the Strategy by identifying, detailing and promoting concrete examples and good practices of policies and initiatives at national and regional level aiming at addressing skills shortages and mismatches as well as fostering multi-stakeholder partnerships. For this purpose, an interactive map available on the Construction Blueprint website has been produced. Again, it is foreseen that this map will be updated in the course of the project thanks to the suggestions made by the experts involved in the Alliance.

Also, the goal of this second phase, which is still ongoing, is to design and deploy a new European observatory – also called "watchtower". It will be complementary to the existing European Construction Sector Observatory (ECSO) run by the European Commission and, by using a big data methodology, will be able to anticipate skills needs at national and regional level in the fields of energy

efficiency, circular economy and digitalisation. This is one of the significant building blocks of this project.

Again, in the framework of this second phase, the partnership is currently updating occupational profiles, qualifications and training influenced by the new trends in the construction industry, always with a focus on energy efficiency, circular economy and digitalisation. On this basis, the partnership will design specific training plans, through which these skills will be covered. Then, they will be delivered to several thousands of workers via different methodologies.

In particular, the design of new or updated training curricular has been initiated, as well as the preparation of new training content to cover various missing skills. Also, an e-learning platform is under preparation and should be ready in the next few months. It is foreseen that a series of MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) will be available for construction companies and workers on this platform.

BUILDING BRIDGES

In a third phase, the Construction Blueprint project intends to generate a more positive image of the construction industry. To achieve this goal and to transform construction into a career opportunity, the partnership will carry out campaigns to promote the attractiveness of the construction industry among youngsters and particularly among women. It will also identify solutions to facilitate the mobility of workers in Europe.

Last but not least, the partnership will have to find ways, and in particular funding opportunities, to ensure the long-term sustainability of the various projects' outcomes. **ce**



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