



Grant number: 116789 - CP -1-2004-1- FR – GRUNDTVIG – G1PP

KEYPAL

BENCHMARKING REPORT

DATE: 31st October 2006

ABSTRACT This document reports on the benchmarking study carried out by the KEYPAL partners regarding policies, strategies and initiatives for key skills in Europe and in particular England, Wales, Scotland, Germany, Slovenia and France.

AUTHOR Rheinallt Jones & Sarah Jones-Morris (CWNW) and the KEYPAL partners
WP2

KEYWORDS Benchmarking, Key Competences, Basic skills, ePortfolio, Europe

VERSION Final

DISTRIBUTION The KEYPAL Coordinator (EIFEL) and KEYPAL partners have made this report available under the Creative Commons License www.creativecommons.org

Table of Content

1	Executive summary	3
2	Introduction	4
2.1	Methodology for benchmarking	5
3	Main report	6
3.1	Summary of results by country	6
3.2	ePortfolio tools in Europe	19
4	Conclusions	22
5	Recommendations	24
6	Appendix 1	28
6.1	Key-PAL Project Questionnaires	28
7	Appendix 2	33
7.1	Draft Definitions of terms for the KEY-PAL Project	33
8	Appendix 3	35
8.1	Desk research	55

1 Executive summary

The Keypal project is a Grundtvig project funded as part of the SOCRATES PROGRAMME of the European Commission. The aim of Keypal is to establish the relevance and potential impact of the ePortfolio on the development and assessment of key-skills (basic skills / key competencies), a critical issue for Europe.

Keypal focuses on the potential of the ePortfolio for enabling young adults (age 16- to 25) to acquire, demonstrate and then potentially accredit key skills. Particular attention was given to disadvantaged young adults i.e. those without any formal qualification, with special needs etc.

A Benchmarking exercise was carried out at the beginning of the project (and reviewed again at project end) to investigate on a European level:

- terms used to refer to basic/key skills/competencies and the definitions of these terms, including specific aspects within each
- strategies, policies in the field of key/basic skills
- forms of accreditation and certification in the field of key/basic skills
- ePortfolio tools currently within existence in Europe.

The Benchmarking exercise revealed wide variations between partner countries in the extent to which governments and education and training providers have agreed on official terms, developed strategies and devised programmes to tackle the issue of basic/key skills/competences. Also there are wide variations in the how basic/key skills/competences are measured, accredited and certified.

The work done by EU Commission Working Group on Basic Skills, Foreign Language Teaching and Entrepreneurship on defining Basic skills/key competences was seen as a valid starting point. The recommendation of the benchmarking exercise was to adopt these Key competences with some amendments seen below:

- Communication in the mother tongue
- Communication in a second language
- Mathematical literacy and basic competences in science and technology
- ICT skills
- Learning-to-learn
- Interpersonal and civic competences
- Entrepreneurship
- Cultural awareness
- Problem solving

The benchmarking exercise also identified 3 main types of ePortfolio tools in Europe – open source, commercial and in-house (or home-grown) tools. Possible tools available for use in the pilot were also identified. The period between the initial benchmarking exercise in early 2005 and the end of the project saw a big expansion in the number of ePortfolio tools available commercially and through open source.

2 Introduction

The Keypal project is a Grundtvig project funded as part of the SOCRATES PROGRAMME of the European Commission.

The aim of Keypal is to establish the relevance and potential impact of the ePortfolio on the development and assessment of key-skills (basic skills / key competencies), a critical issue for Europe, if it is to become *'the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustained economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.'*

Keypal aims to explore how the ePortfolio can support and valorise self-managed learning and development for the acquisition of key-skills. It furthermore aims to explore the ability of the ePortfolio to support young adults in interacting with all the actors that can contribute to their development and learning: orientation services, educational services (school of second chance, night classes), and all naturally occurring informal and non-formal learning opportunities (at work, in social activities, at home, in libraries, clubs or museums, etc.)

ePortfolios are becoming increasingly popular as a tool for both learning and assessment in learning environments around the globe. Keypal focuses on the potential of the ePortfolio for enabling young adults (age 16- to 25) to acquire, demonstrate and then potentially accredit essential skills. Particular attention will be given to disadvantaged young adults i.e. those without any formal qualification, with special needs etc.

The partner organizations taking part in the project include:

- European Institute for E-Learning - The Project Coordinator (FR)
- Ecole de la Deuxième Chance de Seine St Denis (FR)
- Edinburgh University Settlement (UK)
- Careers Wales North West (UK)
- The MRS Consultancy Ltd (UK)
- Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (SI)
- Deutsches Rotes Kreuz, Kreisverband Bremen, e.V. (D)
- PaperFree Systems Ltd (UK)
- Ynternet (CH)

During the initial part of the project was a Benchmarking Report was produced by partners by gathering information on a European level as to existing:

- terms used to refer to basic/key skills/competencies and the definitions of these terms, including specific aspects within each
- strategies, policies in the field of key/basic skills
- forms of accreditation and certification in the field of key/basic skills
- ePortfolio tools currently within existence in Europe.

This benchmarking exercise would provide the terms of reference for basic/key skills/competencies for the project pilot.

2.1 Methodology for benchmarking

The methodology used to gather this information was through the completion of structured questionnaire (see Appendix 1) by each of the partner organisations involved in the Keypal project.

To aid partners in the completion of the questionnaire, an initial terms of reference in the form of a Definition of Terms was agreed (see Appendix 2). The returned questionnaires were collated (Appendix 3).

Further information was gathered through desk research, this expanded the findings to other European Countries not directly involved in the Keypal project and explored the current research available in this field. This included research into the outcomes of other Benchmarking Reports relevant to key/basic/essential skills/competencies; in particular, the work of the EU Commission Working Group on Basic Skills, Foreign Language Teaching and Entrepreneurship. This working group initially comprised representatives from the Member States. However, in January 2003 it was enlarged to include representatives from the candidate countries, the EFTA/EEA countries and stakeholders' groups.

The key issues stated in their detailed work programme in relation to the first objective are the following:

- (1) Identifying new basic skills, and how these skills, together with the traditional basic skills, can be better integrated into the curricula, learned and maintained through life;
- (2) Making attainment of basic skills genuinely available to everyone, including those less advantaged, those with special needs, school drop-outs and adult learners;
- (3) Promoting official validation of basic skills, in order to facilitate continuing participation in education and training, and to promote employability.

These objectives fit quite closely with those of Keypal, whose aim is to look at the potential role that ePortfolios can take in the achievements of these objectives.

At the end of Phase 1, the working group presented an interim report to the Commission. This report introduced 8 domains of key competences with definitions and a list of knowledge, skills and attitudes that relate to each area of competence. The competences included:

- communication in mother tongue
- communication in a foreign language
- Mathematical literacy and basic competences in science and technology
- ICT skills
- Learning-to-learn
- Interpersonal and civic competences
- Entrepreneurship
- Cultural awareness

The working group preferred the terms '*competence*' and '*key competence*' to '*basic skills*' which was considered to restrictive as it was generally taken to refer to basic literacy and numeracy, and to what are known variously as 'survival' or life skills.' 'Competence' was considered to refer to a combination of skills, knowledge, aptitudes and attitudes, and to include disposition to learn as well as know-how.

This benchmarking report was then reviewed at project end as the situation regarding basic/key skills in some member states had evolved during the course of the project. Furthermore additional ePortfolio tools emerged over this time.

3 Main report

3.1 Summary of results by country

3.1.1 Germany

Strategic overview

There are no official definitions of key skills/basic skills/essential skills in Germany currently. The terms, however, are often employed by politicians, educationalists and economists. Without a clear definition, this use is rather rhetorical. The common use of these terms is corroborated by Weinert's findings quoted in the EURYDICE report who established that there can be found more than 650 references to general key qualifications or skills in recent German publications (p 69 there).

The terms are used in a variety of contexts. They are most often employed to refer to:

- Reading
- ITC
- L2L - Learning to learn
- Foreign Languages

They are, interestingly, also used to refer to intercultural skills whose relevance seems to be acknowledged more and more.

Accreditation and certification

All German school leaving certificates (beginning after 9 years of compulsory schooling) are understood to indicate that the candidate holds basic skills. The need for educational standards in order to evaluate students' attainment is increasingly understood in Germany, especially after the shocking PISA results of 2000. There is thus more striving for standards.

However, there is no institution to certify key skills for people who leave school without their certificate.

One of the problems most difficult to solve in the context of a federal i.e. all German certificate is that in Germany, education is part of the Länder's (the federal states, of which there are 16) responsibility. There is a Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs in which these ministers *sometimes* agree on common standards or measures.

Key Skills in a variety of contexts can be proven by international certificates, such as the European Computer Driving License or internationally acknowledged language certificates such as the Cambridge certificates, the TOEFL, DELF or DALF. Unfortunately, even here not all employers know about the certificates.

The idea of accredited key skills is not very widespread nor popular in Germany. Since there are no concrete definitions, key skills do not hold the same value as they would in countries with a well established basic skills agency or program. Through their involvement in the EUCEBS project, the Red Cross in Bremen are trying to disseminate the idea of key skills accreditation.

Because there are no clear definitions of key skills, there is the potential that any portfolio approach may work better than a mere certificate, because employers can

find evidence of their potential employees' skills. An ePortfolio could be seen as quite prestigious by many employers because it already demonstrates some key skills (use of ICT and the skill to organize items in a portfolio).

3.1.2 England

Strategic overview

In England the Basic Skills Agency has defined basic skills as 'The ability to read, write and speak in English and to use mathematics at a level necessary to function and progress at work and in society in general'. This definition supported by government is widely accepted within the education, employment and training sectors in England.

The Basic Skills Agency (www.basic-skills.co.uk) is funded from the government through the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). As an independent organisation they are not responsible for national strategies BUT they aim to be a critical friend of the government and state that they: "don't shy away from making our views known even when they are critical of existing policies and strategies."

The agency aims to be a national ideas and innovation organisation, focusing on finding practice worth sharing and disseminating it effectively. Their three current priorities are:

- Improving the speaking and listening skills of children, young people and adults
- Improving basic skills at transition points in a child's, young person's or adult's life
- Engaging disengaged children, young people and adults in improving basic skills

They focus their support through 6 programmes which include:

The Better Teaching Partnership is aimed specifically at post 16 organisations that were graded poorly when last inspected by OFSTED/ALI. Specialist staff work with such organisations to try improve their grading at the next inspection.

National projects - They break down into four categories: National Support Projects; National Development Projects; Regional Projects; and European Projects. Current project include working with asylum seekers, REPRISE a partnership of 12 European countries sharing good practice in the fields of Basic Skills and Social Inclusion and consultation work in Hungary.

Innovation Grants - provides modest grants to encourage creativity and innovation in the promotion and teaching of basic skills in all sectors, particularly among groups of young people and adults that have not benefited from other programmes.

Advisory service - for organisations that have a strategic role in basic skills, like Local Authorities, Learning and Skills Councils [LSCs] and organisations concerned with economic and social regeneration.

In England, the practical promotion of the strategy to improve adult literacy and numeracy skills is through the *Skills for Life* programme. The programme's priority

is to improve the skills of those groups where literacy, numeracy ICT and language (ESOL) needs are greatest and where they can make the most impact, particularly:

- unemployed people and benefit claimant
- prisoners and those supervised in the community
- public sector employees
- low-skilled people in employment
- other groups at risk of exclusion

Their initial aim was that 750,000 adults would improve their literacy and numeracy by 2005 and have provided £1.5 billion over three years as financial support. There are currently 8 projects aimed at improving basic skills at Secondary and Post-16 level.

The concept of Key skills is also widely used and accepted within the fields of education, training and employment in the UK (see the Accreditation and certification section for more information). The Key skills include:

- communication
- application of number
- ICT
- working with others
- improving own learning and performance, and
- problem solving.

More recently the Government commissioned the Leitch Review to identify the UK's optimal skills mix in 2020 to maximise economic growth, productivity and social justice, and to consider the policy implications of achieving the level of change required. The Leitch Review of Skills published its interim report 'Skills in the UK: The long-term challenge' on 5th December 2005 http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/independent_reviews/leitch_review/review_leitch_index.cfm.

The report found that although skills in the UK are improving:

- over a third of adults in the UK do not have a basic school-leaving qualification – double the proportion of Canada and Germany
- five million people have no qualifications at all
- one in six adults do not have the literacy skills expected of an 11 year old and half do not have these levels of functional numeracy.

The Leitch Review believes that the UK must urgently raise its game and set itself a greater ambition to have a world-class skills base by 2020. It also identifies a priority groups as adults with low skills levels.

'**Functional skills**' is a term gaining prominence in England following the 14–19 Education and skills White Paper (February 2005) <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/14-19educationandskills/> and the Skills White Paper (March 2005) which identified the need for much greater coherence across age groups and learning contexts to further learning, and for life and work.

Functional Skills are "core elements of English, mathematics and ICT that provide an individual with essential knowledge, skills and understanding that will enable

them to operate confidently, effectively and independently in life and work. Individuals of whatever age who possess these skills will be able to participate and progress in education, training and employment as well as develop and secure the broader range of aptitudes, attitudes and behaviour that will enable them to make a positive contribution in the communities in which they live and work.”

The emergence of functional skills responds to concern from employers that young people are leaving school without the foundation in the basics they need in the workplace. This also complements the findings from the Leitch Review.

Accreditation and certification

The QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) brings together the work of the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) and the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA) with additional powers and duties.

They define Key skills as the skills that are commonly needed for success in a range of activities in education and training, work and life in general. In 2004 new key skills standard were introduced. The six Key Skills are defined as:

- communication
- application of number
- ICT
- working with others
- improving own learning and performance, and
- problem solving.

These terms have been adopted across England. Key Skills qualifications were introduced in September 2000. Consisting of Communication, Application of Number and Information Technology they are available at levels 1 to 4 and are normally offered as part of a wider programme (e.g. alongside an AS/A level or as part of an apprenticeship). Key Skill qualifications in working with others, improving own learning and development and problem solving are currently being piloted.

England and Wales have many awarding bodies which provide Key/Basic Skill support and qualifications these include:

- ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network)
- Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA)
- City and Guilds
- Edexcel
- Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR)

The National Statistics Department has conducted research into the awards of key skills qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland between September 2000 and September 2004. Up to September 2004, 940 thousand Key Skills qualifications had been awarded to 572 thousand individual learners. In 2003/04, two-thirds of all Key Skills qualification awards were to 16-18 year olds. However, increasing numbers are going to those aged 19 and over, up by 65% on the previous year.

OCR is one examination body that is keen to support the use of ePortfolios and are currently exploring their use with both General and Vocational qualifications.

In England there are 48 LSCs (Learning and Skills Councils). These organisations aim to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to ensure the English workforce is of world-class standards.

They are responsible for planning and funding high-quality vocational education and training for everyone. Their vision is that “by 2010, young people and adults in England have the knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce”.

Following the 14–19 Education and skills White Paper (February 2005) and the Skills White Paper (March 2005), the DfES gave QCA a remit to develop functional skills in English, ICT and mathematics.

Functional skills will be developed in ways that will ensure that young people and adults can engage purposefully as citizens and in employment. Functional skills will be incorporated into GCSEs, be a component of the new specialised diplomas and will also be offered as a standalone qualification for young people (e.g. Apprenticeships) and adults. Pilots of the new functional skills qualifications are due to start in September 2007. Functional skills takes forward the practical application of the first 3 Key Skills communication, application of number and ICT.

3.1.3 Wales

Strategic overview

The situation in Wales is similar to that of England, and the same definitions for Basic Skills ‘The ability to read, write and speak in English/Welsh and to use mathematics at a level necessary to function and progress at work and in society in general’ and Key Skills are widely used and accepted.

But as in England, following Wales’ review 14-19 qualifications and provision, a new term is starting to emerge ‘functional skills’. Functional Skills are “core elements of English, mathematics and ICT that provide an individual with essential knowledge, skills and understanding that will enable them to operate confidently, effectively and independently in life and work. Individuals of whatever age who possess these skills will be able to participate and progress in education, training and employment as well as develop and secure the broader range of aptitudes, attitudes and behaviour that will enable them to make a positive contribution in the communities in which they live and work.”

Functional skills will be an integral part of the new GCSE qualifications, and as in England consideration is being given to introducing functional skills into other qualifications.

Recent benchmarking research has revealed that the basic skills level in the post education population in Wales is below both the UK average and the level of many European Countries. In April 2005 £40 million was made available until 2008 to support the activities outlined in **Words Talk - Numbers Count**, the second all-age National Basic Skills strategy for Wales <http://www.basic-skills-wales.org/bsastrategy/en/home/index.cfm>

In Wales the Basic Skills Agency was given responsibility by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) for overseeing the implementation of the Basic Skills strategy in 2001 and this has been extended until 2008 to include the new strategy.

On a practical level, the national Basic Skills strategy in Wales aims include ensuring that:

- fewer young people should leave compulsory education still struggling with basic skills
- the number of adults with poor basic skills should be diminished significantly.

This second Basic Skills Strategy has an all-age approach that concentrates on ten horizontal themes and ten priority groups. The horizontal themes address issues and barriers that face all those with a basic skills need - such as the quality of learning provision, and the sufficiency of help and support and the priority groups show were the focus of support needs to be.

Priority Groups

- Early Years
- Pupils Under-attaining in school
- Families
- Young People
- Adult Learners
- Low Skilled Workers
- Jobseekers
- Offenders and Ex-Offenders
- Other Groups at Risk of Social Exclusion
- Speakers of Other Languages

Horizontal themes

- Raising Awareness
- Better Identification of Learning Needs and Tracking Progress
- Providing a Better Range of Attractive Learning
- Improving the Quality of Provision
- Developing the Practitioner Workforce
- Fit-for-purpose Qualifications
- Better Help and Support for Learners
- Welsh Language
- Working Together to Maximise Impact
- Better Evidence of What Works

The strategy include the targets that: by 2010, 80% of working-age adults to have at least Level 1 literacy skills, and 55% to have at least Level 1 numeracy skills; All schools to maintain the Basic Skills Quality Mark standards, and all post-16 learning providers to hold the Quality Mark by 2006; 50% of employees working for employers that have signed the Employer Pledge by 2010 (allows private and public sector companies and organisations to demonstrate their commitment to the National Strategy by signing the pledge thus committing them to support its employees in improving their basic skills)

The Basic Skills Agency works in partnership with other key players to deliver the National Strategy and provide a coherent approach to raising standards of literacy and numeracy in children, young people and adults. The partners include the Local Authorities, DELLS (Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills formed in April 2006 following the intergration of ACCAC & the National Council for Education and Training – ELWa into WAG), Estyn, Careers Wales, education and training providers, employers, trades unions and business organisations and the voluntary sector.

In Wales, the outcomes of the Future Skills Wales (FSW) Research (www.futureskillswales.com) continue to highlight the importance of Key Skills for

employers whilst the Skills and Employment Action Plan 2 (SEAP 2) includes activities to further promote and support the achievement of these skills.

In 2004 www.careerswales.com was launched, which included an ePortfolio tool accessible to all in Wales whatever their age. The ePortfolio aims to provide a lifelong personal development and careers management tool for the people of Wales. The ePortfolio developed by Careers Wales, the national careers, information and guidance service, is supported and funded by the Welsh Assembly Government, with additional funding through Europe.

Accreditation and certification

Basic and Key Skills qualifications are accredited by a number of awarding bodies (see section on England above) including the Welsh Joint Curriculum Authority (WJEC). Wales had its own qualifications and curriculum assessment authority – ACCAC until April 2006, when it became part of the Department of Education, Lifelong Learning & Skills (DELLS) with the Welsh Assembly Government.

In Wales, Key Skills are integral to the achievement of the new Welsh Baccalaureate Qualifications (WBQ) part of the Learning Core in the 14 - 19 agenda, all 14 - 16 year olds are required to develop all six Key Skills at the level appropriate to their programmes. Post-16, all learners should develop the Key Skills of Communication plus a minimum of two other Key Skills at a level appropriate to their programmes. In addition, all post 16 learners should have access to the remaining Key Skills as enhancements. For some learners, Key Skills will be a requirement of their programmes e.g. WBQ and some modern apprenticeships.

A provision of the basic skills strategy is that All post 16 learners entering education or training are now assessed for their basic skills abilities and support provided to those that need it.

The review and re-organisation of 14-19 provision currently happening in Wales has seen plans to integrate 'functional skills' into the new GCSE structure. This may in the future be expanded to other qualifications as is planned in England.

3.1.4 Scotland

Strategic Overview

The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) uses the term "core skills". The five SQA core-skills areas in which qualifications are awarded are:

- Communication
- Numeracy
- Problem Solving
- Information Technology
- Working with Others.

The Lifelong Learning strategy for Scotland published by the Scottish Executive contains the statement that the OECD's PISA Study Level 2 is the minimum skills standard necessary for life and work In Scotland.

Other organisations that have relevant Basic Skills remits include:

- *Literacy Engine*: this programme, run by the Scottish Executive, is based on the current Adult Literacy and Numeracy Strategy for Scotland. £22,500,000 of new money was set aside in 2002 for the programme, of which

£18,500,000 went to the Scottish local authorities to be spent within their Community Learning Partnerships. The rest went to four “Pathfinder” projects: with the STUC; with Morgan Stanley, Boots and other local employers in North Lanarkshire; with the Road Haulage and Distribution Training Council; and with the Scottish Prison Service. (N.B. The term “basic skills” has been replaced in Scotland by the term “adult literacy and numeracy”, when it isn’t being replaced by the term “core skills”!)

- *Skills for Life and Work Division*: this is the division of the Scottish Executive responsible for vocational training in Scotland. Their remit includes the core skills listed above.
- *Scottish University for Industry (LearnDirect Scotland)*: they work closely with the Skills for Life and Work Division. They supply an ePortfolio (Skillnet) and literacy and numeracy eLearning packages (Plato) to 500 registered LearnDirect centres in Scotland.
- *Further and Adult Education Division*: this is the division of the Scottish Executive responsible for the further-education college sector in Scotland. Their remit includes the core skills listed above.
- *Communities Scotland*: this agency, also a part of the Scottish Executive, is where developmental work in adult literacy and numeracy takes place, including design innovations in tutor training and in software (e.g. computer games packages to foster young people’s achievement of citizenship standards).

Draft guidelines for an Adult Literacy and Numeracy Curriculum for Scotland were published in 2003 from the University of Edinburgh. These guidelines were drawn up under advice from four further education colleges, five local authority Community Education services, the WEA and two additional voluntary organisations. Although the guidelines did not have an official government status, they have now been brought into general use by tutors and others in the field of adult education in Scotland.

There were two parts to the guidelines:

- 1) What is the curriculum / What is the relationship between learning and assessment; and
- 2) How should we think of the curriculum / How do we translate our principles into effective learning, teaching and assessment practice?

An Adult Literacy and Numeracy Curriculum Framework for Scotland, published in 2005 by the Scottish Executive, has now firmed up these guidelines and details the official policy on which work in the adult literacy and numeracy field in Scotland is to be based. Putting policy into practice has already begun. At the service delivery level, provision is completely learner-centred. The recognition of prior learning comes into play from the beginning, when a learner arrives at one of the learning venues operating within the Framework and states the personal reason why literacy or numeracy help is sought. Practitioners have initial in-depth interviews with each learner, to help learners build on the reading, writing and number skills already acquired from their own lives. The social practices model used means that learners learn in informal and sociable environments; that is to say, literacy and numeracy

will look different as tackled within community football, within prison work, within “family literacy” involving parents’ relationships with their children, and so on.

The Scottish Adult Literacy and Numeracy Curriculum Framework has five organising principles behind its approach:

1. The research and theoretical base for the curriculum should be explicit and transparent.
2. Teaching should be focused on the application of skills and knowledge, not simply their acquisition.
3. To gain flexibility and responsiveness to the particular needs of particular groups of learners, a broad national framework is needed, supported by local and individual development of plans and programmes.
4. A national framework needs to make explicit for learners and for practitioners what is to be learned and what good performance will look like.
5. There are no quick fixes: a comprehensive and flexible system takes time to build and commitment over time to support and refine.

Thus learners and practitioners will both be entrusted with maintaining the level of what is to be learned and what good performance will look like.

Accreditation and certification

UK Youth have developed Youth Achievement Awards which provide an integrated method of accrediting the learning outcomes and achievements of young people participating in UK Youth’s programmes. These awards are formally recognised in Scotland through Youth Scotland/SQA. The awards are for self-awareness/self esteem, communication skills, interpersonal skills, exploring and managing feelings, understanding and identifying with others, recognising what is right and wrong, problem solving, negotiation skills, action planning, and learning from experience.

Qualified Youth and Community workers recommend particular young people for the awards on the basis of personal knowledge of the young person involved and the evidence of competence the young person has shown. To quote UK Youth’s *Curriculum Basis for Quality Work with Young People*:

“UK Youth’s youth work programmes are designed to promote quality work with all young people. They are based on the principles of empowering and supporting young people to take control of and responsibility for their lives within a framework of equal opportunities and a structure that promotes accredited learning and skills outcomes.

We believe that such work assists young people to develop the social skills necessary to avoid or address risk behaviours, in particular:

- school underachievement, truancy and exclusion
- drugs misuse
- risky sexual behaviour leading to unwanted pregnancy, STDs, HIV
- emotional problems, depression, suicide attempts
- crime

These risk behaviours are interrelated and are best addressed in a holistic manner. This is best achieved by:



- empowering young people by building on their motivational interests and intelligence to develop / support a high level of self esteem
- fostering a positive life view and the ambition to achieve, to develop something to work for
- the personal and social skills necessary to turn their vision into reality

The Awards can be utilised to accredit QCA Key Skills Communication, Working with Others and Improving Own Learning and Performance.”

For SQA core skills: modules to achieve credits are recognised within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) as *units* and are offered to learners and trainees for the demonstration of achievement at several different levels within each of the five core-skills areas. The units are competence-based. Credit transfer schemes are possible through the Framework, and the expectation is that those training for a trade can be given automatic credit for core-skills units in the SQA catalogue because these skills will be demonstrated automatically when satisfying conditions for sectoral-skills standards. (According to the Scottish Sector Skills Development Agency, however, embedding core skills in vocational training in this way is not working, and new solutions may be sought.)

Employers in Scotland recognise ECDL and MOUS accreditation for information technology skills.

3.1.5 Slovenia

Strategic overview

The remit for basic/key/essential skills is part of the work of SIAE and other institutions that develop educational programmes where key competences are recognised as an essential unit of curriculum.

Regarding the adult population in 2003, SIAE created a long-term strategy for raising literacy levels of adults. The strategy is based largely on the results of the national adult literacy survey conducted in 1998 as a part of International literacy Survey (IALS). The survey revealed that more than 70% of Slovenian adult population from 16 to 65 has literacy skills below international average. One of the important recommendations of the Strategy is a development of national standards for basic skills. The task is planned to be completed in 2005 and 2006 within the annual working plan of the SIAE.

The strategy was considered as a sufficient basis for developing a National Action Plan for Raising National literacy levels in the three years period 2004-2006, co-financed from EU Social Fund.

There are also strategic goals for the development of vocational and technical education of adults (also young adults), derived from national priorities. These are defined in national strategic documents, such as the new guidelines for the preparation of educational programmes of short-term and upper secondary vocational and technical education (2001).

There are also three non-formal public programmes whose content includes explicitly defined standards for basic skills:

- ***Project Learning for Young Adults (PLY)*** - aimed at young unemployed adults who didn't complete their education successfully or get any vocational qualifications. It is a daily organised programme that helps young people to get the knowledge, skills and attitudes to stimulate their own-personal power ("empowerment") to overcome the social exclusion that has a harmful impact on their motivation, intellectual and other capabilities for further

learning/education and thus the potential for independent and constructive way of living. Participants can participate in PLY for 3 months up to a year.

- **Bridge to Education (BE)** tends to help adults (mainly young adults); i.e. to raise their motivation for education (schooling) and to overcome a gap in key competences (or basic skills) that are needed in school/education. The basic skills in this context refer not only to writing, reading, counting, but wider context i.e. ICT, active citizenship, interpersonal relationships and communication, learning skills and strategies and life long learning. The teachers act as mediators between student's needs and their life circumstances and the educational goals, standards and contents of the programme.
- **Reading and Writing Together (RWT)** - similar to BE, but aimed at the illiterate parents of primary schools children. Parents are motivated to join the programme as they want to help their children with their learning and other aspects of their lives. The programme is organised in the way that parents and children work and learn together with the school teacher in projects. If they want to achieve the goals of the project, they need to learn and get competences in several different fields (i.e. writing, counting, reading, active citizenship, etc. see BE)

SIAE also ran a project where the educators who work in these programmes were qualified and trained.

The EUCEBS standards of communication, numeracy, ICT, learning to learn, interpersonal skills and citizenship have been taken as the starting point for the development of a National basic skills standard.

Accreditation and certification

Probably the most tangible results within regular / formal education are visible in VET, though more expert work and efforts are needed to make a more decisive breakthrough. As a result of new approaches derived from an evaluation of the current training programmes carried out in 2000 with the support of Phare, a first training programme is about to be introduced on an experimental basis.

Built around vocational and general competencies agreed upon by the state and social partners, it includes vocational qualifications as well as personal competencies and competencies needed for further learning. The competencies to be developed in the training programme leading to a vocational qualification in car service business have been defined as follows:

1. Communication capabilities (in the mother tongue, in a foreign language and in mathematical language)
2. Awareness of the importance of:
 - the mother tongue
 - preserving and protecting natural and cultural heritage
 - respecting life
 - respecting individual and cultural diversity
 - assuring quality life and work.
3. Creative capacities to include aesthetic dimensions into professional, individual and social environment, awareness of aesthetic values.
4. Capability to understand and critically judge events and processes in nature and society.
5. Ability of understanding oneself and others; awareness of the complexity and inconsistency of societies and cultures; the responsibility to oneself and one's interaction with nature and society;
6. Social skills and capabilities for work and cooperation in groups as well as capabilities for active citizenship and conflict resolution;

7. Development of capabilities and strategies for work with modern technologies, with sources, information and materials (*the ability to efficiently search, collect, process, interpret, exchange, present and assess them*).
8. A healthy life-style and responsibility for:
 - retaining one's own health and the health of others;
 - protection of the environment.
9. The capacities needed for
 - efficient lifelong learning,
 - planning and building the professional paths on the basis of:
 - one's own work experiences (employment and self-employment)
 - formal and informal learning
 - development of entrepreneurship and the capability to act as entrepreneur.
10. Awareness of the importance of knowledge for economic efficiency and competitiveness of an individual, a business or a society as a whole.

Approaches recommended in all education and training programmes and on all pre-university levels of education, advocating setting clear objectives that should not limit themselves so much to factual knowledge, but develop higher levels of knowledge and attitudes, are conducive to what is referred to as competencies. To attain the goals of the reform stated above objectives must be formulated in terms of competencies. The shift in focus from content to objectives is central to the activities of the National Education Institute.

There is also a project (still in its experimental phase) lead by The National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia and Centre of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational, Education and Training, which is dealing with key competencies in secondary vocational educational programmes. In this case key competencies are not defined as an independent part of the educational programme, but they are implemented as part of different subjects.

3.1.6 France

Strategic overview

Since the first version of this benchmarking report there have been some important advances in the field of key skills in France further to a law passed by the Government on 11th July 2006 (<http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/texteconsolide/PEH4F.htm>) on the establishment of a Common set of skills and knowledge (*Socle commun de connaissances et de competences*) that all French school leavers must have mastered by the end of compulsory education at age 16. This law was built on the initiatives already formalised by the European Parliament on 'Key skills for Education and Life long learning.

There are 7 key skills identified within this law and are as follows:

1. A good command of the French language
2. Practical ability in a foreign modern language
3. Basic skills in mathematics and a scientific and technological culture
4. Basic ICT skills
5. A humanist culture
6. Social and civic skills
7. Autonomy and initiative

The first five of these skills already form an integral part of the French school curricula but the last two will require particular attention by the Ministry of Education in terms of application and evaluation in the near future. This common set of key skills is being introduced into compulsory schooling in 2006 and the first school leaving certificate (brevet) to be based on these skills will take place in 2008.

Although this law has not changed the curricula in schools it will require schools to provide more personalised learning and support facilities. Furthermore teachers will be required to assess students progress in these seven key skills at regular periods throughout their schooling. Teachers will be provided with the evaluation and tools to monitor students progress in these skills and each pupil will have a personal learning plan or record which will track his/her progress in these seven skill areas. Schools will be required to put in place personalised support to ensure students master all these skills by the end of their schooling i.e. tutoring, access to resources, supervised study and provide special needs students with personalised learning programmes.

The Government has set up a working group for each of these key skills to look at potential changes to curricula and the resources needed to support this initiative.

In terms of **ePortfolios** the French Government announced in September 2006 (<http://www.education.gouv.fr/cid3949/plan-en-faveur-des-technologies-de-l-information-appliquees-a-l-education.html>) that they will introduce in 2007 an ePortfolio for all school children based on their development in a foreign modern language (skill n° 2). This ePortfolio will form part of students Digital workspace (Espace Numérique de Travail) an initiative already well underway in French education. After experimenting with an ePortfolio for languages in 2007 it is expected to extend the concept of the ePortfolio to the rest of the key skills listed above. Outside formal initial education there is no policy or standard as regards basic/key skills only job specific skills defined via vocational and professional qualifications.

Accreditation and certification

There are no government or official agencies with a remit for basic/key skills, only private agencies looking at providing skills/training for certain professions. Therefore there is no accreditation body for basic or key skills as such.

However the French National Education system will be modifying their examination at the end of compulsory education (brevet scolaire) in line with the key skills listed previously from 2008 onwards. Furthermore it can be expected that the introduction of the ePortfolio (for foreign languages initially) will also form part of this evaluation process. It should be noted though that the 'brevet' accreditation is only open to students in initial secondary education and is not open to learners outside of formal education – or at least as yet!

Outside the formal education system the emphasis is on professional insertion and not on gaining generic skills. There are organisations that support young people in getting access to jobs/training (such as the Ecole de la Deuxième Chance – E2C) but they do not have a specific remit for improving these specific skills only in helping young adults get a job. Organisations such as E2C provide their own diplomas recognising the attainment of key skills but such diplomas do not have any official recognition outside the school itself.

Accreditation and certification by the National Ministry does exist for professional skills and is called the "Brevet de Technicien Supérieur" or "BTS" for which students are obliged to enrol on a specific course for a 2 year period at the end of which they

pass a state examination. They must also carry out an internship as part of the BTS course and assessment. Private qualifications for certain key skills i.e. TOEIC, TOEFL for language learning exist but they have no official recognition in France.

3.2 ePortfolio tools in Europe

The partners also undertook a survey of existing ePortfolio tools available within Europe (although many are from North America) so as to select the most appropriate tool for the project pilots.

There 3 main different sources of ePortfolio are:

- **Open source ePortfolio tools**
- **Commercial ePortfolio tools and services**
- **In-house (Home- grown) ePortfolio tools**

There are also a large number of **desktop tools** such as Blogs, Wikis, Webpages, Plone, which can be used to create an ePortfolio.

Examples of ePortfolios:

Open Source tools and platforms			
Tool	Type	Target	URL
Open Source Initiative Portfolio (OSPI)	Presentation portfolio JAVA based	Higher Education	http://www.theospi.org
ELGG: Scotland	Learning portfolio and reflection and collaboration	Lifelong learning	http://elgg.net
PETAL UK	Teaching and Learning & presentation	Higher Education and LLL	http://www.brookes.ac.uk/research/odl/petal/petal_home.html
Enfa French	Assessment	Higher and vocational education	www.enfa.fr/portfolio/
Cyberfolio French Canadian	Reflection and learning	Primary and Secondary school	www.cyberfolio.org/ Example: http://recit.cadre.qc.ca/portfolios/
Cyberpif French Canadian	Training Plan	Primary and Secondary school	www.cyberpif.net
Portfolyo Swiss	A simple eP Tool in Python (allow XML data import/export).	Professional	www.ubique.ch/code/portfolyo
SCAM ePortfolio	Learning & presentation	Education	http://scam.sourceforge.net/
LUSID – University of Liverpool UK	Personal Development	Higher Education	http://lusid.liv.ac.uk/index.html
ePET – Eportfolios extension toolkit UK	Learning, development. Presentation	Self Higher Education	http://www.eportfolios.ac.uk/ePET
Commercial			
Tool	Type	Target	URL
MAPS	Assessment	Schools	www.maps-ict.com
PaperFree UK	Assessment	Further & Vocational Education	www.paperfree.co.uk
Axia Skill up	Presentation/skills development	Higher Education and LLL	http://www.skillupnow.net
ePortaro portfolio	Presentation/learning	Higher Education	www.eportaro.com

College Livetext	Presentation/Learning/ Assessment	Higher Education	www.college.livetext.com/
PebblePad	Presentation/learning	Schools, colleges, universities	www.pebblelearning.co.uk/
Winvision digital Portfolio	Assessment/learning/pe rsonal development	Education	www.winvision.nl/Products/EN/Products/
iWebfolio - Nuventive	Presentation/learning	Education & professional development	www.nuventive.com/
Factline ePortfolio	E-learning/presentation	Education	www.factline.com/216915.0/
Giunti eXact Portfolio	Personal development	Education & employment	http://www.learnexact.com/info.php?vvu=35
Spider ePortfolio UK	Presentation & learning	Education	www.spider-networks.net/applications/eporfolio.html
Blackboard Portfolio UK	Learning/presentation	Higher Education & Further Education	www.blackboard.com/products
Home Made Tools			
Tool	Type	Target	URL
Careers Wales Online	Personal development & careers management tool	All ages – national ePortfolio supported by Welsh Assembly Government	www.careerswales.com
Yinternet	Personal development and reflection	ALL	http://www.cooperation.net/cooperation.net
Platforms that can be used as ePortfolios			
Dokeos 34 languages	Open Source elearning and course management web application		www.dokeos.com/
dotFolio	Learning & personal development	Opensource built on OpenACS	http://dotfolio.org/
Yahoo 360°	Reflection and collaboration	ALL	http://360.yahoo.com
Overblog (in French)	Reflection and collaboration	ALL	http://www.over-blog.com



4 Conclusions

The findings of the benchmarking questionnaire demonstrate that there are wide variations between partner countries in the extent to which governments and education and training providers have agreed on official terms, developed strategies and devised programmes to tackle the issue of basic/key/essential skills/competences. Also there are wide variations in the how basic/key/essential skills/competences are measured, accredited and certificated.

France has since the first draft of this report moved forward both in the recognition of key competences in the school curriculum and in support of using ePortfolios in education. Germany has yet to adopt agreed terms for basic/essential/key skills though there is a growing interest in the field. The United Kingdom on the other hand including England, Scotland and Wales have a well established system including a Basic Skills Agency; recognised Key Skills and Basic Skills; a strategy for improving basic and key skills; and awarding bodies that accredit and certificate these basic and key skills. The provision of education for 14-19 year olds in both England and Wales are undergoing big changes aimed at making education more accessible to the majority of young people.

Slovenia has done a lot of work in this area since 2000 both in pre-16 and post-16 education. SIAE was tasked by the Ministry of Education and Sport in 2001 to develop a strategy for raising literacy levels of adults (but has yet to be adopted), a National Adult Education plan was adopted 2004 and implementation started in 2005. The EUCEBS standards of communication, numeracy, ICT, learning to learn, interpersonal skills and citizenship are been taken as the starting point for the development of a National basic skills standard.

The results of the work done by the EU Commission Working Group on Basic Skills, Foreign Language Teaching and Entrepreneurship, gives a further picture of the situation in other European countries. Following their benchmarking exercise they identified and put forward the following 8 key competences: communication in mother tongue; communication in a foreign language; mathematical literacy and basic competences in science and technology; ICT skills; learning-to-learn; interpersonal and civic competences; entrepreneurship; cultural awareness.

These eight key competences compare quite closely and can be mapped easily to both the key skills adopted in England and Wales, the core skills adopted in Scotland and the EUCEBS basic standards. The map below illustrates this:

Key Competence	UK Key Skills	EUCEBS basic standards
Communication in the mother tongue	Communication	Communication
Communication in a foreign language	Communication	Communication
Mathematical literacy and basic competences in science and technology	Application of Number	Numeracy
ICT skills	ICT skills	ICT Skills
Learning-to-learn	improving own learning and performance	Learn to Learn
Interpersonal and civic competences	<i>Working with others / Communication</i>	<i>Interpersonal Skills</i>
Entrepreneurship		
Cultural awareness	Problem Solving (except in Scotland)	Citizenship

The three competencies that do not map easily across are entrepreneurship, cultural awareness, citizenship and problem solving. However problem solving does form a part of ‘mathematical literacy and basic competences in science and technology’, ‘learning to learn’ and ‘entrepreneurship’. We would argue that all of these competencies are important for young people to be able to function socially and within a working environment.

Another issue that should be raised is that within countries where there is more than one official language and therefore a high degree of bilingualism such as Wales and Switzerland the terms ‘Communication in mother tongue’ and ‘Communication in a foreign language’ can cause confusion and could be replaced by a more appropriate term like ‘communication in a first language’ and ‘communication in a second language’.

The ePortfolio tools available within the Key-Pal partnership for use as part of the Piloting are:

- PaperFree
- ELGG
- Blogs
- Career Wales Online
- Cooperation.net by Yinternet
- Skill Up

5 Recommendations

The recommendations from this benchmarking exercise are that the eight key competences put forward by the EU Commission Working Group on Basic Skills, Foreign Language Teaching and Entrepreneurship be used as a basis for the key competences to be introduced in the Key-Pal Pilot.

The amendments to be made include replacing ‘communication in mother tongue’ and ‘communication in a foreign language’ with ‘communication in a first language’ and ‘communication in a second language’; and the insertion of ‘problem solving’ as an additional competence rather than it been integrated within other key competences.

The rubric below lists the key competences to be used in the Key-Pal project together with definitions of each competence and a further break down of the essential components within each competence.

Proposed Key Competence rubric :

Key Competence	Definition	Examples
Communication in First Language	Communication is the ability to express and interpret thoughts, feelings and facts in both oral and written form, and to interact linguistically in an appropriate way in the full range of societal contexts: work, home and leisure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening • Speaking • Reading • Writing
Communication in Second Language	Having Communication skills in a second language is where an individual is considered to have the same four skill dimensions (listening, speaking, reading and writing) as communication skills in a first language. However, the level of mastery is not necessarily the same for all four dimensions, and there can be differences between languages (see Appendix 2).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening • Speaking • Reading • Writing

<p>Mathematical literacy and basic competences in science and technology</p>	<p>Mathematical literacy is the ability to use addition, subtraction, multiplication, division and ratios in mental and written computation to solve a range of problems in everyday situations. The emphasis is on process rather than output, on activity rather than knowledge. Science refers to the body of knowledge and methodology employed to explain the natural world. Technology is viewed as the application of that knowledge in order to modify the natural environment in response to perceive human wants or needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addition • Subtraction • Multiplication • Division • Ratios
<p>ICT skills</p>	<p>ICT skills comprise the use of multi-media technology to retrieve, store, create, present, sort and exchange information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a file • Retrieve a document • Store a picture • Present multimedia information • Exchange music files • Retrieve information from the www

<p>Learning-to-learn</p>	<p>'Learning-to-learn' is defined as a foundation skill in Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality. The working group agreed upon the following definition: 'the disposition and ability to organise and regulate one's own learning, to manage one's time effectively; to solve problems; to acquire, process, evaluate and assimilate new knowledge; and to apply new knowledge and skills in a variety of contexts — at home and at work, in education and training.'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying Learning Style • Planning actions within Life Long Learning Context • Identifying achievable and realistic goals • Organisational skills • Time management
<p>Interpersonal and civic competences including working with others</p>	<p>Interpersonal competences comprise all forms of behaviour that must be mastered in order that an individual is able to participate in an efficient and constructive way in social life, and to resolve conflict where necessary. Interpersonal skills are necessary for effective interaction on a one-to-one basis or in groups, and are deployed in both the public and private domains to promote the effective relationship for working with others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working as part of a team • Use of Communication skills to solve interpersonal challenges • Negotiate within a variety of situations • Use of active listening skills to promote understanding of others.
<p>Entrepreneurship</p>	<p>Entrepreneurship has a passive and an active component: it comprises both the propensity to induce changes oneself and the ability to welcome, support and adapt to innovation brought about by external factors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take responsibility for one's actions (positive or negative) • developing a strategic vision • setting objectives and meeting them, • becoming self-motivated to succeed.

<p>Cultural awareness</p>	<p>The term 'cultural awareness' comprises an appreciation of popular culture and general social mores, as well as the ability to appreciate literature, art, music and other forms of creative expression.</p>	<p>ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appreciate literature • art • music • other forms of creative expression.
---------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Each partner will choose the ePortfolio tool that most closely meets their needs in terms ePortfolio type and language considerations.

6 Appendix 1

6.1 Key-PAL Project Questionnaires

6.1.1 Introduction

This questionnaire is a first and key step within the workplan of the KEYPAL project (<http://www.eife-l.org/portfolio/keypal/>), supported by the European Commission DG Education and Culture. The main aim of this project is to establish the relevance and potential impact of an electronic portfolio (ePortfolio)* for the development and accreditation of basic and key skills (essential skills).

ePortfolios are becoming increasingly popular as a tool for both learning and assessment in learning environments around the globe. KEYPAL focuses on the potential of the ePortfolio for enabling young adults (age 16- to 25) to acquire, demonstrate and then gain accreditation for essential skills. Particular attention will be given to disadvantaged young adults i.e. those without any formal qualification, with special needs etc.

This questionnaire aims to gather information on a European level as to the existing strategies, policies and forms of accreditation in the field of Key/Basic and essential skills. The information gathered in this questionnaire will be compiled in the form of a benchmarking report and will be made available to all respondees. It will enable the KEYPAL project to propose an ePortfolio solution(s) for essential skills that is in line with current good practice in European member states.

Thank you for your time.

Contents:

Questionnaire 1 - Benchmarking Questionnaire

Questionnaire 2 - Occupational Standards Questionnaire

Notes

Draft definition of terms

1. Key-PAL Benchmarking Questionnaire

1. Does your country/region have standards for basic/key/essential skills? See list below:

- Application of number (numeracy skills)
- Communication including Verbal, Listening and Written skills.
- Improving own learning and performance
- Information and communication technology
- Problem solving
- Working with others
- Time-Keeping
- Reliability
- Self awareness
- Understanding customer needs
- Ability to follow instructions
- Adaptability and Flexibility
- Entrepreneurial Skills
- Leaderships
- Initiative

Yes	
No	
Don't know	

Please provide details, including any additional basic/key/essential skills recognised by your country/region:

2. Does your country/region have an official agency or agencies with a remit for basic/key/essential skills?

Yes	
No	
Don't know	

If Yes, please provide a short summary of their remit including support provided to organisations working with young people:

3. Has your country/region developed strategies or policies relating to basic/key/essential skills?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please provide details on how these strategies are being implemented on a practical level:

4. Does your country/region have organisations with a remit to support young people in developing and improving their basic/key/essential skills?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please provide details of the organisations and the nature of support provided:

5. Does your country/region have a:

- Basic/key/essential skills certificate (non accredited)
- Accredited basic/key/essential skills qualification

Please provide details of the assessment, accreditation and support processes:

2. Key-PAL Occupational Standards Questionnaire

1. The term “occupational standards” in the Key-PAL context refers to: (please tick all that you think apply):

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the basic skills underpinning today’s jobs, e.g. <i>Numeracy</i> becomes <i>Financial Literacy</i> as arithmetical operations become contextualised 	<input type="checkbox"/>
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the skills and knowledge needed in order to work with young adults, including young adults at risk of social exclusion 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the skills and knowledge the Adult Education professional needs to support learners and trainees to evidence competences by portfolio 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the ICT skills needed to populate, organise and navigate an ePortfolio 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all of the above. 	

2 a) What work skills or sector skills does your organisation teach and/or validate?

2 b) How do basic/key skills translate into the work contexts involved?

3 a) If your organisation provides learning support for young adults, what credentials (qualifications and or training) do your paid staff/volunteers have for such work?

3 b) Please describe what you look for when recruiting new staff.

4. Does your organisation have experience of supporting adults to demonstrate knowledge, skills and competence by portfolio evidence?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

If yes, please describe in detail the process(es) and materials used and the philosophical and instrumental rationales adhered to.

5. Do you have experience of developing and managing an ePortfolio?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

If yes, please list the ICT skills you found you needed, with reference to the tasks you needed them for.

6. Do you have anything to add, or ask?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please give details below.

7 Appendix 2

7.1 Draft Definitions of terms for the KEY-PAL Project

1. Life Long Learning

Lifelong learning encompasses the whole range of learning experienced by an individual through his/her life, namely: formal and informal learning, workplace learning, and the skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours that people acquire in day-to-day experiences.

2. Portfolio

Portfolio is a purposeful collection of an individual's work that exhibits his or her efforts, progress and achievements in one or more areas. The collection must include the individual's participation in selecting contents, the criteria for selection; the criteria for judging merit, and evidence of individual self-reflection.

3. ePortfolio

An **electronic portfolio** uses electronic technologies, allowing the portfolio developer (user) to collect and organise portfolio artefacts (items) in many media types (audio, video, graphics, text). A standards-based portfolio uses a database or hypertext links to clearly show the relationship between the standards or goals, artefacts (items) stores and reflections. The Life Long Learner's reflections are the rationale for specific artefacts (items) being evidence of achieving the stated standards or goals.

4. Young Person

A person between 16 and 25 years of age.

5. Basic Skills

The ability to read, write and speak in a language and use mathematics at a level necessary to function and progress at work and in society in general.

6. Key Skills

Key skills are the skills that are commonly needed for success in a range of activities in education and training, work and life in general.

The key skills are:

- Application of number
- Communication
- Improving own learning and performance
- Information and communication technology
- Problem solving

- Working with others.

(N.B. This is an NVQ/SVQ list. Is it being accepted without change by all KeyPAL partners as our official KeyPAL key skills definition?)

7. Key competencies

For a competence to deserve attributes such as 'key', 'core', 'essential' or 'basic', it must be necessary and beneficial to an individual and to society as a whole. It must enable an individual to successfully integrate into a number of social networks while remaining independent and personally effective in familiar as well as unpredictable settings. A key competence must also enable people to constantly update their knowledge and skills in order to keep abreast of fresh developments.

8. Competencies

Competencies can be divided into skills, knowledge and attitudes.

9. Accreditation

Accreditation is the approval of an academic or vocational course, including the identification and validation of non-formal and formal learning, by an authorised body.

10. Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)

A general term used for the award of credit on the basis of demonstrated learning that has occurred at some time in the past. This learning may have come about as the result of a course, or self-directed study, or as the result of experience either at work or in leisure pursuits.

11. Distance learning

Learning through TV, radio, correspondence, computer network, CD-ROM, video, Internet etc.

12. Validation

The process by which the outcome of learning (both formal and informal) is judged to have met the requirements for an award by the relevant awarding or examining body, or by an accredited institution on behalf of that awarding body.

8 Appendix 3

Collation of Completed Questionnaires

1. Does your country/region have standards for basic/key/essential skills? See list below:

- Application of number (numeracy skills)
- Communication including Verbal, Listening and Written skills.
- Improving own learning and performance
- Information and communication technology
- Problem solving
- Working with others
- Time-Keeping
- Reliability
- Self awareness
- Understanding customer needs
- Ability to follow instructions
- Adaptability and Flexibility
- Entrepreneurial Skills
- Leaderships
- Initiative

Results

	France	Germany	England	Wales	Scotland	Slovenia
Yes			X	X	X	X
No	X	X				

Additional Information including details on additional basic/key/essential skills recognised by Participating countries/regions:

Germany

There are no official definitions of key skills/qualifications in Germany. The terms, however, are often employed by politicians, educationalists, and economists. Without a clear definition, this use is rather rhetorical and it seems that everybody makes use of it in order to support the relevance of whatever skill they have in mind. This ample use of terms is corroborated by Weinert's findings quoted in the EURYDICE report who established that there can be found more than 650 general key qualifications or skills in recent German publications (p 69 there).

A search of the web pages of the German Ministry of Economics and Labor yields no hits for the terms – which gives reason to think that key skills are not a high priority topic for this institution.

A search on the web pages of the German Ministry of Education and Research yields about 30 hits. The terms are used in a variety of contexts. They are most often employed to refer to:

- Reading
- ITC
- L2L
- Foreign Languages

They are, interestingly, also used to refer to intercultural skills whose relevance seems to be acknowledged more and more.

Key Skills in a variety of contexts can be proven by international certificates, such as the European Computer Driving License or internationally acknowledged language certificates such as the Cambridge certificates, the TOEFL, DELF or DALF. Unfortunately, even here not all employers know about the certificates.

One of the problems most difficult to solve in the context of a federal i.e. all German certificate is that in Germany, education is part of the Länder's (the federal states, of which there are 16) responsibility. There is a Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs in which these ministers *sometimes* agree on common standards or measures.

England

In England, The Basic Skills Agency are funded from the Government through the Department for Education and Skills. They define themselves as a small, quick response, independent organisation, working at 'arms length' from their funders the Department for Education and Skills and are a not-for-profit charity.

The Agency in England aims to be a national ideas and innovation organisation, focusing on finding practice worth sharing and disseminating it effectively.

As an independent organisation they aim to be a critical friend of the Government and state that they: "don't shy away from making our views known even when they are critical of existing policies and strategies."

In England Basic skills are defined as:

- the ability to read,
- to write and
- to use mathematics to a level required to function at work and in society in general

Essential ["Key"] skills as defined by QCA [Qualifications and Curriculum Authority] in 2004 are six:

- *communication*
- *application of number*
- *ICT*
- *working with others*

- *improving own learning and performance, and*
- *problem solving*

Wales

In Wales The Basic Skills Ageing the has the remit for developing and promoting Basic/Key Skills in Wales. However it is the National Assembly of Wales that agrees the standards.

The Basic Skills Agency has been responsible for overseeing the National Strategy for Basic Skills in Wales since 2001. In February 2005 the Agency was awarded the contract to oversee the Strategy for a further three years.

Their Goal is to help raise standards in basic skills. They aim to do this through their four programmes, listed below.

These programmes are underpinned by their three priorities: speaking and listening; transition; and engaging the disengaged.

The Quality Mark

This is awarded to schools – infant, junior, primary, secondary and special schools – that reach a minimum standard in teaching literacy and numeracy. They also award the Quality Award to Post-16 organisations in Wales.

Developing Effective Practice

This involves identifying a problem or issue facing those working in basic skills. It's based on a partnership with Local Education Authorities (LEAs) and seeks to identify effective practice and make sure that this is built on and shared widely by LEAs, schools and other organisations.

Better Teaching Partnership

This is aimed specifically at post 16 organisations that gained a low grade by National Educational Inspectors (ALI/Ofsted). This involves a group of specialist staff from the Basic Skills Agency working with the organisation to try to improve their grading at the next inspection.

Consultancy

The consultancy provided by the agency is focused on in-depth provision reviews for strategic organisations such as LEAs, Learning and Skills Council and major regeneration partnerships.

Scotland

The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) uses the term “core skills” for these (Above listed) skills. The five SQA core-skills areas in which qualifications are awarded are *Communication, Numeracy, Problem Solving, Information Technology, and Working with Others*.

UK Youth have developed Youth Achievement Awards which provide an integrated method of accrediting the learning outcomes and achievements of young people participating in UK Youth's programmes. These awards are formally recognised in Scotland through Youth Scotland/SQA. The awards are for *self-awareness/self esteem, communication skills, interpersonal skills, exploring and managing feelings, understanding and identifying with others, recognising what is right and wrong, problem solving, negotiation skills, action planning, and learning from experience.*

Employers in Scotland recognise ECDL and MOUS accreditation for *information technology* skills.

The Lifelong Learning strategy for Scotland published by the Scottish Executive contains the statement that the OECD's PISA Study Level 2 is the minimum skills standard necessary for life and work in Scotland.

Slovenia

There are three non-formal public programmes that content among others an explicitly defined standards for basic skills:

1. Project Learning for Young Adults (PLY); 2. Bridge to Education (BE); 3. Reading and Writing Together (RWT).

- **PLY** is aimed for the young unemployed adults who did not complete their education successfully or get any vocational qualification. It is a daily organised programme that helps young people to get knowledge, skills and attitudes to stimulate their own personal power ("empowerment") to overcome the social exclusion that has a harmful impact on their motivation, intellectual and other capabilities for further learning/education and thus the potential for independent and constructive way of living .). Participants may enjoy PLY for 3 months till one year.
- **Bridge to education (BE)** tends to help adults (mainly young adults); i.e. to raise their motivation for education (schooling) and to overcome a gap in key competences (or basic skills) that are needed in school/education. The basic skills in this context refer not only to writing, reading, counting, but wider context i.e. ICT, active citizenship, interpersonal relationships and communication, learning skills and strategies and life long learning. The teachers are mediators among student's needs and their life circumstances and the educational goals, standards and contents of the programme.

- **Reading and Writing Together**

It is similar to BE , but is aimed to the illiterate parents of primary schools children (up to ten years). Parents are motivated to enjoy the programme because they want to help their children in school learning and widely in their lives. The programme is organised in the way that parents and children work and learn together with the school teacher in projects. If they want to achieve the goals of the project, they need to learn and get competences in several different fields (.e writing, counting, reading, active citizenship, etc. see BE)

Probably most tangible results within regular / formal education are visible in VET, though more expert work and efforts are needed to make a more decisive breakthrough. As a result of new approaches derived from an evaluation of the current training programmes carried out in 2000 with the support of Phare a first

training programme is about to be introduced on experimental basis, built around vocational and general competencies agreed upon by the state and social partners. It includes both vocational qualifications as well as personal competencies and competencies needed for further learning. The competencies to be developed in the training programme leading to a vocational qualification in car service business have been defined as follows:

11. Communication capabilities (in the mother tongue, in a foreign language and in mathematical language)
12. Awareness of the importance of
 - o the mother tongue,
 - o preserving and protecting natural and cultural heritage,
 - o respecting life,
 - o respecting individual and cultural diversity,
 - o assuring quality life and work.
13. Creative capacities to include aesthetic dimensions into professional, individual and social environment, awareness of aesthetic values.
14. Capability to understand and critically judge events and processes in nature and society.
15. Ability of understanding oneself and others; awareness of the complexity and inconsistency of societies and cultures; the responsibility to oneself and one's interaction with nature and society;
16. Social skills and capabilities for work and cooperation in groups as well as capabilities for active citizenship and conflict resolution;
17. Development of capabilities and strategies for work with modern technologies, with sources, information and materials (*the ability to efficiently search, collect, process, interpret, exchange, present and assess them*).
18. A healthy life-style and responsibility for:
 - o retaining one's own health and the health of others;
 - o protection of the environment.
19. The capacities needed for
 - o efficient lifelong learning,
 - o planning and building the professional paths on the basis of:
 - one's own work experiences (employment and self-employment),
 - formal and informal learning,
 - development of entrepreneurship and the capability to act as entrepreneur.
20. Awareness of the importance of knowledge for economic efficiency and competitiveness of an individual, a business or a society as a whole.

Approaches recommended in all education and training programmes and on all pre-university levels of education, advocating setting clear objectives that should not limit themselves so much to factual knowledge, but develop higher levels of knowledge and attitudes, are conducive to what is referred to as competencies. To attain the goals of the reform stated above objectives must be formulated in terms of competencies. The shift in focus from content to objectives is central to the activities of the National Education Institute.

2. Does your country/region have an official agency or agencies with a remit for basic/key/essential skills?

Results



	France	Germany	England	Wales	Scotland	Slovenia
Yes		X	X	X	X	X
No	X					

If Yes, please provide a short summary of their remit including support provided to organisations working with young people:

Germany

All German school leaving certificates (beginning after 9 years of compulsory schooling) are understood to indicate that the candidate holds basic skills. However, there is no institution to certify key skills for people who leave school without their certificate.

The need for educational standards in order to evaluate students’ attainment is increasingly understood in Germany, especially after the shocking PISA results of 2000. There is thus more striving for standards.

England

AS mentioned in response to Question 1, England has Basic Skills Agency which is funded by the through the Department for Education and Skills. They define themselves as a small, quick response, independent organisation, working at ‘arms length’ from their funders the Department for Education and Skills and are a not-for-profit charity.

The agency’s three current priorities are:

- Improving the speaking and listening skills of children, young people and adults
- Improving basic skills at transition points in a child’s, young person’s or adult’s life
- Engaging disengaged children, young people and adults in improving basic skills

Their current programmes for secondary and post-16 groups are:

European Basic Skills Network

The European Basic Skills Network was originally established through a partnership of national agencies with a responsibility for basic skills in six member countries with funding from the Directorate–General for Employment and Social Affairs.

Embedding Basic Skills in London Local Authorities

National research indicates that 23% of adults in Britain have poor literacy, language or numeracy skills (*Skills for Life, 2001*) and about half of these are in employment. Approximately 476,000 local government employees may have problems with literacy and 498,000 with numeracy.



Financial Literacy

In the 2000 budget the Chancellor allocated funding to the then DFEE to implement emerging recommendations made in a report published by the Adult Financial Literacy Advisory Group. The Basic Skills Agency was allocated part of this funding to set up a programme to improve the financial literacy of adults. Details of this programme, together with information on other related initiatives are given here.

Literacy and Social Inclusion

Literacy and Social Inclusion is a 3 year Basic Skills Agency national support project delivered by the National Literacy Trust which is bringing together a web-based national resource of good practice and 'what works' around literacy and social inclusion across the whole age range.

National Development Project Basic Skills and the Army

In recent years the increasingly competitive labour market and the need for a multi-skilled workforce capable of responding flexibly to changing demands and roles have brought the Army's basic skills issues into sharper focus.

National Development Project Basic Skills in Prisons

The Prison Education Service has set ambitious targets to raise standards of basic skills in the prison population. We're working closely with the prison service to fund and support development to help meet these targets.

National Development Project Basic Skills in Probation

The project on the literacy demands of the general offending behaviour programmes (GOBPS) is progressing well. Data collection is in progress in the six probation areas involved in fieldwork.

Quality Mark

Our Basic Skills Quality Marks provide frameworks for the continuous improvement of the literacy and numeracy of learners in primary schools and secondary schools basic skills programmes. There is also a Quality Mark for post-16 organisations in Wales

REPRISE: Results Exploitation and Project Research and Information on Social Exclusion

REPRISE was developed and set up to build upon and continue the work of the European Basic Skills Network (1998 - 1999), originally set up to tackle social exclusion. REPRISE is a project network of 12 countries.

Wales

The National Basic Skills Strategy for Wales was launched in April 2001. The Basic Skills Agency has been asked to oversee the implementation of the National Strategy on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government.

The Agency works in partnership with other key players to deliver the National Strategy and provide a coherent approach to raising standards of literacy and numeracy in children, young people and adults.



The partners include the Local Authorities, ACCAC, the National Council for Education and Training – ELWa, Estyn, Careers Wales, education and training providers, employers, trades unions and business organisations and the voluntary sector.

The agency see themselves as a small, quick response, independent organisation, working at ‘arms length’ from their funders, the Welsh Assembly Government.

They are working towards being national ideas and innovation organisation and a source of practice worth sharing.

As an independent organisation they see themselves as a critical friend of Government.

The agency is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Welsh Assembly Government’s National Basic Skills Strategy for Wales.

Currently, their priorities are:

- Improving the speaking and listening skills of children, young people and adults
- Improving basic skills at transition points in a child’s, young person’s or adult’s life
- Engaging disengaged children, young people and adults in improving basic skills

It is important to note that the agency is not responsible for strategies, such as the Government’s Skills for Life, Primary or Key Stage 3 strategies. However, they hope to contribute to their aims by helping to raise standards in basic skills.

Similarly, they are not responsible for national examination frameworks, SureStart or workplace basic skills training.

Scotland

As mentioned in Question 1, Scotland has the SQA and *Youth Scotland* as the main agencies dealing with Basic Skills. However, there are other organisations that have relevant Basic Skills remits which are detailed below:

- *Literacy Engine*: this is not an agency, but a programme run by the Scottish Executive, based on an Adult Literacy and Numeracy Strategy for Scotland. £22,500,000 of new money was set aside in 2002 for the programme, of which £18,500,000 went to the Scottish local authorities to be spent within their Community Learning Partnerships. The rest went to four “Pathfinder” projects: with the STUC; with Morgan Stanley, Boots and other local employers in North Lanarkshire; with the Road Haulage and Distribution

Training Council; and with the Scottish Prison Service. (N.B. The term “basic skills” has been replaced in Scotland by the term “adult literacy and numeracy”, when it isn’t being replaced by the term “core skills”!)

- *Skills for Life and Work Division*: this is the division of the Scottish Executive responsible for vocational training in Scotland. Their remit includes the core skills listed above.
- *Scottish University for Industry (LearnDirect Scotland)*: they work closely with the Skills for Life and Work Division. They supply an ePortfolio (Skillnet) and literacy and numeracy eLearning packages (Plato) to 500 registered LearnDirect centres in Scotland.
- *Communities Scotland*: this agency, also a part of the Scottish Executive, is where developmental work in adult literacy and numeracy takes place, including design innovations in tutor training and in software (e.g. computer games packages to foster young people’s achievement of citizenship standards).

Slovenia

The remit for basic/key/essential skills is part of the work of SIAE and other institutions that develop educational programmes where key competences are recognised as an essential unit of curriculum.

3. Has your country/region developed strategies or policies relating to basic/key/essential skills?

	France	Germany	England	Wales	Scotland	Slovenia
Yes		X	X	X	X	X
No	X					

How are these strategies are being implemented on a practical level:

Germany

Germany has developed strategies and policies only in the context of the official school system of compulsory education.

For example, Bremen was particularly shocked by the bad PISA results of Bremen students. Therefore, a variety of counter measures have been thought of:

- readings clubs for elementary school children
- support of migrant children’s learning of the German language both in elementary schools and in preschool education, e.g. through support of their mothers’ German language skills or through extra classes for 6 weeks when children arrive in Germany and begin attending school.

England



In England, the practical promotion of the strategy to improve adult literacy and numeracy skills is through the *Skills for Life* programme.

The programme's priority is to improve the skills of those groups where literacy and numeracy needs are greatest and where they can make the most impact, particularly:

- unemployed people and benefit claimant
- prisoners and those supervised in the community
- public sector employees
- low-skilled people in employment
- other groups at risk of exclusion

Their initial aim was that 750,000 adults would improve their literacy and numeracy by 2005 and have provided £1.5 billion over three years as financial support.

Wales

On a practical level, the national Basic Skills strategy in Wales aims to ensure that:

- all young children are prepared for learning when they begin school;
- continue to reduce the number of children leaving primary school struggling with learning to read, write and use numbers;
 - fewer young people leave school still struggling with basic skills;
- decrease significantly the number of adults with poor basic skills.

These are supported by the programmes detailed under the responses to question 1.

Scotland

As detailed in response to Question 2, Literacy Engine is not an agency, but a programme run by the Scottish Executive, based on an Adult Literacy and Numeracy Strategy for Scotland.

An example of the Literacy Engine at work in one of the 32 Scottish local authority areas would be *CLAN*, a voluntary organisations group, set up especially for the Literacy Engine, whose members each offer literacy and numeracy help under the aegis of the City of Edinburgh Council.

It must be noted that draft guidelines for an Adult Literacy and Numeracy Curriculum for Scotland were published in 2003 from the University of Edinburgh. These guidelines were drawn up under advice from four further education colleges, five local authority Community Education services, the WEA and two additional voluntary organisations. Although the guidelines do not have an official government status, they are likely to be brought into general use by tutors and others in the field of adult education in Scotland. There are two parts to the guidelines:

- 1) What is the curriculum / What is the relationship between learning and assessment; and
- 2) How should we think of the curriculum / How do we translate our principles into effective learning, teaching and assessment practice?

Slovenia

Regarding the adult population in 2003, SIAE created a long –term Strategy for raising literacy levels of adults. The Strategy is based largely on the results of the national adult literacy survey conducted in 1998 as a part of International literacy Survey (IALS). The survey revealed that more than 70% of Slovenian adult population form 16 to 65 has literacy skills below international average. One of the important recommendations of the Strategy is a development of national standards for basic skills. The task is planned to be completed in 2005 and 2006 within annual working plan of the SIAE.

The Strategy was considered as sufficient basis for National Action Plan for raising National literacy Levels in the three years period 2004-2006, co-financed from EU Social Fund.

There are also strategic goals for the development of vocational and technical education of adults (also young adults), derive from national priorities. These are defined in national strategic documents, such as New guidelines for the preparation of educational programmes of short-term and upper secondary vocational and technical education (2001).

4. Does your country/region have organisations with a remit to support young people in developing and improving their basic/key/essential skills?

	France	Germany	England	Wales	Scotland	Slovenia
Yes			X	X	X	X
No	X	X				

Please provide details of the organisations and the nature of support provided:

England

In England there are 48 LSCs [Learning and Skills Councils). The LSCs exist to make England better skilled and more competitive. These organisations aim to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to ensure the English workforce is of world-class standards.

They are responsible for planning and funding high-quality vocational education and training for everyone. Their vision is that “by 2010, young people and adults in England have the knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce”.

Key Skills Support Programme funded by the Department of Education and Skills and European Social Fund. Schools and colleges and workplace-based – two agencies are



deliverers: LSDA [Learning and Skills Development Agency] supporting schools and college, and Learning For Work supporting workplace-based learning.

Please refer to Appendix 1 for further details on the agencies and organisations involved in the support process.

Wales

As detailed in response to Question 1, the Basic Skills Agency works in partnership with other key players to deliver the National Strategy and provide a coherent approach to raising standards of literacy and numeracy in children, young people and adults.

The partners include the Local Authorities, ACCAC, the National Council for Education and Training – ELWa, Estyn, Careers Wales, education and training providers, employers, trades unions and business organisations and the voluntary sector.

Detailed below are the programmes that are currently implemented in Wales: Post 16

Basic Skills Employer Pledge

The Basic Skills Employer Pledge has been developed as part of the Welsh National Strategy to reduce the substantial number of adults in Wales with poor literacy and numeracy skills. It is intended for all private and public sector companies and organisations, whatever their size. It allows them to demonstrate their commitment to the National Strategy in a concrete way.

Family Programmes and KUWC

The Basic Skills Agency's Family Programmes in Wales consist of programmes and workshops run in all Local Education Authorities to help parents improve their own basic skills and to get them back into learning whilst helping their children.

Financial Literacy and Consumer Education

The aim of the financial literacy and consumer education initiative is to use this context as a means of attracting a wider group of learners into improving their basic skills. Discussions with colleagues in the further education sector, agriculture and voluntary and community organisations indicate that not only is financial and consumer capability an increasing area of concern, but that it is also a context which attracts a wide range of learners including some difficult to reach groups.

Financial Literacy and Consumer Education

The aim of the financial literacy and consumer education initiative is to use this context as a means of attracting a wider group of learners into improving their basic skills. Discussions with colleagues in the further education sector, agriculture and voluntary and community organisations indicate that not only is financial and consumer capability an increasing area of concern, but that it is also a context which attracts a wide range of learners including some difficult to reach groups.

National Support Project for Basic Skills in Further Education Colleges

The NSP provides basic skills advice and support to Further Education colleges,



and aims to strengthen the services colleges provide for students who lack the basic skills they need to achieve their vocational and academic goals.

National Support Project for Basic Skills in the Workplace

The NSP works to promote and develop the Employers Pledge in Wales. Employers are invited to sign the pledge thus committing them to support its employees in improving their basic skills. The NSP offers additional help in assisting the employers to develop a basic skills strategy and action plan.

National Support Project for Basic Skills in Training Organisations

The aim of the NSP is:

"to improve the capacity of training organisations to provide effective, high quality, basic skills teaching which is relevant to the vocational context in which the training provider operates."

National Support Project for Basic Skills in Voluntary and Community Organisations

The aim of the NSP is:

"to provide advice and support for voluntary organisations and community focused services which work with clients who may have basic skills problems. The purpose of the project will be to increase the capacity of these organisations and services to help their clients within the context of the organisation's activities"

National Support Project for the Post 16 Quality Mark

The aim of the NSP is:

"to provide advice and support to organisations which provide basic skills tuition to adults to meet the criteria of the Post 16 Quality Mark and achieve or renew the Quality Mark".

Post 16 Quality Mark

The Post-16 Quality mark provides a framework for raising standards of English/Welsh language, literacy and numeracy among adults. The Quality Mark focuses on effectiveness, as well as on entitlement, on development as well as on current provision.

Supporting ESOL/EAL programmes

The ESOL/EAL programme aims to strengthen the support available to adults and children from linguistic minority communities in response to the ESOL/EAL scoping study, EAL and ESOL in Wales, commissioned in October 2002.

Teacher Training for Basic Skills Teachers in Post 16 sectors

The main aim of the Teacher Training programme in Wales is to strengthen the quality of basic skills teaching in the post-16 sector and to ensure that providers have sufficient capacity to support substantial improvements in basic skills levels in Wales.

The Tripartite Course

The aim of the Tripartite Course is to prepare young people and adults for a Level 1 qualification in literacy, numeracy and I.T. The Course has been written to cover all

the skills, knowledge and understanding needed at this level. It is aimed at learners who are at the top of Entry 3 or the lower end of Level 1.

Scotland

UK Youth have developed Youth Achievement Awards which provide an integrated method of accrediting the learning outcomes and achievements of young people participating in UK Youth’s programmes. These awards are formally recognised in Scotland through Youth Scotland/SQA. The awards are for *self-awareness/self esteem, communication skills, interpersonal skills, exploring and managing feelings, understanding and identifying with others, recognising what is right and wrong, problem solving, negotiation skills, action planning, and learning from experience.*

Slovenia

All the organisations that provides programmes that have been described in the response to Question 1. There is also SIAE where the programmes were developed and the educators who work in these programmes were qualified/ trained.

There is also a project (still in its experimental phase) lead by The National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia and Centre of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational, Education and Training, which is dealing with key competencies in secondary vocational educational programmes. In this case key competencies are not defined as an independent part of the educational programme, but they are implemented as part of different subjects.

Question 5

5. Does your country/region have a:

- Basic/key/essential skills certificate (non accredited)
- Accredited basic/key/essential skills qualification

Results

	France	Germany	England	Wales	Scotland	Slovenia
Basic/key/essential skills certificate (non accredited)	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Accredited basic/key/essential skills qualification	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

Details of the assessment, accreditation and support processes in the regions:



Germany

As part of our work in another European Union project, EUECBS, we are trying to disseminate the idea of key skills accreditation.

The idea of accredited key skills is not very widespread nor popular in Germany. Since there are no concrete definitions, key skills do not hold the same value as they would in countries with a well established basic skills agency/program.

However, because there are no clear definitions of key skills, there is the potential that any portfolio approach works better than a mere certificate, because employers can find evidence of their potential employees' skills. An ePortfolio could be seen as quite prestigious by many employers because it already demonstrates some key skills (use of ICT and the skill to organize items in a portfolio).

England and Wales

England and Wales have many awarding bodies which provide Key/Basic Skill support and qualifications:

ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network)

ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) is an approved awarding body offering a number of programmes and qualifications to develop life skills, from Key Stage 3 through to adult life, from preparatory to Entry Level through to Key Skills at level 4.

They define Key Skills "as skills that are commonly needed for success in a range of activities in education and training, work and life in general."

Key Skills Qualifications

- Communication
- Information and Communication Technology
- Application of Number

The Wider Key Skills Units

- Working with Others
- Improving Own Learning and Performance
- Problem Solving

The key skills units aim to develop and recognise each candidate's ability to apply these skills in ways that are appropriate to different contexts and to improve the quality of their learning and performance. They are intended for everyone, from pupils in schools to chief executives in large companies.

Evidence for the key skills may be drawn from work undertaken within:

GCSE, GCE, AVCE, GNVQ and NVQ Qualifications, ASDAN programmes, Work Experience, employment, voluntary or youth work

Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA)

The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) came into existence in April 2000 following the merger of the Associated Examining Board and the Northern Examining and Assessment Board and is the largest of the three English unitary awarding bodies.

They provide a Key Skills Unit Certification which supports a certification for each individual Key Skills Units for the main three Key Skills, (Working with Others; Improving own Learning and Performance; and Problem Solving. These are available at Levels 1,2,3 or 4 of the National Qualifications framework.

They also provide a Basic Skills qualification in Adult Literacy and Adult Numeracy at either Level 1 or 2 of the National Qualifications Framework.

8.0.1 City and Guilds

City & Guilds are one of the leading providers of vocational qualifications in the United Kingdom.

Their traditional City & Guilds vocational qualifications follow a course structure with more conventional methods of learning. These awards retain the emphasis on developing practical skills and knowledge, but they tend to be classroom-based with assessment by written and practical examinations. These qualifications are recognised by certificates and diplomas.

Key Skills and Core skills

They offer development and accreditation in six Key Skills (communication, application of number, information technology, working with others, improving own learning and problem solving). These awards are part of their Apprenticeships and if a candidate is considering entering higher education they can gain UCAS points for completed Key Skills units. (In Scotland they offer five Core Skills instead of Key Skills.)

Basic Skills

The Basic Skills courses can help candidates to get the literacy and numerical skills needed for employment. They cover reading, writing and speaking in English as well as using mathematics. The main aim of the course is to improve the candidates Basic Skills and/or just increase their confidence in these areas as entry-level qualifications.

Edexcel

Edexcel is one of the largest examining and awarding bodies in the UK They provide a wide range of qualifications including GCSEs, GCE AS and A levels; GNVQs, BTEC First, National, and Higher National Certificates and Diplomas; NVQs; Key Skills and Entry Qualifications and specific programmes for employers.

They offer six key skills units:

The key skills units:

- application of number
- communication
- information communication technology (are assessed by test and portfolio.)
- Improving own learning and performance
- problem solving
- working with others

(are qualifications in own right and are assessed by portfolio only.)

Learners are awarded a level for each key skills unit they achieve. Each unit is available at four levels, starting at Level 1.

For each qualification, learners have to:

- complete a portfolio of evidence for internal assessment
- pass an external assessment (test).

The key skills qualifications are for anyone over the age of 14, whether in education or training.

Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR)

OCR's purpose is to develop, promote and provide a flexible range of qualifications which recognise the achievements of learners through all the phases of life and work.

Their Key Skills qualifications are designed to provide candidates with skills that are commonly needed for success in education, training, work and life in general. They promote the aim that those who gain Key Skills can follow a pathway to higher level education or employment.

The Key Skills qualifications (Communication, Application of Number and IT) are assessed through an external test and internally-assessed portfolio. They are available across the National Qualifications Framework from Level 1 to Level 4. The wider Key Skills units (Working with Others, Problem Solving and Improving Own Learning Performance) are assessed through an internally-assessed portfolio only.

Key Skills qualifications are targeted at pre- and post-16 learners. They are designed to improve students' motivation, progression and achievement.

The following tests are now available through OCR's Electronic Test Delivery (ETD) system:

Key Skills

- Communication
- Application of Number
- Information Technology

Basic Skills

- Adult Literacy
- Adult Numeracy

Each of these tests is available at Level 1 and Level 2.

OCR is keen to support the use of ePortfolios so we're currently exploring their use with both General and Vocational qualifications.

They're secure, accessible (internet based) or portable (non-internet based)

Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)

The QCA brings together the work of the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) and the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA) with additional powers and duties.

They define Key skills as the skills that are commonly needed for success in a range of activities in education and training, work and life in general.

QCA Provides information and guidance upon key skills standards, test specifications, the example portfolios, details about key skills proxies and example tests.

Their identified key skills are:

- Application of number
- Communication
- Improving own learning and performance
- Information and communication technology



- Problem solving
- Working with others.

At level 5, there is a single key skills unit in personal skills development.

Additional Information for England and Wales.

The National Statistics Department has conducted research into the AWARDS OF KEY SKILLS QUALIFICATIONS in England, Wales and Northern Ireland between 2003/04.

Key Skills qualifications were introduced in September 2000. Consisting of Communication, Application of Number and Information Technology they are available at levels 1 to 4 and are normally offered as part of a wider programme (e.g.

alongside an AS/A level or as part of an apprenticeship). The SFR covers awards from the introduction of Key Skills qualifications in September 2000 to September 2004. These statistics are collated from information supplied by Awarding Bodies. For the first time, this SFR includes more detailed trend and year-on-year figures. From September 2004 wider Key Skills have been piloted as qualifications. Information on the wider Key Skills qualifications is now being collected and will (subject to quality assurance) be presented in future SFRs.

KEY POINTS

- Up to September 2004, 940 thousand Key Skills qualifications had been awarded to 572 thousand individual learners.
- There were 332 thousand Key Skills qualification awards in 2003/04 alone up by 23% on the previous year.
- In 2003/04, there were slightly more IT than Communication awards. However, Application of Number is the fastest growing qualification, up by a third on the previous year.
- In 2003/04, two-thirds of all Key Skills qualification awards were to 16-18 year olds. However, increasing numbers are going to those aged 19 and over, up by 65% on the previous year.
- 108 thousand individuals have all three key skills qualifications. 73 thousand individuals achieved their third Key Skill when they were aged 16-18.

Additional Information for Wales

In Wales, Key Skills are integral to the achievement of the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualifications. As part of the Learning Core in the 14 - 19 agenda, all 14 - 16 year olds are required to develop all six Key Skills at the level appropriate to their programmes. Post-16, all learners should develop the Key Skills of Communication plus a minimum of two other Key Skills at a level appropriate to their programmes.



In addition, all post 16 learners should have access to the remaining Key Skills as enhancements whilst for some learners, Key Skills will be a requirement of their programmes e.g. WBQ and some modern apprenticeships .

In Wales, the outcomes of the Future Skills Wales (FSW) Research continue to highlight the importance of Key Skills for employers whilst the Skills and Employment Action Plan 2 (SEAP 2) includes activities to further promote and support the achievement of these skills.

Scotland

For SQA core skills: modules to achieve credits are recognised within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) as *units* and are offered to learners and trainees for the demonstration of achievement at several different levels within each of the five core-skills areas. The units are competence-based. Credit transfer schemes are possible through the Framework, and the expectation is that those training for a trade can be given automatic credit for core-skills units in the SQA catalogue because these skills will be demonstrated automatically when satisfying conditions for sectoral-skills standards. (According to the Scottish Sector Skills Development Agency, however, embedding core skills in vocational training in this way is not working, and new solutions may be sought.)

For purposes of this benchmarking exercise, it may be said that having two Ministries in Scotland, one for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning and one for Communities, each with a different slant from the other on basic/key/essential skills, has the potential to cause confusion.

For Youth Achievement Awards: Qualified Youth and Community workers recommend particular young people for the awards on the basis of personal knowledge of the young person involved and the evidence of competence the young person has shown. To quote UK Youth's *Curriculum Basis for Quality Work with Young People*:

"UK Youth's youth work programmes are designed to promote quality work with all young people. They are based on the principles of empowering and supporting young people to take control of and responsibility for their lives within a framework of equal opportunities and a structure that promotes accredited learning and skills outcomes.

We believe that such work assists young people to develop the social skills necessary to avoid or address risk behaviours, in particular:

- school underachievement, truancy and exclusion
- drugs misuse
- risky sexual behaviour leading to unwanted pregnancy, STDs, HIV
- emotional problems, depression, suicide attempts
- crime

These risk behaviours are interrelated and are best addressed in a holistic manner. This is best achieved by:



- empowering young people by building on their motivational interests and intelligence to develop / support a high level of self esteem
- fostering a positive life view and the ambition to achieve, to develop something to work for
- the personal and social skills necessary to turn their vision into reality

The Awards can be utilised to accredit QCA Key Skills Communication, Working with Others and Improving Own Learning and Performance.” (In Scotland only the first two of these would obtain.)

8.1 Desk research

8.1.1 Working Group on Basic Skills, Foreign Language Teaching and Entrepreneurship report

The EU Commission established a Working Group on Basic Skills, Foreign Language Teaching and Entrepreneurship. As part of their remit, they focused on ‘Basic Skills’ and published their findings in their ‘Activity Report’.

The working group preferred the terms ‘*competence*’ and ‘*key competence*’ to ‘*basic skills*’ which was considered to restrictive as it was generally taken to refer to basic literacy and numeracy, and to what are known variously as ‘survival’ or life skills.’ ‘Competence’ was considered to refer to a combination of skills, knowledge, aptitudes and attitudes, and to include disposition to learn as well as know-how.

The movement away from the term ‘basic skills’ towards ‘competences’ is paralleled in other related studies, for example, the ASEM (the Asia-Europe Meeting) initiative on Lifelong learning¹. Here ‘competence’ is used as a generic term that encompasses skills and qualifications. The term ‘competence’ refers to achieving a high degree of integration between the potential and capabilities of the individual with broader social objectives.

DeSeCo², as a part of the OECD’s INES programme, defines competence from demand-oriented, functional perspective, and provides an overarching conceptual framework that unites the personal and social dimensions. The knowledge, skills and attitudes that will make an individual more employable represent human capital at a societal level. Similarly, what is active citizenship at the level of the individual becomes social capital at the societal level; and collective personal fulfilment amounts to cultural capital. DeSeCo distinguishes between three broad types of

¹ ASEM Lifelong Learning. Thematic Report I. Ensuring Basic Skills for All, see <http://www.asemlll.dk>.

² DEELSA/ED/CERI/CD(2002)9 DEFINITION AND SELECTION OF COMPETENCES (DESECO): THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS. STRATEGY PAPER.

competence: *communicative* — the ability to speak, listen, write, negotiate and mediate; *analytical* — the ability to operate within systems of formal logic, to create models, and to display a sociological imagination; and *personal*, for example to display ‘emotional balance’. All these are necessary pre-requisites for the achievement of the Lisbon goals that are based on economic growth and stability, creating employment and strengthening social cohesion. In this context, the acquisition of key competences by all is required for the attainment of three basic objectives that are attainable at the level of the individual and at the level of society:

- 1) **personal fulfilment and development throughout life (cultural capital):** key competences must enable people to pursue individual objectives in life driven by personal interests, aspirations and the desire to continue learning throughout life
- 2) **active citizenship and inclusion (social capital):** these key competences should allow everybody to participate as an active citizen in society;
- 3) **employability (human capital):** the capacity of each and every person to obtain a decent job in the labour market.

As conclusion of these deliberations, the following definition was adopted by the working group:

Key competences represent a transferable, multifunctional package of knowledge, skills and attitudes that all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, inclusion and employment. These should have been developed by the end of compulsory school or training, and should act as a foundation for further learning as part of Lifelong Learning

The definition stresses that key competences should be **transferable** and therefore applicable in many situations and contexts; **multifunctional**, in that they can be used to achieve several objectives; to solve different kinds of problems; and to accomplish different kinds of tasks. Key competences are a **prerequisite** for adequate personal performance in life, work and subsequent learning.

Table 1 below presents a schematic overview of the eight domains of key competences agreed by the working group. (See Annex 2 for further details.) These apply across the full range of education and training contexts:

- general compulsory education, which is increasingly characterised by a change in emphasis — a shift away from ‘codified or explicit knowledge’ towards ‘tacit knowledge embedded in a learner’s personal and social competences.’ (Eurydice, 2002, p 13)
- adult education and training — from ‘compensatory’³ education (including the ‘foundation skills’ of literacy and numeracy) — to further and higher education and continuing professional development;

³ This is the term used in the Communication from the Commission *Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality*, COM (2001) 678 final (p 22) to refer to ‘the provision of learning that should have been acquired during compulsory schooling’.

- specific educational provision for groups at risk of social exclusion — for example, migrants; ethnic minorities; young people and adults with low levels of initial educational attainment; those living in remote and rural areas, etc.

The examples of good practice described and analysed in this report provide illustrations of initiatives in all three of these contexts.

Table 1. Overview of key competences defined by the Working Group on Basic Skills, Foreign Language Teaching and Entrepreneurship

Competence	Definition
Communication in the mother tongue	Communication is the ability to express and interpret thoughts, feelings and facts in both oral and written form (listening, speaking, reading and writing), and to interact linguistically in an appropriate way in the full range of societal contexts — work, home and leisure.
Communication in a foreign language	Communication skills in foreign languages were considered to have the same four skill dimensions (listening, speaking, reading and writing) as communication skills in the mother tongue. However, the level of mastery is not necessarily the same for all four dimensions, and there can be differences between languages (see Appendix 2).
Mathematical literacy and basic competences in science and technology	Mathematical literacy is the ability to use addition, subtraction, multiplication, division and ratios in mental and written computation to solve a range of problems in everyday situations. The emphasis is on process rather than output, on activity rather than knowledge. Science refers to the body of knowledge and methodology employed to explain the natural world. Technology is viewed as the application of that knowledge in order to modify the natural environment in response to perceive human wants or needs.
ICT skills	ICT skills comprise the use of multi-media technology to retrieve, store, create, present, sort and exchange information.
Learning-to-learn	‘Learning-to-learn’ is defined as a foundation skill in Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality. The working group agreed upon the following definition: ‘the disposition and ability to organise and regulate one’s own learning, to manage one’s time effectively; to solve problems; to acquire, process, evaluate and assimilate new knowledge; and to apply new knowledge and skills in a variety of contexts — at home and at work, in education and training.’

Interpersonal and civic competences	Interpersonal competences comprise all forms of behaviour that must be mastered in order that an individual is able to participate in an efficient and constructive way in social life, and to resolve conflict where necessary. Interpersonal skills are necessary for effective interaction on a one-to-one basis or in groups, and are deployed in both the public and private domains.
Entrepreneurship	Entrepreneurship has a passive and an active component: it comprises both the propensity to induce changes oneself and the ability to welcome, support and adapt to innovation brought about by external factors. Entrepreneurship involves taking responsibility for one's actions, positive or negative, developing a strategic vision, setting objectives and meeting them, and being motivated to succeed.
Cultural awareness	The term 'cultural awareness' comprises an appreciation of popular culture and general social mores, as well as the ability to appreciate literature, art, music and other forms of creative expression.

8.1.2 Agencies and organisations involved in the supporting Basic Skills in England

BASIC SKILLS SUPPORT

- **Adult Basic Skills Resource Workshop** - online resources from Abingdon & Witney College (UK), includes free worksheets & interactive exercises & quizzes, also recommended sites with further worksheets & handouts from the UK & the US
- **Adult Literacy in Scotland** - project papers & resources
- **Basic Skills (FE & Adult)** - materials, reviews, publications, awards & the revised Quality Mark on the Basic Skills Agency site
- **Basic Skills Agency** - resources online, research, information for all education sectors (primary, secondary, FE, adult), family literacy & numeracy, Basic Skills News online, also **National Telephone Referral Service for people who need help with improving basic skills on 0800 700 987**
- **Basic Skills Agency Resource Centre** - catalogue, news & useful links
- **Basic Skills & IT skills** - sections on UK & world news, message boards, chat rooms & email, links to computer skills, resources for learners of English, games & exercises, good links from tutor at Southampton City College
- **Better Basic Skills** - UK government's response to " A Fresh Start"
- **Digital Education Network** - includes English language support online, also EFL, TEFL, education forums, courses worldwide (UK site)
- **Basic Skills** - use of ILT in basic skills, current issues, resources, ideas & case studies, staff development online, project details, including community based projects
- **BASIL (Basic Skills for Inclusive Learning)** - second stage of national training project - for literacy, numeracy & ESOL teachers & teachers & trainers working with adults with learning difficulties or disabilities (learning disabled adults or people with learning impairments)
- **European Basic Skills Network** - news, research, resources & links

- **National Institute for Literacy (NIFL)** - US organisation, providing background to US issues, mailing list & links
- **National Literacy Trust** - includes initiatives, resources, statistics, research, organisations, discussion boards, links, jobs
- **NIACE and Basic Skills** - news, projects, documents, events, email discussions, links
- **QCA - basic skills** - guidance material for national standards, qualifications, relationship between basic skills & key skills, adult literacy and numeracy example tests (PDF files) from Qualifications & Curriculum Authority
- **Read, Write, Plus** - key resources & links from the Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit of the DfES, including key documents, policies & research, including research on the issues for people with learning difficulties & impairments and on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), also national standards, the national core curriculum, practice tests, planning & funding, regional pathfinder projects, events
- **Workplace Basic Skills Network** - network, training & project information
- **YouthBOOX** - reading project with young people, section for readers, project reports & tools, online discussion forums

KEY SKILLS SUPPORT

- **BBC Further Education** - materials on key skills, communication, application of number, study skills online exercises, links to other key skills sites
- **BECTa** - news & resources on ICT & key skills
- **Core Skills** - outline of each core skill, problem solving, communication, numeracy, information technology, from SkillUp, Scotland
- **Glossary of educational terms & approaches** - very useful & understandable selection of educational terms and theories used in learning approaches & methodologies, including learning cycles & skills, accelerated learning, multiple intelligence, experiential learning, mind mapping, thinking hats, transferable skills & more, from Bradford College
- **Improving literacy & numeracy - a fresh start** - report of the working group on post-school basic skills, chaired by Sir Claus Moser

- **Key Skills** - from DfES, Key skills qualifications (levels 1-4) in communication, application of number & information technology (IT) plus wider key skills units: working with others, improving own learning & performance, problem solving. Site includes FAQs for schools, colleges, work-based route, developments, links
- **Key to Key project** - key skills project for higher education students, based at Sheffield Hallam University
- **Key Skills in Context** - sets out to place the development of key skills at level three, into contexts which are meaningful & realistic & provide opportunities for evidence Level 3 Key Skills. It is a thematically based, multi-media resource for students divided into four themes: Europe and the World of Work, a Healthy Lifestyle, Planning for the Future, Media
- **Key Skills Support Programme** - news & discussion topics, key skills definitions, management & strategy, key skills & work related programmes, teaching & learning resources & research for schools, colleges & work based training, student guidance & support, leaflets for students, action planning, assessment issues, verification, moderation & inspection findings, progression issues.
- **Key Skills Support Programme (Cymru)** - Welsh language key skills sites
- **Key Skills Programme News** - from Learning & Skills Development Agency, free newsletter on projects & news
- **Key Skills in Higher Education** - case studies of programmes at UK Universities
- **Key Skills development at Newcastle University** - information & models of good practice
- **Key Skills website (DfES)** - news, policies, resources, case studies, publications
- **QCA - key skills in the national curriculum** - includes updates, specifications, relationship with Adult literacy and numeracy, tests & awarding bodies
- **Adult basic skills and key skills** - definitions and the relationship between basic skills & key skills
- **FERL (FE Resources for Learning)** - very many resources & projects on key skills in the curriculum (use search within FERL)
- **Learning Technologies site** - Ezine, learning materials, reports, events, college projects, linked sites, European links, ILT standards (from **Learning & Skills Development Agency**)
- **ILT for key skills** - resources from colleges & commercial providers & policies

- **What are key skills?** - many resources for key skills in Higher Education, from the Key Skills in Higher Education Dissemination Project, including support materials, assessment & accreditation issues, worldwide report

