



D1.3 REPORT ON NATIONAL FOCUS GROUPS – RESULTS FROM GERMANY

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Introduction

SCOPE

This document reports on the workshop organized within the framework of ACT project in Frankfurt a.M.. Under this perspective there are presented the stages that were followed, describing in detail the workflow of each stage.

AUDIENCE OF THIS DOCUMENT

Project partners

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

(See next page)

ACRONYMS	DEFINITION
ACT	Agricultural Alliance for Competence and Skills based Training
AIAB	Italian Association for Organic Farming
AK	Agro-Know Technologies
BIBB	Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung
DLG	DLG-Akademie
EC	European Commission
ECVET	European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training
ENAPRA	Ente Nazionale per la Ricerca e la Formazione in Agricoltura
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
FG	Focus Group
IFSAT	International Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture Training
PACT	Pathways for Agricultural Competence and skills based Training
TEIA	Technical Educational Institute of Athens
UDE	University of Duisburg-Essen
VET	Vocational Education and Training



WORKSHOP IN GERMANY; PRESENTATION OF STAGES AND WORKFLOW

Within the framework of ACT project it was organized a workshop at DLG in Frankfurt a.M. on May, 14th. Workshop participants invited covered all target groups within scope, i.e. agricultural VET providers, agricultural businesses and membership organisations, representatives of the agricultural labour market, VET policy makers, farmers, farmer coalition representatives, local authorities, farming workers, reaching approximately an estimated number of 25 people. Unfortunately only 10 persons in total of this group participated due to the fact that especially farmers started outdoor activities on their fields and some politicians were not available (also see list of participants). Especially this group showed great interest in the project and offered to do bilateral interviews at a later participation.

The aim of the focus group was to:

- 1. Get answers on the current developments and tasks in agriculture as a warm up
- 2. Illustrate competences and skills of vocational education and training (VET) in agriculture, Define competences on agricultural innovations and management
- 3. Find solutions for the aims of the ACT-project

The focus group was organized in the following stages with the view to:

- disseminate ACT rationale at national, regional and local level
- create a “interest group in Agriculture” (including practitioners, stakeholders, policy makers, etc.), that will be informed about project activities, follow up on updates, pilot and use project materials during and after the funding period of the project, building thus upon the establishment of ACT community in a sustainable manner

STAGE 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE PURPOSES OF THE WORKSHOP.

- Present ACT project and workshop agenda
- State the general purposes of the session; explain to all participants the aim of the discussion, what it is expected, the process that will follow, how they can contribute, how their input will be collected and analysed, how and where the conclusions of the workshop will be used and published.
- Establish ground rules: everyone will be asked to talk; each person’s opinion counts; participants should not interrupt each other.

STAGE 2: GATHER DATA ON THE CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS.

- Participants were asked to provide brief information on demographic and socio-cultural characteristics (profession, role, experience, age group, current status/situation, etc.).

STAGE 3: MOTIVATION/EXPECTATIONS TO TAKE PART IN THE Focus Group

- What made attractive to participate?
- What were the expectations about getting involved?

STAGE 4: COLLECTION OF FEEDBACK TO THE TOPICS

During this stage a series of “focused” questions and statements were posed.

The process that followed could be described as follows:

- The facilitator explained and wrote down the question/questions on a white board/flip chart with meta-cards;
- The participants were given a few moments to write down responses to the question on meta-cards;
- The facilitator asked each participant to present their opinion; then, he/she put on his/her meta-card onto the flip chart and the responses were qualified/structured by noting major similarities and differences in questions;
- The facilitator led group discussion about responses;
- The facilitator summarised the workshop conclusions, highlighting group agreements and disagreements;
- Discussion among workshop participants revealed in details the major agreements and disagreements.

Topics of discussion

Workshop facilitator asked participants to express their opinion on the following subject areas:

1. Is there a demand for lifelong learning in agriculture? Please explain!
2. Does the a) education and b) training system provide farmers with the necessary competences to perform well? Is there a gap between what is offered and what is needed?
3. Please define the competences that a farmer needs to have
 - a) To perform well in his/her job;
 - b) To manage a growing enterprise or a group of employees;
 - c) To integrate innovations (technical, legal, etc.) into the daily business.
4. Which are the driving forces that shape agriculture today? Are there new developments, and if yes: which ones?
5. Do new tendencies (see question 4) require new competences? If yes: which ones?
6. How can we cope with the challenges of mobility – physical immigration/emigration (work force entering “our” system/ we entering foreign systems), job immigration/emigration (non-farmers entering the agricultural sector/farmers changing into non-agricultural jobs)?

STAGE 5: WRAPPING UP AND FAREWELL

The facilitator summarised the main results of the workshop (see CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS), invited the participants to further participate in ACT and closed the event.



FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION, GERMANY– REPORT ACCORDING ON TOPICS

Topics of discussion

I: DEVELOPMENTS AND TASKS IN AGRICULTURE

The following topics were defined:

- Specially in South-West-Germany more and more family led farms change to work with external personnel (“Fremd-AK”) which is a new situation for the farmer who suddenly has to lead people
- Next generation change: young followers would like to work in the industry and not to stay on the family farm
- East/West-conflict is still there: differences in farm structures; East German farms are searching for farm managers
- Farm Structures: small ones stop existing, big ones are specializing their production, next generation often missing
- Documentation: question which one is most efficient?
- Communication with the end-consumer is more and more necessary, the “transparent” farm; pressure from the end consumer on the one side and from the trader of the other side (prices, quality)
- Technical development: software is available, but farmer sometimes even does not have a documentation system
- structural change: family farms change to juridical forms or other company types
- number of working inhabitants sinks
- technical change: smart farming
- demographic change: workers, young followers/next generation
- social change: Sustainable production, requirements of the consumers
- Change in Learning culture and behavior: learning with digital media
- climate change
- VET: German qualification frame, which model is doing best?
- sales and international competition

- risk analysis
- efficient usage of water/products



Groups to be formed out of this statements:

- Quality
- Required Competences
- Farm structures
- Overall questions

Especially the structural changes in agriculture move down into every field. To work out solutions competences on farmer sides are required.



The farmer needs practical and realisable solutions for his current requirements whereas longer lasting tasks such as climate change and communication/PR to the end consumer is of 2nd priority.

II: REQUIREMENTS ON COMPETENCES AND SKILLS

The following competences and skills in management&innovation were listed as to be required in nowadays farming:

1. Overall competences:

-how to learn from others: it is necessary in many fields to reflect the own praxis, to think globally; not every farmer has this in mind

2. Social competences: today the situation in family farms differs from the past

-personnel criterias

-self organisation

-own behaviour

-communicative skills

-leadership

-entrepreneurship

3. Technical-methodic competences:

-Information and Communication technology

-to manage and use data, eLearning

-smart farming

- sales of farm products



On this behalf Englert presented a research result by the University of Gießen which was done in 2013: the farms asked in this study wanted to get workers with skills like self organisation and strong personality. They asked for a good education in this fields for job beginners both for qualified workers and managers.

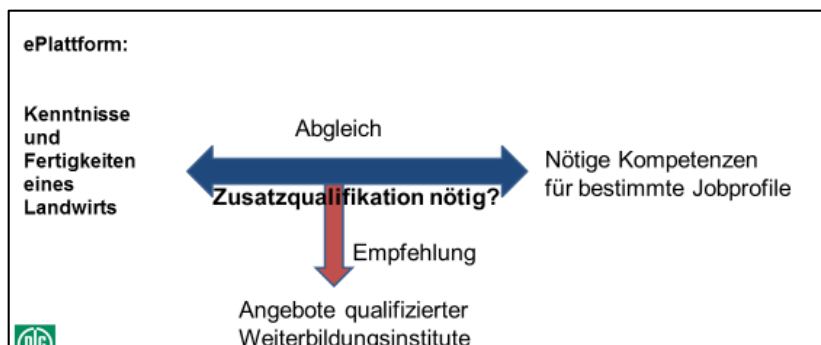
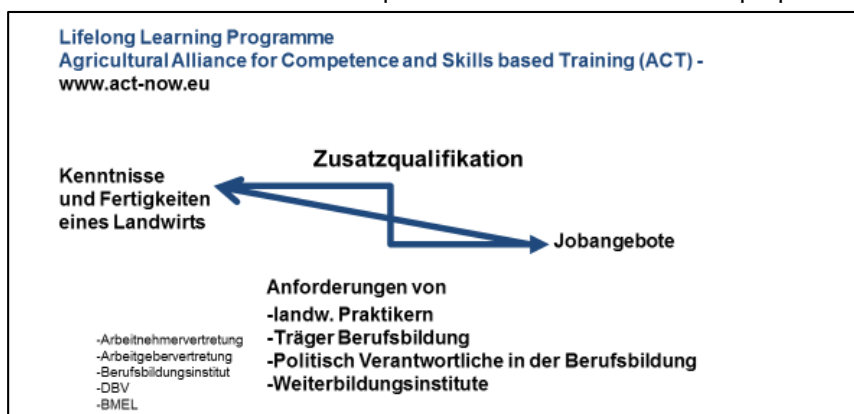
Zimmer argued that the “Arbeitsagentur” gives bad descriptions of the agricultural job fields, but that the VET in general always is good and not to change. Different required competences could be added in special further education programmes. Because of the “Qualifikation per Tarifvertrag” further education is not captured which is a political problem.



Bretschneider points on the diversity of possibilities to describe competences. The specification of competence fields should be done according to different target groups, regions and to define certain points in between these. A source could be the “Qualinet” and the BIBB-modell on competences and skills.

III: SOLUTIONS FOR THE ACT-PROJECT

The idea of ACT was presented as a platform which matches job profiles and the knowhow of a person to work out missing links which could be covered by special further education. For this purpose the required seminar of an education partner could be offered on the platform as well. A common defined frame work which describes both sides is required for this purpose. Flip chart picture:



Bretschneider pointed out that the matching process is classical, that ACT and the main thought is a good idea. Instruments for the acceptance of informal learning is necessary, but self assessment is a hard task. To define the competence fields and job profiles is a big task. A focus on some topics would be helpful.

Zimmer agreed but pointed out not to touch the formal VET and to localize on qualitative good educational institutions. For this institutions a kind of certification catalogue (or quality sign) should be developed which they should fulfill to be listed on the platform. IG Agrar would support this if it is well done and in a common sense.

Solutions for the ACT-platform:

1. Doubts:

- Does the farmer really use this platform?
- Who has the real advantage out of it?
- No extracts from the very first VET into further qualification-fields!

2. Wishes:

- No unqualified educational institutions on the platform
- Overview on all technical schools, universities and educational institutions in Germany
- Independent advice (not by the educational institution) for the further required education
- No advertising of educational institutions

3. Contents:

- self assessment and 3rd-view assessment
- how to define competences?
- knottable competence model
- platform for training and further education on EU-level (list)

4. Realisation:

- data usage, protection and privacy
- EU-mobility



-Agrar-Erasmus?



Answers by the ACT-Team:

-no costs for users during project time

-nationally from the beginning

Problem: image + sales?

IV: CONCLUSION/FEEDBACK BY THE PARTICIPANTS

Open questions:

1. How will the competence fields be defined and flow into ACT?
2. How will the usage of the platform be?
3. EU-project with national focus?
4. How to get structure into the chaos of competences?

The participants had in common that the project is difficult to realise but interesting for all target groups.



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

After the focus group the ACT-members participating concluded the result in a meeting.

1. The people from the list who could not participate will get a questionnaire to answer to the questions and will possibly be involved in the project in later steps if still required.
2. Definition of **competence fields** for Germany: according to the mentioned fields in this focus group, the ACT Team worked out the following list of competences. The ACT Team recommends to focus on this competences in the further project. Meanwhile it is to say that this competence fields were already mentioned in the German Desktop Research report:
 - A. Quality
 - B. Change of farm structures
 - C. Entrepreneurship
 - D. Sales and communication
 - E. Technical Change

Or/and

 - F. Social Competences / overall competences
 - Both for employees (workers, managers) and employers (entrepreneurs)
3. **Solutions for the ACT-portal (Topic III)** will be presented in the next ACT-meeting in Athens:

ACT portal			
Questions and considerations	Wishes	Content	Gestaltung
How to reach the end user ??	No education offers from non-accredited providers	Objectivity of assessments {self assessment vs. external assessment}	If positive, networking possible
Who does really benefit from the platform:	Complete overview of Agricultural VET providers??	How is competency defined? How is competence identified?	Reliability of provided data
0 the project (partners) 0 the employer 0 the employee	Could it be a portal for accredited agricultural education in EU?	Use appropriate competency model for the definition of content	Mobility in EU versus National mobility
Who is responsible for updating?		Assessment of competence as a means of consultation	Inpartial offers for education
How to generate enough traffic??		Training?	"Agricultural Erasmus"
No parts of dual VET in qualification packages			



LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

**Fokusgruppe: Qualifizierungsbedarf in der Landwirtschaft
am 14.5.2014 in Frankfurt**

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ABOUT ACT

ACT aims at establishing and sustaining an Alliance for competences and skills based vocational education and training (VET) in agriculture. This alliance will include all relevant stakeholder groups in the agricultural sector, namely the farmers, industry, VET providers and policy makers as well as the labour services within the European agriculture. In such close cooperation, ACT develops a framework, the "Pathways for Agricultural Competence and skills based Training (PACT)" and related training and tools for its implementation and usage. Thus, ACT clearly contributes to the ET 2020's key objective and priority for the continuous development and management of knowledge, skills and competences at the individual and organizational levels. In summary the mission of ACT is to support and improve farming business by tools defining competences on agricultural innovations and management - to finally making lifelong learning and mobility a reality in Europe!



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