



European Research Institute on Cooperative and Social Enterprises

Titolo: **IDENTIFICATION OF A EUROPEAN JOB PROFILE FOR COOPERATIVE MANAGERS**

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EUCoopCampus

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Lifelong
Learning
Programme

Abstract:

This paper presents the results of research conducted as part of the European Coop Campus project, a project funded by the European Commission in the framework of the Lifelong Learning Programme Leonardo da Vinci. The first aim of the research was to map the training scenario of the cooperative training organizations involved, demonstrating both the training needs and response to those needs in order to provide an overview of existing cooperative manager profiles in the partner cooperative systems. The analysis helped to point out some preliminary conclusions on the existing supply of training activities, on the main traits of professional profiles, and on the expected learning outcomes. Next, a common cooperative manager job profile was developed and validated based on partner and practitioner feedback from Germany, Spain, Greece, UK, and Italy. The job profile validated by the partners was then used as a starting point for determining priorities for training and tools. The model developed through this research and the emerging job profile can prove useful in various ways including hiring in cooperative businesses and developing trainings that best respond to the needs of cooperative businesses across Europe.

Keywords:

Cooperative, Comparative study, Elected members, Europe, Long-life-learning, Job profile, Focus group, Formal non-formal and informal learning, Manager, Network, Skills, Training, Social Economy, Social Enterprise

1. Introduction

This paper presents the results of research conducted as part of the European Coop Campus project ("EUCoopCampus")¹, a project funded by the European Commission in the framework of the Life Learning Programme Leonardo da Vinci. The project, begun in November 2012, is still ongoing and will last until 12 December 2014. Project partners include the Trentino Federation of Cooperation (lead partner, Italy), Euricse (Italy), The Cooperative College (UK), ADG Akademie Deutscher Genossenschaften (Academy of German Cooperatives, Germany), COEXPHAL (Association of Fruit and Vegetable producers of Almeria, Spain), University of the Aegean – Departments of Sociology & Geography (Greece), Civil Society Development Foundation (Romania), and ACTIF-Europe (France).

EUCoopCampus' focus is on the learning needs within cooperative enterprises in Europe. The unique structure and identity of cooperatives requires them to have specific training and learning opportunities geared towards this particular form of enterprise that is coherent with the cooperative principles and values. To this end, EUCoopCampus aims to develop a mutually recognized training model that addresses the non-formal and informal learning of cooperative managers and elected members² in Europe. The project goals are to increase manager and elected members' cooperative competences through mutually recognized and validated training, fostering mobility of cooperative managers and elected members throughout Europe.

The project addresses the learning needs of cooperative managers and elected members by recognizing the relevance of the learning on the job and by fostering the exchange of practices and experiences also through mobility learning units, thus providing participants with the opportunity to achieve new competences and enlarge their knowledge for professional and personal development. The project is being carried out by first developing a European job profile of a cooperative manager/elected member, then developing learning outcomes for specific competences that could be learned through non-formal and informal training and be recognized through the ECVET system (European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training)³, and finally developing tools for mobility to foster a European outlook.

The paper first describes the methodology used to examine current training needs and gaps leading to the development and validation of the European cooperative manager and elected member job profile. It then presents the job profile. The paper concludes with some remarks on what was learned through the research and the potential uses of the EUCoopCampus project outcomes.

¹ <http://www.coopcampus.eu/>

² board members or those who present their candidacy to board roles and need adequate training

³ <http://www.ecvet-team.eu/>

2. Methodology

Prior to this European project, Euricse partnered on the Ariadne project (also funded through the Lifelong Learning Programme Leonardo da Vinci) in which competences were identified for managers of social enterprises in Europe. It was determined that these competences could provide a solid foundation for developing a European job profile specific to the cooperative sector. Euricse adapted the competences from the Ariadne project and created the draft job profile below with seven competences and various topics to be considered within each:

COMPETENCE 1: COOPERATIVE KNOWLEDGE AND IDENTITY

- TOPIC 1: Cooperative principles
- TOPIC 2: History of own coop and movement/sector
- TOPIC 3: Economic role - advantages and limits of coops
- TOPIC 4: National legal frameworks
- TOPIC 5: International legal frameworks
- TOPIC 6: Mutuality versus community/social interest

COMPETENCE 2: LEADERSHIP

- TOPIC 1: Values
- TOPIC 2: Social and relational skills
- TOPIC 3: Organizational culture
- TOPIC 4: Leadership styles
- TOPIC 5: Communication
- TOPIC 6: Problem solving

COMPETENCE 3: GOVERNANCE

- TOPIC 1: Governance models
- TOPIC 2: Legal requirements
- TOPIC 3: Involvement strategies/member engagement
- TOPIC 4: Mission and vision

COMPETENCE 4: HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

- TOPIC 1: Policies/management
- TOPIC 2: Leading equality and diversity
- TOPIC 3: Intrinsic motivation and engagement
- TOPIC 4: Stress and satisfaction monitoring (job quality monitoring)
- TOPIC 5: Volunteer recruitment and management

COMPETENCE 5: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- TOPIC 1: Understanding financial accounts/statements
- TOPIC 2: Performance management
- TOPIC 3: Managing diverse income streams
- TOPIC 4: Financial strategy (risk evaluation and decision-making)
- TOPIC 5: Achieving economic and social goals

COMPETENCE 6: EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT

- TOPIC 1: Stakeholder map
- TOPIC 2: Social impact
- TOPIC 3: Communication strategy
- TOPIC 4: Networking and business coordination
- TOPIC 5: Advocacy/political representation

COMPETENCE 7: MARKET & PRODUCTS/SERVICES

- TOPIC 1: Local market dynamics
- TOPIC 2: International market dynamics
- TOPIC 3: Innovation & social innovation
- TOPIC 4: Project management
- TOPIC 5: Marketing and Sales
- TOPIC 6: Quality assurance and Customer Satisfaction

The draft job profile was then enriched and validated through both a comparative study conducted with the EUCoopCampus partners and focus groups with practitioners conducted in each partner country. The comparative study analyzed the partner institutes' training activities for managers and elected members in the cooperative sector in order to compare the specific competences and topics included in said training activities to the draft profile developed. The focus groups served to validate the results of the study with practitioners in each partner country.

2.1 Comparative study

The comparative study was undertaken first by identifying the existing supply of learning activities in the various partner countries, where learning was divided by formal, non-formal

and informal⁴. By asking the partners the specific competences developed and topics addressed in the learning activities, we obtained a further understanding of the main traits to be included in the job profile of cooperative managers. Furthermore, by comparing data among countries, complementarities and heterogeneities in programs and methodologies provided was sketched.

The comparative study was planned with the aims of:

- providing an overview of existing cooperative manager/elected member profiles in the partner cooperative systems in relation to learning outcomes (LO), cooperative learning frameworks, EQF/NQF and ECVET system, by comparing countries and coop types
- defining common and transversal learning units for a cooperative manager/elected member specialization, in order to identify a new and specific European job profile for cooperative managers/elected members in line with the cooperative principles and values
- conducting a gap analysis of the needs of the cooperative enterprise in terms of qualified managers and elected members and existing suitable profiles
- identifying areas of competences suitable for mobility learning units (MLU)

As a first step for the understanding of the competences that cooperators should develop in order to implement their skills and knowledge as managers and elected members of cooperative firms, we asked the partners to define the most important competence that cooperators should own and therefore the traits that start in sketching the job profile of managers and elected members of cooperative firms.

After the agreement on the competences to be developed in training programs devoted to cooperators and after the general description of the meanings of these competences, partners were asked to describe programs provided in relation with specific topics to be included in each competence.

Partners were then asked some specific questions designed to help in understanding the relevance that both the partner institutes and managers and elected members of cooperatives with which the institutes collaborate assign to the development of specific topics within the general competences. In addition to these questions on the general relevance of topics suggested, we also investigated the perceived relevance by managers about the possible gap, i.e., when formal training is not provided. Some questions aimed at providing information on the knowledge of the topics by cooperative managers and the way in which they are learned or would be best to learn them. We also asked partners about the type of learning, by looking

⁴ For definitions of terms used in the comparative study see Annex 1 below.

to the informal or non-formal learning and its consequence on the possession of some skills by managers and elected members. Finally, we asked if partners considered particular topics to be specific to individual countries or sectors.

The analysis of data collected helped to point out some preliminary conclusions on the existing supply of training activities, on the main traits of professional profiles, and on the expected learning outcomes.

The analysis of the comparative study seemed to underline the lack in academic teachings, master's and Ph.D. programs, formalized academic teachings supported by the institutes themselves or in partnership with other local institutes; these courses are in fact provided by the German partner only. Moreover, only few courses are provided with the support of academic institutions or their professionals, while most of the courses listed seem to focus more on the practical development of knowledge and follow the consultancy approach. This does not mean that courses are incomplete, but they are rarely or differently supported by a scientific and theoretical view, which however is not necessarily the case for all the courses and topics learned. As a conclusion, certainly the partnership can offer a good and complementary range of training programs for managers.

As regards the professional profiles, we individuated the competences that the partner institutes feel are essential to be learned for cooperative managers and we collected some information that helped in matching the job profile with the training activity. Specifically, overall, all of the competences and topics suggested to the partners were considered very or quite important by all the partners and by the managers that they represent, with a few exceptions for certain topics for certain partners: human resource management had the most mixed results, while learning volunteer management is the least important topic and therefore does not represent a competence in the professional profile. Notwithstanding these results, partners claim that in many cases the managers do not express formal demand for some of the topics, since knowledge can be acquired also through informal or non-formal learning. The aspects of highest interest to the managers and for which managers express higher formal training needs are leadership, financial management, market and product/service; also the topic of social impact and international legal framework are of high interest.

As a second result that was taken into account when building the professional profile, for most of the competences (cooperative knowledge and identity, leadership, governance, human resource management, and financial management) both formal and non-formal learning are very used methods, while informal learning is always more difficult to apply to these topics. However, non-formal and informal (less formal) learning are particularly important for the development of competences on external stakeholder management and market/product dynamics. None of the partners retained that "no learning" is needed on competences and topics suggested, except with the non relevance of volunteer management for some of the partners. Moreover, while non-formal learning seems to be the best way for learning most of the topics, formal learning can support the development of competences on leadership,

governance, market and product/services, though formal learning seems to not be the ideal way to learn external stakeholder management.

In fact, interviewed institutions expressed that managers usually have higher personal competences on cooperative knowledge and values; leadership is also considered a natural trait of people and is more difficult to acquire. In contrast, managers usually do not have specific knowledge on governance and therefore training is needed on these competences. Some of the topics included in the development of human resource management, financial management, and external stakeholder abilities should be covered by specific training since they do not usually belong to the managers' natural traits and knowledge.

As a further step of the analysis, we wanted to test the possibility of training programs where managers coming from different cooperative types or countries participate in the same classrooms and courses. Institutions providing training in the different countries claim that none of the competences are country oriented or specific to sectors, but they can be considered transversal.

The comparative study resulted in a validation by the partners of the competences proposed and the addition of definitions of each topic and a sense of priority competences for cooperative managers and elected members. It also identified the gap between the available training and the need for training related to individual competences. Finally, it allowed for the identification of the competences best suited to informal and non-formal training. We decided to then conduct focus groups with practitioners in each country to test these results, integrate our existing information and add specifications in order to develop a definitive job profile.

2.2 Focus groups

The second step of analysis consisted in conducting one focus group with cooperative managers/elected members for each partner country. Focus groups were managed by following a common methodology and questions. The aim was to test the job profile developed through the comparative study, understand the participants' perceived training and learning needs, and their perceptions about different methods of learning (formal, informal, non-formal).

In the focus groups, partners were asked to discuss the following questions with practitioners:

- a) Is the job profile accurate/does it resonate with the participants' experience? Is there something they find irrelevant or is there anything missing?

- b) For each of the 7 competences, what is the topic/aspect that stands out as a characteristic of a cooperative manager as opposed to a manager in a different enterprise form?
- c) Please tell us which competence(s) you think can be learned in formal training settings (e.g. university course), informal training (e.g. on the job), or non-formal training (e.g. workshops, seminars, brief courses without credit).
- d) For you personally, which is your strongest/most utilized competence? Which one do you use least? And for which competence do you feel you are most in need of training?
- e) Thinking about challenges faced today, what do you think is the competence that must absolutely be learned by cooperative managers?

The participants in the focus groups included an average of 12 cooperative managers or elected members from five countries and were quite heterogeneous in terms of age (managers with lengthy experience as well junior managers were involved) and role in the organization: some senior managers (one or two per focus group), middle managers (who comprised generally half or the whole of the group), elected members (mainly board members). Each partner involved representatives of their member cooperatives and therefore a mix of managers coming from different cooperative types were involved.

As a first result of the focus groups, all the participants in all of the countries found the job profile individuated in the previous step of the analysis sufficiently elaborated and complete. Competences and topics proposed were found to be in line with the participants' experience, while participants had some suggestions related to the need for focalizing most of the topics on the specific traits and needs of cooperatives and adding some "business viability issues" by reflecting more, for example, on strategies for the cooperatives, planning activities, facing competition, etc. The job profile was viewed as somewhat excessively detailed but missing only very few topics. The practitioners confirmed that some of the topics that were already individuated by the partners as superfluous in the comparative study can be disregarded in the final job profile. This is the case for political representation, external stakeholder management and internal legal framework, although not all of the practitioners consider these topics irrelevant.

Linked to some previous results, the second question practitioners were asked to discuss was the individuation of the main topic for each competence. The objective of this question was to individuate the specific traits and skills that managers of cooperative enterprises should possess in order to distinguish their training and knowledge from general training and skills and from for-profit managers especially. By comparing answers collected, we found some agreement on the relevance of the competence 1 - Cooperative knowledge as a whole, while in the other competences the topics that seemed to be of particular relevance to the role of

cooperators are: values, social and relational skills, and organizational culture (in defining leadership), mission and vision (in governance), policies of HRM (in the fourth competence), achieving economic and social goals (in financial management), stakeholder map and social impact (in external stakeholder management) and finally different topics without priorities in market and products knowledge.

When looking to the third discussion topic, the focus groups mainly indicated that the competences related to governance, human resource management and financial management are better learned through formal training, while training on leadership and external stakeholder management is more frequently acquired through informal training. The agreement is not so diffused, and some countries diverge in the perception of training methods, but the idea that cooperative managers are involved in a daily learning-by-doing process and therefore formal learning can only support and formalize practices and learning outcomes that are usually developed in informal and sometimes non formal ways seems to be quite diffused.

The fourth discussion theme helped in understanding the actual knowledge by practitioners, the gap that they perceive in their actual training, and therefore their need for training. Firstly, managers and elected members interviewed claimed that cooperative knowledge and leadership are the most utilized competences, although the former are not so diffused in all of the countries and therefore should also be considered in training programs. The most difficult activity, however, is to put into practice the knowledge acquired in the daily working life, meaning that, in our opinion, although informal learning is a diffused practice, cooperators always require formalization of their knowledge in the form of formal training.

Further, the last topic of discussion reflected on the competences that must absolutely be learned by cooperative managers in light of the recent crisis and challenges faced by cooperative firms. Having a proper leadership style appeared to be the most needed competence to acquire, since a good leader is able to manage teams and human resources, to relate with external stakeholders also by embodying social responsibility, and to have predictive answers for innovation, and facing market and product competition. Certainly, the *fil rouge* in the answers by practitioners of different countries can be individuated in the need to be a "problem solver" by understanding the right way for translating values and cooperative traits into competitive and exclusive advantages in managing both internal and external resources. Advantages that can improve loyalty, trust in the organization, and, as a consequence, lead to higher resource gathering and long-term stability.

3. Job Profile

Based on the results of the comparative study and focus groups, the ideal profile should include all the competencies and all the topics initially proposed, apart from a few topics that appear to be too specific and differentiated by country. Furthermore, the ideal profile must take these competencies and topics by contextualizing them in the cooperative sector and therefore by putting values in the practice of each technical skill and managerial activity (from HRM to marketing, from stakeholders and governance to products and innovation).

The European cooperative manager and elected member job profile that therefore emerged from the comparative study and focus groups is the following:

Competence 1 COOPERATIVE KNOWLEDGE AND IDENTITY	Competence 2 LEADERSHIP	Competence 3 GOVERNANCE	Competence 4 HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	Competence 5 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT	Competence 6 EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT	Competence 7 MARKET & PRODUCTS/SERVICES
<p>Topic 1: Cooperative principles <i>“The 7 ICA principles and their relevance for the cooperative aim”</i></p>	<p>Topic 1: Values <i>“Defining the coop’s mission, putting values into practice, paying attention to other-regarding and cooperative behaviors (fairness, trust...)”</i></p>	<p>Topic 1: Governance models <i>“To compare different organizational charts, to structure the membership, board of directors, control bodies; to manage democracy”</i></p>	<p>Topic 1: Policies/management <i>“To manage selection, job design, work flow, incentive strategies... To anticipate different planning scenarios in terms of HR, according to the organizational strategic objectives and boundaries”</i></p>	<p>Topic 1: Understanding financial accounts/statements <i>“To identify, analyze and interpret the indicators of financial results”</i></p>	<p>Topic 1: Stakeholder map <i>“To describe who stakeholders are and their needs/ expectations; to individuate the organizational priorities to respond to their needs and the strategies to relate with them”</i></p>	<p>Topic 1: Local market dynamics <i>“To investigate micro-markets (one’s sector of activity, regional or national markets) and their evolution both in terms of demand and supply”</i></p>
<p>Topic 2: History of own coop and movement/sector <i>“To define the origins, the motivations, the identity and the evolution of coops. To position the coop in its context”</i></p>	<p>Topic 2: Social and relational skills <i>“To develop abilities in listening, communicating, developing empathy, etc.”</i></p>	<p>Topic 2: Legal requirements <i>“To individuate boundaries and opportunities in the legal articles defining mutuality, profit sharing, governance systems etc”</i></p>	<p>Topic 2: Leading equality and diversity <i>“To be attractive and retain young staff, to be sensitive to the particular needs of the different groups, to manage appropriately the different groups and their relationships”</i></p>	<p>Topic 2: Performance management <i>“To understand the cost structure and to be able to raise revenues to cover those costs; to understand market dynamics and answer competition”</i></p>	<p>Topic 2: Social impact <i>“To individuate the consequence of the coop presence on the local community in terms of externalities, environmental impact, social capital, employment, etc.”</i></p>	<p>Topic 2: <i>International market dynamics</i> <i>“To understand the development of competition, demand, supply, at an international level and its impact on the coop’s strategies”</i></p>
<p>Topic 3: Economic role - advantages and limits of coops <i>“To understand how coops can solve market failures and marginalization, and can increase efficiency and effectiveness”</i></p>	<p>Topic 3: Organizational culture <i>“How to create an organizational culture which pays attention to the diverse stakeholders and how to transmit it”</i></p>	<p>Topic 3: Involvement strategies/member engagement <i>“Starting from the individuation of the diverse stakeholders’ interest, to plan loyalty models and strategies to increase the psychological</i></p>	<p>Topic 3: Intrinsic motivation and engagement <i>“To know the diverse levers for workers’ engagement in terms of intrinsic motivation, non-monetary compensation, attention to the workers’ needs and personal objectives, marks of</i></p>	<p>Topic 3: Managing diverse income streams <i>“To ensure a good financial mix (to understand the link between sources of funding and types of benefits generated by the cooperative); to diversify the income</i></p>	<p>Topic 3: Communication strategy <i>“To manage the interface between the organization and the diverse stakeholders, by developing communication strategies”</i></p>	<p>Topic 3: Innovation & social innovation <i>“To invest in and develop new products and to change procedures and processes; to innovate in social terms, by developing initiatives in favor of the community/the social</i></p>

		<i>participation”</i>	<i>recognition, feedbacks, trust, involvement”</i>	<i>sources”</i>		<i>interest”</i>
Topic 4: National legal frameworks <i>“Analysis of the national Law”</i>	Topic 4: Leadership styles <i>“How to be a manager able to increase the sharing of the mission among workers and to individuate strengths and weaknesses of the management”</i>	Topic 4: Mission and vision <i>“To provide a shared vision of social enterprise across the team, notably by being part of the appropriate networks”</i>	Topic 4: Stress and satisfaction monitoring (job quality monitoring) <i>“To monitor and manage the determinants of stress and satisfaction in order to develop a serene work atmosphere encouraging collaboration and wellbeing”</i>	Topic 4: Financial strategy (risk evaluation and decision-making) <i>“To develop a proactive approach to the risk and profitability of the financing means, according to the cooperative's needs and realities”</i>	Topic 4: Networking and business coordination <i>“To map the existing networks among coops, to pick out the existing and potential competitors and partners; to collaborate with local communities, public authorities, etc.”</i>	Topic 4: Project management <i>“To manage various projects; to find, to plan, to organize, to control resources to achieve specific goals; to manage a project office “</i>
Topic 5: International legal frameworks <i>“Analysis of the international laws and guidelines”</i>	Topic 5: Communication <i>“To manage the interface between the organization and the diverse stakeholders, by developing communication strategies”</i>		Topic 5: Volunteer recruitment and management <i>“To individuate the opportunity for volunteer involvement, to create networks for their recruitment, to develop strategies for their loyalty”</i>	Topic 5: Achieving economic and social goals <i>“To elaborate various scenarios and answers to achieve better performance while increasing the wellbeing of members/the local community”</i>	Topic 5: Advocacy/political representation <i>“To position the coop as part of a social movement and to develop strategies to enforce the voice of the movement”</i>	Topic 5: Marketing and Sales <i>“Marketing policies and strategies”</i>
Topic 6: Mutuality versus community/social interest <i>“Understanding the relevance of managing the coop by paying attention to both the members' interest and the social impact/community interest”</i>	Topic 6: Problem solving <i>“To develop emotional intelligence and abilities to manage unexpected situations; to be able to elaborate various scenarios”</i>					Topic 6: Quality assurance and Customer Satisfaction <i>“To check and certify the quality of products/services and of procedures in accordance with regulations and in terms of client/user/customer satisfaction”</i>

4. Conclusions and potential use

After the validation of the job profile, the project partners continued on to develop learning outcomes and units for two of the topics: Putting co-operative values and principles into practice and Stakeholders and relationships with the local community (from Competence 1 and Competence 6). The learning outcomes were then developed into mobility learning units (MLU) consistent with the ECVET guidelines. The MLU are expected to provide a common reference point for training activities across countries to be undertaken in the next phases of the project. Their main function is to provide a framework for the comparability of existing learning units that each host institution already has in its current training offer. These two MLU will be tested during the course of the project in two partner countries with the project partners as well as practitioners from each project country. These tests entail site visits and learning opportunities with cooperative enterprises in Spain and Germany. The objective of the testing phase is to evaluate the design derived from the previous phases of the project in a real life experience. The final phase of the EUCoopCampus involves the exploitation of the project partnership and results with the main aim being the creation of a permanent network. Although EUCoopCampus is still an ongoing project, the work completed to date has enabled the team to reflect on training and education in the European cooperative movement and highlight some preliminary conclusions.

While at the beginning of the analysis we expected managers and elected members to be insufficiently trained on the different competences and topics, previous results tend to support instead that we should not consider the gap in terms of deficiency or lack of skills. Managers conduct their activity by possessing some informal knowledge, and this informal knowledge differentiates them from for-profit managers. Nonetheless, ideologies and a feeling of being different and having a social value and solid principles do not help in managing in a proper way some competencies: from financial management to human resource management, from governance to market and products issues. Therefore, the real gap is in the ability to translate what we could call 'intentions' into 'actions' and the training programs should help in solving this point by providing complementarities among formal, non formal, and informal training, to apply knowledge acquired into work projects, and trying to convert theory into learning outcomes. Transferring these learning outcomes into ECVET can help to increase opportunities for learning from entrepreneurial experiences in other European countries and the recognition of mobility learning in one's own country and career path. Further, the customization of the ECVET tools allows for recognition in non-formal and informal cooperative learning contexts. In this way the project aims to enhance the role of ethical competences and soft skills acquired in contexts other than traditional training and to enhance continuous learning.

Further, the job profile for European managers and elected members of cooperative enterprises developed and validated by the partners and practitioners from each country can have various ongoing uses. First, it could be adopted as a common method of cooperative managerial skills evaluation. This evaluation could be useful in order to evaluate an individual

(e.g. in hiring situations, self-evaluation, promotions, etc.) as well as in the case of a strategic organizational analysis to evaluate whether its team as a whole has the range of capacities and skills in the profile. As regards training, the job profile can prove to be a useful tool to plan manager training programs in order to choose the appropriate topics in relation to the participants. Moreover, it can be used at the end of a training program to measure the progress and outcomes of the training activity for the participants. Hence the job profile can be of use to cooperative managers, elected members, cooperative trainers, national and international cooperative organisations, policy-makers, universities and research centres.

Another outcome of the EUCoopCampus project is the planned permanent network (initially comprised of the project partners but with the possibility of future expansion) that will strive to assure future collaboration and mobility exchanges among the partners and other European cooperators. The implementation of this network will give continuity to the efforts taken during the project and will enlarge the mobility area. Most importantly, it will work towards the mutual recognition of the cooperative manager profile across Europe, helping to improve and recognize the qualifications in the cooperative sector and promoting mobility within European systems for training more responsible and creative managers. This can increase the attractiveness of cooperatives as a valuable business model as well as enable cooperatives to become learning organizations, capable of understating specific internal needs while also grasping new opportunities at local and international level for a more balanced development. This thereby also increases the attractiveness of continuous learning by designing a framework for validating prior non formal and informal learning thus promoting personal development and professional advancement.

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Annex 1: Terms of reference

In order to ensure all partners were referring to the same target group and could categorize training activities we first established shared definitions. The professional profile considered in the analysis of training programs refers to “middle managers”, “senior managers”, and “elected members” in the cooperative system, where elected members are defined as any cooperative member voted into a position of decision-making authority (i.e. board of directors, policy committee, social committee etc.). As regards the type of cooperatives that can represent target groups for training programs we distinguish:

Worker cooperative. A cooperative owned and democratically controlled by its worker-owners. Worker cooperatives enable members to obtain more favourable working conditions than those available on the market, both in terms of quality and economy.

Retail cooperative. A cooperative formed to purchase and supply goods and services at competitive conditions in the interest of members (retailers).

Consumer cooperative. A cooperative owned and democratically controlled by its main consumers. Consumer cooperatives enable members to obtain supplies and/or durable goods on more favourable conditions than those available on the market. They work to safeguard the quality of products and services as well as sales prices.

Purchasing cooperative. A cooperative formed to aggregate demand to get lower prices from selected suppliers. It is often used to reduce costs of procurement.

Producers cooperative. A cooperative owned and democratically controlled by producers who band together to process or market their products.

Cooperative bank, financial cooperative, credit union. Private cooperative enterprise providing banking and financial intermediation services, democratically controlled by its member customers (borrowers and depositors). Consider Credit unions and banks whose capital is composed also by individuals without rights regarding the management of the bank.

Insurance cooperative and mutual. A cooperative owned and democratically controlled by its main insured. Insurance cooperatives enable members to obtain insurance policies on more favourable conditions than those available on the market.

Housing cooperative. A cooperative formed to provide an owned or rented property on more favourable conditions than those available on the market. This category includes both housing cooperative and cooperatives in the sector of Construction.

Social cooperative. A cooperative that manages health, social or educational services and productive activities for work integration of socially disadvantaged people.

Other type. Other types of cooperatives not included in the above categories.

As regards types of learning, we utilize the definitions by the CEDEFOP Glossary⁵ and in general we distinguish:

Formal learning: learning typically provided by an education or training institution, structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support) and leading to certification. Formal learning is intentional from the learner's perspective.

Non-formal learning: learning that is not provided by an education or training institution and does not typically lead to certification. It is, however, structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support). Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's perspective. Courses, seminars and workshops are considered in specific areas, both in improving technical and socio-institutional skills.

Informal learning: learning resulting from daily life activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support) and typically does not lead to certification. Informal learning may be intentional but in most cases it is non-intentional (or "incidental"/ random). The long tradition in the cooperative field transferred from one generation to another; the day to day experience working in the cooperative; and actively participating in its activities are important for informal learning. These concepts were validated in the SKILLS project, on which this project is partially based.

⁵ <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/about-cedefop/projects/validation-of-non-formal-and-informal-learning/european-inventory-glossary.aspx>

As regards other terms used:

Competence: identifies the general area of training, specifically, as defined by ECVET: “the proven ability to use knowledge, skills, social and/or personal methodologies in work or study situations and in professional and personal development.”

Topic: identifies the single skill/knowledge that represents a trait for a complete manager. Topics therefore split the general competence that a manager should develop in specific traits and profiles of the management in relation to the competence. Since the assumption is that both technical and behavioural skills must be implemented for achieving a good job profile and managers’ professionalization, topics relate to both aspects and must be as much as possible (but coherently) multi-disciplinary, complementary, multi-perspective, specific to the management of a “cooperative enterprise” (i.e., covering both the cooperative and the enterprise side).

Learning outcomes: statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process and which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence.

Unit of learning outcomes (unit): a component of a qualification, consisting of a coherent set of knowledge, skills and competence, that can be assessed and validated.

ECVET system: The European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) is the European instrument to promote mutual trust and mobility in vocational education and training. Developed by Member States in cooperation with the European Commission, ECVET has been adopted by the European Parliament and the Council in 2009. ECVET’s purpose is to enable recognition of learners’ achievements during periods of mobility by creating a structure, bringing a common language, and stimulating exchanges and mutual trust among VET providers and competent institutions across Europe. In the context of international mobility but also mobility within countries, ECVET aims to support recognition of learning outcomes without extending learners’ education and training pathways. ECVET supports flexibility of programmes and pathways to achieve qualifications, enhancing the opportunities for lifelong learning. It makes it easier to recognise the learning achievements that young people or adults have gained in other contexts - be it countries, institutions or systems (for example initial or continuous training) but also formal, non-formal, or informal ways of learning.

EQF system: The European Qualification Framework (EQF) is a translation instrument – a conversion and reading grid – which makes it possible to relate and collocate the various qualifications (diplomas, certificates etc.) issued by the Member States within an 8-level structure; their comparison is based on learning outcomes. It is a meta-structure in the light of which, on a voluntary basis, the Member States are asked to reconsider their own education and training systems, to establish links between the individual national systems of reference for qualifications and the EQF. The EQF is thus not a duplication of the national systems at a European level, nor is it an attempt to impose standardisation of the qualifications at a European level.

EQF: how it relates to ECVET: The integrated European credit transfer system (ECVET) is part of the set of instruments included in the EQF strategy. In practice, it is a system which assigns credit points to qualifications and/or to their component units. A unit is defined as the “smallest part” of a curriculum, of an education or training process, or of a qualification, and corresponds to a specific combination of knowledge, skills and competences. Each unit may vary in size, according to the national education and training system of reference. It corresponds to a specific result at an industrial level, in terms of expected results. A unit is associated with a professional figure/profile in turn inserted within a given level of the qualifications structure.

The credits are assigned to the learning outcomes achieved, taking into consideration the set of knowledges, skills and competences required for a qualification or a unit. The requirements for acquiring a qualification or a unit must be defined by the competent bodies at a national level. The integrated European credit transfer system explicitly correlates the units to the levels of the EQF for the purposes of capitalising and collecting credits.