

ILSE - EU Partner Project: “Safer Europe by higher qualified Water Safety Managers“

Project Number: 2012-1-DE2-LE004-11717-5

Background

In Europe 35 000 – 40 0000 people drown each year. Tourists travel all over Europe and need water safety for/during their leisure time activities and holidays. Therefore standardised information (ISO 20712) and qualified lifeguard service at beaches, in swimming pools and at lakes and rivers, and consistent management of water safety activities generally are necessary.

Lifeguards must be well educated and should be mobile to be able to take their vocation in different countries in Europe. Therefore a “European Qualification Framework for Lifesaving” was developed by the International Life Saving Federation of Europe (ILSE) and accepted by the EU Directorate General on 23rd September 2009. The EQF1 Project developed a qualification Framework for levels 1 to 4:

1. Lifesaver *
2. Lifesaver **
3. Lifesaver ***
4. Lifesaving Instructor/Chief Lifesaving Instructor

A new partnership project, EQF2, was put forward to develop the Framework further for levels 5 to 8 for Water Safety Management and this was accepted by the EU Directorate General in 2012. Up to now there is no common European qualification concept for higher levels in Water Safety Management. There is however a growing need for specialists and managers of staff in water safety with higher levels of qualifications. Some Higher Education Institutions (HEI) offer some courses with some lifesaving content, but the main focus of these programs is on different topics such as tourism, sport or environment, and not on Water Safety Management as a specialism.

Project Objectives

The objectives of the partnership are defined as:

- a) Exchange of experience between the experts of all lifesaving organisations, and higher education institutions regarding knowledge, skills and competencies of highly specialised experts and those with responsibilities for a higher management level in lifesaving
- b) Development of a common view of the European experts about higher education in water safety
- c) Development of an EQF for Water Safety Management (level 5 to 8)
- d) Collection and dissemination of best practice education modules for higher levels
- e) Development work to harmonise the new EQF levels with National Qualification Frameworks
- f) Get better-educated managers in all environments of water related human activities all over Europe



g) Recognition of the qualification framework for Water Safety Managers by HEIs across Europe

The EQF2 project was a good opportunity to combine the experiences and knowledge of European Lifesaving federations and HEIs to produce a qualification framework in Water Safety management. The partners have exchanged their experience and best practice training modules that can be used for the professional and academic education. Helpful teaching and training concepts were collected and disseminated

These new EQF levels should be recognised by the EU institutions after the project has been concluded, and should form a base from which to develop further academic and professional courses of studies.

It was agreed that the EQF2 project would be developed through four different streams:

1. **Management** instruments and concepts – Stream Leader **Dr. Klaus Wilkens PhD**
2. **Safety Science** (e.g. Safety and Health, Natural Hazards, human related hazards, prevention management) – Stream Leader **Dr Detlev Mohr**
3. **Methodology and Didactics** (e.g. behavioural science didactical methods, communication and social skills, HR-Management) – Stream Leader **Peter Lewis**
4. **Special topics** (e.g. advanced rescue technics, advances first aid, co-operation with other services, communication with media) – Stream Leader **Mats Melbye**

Partners

It was originally intended that 16 of our member federations along with 2 universities would participate in developing this higher qualification framework. However, ultimately only 7 of our member federations were accepted to become funded partners in this project.

These partners are (listed in alphabetical order):

- Federación de salvamento y socorrismo de Castilla y León – (FECLESS – Spain)
- Ligue Francophone Belge de Sauvetage – (LFBS – Belgium)
- National Sports Academy “Vassil Levski” – (NSA – Bulgaria)
- Norges Livredningsselskap – (NLS - Norway)
- Royal Life Saving Society UK – (RLSS UK – UK)
- Surf Life Saving Great Britain – (SLSGB – GB)
- Wodne Ochotnicze Pogotowie Ratunkowe – (WOPR – Poland)

This reduction of more than 50% of potential partner organisations placed much more responsibility and a greatly increased workload on the remaining participants.

Our colleagues in the German lifesaving federation, the DLRG, had intended to be the coordinating federation, and to that end had already arranged a meeting of the partner organisations at its headquarters in Bad Nenndorf, Germany in August 2012.

However, shortly before this the DLRG had been advised that they were not accepted as a funded partner. Nevertheless they have continued to offer their support, advice and knowledge in the fields in which they have particular expertise. Their then President, Dr



Klaus Wilkens, and Vice President, Dr Detlev Mohr, both agreed to continue, at their federation’s expense, as stream leaders for the first two streams.

When the final list of participating partner federations was published, it was necessary to appoint a new co-ordinating federation. Unfortunately this did not happen until the conclusion of the final EQF1 Project Workshop in Prague in January 2013, when the EQF2 partners appointed Surf Life Saving Great Britain (SLSGB) to act as the co-ordinator and revised plans for meetings and seminars were proposed.

Location of EQF2 Seminars and Workshops

In the original application it had been planned that there would be only four seminars:

- Germany – August 2012
- Croatia – May 2013
- Italy – January 2014
- Poland – May 2014

Although an initial workshop meeting had taken place in Germany in August 2012, as Germany was not accepted as a partner, this did not count for the use of transnational mobilities. The planned seminars in Croatia and Italy were cancelled, as these were not partner organisations.

The partnership wanted to try and ensure that events were held in as many of the participating countries as possible. Furthermore, because there were fewer partners each needing to contribute more to the work, a more expansive programme was arranged as follows:

Location	Date	Event	Total no attendees	Total foreign attendees
United Kingdom – Broom	15/-17/05/2013	Preparatory Workshop	4	2
Belgium – Louvain-La-Neuve	30/05-02/06 2013	Seminar	17	15
Bulgaria – Sofia	03/-06/10/2013	Seminar	25	18
United Kingdom – Stratford	16/-18/01/2014	Seminar	19	14
Poland – Szczecin	24/-27/04/2014	Seminar	15	11
Spain - Valladolid	05/-08/06/2014	Seminar	14	12

A short meeting was also held with representatives from 5 partners during the ILS Board of Directors meeting in Belgium in April 2013, where it was agreed to set up a Dropbox folder as the primary means of communication and transmission of documents between partners.

Each Seminar was well attended by members of the partnership, as shown in the above table. The use of the Leonardo Da Vinci funding enabled transnational mobility certificates to be given to all participants from foreign countries. A key group of people attended all seminars, while others attended when specific issues were being considered. In all 32 different people attended the events.

A total of 72 mobility certificates were issued by the co-ordinator. A list of all attendees is given in Appendix 1. As stated earlier, the German federation, DLRG, continued to



support the project by supporting the 2 stream leaders for the Management and the Health and Safety streams to attend and share their expertise. They attended three of the five Seminar events. A short planned meeting was also held with them during the ILS World Conference on Drowning Prevention in October 2013 in Potsdam (at which representatives of all the partner organisations were present) to check on progress and discuss the agendas for the final three seminars.

Outcomes of the EQF2 Seminars

The preparatory workshop with representatives from 3 partners held in May 2013 included a review of progress following the initial start-up meeting held in August 2012 (some initial drafts of levels 5 and 6 had been prepared, and an initial proposal for the management curriculum had been outlined). These partners agreed to take the lead in setting the program for the seminar in Louvain-La-Neuve, Belgium, and identified key roles, responsibilities, and communication methods, and use of common terminology for developing material for levels 5 to 8.

The seminar in Louvain-La-Neuve, Belgium saw considerable progress being made. A strong link was made to the Université Catholique de Louvain (UCL) at the start of the seminar with a motivating talk from Thierry Zinz, the Dean of the Faculty of Sport and Rehabilitation Sciences at UCL, and Vice President of the Belgian Olympic Committee

The partners then devoted their attention to clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of each of the levels 5 to 8 which were agreed as:

- Level 5 – Specialist/Assistant Manager – 1-2 years
- Level 6 – Bachelor/Manager – 3-4 years
- Level 7 – Masters – 1-2 years
- Level 8 – PhD – 3+ years

Following this, a great amount of work was done during and between each seminar to define the knowledge, skills and competencies appropriate to streams 1, 2, 3 and 4 at each level. By beginning with level 6 the partners were able to set a benchmark standard from which to develop up to levels 7 and 8, and down to level 5.

Each stream leader led the group through their topics, and regular breakout sessions using smaller groups were held to divide the work into more manageable pieces, with feedback in plenary sessions to check on the level of understanding of the full group before moving forward. Each seminar began with a review of progress from the previous event and ended with a summary of the work to be undertaken outside the group by each partner. The templates for each level went through several editing sessions before the final text was agreed by the time of the final event in Spain.

Specific tasks were allocated to specific individuals and partner organisations to prepare for the following seminars. The Seminar in Sofia had a focus on developing the criteria for the Bachelor Degree, and prior to the event, the co-ordinator was invited to a meeting with the Rector of the National Sports Academy, who confirmed his institution's keen interest in being the first in Europe to start using the new framework. Such is their level of interest



that their Vice-Rector attended the final event in Spain to confirm that they will hopefully start using this soon.

The January 2014 Seminar focused mainly on developing the management stream, from levels 5 to 7, and an initial draft of the potential allocation of ECTS for each section of the programme. This work was completed during the next Seminar in Poland, along with the Health and Safety elements up to Level 7. For all streams a single Level 8 set of criteria were agreed.

The final event in Spain drew together all the elements from the four streams, including the Didactical Methods and Special Topics, both of which had been regularly worked through at each Seminar. A method of presenting the outputs from the four streams in a combined format was finally agreed. The work required to complete the final report and presentation of the outputs was discussed and a plan agreed.

The final report and products will be agreed by all partners before each completes their individual report template for their national funding agency by 30th September 2014. The documentation will be loaded onto the European Shared Treasure (EST) database at the same time so that the products are visible to all.

Throughout the duration of the programme, all partners have worked closely together to determine what best practices should be shared and included in the final documentation for each stream on each level. The official language of the project is English, as that is the normal language of the International Lifesaving Federation of Europe of which all partners are members and from whom the idea for the project was initiated. All partners are used to working together in this common language, but where required, each has taken care of their own translation needs.

The key outcomes from all of the events are:

- Through successful partnership working across Europe, the seven partners have successfully worked together to share their expertise in the field of lifesaving and water safety management. Without this opportunity to work together that has been provided by the EU Leonardo Da Vinci Funding, such collaboration would have been far more difficult to achieve.
- This has enabled them to develop a Qualification Framework for levels 5 to 8 to provide a safer Europe by having more highly qualified Water Safety Managers, with a curriculum divided into four streams:
 - Management
 - Health and Safety
 - Didactical Methods
 - Special Topics
- For each stream specific criteria at each level 5 to 7 have been developed:
 - Level 5 – Specialist/Assistant Manager in Water Safety Management
 - Level 6 – Bachelor Degree in Water Safety Management
 - Level 7 – Masters Degree in Water Safety Management
- The criteria for each level from the four different streams have been combined into a single Excel document for each Level, covering the Knowledge, Skills and Competence required for each topic within each stream.



- For the final level, a single set of criteria were developed to cover all four streams:
 - Level 8 – PhD in the field of Water Safety
- A separate document has been produced giving an overview of the entire Qualification Framework, along with an overview of the different issues covered in the Special Topics section.
- HEIs in at least 4 of the 6 countries involved have already indicated an interest in taking up the Qualification Framework for Water Safety Management and are prepared to look further into the possibility of doing so. There is also now interest being shown in at least 2 countries not involved in the partnership.

Evaluation of the EQF2 Project

It is important to evaluate the success of this project and whether we have achieved the objectives that were set out in the application. Some of the evaluation cannot take place until the successful conclusion of the reporting process has been completed by the end of September, and some is dependent on getting HEIs willing to take up the qualification framework for their students. This will take some time to achieve.

In terms of achieving the tasks that were set, we can at this point state:

- a) There has been a very good exchange of experience between the experts of the seven lifesaving organization partners involved – this has also included some interaction with some HEIs – regarding knowledge, skills and competencies of highly specialised experts and those with responsibilities for a higher management level in lifesaving
- b) Among the seven partners there is now a common view of the European experts about higher education in water safety, which like the EQF1 outcomes will be shared with all European Lifesaving Federations – a request has already been made to them for more experts to form a European expert panel to assist educational institutions in assessing the competence of students in this field in future
- c) A European Qualification Framework for Water Safety Management (level 5 to 8) has been successfully developed and published
- d) Collection and dissemination of best practice education modules for higher levels has taken place as a result
- e) Among the seven partner federations, work will now be able to begin to harmonise the new EQF levels with their National Qualification Frameworks – other European Lifesaving Federations can also do the same within their countries
- f) We will need to monitor the take-up of this qualification framework throughout Europe and this will take time. If it is taken up, then we will have better-educated managers in all environments of water related human activities all over Europe
- g) There are already encouraging signs of interest from higher education institutions within the 6 countries where the 7 partners are based in recognizing the framework for Water Safety Management, as well as within other countries not involved in the partnership. We need to keep monitoring the level of interest and it will take some time.

Our goal of creating a specific Qualification Framework for Water Safety Management for use by higher education institutions has been achieved, and we now need to do all we can to promote its use by those institutions as soon as practically possible.



Appendix 1 Attendees at all events:

Name	Partner	Initial Meeting BN-GER	Prep Meeting BRO- UK	Seminar 2 LLN-BEL	Seminar 3 SOF-BUL	Seminar 4 STR-UK	Seminar 5 SZC-POL	Seminar 6 VAL-ESP
Ana M ^a Dominguez Pachon	FECLESS	x	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Francisco Cano Noguera	FECLESS	x	x	✓	x	x	x	x
Jesica Pino Espinosa	FECLESS	x	x	x	✓	x	✓	✓
Alberto Garcia Sanz	FECLESS	x	x	x	x	✓	x	x
Luc Landrain	LFBS	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Philippe Verhelst	LFBS	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mats Melbye	NLS	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Trond Augestad	NLS	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x
Torill Hindmarch	NLS	x	x	x	✓	✓	x	✓
Anette Ten Kate	NLS	x	x	x	✓	x	x	x
Natalia Stoyanova	NSA	x	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Stoyan Andonov	NSA	x	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Maya Antova	NSA	x	x	✓	✓	x	x	x
Desislava Koleva	NSA	x	x	✓	✓	x	✓	x
Nikolay Izov	NSA	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓
Aleksandra Gencheva	NSA	x	x	x	✓	x	x	x
Teodora Tomova	NSA	x	x	x	✓	x	x	x
Stefka Djobova	NSA	x	x	x	✓	x	x	x
Peter Lewis	RLSSUK	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Damien Hall	RLSSUK	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x
Clive Holland	RLSSUK	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x
Ken White	RLSSUK	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x
Janet Wilson	RLSSUK	x	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rory Smith	RLSSUK	x	x	x	✓	x	x	x
Peter Rooney	RLSSUK	x	x	x	✓	x	x	x
John Martin	SLSGB	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lauren Turner	SLSGB	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x
Adrian Mayhew	SLSGB	x	x	✓	✓	✓	x	✓
Andrew Byatt	SLSGB	x	x	✓	✓	✓	x	x
John Clark	SLSGB	x	x	x	✓	x	x	x
Steve Instance	SLSGB	x	x	x	✓	x	x	x
Alexander Skailly	WOPR	x	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Filip Orlovski	WOPR	x	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	x
Jakub Friedenber	WOPR	x	x	✓	x	✓	x	x
Tomasz Zalewski	WOPR	x	x	x	x	✓	✓	x
Apoloniusz Kurlczyk	WOPR	x	x	x	x	✓	✓	x
Magdalena Zielinska	WOPR	x	x	x	x	✓	x	x
Mobility Certificates n/a		9	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mobility Certificates issued	72	0	2	15	18	14	11	12
In-Country Attendees	22	0	2	2	7	5	4	2
Total Attendees	103	9	4	17	25	19	15	14