



Intellectual Output 6 – Final Report

EASIT (Easy Access for Social Inclusion Training)

Grant Agreement:	2018-1-ES01-KA203-050275
Funding Scheme:	Erasmus +, KA2 KA203: Strategic Partnerships (Higher Education)
Project Duration:	01/09/2018-31/08/2021 (36 months)
Coordinator:	Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB)
Partners:	Dyslexiförbundet (DYS) Radiotelevizija Slovenija Javni Zavod Ljubljana (RTVSLO) International Hochschule SDI München- University of Applied Sciences (SDI) Stiftung Universität Hildesheim (SUH) Università degli Studi di Trieste (UNITS) Universidade de Vigo (UVIGO) Zavod RISA (RISA)





Document title: IO6 final report

Author: Anna Matamala

Version: 1.0

Submission date: 09.08.2021

Abstract: This report provides an overview of how certification has been approached in related educational projects and the specific steps taken in EASIT towards certification. It also provides suggestions for future certification.

Dissemination level:

P Public

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Revision History

Revision	Date	Author	Organisation	Description
0.1	09.07.2021	A. Matamala	UAB	Draft version
0.2	18.07.2021	Anna Matamala	UAB	Revised and approved version for advisory board revision
0.3	19.07.2021	Anna Matamala	UAB	Revised version (previous version did not include SDI's input)
0.4	05.08.2021	Anna Matamala	UAB	Revised version with Advisory Board's input
1.0	08.08.2021	Anna Matamala	UAB	Final version, after quality validation

Contributors

Name	Surname	Organisation	Email
Anna	Fernández-Torné	UAB	Ana.fernandez.torne@uab.cat
Elisa	Perego	UNITS	eperego@units.it
Ester	Hedberg	DYS	ester.hedberg@dyslexi.org
Jesús	Meiriño	SUH	jemeirino@uvigo.es
Rocío	Bernabé-Caro	SDI	Rocio.Bernabe@sdi-muenchen.de
Sergio	Hernandez Garrido	SUH	hernande@uni-hildesheim.de
Tatjana	Knapp	RISA	tatjana@risa.si
Veronika	Rot	RTVSLO	veronika.rot@rtvslo.si

Advisory Board Revision

Ms Leealaura Leskelä, The University of Helsinki, Finland.

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

Acronym	Written-out form
ADLAB-PRO	Audio Description: A Laboratory for the Development of a New Professional Profile
AVJ	Audiovisual journalism
CEDEFOP	European Center for the Development of Vocational Training
CPI	National Institute for Vocational Education and Training
DYS	Dyslexiförbundet
E2U	Easy-to-Understand
EASIT	Easy Access for Social Inclusion Training
ECQA	European Certification and Qualification Agency
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
EQF	European Qualification Framework
ESG	Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

EU	European Union
ILSA	Interlingual Live Subtitling for Access
IO	Intellectual Output
LiRICS	Live Reporters International Certification
LO	Learning Outcome
LTA	Live Text Access
ME	Multiplier Event
MOOC	Massive Open Online Course
NOS	National Occupational Standards
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
RISA	Zavod Risa
RTVSLO	Radiotelevizija Slovenija Javni Zavod Ljubljana
RUCT	Registro de Universidades, Centros y Títulos (Registry of Universities, Centres and Qualifications)
SDI	Internationale Hochschule SDI München – University of Applied Sciences
SUH	Stiftung Universität Hildesheim



UAB	Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
UNITS	Università degli Studi di Trieste
UVIGO	Universidade de Vigo



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1 Introduction

Table 1 provides a short description of intellectual output 6 (IO6), as presented on the grant agreement:

Item	Description
Output identification	IO6
Output title	Certification
Easy-to-read title	Certification
Description	<p>This IO will explore certification avenues to secure the project sustainability. In this regard, the project will be built upon existing projects, and will design a specific strategy that can be implemented in the future. It must be stressed that, although the project will not implement the curriculum and the corresponding certification, it will take certification aspects into account from the very beginning, to guarantee that outputs can be implemented in real-life situations and to guarantee the transferability potential and higher impact. This is why working days related to this IO are distributed in critical moments in the project, so as to guarantee that all IOs take into account where relevant future certification procedures.</p>
Start date	01-09-2018
End date	31-08-2021
Languages	English
Available media	Text file
Leading organisation	UAB
Participating organisations	All partners

Table 1. Intellectual Output summary

2 Aims

Intellectual Output 6 (IO6) aims to explore certification avenues to secure the project sustainability. Building upon existing projects, it aims to define the best certification procedures that could be implemented beyond the life of the project.

As indicated in the grant agreement, the project will not implement the curriculum and the corresponding certification, but it will take certification aspects into account from the very beginning in order to guarantee the future transferability of the results.

3 Intellectual Output Development

This intellectual output has been developed in parallel to the other project intellectual outputs and has taken the following steps:

1. Analysis of certification procedures in related Erasmus+ projects such as Accessible Culture and Training (ACT), Interlingual Live Subtitling for Access (ILSA), Live Text Access: Training for real-time intralingual subtitler (LTA), and Audio Description: A Laboratory for the Development of a New Professional Profile (ADLAB PRO), in order to assess different certification possibilities. This was done at the beginning of the project
2. European Certification and Qualification Agency (ECQA) skills card analysis in order to produce a skills card adapted to the quality criteria of this European certification agency.
3. Analysis of current European Higher Education Area (EHEA) recommendation for curriculum development, prior to the academic proposal development.

4. Analysis of ECQA training materials development.
5. Development and application for a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) proposal at UAB-Coursera.
6. Design, application, and approval of three specialisation courses at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB) which will use EASIT educational materials.
7. Analysis of certification processes at both vocational and training in different countries to be used as case studies.
8. Report development, in four iterations, with input from all partners under the coordination of UAB.

The results are presented in Section 4.

4 Intellectual Output Results

This section reports on the main results of Intellectual Output 6, namely:

- A short introduction on how the EASIT consortium understands certification in education (4.1.).
- A description of how certification has been approached in related Erasmus+ projects such as ACT, ADLAB PRO, LTA, and ILSA (4.2).
- The steps taken during the life of the project so that the EASIT proposal can be easily transferred into certified programmes. More specifically:
 - adapting the skills card to ECQA procedures (4.3.1),
 - applying for a MOOC proposal at Coursera (4.3.2), and
 - developing three specialisation courses (4.3.3).

- Some suggested certification strategies at university level and professional level (4.4.).

4.1 Certification in education

From a broad perspective, “certification” can be defined as “third-party attestation related to products, processes, systems or persons” (ISO/IEC 17000:2004). The same standard defines attestation as “issue of a statement, based on a decision following review (5.1.), that fulfilment of specified requirements (3.1.) has been demonstrated”.

In the field of education, certification is tightly linked to the concept of qualification. The European Qualification Framework ([EQF](#)) defines a qualification as the “formal outcome of an assessment and validation process obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards” (2018: 7). The European Credit Transfer System ([ECTS](#)) User’s Guide defines qualification as “any degree, diploma or other certificate issued by a competent authority attesting the successful completion of a recognised programme of study”.

The European Qualification Framework is a common reference framework at European level that aims to make qualifications more understandable across countries and systems. It covers all qualifications distributed in 8 levels, which are defined by a set of descriptors that indicate the learning outcomes to be achieved. These learning outcomes are established taking into account: a) knowledge, b) skills, and c) responsibility and autonomy. This system is compatible with the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area, where qualifications fall between level 5 and level 8 of the European Qualification Framework.

Formal learning generally leads to a qualification that takes the form of a certificate. Formal learning is understood as learning generally provided

by an education institution in a structured way. Non-formal learning (for instance, in-company training or courses organised by civil society organisations) and informal learning (resulting from daily activities and often unintentional) can also be recognised when an institution certifies that the learning outcomes achieved and assessed satisfy some requirements of a particular programme, component or qualification. Third-party institutions providing certification range from universities to associations.

Certifications help raise employability and ease mobility, because they are all based on the concept of learning outcomes, i.e., what the holder of the certificate is expected to know, understand and be able to do. This is why the EASIT project has given learning outcomes a central position in its development.

Certain professions are regulated by law: they require a certain qualification, having passed certain tests and/or register in a professional association. In the European Union this regulation is dealt with at national level, but there is a European Union [database of regulated professions](#). For instance, a sworn translator is regulated in many countries. A keyword search shows that no regulated professions are listed related to “accessibility”, “subtitling”, “audio describing”. When entering the keyword “translator”, 22 items are found related to translation and interpreting mostly in courts (sworn translators).

4.2 Certification in related projects

As a first step in the project, EASIT analysed how certification had been tackled in similar Erasmus+ projects. The result is an overview of certification and related concepts in Erasmus+ projects such as Accessible Culture and Training (ACT), Interlingual Live Subtitling for Access (ILSA), Live Text Access: Training for real-time intralingual subtitlers (LTA), and

Audio Description: A Laboratory for the Development of a New Professional Profile (ADLAB PRO).

4.2.1 Certification in ACT

[The Accessible Culture and Training \(ACT\) project](#) was an Erasmus+ project that lasted from 2015 until 2018 and focused on a) defining the profile of the accessibility expert for the scenic arts, and b) providing training materials. One of its main results was a MOOC, now available in Coursera ([Accessibility to the Scenic Arts](#)).

The project included an intellectual output that prepared for certification after the end of the project. This output was led by ECQA. ECQA is the result of a series of EU funded projects but currently acts as an independent organisation that responds to a market demand. A professional who obtained a university degree 20 years ago may want to requalify to sustain their value in a company and assume a new job role. This is what ECQA offers through a Job Role Based Qualification Strategy and a modular certification process.

Regarding ACT, the IO5 [deliverable](#) explains the ECQA certification process and how it was applied in the ACT project. The main milestones in this regard were the following:

- the ACT skills card meets the criteria of ECQA certification. Skills units have a name, an acronym and a skill unit description. Skills units are broken down into learning elements with a Learning Element Title and a list of learning outcomes (also called performance criteria);
- the questionnaires developed for the MOOC can form the basis of the future ECQA multiple choice exam questions, as the guidelines for creation of multiple-choice questions have been followed;

- a course has been created around the ACT skills card, namely the MOOC Accessibility to the Scenic Arts.

4.2.2 Certification in ADLAB PRO

[Audio Description: A Laboratory for the Development of a New Professional Profile \(ADLAB PRO\)](#) was an Erasmus+ project that lasted from 2016 until 2019 and focused on creating free-access, flexible, didactic materials of a modular and customizable nature, for the creation of the professional figure of the audio describer. One of its main results are the open access [course materials](#).

In ADLAB PRO a different approach was taken and, rather than focusing on certification, IO6 was devoted to “course evaluation, recognition and accreditation”. In this regard, “accreditation” was understood as the process of assigning ECTS and ECVETS. The results are presented in this [deliverable](#).

Specifically, ECTS and ECVETS were researched and defined primarily based on the ECTS User’s Guide (2015) and Be-TWIN project results (Be-TWIN 2010a, 2010b, 2011). Among other things, ADLAB PRO observed that the main limitation of this credit system is that they do not seem to be compatible: ECTS are not applicable to vocational education at tertiary level, nor to alternative learning pathways and no connection has been determined so far between ECTS and ECVET points. However, assigning both ECTS and ECVETS to each educational component of a course is a crucial process that can ensure the comparability of programmes and awarding qualifications, the transparency of studies and courses and consequent recognition of academic qualifications obtained abroad, and overall accreditation recommendations and quality.

While designing the ADLAB PRO curriculum and working on the creation of educational components, for each module, competences and sub-

competences, learning outcomes, levels of the units and expected class and individual workload were defined and have constituted the basis that enabled partners to attribute ECTS and ECVETS to each (for more details, see ADLAB PRO 2018a, 2018b, 2019). The ADLAB PRO curriculum has been developed in order to meet the requirements of 30 ECTS that normally correspond to the credits to be acquired for half-academic year (EU 2015). Such number has been divided into 6 ECTS/ECVETS for modules 1 to 4 and 3 ECTS/ECVETS for modules 5 and 6 (cf. ADLAB PRO 2018b and Figure 1).

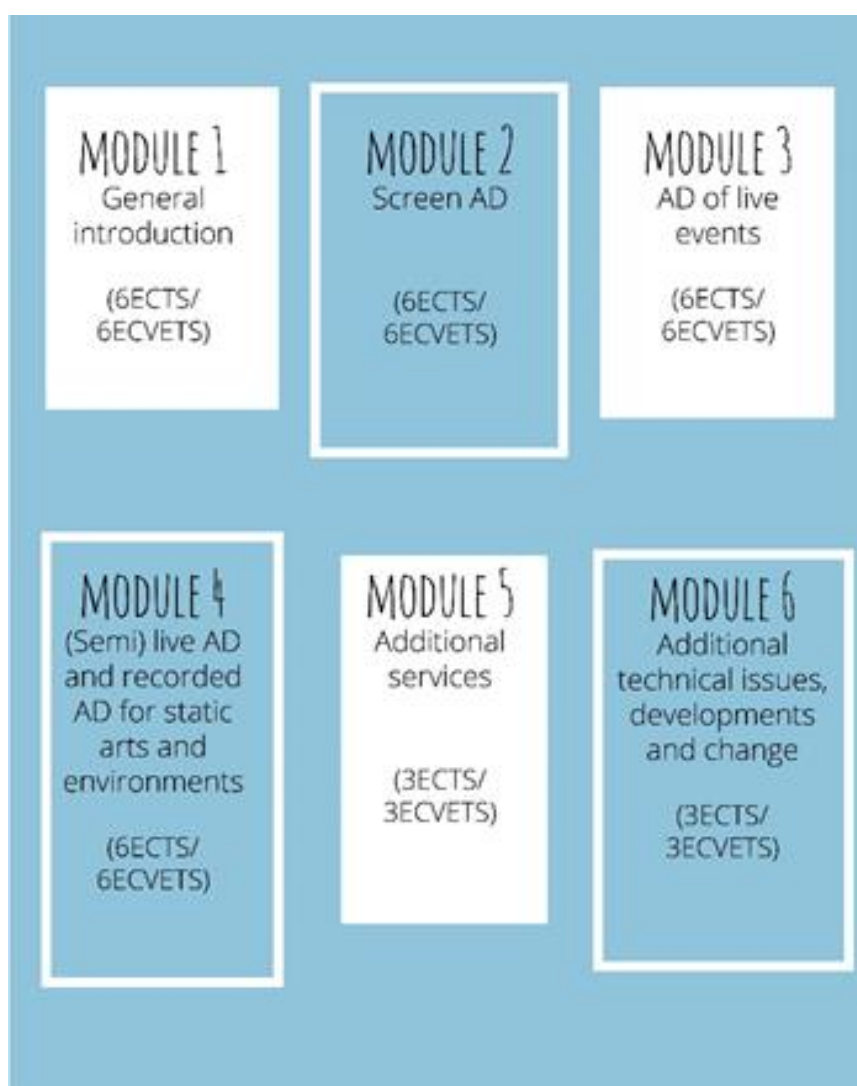


Figure 1. The ADLAB PRO course: Module structure and attribution of ECTS/ECVETS

The suggested number of ECTS and ECVETS (EU 2015) will enable those institutions that will use the course to consider whether to adhere to it or to customize it according to their training needs. Based on the consortium's suggestion, 1 ECTS would correspond to 5 face-to-face hours and 20 hours of individual work at home, therefore a 6 ECTS module would entail an overall of 30 + 120 hours of work.

Assigning ECTS and ECVET points to a course curriculum is not a straightforward process, and it entails a thorough break-down of all the course components to eventually advance a proposal for future accreditation.

4.2.3 Certification in LTA

The [LiveTextAccess \(LTA\)](#) Erasmus+ project started in 2018 and finishes in August 2021. The project aims at addressing a lack of harmonised quality in the delivery of real-time intralingual subtitles and in training across Europe. To this end, the consortium defined a specific IO to develop a certification procedure that recognises skills, knowledge and abilities gained both in educational settings and in the job.

This approach supports lifelong learning and includes parts of the population beyond those aged 19 – 26, who are already the primary addressees of university programmes. To this end, ECQA joined the project as a partner.

[ECQA](#) is a not-for-profit association, based in Austria, that provides a certification and qualification platform in the European Union for about 30 professions. ECQA joins more than 60 members from 25 countries, and thousands of professionals. Since its foundation, ECQA has issued several thousand certificates to professionals in Europe and worldwide.

The LTA certification draws upon the principle of awarding credits for the achievement of learning outcomes in the classroom, outside the

classroom, and in non-formal contexts. The process of allocating credits to learning outcomes is based on the estimated time that a learner needs to complete all learning tasks to achieve a learning outcome.

The LTA certified course is based on the LTA skills cards and the competence-based curriculum designed by the project partner Carlo Eugeni during Intellectual Output 2 - Curriculum design. The described curriculum can be downloaded from [LTA's webpage](#).

The curriculum is based on Safar (1992) and Hamaoui's proposals (2010) for the training of students of audiovisual translation at universities. To meet the needs of students from vocational and academic institutions, the curriculum provides a joint reference to CEDEFOP terminology (2014) and the ECQA terminology put together in the Master thesis by Blanca Nájera Villar (2011). Figure 2 shows this integration.

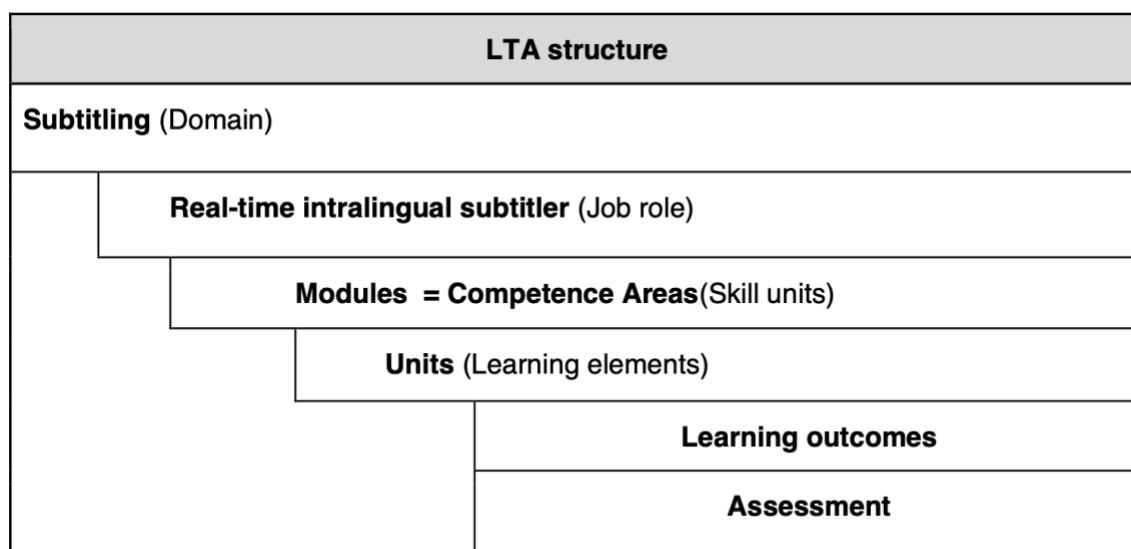


Figure 2. LTA course structure based on the ECQA structure of a Skill Card

ECQA recommends 30 ECTS/ECVET credits for certified courses, which corresponds to half a year of study or work. This means about 750

training or work hours, which translates into approximately 25 training hours per credit.

The distribution of the credits is based on the level of expertise that a prospective student should acquire in each competence area. Figure 3 shows the distribution.

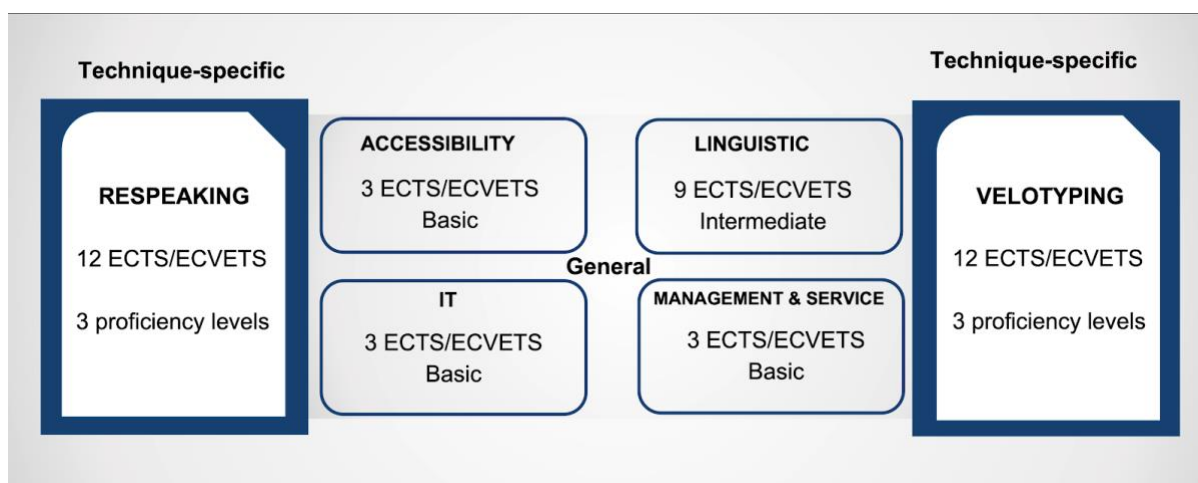


Figure 3. LTA course: workload distribution

The workload distribution for a 30-ECTS course shows that students will dedicate 12 ECTS to acquiring technique-specific skills and 18 ECTS to acquiring skills in the general competence areas Understanding accessibility, Linguistic, IT, and Management and service competence.

In terms of workload, 12 ECTS account for a workload of 300 hours, which are divided into 108 class hours + 192 hours of self-study and homework. Similarly, 18 ECTS account for 450 hours.

The certification process always follows these three steps:

- 1) The candidate takes a self-assessment test at the ECQA platform. The questions are randomised and cover the five competence areas for LTA training:

- General knowledge about accessibility, target users, and working settings
- Linguistic competence
- IT competence
- Entrepreneurship and service competence
- Respeaking competence and/or Velotyping competence

2) The candidate decides according to the test results whether to take part in the whole training, parts of it, or none.

3) The candidate registers for the exam.

The exam encompasses two parts: a written part and a practical one. The written part is a multiple-choice test that can be taken online upon registration. To pass this test, students need to achieve 66% of correct answers for each learning outcome of the training. After successful completion of the written part, students need to show their ability to apply the acquired knowledge in the job. To this end, a so-called Job Role Committee is built to conduct the practical part of the exam.

All the certification procedure is described in [IO5 Report](#). To prepare for the exam, open-source training materials, the skills cards and the curriculum can be downloaded from the project's [website](#).¹

4.2.4 Certification in ILSA

Interlingual Live Subtitling for Access (ILSA) adopted two approaches, consisting of recognition with ECTS credits (see [IO7 report](#) for details) and certification.

¹ To become an exam organisation or learn more about the types of certificates issued by ECQA, ECQA Vice-president [Gabriele Sauberer](#) can be contacted.

Certification is offered through LiRICS: Live Reporters International Certification. LiRICS is run by the Galician Observatory for Media Access, an independent research group hosted at the University of Vigo (Spain). Its mission is to set and maintain high international standards in the respeaking profession to enable the existence of a pool of respeakers who can provide high-quality access through subtitles for live TV programmes and live events.

ILSA certification process is used and recognised internationally. In 2019, after assessing the online certification process proposed by LiRICS, the Department of Education in the UK concluded that it meets their requirements and that LiRICS-certified respeakers are eligible for Disabled Students' Allowances funding.

As well as certifying live subtitlers, LiRICS is also used to certify quality evaluators. In Canada, the governmental regulatory body CRTC (Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications) has established that all broadcasters are required to assess the quality of their captions with the NER model ([CRTC, 2019](#); [Romero-Fresco, 2020](#)). In order to do so, they need evaluators who are certified through LiRICS.

As explained in [NER Canada](#), to become a certified NER Evaluator one must first obtain NER Training through a programme and/or organisation that has been recognised and approved by the NER Advisory Council. Once training is complete and a certificate has been issued, the NER Advisory Council must approve the certification. The NER Advisory Council will only approve certifications that have been reviewed and confirmed by a third-party verifier. The third-party verifiers approved by the NER Advisory Council are Joanne Pak, David Keeble and Dr. Pablo Romero Fresco (LiRICS).

Once accepted by the NER Advisory Council, the certified NER Evaluator will be listed on the NER website. Certified NER Evaluators that are

available to work freelance will have their contact information on the NER website.

LiRICS is also currently being used in the United States, where the largest captioning company, VITAC, has been using it to certify some of its professionals. The same applies to researchers in the two leading universities for media accessibility, Gallaudet University (Washington) and Rochester Institute of Technology (NY). The Global Alliance for Speech to text Captioning has also adopted it and is planning to issue it widely as the only certification in the US that is valid for both stenotypists and voice writers (respeakers).

As far as the certification process is concerned, respickers will normally be expected by their employers to obtain one of the following certifications at least once every 3 years, starting at Level 1 and moving on to 2 and 3 (see Figure 4).

Evaluators must become accredited NER evaluators, which involves completing successful NER assessments of live subtitles in one news programme, one sports programme, one entertainment programme/chat show, one class, one conference and one Question and Answer session.

[Romero-Fresco et al. \(2019\)](#) and [Romero-Fresco and Fresno \(2020\)](#) provide more information about LiRICS.



Level 1 Certification	
TV	Education and Live Events
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - three genres: news, sports, entertainment/chat shows - 1 10-minute sample per genre - one live attempt - assessed with the NER model by two evaluators - must obtain at least 3 stars out of 5 in 2 genres and 2 stars out of 5 in 1. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - three genres: classroom, conference, Q&A - 1 10-minute sample per genre - one live attempt - assessed with the NER model by two evaluators - must obtain at least 3 stars out of 5 in 2 genres and 2 stars out of 5 in 1.
<i>Unsuccessful candidates may re-register to take the test as many times as needed.</i>	
Level 2 Certification	
TV	Education and Live Events
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - three genres: news, sports, entertainment/chat shows - 1 10-minute sample per genre - one live attempt - assessed with the NER model by two evaluators - must obtain at least 3 stars out of 5 in 1 genre and 4 stars out of 5 in the other 2. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - three genres: classroom, conference, Q&A - 1 10-minute sample per genre - one live attempt - assessed with the NER model by two evaluators - must obtain at least 3 stars out of 5 in 1 genre and 4 stars out of 5 in the other 2.
<i>Unsuccessful candidates may re-register to take the test as many times as needed.</i>	
Level 3 Certification	
TV	Education and Live Events
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - three genres: news, sports, entertainment/chat shows - 1 10-minute sample per genre - one live attempt - assessed with the NER model - must obtain at least 4 stars in all genres. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - three genres: classroom, conference, Q&A - 1 10-minute sample per genre - one live attempt - assessed with the NER model - must obtain at least 4 stars in all genres.
<i>Unsuccessful candidates may re-register to take the test as many times as needed. For successful candidates, 12 months must have elapsed between each successful attempt.</i>	

Figure 4. ILSA certification levels

All the previous projects were shared with project partners and served as inspiration for the EASIT certification strategy.

4.3 Certification in EASIT

EASIT has considered certification when developing its contents (4.3.1) but has gone a step further and has obtained the authorisation to develop a MOOC (4.3.2.) and has also designed three specialisation courses that will use EASIT materials and will issue a certificate by UAB (4.3.3).

4.3.1 EASIT steps towards certification

This section reports on the steps taken to make certification possible, concerning the skills card development, the curriculum design and the educational content production.

Skills card

A skills card could be described as a list of skills a learner must have in order to be considered as an expert in a specific field. EASIT has taken into account the ECQA guidelines in the design of the skills cards, so that they could be easily adopted by this certification agency in the future. This is thoroughly explained in the [EASIT IO3 report](#).

Skills cards are organised into different units (that is, competence areas). The ECQA recommends a maximum of five or six units per skills card. At the same time, each unit is made of learning elements, which are grouped in topics. The ECQA advises to include three topics per unit, even though this number could be higher. Each element includes different learning outcomes, which “are statements of what a student is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after the completion of a process of learning” (ECTS Users’ Guide, p. 47).

Following an exhaustive revision of the skills cards elaborated within the framework of other projects on media accessibility already mentioned in this report (ADLAB PRO, LTA, ILSA, and ACT), the format that was finally used for the creation of the skills card in EASIT was the one used in the

ACT and LTA projects, which is compliant with ECQA recommendations. This skills card includes different units, and each unit contains several elements leading to different learning outcomes (also called “performance criteria” in some projects).

One aspect that was thoroughly discussed in the project was the terminology to be used ([see IO1 report](#)). It was finally agreed to use the term “easy-to-understand language” as an umbrella term that includes all language varieties that enhance comprehensibility, from Easy-to-Read (or Easy Language) to Plain Language (see this [video presentation](#) for further details). Our aim was to put the emphasis on the understanding, instead of the reading typically associated with written texts, therefore suggesting a term (“easy-to-understand”) that encompasses different varieties with diverging simplification levels.

Another key aspect that was decided during the EASIT project was related to the number of profiles. The members of EASIT agreed that three different profiles should be created, namely:

- Expert in easy-to-understand subtitling,
- Expert in easy-to-understand audio description, and
- Expert in easy-to-understand audiovisual journalism.

EASIT took care of defining the skills associated with accessibility, easy-to-understand language and the three specialisations mentioned above. The general skills concerning subtitling, audio description and audiovisual journalism were not defined as they were dealt with in other projects. These skills were considered to be pre-requisites, and EASIT only provides basic videos, together with some references and training possibilities.

The three skills cards that were elaborated within EASIT are made up of four different units, namely:

- Unit 1, Media accessibility;
- Unit 2, Easy-to-understand;
- Unit 3, Easy-to-understand and subtitling/audio description/audiovisual journalism;
- Unit 4, The profession.

Unit 1 is made up of five different elements: (1) "Human Diversity", (2) "What is accessibility", (3) "What is universal design", (4) "What is media accessibility" and (5) "Media accessibility services."

Unit 2 also includes five different elements: (1) "Understanding E2U", (2) "Legislation, standards and guidelines", (3) "Processes", (4) "The language of E2U" and (5) "Visual presentation."

Unit 3 focuses on each specific profile, even though it contains in all cases three common elements: (1) "Processes", (2) "Linguistic aspects" and (3) "Technical aspects."

Finally, Unit 4 is only composed of one element, that is in turn made up of two sub-elements: (1) "Personal skills" and (2) "Interpersonal skills."

UNIT	ELEMENT
Unit 1. Media Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human diversity • What is accessibility? • What is universal design? • What is media accessibility? • Media accessibility services
Unit 2. Easy-to-Understand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding E2U • Legislation, standards, and guidelines • Processes • The language of E2U • Visual presentation
Unit 3. Easy-to-Understand and a) subtitling, b) audio description, c) audiovisual journalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processes • Linguistic aspects • Technical aspects
Unit 4. The profession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal skills • Interpersonal skills

Table 2. EASIT Unit-element structure

Curriculum design

IO3 resulted in skills cards based on recommendations from the [ECQA Certification of Job Roles](#) for the three EASIT expert profiles mentioned in the previous section. The curricula designed in IO4, and thoroughly described in [IO4 report](#), are based on these skills cards and follow hereby ECQA certification approaches. More specifically, EASIT has designed:

- three university curricula for the three professional profiles targeted in the project
- a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) proposal as an introduction into the field of E2U audiovisual content.

The skills cards include four units, which are made up of elements, which include learning outcomes. This structure (units>elements>learning outcomes) was the starting point for the curriculum design process.

When designing the university curricula, the skills cards were adapted as follows: the units were turned into modules, the elements of each unit were turned into teaching and learning contents, and the learning outcomes of each element were turned into the programmes' and modules' learning outcomes. Table 3 shows the equivalence between the IO3 skills card units and IO4 modules.

IO3: Skills cards units		IO4: Modules	
Unit 1	Media Accessibility Norms and Regulations	Module 1	Media Accessibility
Unit 2	Easy-to-Understand	Module 2	Easy-to-Understand Language
Unit 3	Easy-to-Understand and Subtitling	Module 3	Easy-to-Understand and Subtitling
	Easy-to-Understand and Audio Description		Easy-to-Understand and Audio Description
	Easy-to-Understand and Audiovisual Journalism		Easy-to-Understand and Audiovisual Journalism
Unit 4	The Profession	Module 4	The Profession

Table 3. Equivalence IO3 skills card units and IO4 modules

Although [IO4 report](#) provides a thorough overview of the content of each module, we would like to stress two aspects:

- users are central in the training process of future professionals. Therefore, identifying user needs, understanding the role of users in the process of creating accessible content, and working in a team alongside persons with diverse capabilities are included as learning outcomes in the modules.

- EASIT focuses on shared aspects across languages when creating, adapting/translating or validating easy-to-understand content. However, when the curricula are implemented in a certain environment, specific language features will need to be discussed and extensive training in writing easy-to-understand texts will need to be provided.

The role of users and the importance of linguistic knowledge have often been overlooked in existing training, but are central in EASIT.

The university curriculum was assigned 30 ECTS, with a duration of 6 months. This is in line with the ECQA recommendation of proposing 30 ECTS/ECVETS credits for certified courses, where 1 ECTS stands for 25 working hours.

The EASIT curricula follow guidelines from the European Commission (European Credit Transfer System, ECTS) and CEDEFOP (European Centre for Development of Vocational Training). Most of these guidelines are required for programmes' quality accreditation in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA, see [Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area](#)). Modular structures, learning outcomes per modules, courses credits, duration, teaching and learning contents, and profile definition are key criteria considered in the EASIT curricula that are also assessed in accreditation processes across Europe. One of the most relevant features of the EASIT curricula is that they are flexible enough to be adapted to the specific requirements, needs and wishes of each institution and still meet relevant criteria for quality accreditation at European level.

Additionally, as already mentioned, EASIT developed the curriculum for a [Massive Open Online Course](#) (MOOC) that can be used outside an academic environment as an introduction to the topic.

Course content development

EASIT has developed different types of educational resources, namely:

- videos, which can take the form of video lectures or other videos such as interviews or samples. These interviews give voice to both professionals and users of easy-to-understand language;
- reading lists;
- tasks, which include questionnaires and suggested activities for learners, and
- additional materials such as links to websites and external videos.

This is thoroughly described in [IO5 report](#). To make this content as accessible as possible to diverse users, alternative formats for videos have been produced, namely:

- presentation slides,
- video transcripts,
- subtitles in different languages, and
- audio-only file.

The open educational resources created can be used in a wide variety of educational environments, such as academic university courses or vocational courses as the ones described above. The materials can be used in the classroom, but also outside the classroom, and they can also be adapted for self-learning.

Taking into account prospective certification needs, special attention has been paid to the recommendations by ECQA on the development of quality training materials.

ECQA (Horvat, 2011) recommends that the training material should be modular and consistent with the skills card of the profession, a recommendation that has been followed in the EASIT project. The training materials follow the modular structure of the skills card, as shown on Figure 4.

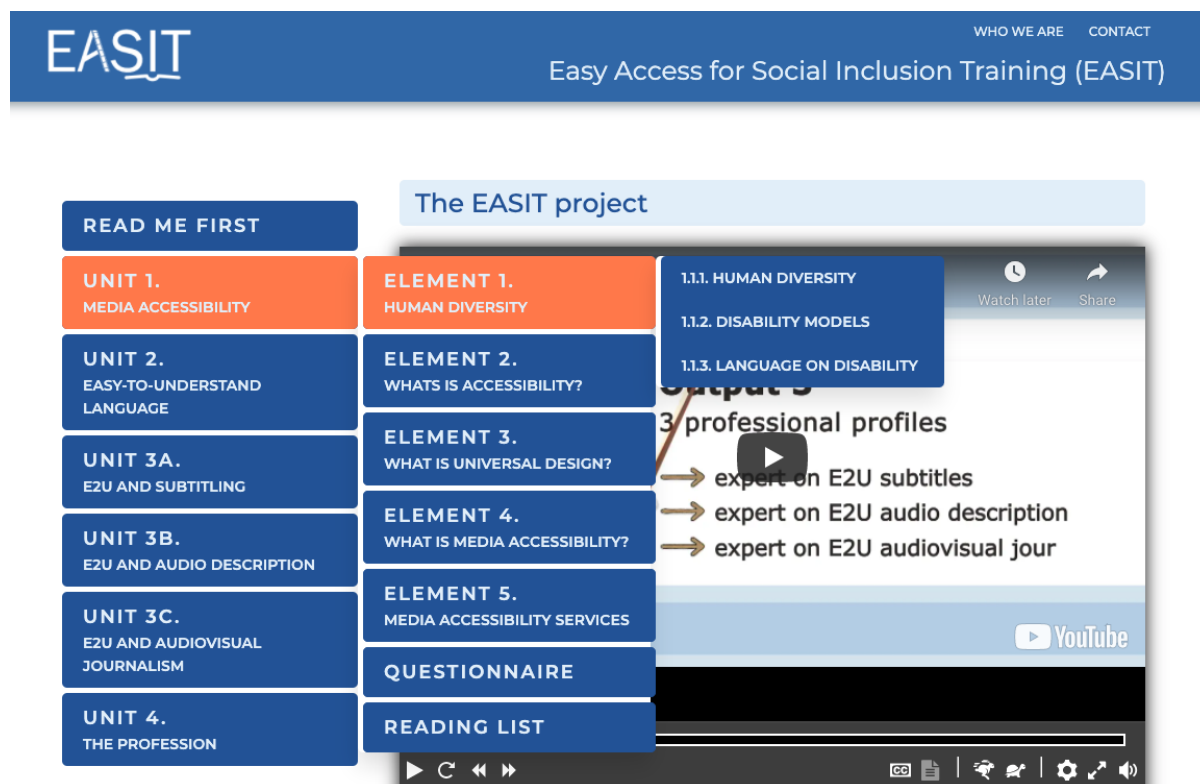


Figure 5. Modular structure of educational content

Regarding types of content, ECQA mentions the need to develop:

- presentation slides
- student notes
- multimedia presentation
- exercises
- references
- authors list

Presentation slides have been developed and are available independently for download in the EASIT website. They follow most ECQA recommendations and include the unit, element and the corresponding logos. Any additional ECQA compliant feature can be added in the future as the slides can be downloaded and adapted.

Students' notes have taken the form of transcripts in the EASIT project, allowing students to access the content related to the slides in written format. Additionally, this has been included in a multimedia presentation that takes the form of videos.

Exercises have taken the form of questionnaires and tasks. A document with 15 questions and from 6 to 25 tasks has been created for each unit. The questionnaire structure is compliant with [ECQA recommendations](#), but the pool of test questions should be expanded in the future to contain at least 5 different test questions per learning outcome.

ECQA recommends a list of sources and further reading. This has been transferred in the EASIT materials as: a) a reading list for each unit, divided into elements, and b) a list of additional materials that can be consulted in relation to a video presentation.

Finally, authors have been acknowledged in all materials, as advised by ECQA. Moreover, the relevant funding programme has been acknowledged and the disclaimer has been included, as advised by ECQA recommendations and funding agency regulations.

All in all, many ECQA recommendations have been followed when developing the educational content, which will make a future certification easier.



4.3.2 MOOC certification

Training can take the form of massive open online courses (MOOC), a format which is nowadays very popular as it suits the needs of diverse users (Bali, 2014; Yousef et al, 2014). EASIT designed a MOOC, as already presented above. This MOOC proposal was presented at a UAB call for MOOC development and implementation and it was approved. The next paragraphs describe the process followed, which may serve as an example of how non-formal training can be certified. It should be stressed that the process described corresponds to the situation at UAB in the 2018-2019 course, which can vary in future years and at different academic institutions.

An [open call](#) for MOOC courses was published by UAB and a proposal following the EASIT skills card was submitted. The title of the course was "Easy audiovisual content: Easy-to-Read and Plain Language in audiovisual access services". The course length was 7 weeks, with an average of 2-4 working hours per week. The course was structured as follows:

- Week 1- Unit 0- General introduction to MOOC and to accessibility.
- Week 2- Unit 1- Media Accessibility
- Week 3- General introduction to easy-to-understand language
- Week 4- Process and visual presentation of easy-to-understand language
- Week 5- Easy-to-understand hybrid services: audio description, subtitling and audiovisual journalism.
- Week 6- The profession
- Week 7- Final assignment

In terms of assessment, each week included a questionnaire. Additionally, a non-graded non-compulsory assignment plus a final compulsory peer-reviewed assignment were planned.

The proposal was assessed by UAB and [accepted](#). If the MOOC wants to be implemented in the future, it has UAB's academic approval but needs to follow the technical requirements by UAB and its visual identity, an aspect in which agreement was not reached in the consortium. Keeping the EASIT visual identity was prioritised during the project development.

In terms of certification, students taking the course can request a verified [Coursera certificate](#) of successful completion of the course once they have passed all required assignments or meet the passing threshold for a cumulative graded course. The certificate is signed by the instructor, issued in .pdf format and downloadable from the Coursera platform. Taking the MOOC does not have any associated costs, but requesting the certificate does. The cost includes complete name verification.

4.3.3 Specialisation courses

Specialisation courses offer specific and specialised training on a topic. They are usually short and market-oriented and address a professional audience. UAB offers more than 400 specialisation courses in 17 different areas.

Using the EASIT curriculum and materials as the basis, together with materials from other educational projects such as ACT or ADLAB PRO and ad-hoc materials, UAB offers three [specialisation courses](#):

- a specialisation course starting September 2021 on [Accessibility Management and Promotion: Accessible Services, Information and Communication](#), which incorporates part of EASIT Unit 1. This course will be in English.

- a specialisation course starting September 2021 on [Accessibility Management and Promotion: Accessible Services, Information and Communication](#), in Catalan. This course is possible thanks to the support of the Culture Department of the Catalan Government. This support shows the impact of EASIT training proposal on key stakeholders beyond academia.
- a specialisation course starting January 2022 on [Accessible Digital Communication: Easy-to-Understand Language](#), which includes some of the EASIT materials in units 2, 3 and 4.

In order to do so, three different proposals had to be submitted and approved at two levels: at the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting Academic Commission and at the Postgraduate School level. They were then accepted by the Academic Affairs Commission at UAB.

Students who enrol in the courses and successfully complete it will be granted a certificate of completion.

All three courses will run online and, although the first one is not a prerequisite for the second one, it is highly recommended. They include six units, each one corresponding to 1 ECTS and 2 weeks.

The structure is as follows:

Accessibility Management and Promotion (Catalan and English version)

- Key concepts and models: diversity, accessibility, usability, universal design, inclusion and multimodality.
- Users, scenarios and services.
- Legislation.
- Standards and guidelines.

- Technology for accessibility.
- Accessibility management: case studies.

Accessible Digital Communication: Easy-to-Understand Language

- What is easy-to-understand language? Services and modalities.
- Legislation, standards and guidelines.
- The process of creation, adaptation and evaluation/validation of easy-to-understand content.
- Linguistic and visual aspects.
- Easy-to-understand language in audiovisual media.
- Case studies in different languages (including English, Spanish and Catalan, depending on the demand).

The fact that these two courses are offered using EASIT materials guarantees the sustainability of the project.

4.4 New avenues for EASIT

EASIT can be taken a step further beyond the life of the project. This section presents different possibilities in both higher education and vocational training. We have used Slovenia as a case study for vocational training, and Spain and Germany as case studies for higher education.

4.4.1 Certification possibilities for new professions: Slovenia as a case study

The National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) system could provide the necessary framework to implement EASIT beyond the academic and higher education environment: “they assess someone’s competence in a work situation and they are based on [national occupational standards](#)”

(levels)”. National occupational standards (NOS) “define the competences which apply to job roles or occupations in the form of statements of performance, knowledge and the evidence required to confirm competence”. In this regard, the NVQ system promotes certification of corresponding professional competencies. [Certification of competencies](#) is understood as “the formal recognition of the proved competency (thus, assessed) of an individual in order for him to carry out a standardised labour activity”.

One of the possibilities to use the results of the EASIT project in Slovenia would be through the NVQ system. Professions such as the experts in easy-to-understand subtitling, audio description and journalism will be needed in the future in different media such as TV, press, radio or web. A certified course in these areas would allow employers to train their employees in new specialisations. Journalists could become experts in easy-to-understand journalism, subtitlers could expand their skills and be able to provide easy-to-understand subtitles and the same would happen for audio describers. Taking into account that Slovenia does not have a university programme to train audio describers, a special course to train describers first would be needed.

The NVQ system is a flexible and adaptable system that enables companies to quickly respond to labour market changes and needs and to work process variations. It offers a wide range of qualifications needed by companies. Employers can also put forward proposals for new National Vocational Qualifications. In this framework, they define competences, skills and knowledge required by companies and thereby provide for appropriate new staff.

The NVQ system helps companies to assure requisite qualifications, but it also gives an overview of existing qualifications in companies and enables better knowledge management of employees—identification, assignment,

enhancement and assessment of knowledge in companies, tapping into hidden potential of employees, retraining, redeployment of labour resources, etc.

The NVQ system also gives individuals the possibility to validate the skills and knowledge obtained through the pursuit of one's occupation, volunteer work, leisure activities, participation in non-formal training programmes, self-learning, etc. NVQ attests to one's competence to perform a certain occupation. The certificate is not merely valid at a company level, but it is also recognised at national and European levels.

The NVQ acquisition procedure follows a three-step process: a) submission of the application, 2) counselling and compilation of a portfolio, and 3) NVQ assessment and award. NVQ can be obtained by adults who acquired different vocational competencies throughout their lifetime, but did not have them assessed or awarded, and wish to be promoted in their professional career without obtaining a higher level of professional education or completing a formal education programme.

Radio Television Slovenia (Radiotelevizija Slovenija) is already participating in this form of certification and there is the possibility to extend the number of specialised professions training that it could offer as a public broadcaster. This would also have an impact on the academic variety of the programmes.

The production process of multimedia contents has undergone changes as new approaches were introduced. Due to the growing numbers of multimedia content production, the demand for staff increased but the educational market had neglected the acquisition of appropriate knowledge and skills in the field. If one adds high training costs for new staff integrated into the work process without possessing requisite basic knowledge and skills in recording and adaptation of audio and visual

contents, we probably enumerated all the key reasons motivating Radio Television Slovenia to kick off our activities in relation to the NVQ system.

Following three years of intensive cooperation with the National Institute for Vocational Education and Training (CPI) and the National Examination Centre, certification procedures at complexity levels V and VI enabled Radio Television Slovenia to cover all job classification needs for previously so-called specific media profiles such as:

- sound designers,
- stage lighting designers,
- image and sound editors,
- maskers,
- television camera operators,
- cameramen,
- media production organisers,
- script supervisors,
- media archivists,
- music editors,
- prop masters,
- grip technicians, etc.

Within this context, the NVQ could be easily extended and new profiles could be created for audio describers, and more specifically for audio describers, subtitlers and AVJ journalist who are experts in easy-to-understand language. The work done within the EASIT project could be

the basis for this future expansion of job certifications needed by the audiovisual industry.

Moreover, this wide range of vocational standards and catalogues does not solely cater for the needs of the public institution Radio Television Slovenia, but also resolves educational and staff challenges in theatre and stage arts, archives and video production producers (mobile technology, online newspapers and similar).

Certification benefits for employees

The acquisition of a verified document at complexity level VI within a relatively short time and by contributing a fairly low financial sum (associates of the Radio Television Slovenia paid only half of statutorily defined participant fee) is without a doubt one of the most important advantages arising from NVQ. A psychological effect is of even greater significance as certificate holders are more self-confident and have better job and social security, not to mention increased staff mobility of employees.

As credit assessment procedures of catalogues are completed, many individuals will have better transition possibilities to full-time educational programmes.

Certification benefits for employers

Professional and competence levels of employees were substantially enhanced within a relatively short time and by way of low financial contributions. Primarily older associates viewed the possibility to obtain a verified document very positively. Hence, the move can be seen from the perspective of life-long learning and age management. Motivation and in-house mobility of the staff were simultaneously increased. The work organisation certainly gained positive ratings in a wider social community.

At the same time, it was demonstrated that enormous motivation and targeted policies allow for active interventions when designing educational and staff policies at state level and thereby meet employees' needs. This realisation leads and guides us to engage in further actions and ambitions: we would like to see the introduction of the certification system or National Vocational Qualifications at university level in the future.

To sum up, Radio Television Slovenia has been involved in the definition of job role competencies for a wide range of professionals. They provide some of the courses in collaboration with educational centres and are involved in assessment and certification through an educational institute. The way the EASIT project has been designed—with clear skills card and a suggested curriculum for both academic and vocational training—would make it easy for Radio Television Slovenia to generate new job roles beyond the life of the project, propose a course using EASIT materials and get their professionals certified for new through the [NVQ programme](#).

Closely related to this, the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training is developing the project [PINPIU](#), which aims to develop [Advanced Training Programmes for Further Vocational Education and Training](#) in 2017-2022. Training and advanced training programmes are a new type of publicly valid programmes of further vocational education and training in the Republic of Slovenia. A company, chamber, employers' association or school, can submit a proposal to the CPI. If accepted, a working group develops the proposal and submits it to the Professional Council of the Republic of Slovenia for Education and Training.

In this regard, the work done as part of the EASIT project would be helpful in applying for this recognition, as some of the criteria of the PINPIU programme have already been considered when developing the EASIT proposal, namely:

- that the content of the new qualification means upgrading, supplementing, updating or deepening of knowledge and improvement of professional competencies, and that it enables participants to acquire new and additional knowledge; and
- that new, additional knowledge, reflects the needs of companies and jobs where candidates will receive practical training, or they are employed at.

4.4.2 Certification processes in higher education: Spain and Germany as case studies

In **Spain** universities can offer what are termed “títulos oficiales” (official degrees) and “títulos propios” (university-specific degrees). Official degrees (BA, MA, PhD) follow specific quality procedures and have the official recognition of the State; hence, they are included in the Registry of Universities, Centres and Qualifications [RUCT](#). University-specific degrees are supported by the prestige of the university granting them.

The process of creating and evaluating higher education official degrees was established in the [Royal decree 1393/2007, 29 October](#), following the principles of the European Higher Education Area. According to this framework, universities propose new studies and different stages are followed:

- Verification: the university submits a report with a new academic degree proposal which is evaluated by a quality agency.
- Monitoring or follow-up: there is a yearly revision of how the academic degree is being implemented.
- Modification: if relevant, changes can be proposed and implemented based on the annual monitoring or follow-up.

- Accreditation: the quality of the evaluation is assessed and, if the evaluation is positive, the degree can continue to be offered.

There are quality agencies providing the recommendations and performing the assessment at regional level. For instance, [AQU Catalunya](#) is the agency for the promotion and assurance of quality in the Catalan higher education system and is a member of the Spanish Network of Higher Education Quality Agencies. [ANECA](#), on the other hand, is the central National Quality and Accreditation Agency in Spain.

Regarding university-specific degrees, each university establishes its own criteria to propose new degrees. A new Royal Decree on the Organisation of University Training is currently being discussed.

In the context of EASIT, the curriculum design could be easily integrated in a proposal for an official Master's degree verification, as it has some of the main aspects required in the application:

- ECTS has been used: since EASIT proposes a 30-ECTS course, it could be integrated in a wider Master's programme;
- learning outcomes are central in the curriculum design;
- instructional blocks are organised in modules, and for each module information on the structure, contents, methods, assessments and materials is included.

Another possibility would be to develop a university-specific degree. In this case, the proposal should need to fit in the university regulations. At Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), there would be different possibilities:

- Integrate the EASIT structure as part of a 60-ECTS university-specific Master's degree.

- Propose a 30-ECTS postgraduate degree. According to current regulations, postgraduate degrees at UAB have between 30 and 60 ECTS.

In **Germany**, Bachelor's and Master's programmes can be created and offered following state law. Each of the 16 states has its own legal framework to regulate the creation of programmes in higher education. In general, each university or institution has the authority to develop a study programme (Bachelor's or Master's) that is based on its own study and examination regulations (in German: Studien- und Prüfungsordnung, see [German Accreditation Council 2020](#)). If programmes are regulated by state examinations (in German: Staatsexamen), like for instance medical or law studies, further stipulations may apply.

In order to assure and enhance quality in higher education, study programmes can be accredited by the [German Accreditation Council](#). Each state has its own legal framework for accreditation, but they are all bound to the [Interstate Study Accreditation Treaty](#), which in turn is based on the [European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area \(ESG\)](#). This treaty formulates a joint accreditation system that aims to ensure the quality of teaching and learning in German universities and institutions for higher education. It also intends to make possible transferability between institutions of students' achieved credit points according to European principles stated in Bologna.

The accreditation process in Germany has four different stages:

- Self-evaluation.
- Peer-review evaluation.
- Report.
- Decision on accreditation.



The first three stages are coordinated by accreditation agencies authorized by the German Accreditation Council. This Council lists a total of ten agencies that are authorized to operate in Germany (see [German Accreditation Council](#)). They are in charge of the evaluations and the resulting reports that are sent to the German Accreditation Council, which has the authority of granting or denying the accreditation.

In the first stage of self-evaluation, universities draft a concept for a Bachelor's or a Master's degree. This concept should include the quality goals of the higher education institution, as well as the study programmes' formal criteria, such as structure, duration, profiles, admission requirements, modules, credits, amongst others (see [Interstate Study Accreditation Treaty](#)). This concept is sent with an application to the German Accreditation Council and an agency of the institution's choosing.

In the second stage, the accreditation agency coordinates with the higher education institution for a peer-review evaluation. The review panel appointed by the agency is made up of at least two subject-related professors, a subject-related representative with professional experience and one subject-related student (see [German Accreditation Council](#)). During this evaluation, the agency assesses if the quality criteria for higher education programmes are met, if the academic content is covered appropriately and if the institutions possess the infrastructure to pursue the programme's goals. Based on this, the agency writes an accreditation report with recommendations for a final decision from the Council.

The EASIT curricula for higher education programmes can be used as a starting point for the creation of new Bachelor's and Master's programmes in the fields of accessibility and easy-to-understand language in Germany. Each university has the authority and autonomy to create and offer their own study programmes following German and European regulations. The EASIT curricula were based on European recommendations for higher

education. Furthermore, if the EASIT curricula were to be accredited by the German Accreditation Council, several of the formal criteria that are demanded according to the Interstate Study Accreditation Treaty were also considered. The EASIT curricula can also be adapted to the institutions' own requirements and wishes and still meet accreditation criteria.

5 Key Performance Indicators

The project established a key performance indicator (KPI) for this output: proposed certification strategy developed. This KPI has been achieved because the project has suggested different certification paths and, additionally, has implemented some certification paths, which guarantees the project sustainability.

6 Dissemination

This output has been disseminated in parallel to the dissemination of the project, where certification is a central aspect. Special emphasis was put in the last multiplier event in [Slovenia](#). Additionally, some of the presentations where certification is addressed are:

- Bernabé-Caro, R., Matamala, A. (2021, forthcoming). Audiovisual content for all: Easy-to-read Language in Audiovisual translation. [KLAARA 2021](#).
- Matamala, A., Fernández-Torné, A. (2021, submitted). Presentation and book chapter at [CIDICO](#) conference.
- Matamala, A. (2021, forthcoming). Easy-to-understand access services in multimodal contexts: training and practice. [IATIS conference](#).



- Matamala, A. (2021, forthcoming). Clear writing and audiovisual content: training future professionals. Clear Writing for Europe 2021 pre-conference. European Commission.
- Matamala, A. Oncins, E., Orero, P. (2021). Training new professional profiles in easy-to-understand audiovisual media services. CIDUI. Beyond Competencies in a Digital Society. June 2021.
- Panel at Media for All Conference, 2021. Open access link: <https://ddd.uab.cat/record/237359>
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7 Impact, transferability and sustainability

The certification strategies described in this document, which consider both academic and vocational environments, will make the project sustainability and transferability easier. In this regard, the skills card, the curriculum design and the educational content creation processes have been guided by quality procedures and recommendations that will make the adoption of the EASIT curriculum easier across Europe.



As for the impact of the project, it is demonstrated by the fact that a proposal for a MOOC has been accepted by Coursera-UAB and by the fact that three certified courses will be developed. These courses have undergone external evaluations before approval, showing that EASIT has taken quality procedures seriously.

8 Conclusions

This output aimed to explore certification avenues to secure the project sustainability. This has been achieved, as quality procedures from both vocational and higher education quality agencies have been considered along the project development. More specifically, EASIT has produced relevant outputs such as skills cards which follow the European Certification and Qualification Agency criteria, a curriculum design in line with the European Higher Education Area recommendations, and training materials that can fit both vocational and academic environments. The fact that certification has been a central axe of the project will make the future implementation of the proposals easier.

In this regard, it should be stressed that before the completion of the project a MOOC proposal together with three specialisation courses have already been accepted, and the courses will be implemented shortly after the end of the project.

All in all, EASIT has proposed new professional profiles suited to the dynamic market needs while taking into account certification aspects and developing flexible materials that can be used in a wide variety of contexts. This continuous work on certification will guarantee the transferability and sustainability of the EASIT project results.



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Partners:

