Valorization and Dissemination Plan

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1 Introduction

Coherently with current literature and policy views, “valorisation” in the CERTIFIED project means “building on project achievements and outcomes”, enhancing them through validation and exploitation. This is aiming to increase their value and impact, and to integrate them into development and training systems and practices at local/national as well as at European level.

The CERTIFIED project aims at the creation of a new system for the certification of competences and the accreditation of training providers in the Financial Services Sector in the EU and in particular in Luxembourg, that is the headquarter of a number of major European Investment Banks. CERTIFIED will explore the key segments of the Financial Services Sector - banking, insurance, investment and capital market - and will provide European certificates for competences corresponding to EQF levels 4 and 5 (which translates into expert employees and middle managers working in the Financial Services Sector).

The CERTIFIED certification and accreditation system responds to the need for common competences and qualifications frameworks at sectorial level, coherently with the following key policy milestones:

- the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF) and the key principles of the European Quality Framework for VET;
- the EU Directive 2005/36/EC on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications;
- the Copenhagen policy priorities and related follow-ups;
- the sectorial EU framework articulated in the Financial Services Action Plan (FSAP) and post-FSAP policies for an integrated European Financial Services Sector;

The adoption of a competence-centred approach for the certification system will allow the adaptation of the system according to local/national specificities (in a logic of ‘scalability’). This will assure quality of the system and comparability of the certification outcomes across Countries. The shift from a knowledge-centred method to a competence-centred approach for examinations leading to certification is expected to facilitate the valorisation process.

In this document, the overall valorisation and dissemination strategy, as designed taking into account the sectorial context, the project target groups and the sustainability issues, is presented.

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Leonardo UK National Agency, Valorisation Guidance Note for Applicants and Projects
2 Target Groups

The addressed target sector is the Financial Services Sector comprising banking, insurance, investment and capital market. The sector, being the backbone of the EU economy, has a fundamental role and impact on the quality of life of the EU society, especially considering the growing importance of financial advise and financial planning. Within the EU, Luxembourg is in this respect particularly affected, since the Financial Services Sector accounts for 30% of its GDP and employs some 29,000 staff (i.e. 10% of the working population). In this context the CERTIFIED project will strive to benefit not only institutions and individuals professionally involved in the Financial Services Sector, but also EU citizens at large, being the customers of the Sector. They will be in fact among the potential users of the CERTIFIED system. Therefore, the CERTIFIED certification and accreditation system will represent the common tool to assure quality and transparency of competences and qualifications2.

The directly addressed target groups thus are:
♦ Banking and Financial Institutes.
♦ Banks and financial services institutions.
♦ Employees and middle managers in the Financial Services Sector.
♦ Certification and accreditation institutions.
♦ Training providers, trainers, specialists in lifelong learning and VET.
♦ Higher Education institutions.

The final and potential users of the project results will be:
♦ Banking and Financial Institutes, as well as training providers in other service sectors.
♦ Employees and middle managers in the Financial Services Sector and in other service sectors.

The validation experiences in three different pilot sites (Poland, Portugal and Greece) should provide also inputs for the fine-tuning of the accreditation and certification system, thus meeting the needs of local users. The involvement of key players in the Financial Services Sector as well as of certification authorities should make sure that the CERTIFIED system responds to real needs and complies with institutional guidelines and priorities at national and international/EU level.

The innovative and flexible approach to certification and accreditation in CERTIFIED, together with its high quality assurance standards, it is expected to extend the project results beyond the target groups defined in the project, also giving benefit to the life long and vocational training practices and frameworks in the EU sector.

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2 Competences are understood as the combination of knowledge, skills and know-how applied and mastered in a given work situation. The definition was agreed by the European Social Partners in February 2002 and has been adopted by the European Commission in the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning.
3 Objectives of valorisation and dissemination

In order to increase the value and ensure the use of CERTIFIED and the impact that the planned accreditation and certification system may have, it is envisaged valorisation and dissemination activities will be consistent with the following objectives:

1. To build consensus
2. To assure the availability of outputs
3. To assure transferability of outputs
4. To increase the visibility

In general terms, it is important to stress that the planned ongoing validation processes are meant to inform and involve the addressed target groups. This in order to facilitate the perspective integration of the CERTIFIED accreditation and certification system within existing VET systems at national and at sectorial level. In this respect, target groups involvement is considered as the key measure supporting project valorisation.

In order to achieve the above-mentioned objectives, the following specific actions and initiatives will be taken:

1. With respect to the objective ‘to build consensus’: Building a widespread consensus on the outputs will be an ongoing process made possible by setting up an iterative validation process involving final beneficiaries and other stakeholders. The planned workshops will also serve this purpose, together with the involvement of national reference centres (EBTN Members) in specific research activities (e.g. the study, the national overviews of existing accreditation and certification systems). Such ongoing process makes it possible to involve a large number of key players since the project inception, which will be asked for their expertise and knowledge of the sector. This will certainly lead to the acceptance of the system.

2. With respect to the objective ‘to assure the availability of outputs’: Outputs will be made available to interested parties by publishing them on the project web site and making them available and downloadable. This will facilitate the integration process within existing VET systems. In this respect, the decision of the CERTIFIED partnership to publish and share the project outputs as they are developed and validated reflects the willingness of making the planned system as widely known and accepted. In addition, making outputs public also implies that external actors can contribute with their comments and suggestions for improvement. The communication process which is foreseen will facilitate the further adoption of the accreditation and certification system in other Countries. In this respect, the web site has a fundamental role in assuring this possibility. It is foreseen that documents will be saved in PDF format. Users will be able to download them for free after registration to the web site.

3. With respect to the objective ‘to assure transferability of outputs’: The conditions for transferability and scalability will be created by integrating the results of the validation (and therefore user feedback) in the developed system in order to verify the degree of acceptance of the model developed by other actors. Validation with ‘real’ users will take place in the pilot experiences. During the 4-month pilot experiences it will be possible to discuss with users the critical elements of the system in view of improving it and making it consistent with different national contexts. The adoption of a methodology focused on competences and based on recent policy priorities and tools (such as the European Qualifications Framework) will also contribute to the
transferability of the outputs. Closely linked to the valorisation and dissemination strategy, the sustainability strategy will take into account context-related opportunities for further development and exploitation. This will be described initially in the Sustainability Plan and then refined and adapted to real perspective scenarios of development in the (Business) Development Model.

4. With respect to the objective ‘to increase the visibility’: The visibility of the project outcomes will be fostered by promoting them in relevant events and media, and by organising the final Dissemination Conference. EBTN will make sure that CERTIFIED is presented and promoted in the transnational events and conferences organised at regular intervals in Europe and in the rest of the world. SCIENTER, as Member of European networks working in the field of VET (i.e. EDEN, MENON EEIG, EifEL) will have the opportunity to introduce the project to the public of VET specialists, whereas the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg will make sure that the project is promoted in the academic fields. EKEPIS will make sure that the project is known among national qualifications authorities and the institutional players working on the addressed themes. FABI will make sure that the trade unions field is informed about the project and possibly reacts on the further implementation opportunities at national and EU level. Furthermore, the group of EBTN Members which have already sent their Letter of Support will also assure visibility. The four quarterly e-newsletters will contribute to keeping up-to-date the addressed target audiences and highlight specific outcomes as they are developed and validated. The final Dissemination Conference will be a valuable opportunity for presenting the project to a wide audience of experts and practitioners (approximately more than 100 people will be invited), and to collect additional first-hand experiences from external players.

Furthermore, the acceptance expressed by interested organisations will open the way to real sustainability of the system in different Countries in Europe, in the Mediterranean and Balkan Countries, and possibly in other sectors too. In this respect, it has been planned that after the ‘launch’ of the CERTIFIED system in the final Dissemination Conference, additional organisations from the Financial Services Sector, as well as from other sectors, will express (through letters of interest/appreciation) their commitment to work with the CERTIFIED system and to endorse it.
4 The Valorisation Strategy: Approach and Activities

The CERTIFIED valorisation strategy is primarily based on the existing consensus of all EBTN Members towards the development of a comprehensive certification and accreditation system for Financial Services Sector in the EU. This is expected to assure quality in the training provisions and in the related certification procedures for the large constituency of Financial Services Sector employees, with a special focus on middle managers in the pilot phase. This consensus has been expressed and formalised already at the beginning of 2005 when the CERTIFIED pre-proposal was submitted to the EC. On that occasion, the EBTN Executive Committee (the ‘Office Bearers’) officially approved the project, its objectives and operational aspects. It has also been agreed that an Accreditation Committee will be established soon after the CERTIFIED system will be finalised and integrated with the outcomes of the validation phase. This will be facilitated by the valuable inputs from three partners of the CERTIFIED project (namely, WIB – Poland, CIOBS – Scotland, and IFB - Portugal) which are also Members of the EFCB Accreditation Committee. In almost three years of operations, the EFCB Accreditation Committee has accredited 12 Banking Institutes throughout Europe, and EBTN has issued certificates to bank employees. The EFCB has therefore become a ‘quality label’ for the foundation level certificates. This has strengthened EBTN position as leading certification and accreditation body in the Financial Services Sector, and has in the mean time opened up the challenge for the intermediate level certification system. The interest and commitment of EBTN Members in Europe and in third countries represents an essential condition for the future implementation of the certification and accreditation system within the Financial Services Sector.

The CERTIFIED valorisation strategy is strictly linked to dissemination and to sustainability and exploitation of project outcomes. In this respect, specific valorisation activities will be carried out in order to:

♦ Produce comprehensive documentation on the project aims, outcomes and impact.
♦ Highlight that the achieved results meet needs clearly identified at the project outset, thus assuring effectiveness.

The effectiveness of the valorisation strategy is mainly based on the credibility and competence of EBTN and of its Members. As a matter of fact EBTN is a transnational network made of 35 European organisations3 which has been working since its creation in

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3 [http://www.ebtn.com](http://www.ebtn.com). The EBTN Full Members are:

- Belgian Bankers Association (BE);
- International Banking Institute (BG);
- Sofia University "St. Kl. Ohridski” Centre for European RTD Projects (BG);
- Institute of Financial Services, Cyprus (CY);
- The College of Banking (CZ);
- The Danish Bankers Association (DK);
- The Finnish Bankers' Association (FI);
- Centre de Formation de la Profession Bancaire (F);
- Association for Bankers Training (DE);
- Bankakademie e.V. (DE);
- Hellenic Banking Institute of the Hellenic Bank Association (GR);
- International Training Centre for Bankers (HU);
- The Institute of Bankers in Ireland (IE);
- Finance & Banking - Organizational and HR Development Association (I);
- Abiformazione (I);
- Financial Technology Transfer Agency (LU);
- The Luxembourg Institute for Training in Banking (LU);
- The Netherlands Institute for Banking, Insurance and Investment (NL);
- Norwegian School of Management (NO);
- Warsaw Institute of Banking (PL);
- The Gdansk Institute for Market, Economics - Academy of Banking (PL);
- International School of Banking & Finance (PL);
- Instituto de Formação Bancaria (PT);
- Romanian Banking Institute (RO);
- International Banking Institute (RU);
- The Institute of Banking Education of the National Bank of Slovakia (SK);
- The Bank Association of Slovenia (SI);
- Asociación Española de Banca Privada (ES);
- Private Foundation Institute of Financial Studies (ES);
- Banking Studies Center (CH);
- Swiss Bankers Association (CH);
- Foundation “Genève Financial Center” (CH);
- The Banks Association of Turkey
1991 for the promotion of knowledge of EU sectorial regulations by organising international workshops and conferences. Specifically, VET, professional certification and quality assurance represent the main interest areas. The EBTN European Working Committee on Professional Certification, which has been working on the implementation of the EFCB, is in charge of publishing and disseminating (also through the EBTN web site) relevant documents and results of the certification activities.

The following valorisation actions are already planned and other will be planned forward:

- Dissemination and visibility, starting from the project kick-off meeting. It has already been planned that CERTIFIED will be presented in the following events:
  - Autumn 2006: Seminar “Professional Development in the Financial Services Sector” to be held in Brussels
  - Early 2007: Conference “Banking and Financial Training Experiences” to be held in Frankfurt
  - Spring 2007: “World Conference of Banking Institutes”, in Toronto (Canada). The EBTN President will be a guest speaker.
  - Autumn 2007: CERTIFIED final Dissemination Conference, to be held in Milan (Italy).

Furthermore, EBTN Member organisations will be invited to organise, in their own Countries, specific workshops in which the CERTIFIED outcomes and implementation lines will be presented. The invited participants will be representatives of the local Financial Services Sector as well as of qualifications authorities, Higher Education Institutions and training providers. The EBTN President will participate in each of these workshops, assuring consistency and continuity across Countries.

- Activation of EBTN Members since the project inception/start up and consensus building. The link with the EFCB and the participation of some Members of its Accreditation Committee (namely: WIB, IFB and CIOBS) which have a consolidated experience in certification approaches and procedures. There is a need among EBTN Members for an accreditation and certification system which assures quality in training processes and practices. EBTN Members have already been informed (already at the beginning of 2005) of the CERTIFIED project and its outcomes and have expressed their willingness to implement the system once it has been validated. EBTN Executive Committee (called ‘Office Bearers’) has already committed itself to the creation of a new Accreditation Committee for the second-level/intermediate certification system for middle management. The new accreditation and certification system will be formally endorsed by the EBTN Board of Directors. This means that there is already a widespread consensus among EBTN Members on the CERTIFIED system.

Therefore the CERTIFIED partners (co-ordinated by EBTN, leader of the work package will work on project valorisation with the objective of assuring:

i) Visibility and dissemination of the project with regard to the developed products and (expected) impact.
ii) Visibility and promotion of the project network (as resulting from the activities that each partner will carry out locally with key players and stakeholders), so to enhance public awareness of the project outcomes.

iii) Involvement of other actors/key players in the different fields addressed by CERTIFIED, in order to promote and support consensus beyond the partnership and beyond the project scope as defined in the proposal and contractual obligations. Important organisations at European and national level have already expressed their interest, sending their ‘Letter of Interest’ (attached to this proposal). These organisations are: the Banking Committee of the European Social Affairs – European Banking Federation; the Luxembourg Institute for Training in Banking (Luxembourg), and ATTF – Agence de Transfer de Technologie Financière (Luxembourg).

iv) Collection of users’ feedback in order to verify the degree of acceptance of the model developed, so to substantiate the validation process and set the basis for further dissemination and transferability to other contexts (sectors and Countries).

v) Identification of possible additional funds so to enhance sustainability once the Leonardo da Vinci support has phased out.

In order to make sure that valorisation activities are successful, special attention should be also paid to:

1. The specific characteristics of the project outputs. These concern also the actual implementation areas where the CERTIFIED system can be transferred in an effective way, exploiting the real project potential and generating a positive impact on training systems. The analysis of the project outputs is called “awareness of project and products identity”. This may also imply adaptation activities so to make the developed system in line with existing accreditation and certification systems in EU Countries.

2. The characteristics and needs of the addressed target groups and of the context in which they operate. Only a deep understanding of the external context and of the target groups will allow for a consistent valorisation strategy aimed at promoting the application of the system. As specified in Section C1 of this proposal, the addressed target groups and the final and potential users are (a) Banking and Financial Institutes; (b) Banks and financial services institutions; (c) Employees and middle managers in the Financial Services Sector; (d) Certification and accreditation institutions; (e) Training providers, trainers, specialists in lifelong learning and VET; (f) Higher Education institutions. Their needs may evolve in time. CERTIFIED needs to monitor them and integrate the key emerging elements so to develop an accreditation and certification system which is updated and coherent with the latest developments in the Financial Services Sector training area. Similarly, CERTIFIED needs to be aware of relevant policy developments. This can be generally called “analysis of the context”.

The addressed target groups which have shown an interest are:

- Internal audience: Banking and Financial Institutes (working in the fields of banking, insurance, investment and capital market).
- External audience: research centres, Higher Education Institutions, consulting firms, institutional agencies and other stakeholders working in the field of certification at national and European level.
- Potential Users: other partnerships of projects dealing with the same themes, stakeholders at national and international level.
The following scheme represents the stakeholders scenario:

3. The feasibility of valorization opportunities. It will be a priority for CERTIFIED to ‘use’ the network and to embed dissemination activities in Member organization programmes and events. As a matter of fact, nine EBTN Members from Denmark, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Spain, have already expressed their interest and sent their Letters of Support (attached to this proposal). They have accepted to actively contribute to the design and validation phases. Therefore, they will contribute as expert organizations to the following Work Packages:

- WP 2 ‘Methodology Development’, participating in the kick-off meeting (to be held in Athens in Project Month 1), where a session will be dedicated to presenting the project objectives and planned activities and at collecting their feedback, needs and expectations;
- WP 3 ‘Integration and Design of the System’, contributing to the collection of national data for the study and also participating in the ‘Validation workshop’ in Frankfurt in Project Month 4;
- WP 4 ‘Integration and Design of the System’, monitoring the development of the competences framework and of the qualifications framework, and then participating in the ‘Integration Workshop’ to be held in Paris in Project Month 14;
- WP 6 ‘Piloting, Validation and Consolidation’, monitoring the validation/piloting activities (and possibly also volunteering as a pilot site) and participating in the ‘Consolidation Workshop’ to be held in Luxembourg in Project Month 19.

4. Concerning the specific “Valorisation Actions” that will be carried out, the CERTIFIED partnership has already planned, as the final dissemination conference, and to

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4 The Danish Bankers Association (Denmark); Private Foundation Institute of Financial Studies (Spain); International Training Centre for Bankers (Hungary); National Bank of Slovakia - Institute of Banking Education (Slovakia); ABIFormazione (Italy); The Netherlands Institute for Banking, Insurance and Investment (Netherlands); Romanian Banking Institute (Romania); The Bank Association of Slovenia
participation in other events and elaboration of articles and papers for specialized press. Special attention has to be paid to the possibility to embed the dissemination and valorisation of CERTIFIED in existing initiatives. The aim is to give the project outcomes the greatest visibility also linking them with the mainstreaming discussion issues already dealt with in institutionalised settings.
5 Methods and tools

The partnership will use a wide variety of dissemination methods to communicate and make the project message visible to the target audience and achieve the project valorisation purposes. The following table lists some of the many methods the members are asked to use:

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<th>Tools</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Target</th>
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<tr>
<td>‘Official’ newsletters / journals of partners</td>
<td>To raise awareness To inform</td>
<td>Members of EBTN Financial Service Sector operators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project web site</td>
<td>To raise awareness To inform To promote To engage</td>
<td>Financial Service Sector operators Researchers and experts in the field (academic sector, training sector) Citizens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminars at national level</td>
<td>To inform To promote To engage</td>
<td>Financial Service Sector workers (incl. managers) Researchers and experts in the field (academic sector, training sector)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific articles</td>
<td>To inform To engage</td>
<td>Financial Service Sector managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Dissemination Conference</td>
<td>To engage To promote</td>
<td>Researchers and experts in the field (academic sector, training sector)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Conference Proceedings</td>
<td>To inform To engage</td>
<td>Financial Service Sector operators Researchers and experts in the field (academic sector, training sector) Citizens</td>
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