EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR LOCAL CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT
EXPERTS TO UNDERTAKE THE PROCESS OF THE KEY DELIVERABLES OF
ESF PROJECT 1.228

1. Aim of this Expression of Interest

The aim of this Expression of Interest is the engagement of local Curriculum Development Experts in relation to EU co-funded project ESF 1.228 ‘Design of Learning Outcomes Framework (LOF), associated Learning and Assessment Programmes and related Training’. This is currently being implemented by the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education (DQSE). The DQSE deems it essential to involve local educational professionals in this endeavour since their experience plays a pivotal role in the ownership of the project by local stakeholders, the validation of and in some cases, the co-development process of the key deliverables of this project.

2. Aims of the ESF Project 1.228

The aim of the ESF Project 1.228 is to design a Learning Outcomes Framework, including the Learning and Assessment Programmes associated with it. The project also aims to train a number of trainers who will support the implementation of the LOF in schools. This will help in achieving a paradigm shift away from a prescriptive curriculum towards a framework based on learning outcomes which allows for internal flexibility and attractiveness to lifelong learning. It will also facilitate a move away from stand-alone subjects to learning areas that form the entitlement for all learners towards inclusivity, citizenship and employability.

3. Background

This project will enable the fulfilment of the National Curriculum Framework (NCF), which is a legal requirement for all compulsory education schools in Malta, by developing the Learning Outcomes Framework and Learning and Assessment Programmes of the different year groups from Years 3 to 11. It addresses the holistic development of all learners and advocates a quality education for all. The Learning Outcomes Framework will allow for flexibility in teaching and learning programmes in order to address specific needs and to build upon strengths within the context of the learning communities in different Colleges and Schools. The concept of flexibility is promoted throughout the entire framework.

The NCF provides a long-term vision for the educational entitlement of all learners in pre-school and compulsory education in Malta and Gozo within a wider lifelong
learning perspective. It addresses the gaps in our learning processes that over the years have led to absenteeism, to significant rates of early school leavers and to low skills and competences for a proportion of students. It strengthens the already existing structures that are transforming schools into learner-centred education centres where active and meaningful learning can take place. It is intended to lead to an increased participation rate in post-secondary and tertiary education and attract more students to lifelong learning, encouraging them to embark on further and higher education streams leading to new and better formal qualifications.

This is the first curriculum framework to be adopted since Malta joined the EU in 2004 and hence it has taken into consideration important policy-related documents issued by the European Commission. These include the ‘Key Competences for Lifelong Learning — A European Reference Framework’ (included in the annex of the Recommendation) (2006/962/EC); the Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training (ET 2020) (2009) and Europe 2020 – A strategy for smart sustainable and inclusive growth (COM (2010) 2020) which is the follow up to the Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs (Memo 06/478/12 Dec 2006).

Against the background of our historical development, and on the basis of the curriculum and EU documentation, the NCF seeks to provide strategic direction by rationalising the necessary changes and their implications for area/subject content, pedagogies and assessment. The NCF is presented within a lifelong learning perspective and celebrates diversity by catering for all learners at each stage of their education. It treats early childhood, primary and secondary education with the same importance. The NCF seeks to present a seamless curriculum which reflects smooth transitions, building and extending on the firm foundations in early childhood education. In essence, the NCF aims at providing a quality education for all learners, reducing the percentage of early school leavers and strengthening their enrolment in further and higher education.

4. The Learning Outcomes Framework

By means of this Learning Outcomes Framework that will be developed as a result of this project, instead of having a prescriptive content-based curriculum, we will for the first time develop a learning outcomes approach that will impact on all programmes in schools and on all external examinations and assessment at the end of compulsory education in Malta.

The NCF regards the first two years of primary schooling as a continuation of the two-year Kindergarten period, which are together considered the Early Years. No discrete learning areas are envisaged for the Early Years, since the emphasis in these years is on the development of skills and positive dispositions towards learning which will be developed and extended in later years.

Thus this LOF project will focus on Years 3 to 6 (the Junior Cycle) Years 7 and 8 (the Middle Cycle) and Years 9 to 11 (the Secondary Cycle). The NCF for Years 3 to 11
packages learning in eight learning areas and six cross-curricular themes which form the entitlement of learners in these Years of compulsory education in Malta. The learning areas provide the essential knowledge, skills and attitudes which learners are expected to develop. The learning areas are:

Languages (Maltese and English; Foreign Languages)
Mathematics
Science and Technology
Health and Physical Education
Religious and Ethics Education
Education for Democracy
Humanities
Visual and Performing Arts

The cross-curricular themes are:

Literacy
Digital Learning
Learning to Learn and Co-operative Learning
Education for Sustainable Development
Education for Entrepreneurship, Creativity and Innovation
Education for Diversity

These are considered essential components for a holistic education and they are meant to be embedded in the different learning areas and to provide connecting strands across the learning areas. More information is available at [http://curriculum.gov.mt/en/Resources/The-NCF/Pages/default.aspx](http://curriculum.gov.mt/en/Resources/The-NCF/Pages/default.aspx) (pp. 33 – 39)

The NCF already indicates the general learning outcomes of the different cycles. The Learning Outcomes Framework will need to specify these further for each learning area and cross-curricular theme across the junior, middle and secondary school cycles.

To ensure that the Learning Outcomes Framework leads to developmental learning as espoused by the NCF, the Learning Outcomes Framework shall be developed according to ten outcome levels, based on the ten levels of attainment that were first introduced in the draft NCF of 2011, and implemented in the state school learning and assessment programmes of Forms 1 and 2. In a differentiated learning context, different learners in the same classroom will naturally be progressing in different ways through these outcome levels, and the teaching and learning will need to cater for this diversity. The table below gives an indication of the generally expected outcome levels compared to the different Years. This should be used only as a rule of thumb – educators know that by definition some learners will be below or above the expected level, meaning that they might need more time and/or different learning routes to progress through the levels of attainment.
The national external examinations and assessments at the end of compulsory education are to reflect the rationale of the NCF and the Learning Outcomes Framework which will be based on a pedagogy that is student-centred, inquiry-based, integrated with the cross-curricular themes, and supported by an e-Learning based approach. The national external examinations and assessments are to be pegged to the MQF levels 1, 2 and 3, and will be guided by the Learning Outcomes Framework of the learning areas and the Learning and Assessment Programmes at subject level.

### 5. The Learning and Assessment Programmes

Once the Learning Outcomes Framework is developed, the second part of the project constitutes the development of Learning and Assessment Programmes for each subject for each year from Years 3 to 11.

The Learning and Assessment Programmes shall have the following three components, per level of attainment as applicable for each subject:

- Knowledge, skills and attitudes
- Indications how some or all of the six cross-curricular themes would be addressed through the knowledge, skills and/or attitude learning outcomes
- Detailed and measurable/demonstrable assessment criteria using ‘I can’ statements or similar formats.

Agreement on format, content and procedure will be discussed at the start of the project.

The Learning and Assessment Programmes shall be developed for the following subjects. The cross-curricular themes will be embedded in the subject-based Learning and Assessment Programmes.
**Category A Subjects**
(Yrs 3 to 11 = 9 yrs)
- Mathematics
- English
- Maltese
- Social Studies
- Science (as from Yr 7 this becomes Core Science)

**Category B Subjects**
(Yrs 7 to 11 = 5 yrs)
- Graph. Comm.
- Design & Technology
- French
- Italian
- German

**Category C Subjects**
(Yrs 9 to 11 = 3 yrs)
- Computing
- Life Sciences
- Materials Science
- Physical Sciences
- Accounts

**Learning Areas**
(Yrs 3 to 11 = 9 yrs)
- Languages
- Mathematics
- Science and Technology
- Health and Physical Education
- Religious and Ethics Education
- Education for Democracy

**Cross-Curricular (Transversal) Themes**
(Yrs 3 to 11 = 9 yrs)
- Literacy
- Creativity and Entrepreneurship
- Digital Literacy
- Diversity
- Learning to Learn
- Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

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* These subjects are currently being developed by local VET further and higher state institutions, and incorporate a Learning Outcomes perspective. These subjects need to be aligned by the contractor to conform to the Learning Outcomes Framework & Learning and Assessment Programmes being developed in this ESF project.

In addition, in the case of Maltese, Social Studies, Religion and Ethics, all of which are Category A subjects, and Maltese Literature which is a Category C subject, the role of the contractor is to provide experts to act as curriculum consultants with respect to the work of the local experts so that the Learning and Assessment Programmes for these subjects matches the rest of the Learning and Assessment Programme in terms of format, development, sequence and learning outcomes orientation.
The rationalisation of the subjects, including the final number of hours for which the Learning and Assessment Programmes are to be developed, will be finalised with the successful bidder before the contract is signed and subject to the direction by the Ministry for Education and Employment in Malta.

6. Engagement of Local Curriculum Development Experts

The validation process associated with the Learning Outcomes Framework and Learning and Assessment Programmes is required to ensure that these achieve the goals of the National Curriculum Framework. This Expression of Interest has the scope to engage local Curriculum Development Experts to undertake the validation process under the supervision of the DQSE.

These Experts shall approve the parameters of the design of the Learning Outcomes Framework and the Learning and Assessment Programmes (LAP), provide ongoing feedback on the development of same, validate the contents and give the final approval that would signify the successful completion of the work by the Contractor. This work will be carried out for the different learning areas and cross-curricular themes of the LOF, and also for the LAP of the different subjects. The local Curriculum Development Experts would ensure that the work being developed is relevant for the Maltese educational context in line with government policy. The local Curriculum Experts would liaise with the Head of Project, and be answerable to the Learning Outcomes Framework Board set up by the Ministry for Education and Employment in line with the NCF.

A distinction needs to be made between the curricular development of Maltese (Language and Literature), Social Studies, Religion and Ethics, and the rest of the subjects. Due to the unique nature of these five subjects in the context of Maltese educational provision, the local experts need to have a much stronger presence in the development of the LOF as well as the LAP for these subjects. This shall be translated into a greater number of hours being allocated to the contribution of these local experts.

Local Experts are also being recruited to validate the 8 Learning Areas per cycle, which enshrine the intended collective outcomes of the subjects within them, as well as the 6 Cross Curricular Themes which run throughout all the subjects and cycles. Both Learning Areas and Cross Curricular Themes are being treated like Category A subjects as these span across the three cycles.

The VET subjects currently being developed by local VET further and higher state institutions need to be aligned to conform to the Learning Outcomes Framework & Learning and Assessment Programmes.
All local Curriculum Development Experts shall be recruited through this Expressions of Interest. Applications together with a European CV will be received in the first instance by the DQSE, Customer Care Section, Great Siege Road, Floriana (VLT 2000), or the Education Office, Fortunato Mizzi Street, Victoria, Gozo (VCT 2000), not later than noon (CET) of 19th of December 2013. Applications can also be submitted through the on-line Government Recruitment Portal on http://recruitment.gov.mt/ by the said closing time and date. Applications submitted after this date will be considered if and when the need arises.

An information session for prospective applicants will be held on Monday 2nd December 2013 at 4.00 pm at the National Curriculum Centre, Hamrun.

7. Eligibility Criteria

The eligibility criteria for the selection of the local Curriculum Development Experts shall be:

- At least a first degree in the subject or area
- At least ten years of experience in the teaching and/or pedagogy of the subject or area
- Evidence of competence in English

The selection criteria for the recruitment of the Local Experts shall be:

- Experience in the development of syllabi, learning outcomes and/or learning and assessment programmes
- Demonstrated competence and ability in conceptualising learning in terms of learning outcomes, and ability to evaluate the Learning Outcomes Framework and Learning and Assessment Programmes
- Knowledge of the key competences framework, the learning outcomes paradigm, the NCF and other related documentation
- Publications and/or evidence of material contribution to the curricular and/or pedagogical development of the subject or area
- Qualifications in the subject or area (over and above the eligibility criteria)
- Years of experience in the teaching and/or pedagogy of the subject or area (over and above the eligibility criteria)

8. Remuneration

The payment formula is based on an estimation of 150 hours of work for Category A subjects i.e. those that require validation for eleven school Years. This calculation excludes Maltese (Language and Literature), Social Studies, Religion and Ethics, for reasons given below. The rate of payment is roughly equivalent to the hourly rate of
professional officers on Public Service Salary Scale 6. The remuneration per subject/area per expert is as follows:

- Payment per Category A Subject (except for Maltese (Language and Literature), Social Studies, Religion and Ethics): €1,800
- Payment per Category B Subject: €1,008
- Payment per Category C Subject: €600
- Payment per Learning Area: €1,800
- Payment per Cross-curricular Theme: €1,800

For Maltese, Social Studies, Religion and Ethics, which are all Category A subjects, 450 hours shall be allocated per expert, at the same hourly rate as the other subjects. Payment will therefore be set at €5,400 per expert. Maltese Literature is being considered like a Category A subject and 150 hours shall be allocated per expert at the same hourly rate, equivalent to a payment of €1,800 per expert.

Every expert employed through this expression of interest will be asked to sign a contract for service. Selected experts shall be paid a lump sum on successful completion of the work.

9. Intellectual Property Rights

The intellectual property rights of all documentation and tools developed as deliverables of this project shall belong exclusively to the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education.