ESCO - Skills/Competences, Occupations and Qualifications - Vital role of AQUATT in this new EU initiative

Mapping of occupational sectors is one main pillar on which ESCO is based. It is also one area on which AQUATT and its partners in the WAVE and VALLA projects have spent a great deal of time and energy. It is therefore gratifying to be able to report that at the latest meeting of the ESCO reference group on agriculture, fisheries and forestry, AQUATT's profiling of the aquaculture industry (along with the relevant competences and learning outcomes) is being used as the template for the fisheries and aquaculture sectors.

Much of the information being released on ESCO will sound very familiar to some of the readers of this newsletter. ESCO is in the process of developing two online tools, "*to help European citizens enhance their skills and meet the demands of tomorrow's labour market. These multilingual tools, created with the aim of improving and facilitating skills matching, can increase the efficiency with which jobseekers will find vacancies and employers will find candidates.*"

Sounds familiar? Heard that before somewhere?
AQUATT developed the WAVE online tool containing the Master List of Competences for aquaculture, and the VALLA online tool took this one stage further, linking competences to learning outcomes, which allowed course designers to describe their formal and informal courses in terms of learning outcomes and thus qualifications. "*Once fully developed, the ESCO classification will consist of three main pillars, linking skills, occupations, and qualifications. ESCO will help to describe qualifications in terms of learning outcomes in line with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs), which are being developed. ESCO will be sufficient to broadly meet the needs of Member States who do not have their own classifications system, and to enable those with existing national and sectoral classifications to link with each other.*"

ESCO poses the question "*What can a skills, competences, qualifications and occupations taxonomy be used for*?" The answer echoes the WAVE Guidelines, first published six years ago.
"**Jobseekers** can use it to describe their skill set when developing a CV, that can then be easily used for various automatic matching purposes;
Employers can use it to define a set of skills and competences required when they are developing a job description to be advertised with public or other employment services;
Learners can use it to build personal skill profiles and to record their learning outcomes;
Bodies developing and/or awarding qualifications can use it to express learning outcomes in more operational terms;
Education and training institutions can use it to improve planning and curriculum development related to emerging skill needs, and to facilitate the recognition of foreign

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qualifications;

Human resource managers and guidance providers can use it to enhance planning and enrich aptitude or ability tests, skills, and interest inventories or tools."

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