



**STAFFER**  
EUROPEAN RAIL SKILLS ALLIANCE

# **Assessment of employability and career opportunities from the point of view of rail operators and infrastructure managers**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Meaning
CEDEFOP	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
CER	Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies
EACEA	European Education and Culture Executive Agency
EQAVET	European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ET2020	“Education and Training 2020” work programme
DB	Deutsche Bahn AG
E&T	Education and Training System
HR	Human Resource
RACER	Relevant, Accepted, Credible, Easy and Robust
SNCF	Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer (French National Railway Company)
WMP	WMP consult – Wilke Maack GmbH
WP	Working Package
UB	University of Belgrade
FS	FERROVIE DELLO STATO ITALIANE
ÖBB	ÖBB Technische Services GmbH
IŽS	Infrastructure of Serbian Railways
CFL	Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer Luxembourgeois
UASFHE	University of Applied Science Fachhochschule Erfurt
VET	Vocational Education and Training



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# 1 OBJECTIVE AND PROCEDURE

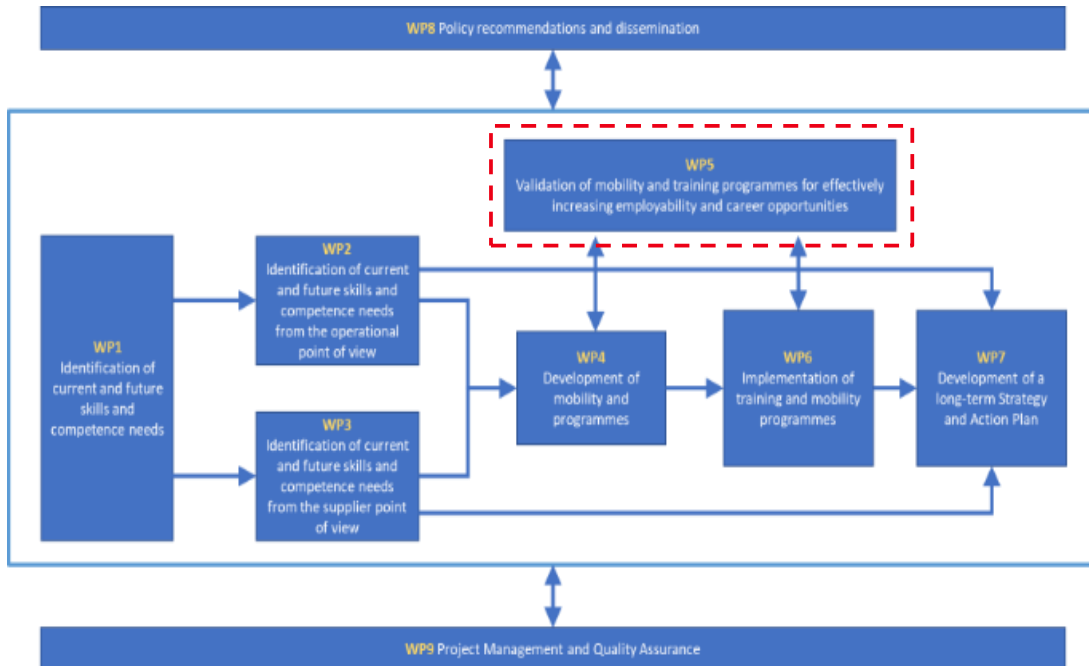
## 1.1 OBJECTIVE TASK 5.2

The overall objective of WP5 is to validate the new and/or updated mobility and training pathways, programs and curricula developed in WP4 to enhance employability and career opportunities. It is part of phase 2 of the STAFFER project entitled “Mobility and training program design and implementation” with three work packages:

- **WP4: Development of mobility and programs**
- **WP5: Validation of mobility and training programs to effectively increase employability and career opportunities**
- **WP6: Implementation of training and mobility programs**

The STAFFER project plan can be briefly described as follows: based on the identification of current and future qualification and competence requirements for the entire railway sector (WP2 and WP3), suitable training and mobility programs are developed (WP4) and validated to effectively increase employability and career opportunities (WP5). In WP5, the perspective of employability is connected to the process of development (WP4) and implementation (WP6) of new and/or updated E&T programs in the railway sector (Figure 1).

## Project structure



UniGe

**FIGURE 1 STAFFER PROJECT STRUCTURE WITH INCLUSION OF WP5**

The objective of Task 5.2 (Assessment of employability and career opportunities from the point of view of rail operators and infrastructure managers) is the application of the criteria and methods analyzed in Task 5.1 (see final report and results Task 5.1) for a specific assessment of employability for the railway sector.

Criteria and methods are developed and applied to assess training courses, programs, courses of study regarding to their ability to secure employability and career opportunities – with focus on the occupational groups of the railway sector identified in WP2 and their future skills and needs.



## WP5 interdependencies & synthesis

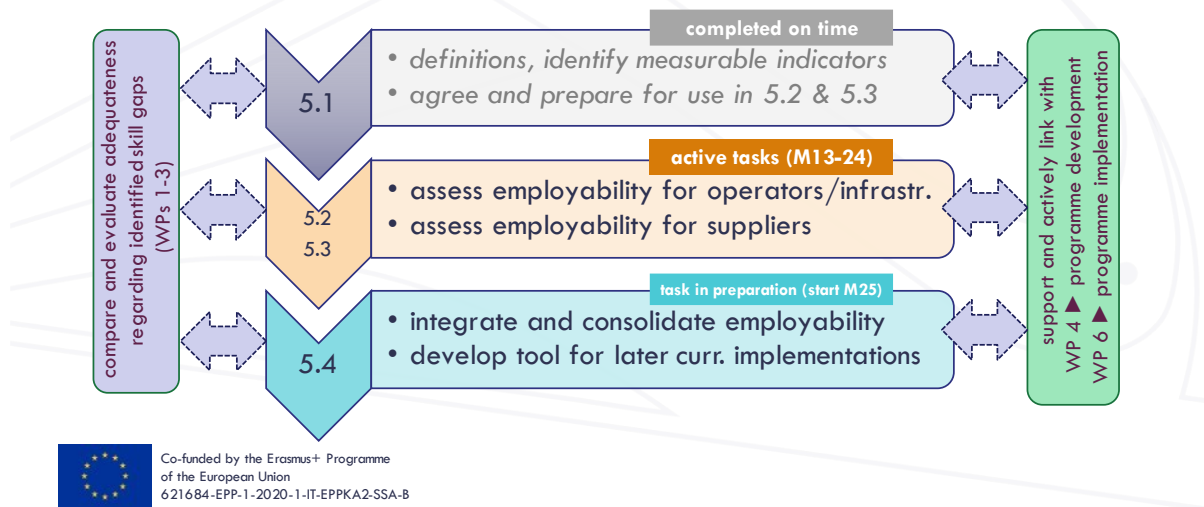


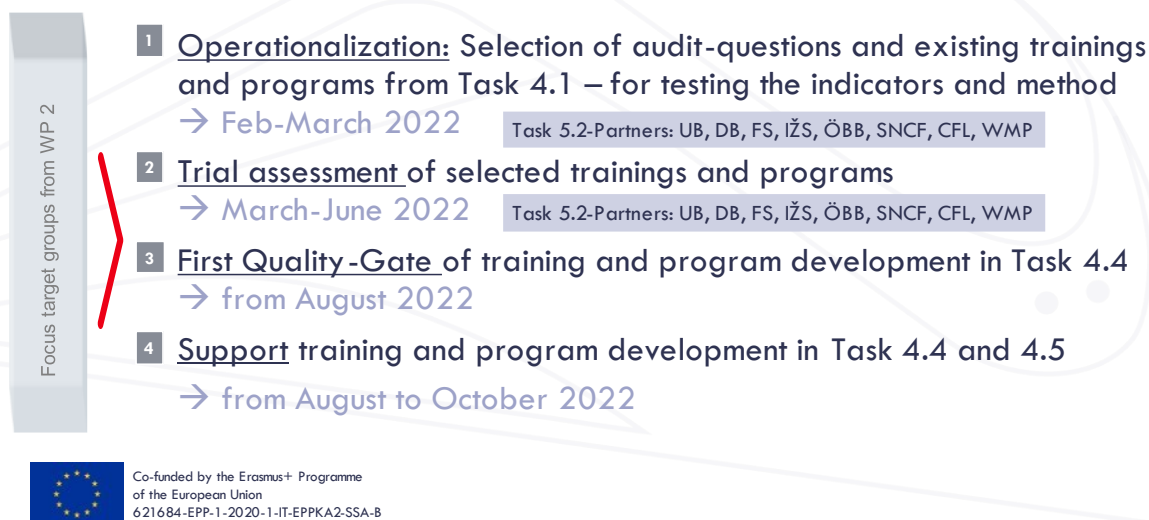
FIGURE 2 WP5 INPUT AND OUTPUT INTERFACES – OBJECTIVES AND DEPENDENCES OF TASKS 5.1 TO 5.4

### 1.2 Procedure

For the evaluation of the employability of training courses, programs, courses of study, 4 essential work steps were planned in Task 5.2 with the partners:

1. **Deciding on an audit method and selection of a question setting** with focus on employability for focus occupational groups in the railway sector;
2. **Carrying out trial assessments** of existing, offered training courses, programs, courses of study;
3. **First use of the assessment** in training courses, programs, courses of study in the development phase;
4. **Preparation for a method application** in the development and implementation phases (WP4 and WP6) of newly designed training courses, programs, courses of study in Task 5.4.

## Task 5.2 - Essential steps



**FIGURE 3 INPUT AND OUTPUT INTERFACES TO TASK 5.2 – ESSENTIAL STEPS IN PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION TASK 5.2**

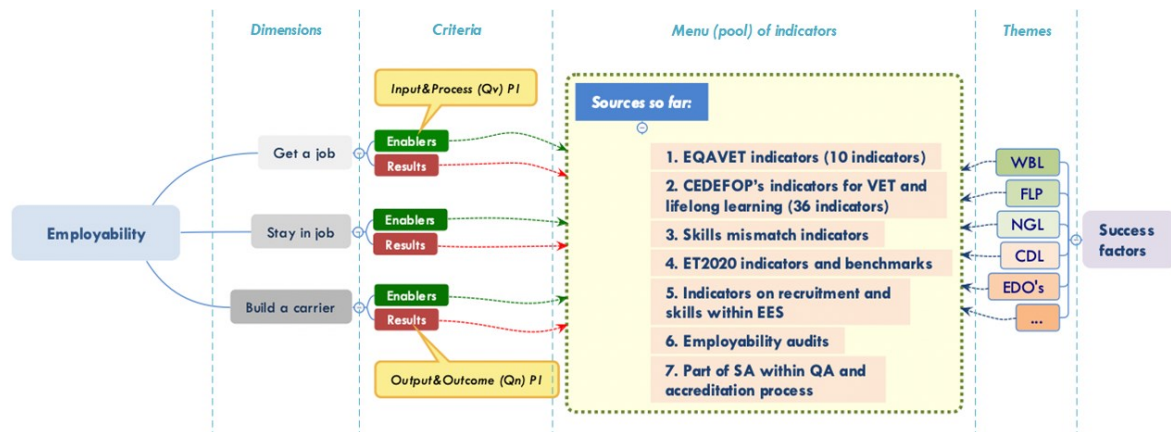
### 1.2.1 Analysing the results of Task 5.1

In Task 5.1, the team from the University of Belgrade developed a methodological (and theoretical) umbrella for the evaluation of training and mobility programs with focus on employability. It includes a detailed theoretical construct of employability (conception phase) and a set of quantitative and qualitative indicators for measuring employability (operationalization phase).

In the concept phase, the UB team carried out a literature search on common definitions of employability, decided on a definition within the STAFFER project and created a conceptual framework of employability with

- the three dimensions “get a job”, “stay in job”, “build a career” and
- the criteria “Enabler” (Input & Process) and “Results” (Output & Outcome).

In the operationalization phase, a set of measurable indicators for the theoretical construct were developed. In two survey phases within the Task 5.1, the working group consolidated it into a final set of indicators/metrics.



**FIGURE 4 TASK 5.1 POSITIONING OF INDICATORS IN THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

(Abbreviations: Qv – Qualitative, Qn-Quantitative, PI-Performance Indicator, WBL-Work Based Learning, FLP-Flexible Learning Pathways, NGL – Next Generation Learning, CDL – Carrier Development Learning, EDO’s – Employment Development Opportunities, EES-Employer Establishment Surveys, SA-Self Assessment, QA-Quality Assurance)

### 1.2.2 Deriving the implementation steps

According to the objective of Task 5.2, the following implementation steps were agreed on in the first partner meetings:

- **Development of the evaluation method**

Regarding the preliminary work and recommendations from Task 5.1, the method of auditing training courses, programs or courses of study was preferred.

The preferred variant of an audit implementation should be the form of interviews according to an audit guideline with the criteria to be evaluated to ensure employability. An online query (self-audit) should only be possible in special cases where evaluation interviews cannot be carried out.

- **Development of the questionnaire**

A set of audit questions relevant for the railway sector was developed based on individual criteria from Task 5.1. These criteria were structured in 5 dimensions for an evaluation of training courses, programs, courses of study regarding securing employability.

Furthermore, a 6<sup>th</sup> dimension of evaluation criteria was added based on the identified focus occupational groups from WP2 with their future skills and qualification needs.

- **Development of an evaluation tool**

A broadly applicable auditing/evaluation tool was developed to enable a broad use of the set of criteria/evaluation questions for evaluating qualification measures in the railway sector.

In addition to recording individual assessments as part of an audit, a simple analysis of the results should be made possible.

- **Trial assessments**

As an important step in finalising the evaluation method and in demonstrating the usability of the evaluation tool; trial assessments were carried out on training courses, programs or courses of study that were already on offer.

## 2 THE EVALUATION METHOD

### 2.1 Assessment possibilities for employability

As a result of the analyses of employability in Task 5.1, 3 essential dimensions (FIGURE 4 POSITIONING OF INDICATORS IN THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK) were included for an evaluation of training courses, programs, courses of study as part of the STAFFER task:

- **get a job** - refers to
  - 1) preparation for the employment regarding to training/studiesand
  - 2) the transition from training/studies to employment
- **stay in job** - refers to the contribution of training/studies to develop on the job
- **build a career** - refers to opportunities and offers in training/studies to support career development

#### 2.1.1 Qualification levels

The training courses, programs, courses of study to be audited must be classified according to two different clusters: the first cluster are the previously described 3 dimensions for employability (get a job; stay in job; build a career), the second cluster is the qualification level (EQF level) of the target group such as follows:

- **vocational/functional training; ... (EQF-level 3-5)**
- **courses of study, ... (EQF-level 6-8)**

An assignment of training courses, programs, courses of study to these clusters should always be based on the previously described qualification objective of the qualification measure for an evaluation. The qualification objective should specify, for example, whether a qualification measure is intended for a career start (application cluster "get a job") and whether this measure provides for an academic career start (EQF level 6-8).

### **2.1.2 Valuation perspectives**

In the joint work in the Task 5.2 partner team, it was recognized that it is necessary to include different perspectives of evaluators on the training courses, programs, or courses of study to be evaluated, such as:

- **Perspective of Education & Training (E&T) - provider**
- **Perspective of employer, company**
- **Perspective of employee, participant, student/graduate**

These three perspectives can certainly cause different assessments of the same audit questions and thus significantly expand the focus for optimizing the audited measures.

Especially in the development phase of training courses, programs or courses of study, the perspectives of the companies as "buyer" of measures are decisive, while a perspective of the employees, students/graduates from the "user perspective" can only be used sensibly when the measures are already established. The E&T providers can use this evaluation method in development and offer phases to optimally align the qualification with the qualification objective - in this case for securing employability.

## Evaluation method: Transfer of evaluation audit - use by railway companies – building application clusters

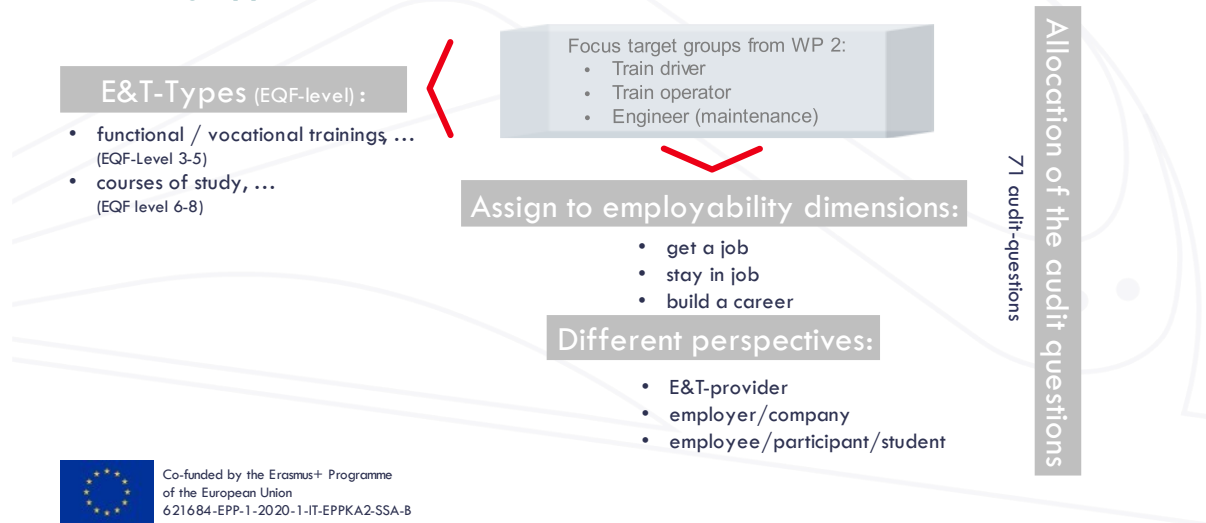


FIGURE 5 METHOD FOR A DIFFERENTIATED ALLOCATION/SELECTION OF AUDIT QUESTIONS

## 2.2 Assessment method

In the view of the project team, the preferred variant of conducting an audit is conducting interviews according to an audit guideline. This audit guideline can be generated based on the 71 audit questions for the railway sector and the assigned application clusters via the respective professional group/target group and the qualification objective. An online query (self-audit) should only be carried out in special cases where evaluation interviews cannot be carried out.

## 3 THE QUESTIONNAIRE

An essential component for the application of the audit method for the evaluation of training courses, programs, courses of study is the selection of the evaluation criteria (= audit questions) relevant to the railway sector.

Railway companies were already involved in Task 5.1 using the RACER method (see final report and results of Task 5.1).

### 3.1 Focus: railway companies

With the focus on the application in railway companies, the question setting and the allocation of the audit questions to the application clusters was validated with the participation of DB Competence and Recruitment Management. Furthermore, an additional validation with colleagues from ÖBB took place.

The applicability and correct assignment of the evaluation criteria (audit questions) for the focus occupational groups were checked for the dimensions of employability and the possible perspectives of the auditors.

### 3.2 Focus: new skills and needs

With the work of WP2 (Identification of current and future skills and competence needs from the operational point of view) there was already a focus on certain rail-specific professional groups (train driver; train operator; engineer (maintenance)) in cross-border rail traffic. With Task 2.2 (Identification of skill needs and occupational profiles from the rail operators and infrastructure managers point of view), the essential future skills and competencies for these rail-specific focus occupational groups were worked out as part of an extensive survey:

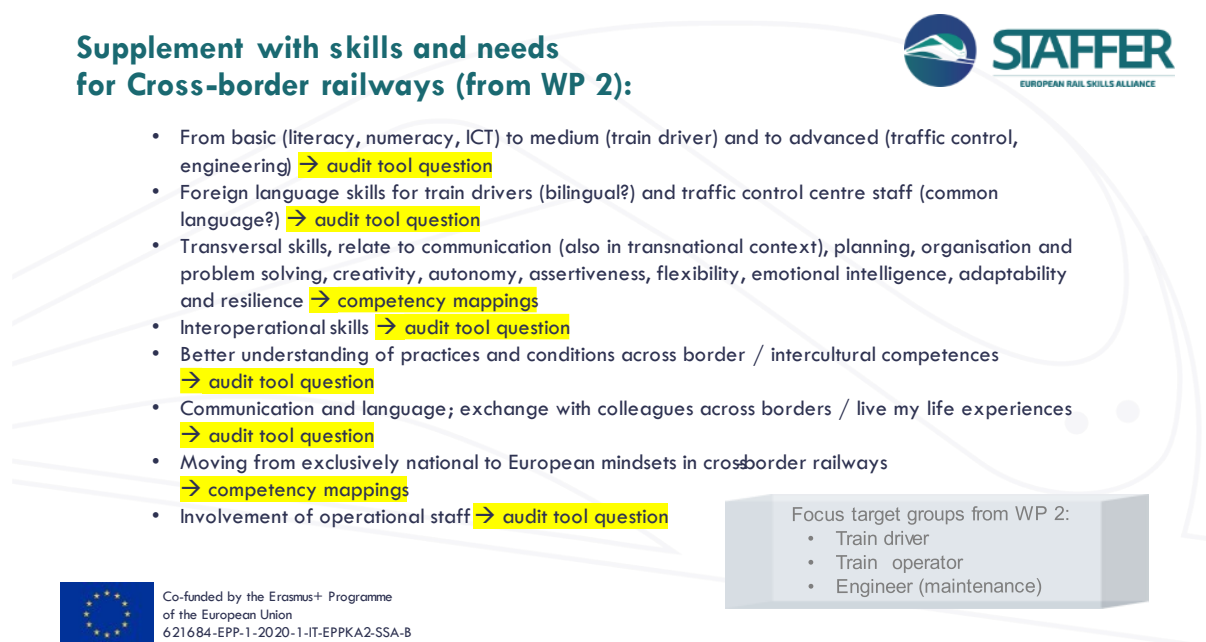


FIGURE 6 SKILLS AND NEEDS FOR FOCUS TARGET GROUPS

These skills and needs were integrated into the questionnaire or included as explicit competency requirements in the audit questionnaire (Table 1 EXCERPT FROM THE AUDIT QUESTIONNAIRE WITH ASSIGNMENT TO THE APPLICATION CLUSTERS).

**STAFFER - Task 5.2 Questionnaire - Allocation to application clusters**

Indicator (Dimension) name	Art.-Nr.	focus group	employability dimension	perspective	EQF-Level	Item name english
1. Employability within curriculum	1.01	train driver; train operator; engineer	get a job	E&T provider; employee; employer	3-5; 6-8	Is the information provided about the programme clear, complete and does it facilitate decision-making by young people and their families?
	1.02	train driver; train operator; engineer	get a job; build a career	E&T provider; employee; employer	3-5; 6-8	Does the information provided about the programme contain data on employment and career opportunities?
				...		
	1.14	train driver; train operator; engineer	stay in job; build a career	E&T provider; employee; employer	3-5; 6-8	Will the program follow an integrated European railway approach?
	1.15	train driver; train operator; engineer	get a job	E&T provider; employee; employer	3-5; 6-8	Does the program offer chances and opportunities for lateral entrants to gain specific railway qualifications?
2. Employment development opportunities	2.01	train driver; train operator; engineer	get a job	E&T provider; employee	3-5; 6-8	Has employment destination data been circulated to ET staff within the last 2 years?
	2.02	engineer	get a job	E&T provider	6-8	Does ET staff know who actually employs their graduates?
				...		
	2.05	train driver; train operator; engineer	get a job	E&T provider; employee; employer	3-5; 6-8	Are learners regularly informed about opened employment opportunities (e.g. through annual job fairs or similar activities)?
	2.06	train driver; train operator; engineer	stay in job; build a career	E&T provider; employee	3-5; 6-8	Is there any data base/website/intranet/social channel available for learners?
3. Career development learning and support	3.01	train driver; train operator; engineer	stay in job; build a career	E&T provider; employee; employer	3-5; 6-8	Are graduate career possibilities and profiles available to learners?
	3.02	train driver; train operator; engineer	build a career	E&T provider; employee; employer	3-5; 6-8	Are learners explicitly taught career management skills?
				...		
	3.07	train driver; train operator; engineer	get a job; stay in job; build a career	E&T provider; employee	3-5; 6-8	Are learners explicitly guided in the course to make contact with the Careers Service?
	3.08	train driver; train operator; engineer	stay in job; build a career	employee	3-5; 6-8	Are learners encouraged to have confidence and high aspirations?
4. Partnership with employers	4.01	train driver; train operator; engineer	get a job; stay in job; build a career	E&T provider; employer	3-5; 6-8	Do employers review your curriculum and provided feedback on its content?
	4.02	train driver; train operator; engineer	get a job; stay in job; build a career	E&T provider	3-5; 6-8	Are mechanisms to review and update curricula based on employer feedback applied regularly?
				...		
	4.07	train driver; train operator; engineer	get a job; stay in job; build a career	E&T provider; employer	3-5; 6-8	Do you have good communication with major employers of our learners?
	4.08	train driver; train operator; engineer	get a job; stay in job; build a career	E&T provider; employer	3-5; 6-8	Do you know what skills, knowledge and attitudes your major employers see as becoming more important in the next five years?
5. Options for work experience	5.01	train driver; train operator; engineer	get a job; stay in job	E&T provider; employee; employer	3-5; 6-8	Have you identified where work related learning activities take place in the course and are these made explicit to learners?
	5.02	train driver; train operator; engineer	get a job; stay in job	E&T provider; employee; employer	3-5; 6-8	Have opportunities to increase work related learning in the course been identified and taken?
				...		
	5.09	engineer	get a job	E&T provider; employee	6-8	What proportion of learners on your course have obtained work experience before graduation?
	5.10	train driver; train operator; engineer	get a job; stay in job	E&T provider	3-5; 6-8	Share of teachers and trainers with work experience
6. Development and support in personal skills	6.01	train driver; train operator; engineer	get a job; stay in job; build a career	E&T provider; employee; employer	3-5; 6-8	Professional knowledge (understanding how one's knowledge can be applied in a broader context and how learning can be transferred to)
	6.02	train operator; engineer	get a job; stay in job; build a career	E&T provider; employee; employer	3-5; 6-8	Analytical thinking (Developing questioning, analytical, and problem-solving skill)
				...		
	6.23	train driver; train operator; engineer	get a job; stay in job	E&T provider; employee; employer	3-5; 6-8	Commitment to safety (Vigilantly identifies and monitors safety-critical issues and incidents to ensure and improve general safety)
	6.24	train driver; train operator; engineer	get a job; stay in job; build a career	E&T provider; employee; employer	3-5; 6-8	Foreign language skills (Masters and uses the relevant languages for his or her area of responsibility)

**TABLE 1 EXCERPT FROM THE AUDIT QUESTIONNAIRE WITH ASSIGNMENT TO THE APPLICATION CLUSTERS**

This work status served as the basis for the trial assessments of training courses, programs, courses of study that were already established.



## 4 THE EVALUATION TOOL

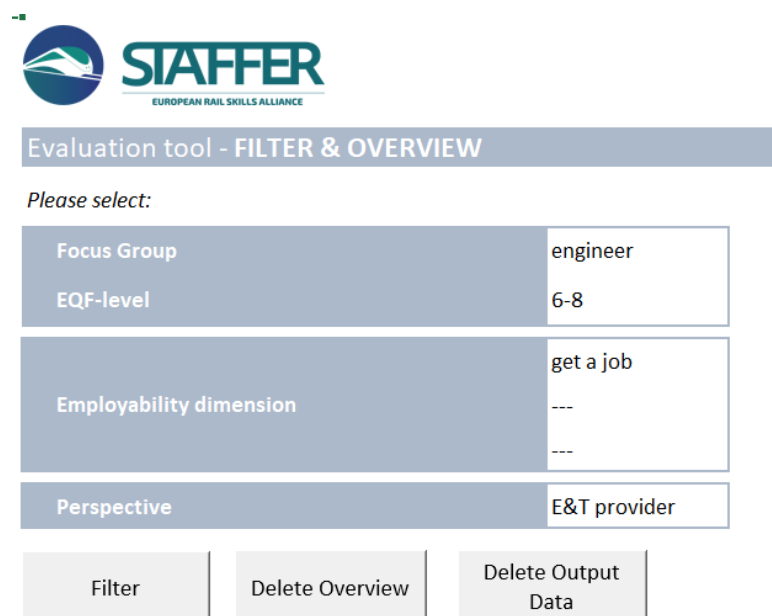
### 4.1 Design requirements for the evaluation tool

A tool should serve as support for the auditors for the evaluation of training courses, programs, courses of study in audits in interview form as well as in an online query.

A key requirement should be to have just one tool for evaluating training, programs, courses of study in the railway sector, considering different qualification levels (EQF levels 3-5 / 6-8) and the 3 dimensions of employability (get a job; stay in job; build a career) with the different perspectives of the auditors (E&T provider; employer, employee/student).

### 4.2 Auditing support

With the support of the Excel-based evaluation tool, the relevant evaluation criteria (audit questions) for an evaluation of training courses, programs, courses of study can be generated based on the qualification goals of these trainings. A precise description of the qualification objective of the training to be evaluated is a prerequisite for an assignment to the dimensions of employability and for the evaluation of the audit questions generated. Ideally, the desired target-level should be definable from the qualification objectives - if possible, for each proven evaluation criterion (for each audit question).



The screenshot shows the STAFFER logo (European Rail Skills Alliance) and a web interface titled "Evaluation tool - FILTER & OVERVIEW". Below the title, it says "Please select:" followed by three dropdown menus. The first menu is "Focus Group" with "engineer" selected. The second menu is "EQF-level" with "6-8" selected. The third menu is "Employability dimension" with "get a job" selected. Below these menus is a "Perspective" dropdown menu with "E&T provider" selected. At the bottom, there are three buttons: "Filter", "Delete Overview", and "Delete Output Data".

Evaluation tool - FILTER & OVERVIEW		
Please select:		
Focus Group	engineer	
EQF-level	6-8	
Employability dimension	get a job	
	---	
	---	
Perspective	E&T provider	
Filter	Delete Overview	Delete Output Data

**FIGURE 7 EVALUATION TOOL: CHOICES ON QUALIFICATION LEVELS, DIMENSIONS OF EMPLOYABILITY AND AUDITOR PERSPECTIVE**

According to the pre-selected entry criteria, the audit questions identified by the evaluation tool can be evaluated using the following logic:

- 1 - The audit point has not been seriously considered at all.
  - 2 - The audit point has been considered but reflection indicates it is poorly satisfied.
  - 3 - The audit point has been considered but reflection indicates it is partially satisfied.
  - 4 - The audit point has been considered and reflection indicates it is adequately satisfied.
  - 5 - The audit point has been considered and reflection indicates it is optimally satisfied.
- na – not applicable

An “Instructions” Excel tab has been set up to prepare for the use of the evaluation tool. It also contains short definitions of the dimensions of employability and the evaluation logic and others.

### 4.3 Possibilities of result analysis

The evaluation tool offers 2 levels of results analysis:

- **The results of the 6 evaluation areas (dimensions of indicators) from the ratings for the evaluation criteria (audit questions)**

Regarding the ratings < 3, the main optimization area can be identified, for which a more detailed analysis can be carried out.

- **The results of individual criteria (audit questions) within an evaluation area**

The individual criteria, which were rated < 3, for example (Figure 8), can be displayed here to implement any necessary optimization of training courses, programs, courses of study with the core focus of securing employability via a more in-depth analysis.

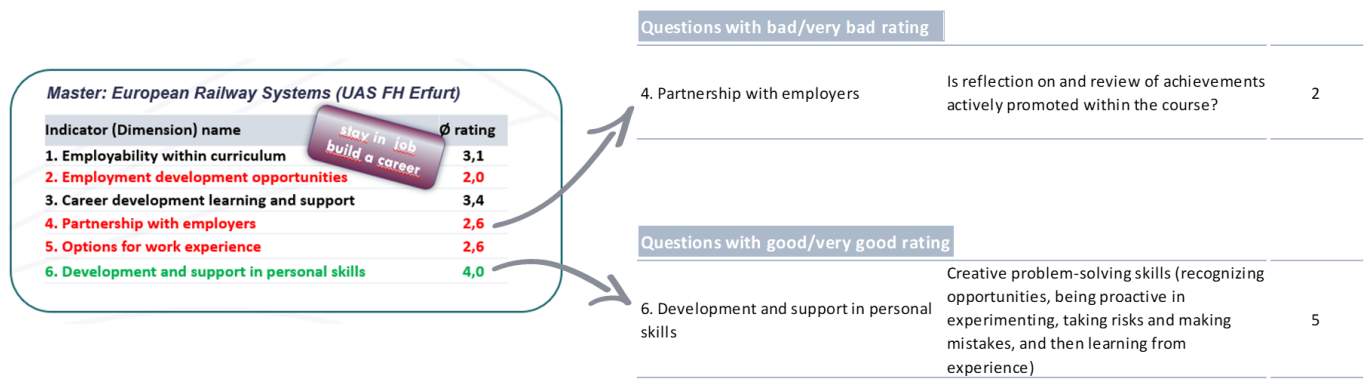


FIGURE 8 EVALUATION TOOL (EXAMPLE: EMPLOYEES/GRADUATE-PERPECTIVE): RESULT ANALYSIS OF ASSESSMENT AREAS AND INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

## 5 THE TRIAL ASSESSMENTS

### 5.1 Objective of the trial assessments

An essential step for the assessment for training courses, programs, courses of study is the test of the applicability of evaluation method, question setting and the ability to analyse the evaluation results in recognizing optimization needs.

It was therefore obvious that this test should be carried out in trial assessments for established training courses, programs, courses of study in a representative selection coordinated in Task 5.2.

### 5.2 Executing of trial assessments

The qualification offers should be selected from the different qualification levels (EQF level), from in-company training to courses of study with different qualification objectives in securing employability (see dimensions of employability) and from different partner countries.

The selected four qualification offers were audited in the evaluation dimensions of employability regarding to the qualification objectives and different perspectives of the auditors.

## Trial Assessments: Selection of the existing trainings and programs - testing the evaluation-tool and method

Focus group	Training / Program	Task 5.2 - Partners	Type of program	Employability dimension	perspective	Status
Railway engineer	Different programs	Udl (SNCF)	in company training	stay in job build a career	provider (E&T)	✓
Railway manager	Master European Railway Systems	FH Erfurt	University program	stay in job build a career	provider (E&T) student (employee) employer	✓
Train driver	Functional training for train drivers	DB	in company training	get a job	provider (E&T) employee employer	✓
Engineer/train operator		IŽS	in company training	build a career	employer	✓



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**FIGURE 9 SELECTED TRAINING COURSES, PROGRAMS AND COURSES OF STUDY FROM CURRENT OFFERS FOR THE TRIAL ASSESSMENTS**

In addition to the assessment results (see example in Figure 8), the possibility for feedback from the auditors or the Task 5.2 partners was provided, which was used for the further development of the evaluation method, the questionnaire, and the evaluation tool.

## 6 RESULTS

### 6.1 Evaluation of the method

The usability of the evaluation method is given for a wide range of qualification offers, especially according to the evaluation of securing employability.

It is also possible to include different perspectives (E&T provider; employer; employee/graduate) of the auditors.

The method allows an audit form as an interview as well as a self-audit as an online evaluation.

## 6.2 Applicability of the questionnaire

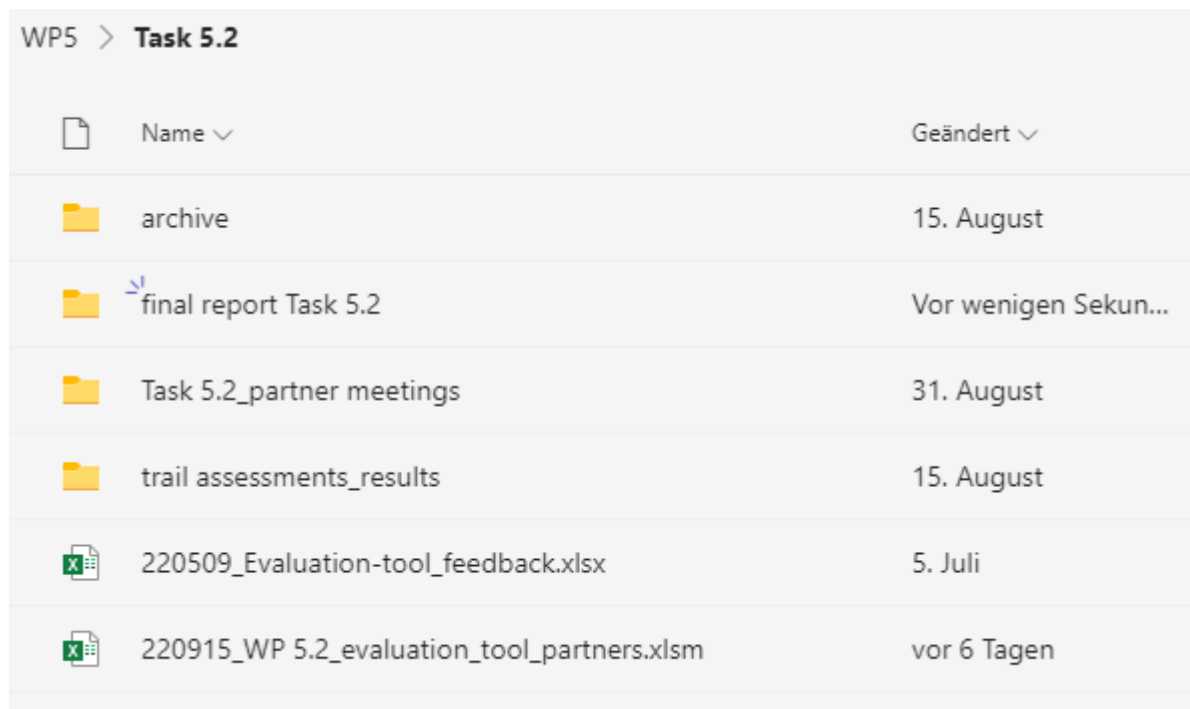
The question setting was primarily oriented towards an assessment of the employability of focus occupational groups in railway transport and railway infrastructure companies. This allows an evaluation of a wide range of qualification offers.

## 6.3 Usability of the evaluation tool

The evaluation tool demonstrated its usability in the trial assessments by generating the respective question settings according to the preset evaluation dimensions and perspectives and can therefore be used as an essential support in the evaluation process.

The analysis of the results of evaluated training courses, programs and courses of study can be used for design approaches both in the context of qualification development as well as for the further development of implemented qualification measures.

The results of the trial assessments and the evaluation tool can be viewed and used in the unige.it MS Teams channel as follows:



Name	Geändert
archive	15. August
final report Task 5.2	Vor wenigen Sekun...
Task 5.2_partner meetings	31. August
trail assessments_results	15. August
220509_Evaluation-tool_feedback.xlsx	5. Juli
220915_WP 5.2_evaluation_tool_partners.xlsm	vor 6 Tagen

FIGURE 10 DOCUMENTATION OF RESULTS TASK 5.2 – UNIGE.IT\_MS-TEAMS-CHANNEL

## 7 CONCLUSION

In accordance with the task of enabling an assessment of employability and career opportunities from the point of view of railway operators and infrastructure operators for qualification programs to be developed in the STAFFER context, a widely applicable method and an applicable assessment and analysis tool were successfully developed.

The most important requirement for the further use of the evaluation method with the evaluation tool in the continuation of Task 5.4 is that the qualification objectives for securing employability are already defined in the development phase of the training, programs, and study modules in WP6. This is the only way that an initial audit of the training, programs and study modules can be carried out in the development phase and an accompanying evaluation can be pursued in the implementation phase.