TOOLS4SE

Designing quality and training tools for competence profile of supported employment specialists

Tools for SE Specialist

Intellectual output 3:

"Instructions guide for the system of competencies monitoring in the SE service"

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I.   Introduction

This handbook is a guidance material which will help the provision of Supported employment (SE) services in Turkey, Bulgaria, Slovenia and Portugal. It facilitates training of SE specialists but also training specialists such as VET Centres and on non-formal base NGOs. It presents step by step how to implement the monitoring of competencies acquired by the SE specialists during the training finalisation or/and recruitment for implementation of SE services.

This handbook could be used also by external bodies of the project consortium who would like to use the Intellectual output 2 – "EQAVET system for recognition, validation and certification of SE specialists" during and beyond project lifetime.

The output is following the dual assessment methodology which includes the following stages:

- Record of specific data.
- Using of assessment tests.
- Conduct of interview.
- Provision of observation by SE coordinator.

II. Target users of the guide

This guide can be used by:

- Existing SE specialists (or other relevant career counselling experts).

- Human resources managers,

- Psychologists.

- VET trainers.

- Other professionals who are Supported employment specialists and would like to recruit, assess or accredit SE specialists.

Those professionals should have a deep expertise with regards to implementation of the SE process in the particular country (Turkey, Bulgaria, Slovenia and Portugal) and should have at least 2 years' experience in the field of guidance and consulting of people with disabilities on the labour market.

They should have the ability to use thoroughly the five stages of implementation process:

Stage 1 – Client Engagement

Stage 2 – Vocational Profiling

Stage 3 – Job Finding

Stage 4 – Employer Engagement

Stage 5 – On and Off the Job Support

Fig. 1 Five stages of the implementation of SE.

This approach for people with disabilities involves the concepts of empowerment, social inclusion, dignity and rights for individuals. Main fundamentals are: uniqueness of each person with disability, respect, self-determination, possibility of informed choices, empowerment, confidentiality, privacy, disclosure of information, flexibility of Supported Employment providers and full accessibility to their services on all levels. The general topic is to follow a "place-train- maintain" strategy rather than the "train-place" methods of other supporting services, because training and learning of skills is more efficient in

real context of a company. The motivation of the people with disabilities is also higher if they are employed from the beginning. Many people with disabilities don´t have a lot of vocational experiences or have not been in employment ever, so working experience placements can be helpful as an instrument for achieving a paid job.

The targeted users mentioned above should have an advanced level of:

- Assessment skills.

- Communication skills.

- Analysing and observation skills.

- Should be able to express feedback in a positive and constructive way.

In addition the assessors should take into consideration that the candidate for SE specialists have or did not have knowledge in the following steps of the employment process:

Fig. 2 Employment process.

III. Occupational profile of SE specialist

During the dual assessment process the SE coordinators should consider the obligations and duties written in the general job profile of a SE worker on EU level as described below.

It defines four main fields of duties for future SE worker:

- People with disabilities.

- Employers.

- Networking,

- Use of techniques and ICT tools.

Each field is discussed by needed skills, knowledge and attitudes.

<table>
<tr>
<td rowspan="2">Main duties</td>
<td colspan="3">People with disabilities
1. Identify and engage suitable clients for SE service.
2. Use a person-centred approach (informed choices by clients).
3. Develop a vocational profile which will establish the client's skills and expectations and identify barriers and support needs. Develop an action plan (focus on responsibilities/strengths).
4. Organize job tastings, support a realistic view of clients on strengths/abilities in different working fields.
5. Identify suitable/appropriate jobs – doing a job matching with employers and employees, strengthen decision making of people with disabilities.
6. Provide information regarding welfare benefits/support services and frameworks of paid employment.
7. Provide appropriate support and training to empower clients to ensure their working position or to develop their career.
8. Provide on-going support on and off the job.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Skills</td>
<td>Attitudes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>
• 5 stages of Supported Employment
• Disability knowledge
</td>
<td>
• Communication/ assessment skills
• Usage of alternative communication systems
</td>
<td>
• Strengthen decision making
• Combination of knowledge and skills
</td>
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</table>

		Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
		• Person centred methods • Assessment methods • Needs analysis knowledge	• Soft skills (empathy, listening skills, etc.) • Positive reassurance • Specialist skills • Negotiation and marketing skills • Self-assessment • Training skills	• Creating networks • Responsibility/ autonomy in implementation of SE service

Main duties

Employers/ companies for people with disabilities

1. Identify and engage suitable companies for PwD.
2. Identify needs of companies; achieve a good job matching with employers/employees.
3. Support for co-workers of people with disabilities.
4. Analyse and disclosure of organizational structures and business culture – structuring the way of inclusion of new employee.
5. Job analysis
6. Support career development within companies.

Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
• Labour market framework • Labour legislation • Financial funding possibilities • Different kind of disabilities and their impact on work	• Mediation skills • Observation and analysis skills • Advising skills • Good communication skills in consultancy with employers	• Negotiation of job opportunities • Management of different perspectives and expectations • Creating networks

		• Safety rules on working places		

Main duties

Networking

1. Develop a network of contacts and build relationships with health professionals, social services, labour offices, welfare benefit experts et cetera to assist with the referral, assessment and support of job seekers.

2. Develop a person centred approach: build relationships with job seekers natural supporters as well.

3. Work with employers to develop employment opportunities through a range of support initiatives.

4. Raise awareness of Supported Employment through presentations, attendance at meetings/events and marketing.

Awareness raising on different levels

1. Public level: Disability and employment issues. Changes in society's attitude towards people with disabilities.

2. Governmental/funding level: topics relating to employment including governmental programmes, social service funding, etc.

3. Employers' level: raising awareness of versatility of PwD.

4. Awareness level: raising awareness of versatility, human right of work, UN conventions, legal frameworks, etc.

Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
• Awareness raising methods • Knowledge of relevant stakeholders/parties	• Communication skills • Networking skills • Marketing skills • Self-presentation/ presentation skills and creativity	• Creating networks • Open-minded towards different networks/initiatives • Team supervisions

Main duties	**Usage of techniques and ICT tools**
	1. Ability of usage of ICT.
	2. Knowledge of technical support possibilities for people with disabilities.
	3. Usage of technical equipment for supporting people with disabilities on their working places.
	4. Creating networks to technical experts.

Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
• ICT knowledge • Technical support possibilities/equipment	• Consultancy skills • Computer based communication skills	• Creating networks • Ability of using new, creative techniques

IV. Step by step during stages of the assessment process

All future SE specialists have to pass through all three stages (pre-assessment monitoring, interview and case completion) to achieve an overview over their competences in SE field.

Best way of a general assessment would be to follow a dual verification principle with two experienced people in the field of practical provision of SE services who will interview new SE specialists. Those people could be one already employed SE specialist and/or a human resources manager/psychologist who should lead to a right perception of the applicant.

The following table is giving a timing, modality, length and outputs from each step of the assessment and validation process:

N°	Stage	Overall Objective	Participants	Tool	Timings and modality	Duration	Results
1.	**Recognition of competencies in entrance**	To identify the competencies, the experiences and the expectations of the applicant at the recruitment process.	The applicant and minimum two assessors.	**First Monitoring sheets.**	This phase should be implemented at the recruitment process. One of the assessors briefly explains to the applicant the modalities to fulfil the form; the applicant answers to the questions of the form.	One hour is the foreseen time to complete this stage.	Gathering of the following information: • General data of the applicant • Training and professional features of the applicant • Expectations towards the SE service in entrance

N°	Stage	Overall Objective	Participants	Tool	Timings and modality	Duration	Results
					The assessors conduct a personal interview which will lead to assessment of the personal characteristic of the candidate.		• Inclinations, aspirations and needs • Professional attitudes, knowledge and interests. • Produced observation assessment by the two assessors – if the level is satisfactory the applicant could proceed onto the second monitoring stage. • If the assessors discovered gaps in terms of SE process they should invite the applicant to proceed

N°	Stage	Overall Objective	Participants	Tool	Timings and modality	Duration	Results
							to the VET training by using the training materials of Intellectual output 4 – "Tools for SE Specialist VET training programme for supported employment providers
2.	**Detection of competencies at the end training process or upon recruitment**	To conclude on the competencies and ability to implement into practice SE consultancy services.	The applicant and two assessors.	**Second Monitoring template.**	This phase should be implemented upon satisfactory level of the observation by the two assessors during the previous stage of the monitoring or after successful completion of the VET training	One hour is the foreseen time to complete this stage.	The given answers to the case study should be analysed by the already employed SE specialists in terms of : • Transparency. • Content-related logical order of planned actions and

N°	Stage	Overall Objective	Participants	Tool	Timings and modality	Duration	Results
					programme for SE specialists. Each applicant will be asked to provide a solution on a particular written case study.		keywords (person-centred methods, abilities, etc. • Comparison with job description of SE specialist). • For the analysis of the given answers of the applicants it is important to define the assessed competences before given the case studies to the applicant.
3.	**Certification of competencies**	To produce an attestation which will validate and assess the	The applicant and the two assessors.	**Attestation letter.**	This phase should be implemented at the end of the 2nd monitoring stage. The two assessors	One hour and a half.	Attestation of the competencies towards the applicant. Possible job insertion to be discussed.

N°	Stage	Overall Objective	Participants	Tool	Timings and modality	Duration	Results
		applicants' performance during the entire process.			analyses the information and performance gathered and elaborates an attestation.		Provision of a certificate.

V. Educational level, previous experience and reference documents provided by the SE candidate.

During the analysis and assessment of the education level and previous experience the two assessors could use the following guidelines:

Qualification Preference	Education Level	Required Work/Internship Experience
Preferred Qualifications	**Degree** in the field of Social Science, Human Services, Education, Business, Marketing, Communications, or other related field vocational or higher education institution.	**Minimum 6 months** in the following areas: job development, coaching, placement; vocational counselling, human services, education and training, or other services to people with disabilities or barriers to employment.

Minimum qualifications for this position may be satisfied by a combination of education and experience as outlined below:

CERTIFICATES, LICENSES, REGISTRATIONS

- Valid Driver's License

- Good driving record.

- Criminal record certificate.

- First Aid certification is an advantage.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS & WORK ENVIRONMENT

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an applicant to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

- The applicant must be able to provide training and services to clients in a variety of business and work settings.
- The applicant must be able to hear instructions and give oral directions.
- The applicant should be able to assist clients with disabilities in and out of vehicles, buildings, restrooms, etc.
- The applicant should have reliable transportation and be willing to travel between office and community locations daily; sometimes transporting people with disabilities.
- The applicant should be able to work on flexible manner in terms of working hours.

VI. Expected duties, functions and responsibilities of the potential SE specialist.

During the assessment process the two observers should be aware that the applicant should have enough level of **presented abilities towards the following duties, functions and responsibilities** *(the list is not explicit and should be used as a indicative guidance material):*

1. Maintain confidentiality.

2. Find and secure employment opportunities for clients that match both the needs of the client and the need of the business.

3. Check with client and employer at regular intervals. Identify solutions to personnel issues and implement them.

4. Maintain communication with clients and circle of support (family members, friends etc.) regarding progress on and outcomes of the career plan.

5. Perform vocational assessments of the clients' skills.

6. Provide professional vocational counselling and guidance to clients through the job identification, interview, and new hire orientation process.

7. Assist in training and maintaining of employment.

8. Facilitate Person Centred Planning Process with client and their circle of support as needed.

9. Market and raise awareness towards paid jobs for individuals with disabilities in the community.

10. Conduct evaluations of potential job vacancies.

11. Meet with potential employers: determine needs of businesses, conditions of employment and potential for employing clients with disabilities.

12. Maintain an effective relationship with the employer that includes soliciting regular feedback about the employment situation and addressing issues as they arise.

13. Identify opportunities for career growth with the employer and their supported employee with disability. Facilitate further training or coaching to assist both parties.

14. Develop on-going positive relationships with key co-workers and the Client at their place of employment.

15. Conduct and/or participate in Client review sessions with representatives of involved agencies and parent/advocates.

16. Develop and implement productive weekly schedule to assist assigned client caseload in maintaining their employment or developing employment opportunities.

17. Disseminate information about community based employment to fellow specialists, funders, employers, consumers and their advocates.

18. Provide training and consultations to co-workers to enable them to support the supported employee.

19. Troubleshoot problems that arise at community job sites and help employer and client to maintain a positive working relationship.

20. Attend and represent Supported employment at various networking events.

21. Develop and maintain relationships with businesses and NGOs in the community.

22. Coordinate with other professionals (doctors, counsellors, others) as needed.

23. Establish natural supports for clients in the workplace and implement a fade schedule that gradually reduces the need for job coaching/follow along services.

24. Document reports and case notes detailing client services, progress, challenges, etc. and the solutions implemented.

25. Assist employers to identify and mitigate or eliminate architectural, procedural and attitudinal barriers to employment of client.

26. Proactively enlist the support of supervisors and co-workers to maximally integrate the client into the regular work routine of the business.

VII. Level of knowledge and skills towards SE process which the SE specialist should possess.

During the process of decision making and conducting of an attestation the two observers should take into account the following necessary skills which the SE specialist should possess in accordance with SE specialist job profile:

- Satisfactory level of professionalism in appearance and actions (including verbal and non-verbal communication).

- An experience in working with people with disabilities is an advantage.

- Good problem solving ability.

- Enthusiastic, motivated and positive attitude, "can-do" attitude.

- Ability to provide proactive solutions to problems.

- Good networking and negotiation skills.

- Understanding of applied behaviour supports for persons with disabilities.

- Effective oral and written communication skills.

- Proficiency with MS Office (Excel, Word, PowerPoint, etc.).

- Ability to maintain strict confidentiality.

- Reliable attendance.

In terms of provided feedback by the applicant the two assessors may evaluate the applicant's answers having in mind the following Supported employment values and their clarifications:

SE Values	*Values clarifications*
Presumption of Employment	A conviction that everyone, regardless of the level or the type of disability, has the capability and right to a job.
Competitive Employment	A conviction that employment occurs within the local labour market in regular community businesses.
Control	A conviction that when people with disabilities choose and regulate their own employment supports and services, career satisfaction will result.

Commensurate Wages & Benefits	A conviction that people with disabilities should earn wages and benefits equal to that of co-workers performing the same or similar jobs.
Focus on Capacity & Capabilities	A conviction that people with disabilities should be viewed in terms of their abilities, strengths, and interests rather than their disabilities.
Importance of Relationships	A conviction that community relationships both at, and away from, work leads to mutual respect and acceptance.
Power of Supports	A conviction that people with disabilities need to determine their personal goals and receive assistance in assembling the supports necessary to achieve their ambitions.
Systems Change	A conviction that traditional systems must be changed to ensure customer control which is vital to the integrity of supported employment.
Importance of Community	A conviction that people need to be connected to the formal and informal networks of a community for acceptance, growth, and development.

When the assessors are performing the recognition and validation process they should be aware of the **five distinct roles** that supported employment direct service personnel perform within each of the functions associated with a person-centred approach to supported employment.

The five roles described in this section are not weighted, and therefore share the same level of importance.

You as assessor should know that a good SE specialist would not, for example, focus solely on the "specialist role" or the "planner role" to the exclusion of the other areas. Rather, SE

specialist must be prepared to serve in many different capacities to effectively meet the needs of individuals with significant disabilities who seek supported employment services. It is important to remember that the SE specialist should work closely with the client with disability, employer, co-workers, family, and others, providing as little or as much assistance as the individual needs to accomplish her or his identified goals.

The following section will guide the assessors by the presented review of the activities associated with each of these distinct roles.

Planner Role

The SE specialist acting in the planner role as performing analyses of the services that a supported employment client was seeking and then assist him or her in the development of a plan to achieve the identified goals. The planner role involves the development of a customer profile in which desirable career options and community supports are identified. Mapping out activities, identifying potential supports, scheduling meetings with organizations, and identifying resources to be utilized would be important functions of the planner role. Setting up and conducting of a situational assessment is one example of a desirable activity for the planner role. This service would be provided to those clients with disabilities who were seeking clarity in choosing a career path, distinguishing interests, or identifying critical support needs.

Specialist Role

The SE specialist should be prepared to enter into a specialist relationship with the client of the supported employment services. As with any specialist relationship, the expectations related to this role would be to provide recommendations based upon the specialist's (applicant) knowledge and expertise. The client has the right to accept or reject the specialist's advice and to contract for additional services if needed. A specific example of the specialist role would be to provide recommendations to the customer in regards to employment selection, job site organization, use of different strategies, and potential support that would assist in getting and keeping a job.

Head Hunter Role

The head hunter role represents an important area of job responsibilities for the SE specialist. Acting in this role s/he engages in a variety of marketing activities ranging from the development and dissemination of promotional information about supported employment services to the identification of strategies for an individual to market him or herself to a prospective employer. A "high power" head hunter would remain current with

community labour market and local economic development opportunities and include such job responsibilities as tracking data on primary and secondary labour markets within a community, conducting labour market surveys, participating in business advisory boards, keeping files on community employers, and making cold calls to businesses with the intent of seeking position openings or potential need to hire.

Essentially, the head hunter spends time developing strong relationships with the entire employment community.

Technician Role

The SE specialist is required to perform in the role of a technician, requiring many technical skills and abilities. S/he should be well versed in the latest high and low rehabilitation technologies that would assist an individual to enter the world of work, to maintain a current employment position, or obtain career advancement. The technician's role also requires the SE specialist to be able to identify appropriate strategies to teach needed skills, provide training as needs arise, and to fade assistance in a systematic process that ensures acquisition and maintenance of a skill. A typical example of the technician's role performed by the SE specialist is providing instruction to a customer on how to ride public transportation.

Community Resource Role

The community resource role requires the SE specialist to have a thorough knowledge of the community. This knowledge can be obtained by conducting regular community analysis activities that investigate potential support resources. These resource areas are not limited to the business community, but rather cover the entire range of community supports to include transportation, recreation, social, housing, and independent living, organizations and agencies. Acting in this community resource role, the SE specialist continually identifies information that will be used to assist an individual in determining preferences for possible supports. This role is vital in helping to ensure that clients with disabilities are not only achieving a measure of economic success but also social success.

VIII. Resources:

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2. Joost van den Berg, Supported employment, Stichting Zuidwester, Middelharnis, The Netherlands.

3. Moon, M.S., Goodall, P., Barcus, M., & Brooke, V. (2006). The supported work model of competitive employment for citizens with severe handicaps: A guide for job trainers. Richmond, Rehabilitation Research and Training Centre on Supported employment.

4. Rehabilitative Brief (2008). Supported Employment, 10(1). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitative Research, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

5. Sousa, A. et al. (2005). Manual de Formação de Técnicos em Emprego Apoiado. Lisboa. APEA – Associação Portuguesa de Emprego Apoiado.

6. Wehman, P. (2010). Competitive employment: New horizons for severely disabled individuals. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.