



### Project SeaTALK

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Vocational training qualification and certification related to Maritime English, although partially regulated by IMO, does not enjoy a common ECVET framework and this situation does not allow National Certification Authorities to establish a level for Maritime English training undertaken abroad, nor for qualifications acquired through non-formal and informal training. To approach the problem or demand situation described, SeaTalk aims to develop Maritime English Training Modules and an ECVET based model for mutual recognition and transparency of learning outcomes and competences in the Maritime English in Europe.

This project aims to:

- Up-skilling advancement in the maritime industry, strengthen the maritime labour market by combating problems of poor communication at sea and imbalanced supply of sailors throughout European countries.
- Improving safety of passengers and the ships' cargo by combating deficiencies of misunderstanding between crew and passengers.
- Creating a comprehensive framework enabling seafarers to undergo common Maritime English training and National Authorities to assess their qualification levels as well as the levels of training undertaken. This will facilitate workers mobility due to an easier and common qualifications recognition system in the EU.
- Creating a standard approach by combining the IMO (International Maritime Organisation) requirements for Maritime English (Training Modules), the highly successful MarTEL Phase tests and the creation of an ECVET system, which could allow National Authorities to recognise and assess such qualifications and levels in a standardised manner.
- Establishing the ME ECVET system to allow mutual recognition of seafarers' Maritime English Competence within the Maritime industry directly linked to the CEFR of languages to promote greater mobility of seafarers' workforce and in line with STCW requirements.
- Developing Maritime English Training Modules (linked to CEFR) to facilitate the training and learning of Maritime English. The combination of Training Modules consolidation and incorporation in the ECVET system will facilitate the mutual recognition of competences thus enhancing workers mobility.
- Promoting good practice in Maritime English education and training across Europe.

The project will allow the consortium to work towards these goals, which are in line with the 'Europe 2020' priorities. By improving the quality of Maritime English education and training, the project will make the European MET sector stronger,

result in more competent trained seafarers. This may well contribute to a reduction in the number of accidents at sea and make the European shipping industry more competitive. During the recent Italy cruise ship Costa Concordia accident, poor communications between the crew and the passengers was evident. If a standard training and assessment approach is enabled, the communication ability of the crew would be higher and more effective in onboard communications.

### **How the project will be implemented**

To achieve this overarching project aim, SeaTalk will envisage the following detailed steps:

#### **Step 1**

- European survey on Maritime English Modules offered in MET and Maritime Universities to be the reference point of Unified Maritime English Training Modules development. (WP2)
- Development of Maritime English Competence description Grid: the Maritime English Competence grid should provide a description basis for all deducted competences for each type and rank of seafarers. Partners will link the CEFR to the detailed perspectives of the different English language competences and job profiles needed for each type and rank of seafarers.

#### **Step 2**

- Development of Maritime English Training Modules to cater for each type and rank of seafarers. The Training Modules should comprise the sections such as Module Title, Level descriptor, Module description, Competence-based outcomes, etc.

#### **Step 3**

- Development of the ECVET Model for Maritime English. The whole ECVET for Maritime English will be incorporated into a comprehensive Handbook. The Handbook will describe the ECVET model on the basis of the ECVET regulation and the competences deducted from the Maritime English Competence Grid.

#### **Step 4**

- Consolidation of Maritime English Learning Materials: presenting the learning materials in the intended e-learning platform (WP5) by consolidating the existing successful Leonardo Maritime English Projects including CAPTAINS, MarEng, MarEng Plus and many other appropriate Maritime English learning and teaching ICT materials. (WP4)

#### **Step 5**



- Test implementation of the ECVET Model: The ECVET model and the developed approaches/instruments will be piloted both inside and outside of the partnership to receive feedback on practical implementation and feasibility for the Maritime sector needs. (WP7)

### Step 6

- Policy development: the project will also develop further policy for Maritime English education and training out of a high quality multi-stakeholder perspective. A policy recommendation paper for Maritime English education and training in Maritime sector will be developed. (WP9)

**Major Milestones** of this project will be reached when:

- The Maritime English Competence description Grid has been completed;
- The Maritime English Training Modules for each type and rank of seafarers have been developed;
- The ECVET Model has been completed based on the Maritime English Competence description Grid and the Maritime English Training Modules;
- E-learning platform for Maritime English Learning Materials has been set up;
- The Maritime English Training Modules, Maritime English Learning Materials, and the ECVET Model have been tested

**Measurable Indicators** of the main project outputs will be established when:

- The Maritime English Competence Grid proves to be a valid base for the development of Training Modules and the ECVET Model development;
- The key project outputs prove to be feasible after the piloting phase;
- The e-learning platform is ready to use and feedback is provided by end-users.

### EU and International Issues

#### European Policies

The promotion of mutual recognition of qualifications between EU Member States and the implementation of the ECVET framework on a European scale is high on the list of priorities in Europe as laid down in the Bologna Process, Copenhagen Process and Lisbon Treaty. The project's objectives are directly linked to Europe 2020's objectives to support mobility of labour, European Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP) 2018 and Marine Knowledge 2020. The expected results of this project are directly

linked to the planned objectives of EU MARE as stated by the *Commissioner Damanaki*.

### IMO Policies on Safety at Sea

Apart from the above European policies, SeaTalk is also in line with the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Comprehensive review of the STCW Convention and the STCW code, 41st session, STCW 41/7/9, 5th October and EU (2009), communication on the strategic goals and recommendations for the EU's maritime transport policy from 2009-2018, Brussels. Ziarati (2009) cites several serious accidents caused by communication failures to occur within the shipping industry. During the recent Costa Concordia accident, poor communications between the crew and the passengers was evident. The sea will be safer if EU supports SeaTalk to overcome the problem in English language competence. The project results will also lower costs of the European shipping community and enables them to compete against the low cost Far East (Asia) and provides the European seafarers with a competitive advantage.

### Greater Mobility of Labour

SeaTalk will increase mobility across the sector both horizontally and vertically providing transferable language skills and qualifications to all seafarers across Europe. International recognition through a BTEC Edexcel qualification will be achieved on completion of the Training Module (WP3). BTEC is the UK's largest awarding body offering academic and vocational qualifications. Exexcel operates in over 110 countries, offering the widest range of academic and vocational qualifications. The project will promote the transfer and recognition of competences and qualifications between the UK and across Europe to promote greater mobility. SeaTalk would create opportunity to improve their English and work onboard vessels of countries where there are severe shortage of workforce (OECD, 2007, BIMCO/ISF, 2005).

The EU support will enable C4FF and the partners to engage in developing a harmonised and comprehensive framework for Maritime English training for MET. It will establish a standard approach to teaching, learning, assessment and transparency of qualifications throughout Europe. Thus this will up-skill advancement in the maritime industry, strengthen the maritime labour market by combating problems of poor communication at sea and imbalanced supply of sailors throughout European countries.

### The Expected IMPACT

**Development Paper**

The project's impact will be multiplied by the strength and influence of the consortium. They have extensive knowledge of the ECVET programme, and combined with the fact that each partner has access to people and organisations within target groups. The consortium will also be able to disseminate these programmes extremely effectively. Target groups all over Europe will be addressed. The target groups of the Project are:

- Seafarers/students
- Maritime English Lecturers
- Vocational education and training providers in Maritime VET centres who are offering Maritime Training programmes
- Maritime Universities offering MVET courses.
- Shipping companies providing cooperative training.
- Labour market authorities who are promoting employment possibilities on the sector and rely heavily on European workforce mobility and recognition.
- MVET associations and their members such as IMEC (International Maritime English Conference), IMLA (International Maritime Lecturers Association) and IAMU (International Association of Maritime Universities) etc.
- Political decision makers on international, European, national, regional and local levels who are planning future policies for Maritime sector on different geographical and political level and are significantly influencing the Maritime industry development.

All the target groups listed above are significantly influencing and determining the Maritime English Education in Europe and are influencing the quality of Maritime industry. In this project, the target groups and the impact aims will be reached by the following approaches:

- Dissemination strategy. The target groups are directly involved in the projects meetings and dissemination strategy and will be made fully aware of the project's objectives and plans.
- Contacting MET providers to encourage the use of the products. MET providers, maritime English lecturers and students will be contacted on the latest progress of the product development and be encouraged to use the product (Training modules, Learning Materials, ECVET system).
- Top-down approach through which information flows from policy makers in a 'downward' direction to a target group. During the project, partners will submit papers to and attend maritime conferences such as IMEC, IMLA, IAMU etc.

which will be attended by key policy makers in maritime field. Since the project is developed in response to the deficiencies in MET, it is expected that the policy makers will respond by becoming involved and addressing the issues that are highlighted.

- The number of METs expected to be pilot the content is over 30. The number of cadets and officers involved with evaluation at the pilot site (TUDEV) will be 48. The overall model will be presented at IMEC and to major awarding bodies in Europe.