

## Lika villkor - Equal Opportunities

### Swedish ESF Project Equal Opportunities

The Swedish Public Employment Service, Arbetsförmedlingen, is the project owner of the ESF Project Equal Opportunities with duration up to June 2014. The aim of the project is to tackle the mismatch of disabled people on the labour market in cooperation with The Swedish Institute of Assistive Technology, disability organizations and employers (industries). The project is financed by the Swedish Public Employment Service and the European Social Fund.

The European Commission made in March 2010 a proposal for a new economic strategy for the European Union, also known as the EU2020 strategy:

([http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/1\\_SV\\_ACT\\_part1\\_v1.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/1_SV_ACT_part1_v1.pdf))

The strategy adopted by all EU heads of state and government in June 2010. The strategy presented seven flagship initiatives, of which one is:

- Modernization of labour markets and increased empowerment

*The Swedish ESF Project Equal Opportunities is directly in line with the EU 2020 strategy.*

- The project is a matching project from an accessibility and adaption perspective.
- The project's target group is people with all kind of disabilities and within the project people with so-called cognitive mark-up, that causes a disability which may be temporary or chronic, will be highlighted.
- The aim of the Equal Opportunities is to get more people into work.
- The process, methodology and tools to be used will be useful for everyone on the labor market, regardless of target groups of individuals.

*The ESF Project Equal Opportunities has three main activities:*

1. Accessibility and adaptation of Self Assessments, Vocational Previewing, Vocational Validation and Training by developing and improving the methodology for visualizing Soft Skills to complement Generic Hard Skills and Hard Skills.
2. Contribute to "unlock" existing resources by increasing awareness of the facilities available for accessibility and adaption for both individuals and companies.
3. Mentors who will be a link between the individual and the company and act as brokers to ensure that the individual does not return to unemployment.

To support the above activities the project Equal Opportunity will need effective methods. Therefore the project has been searching on the international market.

Already in the stage of planning for the ESF project Equal Opportunity an idea came up that an adapted web service to visualize skills, where individuals easily can navigate, might be a solution.

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The web service is supposed to be a solution of current data bases which support many stakeholders, and ensure a process flow on an individual level and that efficiency and quality are achieved in all steps.

The Project team got the information about an existing application in Netherlands, LDC/FIT. This application manage accessibility for Self Assessments of Soft Skills in addition with adaptation for long term unemployed and disabled people.

The process is based on online test batteries and self-assessments, and has been standardized and validated.

The adapted application is developed in cooperation with TNO Work & Employment (a renowned Dutch scientific research center).

The LDC system is fully consistent with the Occupation Classification of the Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), and also based on EU standards.

LDC was established in the early 90's by a number of Dutch governmental organizations (the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment and the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation).

As a result of this information about the LDC process the ESF project Equal Opportunity visited the Netherlands during 2012 in order to understand and learn more about their web-solution.

Result from the visit is very positive and confirm that the application can support and help to fulfill the project goal concerning self-assessments of Soft Skills and the delivery of standard report documents including Soft Skills.

The project has been looking in the same way for a best practice concerning Hard Skills as Self-Assessments for adapted Vocational Previewing, Vocational Validation, Additional Education, Individual Action Plan and Grades/Diploma or Certificates to support the project target group.

A solution was to be found in Sweden as cooperation between economic sectors and the Mapaz / MZ platform supporting the sectors legitimate content with the internet service.

The Swedish MZ/Sectors concept was already launched in 2009 within the seminar "Sectors New Skills for New Jobs" hold by the EU - Commission in Brussels December 2009.

A follow up concrete work shop was hold in Stockholm in May 2011 by the network "Sectors Initiative" based on the "Agenda for New Skills and Jobs".

The EU Commission DG Employment participated actively in the seminar together with stakeholders from Economic Sectors, Companies, Public Employment Service and Organizations.

A meeting with representatives from "Sectors Initiative" and the project Equal Opportunities was held in Stockholm December 2012. The aim for this meeting was to look over possibilities for further cooperation between the project and industries in Sweden that are interested.

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The ESF Project Equal Opportunities realized after making this contemporary social and environmental studies that it could be possible to find a complete solution if the project could have the access to one integrated web service for Soft Skills, Generic Hard Skills and Hard Skills to support the project target group.

In addition to this, the web solution should have features that support individual knowledge of assistive devices.

Today there is an existing website owned by The Swedish Institute of Assistive Technology which can be developed.

Effective methods for self-assessments to make skills visible, increased knowledge and understanding for assistive technology and support from the society will strengthen the empowerment on individual level. This will broaden possibilities for the project target group on the labor market.

In practice this means that the project need to let the project participants test and judge how new methods can help them to find solutions for their own future.

*(Assistive devices are products designed for people with disabilities. Assistive technology can also refer to methods and new technology//SIAT, The Swedish Institute of Assistive Technology)*