End-User e-Skills Framework Requirements Project

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End User e-Skills Framework Requirements

Project Objective:

To survey the requirements for an end-user e-skills framework as articulated by industry, certifying organisations, and individuals and propose practical tool sets derived from such a framework.

Key Project Elements

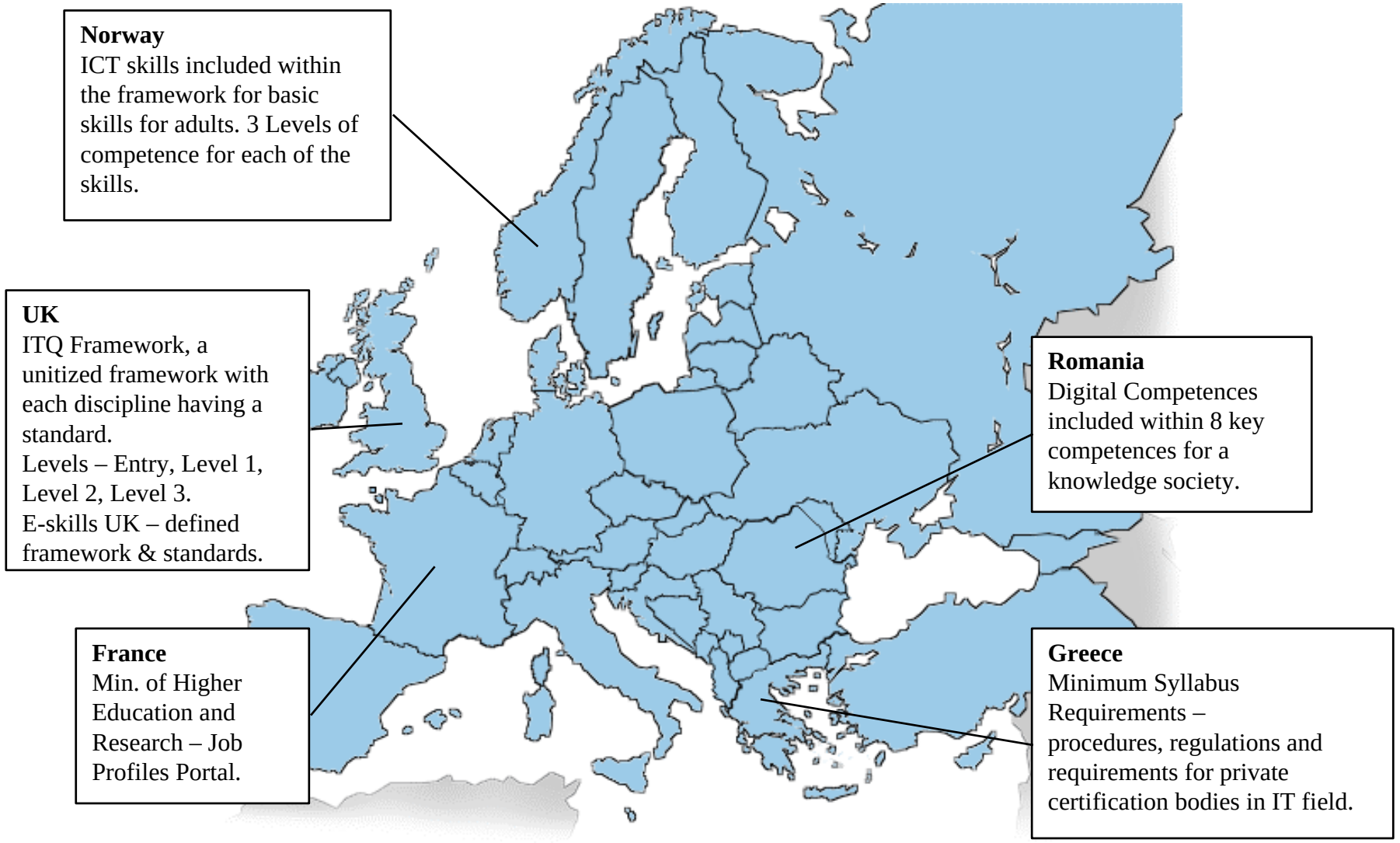
- **Examination of the current end-user e-Skills Framework landscape.**
- **Documenting different types of user for the framework.**
- **Choosing a research methodology to gather requirements.**
- **Developing the necessary research instrument.**
- Surveying members of the four user groups.
- Workshop with key stakeholder representatives.
- Synthesis of the survey activity findings.
- Making recommendations of the possible framework and tool set structure to support end user e-Skills.
- Communicate the findings.

European End User e-Skills Frameworks

Norway
ICT skills included within the framework for basic skills for adults. 3 Levels of competence for each of the skills.

UK
ITQ Framework, a unitized framework with each discipline having a standard.
Levels – Entry, Level 1, Level 2, Level 3.
E-skills UK – defined framework & standards.

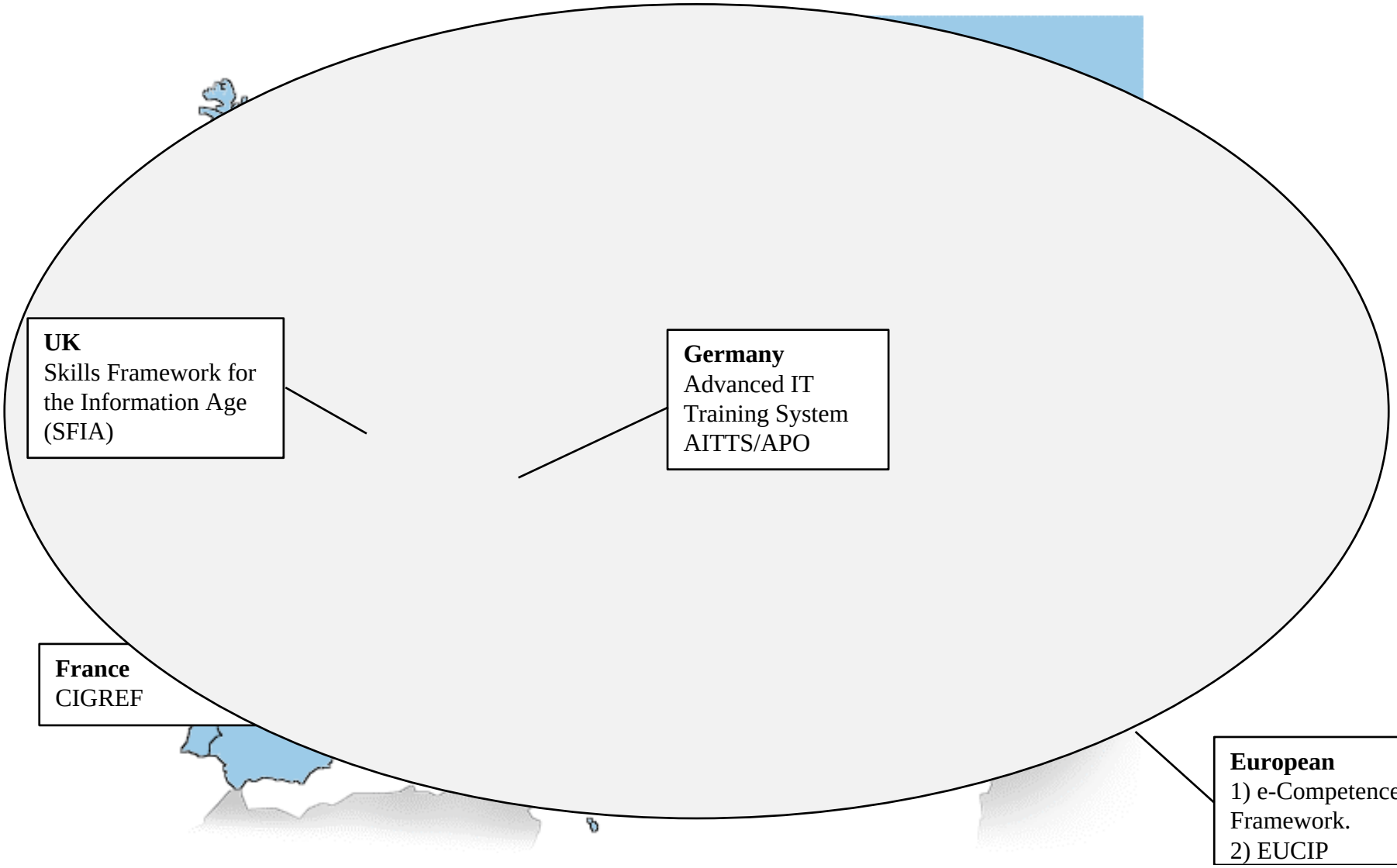
France
Min. of Higher Education and Research – Job Profiles Portal.



Romania
Digital Competences included within 8 key competences for a knowledge society.

Greece
Minimum Syllabus Requirements – procedures, regulations and requirements for private certification bodies in IT field.

European IT Professional Frameworks



Project Focus – End User e-Skills

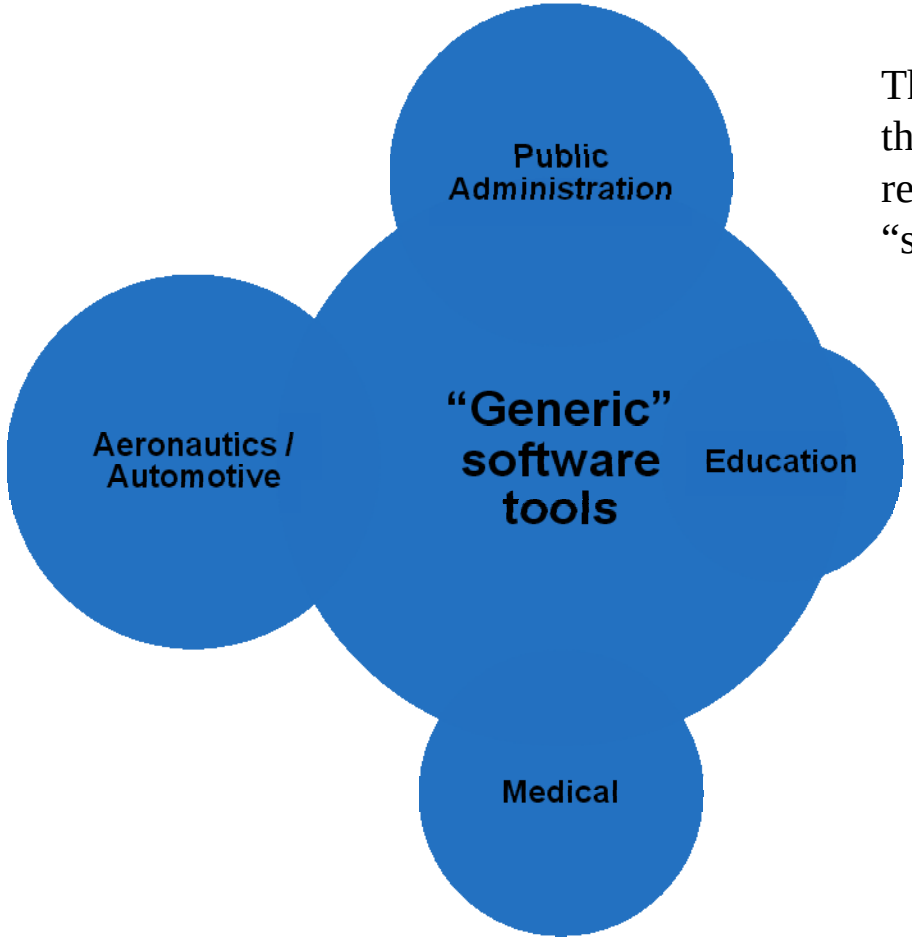
End user e-skills: the capabilities required for effective application of ICT systems and devices by the individual in either a work or personal environment. Individuals apply ICT systems as tools in support of their own activities, which is, in most cases, not ICT.

End user e-skills cover the utilisation of common generic software tools and the use of specialised tools supporting business functions. End user e-skills vary in complexity from introductory up to an advanced usage level. (Adapted from European e-Skills Forum 2004 definition)

Target Groups (Potential Framework Users)

- Human resource and training functions
- Training and/or certification organisations
- Individuals
- Regulatory authorities

Sector Specific Approach to defining end-user e-Skills



The light blue area outside the "Generic" circle represents the specialised "sector" tools

Survey Contents:

- Survey Respondent Information
- Framework Structure
  - Level of Detail, Proficiency Levels, Links to NQFs, Suitability of Descriptors
- Importance of framework against other requirements
- Use of other tools
- Feedback on importance of having a framework
- Various use and tools an end user e-skills framework could provide
- Benefits of having a framework.

Next Project Steps

- Q4 2009 - Circulate revised survey to broad respondent group and complement with interviews.
- Q 4 2009 - Ensure completion, aggregate response data.
- Q1 2010 – Workshop to consider initial results and delivery of interim report.
- Q1 / Q2 2010 – Create final report including recommendations on framework structure and tools sets.
- Dissemination at appropriate events.

Thank You!

End user e-Skills Framework

QUESTIONS

European Committee for Standardization
Comité Européen de Normalisation
Europäisches Komitee für Normung

End User e-Skills Framework

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1. Introduction

The End User e-Skills Framework Requirements project[1] has been commissioned by the CEN/ISSS Workshop on ICT Skills to identify the requirements for an e-Skills framework for use by industry, certifying organisations, regulatory authorities and individuals. The project aims to assist in having an effective understanding of end user e-Skills and to make proposals for developing such a reference framework, as well as outlining associated tools that could benefit framework users. Four potential target groups have been identified and these groups will be surveyed to elicit their understanding of and need for such a framework.

Initial research was undertaken which involved the examination of e-skills frameworks already in place in European countries. This has been completed and will inform the survey which will be carried out with the individuals and organisations representing the four identified target groups of the framework. The groups are:

- Human resource and training functions within medium to large scale organisations
- Training and/or certification organisations
- Individuals
- Regulatory authorities

A pilot test of the survey was completed in October 2009. The findings from this will help finalise the survey to be carried out in early 2010. The data from the survey will be supplemented by a series of interviews with key stakeholders from the target groups to further explore their requirements and the potential benefits that could be derived from an end user e-Skills framework.

The project, which is funded by the European Commission, is part of the CEN/ISSS Workshop on ICT Skills, a European work group consisting of both national and international representatives from the ICT industry, vocational training organisations, social partners and other institutions. The CEN/ISSS workshop aims to create long-term human resources (HR) and competence development solutions for the European Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector.

[1] http://www.ecompetences.eu/site/objects/download/5101_EndUsereSkillsFrameworkRequirementsOverview.pdf

2. Surveying different implementations of end user e-Skills frameworks

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of the initial activity of the project was to gather information on the existence and type of end user e-Skills frameworks in European countries. The activity was primarily desk based research with input from individuals and organisations who are involved in the end user e-Skills domain in the selected countries. The output gives a snapshot of the current activity and the existing solutions being used across Europe. The groups addressed included certifying organisations, human resource functions, regulatory authorities and individuals, although not within a comprehensive framework.

Some of the e-Skills frameworks referred to the skills of IT professionals. Others were those of the end user. This project is focused on the end user. The reader is directed to the eCompetence framework for skills specifically for the IT professional. This framework is discussed 2.3.2.

2.2 Summary of existing end user e-skills frameworks

A summary of the existing end user e-skills frameworks can be seen in Figure 1.

Existing End User e-Skills Frameworks	
Country	Framework Details
France	1) CIGREF (IT Professionals) 2) Ministry of Higher Education and Research - Job Profiles Portal for IT Professions (contains some end user e-skills)
Greece	Common Ministers Decision (Labour & Education) - known in Greece as "KYA-A'/25081/2005" - Minimum Syllabus Requirements[2]
Romania	The National Education Pact, named "Education and Research for a Knowledge Society" Strategy[3], includes digital competences.
United Kingdom	The ITQ[4] framework, aligned to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) which will soon be transferring to the Qualifications Credit Framework (QCF).
Norway	Framework for Basic Skills for Adults, developed by Vox (www.vox.no) on behalf of the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research.

Figure 1 - Summary of end user e-skills frameworks in Europe

It should be noted that when asked about end user e-Skills frameworks, many of the respondents made reference to the prevalence of ECDL in their country and referred to the ECDL syllabus as the framework in use. The ECDL certification programmes are widely adopted across Europe and

[2] http://www.oeek.gr/documents/oeek_kya_pistopoiisis_foreon.pdf
[3] http://www.presidency.ro
[4] http://www.e-skills.com/nvq/2541

beyond (as ICDL), and as a result of 9 million registrations to date[5], ECDL has become the *de facto* standard in this domain.

2.2.1 France

2.2.1.1 CIGREF – "Les emplois-métiers du système d'information dans les grandes entreprises utilisatrices"

CIGREF is an association of 128 French companies and organisations from various sectors. The CIGREF nomenclature presents a set of Information Technology occupations that are used in most information systems departments of major French companies. It is a tool that was built by consensus among HR professionals, led by CIGREF. It is used by companies in France as a template to build their own repository by adding their own specificities.

The CIGREF nomenclature is focused on the skills and competence associated with IT Professionals and for this reason is considered to be outside the scope of the research.

2.2.1.2 Ministère de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherché (Ministry of Higher Education and Research)

The Ministry of Higher Education and Research has developed a Job Profiles Portal for IT Professions[6]. While the profiles are largely focused on IT Professional level skills and competence more relevant to the e-Competence Framework[7], some of the skills requirements are at the end user level. These include internet search techniques for "Online Journalist", and creating databases for "e-Marketer".

2.2.2 Greece

In Greece, the main developments in the area of end user e-Skills relate to an element of the Common Ministers Decision (Labour & Education) - known in Greece as "KYA-A'/25081/2005" - Minimum Syllabus Requirements[8]. This defines the entire process, regulations and other requirements from private certification bodies in the IT field, in order for their certificates to be accepted from the Civil Service Staffing Council (ASEP).

The requirements were developed under the supervision of the Organization of Vocational Education & Training (O.E.E.K.) which also supervises the implementation of K.Y.A. The "Minimum Syllabus Requirements" part of K.Y.A. contains six modules: 1. Using Computer & Managing Files, 2. Word processing, 3. Spreadsheets, 4. Internet Services, 5. Databases and 6. Presentations. These modules are broken into 3 Levels (Units - Knowledge/Skills - Actions/Procedures). The structure is identical to modules 2 to 7 of ECDL Syllabus V4.0, which is well recognised in Greece. The structure covers about 85% of the ECDL syllabus. There is no similar module to Module 1 of ECDL - Concepts of Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

[5] http://www.ecdl.org/publisher/index.jsp?1nID=93&2nID=94&pID=781&nID=830
[6] http://www.metiers.internet.gouv.fr/
[7] http://www.ecompetences.eu/
[8] http://www.oeek.gr/documents/oeek_kya_pistopoiisis_foreon.pdf

The K.Y.A does not currently have any links to an NQF, and it is primarily used by the Public Sector and Public Organizations Employees in most administrative positions.

A table of all approved Certification Bodies/Organizations and their Certificates which are accepted by ASEP is the major service associated with the framework.

2.2.3 Romania

The National Education Pact, called "Education and Research for a Knowledge Society"[9], focuses on 8 key competences[10], which includes the reference to digital competences (using information technology for knowledge and problem solving). These categories make up a framework focused on the development and modernisation of curricula for secondary school and college institutions. The strategy is linked to the Romanian NQF and has been developed by government bodies and experts.

2.2.4 United Kingdom

In the UK the ITQ[11] framework is aligned to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) which will soon be transferring to the Qualifications Credit Framework (QCF). The ITQ framework covers Entry Level, level 1, 2 and 3 at present. It is a unitised framework with each discipline (e.g. word processing, spreadsheets etc) defined as a standard. Most disciplines have a standard at each level. The levels of the ITQ framework are aligned to the NQF/QCF levels that cover England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The ITQ framework is also aligned to levels 4, 5 and 6 of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). The SCQF is a non-regulatory framework.

The framework and resulting standards were defined by e-skills UK, who are a Government licensed Sector Skills Council (SSC) for the IT and Telecoms sector in the UK. Their remit is to represent the skills needs of employers within their given sector.

While e-skills UK's remit is to represent the skills needs of employers, the influence of the framework covers the provision of IT user skills across the whole of the UK. As an SSC, e-skills UK are also responsible for a UK-wide Sector Qualification and Learning Strategy (SQLS) which defines how the skills needs of employers will be addressed. This SQLS informs policy on which qualifications the regulatory authorities will approve for placing on the NQF/QCF and informs the decisions on the priorities for Government funding.

e-skills UK have produced an e-skills Passport which is essentially a diagnostic tool for the ITQ framework. The Passport enables specific profiles (ITQ unit options) to be set for people and they can then perform a simple diagnostic assessment against the relevant standards. The Passport can then track progress against this in the form of ITQ unit achievements. e-skills UK currently sell Passport licences to anyone who wants them. The Passport is not a necessary requirement for involvement in the ITQ framework.

[9] http://www.presidency.ro
[10] http://www.presidency.ro/static/ordine/comisia_educatie/education_and_research_for_a_knowledge_society.pdf page 9
[11] http://www.e-skills.com/nvq/2541

There is no evidence of an alignment with other IT user skills frameworks. However, the British Computer Society (BCS) has mapped ECDL into the ITQ framework.

2.2.5 Norway

The Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research assigned to Vox (www.vox.no) the responsibility to develop a Framework for Basic Skills for Adults. This consisted of descriptions of levels of competence for each of the basic skills that the programme comprises. All the sets of competence goals, i.e. for literacy, numeracy, ICT skills and oral communication, have now been approved by the Ministry of Education and Research.

The Framework for Basic Skills for Adults establishes national standards for reading and writing, mathematics, ICT skills and oral communication. The descriptions of levels of competence for each of the basic skills are divided into three levels. The template is identical for all skills and all levels. Each level is described in detail in the form of intended learning outcomes.

Within this framework, "ICT skills / digital competence" is the set of skills relevant to this research and is about using various ICT systems, finding and exchanging relevant information and producing and presenting information to others.

- Level 1 describes the minimum competence needed to be able to utilize public and private services to one's own ends.
- Level 2 describes the competence needed to use various web-based services independently and actively.
- Level 3 describes the competence needed to be able to exploit the potential of new technology independently and actively.

2.3 Other Framework Developments

The research also noted two important European level framework developments which may interact with any future end user e-skills framework:

- European Qualifications Framework (EQF)
- e-Competence Framework (e-CF)
- IT Professional Frameworks

2.3.1 European Qualifications Framework[12]

The EQF is a common European reference framework which links countries' qualifications systems together, acting as a translation device to make qualifications more readable and understandable across different countries and systems in Europe.

The EQF aims to relate different countries' national qualifications systems and frameworks together around a common European reference, using eight reference levels. The levels span the full scale of qualifications, from basic (Level 1, for example school leaving certificates) to advanced (Level 8, for example Doctorates) levels. As an instrument for the promotion of lifelong

[12] http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc44_en.htm

learning, the EQF encompasses all levels of qualifications acquired in general, vocational as well as academic education and training. Additionally, the framework addresses qualifications acquired in initial and continuing education and training.

2.3.2 e-Competence Framework[13]

The European e-Competence Framework (e-CF) is a reference framework of 32 ICT competences that can be used and understood by ICT user and supply companies, the public sector, educational and social partners across Europe.

The framework provides a tool which has been developed by an international team of experts for:

ICT practitioners and managers, with clear guidelines for their competence development
Human resources managers, enabling the anticipation and planning of competence requirements
Education and training, enabling effective planning and design of ICT curricula
Policy makers and market researchers, providing a clear and Europe-wide agreed reference for ICT skills and competences in a long-term perspective.

The European e-Competence Framework v.1.0 has been developed in the context of the CEN/ISSS workshop on ICT Skills. Work continues in developing the e-CF, through the current e-CF in Action project[14].

2.3.3 IT Professional Frameworks

Aside from the European level frameworks, some national respondents referred to frameworks which were outside the scope of this research. Frameworks such as SFIA (UK), AITTS (Germany) and CIGREF (France) were referenced by respondents from these countries. However, as these frameworks focus on the IT Professional domain, they have not been given substantial attention for the purpose of this paper.

[13] http://www.ecompetences.eu/
[14] http://www.ecompetences.eu/1980,Framework+maintenance.html

3. Definition of end user e-Skills

There are many skills associated with the use of computers. Computing is ubiquitous today and affects both people's personal and working lives. To ensure that the focus and scope of the project would be clear, a definition of "end user e-skills" was researched and agreed.

The Synthesis Report of the 2004 European e-Skills Forum[15] highlighted three main categories within e-Skills, namely:

- ICT practitioner skills
- ICT user skills
- e-Business skills

A common European framework for ICT Professionals to cover both *ICT practitioner skills* and *e-Business skills* has been developed by the work of the e-Competence framework (e-CF)[16]. The work of the current end user e-Skills framework requirements project is focused on meeting the needs of the other key category, *ICT user skills.*

It is important to note that there is scope for cross references and linkages between this and any future end user e-Skills framework and the e-CF. As will be described later, the type of skills within the end user e-Skills framework will be those needed by everyone, including IT professionals who have other competences as described in the e-CF. These skills will have relevance for individuals in non-IT roles and in IT roles and for personal and recreational users.

The definition proposed in the Synthesis Report of the 2004 European e-Skills Forum is a useful starting point to delimit the scope of the term:

> *"ICT user skills: the capabilities required for effective application of ICT systems and devices by the individual. ICT users apply systems as tools in support of their own work, which is, in most cases, not ICT. User skills cover the utilisation of common generic software tools and the use of specialised tools supporting business functions within industries other than the ICT industry."*

Within this definition e-Skills are made up of several capabilities: knowledge, skills and competences. These have been defined separately within the European Qualifications Framework[17]. Europass, who have developed the Europass CV[18] to allow people to make their skills and qualifications understood across Europe, make reference to "Computer skills and competence" with the Europass CV structure. These sections include skills such as word processing, database searching, acquaintance with Internet, graphics design, and advanced skills (programming etc.). These skills and competence are covered within the e-Skills Forum definition above.

[15] http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/ict/policy/doc/e-skills-forum-2004-09-fsr.pdf
[16] http://www.ecompetences.eu/
[17] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:111:0001:0007:EN:PDF
[18] http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/europass/home/vernav/Europasss+Documents/Europass+CV.csp

Digital Competence is included as one of the key competences for lifelong learning, as part of a recommendation of the European Parliament and Council[19]. This particular definition suggests that:

> *"Digital competence involves the confident and critical use of Information Society Technology (IST) for work, leisure and communication. It is underpinned by basic skills in ICT: the use of computers to retrieve, assess, store, produce, present and exchange information, and to communicate and participate in collaborative networks via the Internet."*

This particular definition stresses the communication and collaborative aspects of ICT and the fact that these competences are applicable for work, leisure and communication. Depending on the required level of granularity and structure of an end user framework, it may require some form of descriptors to differentiate between these capabilities, where applicable.

In addition, each end user e-Skills category will require a number of proficiency levels. Within the e-CF, the levels of the framework have been created to have a degree of mapping to EQF levels. This approach may be less satisfactory if applied to the end user e-Skills domain, as end user skills such as creating a mail merge, or creating a chart in a spreadsheet would be too granular to map to an EQF level.

This granularity issue and the need to create levels that are both understandable and practical will be addressed in the research. The construction of the levels can be based on "difficulty", "cognitive complexity", or "specialisation". One previous example was highlighted in the ICT-Skills Certification in Europe[20] report, where a possible categorisation consisting of four levels was proposed: (A) Basic, (B) Core, (C) Advanced, and (D) Expert. A variation of this type of approach will be used during the survey to gather responses based on a proposed framework architecture.

It will also be important to consider the fact that the end user can either be someone who requires the skills for personal / home use, or an individual / organisation which require the skills as part of their occupation, or as part of a qualification / certification. The context and motivation associated with these users differs considerably. Furthermore, the way these users will interact with ICT will vary based on their ICT use requirements.

Based on the requirements and information above, it is possible to create a revision of the European e-Skills Forum definition as follows:

[19] http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/publ/pdf/ll-learning/keycomp_en.pdf
[20] http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/eskills/download/eSkills_Certification_final_report.pdf

> *"End user ICT skills: the capabilities required for effective application of ICT systems and devices by the individual in either a work or personal[21] environment. Individuals apply systems as tools in support of their own activities, which is, in most cases, not ICT. End user e-skills cover the utilisation of common generic software tools and the use of specialised tools supporting business functions. End user e-skills vary in complexity from introductory up to an advanced usage level."*

This revised definition[22] will be used to provide the background to the research and to put the survey questions in context in order to ensure that respondents to the survey will be clear on the domain that they are being questioned on.

Examples of applications that would fall within the domain defined above include: office applications (such as word processing, spreadsheets, desktop database, presentation, e-mail, Internet), desktop publishing, project management, image editing, website creation. Many of these applications are now used for recreational / home use as much as they are for office / work use.

In addition, sectoral applications such as drawing / modelling applications (2-D / 3-D), health informatics applications, skills to use applications to support specific business activities (e.g. customer relationship management systems) would also be included within the research. However, the sectoral needs will not include those of IT professionals.

While IT professional competences are outside the scope of this project, it is important to recognise and appreciate that IT professionals and e-business professionals also require end user e-Skills to carry out their duties.

To enhance the clarity around the *end user ICT skills* domain, it is useful to provide some examples of what is outside the scope of the defined group. The following are examples of skills that are outside scope:

- Systems Development skills (e.g. programming, testing, deployment - these skills are part of the e-CF "Build" area)
- IT Administrator skills (e.g. setting up users, network security, user support / troubleshooting - these skills are part of the e-CF "Run" / "Manage" areas)
- Database Administration
- Business Analysis

[21] Includes recreational home usage
[22] The revision of the definition was assisted by the input of experts who attended the project open meeting in Dublin, 24 July 2009.

4. Target groups of an end user e-Skills framework

The following have been identified as key target groups for an end user e-Skills framework. These groups will form the main focus of the research activity.

4.1 Human resource and training functions within medium to large scale organisations

These functions require a way of describing ICT skills and competencies that relates logically to job roles and that can be used to identify skills gaps. Human resource managers could use an end user e-Skills framework to build job specifications and profiles and to identify appropriate candidates. Training managers could use it to build focused training plans, purchase training in a structured way and reuse content.

In addition the availability of an e-Skills framework could help organisations to identify clearly where there are skill gaps and assist in finding suitable course content to fill the gaps identified. Integration of the end user e-Skills framework as the reference framework for computer skills in the Europass CV could also offer consistency and clarity for HR managers to evaluate candidates' computer skills and enhance mobility prospects for jobseekers.

4.2 Training and/or certification organisations

These organisations could benefit from being able to create flexible training and certification solutions that relate to a common framework. Syllabus development would be supported by an agreed knowledge and skills domain. Certification could be built around logical and required groupings of knowledge, skills, and competencies (KSCs).

Content providers would have a clear definition of the skills required to meet specific needs. The availability of a framework would help organisations which create learning content either for hard-copy or for eLearning solutions. The framework would help to define the learning environment and offer development paths for lifelong learning both in end user e-Skills, and through the benefits that enhanced end user e-Skills can offer for other educational options (e.g. further and higher education). In addition the potential for mapping to the EQF will add credibility to training and certification offerings.

4.3 Individuals

Access to appropriate and recognisable descriptions of their skills sets would facilitate individual mobility. A commonly accepted "language" for expressing end user e-Skills would allow people to reflect their specific KSCs on documents such as CVs and would allow employers to compare the relative merits of prospective employees.

The e-Skills framework could link with the Europass CV in order to make it more recognisable and relevant. In addition the potential links to the EQF could add credibility to any qualifications obtained which adhere to the e-Skills framework.

4.4 Regulatory authorities

These organisations need tools to assist in tasks such as mapping qualifications. National qualification frameworks are engaged in formalising and structuring the certification space to allow certifications to map to each other. This process would be assisted by a standard expression of the e-Skills domain. Particularly as the framework could be mapped to the EQF which in turn is mapped to each NQF.

5 Sector Specific Approach to defining end user e-Skills

The project team have identified four sectors to consider for possible sector specific approaches to defining end user e-Skills. During the research phase the project team will aim to gather requirements from those experienced in these particular sectors and use this data to gauge the potential for sector specific versions of an end user e-Skills framework.

The ICT-Skills Certification in Europe[23] report and the Synthesis Report of the 2004 European e-Skills Forum[24] both noted that end user e-Skills includes the utilisation of common "generic" software tools in an office environment, and the use of specialised tools supporting major business functions with a large number of "user sectors". The relationships between these 2 skills categories are illustrated in Figure 2.

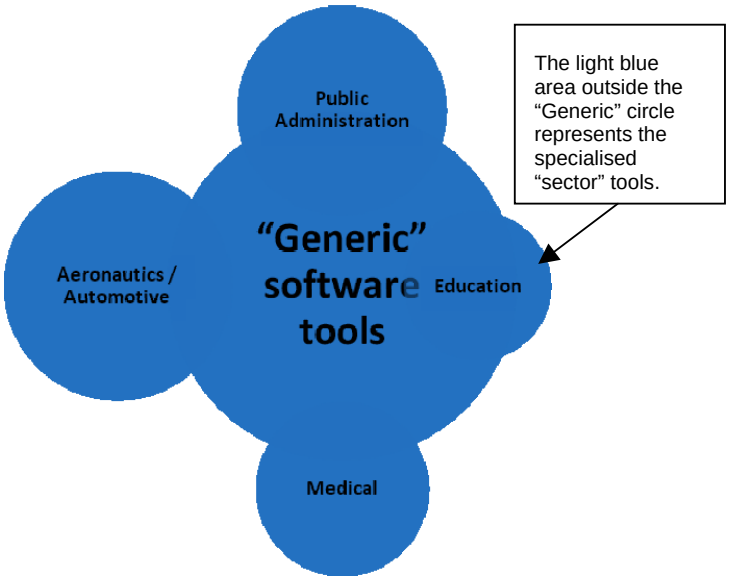

Figure 2 - Relationships between Generic and Sectoral Software tools

The level of overlap between these two skills categories will vary between sectors. The primary research aims to explore this further to gauge the requirements of the sectors. For example, it may become clear that the Aeronautics sector has a greater reliance on the use of specialised tools than the Education sector.

[23] http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/eskills/download/eSkills_Certification_final_report.pdf
[24] http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/ict/policy/doc/e-skills-forum-2004-09-fsr.pdf

Possible benefits and uses of the framework for the chosen sectors could include the ability to support HR planning (training plans, job specifications), to integrate into educational curriculum, to identify skills gaps, to support diagnostic testing.

6 Methodology

The research consists of several phases:
Phase 1 - Research into current frameworks in Europe, described in Section 2
Phase 2 - The creation of a survey
Phase 3 - Pilot running the survey with a selected test population
Phase 4 - Running the survey
Phase 5 - The interviews
Phase 6 – Data Analysis
Phase 7 – Documentation of findings

The primary research will consist of the circulation by the project team of a survey to individuals and organisations representing the four identified potential target groups of the framework:

- Human resource and training functions within medium to large scale organisations
- Training and/or certification organisations
- Individuals
- Regulatory authorities

The project team will supplement the survey with a series of interviews with key stakeholders from the target groups to clarify issues where required, further explore requirements and discuss potential benefits that could be derived from an end user e-Skills framework.

6.1 Survey Pilot

The survey is structured to gain the maximum amount of data from the respondent within a reasonable timeframe. Initial piloting of the survey took place before and during an open expert meeting hosted in Dublin in July 2009 and as a result the survey was revised and prepared for an online pilot. The initial task also validated the completion time required, which varied from 15 – 25 minutes.

The general structure and questions were adapted slightly to suit each survey target group. Following input at a second expert meeting held on October 2009 in London, the survey has been refined further. The full circulation of the survey is currently underway. If you wish to participate in the survey, please contact neil.farren@ecdl.org for details.

6.2 The survey

The current survey features the following content:

- Survey Respondent Information
- Framework Structure, including Level of Detail, Proficiency Levels, Links to NQFs, Suitability of Descriptors
- Importance of framework against other requirements
- Use of other tools

- Feedback on importance of having a framework
- Various use and tools an end user e-skills framework could provide
- Benefits of having a framework.

6.3 The Interviews

The interviews will be completed during December 2009 and January 2010. The project team will use the interviews to gather qualitative perspectives on the requirements of stakeholders of the end user e-Skills framework. The information gathered at the interviews will allow the project team to further develop response trends from the initial survey responses.

The interviews will cover topics such as:

- Framework Structure
- Impacts of a framework
- Benefits of a framework
- Exploring the possible links between an end user e-Skills framework and NQF's
- Sector specific issues around end user e-skills

7 Conclusion

The objectives of the project are to document the requirements for end user e-Skills in Europe and to establish if there is a need for an end user e-Skills Framework. The initial research has produced a view of the European activities around existing implementations of End User e-Skills Frameworks. This has demonstrated that there is activity and interest in this area. Further research will allow the description of the need for an End User e-Skills framework for the identified target groups. It will outline the purpose for creating such a framework and detail the benefits to be accrued from its implementation. The structure of a potential framework will be addressed and the tools required to make use of the framework will be described.

It is anticipated that the differing needs of the chosen Industry Sectors will be elaborated and the impact of the sector specific issues will be considered.

The project will examine the issues regarding mapping the structure for the e-skills framework to the various National Qualification Frameworks and also the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).