

The Skill Gap Analysis (SGA) in the Italian Worker Employability Guarantee Programme (GOL): a new tool for the Public Employment Services network

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The reference to the Validation of non-formal and informal learnings (VNFIL) is increasingly becoming widespread in the context of the current national policies such as the several Programmes included in the National New Skills Plan developed within the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (Mission 5 ‘Inclusion and Cohesion’). The National New Skills Plan aims at reskilling and upskilling workers in transition and unemployed people by defining essential quality levels of performance with a specific focus, not only on technical and professional skills, but also and overall on transversal skills such as digital, green and linguistic ones included in the main EC frameworks and classifications used as benchmarks. The Worker Employability Guarantee Programme (GOL) adopts the principles of the three steps strategy of the EU Upskilling Recommendation and foresees 4 tailored pathways (work ready, upskilling, reskilling, social inclusion) aimed at addressing the skills needs of the beneficiaries (in particular way those arising from digital and ecological transitions or from the effects of the covid-19 pandemic); and at increasing the EQF levels of workers in transition and unemployed people. Within the specialized guidance section of the GOL Programme, it was developed a Skill Gap Analysis (hereafter SGA) tool based on two main principles: the continuity with respect to the previous qualitative assessment phase, aimed at enriching the amount of information collected for an effective personalization of the pathway provided (the qualitative assessment questionnaire collects information on transversal skills, i.e. digital and linguistic skills while the SGA tool collects technical-professional skills referring to a sought-after occupations); the use of the job requirements approach. In respect of other methods used for detecting the competences acquired (e.g. qualifications, psychometric test; self-assessment tool and so on) often not connected with the job skills required, expensive to administer, subjective and associated with the self-esteem of the candidate, the JRA, instead, evaluates the level of competences on the basis of questions that allow the candidate to analyze his/her acted-out competences according to the activities which he/she has put into practice to perform a given job. Based on these assumptions, the SGA is not a self-assessment tool but a face-to-face questionnaire, aims at looking in depth into the competences acquired by the beneficiaries in the different learning contexts (e.g. work and life situations), in order to enhance them for the reintegration of unemployed adults into the labour market. The tool adopted in the PES network aims at measuring the distance (the gap) between the technical and professional competences acted-out by the beneficiaries and those required by a given

occupation used as benchmark. The description of the activities required for performing a given occupation, assumed as benchmark as well as starting point derived from two national classifications and taxonomies: the National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) - National Classification of Occupations (CP2011) used for the univocal identification of the sought-after professional unit (the CP2011 actually includes all existing occupations in the labour market); the Atlas of Work and Qualifications implemented by the National Institute for Public Policies Analysis (INAPP). Starting from a given CP2011 professional unit, the Atlas of Work allows to link it with some micro descriptive elements (such as activities or expected outputs referring to a specific activity area) referring to macro-aggregations such as sectors, work process etc. The Atlas of Work can be, substantially, defined as a mapping of the world of work and qualifications based on the description of the content of the work in terms of activities. The purpose is to achieve a common and updated description of the various professional units included in the CP2011. The present paper aims at explaining in details the main objectives, the methodology and the results emerged during the SGA pilot testing project conducted in the period April -May 2023 by 221 Italian PES of 18 Italian Regions and some post experimentation analysis based on the current use of the new tool. The SGA tool used in the Italian PES network contributes to define competences-based tailored training pathways (e.g. reskilling and upskilling ones) able to fill the gap and accordingly to facilitate the supply-demand matching in the labour market by rating the individual experience with respect to the professional unit analysed, the administration of the SGA provides 4 proximity levels (in % value) as result of the overall degree of coverage of all areas of activity (ADAs). The proximity level defines an overall profile of the beneficiary by providing a measure of the distance between the acted-out competences by the beneficiary and those needed for performing a given professional unit. The coverage (in % value) of each expected outcome allows, instead, to identify the specific skills gaps to be covered. The threshold values are currently indicative.