ESC'EAU: A new model for evaluating knowledge and competence

- International Office for Water - Cooperation - International actions - Vocational training and engineering -

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The ESC'EAU project, led by IOWater within the framework of the ADAPT 1997 initiative programme of the European Social Fund, has made it possible to develop a new model for evaluating and certifying the knowledge and competence of workers in the water sector.

Linking French, English, Italian and German experiences in Europe and in connection with the ADAPT projects led by BEW (Germany) and HYDROCONTROL (Italy), the ESC'EAU model perfectly fits in with the current trend for recognition of the knowledge acquired through experience and professional training.

The ESC'EAU model deals with multi-skill professions in operation and management which are characteristic of the water sector and which need to incorporate several specialities. The ESC'EAU model evaluates them following two main lines: "basic knowledge" and "performance", but with greater significance given to the latter.

This approach, which brings together the sometimes contradictory concerns of practitioners and trainers, is similar to the American certification system. It shows the benefit of defining the whole of the multi-dimensional nature of the water professions at every level.

The ESC'EAU model, a self-evaluation tool which is accessible on the Internet, is based on multiple choice questionnaires (MCQ) for basic knowledge and evaluation software for performance.

It proposes to view the level reached by the worker with the help of a histogram in which each competence is clearly identified. We can easily imagine that the graph related to a given worker could serve as a certificate or represent his weaknesses. From this it will be easier to determine the necessary training in order to compensate for his weak points.

The ESC'EAU software package was tested on volunteer operators from wastewater treatment plants in the Provence-Alps-Riviera region.