

COMMON TRAINING FRAMEWORK FOR LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Introduction



The relevance of a CTF

A Common Training Framework (CTF) defines knowledge, skills, and competences necessary for the pursuit of a specific profession, defining what a person is able to know, to understand and to do. By harmonising the education and training requirements of landscape architecture professionals through the CTF, the EU will ensure free movement of professionals across the EU. The Directive 2013/55/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Recognition of professional qualifications and Regulation (PQD) emphasises that Professional qualifications obtained under CTFs should automatically be recognised by the Member States.

The renewed EU agenda for Higher Education, adopted by the Commission in May 2017, identifies enhanced mobility and cooperation in higher education among its key goals. The Paris Communiqué (2018), highlighting priority activities in this area for the coming years, calls for securing a sustainable future through higher education. These ambitions are in line with the goal of the EU to create a European Education Area by 2025, to promote mobility and academic recognition of qualifications for all EU citizens, leading to free movement of workers - one of the four fundamental freedoms of the Union.

Because of this the InnoLAND Erasmus + Strategic Partnership aims to facilitate transparency and recognition of skills and qualifications of landscape architecture professionals in the EU by developing a Common Training Framework (CTF) for the profession of landscape architect along with relevant tools to support its implementation. The consortium consists of five Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs), covering geographical Europe from the North to the South - Finland, Lithuania, Hungary, Austria, Portugal – contributing with knowledge and experience on varying landscapes, study programmes, regulation of the profession, and European mobility experience. Additionally, two landscape architects' organisations join the project, LE:NOTRE Institute and IFLA Europe, to ensure access to the most prominent landscape architecture knowledge and education, the target group of landscape architecture professionals, and access to the responsible bodies in the European Commission.

The specific objectives of the InnoLAND project include: (1) implementing the requirements of the Professional Qualifications Directive to foster automatic recognition of the landscape architecture profession in Europe; and (2) establishing pan-European quality standards for landscape architecture study programmes and harmonising landscape architecture education in Europe;

Collaborative development of the proposed CTF

In 2021 InnoLAND conducted a collaborative process in which some 60 landscape architects from academia and professional practice took part, representing 24 national LA organisations and programmes across Europe. In 2021 the principles of the CTF were almost unanimously approved (90%) by the ECLAS General Assembly. The Executive Council of IFLA Europe discussed the principles of the CTF. There is still a discussion going on regarding the 50 % of study time allocated to design studios. The contents of the draft CTF were presented to the IFLA Europe General Assembly in 2021.

IFLA Europe PRA Survey

In 2020 and the first months of 2021 IFLA Europe carried out a survey on Professional Recognition and Accreditation among the National Associations in all European countries (PRA-survey; IFLA Europe 2021). The survey aimed to identify: (1) the up-to-date problems for each country, regarding the state and procedures of LA professional recognition and regulation, (2) any good practises or procedures regarding the process of achieving the professional recognition, or any good examples which help the professional accreditation and development, (3) the future trends of the profession, and (4) the obstacles or opportunities regarding the professional mobility.

Regarding the status of mobility, in non-regulated countries, most frequent answers show that no extra procedures are required for a foreign Landscape Architect to work on public landscape architecture projects, but engineers' signature is obligatory in these types of projects and to work with a local Landscape Architect will overcome any practical obstacles and legislation issues (language, technical standards). Additionally, in countries where the profession is regulated, the recognition of the title by the Chamber of Architects and registration with a professional Order are the most frequent answers. Of course, all the professional requirements (citizenship, certificate or diploma, business permit, etc.) are also required. However, all the above obstacles are overcome by working with a National Landscape Architect (30%).

As for the obstacles or problems concerned, in countries where the profession is not regulated, a foreign Landscape Architect will encounter language problems (22%), the same problems as a landscape architect working in his/her own country (14%), insufficient knowledge of legal provision (11%). Regarding the countries where the profession is regulated,

the obstacles are pretty the same, with a big percentage claiming that there are no obstacles. The above answers are almost expected, since most Landscape Architects are working in big Architecture or Planning Companies, and problems of unemployment due to difficulty in mobility do not exist.

Pilot testing of the CTF

From December 2021 until March 2022 the partners of the InnoLAND project and a number of delegates of IFLA Europe tested to what extent the draft proposal for the CTF is complying with the standards for the qualifications of landscape architects in their countries. This was done in countries where the profession is regulated (Austria, the Netherlands, Hungary, Slovenia) and where there is no regulation (Bulgaria, Finland, Iceland, Lithuania, Portugal), and where there is neither regulation nor recognition (Spain).

The main conclusions from the pilot testing are:

- The standards that are presented in the first draft are generally complying with the national standards in each country. The national standards, both in countries where the profession is regulated or where these are not regulated, are more generally formulated. It is better to move the more detailed aspects of the competences to an Annex to the guidance.
- The balance between theory and practice is not mentioned in regulations, however the competences cover both. Naming a number of ECTS is too specific: when the competences are clear there is no need to regulate this in detail.
- Guidelines are not considered in National Regulations, but since this is only a guideline in the CTF this may not be problematic for the compliance.
- The competence of understanding needs and expectations of the actual and potential users and relevant actors are not specified.
- Research is not mentioned in professional standards, but in general National Regulations for Higher Education it is required that graduates acquire research competences.
- Productive landscapes are not mentioned, and may be too specific for the CTF, it is suggested to include these in the guidelines.
- Transversal and transformative competences: in general these are not mentioned in the national standards. These kind of competences are expected to result from the Accreditation requirements set by the National Accreditation Organisations on the basis of EU Higher Education policies.
- The compliance with a code of ethics is not well integrated in the standards.

In countries where the profession is not regulated, a register for landscape architects does not exist. Here landscape architects are not required to complete a post graduate traineeship nor to take part in continuous professional development. Since there is not yet a regulation in these countries this does not affect the formulation of the CTF.

The testing showed that the CTF should be formulated in more general terms and that the draft ((Vries, de et al 2021)) that was presented to ECLAS and IFLA Europe should be split in a core text with the states quo and advice for future development of the programmes.

Discussion and voting by ECLAS 2022 and question to IFLA Europe

In September the updated core CTF was presented to the ECLAS Board, in September 12 and 13 it was discussed with ECLAS members, in the ECLAS Heads of School Meeting. With some minor changes in the wording it was formally approved by ECLAS General Assembly on September 13, 2022.

An important change was to focus for the practice oriented education on 'studio' teaching, because this is quite essential for landscape architecture education.

The CTF will be used as a basis for the updated ECLAS Guidance for LA Education and the IFLA Europe documents for professional recognition. IFLA Europe and its partners will continue the procedure for formal establishment of the CTF by the EU in dialogue with the DG GROW of the EU.

Now IFLA Europe is asked to approve the principles of this draft CTF.

InnoLAND project

September 2022