

# 1 | SEPTEMBER 2021

# SEETHESKILLS



# NEWS

*Standing in front of the challenge for energy-efficient construction and acting at a market level in order to stimulate the demand.*



## Foreword

*Project coordinator Jadranka Arizankovska, Economic Chamber of North Macedonia*

Within the framework of the European Research and Innovation Program Horizon 2020, the Economic Chamber of North Macedonia has launched on 1 June 2021 the project ***Sustainable EnErgy Skills in construction: Visible, Validated, Valuable – SEetheSkills***, which will be implemented in partnership with 10 institutions from 5 countries: Northern Macedonia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and the Netherlands. The Chamber of Economy of Northern Macedonia is the coordinator of the project activities.

Construction is a priority sector of this three-year project and the aim is to prepare it and make it more competitive in terms of European values by acquiring the necessary know-how and technology currently used by European construction companies - emphasizes *Jadranka Arizankovska, coordinator of the project activities.*

## IN THIS EDITION

Find out about what is the Project

Our goals and work going forward

Highlights of our Project launch

The project is expected to increase the visibility, access, and recognition of energy competences in the partner countries through mutual validation based on learning outcomes while applying a novel 3V approach to directly stimulate market demand for energy competences in the construction sector. In addition, in all five countries participating in the project, analyses of existing regulations will be conducted and regulatory changes will be proposed to governments to ensure the unhindered construction of energy-efficient buildings by the construction industry while applying the latest digital technologies and improved skills.

It is expected that the project will greatly raise awareness of the importance of skills and their value through the activities aimed at upgrading energy skills, thus kick-starting the "renovation wave", one of the components of the European Green Deal, as well as the activities involving proposals for stronger legislation on energy efficiency in buildings, the second component of the European Green Deal.

This project represents a serious attempt to keep pace with Europe and the implementation of the European Green Deal, which would mean achieving energy targets and completing activities to address climate challenges.

## Project in brief

*Project Quality Assurance Manager Lihnida Stojanovska-Georgievska, University Ss Cyril and Methodius*

### About the project:

This project takes up the challenge of implementing energy-efficient new buildings and renovation of existing buildings and acting on a market level to stimulate demand for already developed and new or improved energy skills. It is based on the idea of building on the good foundations of the above actions, all of which have been particularly successful at the national level, in order to increase the visibility and accessibility of energy competences and enable their mutual recognition in partner countries through their mutual validation based on learning outcomes.

### Background

SEetheSkills aims to bring together the best of BUS

experiences in five countries: Northern Macedonia, Spain, Slovenia, Slovakia, and the Netherlands. Previous actions in each of these countries have shown innovation and courage in overcoming the challenges of introducing new approaches to energy efficiency in the building sector. As the actions under the BUS initiative and the follow-up projects of the H2020 Construction Workforce Program demonstrated different approaches to the qualification and training of the construction workforce, the **best experiences will serve as a starting point for this action and will be subject to iterative improvements, updates, and implementations:**

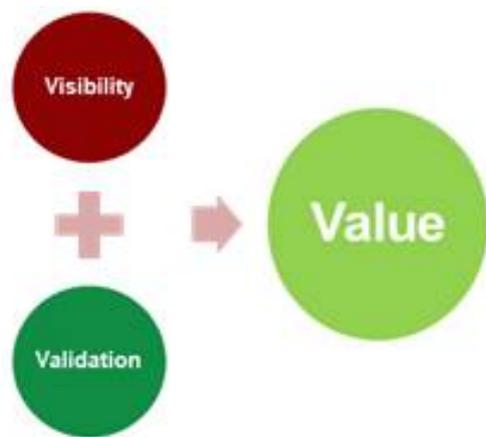
- Experience in designing training programs in terms of content, duration, interdisciplinarity, and areas they cover, in particular, excellence in targeting cross-craft skills;
- Experience in organizing training in terms of number of participants, training material, approach, platforms, type of sessions, etc;
- Proven and recognized benefits of using mobile platforms, apps such as the BUILD UP Skills Advisor, online learning, and various approaches to e-learning that promote the building of 21st-century skills and in particular ICT and digital skills;
- Experience of the process of validation of non-formal and informal learning and recognition and registration of prior learning (RPL) as a proven route to qualification and upskilling;
- Successful approaches in introducing the developed skills and qualifications into the National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) and their recognition by the authorities;
- Good practice in raising awareness and involving professional chambers and associations in the development of the training system for intermediate and higher-level engineers and construction professionals.

### Novelty and soundness of the idea

The aim is to directly stimulate demand for energy expertise in construction through a novel 3V approach by acting on a broad interregional scale to ensure easy uptake of project results not only in partner countries but also beyond through replication in at least 3 Member States.

The 3V approach refers to:

- **VISIBILITY** of skills through the creation of an online skills registration repository, i.e. an integrated SEetheSkills area to make skills visible, accessible and available at interregional level, between project partners and beyond;
- then enabling the interregional crossing **VALIDATION** of energy competences by making them comparable within the SEetheSkills area for the management of knowledge and competences, and through the transfer and replication of training programmes between project partners;
- which as an end result will increase the **VALUE** of the skills and address their market demand internationally and globally by expressing the benefits of using energy skills in achieving sustainability in construction.



The implementation of the project activities is divided into 7 work packages aimed at achieving the project objectives.

**Development of interregional survey** (status quo on existing EE measures in buildings) on existing EE measures in buildings in different partner countries. The survey will identify the skills, training programs and trained workers and professionals identified as required in the national roadmaps in the previous phase to improve databases in the implementation of the 3V approach. After identifying the status quo of existing measures EE, a detailed process and strategy for cooperation, exchange of good practices and mutual recognition will be developed based on the EU recommendations for harmonization of training approaches.

**Visibility of energy skills** will be achieved through the establishment of an online repository (Integrated Energy Competencies Database) composed of three databases: Training

Programmes, Professional Repository, and a Catalogue of Materials for EE in Buildings with a sub-directory of companies that produce EE materials, and by employing a skilled workforce. The repository will ensure the development of a suitable pilot digital solution for depositing the collected data with the possibility of filtering according to different criteria, the exchange of experiences and training schemes between partners, the transfer and duplication of training schemes, and the provision of e-learning with developed/existing training schemes with the aim of duplicating them.

**Development of tools for mutual recognition of skills (validation).** This process will continue with the harmonization and management of skills and knowledge at both personal and organizational levels to promote visibility, mobility, professional development, employability and market recognition of construction workers and professionals, aligning skills and linking them to national and EU qualification standards based on learning outcomes. This will be facilitated through the development of various repository operations (defined procedures and minimum requirements for skills recognition, micro-learning tools, gamification and methodology for replication of RPL as a tool for qualification and certification of professionals, together with the innovative tool e-RPL).

**Simulative activities to raise awareness of the value of energy skills in buildings.** The above activities will be implemented as part of the 3V pilot process. The benefits of using energy efficiency skills in buildings will be promoted through various means, such as an online survey, an "Ask the Tenants" campaign to collect ideas, the organization of events and round tables, an internet tool for owners, case studies to reduce the gap based on BIM and an application to find qualified professionals.

#### Target groups

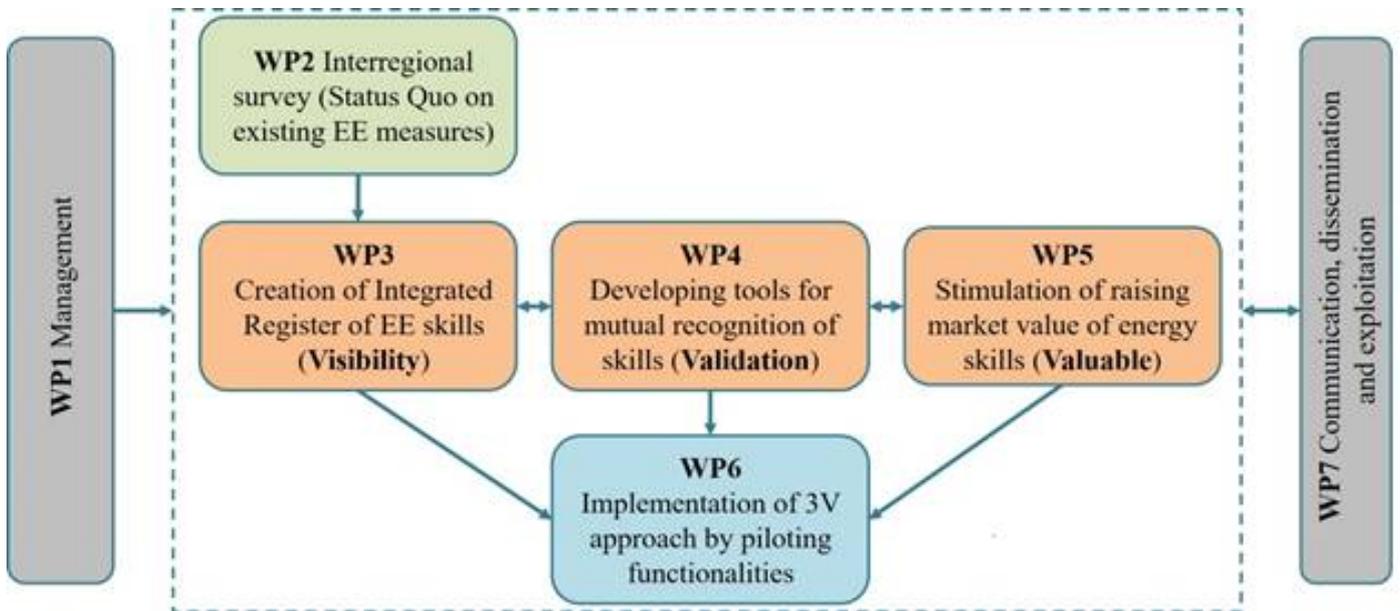
The scope of SEetheSkills communication at various stages of project implementation will address a variety of target groups:

- Individuals (building professionals, blue-collar workers, and residents).
- professional groups and associations, and

- companies (design studios, engineering firms, construction companies, manufacturers of construction materials and products, investors, maintenance agencies)

Macedonia, 2 partners for Slovenia, 2 partners from Slovakia, 2 partner institutions from Spain and 1 partner institution from Netherlands. All partners have long term proven experience in governing and working on energy efficiency related projects, projects with impacts in construction sector, skills and qualifications related projects and projects for

and relevant market actors who are crucial for the achievement of the project objective: Public



The implementation of the project activities

authorities, construction companies in their role as employers, especially small and medium-sized construction and refurbishment companies, investors and retailers of construction materials and products, and training and educational institutions (national and international).

development of innovative IT solutions that serve digitization of industry in general.

Project partners:



### Project partners

The SEetheSkills project consortium consists of 10 partners from 5 different countries, geographically spread over different European regions, from the South and South-East to the Central part and North-West of Europe. The country participation is also well distributed with 3 partners from Northern

Coordinated by  Economic Chamber of North Macedonia

 Ss Cyril and Methodius University, North Macedonia

 BIM Academy

 WITS Institute SLU - BIM Academy, Spain

 University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

 Slovak chamber of Civil engineers, Slovakia

 Association of business and consultancy, North Macedonia

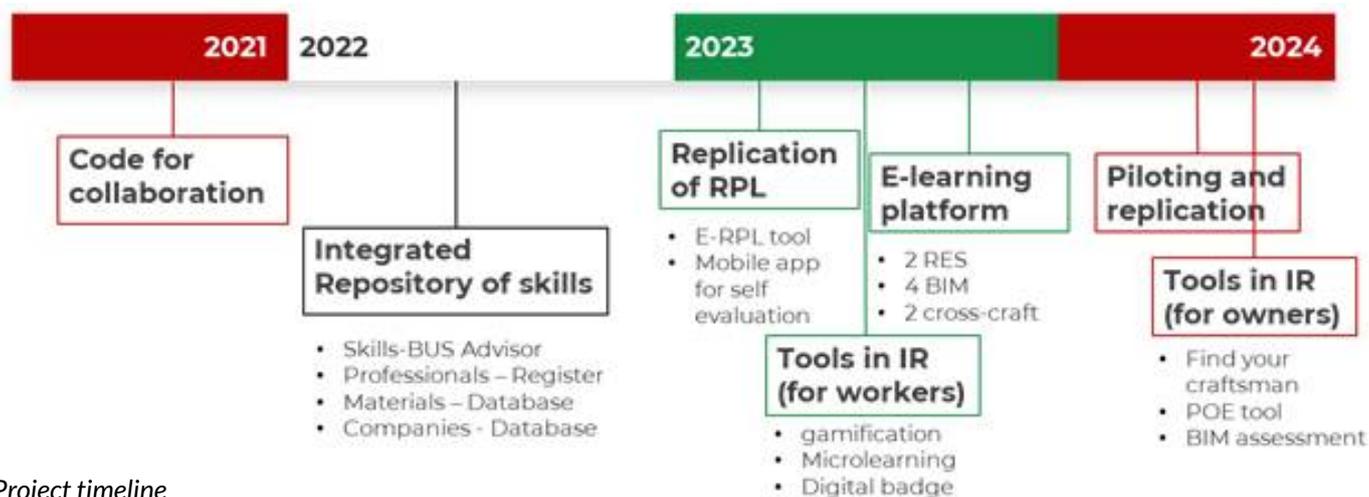
 ITeC Institut de Tecnologia de la Construcció de Catalunya, Spain

 STU SLOVAK UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY IN BRATISLAVA, Slovakia

 Chamber of commerce and industry of Slovenia, Slovenia

 ISSO Stichting ISSO, Netherlands

Project partners



Project timeline

## Highlights of the project start

The official public announcement of the launch of the European project SEetheSkills - Sustainable EnErgy Skills in Construction: Visible, Validated, Valuable, as part of the European Research and Innovation Program Horizon 2020 was organized through the conference How to attain visible, validated, valuable and sustainable energy efficiency skills in construction, held on 31 August and 01 September 2021 in Skopje, Northern Macedonia.

This project will focus intensively on the creation of a comprehensive, integrated database of certified workers, available energy efficiency training courses and companies that hire certified individuals, as well as a catalog of energy efficient materials. In addition, North Macedonia will share with partners its methodology for recognition of prior learning, which is one of the methods for certifying informal knowledge and skills, as well as lessons learned from the pilot project. It is expected that about 500 construction professionals, 2,000 workers, 1,200 tenants or building owners, more than 50 professional associations, 200 companies, etc will be reached by all project partners.

The participants of the conference were welcomed by the Executive Director of the Economic Chamber of Northern Macedonia, Antoni Peshev, MBA, who pointed out the importance of the coordination of this significant project by the Chamber in the next three years, in cooperation with 10 partners, 7 of which are EU Member States, and pointed out that for the fourth time the Chamber successfully coordinates projects from the European program Horizon 2020.

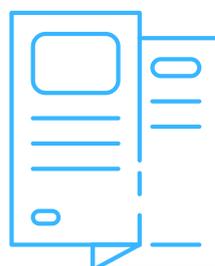
The Deputy Minister of Education and Science of the RNM Government, Prof. Arafat Shabani, concluded that this project is a serious attempt to keep pace with Europe in achieving energy goals and activities to address climate challenges.

Mr. Luca Angelino, representative of EC and project advisor at CINEA, briefly explained the role of the SEetheSkills project in the European initiative BUILD UP Skills and in the European Green Deal agenda.

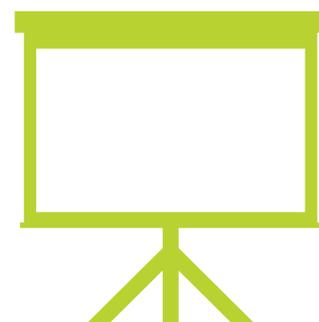
One of the main objectives of the project is to increase the labor capacity in the construction sector. This includes workers, technicians and engineers in the field of energy efficiency. These objectives are in line with the Green Deal of EC, which aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to zero by 2025. This is to be achieved through energy efficiency measures and measures to use renewable energy sources, stressed Prof. Dr. Hristina Spasevska, Vice-Rector for Education at Ss. Cyril and Methodius College in Skopje.

Prof. Spasevska added that the construction sector was not chosen by chance, as there are many

Google Slide project presentation



Project leaflet



workers in this sector in our country without formal education, and therefore the training and certification of workers, technicians and engineers is precisely one of the objectives of the project. The project teams from our country already have experience in certifying a large number of workers, especially in the field of energy efficiency within the framework of the methodology already developed for the recognition of prior knowledge (knowledge and skills), and the partners from the other countries will share their experience in creating databases of certified workers in the construction companies and databases of energy efficient materials.

Mr. Gregor Ficko from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia pointed out that being prepared for the future challenges of climate change is of great importance for the project, which focuses on the underdeveloped construction sector, and that the project will provide a clear vision for our longer-term direction over the next three years.

The conference also welcomed three panel discussions involving experts from partner country chambers on the following topics:

- skills - the importance of their visibility and their role in the EU green agenda,
- the diversity of energy skills on an international basis as a problem for their recognition and validation,
- the valorization of energy skills - the missing link between energy-efficient construction and the pursuit of higher qualifications.

## Events

SEetheSkills made its debut at the 9th annual edition of Sustainable Places (SP2021), held as a hybrid event from 28th September to 1st October 2021 in Rome, Italy, with face-to-face sessions held in Rome. More than 150 European projects participated in SP2021, representing 850 million Euros in research and development and 1500 researching organizations. SEetheSkills was presented as one of the sister projects at the workshop "Sustainable Energy Skills in the Construction Sector 2.0", 15:30 - 17:00, 29th September 2021.

This 90-minute virtual workshop brought together 10 EU projects to present their approach (and/or results) and discuss potential synergies to stimulate future public and private investment in energy retrofitting of habitats. The specific focus was on accelerating the training and certification of craftsmen in the construction and installation sectors so that these sectors can fully adopt innovative technologies, products and systems in the field of energy for buildings. The aim was to respond to the challenges, keep pace with innovation and be more productive and collaborative thanks to adequate training and capacity building. This will translate into new services for building owners and operators and ultimately lead to a more resilient, high-quality, user-friendly and age-friendly living environment. The European construction sector is facing unprecedented challenges to meet ambitious energy efficiency targets. These targets can only be met if successful training initiatives and supportive policy instruments are put in place to act as a springboard to stimulate demand for energy efficiency skills. The aim is to increase the number of skilled construction



professionals and/or workers across the building design, operation, and maintenance value chain (planners, architects, engineers, building managers, technicians, installers, labourers, including apprentices, and other construction professionals), with a particular focus on SME engagement. The use of skilled professionals/tradesmen for both refurbishment and new build and neighborhood-level solutions should be made more attractive and easier for both businesses and homeowners. The following projects were presented at the workshop:

- **Introduction:** Welcome, Mohaddeseh Maktabifard, R2M Solution
- **Forward:** Amandine Lacourt, CINEA
- **INSTRUCT:** Ioan Petri, Cardiff University
- **BUSLeague:** Marion Jammet, Irish Green building Council
- **TRAIN4SUSTAIN:** Uli Jakob, JER
- **HP4All:** Padriac O'Reilly, LIT
- **The nZEB Roadshow:** Dragomir Tzanev, Eneffect
- **PRO-Heritage:** Gerald Wagenhofer, UBW
- **CraftEdu:** Jiri Karasek, SEVEN
- **BIMzeED:** Jose Lucas, ITEC
- **ARISE:** Paul McCormack, Belfast Met
- **SEetheSkills:** Lihnida Stojanovska-Georgievska, UKIM
- **Conclusion & wrap up:** Mohaddeseh Maktabifard, R2M Solution



**Project Seetheskills on social media**  
**Facebook: SEetheSkills – EU Project**  
**Twitter: @seetheskills**  
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