Towards a European Framework for the IT Profession

Putting ambition into action: development and implementation of a European Framework for the IT profession

Brussels, 30 September 2015

The European Commission and the consortium partners Capgemini Consulting, EY and IDC, kicked off in September 2015 a new initiative that will propose by the end of 2016 a comprehensive Framework for the IT profession in Europe. This Framework will be an important step to encourage further growth of the knowledge, skills and competences of the European IT workforce and –people. The initiative will at the same time generate key indicators concerning the evolution of the supply and demand of IT professionals in Europe, and enable comparison with Japan, Canada and the USA. This will allow to track the effect of the joint efforts of stakeholders in Europe to enhance IT professionalism.

Strengthening IT Professionalism in Europe: putting ambition into action

There is broad consensus about the crucial importance of e-skills for Europe given the e-skills shortages, gaps and mismatches that have a continuing negative effect on achieving further growth, competitiveness, innovation and employment in Europe. This was acknowledged during the European conference on digital and key enabling technologies skills in June. The conference concluded that when no appropriate action is taken, the situation will only deteriorate in the future. There is a clear need for Europe to reinforce and rapidly develop these industries to compete for the future.[1]

The European Union has been actively promoting digital skills (e-skills) for over a decade, with the setting-up of the Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs in 2013 as major milestone at European level. Europe has progressed significantly although there is still a lot to be done. It is a promising development to see more and more governments recognizing this need and acting upon it. The efforts of the European Union with regard to actively promoting e-skills seem to increasingly achieve the benefits it aimed for. Now is the time to further support those actions at national level. This initiative will start implementation of the aforementioned Framework for the IT Profession in at least three countries, and thus putting ambition into action.

Other parts of the world face similar developments, as this is a challenge of global dimension. Improving the availability, provision and standardisation of e-skills requires actions at international, European and national level primarily in education, training, research, industrial- and labour policies. This initiative will hence establish and grow close collaboration with Japan, Canada and the USA to exchange knowledge and relevant statistics.

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[1]   Conference 'e-Leadership and Key Enabling Technologies', Brussels, 1-2 June, 2015. See: www.leadership2015.eu

The ambitions

The main objectives of this initiative are:

- The update of key indicators and progress on the situation concerning the IT profession based on the latest data, trends and developments; This includes the evolution of the supply and demand of IT professionals in Europe and forecast, the evolution of the situation concerning the IT industry training and certifications, and the evolution at international level;

- The development of the first comprehensive European Framework for the IT profession, and initiate implementation of the four foundational building blocks in at least 3 countries;

- To bring together a group of leading European experts, and expand this group to create a sustainable pan-European network for the future.

The nature of jobs in the broader IT domain is changing. It is no longer enough merely to be a technical expert. The industry needs professionals with a diversity of knowledge and skills in IT. IT professionals are required to also understand the business, operational and HR management aspects. Industry confirms they are looking for multidisciplinary IT professionals and dual thinkers. As new technologies develop rapidly, e-skills are becoming increasingly sophisticated and need to be constantly updated. This study is a vital step to further maturing the IT profession, while at the same time attracting more people to commence a career in IT.

The European Framework for the IT profession will be based on four building blocks:

- **Competences**: an understanding of the capability and competency needs of individuals working in various roles is essential for organizations to effectively recruit and develop suitable employees. The European Competence Framework is a widely recognized standard.

- **Body of knowledge** (BOK): a comprehensive and up-to-date knowledge accommodating a common IT body of knowledge and pertinent specialist knowledge and skills. Besides many specific BOK's, the European Commission released a first version of the Foundational IT Body of Knowledge last year.

- **Education and Training**: certifications, qualifications, non-formal learning and informal learning are mutually supportive components of a professional's career development.

- **Professional Ethics**: a defining aspect of any profession involves adhering to professional ethical conduct.

The key challenge in the initiative to create synergies: the Framework for the IT profession should be more than just the sum of its four building blocks. Describing these synergies is vital to show the value to those that are supposed to use it: governments, industry and educational institutions – but also IT professionals themselves. Bringing the European efforts to the individual is pivotal for success.

The actions

The ultimate achievement would be the establishment of a concrete action plan in at least three countries, consisting of simple, demand-driven, pragmatic, scalable and sustainable solutions that bring clear added value and contribute to a successful longer term implementation of the Framework for the IT profession.

The initiative is characterized by its collaborative approach. Close collaboration with experts in the field of IT is key in the development, validation and implementation of the IT framework. Throughout the initiative, various events will be organized aimed at exchanging knowledge, receiving feedback and creating support. Your contributions and input will be highly appreciated on the following activities:

- In-depth interviews with key experts (October 2015)

- Online survey addressing 500+ stakeholders in the field of IT (November 2015)

- Experts workshops (26 November 2015, March, June and November 2016 – dates tbc)

- Interim report (May 2016)

- High level conference (December 2016)

- Final report (January 2017)

Should you require more information, or would you like to take part? Please contact:
***Lead consortium: Mr. Niels van der Linden** Niels.vander.linden@capgemini.com*

__EASME:__ Andreea-Bianca.PUIA@ec.europa.eu and
__European Commission:__ GROW-F3@ec.europa.eu