

Overview of the European Graduate Tracking Initiative (EGTI)



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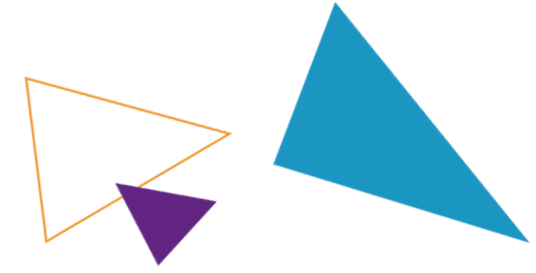
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Content of presentation

- What is the EGTI?
- Benefits of the EGTI to higher education institutions
- What challenges is the EGTI trying to overcome?
- Work undertaken so far to create the EGTI
- An outline of the recommendations from the Expert Group on Graduate Tracking
- An outline of the capacity building support available to countries

Introduction to the European Graduate Tracking Initiative

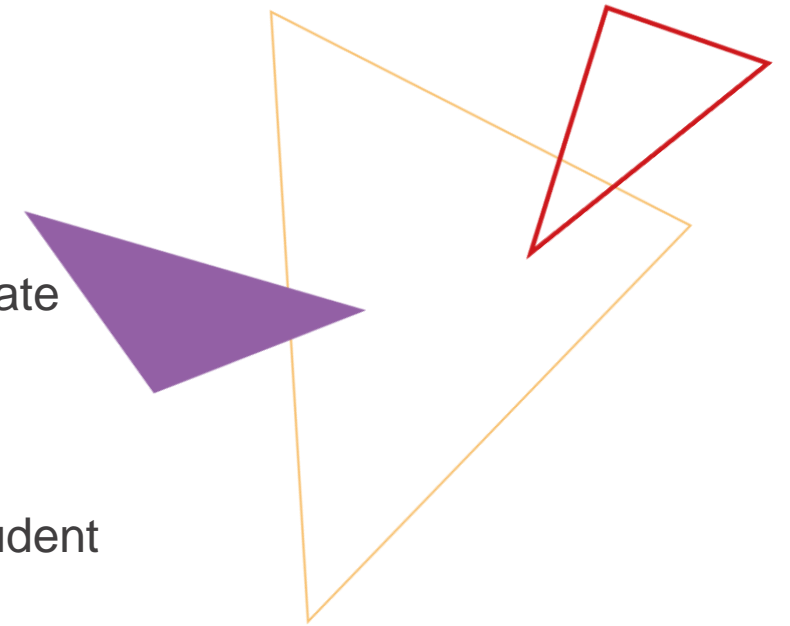


- The EGTI aims to create the conditions for building comparative EU evidence on how higher education and VET systems prepare EU graduates for the European and national labour market.
- The EGTI invites countries to collect data on graduates in the following areas:
 - socio-biographical and socio-economic information;
 - information on education and training;
 - information on employment or further education and training;
 - relevance of education and training to employment or life-long learning;
 - career progress.
- The European Council Recommendation on tracking graduates was adopted unanimously by all Member States in November 2017.

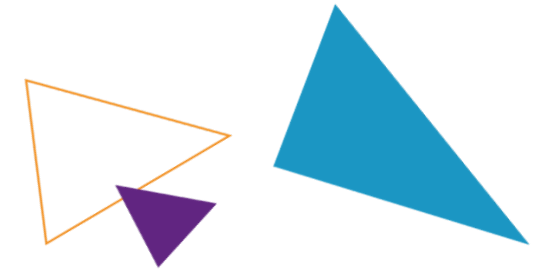
EGTI - benefits to HEIs

The benefits to HEIs of creating a **more coordinated approach** to graduate tracking through the EGTI include:

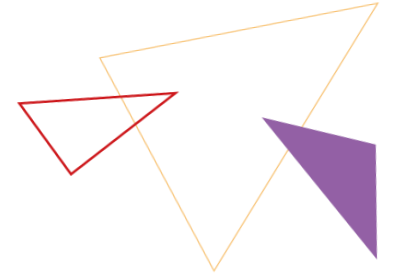
- **creating greater comparability between systems:** if graduates are tracked using similar methods across institutions and borders then comparisons can be made between HEIs, subjects, countries and student cohorts
- **gaining a much better insight into patterns of cross-border mobility:** for institutions with large numbers of graduates gaining employment abroad, the absence of student data on mobility makes it hard to assess the effectiveness of their activities
- **enhancing existing graduate tracking measures:** the EGTI will potentially provide HEI's with new ways of tracking graduates using advanced methods of data collection encompassing a survey and the use of admin data.



What are the challenges to tracking graduates in Europe?



- **Contexts vary.** Organisation, governance, quality assurance and qualifications offered by higher education institutions varies between EEA countries.
- **Concerns vary.** EEA countries with established and existing graduate tracking systems have substantial concerns about a new European graduate tracking initiative.
 - **Systemic concerns.** Is a European graduate survey a risk to existing national surveys due to survey fatigue?
 - **Cost-benefit and financial concerns.** What is the true added value and cost-benefit of a European level system (in comparison to existing national systems)? Who pays for the European level system?
 - **Data protection and GDPR concerns.** Who owns, manages and has access to the European level data?
 - **Quality concerns.** Will a new European level system produce representative, reliable and comparable data? Concerns about a low response rate and long survey length based on the Eurograduate experience.
 - **Political concerns.** How will European level data be used, and for what purposes?



The EGTI: work undertaken so far

- 2017 Council Recommendation agreed by all Member States that paved the way for an EGTI
- A pilot Eurograduate survey (which reported in June 2020) undertaken in 8 European countries between October 2018 – February 2019 which helped lay the ground for a European-wide graduate survey.
- Research report on the State of Graduate tracking Policies and Practices in the EU Member States and EEA countries
- Capacity building programme commissioned in July 2020 to help countries to prepare the ground for an eventual EGTI

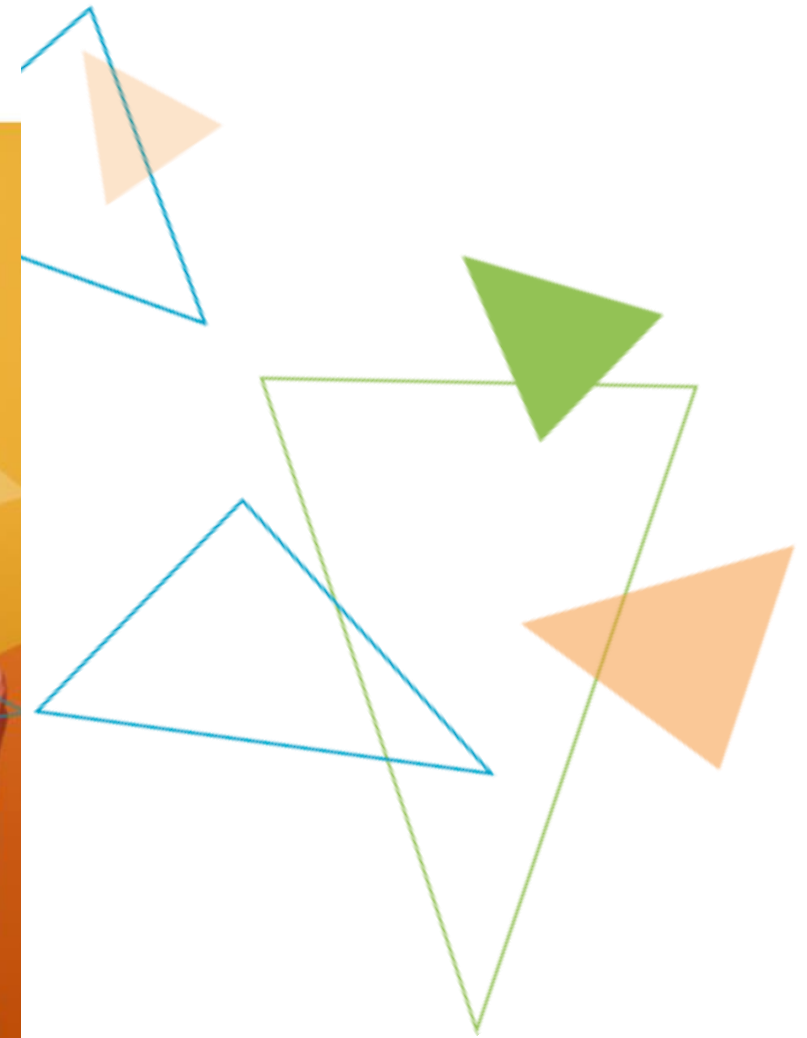


Towards a European graduate tracking mechanism

Recommendations of the Expert group

October 2018 > October 2020

Education and Training



<https://op.europa.eu/s/oNYY> - published 9/2/2021



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Graduate data to be collected at EU level



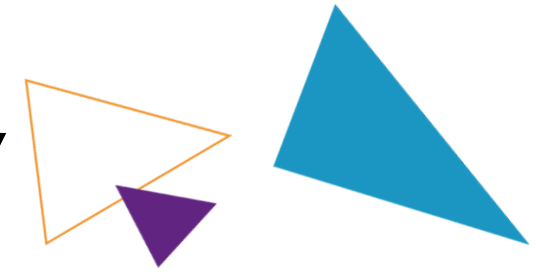
Essential information

- Factual background information on the person: gender, residence, education and employment history, location, working conditions, parental education, career progression and study and labour mobility
- In the medium term, this data could come from national administrative sources.

Recommended information

- More detailed information and perception questions:
- Education and employment details, skills levels self-assessment, reasons for mismatch, job satisfaction, drivers of mobility, household composition etc)
- This data could come from a survey. In the medium term, this would be the only data to come from a survey -> shorter questionnaire.

What can the EGTI show with the 'Essential' and 'Recommended' information?

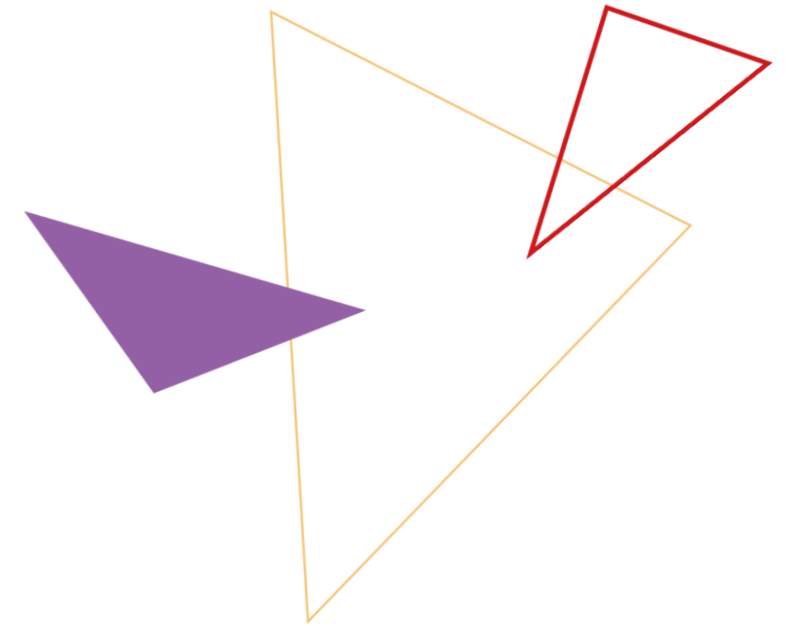


- Share of graduates employed in occupations that are coherent with the field of study in which they graduated (horizontal match based on an objective criteria)
- Share of graduates employed at a qualification level coherent with the level of educational attainment (vertical match based on an objective criteria).
- Characteristics and mobility patterns after graduation of degree mobile graduates.
- Relevance of education and training to employment or lifelong learning (info on education and training history can be combined with information on employment characteristics).
- Impact of learning mobility on labour mobility and employment (including destination countries/regions).

How to approach getting the 'Essential' and 'Recommended' information? (1)

EGTI to be developed following a 'gradual approach' due to:

- different levels of data collection capability in Europe.
- Need for time for further discussions at EU level and preparation at national level.



How to approach getting the 'Essential' and 'Recommended' information? (2)

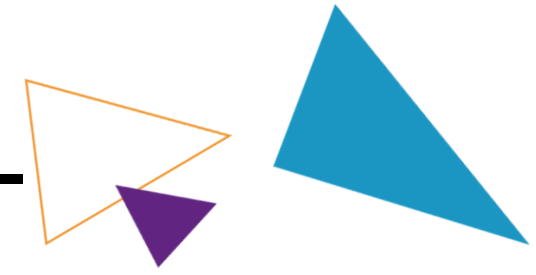


The 'gradual approach' will involve a two-step process:

- **Step 1:** A European wide **graduate survey** to track graduates after they leave their education. A sample of graduates from each country would be asked to answer a standard set of questions. Surveys can be conducted online, by telephone or through paper-based methods.
 - The data collection and preparations for the first round of the new survey will begin in autumn 2021 in 16 EEA countries.
- **Step 2:** The use of **administrative data** from public information sources (e.g. national social security, tax and education databases) to identify what happens to graduates after they complete their learning. It generally requires data to be matched from one data set to another, such as an education database of graduates and social security number or unique learner number.

More detailed capacity building information and tools are provided separately to cover these two steps.

Organisation of the EGTI at European level – National Reference Points: set up & aims



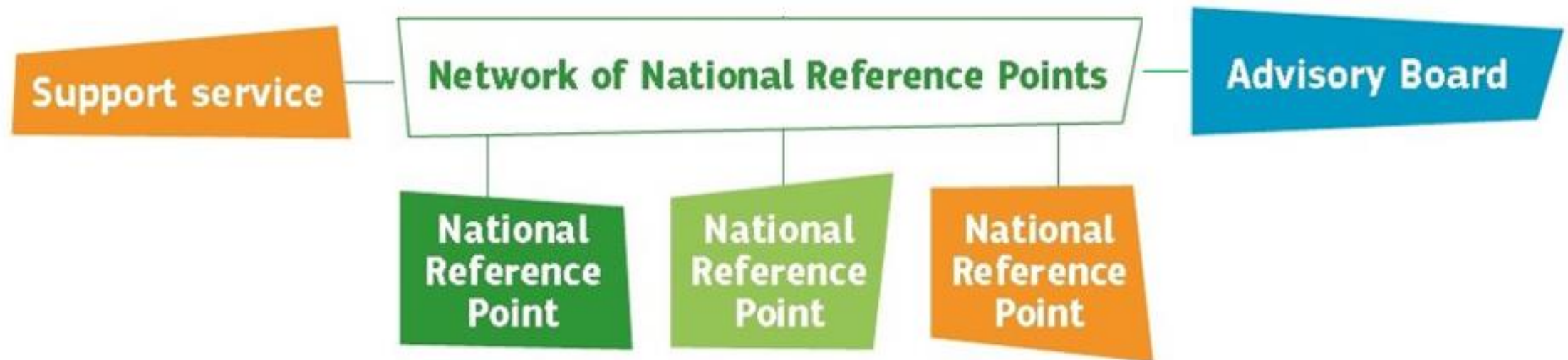
- Form, size, legal entity: **complete flexibility**
- Members: **mixed** e.g. policy-makers, academics, technical and statistical experts, data protection experts
- **Expertise:** education and skills policy, survey design and implementation, administrative data integration, data privacy rules and GDPR
- **Sector:** higher education and where appropriate, VET
- **Sphere of influence:** close links with education providers, students, alumni,, social partners, private sector, government
- **Tasks:** Participate in the European Network on Graduate Tracking meetings and bring in the national context, needs and experience to the European level

Organisation of the EGTI at European level - European Network on Graduate Tracking



- **Purpose:** Facilitate cooperation and expert exchanges on graduate tracking
- **Goal:** Bring together in a *sustainable* way the relevant bodies and experts at national level in order to *coordinate* the national and European graduate tracking initiatives.
- **Reporting:** This network will be coordinated with EU governance framework that will enable the achievement of the European Education Area.

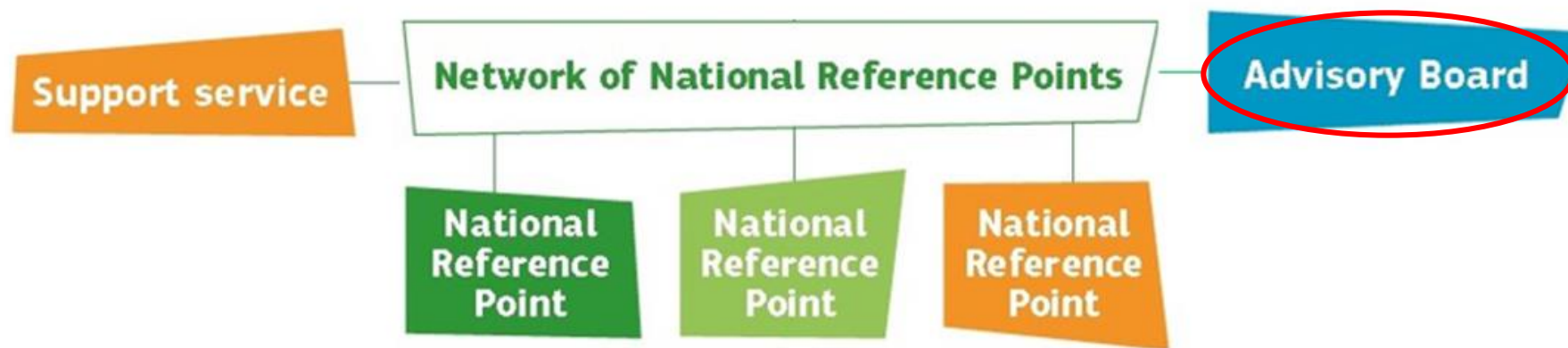
Planned framework for the European Network on Graduate Tracking



Advisory Board



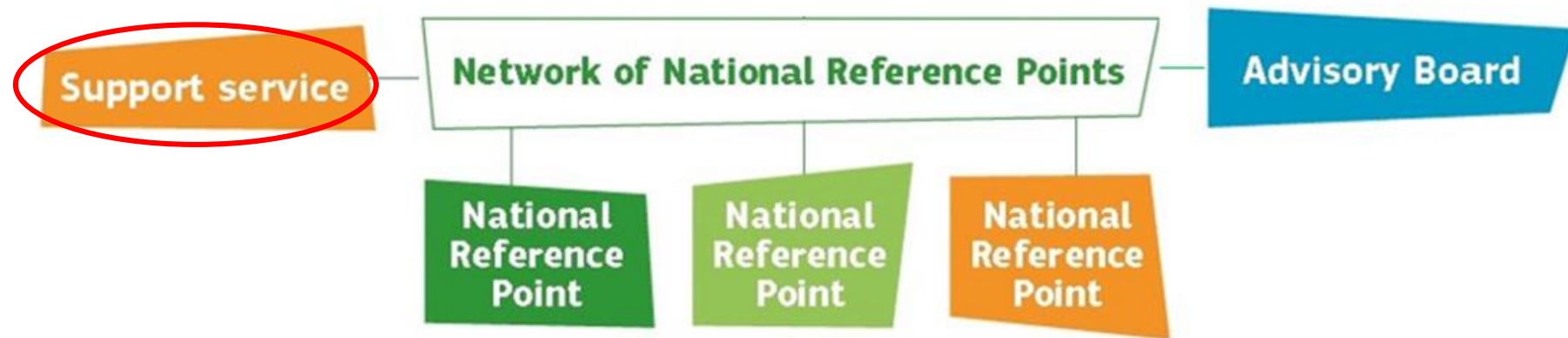
- **Tasks:** set an annual work plan for the network and steer the work towards the full rollout of a European graduate tracking mechanism (without prejudice to the national competencies of Member States)
- **Proposed composition:** EU Trio Presidency, European Commission (EAC, EMPL, EUROSTAT)



Support Service

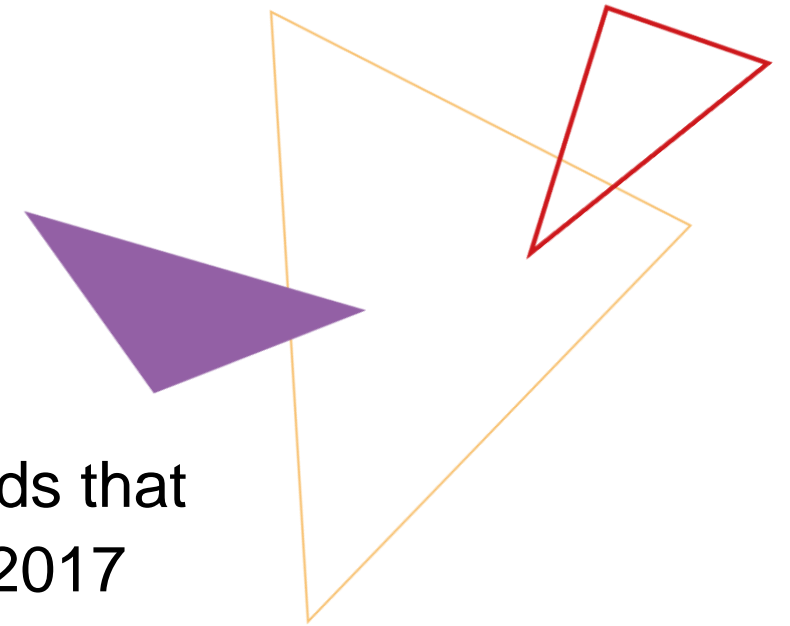


- **Tasks:** support to the European network in the daily management and execution of the work plan, providing logistics, organising peer learning events, meetings of the network, as well as external communication and dissemination of the results
- **Funds:** Funded through 2020 Erasmus+ Work Programme (500,000 EUR for 2 years) through a tender (to be launched in Q2 2021)



Timeline for implementation of the EGTI

- The Expert Group on Graduate Tracking recommends that the target timeline should for implementation of the 2017 Council Recommendation on Graduate Tracking should be:
- 80% of countries to have fully implemented the Recommendation by 2025;
- 100% of countries to have fully implemented the Recommendation by 2030.



National and EU level roles



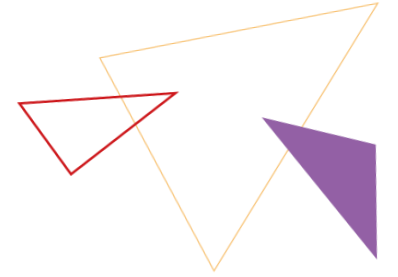
Role of National Organisations:

- Where necessary, to upskill themselves to get ready for the EGTI
- Where necessary, to secure funding to help rollout the EGTI
- To plan how to deliver the EGTI from a national perspective
- To engage with HEIs and graduates to ensure active participation in the EGTI
- To administer the EGTI survey

Role of European Commission:

- To harness expertise across the EU to support the development of the EGTI
- To provide financial support to help countries get ready and actively participate in the EGTI
- To help develop the infrastructure required to deliver the EGTI
- To support the piloting of the EGTI survey.

Introduction to the capacity building support



- ‘Prepare the ground’ for the eventual rollout of the EGTI
- Provide support to countries so they are getting ready to implement the EGTI
- Ensure countries are building the right skills/ technical knowledge to robustly track graduates at the European level

Considerations

- The support provided needs to be highly bespoke as countries are at quite different stages
- The support needs to engage with individuals in countries who will ‘make the EGTI happen’

Topics for the Capacity building

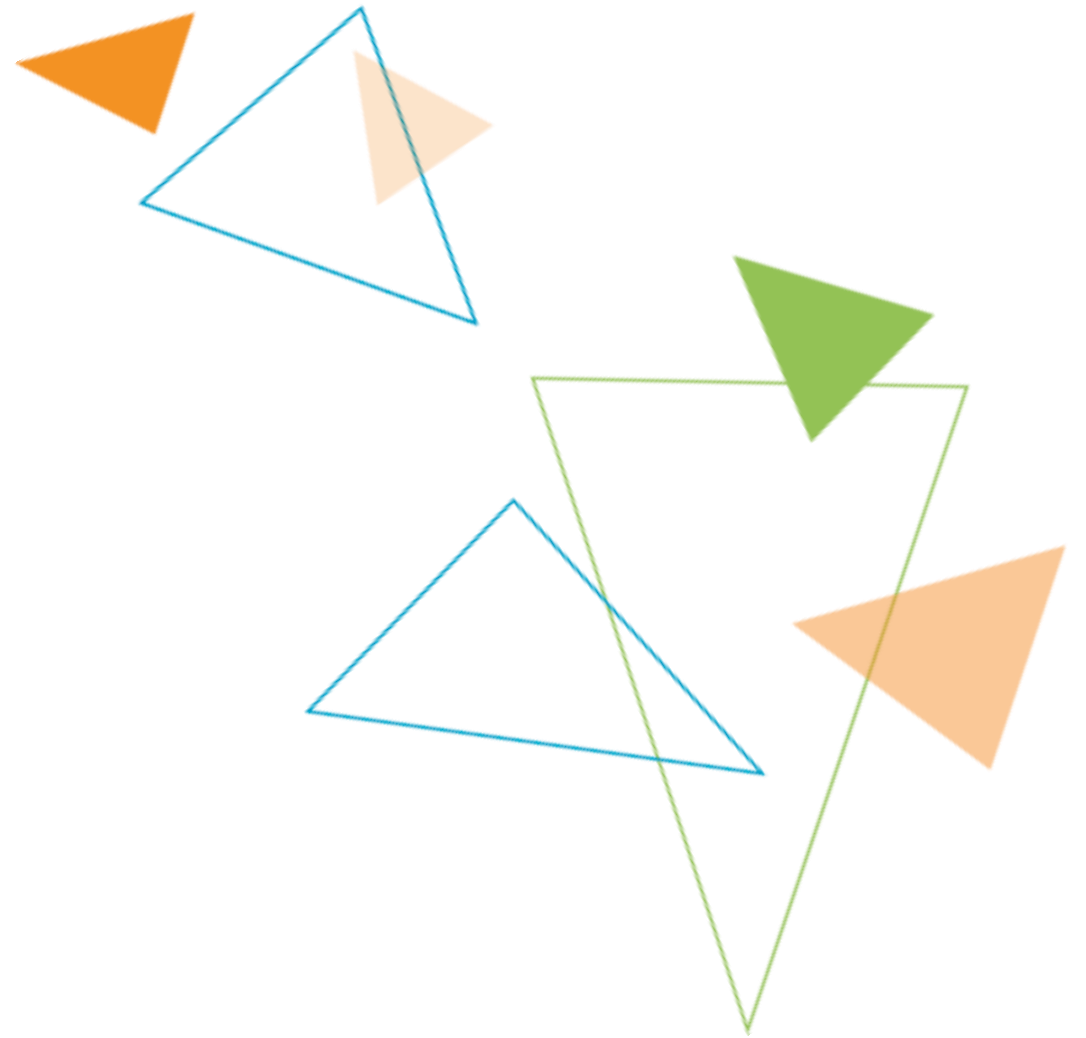


What do countries need support on?

1. Promoting a **good understanding** of the goals and plans of the EGTI
2. Organising national stakeholders and **allocating responsibilities** for implementing the EGTI
3. Ensuring **complementarity** of the EGTI to existing graduate tracking activities
4. Dealing with **the financial cost** and identifying sources of funding to implement the EGTI at the national level
5. Collecting and storing graduates' regularly **updated contact details**
6. Developing/clarifying a normative framework to address **GDPR** issues
7. Sharing of experience in implementing the **EGTI survey** (sampling, questions, data analysis)
8. Methodological support on making the best use of existing **administrative data**, and how to match/link it with survey data

.... but needs are specific to each country meaning capacity building will be tailored.

Thank you!



Contact Details

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European Graduate Tracking Initiative

Frequently Asked Questions

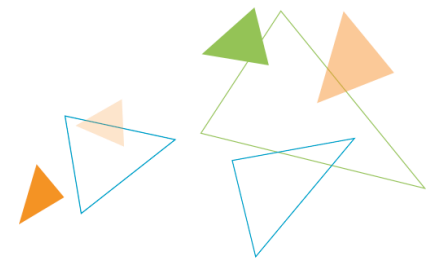
Capacity Building for a European Graduate Tracking Initiative



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Introduction

On 12 March 2021, Ecorys organised a webinar on behalf of DG EAC, European Commission, to explain to interested stakeholders across Europe what the next steps are in developing the European Graduate Tracking Initiative (EGTI). The EGTI aims to create the conditions for building comparative EU evidence on how higher education and VET systems prepare EU graduates for the European and national labour market as well as for active citizenship in our society.

Following the webinar, Ecorys has developed this FAQ document to provide some helpful answers to the questions that arose during the webinar discussions.

Q.1: What progress has been made so far on the EGTI?

In February 2021, the European Commission published the **Recommendations of the Expert Group on Graduate tracking**,¹ which met five times between October 2018 and October 2020. Given the variety of context and availability of data across European Economic Area (EEA) countries², the Expert Group recommended a gradual approach to rolling out the EGTI. In the short term, this could involve voluntary participation in an EU level graduate survey. In the medium term, this could involve work around linking the EU level graduate survey with country-level administrative data. In the long term, the Expert Group emphasised the importance of a coordinated approach across all participating countries. In time, each country participating in the EGTI should have: (1) dedicated governance, policy and management functions, (2) a clear budget for the EGTI, the required (3) legal, (4) scientific and (5) technical/operational capacity in place to implement the EGTI.

In June 2020, the Commission published a comparative report on the lessons learned from the Eurograduate pilot survey.³ The pilot survey was conducted in eight countries (AT, CZ, HR, DE, EL, LT, MT and NO) between October 2018 and February 2019, covering 21,000 Bachelor and Master-level students from the 2012/2013 and 2016/2017 academic years. The results showed the complexity of implementing an EU level graduate survey, and that countries and institutions need enough time (i.e., at least one year ahead of the actual survey) to prepare in order to make the survey and national data collection a success. Stakeholder buy-in and flexibility in relation to, on the one hand, which questions countries do (or do not) wish to answer, and how they wish to provide these answers (e.g., through administrative data, an existing national survey, or the Eurograduate survey) are also key to successful implementation of an EU level survey.

Q.2: What are the immediate plans for the roll-out of the EGTI?

Between May-June 2021, the Commission will ask EEA countries to appoint the persons or organisations that will fulfil the function of a National Reference Point (NRP) for graduate tracking. These NRPs will work together at European level through a **European Network on Graduate Tracking** in the field of higher education. The role of the NRPs will be to coordinate each EEA countries' engagement in the EGTI.

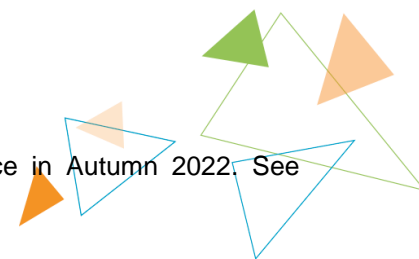
In Q2 2021, the Commission will publish a tender for a contractor to oversee the roll out of the **European graduate survey (EGS)** in 2021/2022 in up to **16 EU/EEA countries**. The target cohort of higher education graduates will be from the academic year 2020/2021 (one year after graduation) and

¹ <https://op.europa.eu/s/oNYY>

² The EEA comprises the 27 EU Member States together with Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein.

³ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/51f88c2e-a671-11ea-bb7a-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

2016/2017 (five years after graduation). Data collection should take place in Autumn 2022. See question 4 for more information.



Q.3: What is the EC's vision for the EGTI's organisational structure?

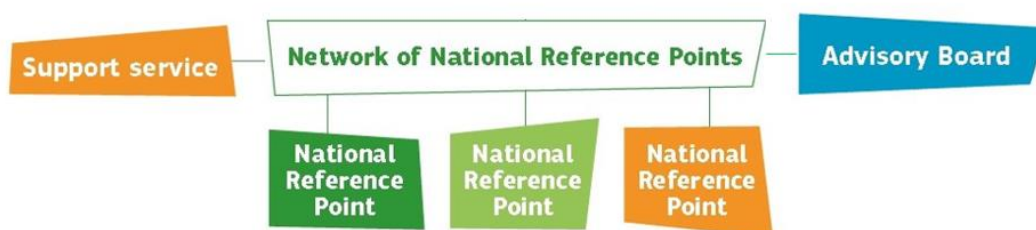
A key part of the EGTI at the national level will be the **National Reference Points (NRP)** for graduate tracking. EEA countries will have the flexibility to decide what form, size, and legal basis their NRP should take. A NRP can be composed of policy-makers, academics, technical and statistical experts, data protection experts, but the NRP as a whole should have close links with education providers, students, alumni, social partners, private sector, government, and other relevant stakeholders. These NRPs will share their expertise and work together in a sustainable way at European level through a **European Network on Graduate Tracking**.

The work of the new European Network on Graduate Tracking will be coordinated by an **Advisory Board**, to be appointed by the network. The Commission proposes that this Advisory Board could be comprised of representatives of EU Member States making up the EU Trio Presidency, as well as representatives from the European Commission (DG EAC, DG EMPL, Eurostat). The Advisory Board's tasks will be to set an annual work plan for the European network on Graduate Tracking, and to steer the work towards the full rollout of the EGTI, without prejudice to the national competencies of EEA countries.

In Q2 2021, the European Commission will publish a tender to appoint a contractor to support the work of the European Network on Graduate Tracking and its Advisory Board. The contractor will be required to support the daily management of the European network and the execution of its work plan, providing logistics, organising peer learning events, meetings of the network, as well as external communication and dissemination of the results. Figure 1 below provides an illustration of the envisaged framework.

The new European Network on Graduate Tracking and its Advisory Board will be coordinated with the EU governance framework that will enable the achievement of the European Education Area (EEA).

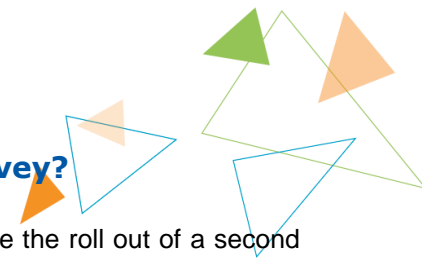
Figure 1: Planned framework for the European Network of Graduate Tracking



Q.4: What will be the workload of the National Reference Points (NRP)?

The workload will depend very much on the national context, organisational structures (existing or planned) and strategic ambitions of the country. The NRP should be fully capable of achieving or overseeing the objectives outlined in the Council Recommendation on tracking graduates. At European level, it is estimated that the NRPs will have 2-3 annual meetings in the context of the European Network on Graduate Tracking. In addition, NRPs will be invited to participate in thematic meetings of working groups to discuss the European Graduate Survey or administrative data exchange.

Q5: What are the plans for the European Graduate Survey?



In Q2 2021, the Commission will publish a tender for a contractor to oversee the roll out of a second pilot phase of the **European graduate survey (EGS)** in 2021/2022 in up to **16 EU/EEA countries**. The target cohort of higher education graduates will be from the academic year 2020/2021 (one year after graduation) and 2016/2017 (five years after graduation).

In parallel with the tendering process for appointing a contractor, the Commission will issue a Call for Expressions of Interest to EEA countries to invite them to indicate their willingness to participate in the EGS. If more than 16 countries indicate their willingness to participate, preference will be given to countries based on whether they participated in the Eurograduate pilot project, their existing level of graduate tracking capacity, their motivation to participate, and the overall geographical balance of the relevant countries.

Following the recommendations from the Eurograduate pilot survey, the preparation for the data collection process for the EGS should begin in autumn 2021. The EGS contractor will be expected to provide support to countries participating the EGS (through their NRPs on graduate tracking) on issues such as survey design, incorporation of an EGS 'module' into existing graduate tracking mechanisms, data storage, etc. This work in the first 16 countries will be funded by a €1m grant from the Erasmus + programme, expected to be published in Q2 2021.

The EGS will aim to collect comparable data between countries. This data can be divided into:

- **Essential information:** this is factual background information about graduates: gender, residence, completed degree, employment status and history, international study and/or labour mobility, etc
- **Recommended information:** this information will involve more detailed questions to graduates on the type of education received, i.e. online or face-to-face, graduates' self-assessment of skills, relevance of the graduates' education to their current employment, level of satisfaction with the education received and link to employment, etc.
- **Optional 'EU module':** countries could choose voluntarily to collect information related to the societal mission of higher education, e.g. on civic engagement, active citizenship or wellbeing of students. This optional module will build on the findings from the Eurograduate pilot survey.

Q.6: What are current and future opportunities for funding for the EGTI?

The Commission is providing financial support to the ongoing 'Capacity building for the EGTI' project which is being delivered by a consortium led by Ecorys and a network of in-country experts (see Q.7 for more information).

In terms of the EGS, the Commission will also provide €1m of grant funding from the Erasmus+ programme to the first wave of 16 countries participating in the survey. In line with the Erasmus+ Work Programme 2021, an "Invitation to submit a proposal" will be published (likely 15 June / 1 July) to support the National Graduate Tracking Reference Points in implementing the Graduate Tracking Initiative. The selected applicants/participating countries will receive a grant to support their data collection processes in order to participate in the survey.

For countries in receipt of EU Structural and Investment Funds (European Social Fund (ESF) and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)), the enabling conditions for the funding period 2021-27 require recipient countries to have a strategic policy framework in place for the education and training system at all levels. This policy framework should include "Evidence-based systems for skills

anticipation and forecasting as well as graduate tracking mechanisms and services for quality and effective guidance for learners of all ages.” The responsibility for allocating any funds received through these EU funds lies with national authorities.



The Recovery and Resilience Facility, or NextGenerationEU fund, (RRF) was agreed in February 2021 and will amount to €672.5bn to cover expenditure between 2020-2026 (of which €312.5bn in grants and €360bn in loans). The aim of the fund is to promote economic recovery following the Covid-19 pandemic. Member States can include their plans to develop graduate tracking when applying to the fund by submitting their National Recovery and Resilience Plans. The responsibility for allocating any funds received through these EU funds lies with national authorities.

Q.7: Does the EGTI cover vocational/further education and training?

The graduate tracking expert group concluded that the VET sector may follow a different timeline due to a different starting position. A detailed overview of principles and guidelines for the development of VET graduate tracking was produced. Currently a methodological study on approaches to achieve EU level graduate tracking data through administrative data is ongoing. Within the overarching framework of the EGTI, there are separate measures and programmes in place to develop and improve the tracking of graduates from vocational/further education and training. It is recommended that the NRPs also include VET expertise and the European Network of Graduate Tracking will ensure it is well coordinated with the graduate tracking activities implemented by the EQAVET network.

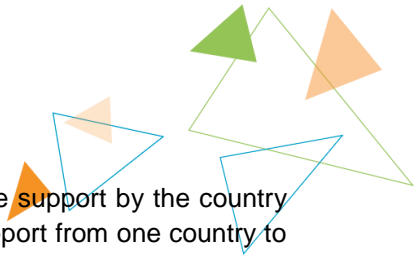
Q.8: What are the main features of the EGTI capacity building programme?

The aim of the capacity building programme is to help countries prepare the ground for the EGTI. The capacity building will ensure all countries have the right skills, knowledge and technical abilities to track graduates at the European level. This recognises that countries will need to undertake a number of key tasks to make the EGTI happen, including engaging with HEIs, ensuring they have good student records, administering a large survey and helping with aspects of the analysis.

The capacity building programme is coordinated by Ecorys working in partnership with graduate tracking experts (including the Eurograduate consortium) and a range of country experts who will deliver the majority of the capacity building support. The work has so far focussed on understanding the capacity building needs of countries and producing a Roadmap for each country which sets out a plan for their capacity building activity.

Although each country has its own unique capacity building needs the work so far has identified eight main topics that the support will focus on:

1. Promoting a good understanding of the goals and plans of the EGTI
2. Organising national stakeholders and allocating responsibilities for implementing the EGTI
3. Ensuring complementarity of the EGTI to existing graduate tracking activities
4. Dealing with the financial cost and identifying sources of funding to implement the EGTI at the national level
5. Collecting and storing graduates' regularly updated contact details
6. Developing/clarifying a normative framework to address GDPR issues
7. Sharing of experience in implementing the EGTI survey (sampling, questions, data analysis)
8. Methodological support on making the best use of existing administrative data, and how to match/link it with survey data.



The bespoke capacity building support will be delivered through virtual online support by the country expert, face to face support when this is available as well as peer to peer support from one country to another. The capacity building support will start in April 2021 and run up until the end of the year.

Q.9: What other points were discussed at the EGTI webinar on Friday 12 March 2021?

- **Will doctoral graduates be included in the EGTI?**

This has not yet been decided. The employment status of doctoral students and their employment prospects after graduation differs a lot between EEA countries, and they are a difficult group to survey as a result. The issue will be re-examined once the first wave of 16 countries to participate in the EGS has been identified, and it is clear what their preference is regarding the inclusion of doctoral students in the survey. In any case, countries are free to expand and explore the broader coverage of other target groups beyond the commonly agreed ones.

- **How will the EU ensure that data collected at the national level will be comparable?**

The Commission's tender process in Q2 2021 should lead to the appointment of a contractor to oversee the roll out of the EGS. This contractor will provide support and guidance to participating countries on how to carry out the EGS in their countries, i.e. how to select a sample of graduates, how to contact graduates, how to construct the questionnaire, etc. Countries with national graduate tracking tools are looking forward to receiving the exact questions to be used in the EGS so they can determine which questions they can answer already based on existing national level data, and what data needs to be collected via the EGS. Each country's National Reference Point for graduate tracking will decide on how it will supply data to the contractor. The contractor will be responsible for overseeing the data cleaning and ensuring its usability. The capacity building for the EGTI, led by Ecorys, is designed to support EEA countries in getting ready to participate in the EGS if they want to do so.

- **How can the privacy of graduates be protected, in particular when data are collected and stored outside national jurisdictions?**

The EU does not seek to collect personal data but only wants the coordination and exchange of anonymised/pseudonymised graduate data. The Expert Group identified privacy concerns as an issue requiring further analysis, with the NRPs providing access to a range of different types of expertise. Such expertise can also be provided through the ongoing capacity-building activities as well as through the future support service of the network.

In the survey phase, personal data will not be stored at EU level, data ownership remains with HEIs or national structures. In the long run, ownership and privacy issues, as well as exploitation rights, will need to be discussed and decided by the European Network on Graduate Tracking.

- **Will there not be duplication of efforts if the same graduates are surveyed several times?**

The coverage of the same graduates over time should allow tracking the evolution of graduates over time, as well as their evolving perception on the relevance of their education. An intelligent design should ensure that students do not have to provide the same information twice; hence the 2nd (follow-up) survey could also be shorter, which will be helpful to increase response rates.