

BLOG POST

A Deep Dive in Self-Assessment – Piloting ISATCOVE with Cedifop (/blog-posts/deep-dive-self-assessment-piloting-isatcove-cedifop)



Open Space Member · 7 February 2024



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Practice Areas: Vocational Excellence (ENE)

Cedifop – a professional diving school in Palermo, Sicily

Cedifop is a professional diving school based in Palermo (Sicily). Professional diving is part of an international industry – CEDIFOP works with various regional and international authorities to assure standards and obtain recognition and

validation.

It is recognized by the Sicily Region and financed almost entirely through student fees. Cedifop is a member of **IDSA (<https://www.idsaworldwide.org/>)**, the International Association of Diving Schools. IDSA establishes trainings standards. Compliance with these standards is a prerequisite for membership and for recognition of courses. IDSA issues a Credentials Card and lists **international equivalences ([Cedifop offers a full range of recognized courses, from onshore to offshore: inshore diver, offshore air diver; top up; sat diver. In essence, Cedifop offers a complete industrial diving training package, from in-port operations to offshore operations below 50 metres. Core courses comply with ISO standards and all courses comply with IDSA and IMCA standards.](https://www.idsaworldwide.org/images/IDSA/PDFs/IDSA-Li</u></p></div><div data-bbox=)**

IMCA ([///Users/daniele/Downloads/\(https://www.imca-int.com/\)](https://www.imca-int.com/)) the International Marine Contractors Association, recognizes courses that respect a defined **code of conduct ([Cedifop is a relatively small training centre: the number of students is limited for safety but also for pedagogical reasons.](https://www.imca-int.com/product%20imca-international-code-of-p</u></p></div><div data-bbox=)**



Why Cedifop chose to carry out a self-assessment?

As far back as 2016, Cedifop has worked with **Skills Together (ST) (<https://skillstogether.it/en/>)** on quality issues. In 2018 Cedifop and Skills Together organized a joint seminar with Regione Sicilia on Educational Credentials and the European Passport within the European Skills Week. When

ST proposed Cedifop the participation to the ETF Pilot 1, the idea was welcomed because it responded to Cedifop’s ongoing commitment to focus on educational quality and its communication.

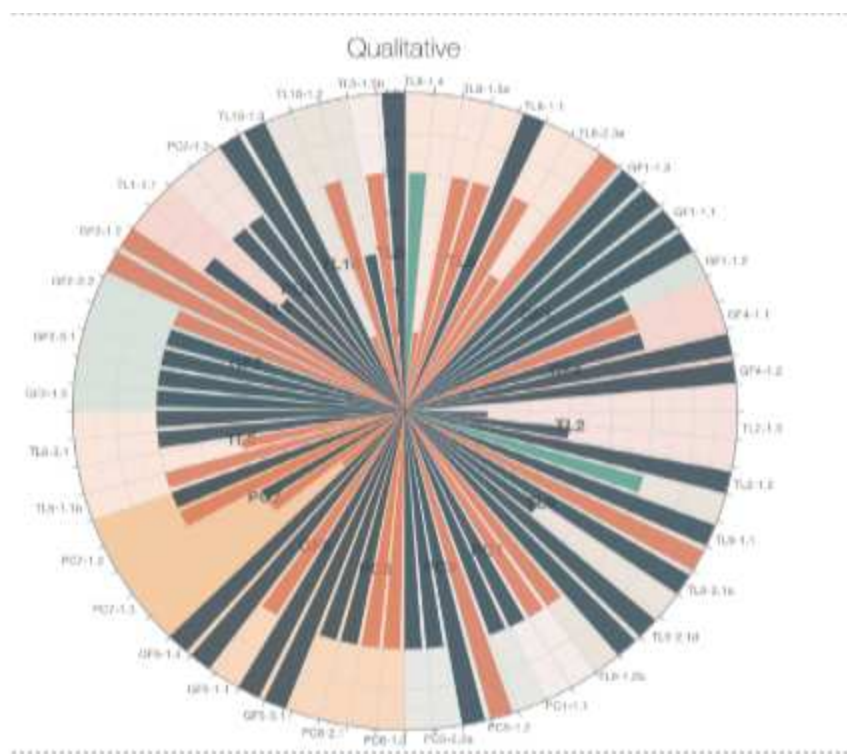
How did Cedifop organise the Self-assessment?

In July 2023, Cedifop established its Self-assessment Team for Isatcove Pilot 1. The team members were: the Director of Cedifop, the Head of Technologies and Education, the Consultant responsible for ISO standards and quality assessment, the Cedifop Communication Director, the Managing Director of ST. Team members registered on the ISATCOVE Platform and met regularly from September to early November 2023 when the exercise was completed.

The team designed a self-assessment selecting those criteria that were most relevant to the priorities and stakeholders of CEDIFOP: 9 criteria in the Dimension of Teaching and Learning, 5 criteria in the Dimension of Partnership and Coordination, and 4 criteria in the dimension of Governance and Funding: 18 criteria altogether. This number makes CEDIFOP eligible to apply for a higher level excellence label: Advancing to Excellence.

Out of these 18 criteria 156 indicators were chosen and assigned, 99% of which received an answer. ISATCOVE collects both qualitative and quantitative data. The self-assessment process required the self-assessment team to gather together, discuss and organize key evidence relating to performance and quality relating to different aspects of vocational excellence.

The graph that follows shows the results only for the qualitative indicators. (78 out of 156). Each indicator has been self-assessed on a score of between 0 (not achieved) up to 4 (achieved to a large extent).



What was the self-assessment like for members of team?

The best synopsis was given by the Director of Cedifop, Manos Kouvakis: “when we teach and carry out underwater industrial activities, we follow very closely security and operational protocols. Isatcove strikes me as the equivalent protocol for educational and organizational excellence. A tool for supporting our organization in assuring overall quality standards and putting CEDIFOP on a continuous improvement path.”, Francesco Costantino, Head of Technology and Education found that the pilot supported his work saw “the Isatcove criteria and indicators as a framework to help CEDIFOP address the transition from training to work.” For Ivan Napoli, who follows the quality assessment standards in CEDIFOP: “the pilot offered an opportunity, when uploading the supporting information on the various indicators, to review the various databases and rationalize them.”

What challenges you had - and how you dealt with them...

The main challenge was about being sure that every response was supported by objective and independent information. For example, with regard to employment of graduates, there is strong evidence from employers that students are employed: requests from employers for graduates is running at more than twice the number of graduates. Unfortunately, graduates, once in employment, are not inclined to respond to graduate tracking surveys.

What you learnt or gained from the self-assessment - how it might help Cedifop to improve

The ISATCOVE platform, though still in a test version, allows an easy, gradual and flexible approach to self-assessment. This has meant that, although the managers and teachers of Cedifop are, as in other schools and training centres, really overburdened, they could find the time to engage in the self-assessment journey. The feedback they gave is that Cedifop intends to continue to use ISATCOVE on a regular basis to better define improvement objectives and control quality on the broadest basis.

What advice would you give to other centres or schools?

Don't be afraid of engaging in ISATCOVE as soon as possible! You should NOT view it as a complicated and scary exercise that exposes you to some possibly arbitrary external evaluation. With ISATCOVE you remain in control – you decide which criteria to use and who will see the results. Excellence has multiple facets. You will be able to forefront your excellences, so as to further improve them and, at the same, identify your weaknesses so as to bring together those who can address them. Finally, you will be able to signal the qualities and ambition of your school to prospective students and to employers.

For further information about CEDIFOP contact:

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For further information about ISATCOVE:

<https://openspace.etf.europa.eu/pages/test-drive-europes-new-self-assessment-tool-vocational-schools> (<https://openspace.etf.europa.eu/pages/test-drive-europes-new-self-assessment-tool-vocational-schools>)

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