



Ireland News on CPD

Introduction to Leonardo da Vinci Project

This major knowledge exchange project, which was approved for funding by the European Commission under the programme Leonardo da Vinci - Transfer of Innovation, commenced in October 2010 and will end in September 2012, allowing the countries with more experience of CPD matters to share their wisdom and experience with lesser experienced nations. The overall aim is to share the employer-based methodology and best-practice lifelong learning processes, developed over a period of more than 10 years by Engineers Ireland, through their national CPD Accredited Employer standard. The European partners will learn from each other, with Engineers Ireland as the lead partner. The outcome of the project, which the partners hope to present to FEANI for consideration, will be a proposed European CPD standard framework for employers of engineers, technicians and technologists.

Introduction to Engineers Ireland's CPD Accredited Employer Standard

In Ireland, Engineers Ireland (the professional body for engineers in Ireland) and the Irish Government (through the Department of Education & Skills) have co-funded and developed over the past decade an excellent framework model which employers of engineering professionals can use to connect disparate training, learning & development initiatives under a best-practice umbrella.

Since the launch of Engineers Ireland CPD Accredited Employer Standard in 1999, over 135 organisations in Ireland have been fully accredited, monitored and re-accredited, with

many more engineering employers working towards seeking accreditation. A full listing of accredited organisations, spanning all sectors of engineering, is contained on the CPD Section of the Engineers Ireland website. (www.engineersireland.ie/cpd/cpd-employer/participating-organisations)

The recommended processes in the standard (which has been revised and updated every 3-4 years) serve to improve performance, develop engineering and technical professionals and, crucially, bring about measurable business benefits. In essence, the standard provides a map for employers to plan how they can support good practices in the area of lifelong learning for all of their engineers and technicians, from graduate level right up to top management level. It is designed to reflect the ever-changing environments in which engineering and technical professionals work and learn.

The annual CPD awards in Ireland challenge participants to submit a case study of how they have used the CPD framework to drive major, profitable organisational initiatives. Winning case studies show CPD linked to product/service innovation, winning new business, breaking into new markets, eliminating waste and enhancing a culture of innovation.

The benefits of gaining accreditation are demonstrable, including the ability to:

- Maximise the potential of employees
- Optimise investment in training and development
- Create and maintain an innovative and dynamic culture

- Motivate Engineers and Technicians
- Facilitate & support diversification and entry into new markets, services and processes
- Improve recruitment, retention and succession planning
- Confer competitive advantage
- Raise profile and increase networking opportunities
- Benchmark to key organisations in relevant sector

Status of the EU CPD Project

The EU Leonardo-funded CPD project is currently in the pilot stage in which the participating engineering organisations of Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Slovakia source an engineering company to work with on the project. The pilot stage commenced on January 1st, 2011 and will end on March 31st, 2012. This pilot stage was designed to allow Engineers Ireland to share as much knowledge as possible about their CPD Accredited Employer Standard with the project partners. The project partners will then use this knowledge to audit their chosen engineering company in June 2012 to assess if their chosen engineering company fulfils the eight criteria needed to become a CPD Accredited Employer – the first in their home country and one of the first in Europe!

The project partners receive full support from Engineers Ireland throughout the project including bi-weekly webinars to discuss the progress of the project and any hurdles the project partners might have encountered. Throughout the pilot phase, each project partners is visited by all the other project partners. The purpose of these CPD symposia is to

conduct a trial CPD accreditation audit of their chosen engineering company, transfer knowledge of the auditing process and to give the project partners valuable experience in conducting professional CPD Accreditation audits.

So far the project partners have visited Lisbon, Portugal in May 2011 to visit EDP (www.edp.pt/en), Bucharest, Romania in August 2011 to visit SEARCH CORPORATION (www.searchltd.ro) and Maribor, Slovenia in October, 2011 to TŠC Maribor (www.tscmb.si). These visits have been highly successful and the experience gained from these CPD symposia will be vital to the success of the project in the next phase. This phase of the project (1st April – 31st August, 2012) will be where each project partner will conduct their own CPD accreditation audit of their chosen engineering company without Engineers Ireland's help or assistance.

Future Plans for EU CPD Project

The pilot will continue into next year where there will be two final CPD symposia. The first will take place in Bratislava, Slovakia in January, 2012 and the last CPD symposia will be a six day master class in Maribor, Slovenia. This six day symposia will be the last chance for each partner to gain vital hands-on experience and knowledge of the CPD Accredited Employer process from the Engineers Ireland team.

The project will conclude with a formal proposal to FEANI.

The official project website can be viewed at: www.cpdeurope.eu.

