ICENUW

Implementing Cooperation in a European Network against Undeclared Work





Implementing Cooperation in a **European Network** against **Undeclared Work**

ICENUW Contact's Web Platform Final Report

social

Europe

conditions

employment

security

work

communication

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Foreword

Globalisation is not only a reality in the modern economic and monetary context. It also constitutes an additional difficulty in the phenomenon of undeclared work, adding more complexity to an already shady world.

It is clear that factors like migration and free movement in a globalised environment add serious challenges to dealing with undeclared work. The introduction of an international context to a growing number of investigated cases results in more pressure on the capacity of solving cases and obtaining results.

In this kind of situation, the available internal capacity to solve these complex cases reaches its limits. The only way to increase the success rate is through the involvement of foreign counterpart(s).

In 2006, the ENUW project, also funded by the EU PROGRESS programme, explored the boundaries of cooperation in a European environment and delivered a set of lessons to bear in mind.

Building on the conclusions of the ENUW project, the 2010 ICENUW project aims at implementing a selection of the shown pathways by emphasising the operational possibilities offered for labour and social inspections services.

A first pathway was to explore the possibility of developing a set of minimal inspection standards. This aim evolved towards the launch of a catalogue of inspection documents and procedures in several Member States. Enhancing communication through common understanding is what we were aiming for.

Facilitating communication between the numerous competent services in Member States on an informal level and in a user-friendly environment was a second step. Looking into the possibilities of a “who is who” in inspection and control services did prove the need for such an instrument. Simple guidance is often essential, connecting the right persons for the job at hand.

At the same time we could not resist reflecting on possible solutions to the legal uncertainties and difficulties arising with cooperation between inspection and control services on an international level. Our third report shows that interactions would greatly benefit from an international network.

Our final focus point were soft measures on making legal work more attractive. Compliance oriented measures are not easily associated with inspection activities. Nevertheless, their possibilities are too significant and promising to ignore. It is crucial to investigate how they can be integrated into inspection procedures. Best practices should be showing us the way.

This experience could not have been possible without the explicit engagement of France, Italy and Spain, who alongside Belgium initiated this project.

We would like to thank the European Commission who entrusted us with developing the set goals and provided funding in the framework of the PROGRESS programme.

We would like to address a special thanks to the different experts who assisted us during the project: Prof. Yves Jorens, Prof. Jean-Philippe Lhernoud, Mr. Antonio Diaz Almagro and Mr. Mauro Di Giacomo. Their reports made the ideas of the project visible and comprehensible. Their conclusions are valuable food for thought.

We must last but not least thank all the inspectors who acted as national experts for their respective authorities and delivered the input from the work floor from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Italy, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania and Spain.

We do hope that the "Charter of Bruges" which endorses the project goals, constitutes a clear signal that inspection and control authorities are willing to cooperate if there is a suitable environment.

Didier Verbeke,
Project Manager

On behalf of the ICENUW Steering Committee

Executive Summary

ICENUW is an innovative project designed to answer to specific needs, without forgetting the broader framework and structures that cover undeclared work. The project focuses on practical solutions that are clear and easy to implement. Instead of creating new processes, ICENUW tries to be a bridge between the solutions offered on a European level and their practical impediments for the agents who need to put them into practice.

The right person for the right task

Working together with partners across the national borders, is not as easy as it should be. If you need information from a different Member State, you need to know what questions to ask, how to ask them and to whom to ask them. At this point in the European integration it is still difficult to know how the inspection and control bodies of all the 27 countries are organized and which competences they have. To know whom is competent for a specific matter and how to contact this person, is an ever bigger challenge.

The Commission considers undeclared work as a priority in its Mutual Learning programme[1]. The exchange of information on good practices is explicitly encouraged. Facilitating identification is a crucial step in order to make this possible. Therefore, the first step in the consolidation of the network begins, according to this project, with a "Who's Who" web application, in which all the stakeholders involved in the fight against Undeclared Work can actively share knowledge and experiences, ask questions, prepare the organization of conferences, exchange best practices, etc ...

After identifying the right person, the question remains of what kind of information this person is able to provide and how. Translation issues, different working methods and a lack of direct interaction add to the challenge. The project will work on a common understanding trough a shared vocabulary and a uniform way of identification of the issues.

For example: If a Belgian inspector needs information from the Spanish authorities, the platform will help the Belgian inspector to find the person who can provide information about the matters under investigation. When contact is made, his Spanish counterpart can inform the Belgian inspector on the correct official way to request information, in which way the request should be made (registered letter, EESSI, through liaison office, ...) and the normal procedure will be followed (not replaced).

1 COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS, "Stepping up the fight against undeclared work", COM(2007) 628 final of 24.10.2007, p11.

The platform will also be very useful for informational uses, such as policy surveys regarding undeclared work. As such, a Greek civil servant interested to know where regularization practices yield promising results can find other civil servants or persons already involved in that area.

This new web platform will be careful not to overlap with other projects currently being developed on a European level and is not trying to replace existing cooperation tools.

The web platform proposed under the ICENUW programme will be a practical and usable tool to know who is who in fight against undeclared work in each country. This new platform will provide the necessary information to contact the right person in each country, and facilitate this contact through new communication technologies.

Introduction

The ICENUW project is set within the framework of PROGRESS[2], in the direct continuity of a previous European project, called ENUW The outcomes are a result of interviews of the inspection services of the four project partners and of eight other Member States associated to the project. This report describes one of the operational deliverables of the project: the interactive contact Web Platform.

Through some seminars, individual workshops and questionnaires, involving inspection bodies, deliverables have been:

(1) Description of a Network Web Application;
(2) Shared scope and requirements for this tool;
(3) Analysis and benchmarking of different technologies;
(4) Building and implementation of a pilot,
(5) Implementation plan for the overall platform version.
(6) Communication reports.

This Final Report is structured as follows:

Section 1 – Executive Summary;
Section 2 – Introduction about the context and key findings;
Section 3 – Information about how the project has been executed;
Section 4 – Solution: Scope and solution requirements;
Section 5 – Proposed solution and its implementation plan;
Section 6 – Conclusions and recommendations.
In addition, extensive electronic files containing the data collected during the work have been submitted to the ICENUW Steering Committee.

2 The Basic Act of the PROGRESS program is the Decision No 1672/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24.
PROGRESS pursues, among other objectives, the following general objective:
- to promote networking, mutual learning, identification and dissemination of good practice and innovative approaches at EU level.
Amongst the possible activities to be financed (in the "Updating of the annual programme for 2009"), a call for proposals is made on the subject of the Exchange of good practices covering amongst other mutual learning programmes on undeclared Work (budget line 04 04 01).
In response to this call a project, under the working title ICENUW, was introduced by a consortium composed of Belgian (lead), French, Italian and Spanisch institutions.
The project was selected by the EC for co-financement, the grant agreements being signed on the 2d of March 2010, with reference VS/2010/0061.

1. Context

The movement of people and demographic changes are restructuring the labor force dynamics and the pattern of demand for inspection services in countries around the world. Demographic trends are altering the composition of the global workforce, with an increasing proportion of workers in all sectors coming from outside national frontiers.

Social and labor administrations are confronted with the complexities, challenges and opportunities of this evolution., administrations and their agencies cannot simply do more with their The tools and methods that are currently available to administrations and their agencies are not always sufficient to meet these challenges and exploit the opportunities. In order to boost their performance and to meet the broader global challenges, they need to widen the scope of their inspection policy.

The current situation calls for quick solutions, innovation and creativity, and primarily for common and integrated approaches. Global problems require common understanding and collaborative solutions. Labor and social security inspection services must develop solutions to address the undeclared work issues.

The growing ease of setting up cross-border groupings of enterprises requires efficient multi level cooperation between monitoring and enforcement bodies. Administrations also need to cooperate with other governments or with European organizations and facilitate interagency cooperation across national borders and across sectors (including the business sector).

It is a key finding that institutional factors[3] are amongst the most important barriers to a collaborative approach, mainly due to underdeveloped institutional infrastructure (too complicated and different legal systems, weak labor market sectors, low levels of tax control, inadequate numbers of custom offices, inflexible employment regulations).

Thus, developing a collaborative approach is essential, as well as underlining the need for meaningful co-productive partnerships between different levels of government and different sectors.

This new approach must also take into account the possibilities offered by new technologies to facilitate its implementation and evolution.

In this context, new technologies, channels and collaborative tools must be the base of this new approach: in particular, solutions coming from web 2.0. technology are very promising. It's necessary to embrace the social networking and collaborative communication technologies that, together, have come to be known as "Web 2.0."

3 RENOOY (P.), IVARSSON (S.), VAN DER WUTSEN-GRITSAI (O.), MEIJER (R.), "Undeclared work in an enlarged Union – An analysis of Undeclared work : An In depth Study of Specific Items", Commission européenne, 2004 : http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/employment_analysis/work/undecl_work_final_en.pdf

Organizations are forced to reinvent themselves adopting Web 2.0. approaches that allow them to adapt to changes :

- Web 2.0. is the result of a deep transformation of the Internet, as a result of significant changes in our social and technology context. While technological progress has been an enabler for this new Internet conception, social factors have been the major driver towards Web 2.0.
- Social evolution has been initially pushed by new generations, but currently it has been adopted by the whole Internet community, including older generations. Organizations must adapt to changes in the way people work and communicate with each other, if they want to remain competitive and efficient.
- This reinvention of government breaks down barriers, improves inspection services and opens up the possibilities of collaboration and broader participation among agencies and institutions.

1.1 Consolidation of a European Network

Collaborating proactively with related agencies and external partners, moving beyond operational collaboration towards integration, by sharing outcomes, strategy, accountability, systems and standardized procedures is required.

Simultaneously, the knowledge of the phenomenon, including the policies fighting undeclared work, could be developed with the exchange of Best Practices.

We must use technology as an enabler, while at the same time ensuring that its deployment is aligned to the greater outcomes that need to be achieved. And secondly, we must investigate its effects as far as cost-effectiveness, people development and reliable service delivery go.

Better collaboration between organizations is also a benefit of Web 2.0 technologies, if channeled towards an identifiable and valuable outcome. When supported by other collaboration technologies, internal government social networking sites can dramatically improve the efficiency and effectiveness of cross-administration cooperation.

Technology plays a critical part in helping inspection services meet the complex, crosscutting needs and expectations of their stakeholders and customers. It facilitates better inspection services, particularly by opening up multiple contacts and application channels for inspectors and by simplifying procedures around Europe. Technology, specifically when different systems are enabled to cooperate with others, makes information sharing within and across agencies much easier. Indeed, a lack of technology, or the lack of the right technology, is a key limitation for inspection agencies in delivering outcomes. It prescribes what can or cannot be done, measured or shared. In some cases, technology limitations could seriously limit the extent to which an administration can achieve its objectives.

The benefits and advantages of adopting these new technologies for inspections services are clear. Nevertheless, it's very important to go step by step. The first barrier comes from different legal and administrative structures, so and indispensable element will be the identification of people in order to start a collaborative working tool that aims for integrated processes and policies.

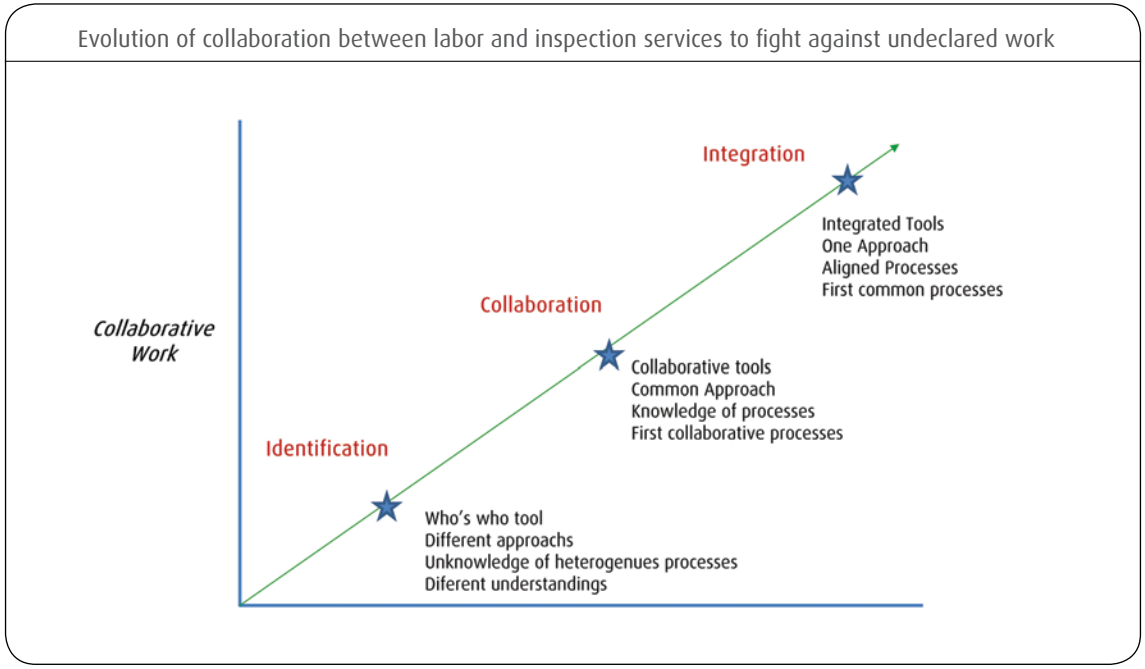


Figure 1.- The Journey of Technology 2.0. to fight against Undeclared Work

The Commission is aware of the possibilities of these new solutions as shown by the IMI (Internal Market Information System) implementation[4].

4 IMI is a secure online application that allows national, regional and local authorities to communicate quickly and easily with their counterparts abroad. (http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/imi-net)
IMI uses the product CIRCA that is a web-based application providing online services that offer a virtual space for Workgroups, enabling the effective and secure sharing of resources and documents. (http://circa.europa.eu/)

1.2 Key Findings

Combining a profound analysis of this reality with the information obtained from the questionnaires received from experts and inspectors of different Member States, we can draw the following main conclusions:

- Global and complex problems require collaborative, or even integrated solutions.
- New technologies are best suited to fulfill these requirements.
- The technologies and web 2.0. tools could facilitate collaboration between labor and inspection agencies from different Member States.
- The inspectors are intensive and advanced users of IT technologies.
- The inspectors welcome these tools have a positive attitude towards using them in their daily work.

The following pictures reflect the results from the questionnaires received from labor and social security inspectors who participated in the project.

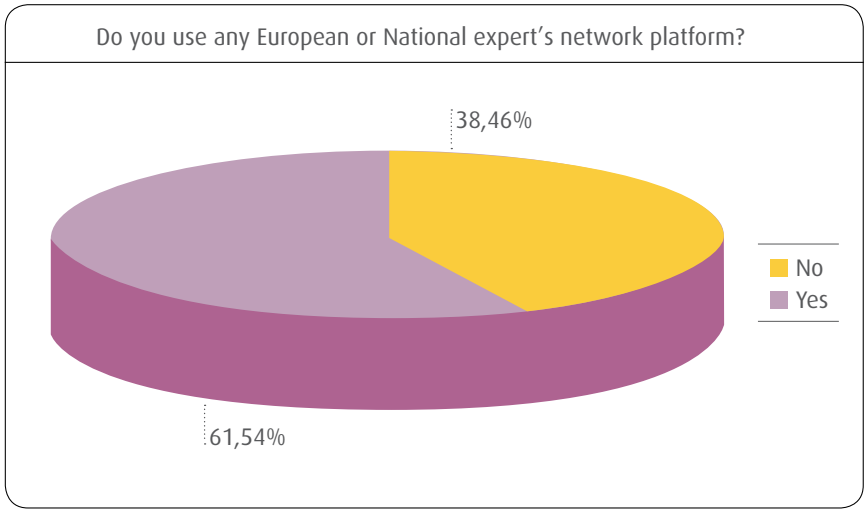


Figure 2.- Labor ans Social Inspection Services. Use of collaborative platform?

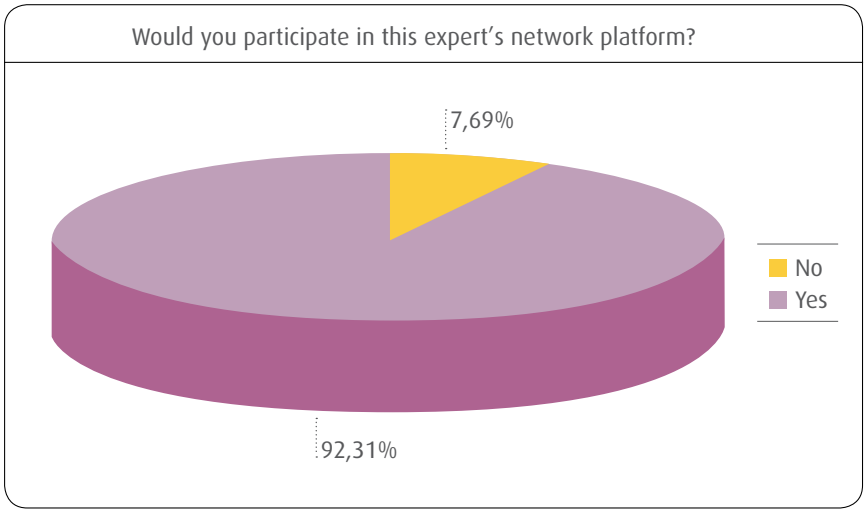


Figure 3.- Position to use a who's who application

2. Objective and Approach

A European Network: creating an interactive Web Application

The right person for the right task

The basic step of contacting a homologue in a different Member State is not as easy as it seems. Institutions and inspectorates have different competences and are often structured differently. It is not always easy to obtain contact details from the right person at the right time.

2.1 Objective

The ICENUW project aims to create a web application to make an online European Network against Undeclared work. The focus lies on 4 outcomes:

- Improving communication between inspectors across Europe
- Identifying which person to contact in case of the need for information concerning a case implying cross-border elements
- Consolidating the Network against Undeclared Work
- Helping to develop a common understanding and a shared practice concerning the equivalent documents that are relevant for inspections

It should be stressed that such a web application should preferably be developed in an existing environment like IMI or EESSI (European Exchange of Social Security Information) or any other pan-European secured network.

Policy should first focus on the consolidation of a European Network: stable platforms of discussions shall improve coordination and integration regarding the themes related to undeclared work trough the exchange of Best Practices. Secondly, measures will consider the possibility of a supporting EU level Platform: enhancing information exchange between inspection authorities in order to check conformity levels will improve quality and rapidity of controls. Shared control procedures will protect fair competition as well as worker's fundamental social rights. Bilateral and multilateral agreements should serve not only as opportunities of exchange and comparison, but also as ways to promote interoperability of databases and information systems. A third measure will be the development of common EU minimum standards for inspections: information instruments and the framework for systematic comparisons have to be set up to promote positive national experiences leading to positive results, with global approaches integrating inspection controls and employment policies. Finally, policy should focus on making legal work attractive and rewarding: trough information campaigns and targeted communication compliance with the rules will improve and violations will decrease.

2.2 Approach

This section presents a detailed outline of the methodological approach undertaken for the project.

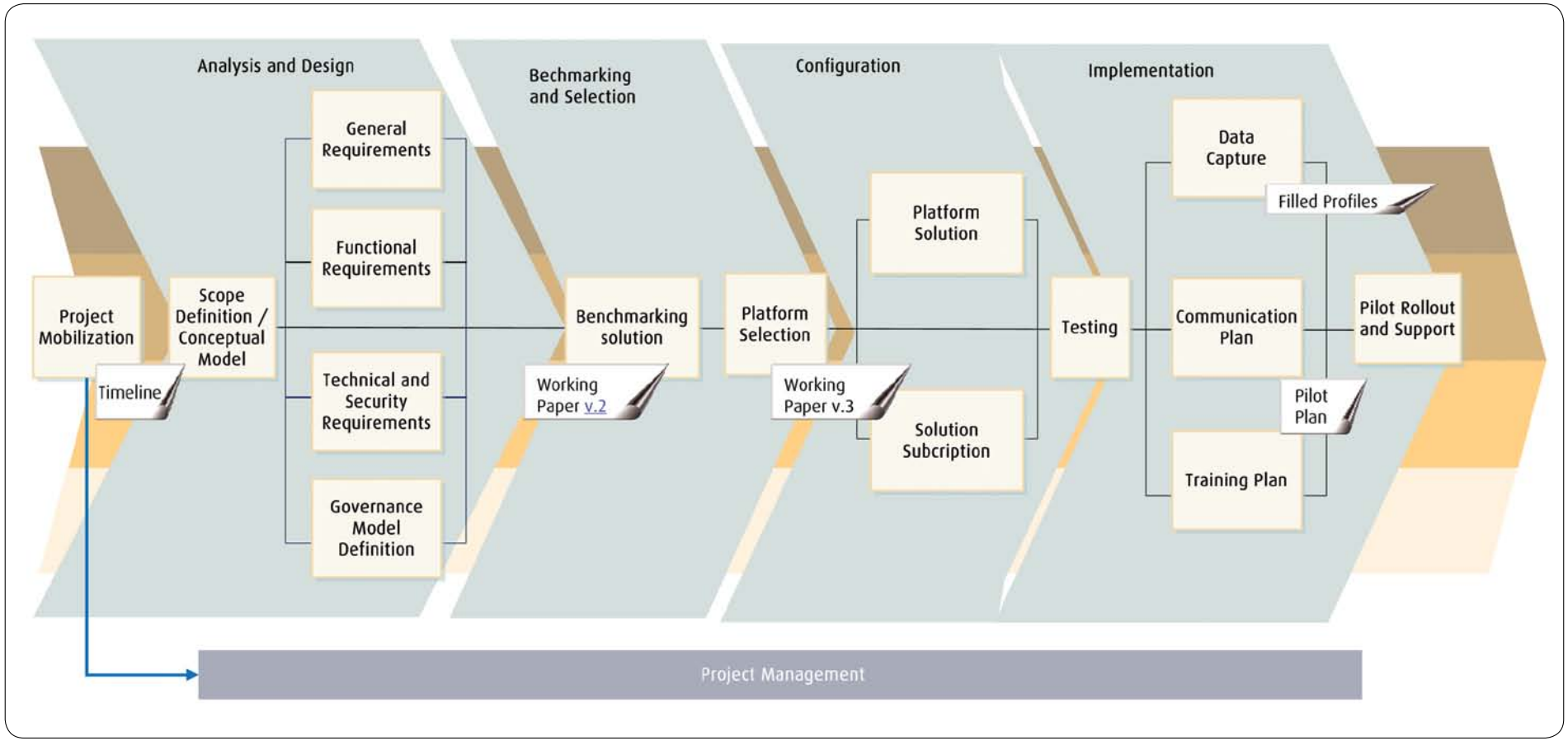


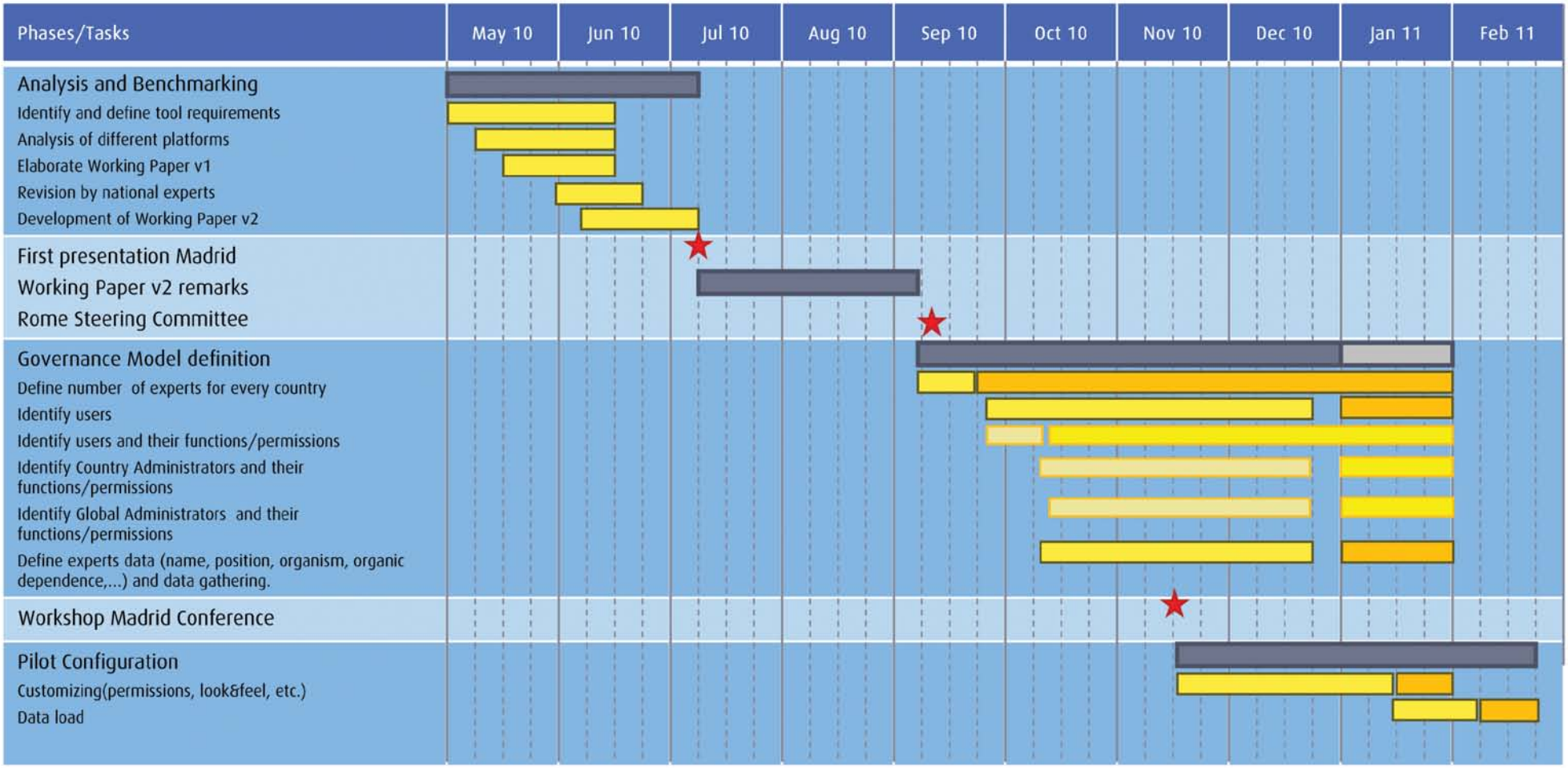
Figure 4.- Methodological approach for ICENUW Contact's Web Platform

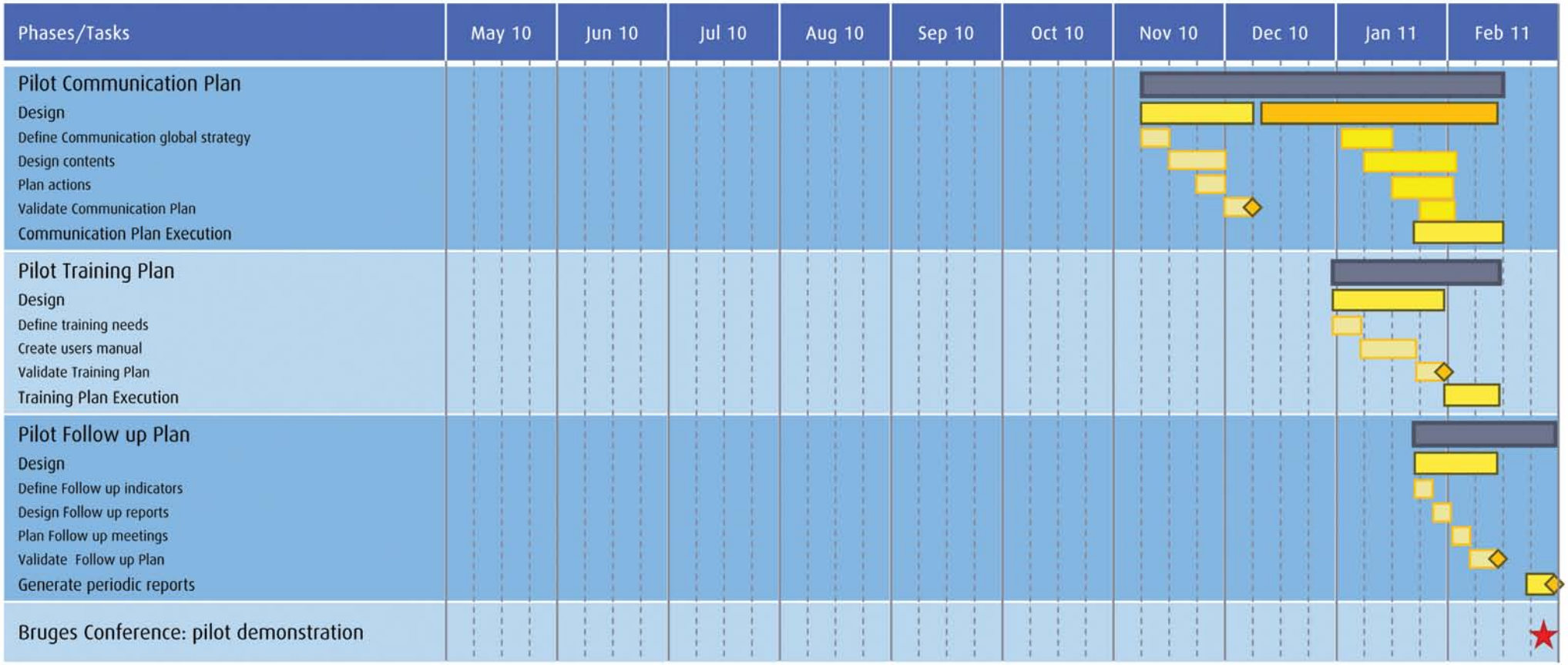
The project survey was implemented in four phases:

- In Phase 1, qualitative interviews of national experts were conducted to identify main requirements for a new platform. Also some questionnaires were issued to know the skills and opinion from other national experts around Europe.
- In Phase 2, it was necessary to develop a deep analysis of economic technologies as a base for the new solution.
- In Phase 3, the objectives, expectations, requirements and work plan were validated in order to prepare the deliverables and pilot.
- In phase 4, the platform has been built and configured.
- Finally, the communication and reports were delivered to support the project and platform.

2.3 Work Plan

Following this approach the work plan has been the following:




Phases/Tasks
May 10
Jun 10
Jul 10
Aug 10
Sep 10
Oct 10
Nov 10
Dec 10
Jan 11
Feb 11
Pilot Communication Plan
Design
Define Communication global strategy
Design contents
Plan actions
Validate Communication Plan
Communication Plan Execution
Pilot Training Plan
Design
Define training needs
Create users manual
Validate Training Plan
Training Plan Execution
Pilot Follow up Plan
Design
Define Follow up indicators
Design Follow up reports
Plan Follow up meetings
Validate Follow up Plan
Generate periodic reports
Bruges Conference: pilot demonstration

3. Solution

The Web application that is going to be developed should offer the functionalities that can ensure the interaction between experts from all the Member States of the European Economic Area.

The general framework for this platform is represented in the following figure:

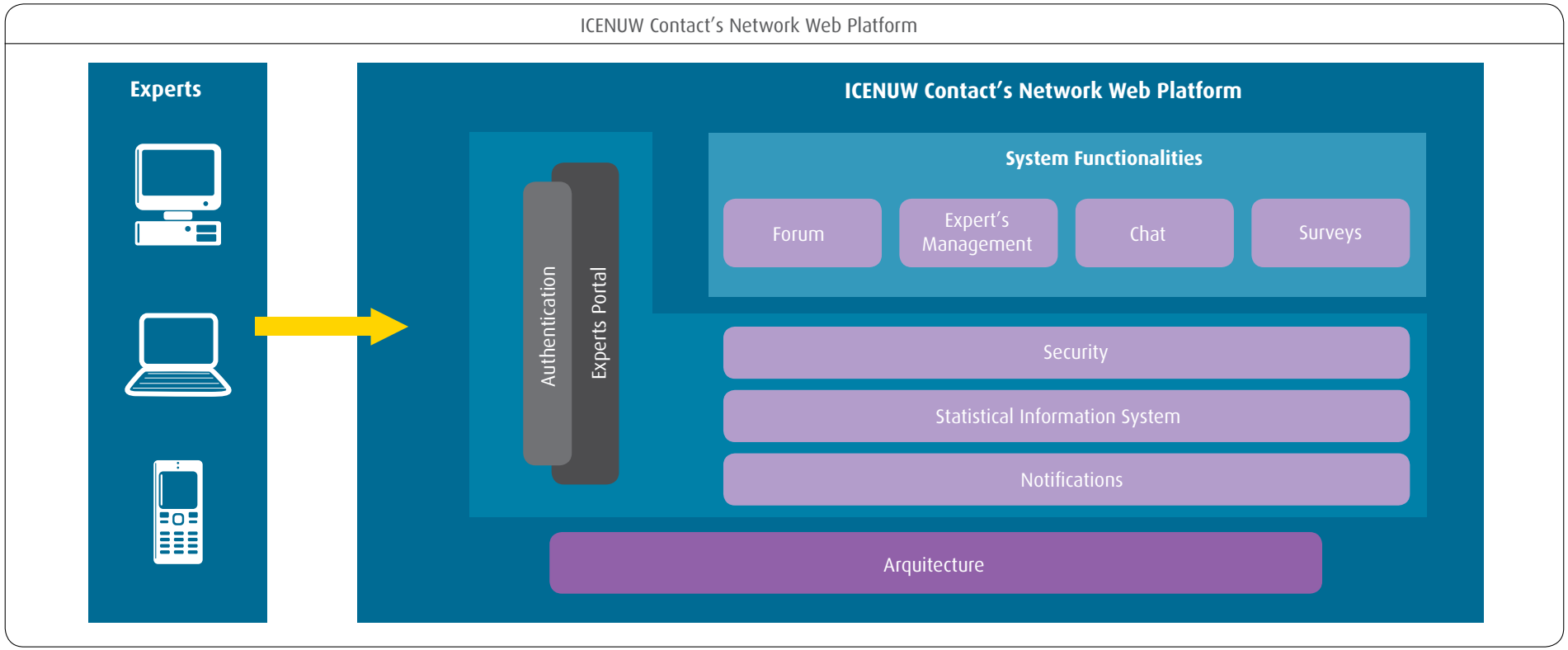


Figure 5.- General Functional Framework

3.1 Main Requirements

These features, oriented to the exchange of contact information, has been defined within the context of the general, functional, communication, technical and security requirements obtained from experts and Member States' inspectors, which will be the prime users of the new platform. These characteristics will permit to build a system that consolidates this interaction network taking into account their guidelines.

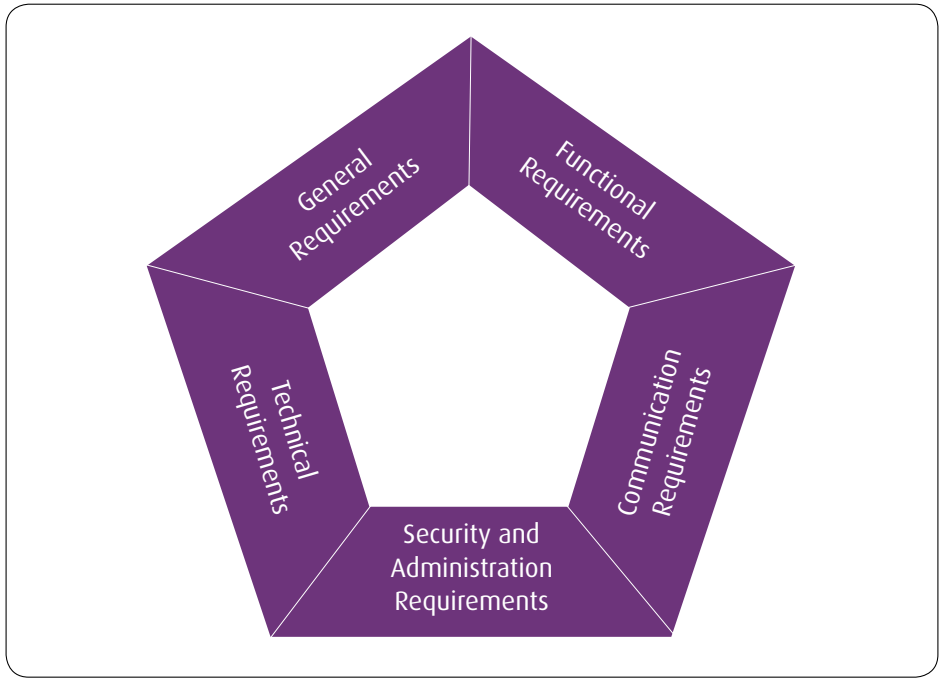


Figure 6.- Main Requirements

3.1.1 General requirements

- **Customization and Flexibility**: It is important that the chosen environment offers the possibility to customize look and graphics to adapt it to every corporate image, etc.
- **Integration with other systems (links enablement)**: The ability to integrate with other systems is a very interesting point in terms of interoperability and exchange of information among users, offering the possibility of including new features in the platform.
- **Web based environment – Usability**: Usability is a qualitative attribute that assesses how easy user interfaces are to use, and is often associated with the functionalities of the product. The product should satisfy users in the following aspects:
    - Learnability: How easy is it for users to accomplish basic tasks the first time they encounter the design?
    - Efficiency: Once users have learned the design, how quickly can they perform tasks?
    - Memorability: When users return to the design after a period of not using it, how easily can they re establish proficiency?
    - Errors: How many errors do users make, how severe are these errors, and how easily can they recover from the errors?
    - Satisfaction: How pleasant is it to use the design?
- **Web accessibility**: The platform should be accessible by as many people as possible. Accessibility can be viewed as the "ability to access" and possible benefit of some system or entity. Accessibility is often used to focus on people with disabilities and their right of access to entities, often through use of assistive technology.
- **Use of Open Standards**
- **Assess the benefits of Open Source Software**
- Following the **IDABC** (Interoperable Delivery of pan-European eGovernment Services to Public Administrations, Businesses and Citizens) principles and guidelines

3.1.2 Functional Requirements

- **Search & Consultation of Users – Member Section**. The tool should facilitate simple and effective user search based on various criteria, as well as consultation of their profiles. To facilitate the search for users within the same group, it is recommended that each user has a members section.
- **Calendar feature Creation, invitation and acceptance of events**. In order to provide facilities for organizing events, meetings, conferences, etc., platform should have a timetable or agenda in which users can mark all the events to which they have been invited.
- **Forum feature (possibility of restricted access)**. Create topic, answers and comments, etc. The platform should provide a forum or a discussion section where users can start discussions of different kinds. Different roles with different permissions are desirable in these forums: administrators, moderators, users, etc. Thus, access to it should be restricted to a specific set of users.
- **Statistics of user participation**. Each user will have a set of statistics, as the number of comments made in forums, events created and participated, etc.
- **Chat Feature (own or external access)**. A chat would offer the possibility of holding on-line meetings or conferences, thus enabling a communication channel more agile

than email or forums. This chat should enable multiple simultaneous conversations, to send files, VoIP and video-conferencing.

- **Surveys**. The platform should allow the production of various types of surveys about different topics, with the possibility of limiting the time each survey is enabled. When creating a poll, notifications to users of the group in which the survey is created or invitations to participate in them should be sent.
- **Multi-language**. The platform must be able to offer its content in different languages at any time. Spanish, English and French are mandatory.
- **Micro blogging** service that allows users to broadcast short messages to other subscribers of the service. The options for message delivery vary from websites, via SMS, instant messaging or ad hoc applications.
- Preventing the publication of documents via the platform (except validated documents)
- **Overview section – most recent activities**. It is recommendable that the tool has a global section and a group section in which recent activities (new events, threads, forums, surveys, registration of new users, etc.) are shown.
- Use of **Tags** to relate elements of the platform members, news, etc. In order to relate each of the elements of the platform in a simple and fast way, the platform should offer the possibility of adding different tags to the elements (users, news, groups, events, etc.) with each tag leading to the related element.

3.1.3 Communication Requirements

- **Notifications by email**. The platform must be configurable to send e-mail notifications to users. There can be different types of notifications: contact requests, monitored forums, events, alarms, etc.
- **Mobile device access**. The platform must be accessible through mobile devices, so that users can join it at any time, anywhere.
- **Possibility of collective communications**. The platform must provide the functionality to send collective communications to all members of the same group. A specific permission may be required to perform this action, so that only users with that permission (global or group administrators) can send them.

3.1.4 Security and Administration Requirements

- **Need of invitation for new users**. To register for a group of the new platform, users will need to receive an invitation. These invitations will be sent via email to experts who might be interested. Invitations will be sent by administrators of the platform.
- **Confirmation of user registration by e-mail**. Once new expert"s registration is completed, he will receive in his inbox an email with a link to confirm registration on the platform. By clicking the link, the user can access the new system.
- **Authentication** based on a username and password. To access the platform user authentication via password is required. When entering the password during the registration of a new user, the system should control the strength of the password. The platform also should provide password recovery tools.

- **Different roles**. Access control must be configurable according to different roles: administrator, participant, guest, etc. Not all users of the same group should be able to access all the functions available on the platform. Therefore, the platform must support different user roles with different permissions.
- **Management of user groups with different levels of access**. Groups created on the platform should not have the same access level to the functionality of the platform. Each group's permissions can be independently configurable.
- **Different levels of administration**: general, by country, group, etc: To provide a decentralized management of all the groups of the platform, customization at various levels of administration must be provided: general manager, country manager, group manager, etc.
- **Global statistical monitoring**. Administrators should be able to generate various statistical reports to assist them in managing the groups they supervise. Therefore, the platform must provide functionalities to facilitate the exploitation of data of each group.

3.1.5 Security and Administration Requirements

- Compatibility with the most important browsers
- Rapid response capacity
- Stable system capable of supporting peak workloads
- Flexibility and easy integration with other systems
- 24x7
- Minimum capacity of 20GB

It must be specially highlighted that this platform is not meant for data exchange. There are other platforms already in place and more appropriate for this. This platform just tries to link supply and demand.

The information about the inspectors that will be visible online will mainly be profile information to enable to determine if the person at hand is relevant for the case in question. Contact data, department, institutional data, professional background etc., are examples of useful information. A picture of the inspector literally gives a face to your interlocutor. It will help inspectors recognize each other on international meetings and makes interaction more dynamic and realistic.

Furthermore, it's important to note that this platform does not aim to replace the existing cooperation structures at national level or between member states. This tool is subsidiary. Rather than replacing the existing structures, it tries to fill in the gaps between them. If one does not experience problems in contacting his homologue in a different member state, then there is no need to use the ICENUW platform.

3.2 Contact Profile

One of the main points of discussion has been to determine what data must appear in the contact profile. The profile we propose for the puspose of the pulot is an example.

It is how we recommend the profile to be, but the use of the platform might show us that changes need to be made. The platform allows us to learn from those first real experiences and offers the possibility to adapt the profile to the needs of the inspectors. On the condition that adaptations are made, bearing in mind that the profile must be practical and easy to use for new contacts and experts.

The selected technology has been an open source solution. It is the most economic solution, is compliant to the requirements and facilitates the platform evolution.

3.3 Implementation Approach

In this kind of solution, where the success is measured by the number of users of the platform, it is important to follow an implementation strategy which facilitates **the use and encourages new subscriptions, incorporating new functionalities step by step.**

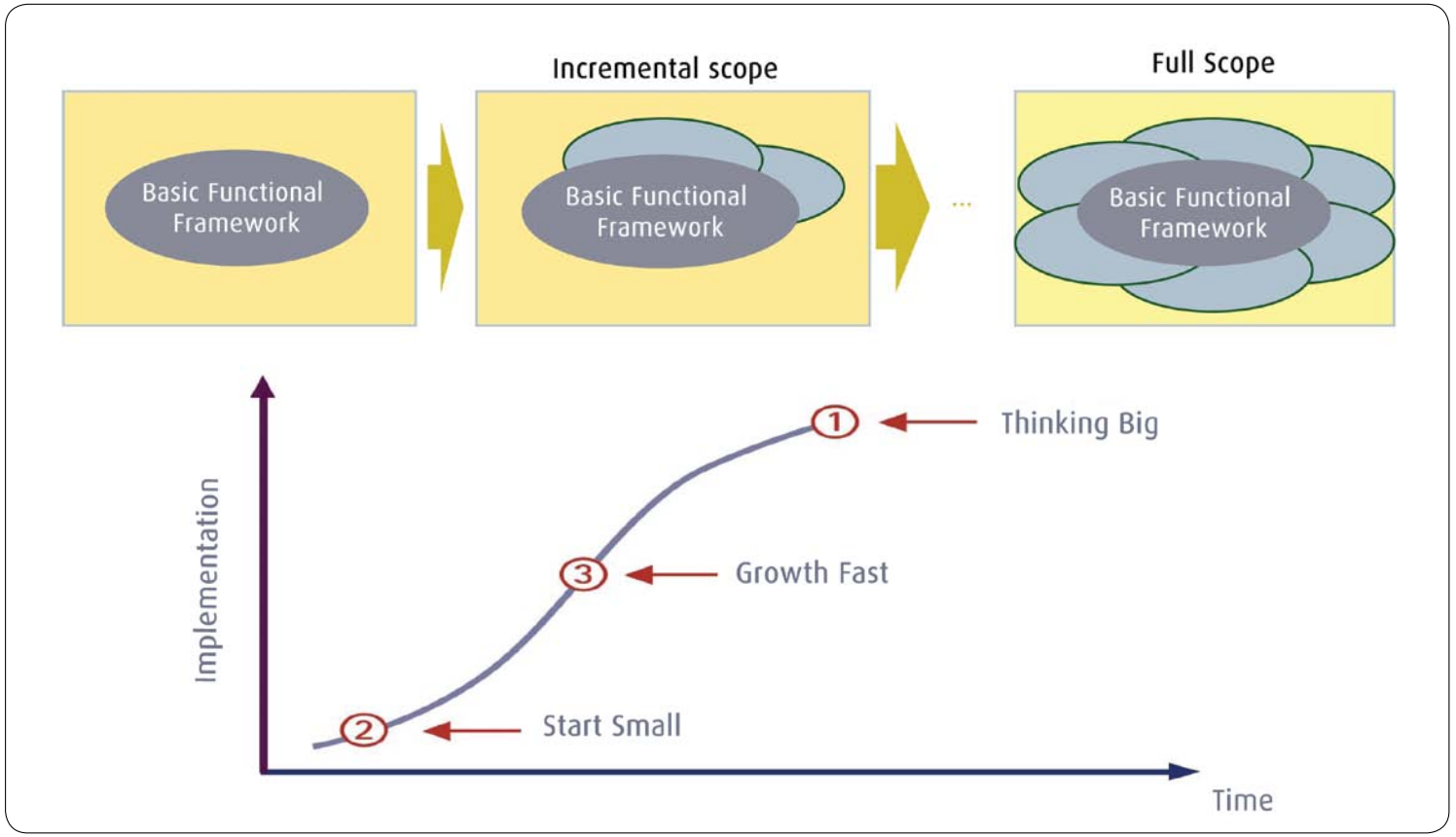


Figure 7.- Implementation Approach

It is recommended to begin with a small application instead of a large, monolithic, and complex program. It is better to select a technology which can be built, tested, deployed and maintained without the need for a large integration project.

As implementation solution it has been decided to develop a solid, complete and real pilot to demonstrate the convenience and utility of the platform. It will be used as a base for further developments in the future.

One of the pending points is to determine what host server on a European level will support the application.

Each participating country (inspection service) should appoint a limited number of inspectors to join the platform. In this first phase we should prioritize utility above universality. As soon as is proven how useful the platform is, then the enlargement of the platform can take place, both geographically as in the number of subscribers. This has to be kept in mind when selecting the national administrator and experts.

Maybe the best option would be to integrate the application into the existing structures. It would increase viability and underline long term perspective.

A link should be established with the useful documents for inspections, minimum inspection standards[5], and others element that can be useful in the inspection works.

To help mitigate any potential risks of this social networking application, it is important to define clear policies from the start to guide our use of new platform, and emphasize the fact that no data will be exchanged.

It is also important to draw up clear roles and responsibilities, and then put in place sound end-user policies that are then also supported by adequate communication and end-user training. Most security risks involve human error, not technology error. Making sure the users understand their responsibilities is an essential element in preventing privacy and security breaches.

Putting in place the right governance model for development and for the ongoing delivery and maintenance of the service is critically important. Again, obstacles and risks are sure to surface at some point. So a straightforward process for governance and decision making is essential.

Finally, as a Web 2.0 development program gets going, it is vital to get input from key executives, and then to enlist them as program sponsors and agents of the new platform. It will be a key and critical success factor to motivate and engaged main executives, experts and inspectors. This will facilitate the implementation, continuous improvement and evolution of the platform, which will eventually prove to be an important tool in the fight against undeclared work.

5 The catalogue will be made available on the platform to make sure a common vocabulary is used in the communication on the platform.

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This programme is managed by the Directorate-General for Employment, social affairs and equal opportunities of the European Commission. It was established to financially support the implementation of the objectives of the European Union in the employment and social affairs area, as set out in the Social Agenda, and thereby contribute to the achievement of the Lisbon Strategy goals in these fields.

The seven-year Programme targets all stakeholders who can help shape the development of appropriate and effective employment and social legislation and policies, across the EU-27, EFTA-EEA and EU candidate and pre-candidate countries.

PROGRESS mission is to strengthen the EU contribution in support of Member States' commitment. PROGRESS will be instrumental in:

- providing analysis and policy advice on PROGRESS policy areas;
- monitoring and reporting on the implementation of EU legislation and policies in PROGRESS policy areas;
- promoting policy transfer, learning and support among Member States on EU objectives and priorities; and
- relaying the views of the stakeholders and society at large

For more information see: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=327&langId=en

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