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**Relating Language Examinations to the  
Common European Framework of Reference for  
Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEF)**

**Manual**

**Overview of  
Preliminary Pilot Version**

***Language Policy Division  
Strasbourg***

## Introduction

The Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg is publishing this pilot edition in order to assist member states, national and international providers of examinations in relating their certificates and diplomas to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*.

The immediate context of the work was a seminar kindly hosted by the Finnish authorities in Helsinki in July 2002 (DGIV/EDU/LANG (15) 2002). This seminar had been organised as a response to the complex issue which member states and examination/certification bodies have to address, and which was succinctly summarised by Professor J. Charles Alderson as:

“How do I know that my Level B1 is your Level B1?”

This resultant pilot edition of a Manual for “Relating Language Examinations to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEF)” is put forward in order to assist member States and examination providers in finding an answer they consider acceptable to the question posed above.

This Manual is intended as a continuation of the work of the Council of Europe’s Language Policy Division in developing planning tools which provide reference points and common objectives as the basis for a coherent and transparent structure for effective teaching/learning and assessment relevant to the needs of learners as well as society, and that can facilitate personal mobility. This work first became widely known in the 1970s with the publication of “The Threshold Level” and the development of versions of it for different languages. The 1990s saw the research and development for the CEF, first circulated in two pilot editions before full publication in 2001 (European Year of Languages). In addition to the two official Council of Europe versions in English and French, the document is now available in Basque, Catalan, Czech, Finnish, Galician, German, Georgian, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Polish, Portuguese, Moldovan, Russian, Spanish, Serbian and Ukrainian. Further versions are in preparation. The initial main impact of the CEF was the “Common Reference Levels” (A1-C2) that it introduced. The CEF is now, however, itself inspiring a new generation of sets of objectives for curriculum developers, further elaborated from the CEF descriptors, of which the prototypes are “Profile Deutsch” and “Un référentiel pour le français.” This current Manual, with its emphasis on relating *assessments* to one another through the mediation of the CEF, is a logical complement to these developments on *levels* and *objectives*.

The primary aim of this Manual is to help the providers of examinations to develop, apply and report transparent, practical procedures in a cumulative process of continuing improvement in order to situate their examination(s) in relation to the Common European Framework (CEF). The approach developed offers guidance to users to:

- describe the examination coverage, administration and analysis procedures;
- relate results reported from the examination to the “Common Reference Levels” presented in Chapter 3 of the CEF;
- provide supporting evidence that reports the procedures followed to do so.

Following the best traditions of Council of Europe action in developing language education, however, the Manual has wider aims to actively promote and facilitate co-operation among relevant institutions and experts in member countries. The Manual aims to:

- contribute to competence building in the area of linking assessments to the CEF;
- encourage increased transparency on the part of examination providers;
- encourage the development of both formal and informal national and international networks of institutions and experts.

Relating an examination or test to the CEF is a complex endeavour. The existence of such a relation is not a simple observable fact, but is an assertion for which the examination provider needs to provide

both theoretical and empirical evidence. The procedures by which such evidence is put forward can be summarized by the term “validation of the claim.”

It is important to note that while the Manual covers a broad range of activities, its aim is limited:

- It provides a guide specifically focussed on procedures involved in the validation of a claim that a certain examination or test is linked to the CEF.
- It does *not* provide a general guide how to construct good language tests or examinations. There are several useful guides that do this and they should be consulted. Relating examinations to CEF makes sense only if the examinations are of good quality.
- It does *not* prescribe any single approach to constructing language tests or examinations. While the CEF espouses an action-oriented approach to language learning and use, being comprehensive, it accepts that different examination reflect various goals (“constructs”). Before embarking on relating an examination to the CEF, it is the prior responsibility of the examination providers to demonstrate the validity of their examination by showing that it assesses the constructs intended.

### **Approach Adopted**

The Manual presents four inter-related sets of procedures that users are advised to follow in order to design a linking scheme in terms of self-contained, manageable activities. The activities carried out in all four sets of procedures contribute to the validation process.

**Familiarisation:** a selection of activities designed to ensure that participants in the linking process have a detailed knowledge of the CEF. This familiarisation stage is necessary at the start of both the Specification and the Standardisation procedures.

In terms of validation, these procedures are an indispensable starting point. An account of the activities taken and the results obtained is an essential component of the validation report.

**Specification:** a self-audit of the coverage of the examination (content and tasks types) profiled in relation to the categories presented in CEF Chapter 4 “Language use and the language learner” and CEF Chapter 5 “The user/learner’s competences.” As well as serving a reporting function, this exercise also has a certain awareness-raising function that may assist in further improving the quality of the examination concerned.

These procedures assure that the definition and production of the test have been undertaken carefully, following good practice.

**Standardisation:** suggested procedures to facilitate the implementation of a common understanding of the “Common Reference Levels” presented in CEF Chapter 3. Standardised exemplars will be provided to assist training in the standardisation of judgements.

These procedures assure that judgements taken in rating performances reflect the constructs described in the CEF, and that decisions about task and item difficulty are taken in a principled manner on the basis of evidence from pre-testing as well as expert judgement.

**Empirical Validation:** the collection and analysis of test data and ratings from assessments in order to provide evidence that both the examination itself and the linking to the CEF are sound. Suggestions and criteria are provided for adequate and credible validation appropriate for different contexts.

These procedures assure that the claims formulated through Specification and Standardisation (“test-under-construction”) can indeed be confirmed when the examination is administered in practice (“test-in-action”) and data on how persons belonging to the target population actually behave when the test is so administered becomes available.

Relating examinations to the CEF can best be seen as a process of "building an argument" based on a theoretical rationale. As noted above, the central concept within this process is "validity".

Evidently it is first necessary to ensure **Familiarisation** with the CEF (Chapter 3) before linking can effectively be undertaken.

Then before an examination can be linked to an external framework like the CEF (external validity), it must demonstrate the validity of the construct, and the consistency and stability of the examination (internal validity). To prove internal and external validity, quantitative and qualitative methods can be combined. **Specification** (Chapter 4) can be seen as a qualitative method: providing evidence through "content-based arguments". The actions which result in filling in the forms A1 and A3-A7 in Chapter 4 focus on the *internal* validity of the examinations. The forms A2 and A8-A20 focus on the *external* validity. There are also quantitative methods for content validation but this Manual does not require their use.

**Standardisation** (Chapter 5) involves both qualitative and simple quantitative procedures - through training and comparison with calibrated test samples and performances - to prove external validity. While the activities are mainly qualitative in orientation, quantitative evidence of the degree of success in the standardisation of judgements is also required.

Finally, **Empirical Validation** (Chapter 6) uses quantitative procedures based on data collection and analysis to demonstrate firstly "internal validity" and secondly "external validity". Chapter 6 demonstrates that proper empirical validation requires considerable psychometric know-how, just as test construction does. If such experience is not available to the examination provider, it is recommended that they arrange sufficient training or obtain the services of a qualified psychometrician.

The approach adopted in this process is an inclusive one. The recommended procedures in each of the chapters mentioned above encourage alignment of examinations to the CEF with differing degrees of rigour appropriate to different testing contexts. The Manual aims to encourage the application of principles of best practice even in situations in which modest resources and expertise are available. First steps may be modest, but the aim is to help examination providers to work within a structure, so that later work can build on what has been done before, and a common structure may offer the possibility for institutions to more easily pool efforts in certain areas.

The recommended techniques are organised in a logical order in such a way that all users will be able to follow the same broad approach. Users are encouraged to start with Familiarisation and are guided through the options offered by the techniques for each of Specification, Standardisation and Empirical Validity. They are asked to identify, from the range of techniques and options offered and similar techniques in the literature, those most appropriate and feasible for their context.

It is the intention of the Languages Policy Division that this Manual for Examination Providers should be followed by an adapted version, following the same structure, which will be suitable for other partners in the language teaching profession, for example members of the European Language Portfolio network, course organisers and individual teachers.

Not all examination providers may consider they can undertake studies in all of the areas outlined above. Some institutions in "low-stakes" contexts may decide to concentrate on Specification and Standardisation, and may not be able to take the process to its logical conclusion of full-scale Empirical Validation as outlined in internationally recognised codes and standards for testing and measurement. However, it is highly recommended that even less well-resourced examination providers should select techniques from all areas. The linking of a qualification to the CEF will be far stronger if the claims based on test specifications and their content are supported by both standardisation of judgements and empirical validation of test data. Every examination provider - even examination providers who have only limited resources or countries that have decentralised traditions - should be able to demonstrate in one way or another through a selection of techniques both the

internal quality and validity of their examination and its external validity: the validity of the claimed relationship to the CEF.

The different elements in the linking scheme outlined above are shown in Figure 1.1.

## **The Need for a Manual**

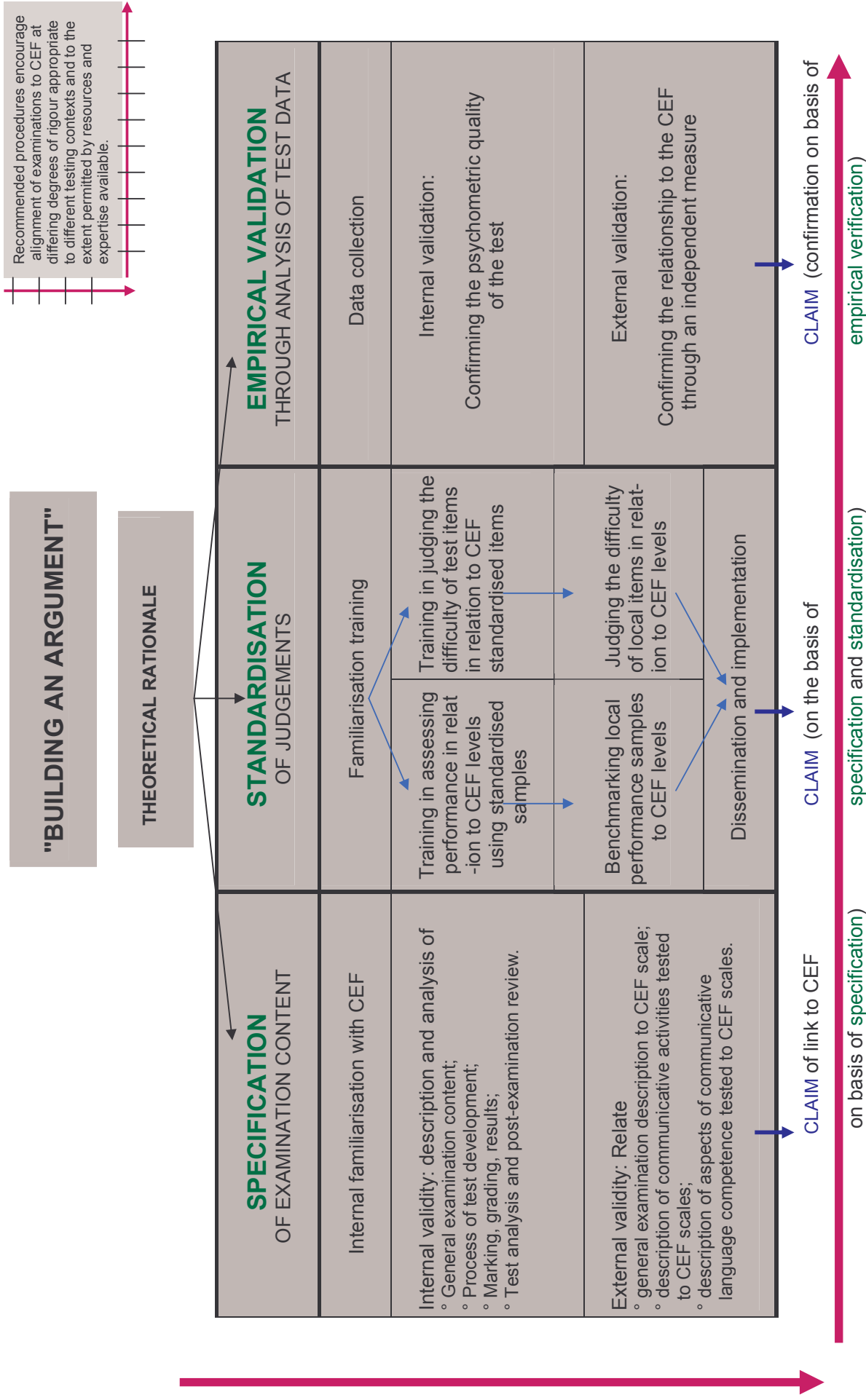
Since the Symposium in Rüschtikon, in 1991, which launched the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEF)* and the *European Language Portfolio (ELP)*, there has been more and more demand for coherence and transparency in language certification from member states. Both the CEF and the ELP have helped a great deal in this direction. The CEF has already been translated into sixteen languages and other translations are in preparation. Almost all member states have developed and implemented ELP models. The European Union has invited member states to set up systems of validation of language competence based on the CEF levels (in its resolution on Linguistic Diversity and Language Learning). The DIALANG project took the CEF as its starting point. The Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) has also adopted the six level scale of the Council of Europe.

The *Common European Framework* is therefore increasingly referred to as the obvious basis for the mutual recognition of language qualifications in Europe. It is already serving this function in the European Language Portfolio context. The portfolio is a *new* educational tool and it has been developed through intensive and extensive international cooperation. Thus the conditions for its implementation in a sufficiently uniform manner are relatively good, even if there have been and are a variety of constraints impacting the portfolio project. By contrast the mutual recognition of language qualifications awarded by all relevant bodies is a much more complicated matter.

The language assessment profession in Europe has very different traditions. At the one extreme there are examination providers who operate in the classical tradition of yearly examinations set by a board of experts and marked in relation to an intuitive understanding of the required standard. There are many contexts in which the examination or test leading to a significant qualification is set by the teacher or school staff rather than an external body, usually but not always under the supervision of a visiting expert. Then again there are many examinations that focus on the operationalisation of task specifications, with written criteria, marking schemes and examiner training to aid consistency, sometimes including and sometimes excluding some form of pre-testing or empirical validation. Finally, at the other extreme, there are highly centralised systems in which primarily selected-response items measuring receptive skills drawn from item banks, sometimes supplemented by a productive (usually written) task, are used to determine competence and award qualifications. National policies, traditions and evaluation cultures as well as the policies, cultures and legitimate interests of language testing and examination bodies are factors that can constrain the common interest of mutual recognition of qualifications. However it is in everybody's best interests that good practices are applied in testing.

Apart from the question of tradition, there is the question of competence and resources. Well-established institutions have, or can be expected to have, both the material and human resources to be able to develop and apply procedures reflecting best practice and to have proper training, quality assurance and control systems. There is perhaps a tendency for more such resources to be made available in relation to "high stakes" testing by national authorities, which determine eligibility for important qualifications. In some contexts there is less experience and a less-informed assessment culture. There may be only limited familiarity with the networking and assessor-training techniques associated with standards-oriented educational assessment, which are a prerequisite for consistent performance assessment. On the other hand there may be only limited familiarity with the qualitative and psychometric approaches that are a pre-requisite for adequate test validation. Above all there may be only limited familiarity with techniques for linking assessments, since most assessment communities are accustomed to working in isolation.

FIGURE 1.1: VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF PROCEDURES TO RELATE EXAMINATIONS TO THE CEF



Therefore it is not surprising that following the publication of the CEF, there have been calls on several occasions for the Council of Europe to take a more active role in assisting examination providers in their efforts to situate their examinations within the Common European Framework, and in validating – in one form or another – language examinations that claim such linkage. It is in the interest of language examination providers to overcome difficulties in establishing valid and reliable links between the results of their systems and the levels of the CEF in order to make these links transparent to users of their language examinations.

This manual is the response by the Council of Europe to the need for guidance to assist examination providers to relate their examinations to the CEF. The first step in this process was at the initiative of the Finnish authorities, who hosted a Seminar in Helsinki from 30th June to 2nd July 2002 entitled “Relating Language Examinations to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEF).” Following this meeting, for which the report is available as DG IV/EDU/LANG (2002) 15, a group of five authors were delegated the task of producing a first version of the Manual. They have been supported by a “sounding board” of consultants drawn from participants at the Helsinki Seminar plus consultation of other experts and institutions in the field.

## **Using the Manual**

The Manual is not a linear sequence of steps to be followed mechanically. It is a principled set of procedures and techniques that is provided to support interested parties in what is a technically complicated and demanding process. Informed judgement is called for at several stages of the process. The responsibility for designing a coherent and appropriate linking process lies with the examination provider concerned. This responsibility involves:

- reflection on the needs, resources, expertise and priorities in the context concerned;
- selection of appropriate procedures from those explained – or others reported in the literature;
- realistic project planning in a modular, staged approach that will ensure results;
- collaboration and networking with colleagues in other sectors and countries;
- coordination of the participants in the local linking process;
- thoughtful application of the procedures;
- reliable recording of results;
- accurate reporting of conclusions.

The Manual is a contribution to the cooperative endeavour of improving the transparency of and comparability between language qualifications in Europe. It is one of a number of steps being taken in this direction at the current time. This first version is a pilot edition. The experience of the application of the Manual in practice will furnish feedback for further improvement plus documented case studies that will be added in an appendix to the second edition.

## **Outline of the Linking Scheme**

The procedures recommended for relating language examinations to the CEF are divided into the areas of Specification, Standardisation and Empirical Validation. Specification and Standardisation each start with Familiarisation. In the same way that there is a logic to the order in which these areas are presented, there is also in many cases a certain developmental logic to the order in which techniques are presented under these headings. Recommendations are made regarding this.

### **A: Specification**

Specification involves mapping the coverage of the examination in relation to the categories and levels of the CEF. The CEF provides a comprehensive set of levels and categories that can be used to describe the content of the examination. The objectives and content of the examination and related documentation are described through the completion of checklists and through accompanying explanations.

## **Familiarisation with the CEF**

Before embarking upon the description of the examination, and the profile of its coverage in relation to the CEF categories and levels, it is necessary that the team involved should familiarise themselves with the CEF. The following steps, described in more detail in Chapter 3, may be found useful in this process:

- a) Consideration of a selection of the question boxes printed at the end of relevant sections of CEF Chapters;
- b) Discussion of the CEF levels as a whole;
- c) Self-assessment of own language level in a foreign language;
- d) Sorting individual CEF descriptors into levels.

If a translation of the CEF descriptors or CEF as a whole is being undertaken prior to the linking project, then the techniques described above are among those that can be used to check that translations do in fact reflect the original descriptors in terms of their levels.

## **Description of Content**

The Specification process requires two separate forms of description:

- firstly a description of the examination in question in its own right;
- secondly, a content analysis of the examination profiled in relation to the categories and levels of the CEF.

**Description:** The description should include: the objectives of the examination, the needs of the learner population for whom it is intended, the examination papers and sections, weighting and reasons for that weighting, text and task/item types, marking criteria, including a detailed scoring scheme with examples of possible answers, and form of reporting results to the learner. This description may state how objectives, content and weighting are reviewed periodically.

**Content Analysis:** The analysis takes as its main reference point the CEF itself. Supplementary reference points are provided by the series of content specifications related to the CEF, which have been developed in association with the Council of Europe; for English: A1: Breakthrough<sup>1</sup>; A2: Waystage<sup>2</sup>; B1: Threshold Level<sup>3</sup>; B2: Vantage Level<sup>4</sup>; for German: Profile Deutsch<sup>5</sup>; for French: Un référentiel pour le français<sup>6</sup>. In addition to a general overview the content analysis should also contain a detailed description of the way in which tasks for each skill and marking criteria for productive skills are related to the CEF descriptors.

Should the examination cover any areas that are not covered, or are only partly covered by the CEF, this should be pointed out.

## **Outcome:**

The outcome of the **Specification** is a claim relating the examination to the CEF on the basis of its content and coverage. This outcome takes the form of:

- A chart profiling coverage graphically in terms of levels and categories of the CEF.
- The Specification section of the report for language professionals including a narrative description and completed versions of the relevant forms provided.

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<sup>1</sup> Breakthrough: to be published

<sup>2</sup> van EK, J.A; Trim, J.L.M., (2001), Waystage, Cambridge, CUP, ISBN 0-521-56707-6

<sup>3</sup> van EK, J.A; Trim, J.L.M., (2001) Threshold 1990, Cambridge, CUP, ISBN 0-521-56707-8

<sup>4</sup> van EK, J.A; Trim, J.L.M., (2001) Vantage, Cambridge, CUP, ISBN 0-521-56705-X

<sup>5</sup> Glaboniat, M.; Müller, M.; Schmitz, H.; Rusch, P.; Wertenschlag, L., (2002), Profile Deutsch, Berlin, Langenscheidt, ISBN 3-468-49463-7.

<sup>6</sup> Forthcoming French initiative similar to Profile Deutsch.

If a translation of the CEF descriptors was undertaken prior to the linking project, then evidence of the equivalence of those translations to the original descriptors should be provided in. The evidence might come from sorting tasks carried out in workshops (CEF Appendix A Method No 9) or from back translation.

## **B: Standardisation**

Standardisation involves achieving and implementing a common understanding of the meaning of the CEF levels. It is vital that this understanding is itself linked to the interpretation of language professionals in other sectors, regions and countries. In practice, this involves validating the judgements of experts involved in the linking project.

Rater training and moderating techniques exploiting standardised CEF exemplars are outlined:

- (a) to train language professionals in a common interpretation of the CEF levels;
- (b) to develop local exemplars for both learner performances and for test tasks at different levels.

Both the standardised CEF exemplars and the local exemplars above can then be used together in the target context for further standardisation training for local examiners and teachers.

In the detailed guidelines in Chapter 5, a range of standardisation techniques listed are explained, with information about the time and resources required.

The first step in standardisation involves the definition of project structure and personnel roles, objectives, phases, procedures and products. In this process, a distinction will need to be made between (a) procedures in relation to interactive and productive skills that are rated by examiners, and (b) procedures for the receptive skills plus aspects of learner competences that are assessed through test items.

In this process, if it is feasible in the context, it is recommended that examination providers start with the productive and interactive skills, since performance in interaction and production tasks can be directly compared to CEF standardised performance samples and directly rated in relation to CEF descriptors. This is logical since it ensures that, early in the linking process, the learner population can be benchmarked to the Common Reference Levels, and the persons involved in the process can confirm their interpretation of the Common Reference Levels.

The Standardisation process should therefore follow a logical sequence from **Familiarisation**, through **Training**, to **Benchmarking** of local performance samples and **Standard-setting** for local tests.

### **Familiarisation**

Whether working with performance samples or with test items, however, it is essential to start with familiarisation exercises, as advised for Specification above:

- a) Consideration of a selection of the question boxes printed at the end of relevant sections of CEF Chapters;
- b) Discussion of the CEF levels as a whole;
- c) Self-assessment of own language level in a foreign language;
- d) Sorting individual CEF descriptors into levels.

### **Training with Standardised Samples of Performance for Productive Skills:**

- Training with CEF standardised samples of Spoken Interaction and Production (videos<sup>7</sup>) and / or Written Interaction and Production (scripts: to be produced<sup>8</sup>).
- Discussion of learners' levels in relation to the assessment grid for spoken performance (CEF Table 3 / Table 5.5<sup>9</sup>) and written performance (Table 5.8)
- Individual rating followed by discussion of spread and iteration until suitable agreement reached.

### **Training with Standardised Test Tasks for Receptive Skills and Linguistic Competences:**

- Training with model items which operationalise a CEF descriptor and which are shown through data analysis to be accurately targeted at the level concerned.<sup>10</sup> Discussion of characteristics of such items for relevant CEF levels.
- Discussion of the levels of texts and tasks in “prototype” items operationalising CEF descriptors. Discussion of the range of difficulty – across levels – of such prototype items and reasons for it.

### **Benchmarking Local Samples of Performance:**

- Rating local samples, using the same rating instruments (Spoken: CEF Table 3 /Manual Table 5.5; Written: Table 5.8) through individual rating followed by discussion or collation.
- Discussion of spread and iteration until suitable agreement is reached. Statistical analysis of ratings, for example, given sufficient data, with the multi-faceted Rasch IRT model. This model identifies inconsistent rater behaviour and adjusts ratings for severity/lenience.

### **Standard-setting for Receptive Skills and Linguistic Competences:**

- Identifying local items operationalising the CEF level concerned, which can serve as prototypes;
- Individual rating of items followed by discussion;
- Discussion of spread and iteration until suitable agreement is reached;
- Provisional prediction of the difficulty of items;
- Feedback on actual difficulty from piloting;
- Discussion of characteristics of misplaced items (identification of distracting/mis-targeted elements);
- Discussion of characteristics of model items;
- Confirmation of model items, and their difficulty level.

### **Outcome:**

The outcome of **Standardisation** is a reinforcement of the claim made on the basis of **Specification** with exemplification and documented results.

This outcome takes the form of the Standardisation section of the report for language professionals. This report appends examples of tasks and task-templates, local samples of spoken and written performance, and of procedures for marking and rating. The report should demonstrate with these examples how CEF standardised performance samples were exploited to benchmark local samples to the CEF and set up moderating systems.

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<sup>7</sup> CEF standardised samples of spoken production and interaction. A video showing calibrated English performances of adult Swiss learners is available from the Languages Policy Division.

<sup>8</sup> CEF standardised samples of written production and interaction. Work in progress in collaboration with examination and course providers.

<sup>9</sup> Table 3: Common Reference Levels: Qualitative aspects of spoken language use.

<sup>10</sup> The Dutch government is launching an international project later in 2003 to develop an itembank of items for one skill which are calibrated to the CEF. These items could then be used to help guide judgements in standard-setting and to anchor tests to a CEF scale.

## **C: Empirical Validation**

Empirical Validation involves the collection and analysis of data on (a) task performance and item characteristics, (b) test quality, (c) learner performance and test scores, (d) rater behaviour and (e) the adequacy of standards set. This may be limited or quite extensive, depending on the type of educational and assessment context concerned, and on the resources available.

Empirical Validation will probably proceed on two levels, though work may be carried out simultaneously:

### **Internal Validation**

Establishing the quality of the examination in its own terms is in practice a prerequisite to effective linking. Do the items perform as they should? Is the scoring appropriate? Are different forms of the test(s) equivalent?

- a) Pre-testing items and piloting tests in order to remove/amend sub-standard items, to improve predictions of item difficulty and the scoring scheme, and to analyse the quality and characteristics of the test(s) as a whole.
- b) Confirmation that the items have good item characteristics and appropriate difficulty values.
- c) Confirmation that the examination tests what it claims to.
- d) Calibrating the items/tasks in the test(s) in order to provide successive/ parallel forms of the test(s) (equation).

### **External Validation**

An independent corroboration of the standards set in the examination can be arrived at in two principal ways: by using an anchor test, or by using judgements of teachers well trained in the CEF – through following Familiarisation and Standardisation procedures. The following suggestions are in an approximate order of complexity in terms of project design and data analysis.

- a) Correlating test results to tests that have already been calibrated in a valid and reliable fashion to the CEF and using regression to relate test scores to CEF levels.
- b) Correlating as above and then using the criterion test as an “anchor” in order to calibrate the test under study, and its tasks and items, to the scale used by the criterion – and hence to the CEF levels.
- c) Correlating teacher ratings in relation to “Can-Do descriptors” that have already been calibrated in a valid and reliable fashion to the CEF and using regression to relate test scores to CEF levels.
- d) Correlating as above, but then using the scale values of the CEF descriptors as “anchors” to calibrate the test under study directly to the scale behind the CEF levels.

### **Outcome:**

The outcome of **Empirical Validation** is a varying degree of confirmation of the claim made from **Specification** and **Standardisation** on the basis of analysed test data. The degree of confirmation will depend upon the appropriateness, scope and quality of the work carried out.

The outcome takes the form of:

- Graphic representations of the nature and strength of the empirical relationship of the examination to the CEF. These follows a standard format.
- A descriptive report providing information about such relevant aspects as:
  - form of instruments
  - data collection design
  - number of subjects
  - analysis methods
  - problems encountered and solutions adopted
  - results obtained
  - interpretation of results

## Guidelines for Reporting Results

The issue of relating an examination to the CEF cannot be separated from the issue of reporting the content and style of the examination. Similarly reporting the relationship itself cannot be separated from reporting the process by which the relationship was established. This section therefore includes detailed instructions on how to produce the two reports:

- **Report for the broad audience:**

Predominantly from Specification, but with adequate indication of the extent and findings of Standardisation and Empirical Validation. This report is very brief, following the standard format supplied in the Appendix. Holders of *European Language Portfolios* will be recommended to include in their Dossier a copy of this report for the examinations they have taken. It is hoped that it will at some point be possible to make these reports available as downloads from the Council of Europe Languages Policy Division's website, as a recognition of the authenticity of the linking.

- **Report for professionals:**

A summary of the outcomes of the procedures undertaken in Specification, Standardisation and Empirical Validation.

The report starts with graphic representation of:

- CEF Level at which the examination is situated;
- Content tested, profiled in relation to CEF categories and levels. What CEF categories are tested? Is the CEF level required the same for all categories, or is the standard for some categories higher than for other categories? Some examinations aim to test an equivalent proficiency level in different skills. Others seek to encourage a greater level of proficiency in certain skills (e.g. receptive skills) or allow a lower level of proficiency in other skills (e.g. written production). Such characteristics should appear clearly from the graphic profile.
- Graphic overview of the procedures followed, indicating the state of completion of the process (best practice / good practice / room for improvement);
- Strength of correlation to the external criterion used to corroborate the relationship to the CEF;
- Strength of classification into CEF levels.

The last two graphics are preferably provided for each subtest.

The main body of the report provides details of the steps undertaken, as outlined under "Outcomes" in the overview of the linking scheme given above. The reports on Specification and Standardisation should include the standard forms given in Chapters 4 and 5. These forms should be completed by a narrative written in a style accessible to the broader language teaching profession in addition to language testers. The report on Empirical Validation should provide sufficient information and references to enable a critical analysis of the procedures and methodologies used. Again, it is hoped that it will at some point be possible to make these reports available as downloads.

## Case Studies

The preliminary piloting is taking place in the academic year 2003 – 2004. The outcome will be a revised pilot edition published in late 2005 or early 2006. It is the intention that this second pilot edition will be accompanied by standardisation exemplars (performances samples and test items) that are representative of the main educational sectors for what it is hoped will be a relatively wide range of languages. The extent of the breadth of standardisation materials that will be circulated with the second pilot edition will to a large extent depend upon the involvement of member states and examination providers in this preliminary pilot.

The Language Policy Division and its Authoring Group are therefore grateful for any offers of cooperation in what is an ambitious endeavour, but one that could make a significant contribution to

the promotion of transparency and coherence with regard to language learning levels, objectives and assessment in Europe.

Involvement can be at three levels of commitment:

- **Feedback** on the pilot edition as a document. Standard questionnaires and forms are available on the CoE website [www.coe.int/portfolio](http://www.coe.int/portfolio).
- **Piloting** of all of the stages of the linking process or of only part of them. Concrete suggestions for revisions arising from the experience would be very welcome in addition to the feedback mentioned above.
- **A Case Study** following and documenting the process of validating the linking of a particular language examination to the CEF. Case Studies will provide the standardised exemplars for successive editions of the Manual, as well as examples of completed forms for the main text. Case Studies will undergo a peer review process, with a selection being published with the second pilot edition in a complementary ISBN volume.

The Manual and all forms included in the Manual are available electronically from the website [www.coe.int/lang](http://www.coe.int/lang) Institutions wishing to become involved at any level of co-operation should consult the document 'Guidance for feedback, piloting and case studies' which is also available on the website. You are requested to register your intention to participate at one or more of the three levels described above using the electronic Registration Form provided.

For extra copies of the "Manual", please contact [johanna.panthier@coe.int](mailto:johanna.panthier@coe.int)

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