



United Nations  
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Cultural Organization



International Centre  
for Technical and Vocational  
Education and Training

## Large Scale Dissemination of Basic Skills to Use ICT (eInclusion), Romania

### PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

**Implementing Organization:** ECDL Romania SA  
**Funding Organizations:** Romanian Government, Ministry of Education, ATIC  
IT&C Association of Romania, private companies

### CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

The digital divide affects a large proportion of the world population. There is a clear need for an appropriate ICT Infrastructure, accessible and affordable Internet access, generalized ability to use IT, and availability of useful content. Many countries face shortages of eSkills and all types of ICT skills are in great demand. ICT User Skills Gap is directly related to eInclusion objectives. ECDL/ICDL (European/International Computer Driving License) programs are open to anyone who wishes to become fully competent in the use of a computer and common applications. These programs bring people to the improvement of their basic user eSkills but also offer them international recognized certification. ECDL ROMANIA is a successful example of actions and results to spread digital literacy and certify it by a program with international recognition by ECDL/ICDL ([www.ecdl.org](http://www.ecdl.org)).

### DESCRIPTION AND AIMS OF THE PROGRAMME

ECDL ROMANIA SA was established in 2002 and within a decade it succeeded in developing a wide network of over 700 test centres throughout Romania. The centres include educational institutions (universities, high-schools, and even secondary schools), training centers within the structures of public administration and centers for vocational training in all the cities of the country. A special emphasis was put on bringing eSkills to communities ("Training Without Boundaries" project) and helping young children, seniors ("Digital Literacy for Seniors"), and people with disabilities.

From its inception ECDL ROMANIA's mission was to improve the basic IT knowledge of computer users, to ensure a high level of competence in PC usage and to encourage the use of computers according to the EU recommended standards. Following on from the success of the initial roll-out, ECDL Romania plans to expand its social inclusion

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remit to provide ICT training and certification to other disadvantaged groups.

The programmes aim to:

- assure the opportunity of obtaining digital competencies for every citizen,
- decrease the number of people that do not possess efficient computer abilities
- ensure that ICT skills are incorporated in national education policies,
- promote digital literacy programs and developing Romanian education system,
- take special measures to ensure that marginalized groups such as the unemployed, older people, people with disabilities, and those in remote locations are empowered to participate in the Information Society,
- develop policies for improving ICT skills,
- use certification as a measureable outcome in the return on investment in digital skills programs.

The 'Training Without Boundaries' project formed part of the 'ECDL Values the Community' campaign through which, ECDL ROMANIA, supports programs for people with disabilities and vulnerable groups. The overarching aim of the project was to provide people with motor disabilities with the opportunity to acquire digital skills and competence to encourage their economic inclusion, by, for example, gaining access to the labor market, and promoting their social inclusion.

The general objective of the Digital Literacy for Seniors program is to ensure that marginalized groups such as the unemployed, older people, people with disabilities and those in remote locations are empowered to participate in the Information Society. The specific objective of the project is to train and certificate with no costs seniors through the ECDL EqualSkills program. ECDL EqualSkills is an introduction to computers and the Internet developed for those with no previous experience. It helps to remove the fear of using a computer for complete novices by using a simple, non-threatening approach to educating individuals in the basic skills of using a computer, email and the Internet.

## IMPLEMENTATION: APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES

The cooperation between the involved partners was a critical factor that allowed for the successful roll-out of the projects. The endorsement of the ECDL Program by the Education, Research and Innovation Ministry in Romania further underlined the importance and relevance of ECDL certification for social inclusion as well as education in general. This endorsement was an additional factor contributing to the successful implementation of the project.

### Funding

The projects are undertaken in close cooperation with stakeholders such as the Romanian Government, Ministry of Education, ATIC IT&C Association of Romania, private companies etc. in order to assure the opportunity of obtaining digital competencies for every citizen. ECDL ROMANIA and Romanian Ministry of Education have successfully collaborated to the development of the educational system in Romania ever since 2004 when ECDL ROMANIA signed an agreement with the Ministry, for free ECDL accreditation in 200 high schools in Romania. In 2011, ECDL ROMANIA renewed its partnerships with the Ministry of Education by signing a new agreement "Education for Information Society" agreement. Through this signed agreement, ECDL ROMANIA continues to accredit for free the schools in Romania and grants 10.000 ECDL certificates for students.

### Participants

A project targeted on 12,000 civil servants at central and local administrative levels in Romania. It was run in cooperation with Euroaptitudini SA, an existing ECDL Accredited Test Centre and implemented on a national scale, throughout the Romanian territory. The ECDL standard has also been successfully integrated in the educational system in Romania through various projects. Since 2009, the Baccalaureate in Romania includes a digital literacy examination. The ECDL standard was successfully integrated in the educational system in Romania also through another project by which all teachers who already have or are about to obtain the European Computer Driving License will benefit from grantable professional credits.

The 'Training Without Boundaries' project targeted to people with motor disabilities in Bucharest, between 24 and 43 years of age. It was implemented in partnership with the Semper Excelsius Association, the General Directorate for Social Security and Children Protection Sector 1, Euroaptitudini and

the Nicolae Iorga High School in Bucharest. Achieving internationally recognized certification of high quality and standards was a motivating factor for all participants. The Digital Literacy for Seniors program was launched into the context of the European Year for Active Ageing 2012 in April 2012. It intends to develop so that by the end of December 2012, 10 seniors in each sector of Bucharest to be ECDL EqualSkills trained. That means it aims a total number of 60 candidates.

### Learning and Training

Civil servants' training took place within the participants' own places of employment, or as close as possible to them. A total of 1287 public authorities were involved comprising 432 rural halls, 34 prefectures, 35 county councils, 151 City halls, and 635 local and central administration institutions. The project lasted 30 months in total. The main training delivery phase was carried out involving 168 ECDL trainers, who trained a total of 824 groups. Each group involved 10 to 15 candidates. The training courses followed the ECDL syllabus with 7 modules: Concepts of ICT, Using the Computers and Managing Files, Word Processing, Spreadsheets, Using Databases, Presentation, and Web Browsing and Communication. The training and testing took place in 20 pre-existing ECDL Accredited Test Centers and an additional 134 ECDL Test Centers that had been accredited specifically for the implementation of this project.

Given the motor disabilities of the target users, The 'Training Without Boundaries' project took place in accessible premises offering facilities accounting for such conditions. The first stage of the project started in March 2011 with a group of 7 persons with motor disabilities in Bucharest obtaining full ECDL certification. The ECDL trainer was a volunteer professor from the Nicolae Iorga High School in Bucharest and the ECDL materials, such as the manuals, were provided by the Euroaptitudini ECDL Accredited Test Centre. As the first stage was a great success, ECDL Romania decided to continue the collaboration into the next stage of the project by giving the opportunity to more people with disabilities to obtain the ECDL certificate.

During April – June 2012, The Digital Literacy for Seniors project took place in Senior Clubs. 10 persons in each sector took part for free on the ECDL EqualSkills program. The ECDL EqualSkills program will take place during 20 hours of training for each group. In the end, the candidates have the opportunity of obtaining the ECDL EqualSkills certificate.

### MONITORING AND EVALUATION

In order to assess the civil servants' varied levels of competence, a preliminary testing phase, consisting of an online questionnaire was conducted. The phase allowed the gathering of important information on the civil servants' actual computer operating knowledge and their separation into groups of competence levels: beginner, intermediate and advanced. The separation of participants into groups ensured the effective delivery of training services that met the participants' needs and expectations. Additionally, the project evaluated the actual impact of ECDL training and certification. Over 400 participants were tested before and after the training and testing phases in order to evaluate their improvements in computer use. The time required for completing the test was improved by 62 % and performance in completing the test was improved by 92 %. Efficiency in successfully completing the test was improved by 89%. User satisfaction with the project was significantly high and participants, after completing the training and testing phases, reported benefits such as less time spent in creating and managing documents, spread-sheets, databases, and presentations. Achieving an important and internationally-recognized certificate clearly added to the motivation and self-confidence of civil servants and resulted in enhanced communication between public administration institutions and citizens.

### IMPACT

ECDL/ICDL (European/International Computer Driving License) programs are open to anyone who wishes to become fully competent in the use of a computer and common applications. Over 12 million people in 148 countries already are included in the ECDL/ICDL programs. ECDL programs enable a person to become fully competent in the use of a computer, and can be adapted to account for local and regional needs. The key is that ECDL not only brings people to the improvement of their basic user eSkills, but offer them on international recognized certification.

ECDL ROMANIA has a constant active social presence through its projects that aim to improve digital inclusion and social development. Within a decade the ECDL Romania program succeeded in developing a wide network of over 700 test centers throughout Romania. There are over 200.000 Romanians that registered on the basic ICT skills program to date, bringing Romania in a leading position in Europe. The program is sustainable and its impact is bigger year by year. ECDL training and testing contributed significantly to the improvement of the civil servants' workflow with reported greater efficiency in task management and less time required in resolving administrative tasks. The 'Training Without



Boundaries' project was aimed primarily at increasing the employability of people with motor disabilities. By the end of the project, all candidates had succeeded in obtaining the full ECDL certificate and increased their employability opportunities. ECDL certification contributed significantly to raising the confidence of candidates with regard to their digital competence. The success of this project led to the decision by ECDL ROMANIA to continue the provision of the ECDL program to persons with disabilities.

### CONTACT

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