



Introduction

The materials made available on this CD are intended to facilitate the standardisation process for reading and listening described in Chapter 5 of the Preliminary Pilot Version of the Manual for Relating Language Examinations to the CEF developed by the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe (Strasbourg, France).

The activities described in the Standardisation phase of the Manual are expected to foster discussion amongst those professionals piloting the Preliminary Version during the training sessions and as a result to contribute to building a common understanding in order to

- relate locally relevant test items to the CEF levels
- gain insights into developing test items that can eventually claim to be related to the CEF levels

The CD-ROM will also be useful for those institutions and examination boards preparing Case Studies, which will follow and document the process of validating the linking of a particular language examination to the CEF levels. The feedback and materials resulting from the Piloting and the Case Studies will inform the main text of a revised version of the Manual, and provide standardised exemplar items to be included in a revised version of the CD.

The items and tasks contained in this CD-ROM have been kindly supplied by examination providers operating in different contexts and for different languages. They are established examination boards with a long history of national and international examination provision (Cambridge ESOL, Goethe Institute, WBT, TestDaF-Institut, CIEP, Università per Stranieri di Perugia), a recent EU-funded project with a pan-European perspective (Dialang), and a national examination system from a Ministry of Education (Finnish Matriculation Examination Board).

Each context has different objectives and follows different approaches, which illustrate a variety of quality testing practices in Europe. The providers of items and tasks on this CD-ROM have experience in relating their tests to the CEF. Some have aligned their levels to the CEF over time, while others, like Dialang, based their work *ab initio* on the CEF, and others are still finalising the process of formal linking to the CEF.

As items and tasks are context-related, and in order to maintain the identity of each set, they are presented separately, by institution and skill, each with introductory background information. All institutions were asked to describe their objectives and the context in which they operate, and to provide information on the test development process together with a description of how decisions on pass/fail grades are made and how standard setting is carried out.

To facilitate the use of the CD-ROM, the institutions characterised their items and tasks according to an agreed framework - the summary page of the Grid developed by the Dutch CEF Construct Project (the text of the Final report of this project is included in pdf format on this CD), in order to analyse texts, items and tasks in terms of the CEF descriptive scheme and levels. This standard characterisation of tasks and items will help users draw compari-

sons and highlight differences between the different testing systems. It was also agreed that item level statistical information would be provided, including facility values, discrimination indexes, reliability and – when relevant and available – cut-off points and theta values.

A careful analysis of the content of the different sections will reveal differences across institutions. Some have slightly adapted the Dutch CEF construct project grid to suit their own test specifications, some have provided additional statistics, and some have not provided all the statistical details. This is mainly due to the different progress made by different institutions in the linkage of examinations to the CEF levels, particularly when it comes to empirical validation of their linkage. Users of the CD may contact the institutions for clarification or further details, if necessary.

It must be stressed that the items in the CD-ROM should be considered to be a pilot in the same way as the Manual, and as part of a process which will feed into a new version of the Manual. Hence, the CD provides examples of reasonable practice and adequate items and tasks, which should not be considered prescriptive, or as the “only” possible approaches, but rather as examples of good and appropriate practice in linking exams to the CEF.

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