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The Luxembourg Institute of Science and Technology (LIST), the Fondation pour la Construction de l'Avenir du Luxembourg (FOCAL), Raiffeisen Bank and the Foyer Assurances today held a press conference to present the results of an original collaboration, which resulted in the development of a highly innovative tool for the skills' assessment market: FOCAL-SCAN.

A win-win partnership

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During the press conference, LIST, represented by Jean-Pol Michel, Lead Senior Transfer and Valorization Officer, and FOCAL, represented by its President, Raymond Schadeck, reiterated their desire to work together by signing a partnership convention.

"This partnership corresponds perfectly to FOCAL's mission statement", said Raymond Schadeck. "We hope to valorise the research results to the maximum by facilitating the implementation of proofs of concept. We have particularly appreciated this project as it should help us all to prepare for a fast-changing labour market".

For LIST, the partnership with FOCAL enables it to reinforce the transfer of its innovations to businesses. "Thanks to FOCAL, we have found partners interested in testing our tool in real-life conditions, in particular, Raiffeisen Bank. Furthermore, an external scientific council, that of FOCAL, has confirmed that there is a lot of interest in our innovation", stated Jean-Pol Michel. "Furthermore, we have received significant funding from the FOCAL Foundation and sponsoring from Raiffeisen Bank and the Foyer, enabling us to cover 50% of the total cost of this crucial demonstration phase in real-life conditions", he added.

Easier, faster and more economical assessments

The FOCAL-SCAN tool enables skills' assessment questionnaires to be generated from job descriptions (specific to the vocabulary of the business).

"FOCAL-SCAN adheres to a working world that is more and more competitive, where a nomad career (several employers during one's working life) has become the norm", highlights Alexandre Baudet, project leader of the project at LIST. It is crucial to have the tools necessary to easily and cost-effectively assess one's own or other people's skills. At the same time, among the existing types of skills' assessments, self-assessment is increasingly being considered an interesting alternative to formal tests. "Compared to formal tests, the FOCAL-SCAN assessments are easier to create, quicker to take and therefore more economical", added Alexandre Baudet. FOCAL-SCAN is not the only declarative self-assessment tool on the market but it is the only one to generate automatic assessments from specific job descriptions. "Furthermore", he concluded, "it was proven in a Phd. thesis and research project that FOCAL-SCAN is up to three times more accurate than other evaluation tools of the same type."

A response to concrete expectations

FOCAL-SCAN can be applied in numerous domains. It can be used to assess the skills to be acquired or acquired in a training session (training assessment), for assessment interviews in terms of career plans (career management), for looking for a new post (employment counselling), and also for pre-selecting candidates during recruitment.

During the press conference, the Employment Administration (ADEM), which is currently testing the tool, talked about how they used it. "For the moment, we have used FOCAL-SCAN on a limited sample of employment seekers. This sample has allowed us to

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obtain some preliminary results. However, in order to confirm them, further testing will be necessary and are currently being planned. With these first tests, ADEM will be able to better identify those persons which have an interest and the competences required for the retail sector, even if they don't have any previous experience", highlighted Armanda Hamtiaux, Head of the Personalized Approach for unemployed people project at the ADEM. Raiffeisen Bank has also tested the tool. "We agreed to test the FOCAL-SCAN tool as we thought it would be particularly interesting to compare an employee's self-assessment with his manager's assessment of them. This tool, which can contribute to the science of evaluation, could highlight the discrepancies between different people in order to better focus discussions in this context," said Emile Lutgen, Human Resources Director at Raiffeisen Bank.

"During this real-life conditions demonstration phase, it will be important to find manufacturers ready to take up the solution to exploit it commercially," highlighted Jean-Pol Michel and Raymond Schadeck. The two partners are confident. FOCAL-SCAN has a bright future ahead of it. Notice to interested industrial actors in this sector.

Photo (L-R): Guy Hoffmann (Banque Raiffeisen), Raymond Schadeck (FOCAL), Jean-Pol Michel (LIST), Sylvie Breyer (Foyer)

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