



Expanding Minds – Assessing Competence

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The twin technologies of Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) & Wall Probing Radar (WPR) enable the detection of buried material, either below ground or within built structures and are based on long standing scientific principles that are well understood at academic level. As a result of its lead in the development of firm standards for manufacturing and product supply; Europe has become a world focal point for GPR/WPR technology and commercial exploitation has flourished to such an extent that GPR/WPR is now used throughout Europe across diverse markets from civil engineering & construction, to traffic management, town planning and the maintenance of utilities. Other applications provide more societal benefit e.g. assisting forensic investigations; aiding health & safety and the reduction of workplace injuries; supporting environmental improvements by replacing intrusive works with non intrusive procedures; supporting heritage preservation through archaeological surveys; identifying water leakage from potable water distribution systems; the preservation of life through humanitarian/demining services and the search for new sources of water in drought areas.

For all these areas of endeavour however, the only vocational training available in the use of GPR/WPR is provided by manufacturers or suppliers in respect of the use of specific equipment; the focus being functional aspects of that specific equipment or, to the provision of specific services by the service providers to their own staff; the focus being the commercially deliverable aspects. In both instances this training has no recourse to common terminology, agreed physical principles, accepted parameters or technical limitations. This has led to wide ranging variations in the knowledge, skill and ability of operators and the issue of copious guidance documents for general and specific uses, from a wide variety of sources.

The lack of these common frames of reference means there is no solid basis for building recognised good practice and with no access to a relevant, common recognised assessment process there can be no common transferable skills. The only recognised qualifications available being academic ones, which are not generally applied or particularly relevant in a commercial environment. The industry is therefore unable to offer appealing career paths and employment opportunities in line with today's accepted practices.

This proposal is made to meet the immediate need for this situation to change; act as the catalyst for co-operation between all affected sectors of industry and commerce in COST countries, to develop a unified professional standards and training framework applicable to all areas of the technology's application. Thus ensuring vital services may always be delivered by: Professional companies; employing competent, trained staff; working to recognised and unified European standards. Interaction with members of Cost Action TU1208 and inclusion of the creation of a formalised training programme within Cost Action TU1208 in support of this is strongly welcomed.

EuroGPR is a not for profit Eurocentric organisation drawing its membership from a wide variety of manufacturers, service providers, institutions and non government organisations. It has strong links to existing standards institutions within Europe and worldwide links within industry and academia. It provides a neutral centre from which to set European wide standards towards which other interested parties may migrate without bias.