

Press release

REAL Alternatives e-learning course on track for 2015 launch following successful pilot testing

The piloting and testing of the REAL Alternatives e-learning course has been a critical stage in the development of this new multilingual blended learning approach designed to improve knowledge of alternatives to high GWP refrigerants. 63 individuals from 12 European countries took part in a pilot exercise in October representing a wide range of stakeholders – from technicians to manufacturers and trainers (see note 1). The general conclusion was that the e-learning will provide a much needed solution to skills shortages – particularly in view of the introduction of the new F Gas Regulation in 2015 and future restrictions on HFCs.

Those who took part in the piloting provided consistent answers and comments: with positive reactions to the approach and structure of the course, the range of refrigerants covered (Carbon Dioxide, Hydrocarbon, Ammonia, R32 and HFOs), and the user-friendliness of the e-learning design. On average they scored the materials “good to excellent” in a range of categories which included depth of knowledge, learning outcomes, coverage of principles, support information on regulations, ease of navigation, and assessment.

Several of the participants highlighted the valuable impact that the course will have on technicians and vocational training providers within the European Union and stated that the course will provide an essential reference for operators of refrigeration equipment.

A selection of comments from the trial are shown below:

“a useful tool to improve awareness of technicians on alternative refrigerants and also enhance their theoretical knowledge in preparation of a face-to-face and practical training “

“The e-learning program is really a very good base for the future and for a further development of the course.”

“A good point is that the new generation synthetics are covered, not only natural refrigerants. This makes the platform modern and independent, yet valuable to technicians - it shows that naturals are not the only way.”

“the E-learning platform will be a very important part of teaching, helpful and “natural” for young people.“

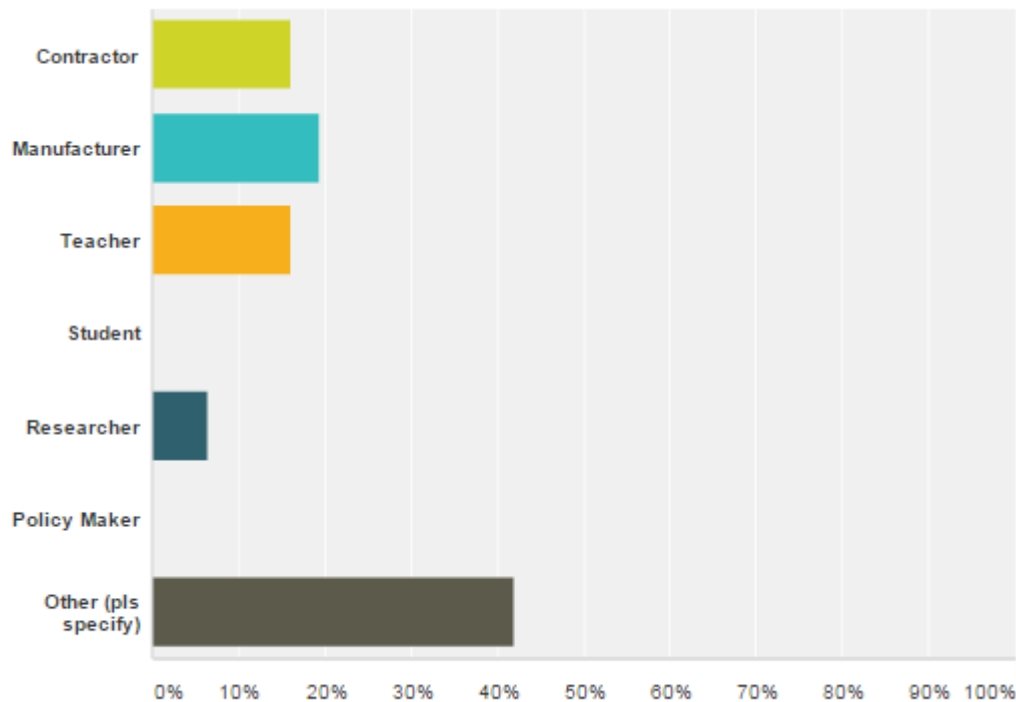
The project team, which includes educational institutions and bodies from the UK, Italy, Germany, Poland and Belgium and now incorporating the consolidated detailed feedback from the pilot into a final version of the programme which will be launched in Spring 2015.

The complete REAL Alternatives programme will take a blended learning approach and includes eight e-learning modules (detailed below Note 2), supplemented with learning booklets, interactive tools and spreadsheets. An e-library of user-generated industry information about alternative refrigerants is already available at <http://www.realalternatives.eu/e-library> and includes over 100 reference documents that will support the e-learning.

The project is co-funded by the EU LifeLong Learning Programme and project partners as below (Note 3).

Those interested in finding out more can register now at the website for updates www.realalternatives.eu

Note 1 –Participants in the REAL Alternatives Pilot and Trial October-December 2014



Others included Wholesalers, Suppliers and Association representatives.

Note 2 - The Real Alternative course is structured in eight Modules:

Modules 1-4 were tested as part of the trial process as being the most comprehensive and fundamental elements.

- Module 1 Introduction to Alternative Refrigerants.
- Module 2 Design Differences for Alternative Refrigerant Systems
- Module 3 Containment and Leak Detection for Alternative Refrigerants
- Module 4 Guidance on the Maintenance and Repair for Alternative Refrigerant Systems
- Module 5 Retrofitting systems with alternative refrigerants
- Module 6 Checklist of legal obligations for alternative refrigerants
- Module 7 Guide to financial, environment, safety and reliability costs
- Module 8 Tools and guidance on conducting site surveys

Note 3 – Project Partners

The two year project is led by a consortium of six partners from across Europe and is funded by the EU Lifelong Learning Programme. The consortium includes training and professional institutes as well as employer representative bodies. All partners in the REAL Alternatives consortium will contribute to each aspect of the programme with the following key areas of responsibility:

- Clarifying alternative refrigerant training needs and opportunities in Europe - London South Bank University, UK
- Developing a specification for the e-learning and reviewing resources currently available in Europe to support learning, London South Bank University, UK
- Developing e-learning process, integrating practical learning materials, resources and translation, Limburg Catholic University College (KHLim), Belgium
- Piloting and testing of materials with live audiences in five languages (English, Italian, German, Polish and Flemish) Associazione Tecnici del Freddo (ATF), Italy
- Monitoring the impact of the project and evaluating success, IKKE training centre Duisburg, Germany.
- Publicity, promotion, and stakeholder engagement, Association of European Refrigeration Air Conditioning and Heat Pump Contractors (AREA) & Institute of Refrigeration, UK
- Project Management, Institute of Refrigeration
- Identifying opportunities for long term sustainability of outputs, PROZON recycling programme, Poland