



# nZEB training in the Southern EU countries Maintaining building traditions

**SouthZEB**  
**WP4 – SouthZEB portal**  
**development**  
**D4.1: SouthZEB portal** – overview of  
the development of the portal and its  
sections, integration and user  
acceptance

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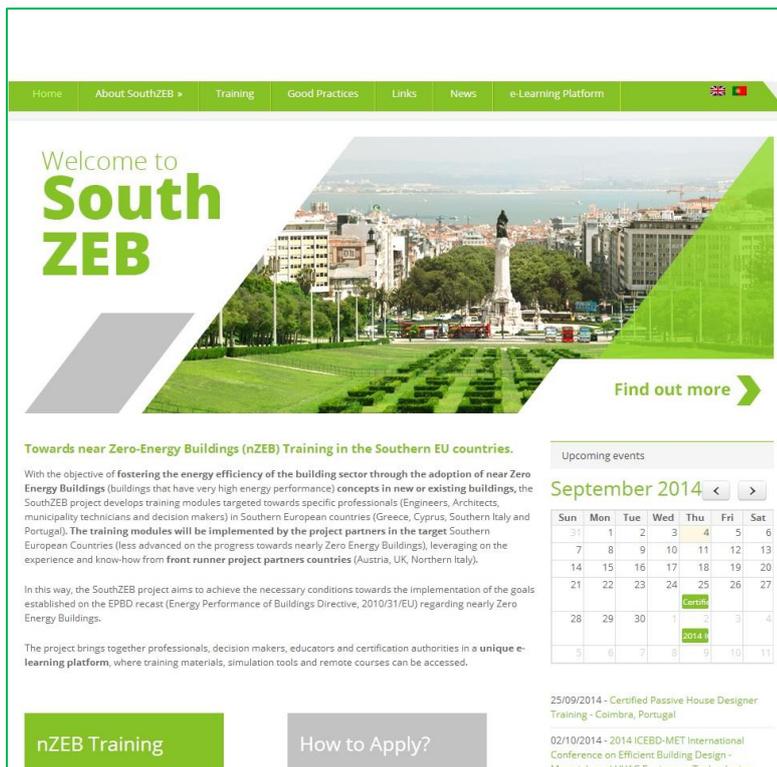
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## Executive Summary

The SouthZEB project has been structured into eight work packages and the Deliverable 4.1: *SouthZEB portal* is drafted and delivered in the framework of Work Package 4: *SouthZEB portal development*.

The objective of this report is to present a description of the portal and its sections present, as well as to describe the findings from the System Integration Test and User Acceptance Tests, which were conducted by the WP4 lead partner, BEST, and in the framework of the 3<sup>rd</sup> design meetings, organised and hosted in the target countries of the SouthZEB project (Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Portugal). The objective of the tests was to make sure all sections, menus and options were working effectively, per user category, as those were defined in Deliverable 2.3: *Specification of requirements for the SouthZEB portal*. The platform is hosted and incorporated into the project website ([www.southzeb.eu](http://www.southzeb.eu)). A set of recommendations for the improvement of the platform is also available at the end of the report.



Picture 1- Screenshot of the SouthZEB home page

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## 1. Introduction

The overall objective of WP4 is the development of the SouthZEB portal and its content. As per the project design, the portal is expected to have various sections, containing project-related information, an e-learning platform, links and information on all available nZEB simulation tools and information material on EU-wide, national or other funding opportunities for nZEB. The specific tasks foreseen for the successful implementation of this Work Package are the following:

1. Second design meeting;
2. Development of the SouthZEB portal and its sections;
  - Development of the e-learning section;
  - Development of the nZEB simulation and design tools section;
  - Forum development;
  - Funding opportunities section development;
3. Development and update of the SouthZEB portal content;
4. Integration of the SouthZEB Portal and User Acceptance Testing;

The second design meeting took place in the first semester of 2015 and it aimed at presenting a variety of options to the members of the National Working Groups related to the portal which was due to be developed. The results of the 2<sup>nd</sup> design meeting were used as the basis for the next phase of the implementation of the WP and led to the development of the portal and its contents. They are analytically presented in the respective report, prepared by BEST, partner responsible for the overall monitoring and management of the specific Work Package.

This report aims at presenting the SouthZEB portal, the different sections and contents, as well as the results from the 3<sup>rd</sup> design meeting and the User Acceptance Test.

## 2. SoutZEB portal presentation

The SouthZEB Portal is connected to the project website, for the convenience of the users. A link is provided at the horizontal menu bar, at the top of the page. By pressing the button, the user is redirected to the homepage of the eLearning platform, which hosts also the other elements of the SouthZEB portal.

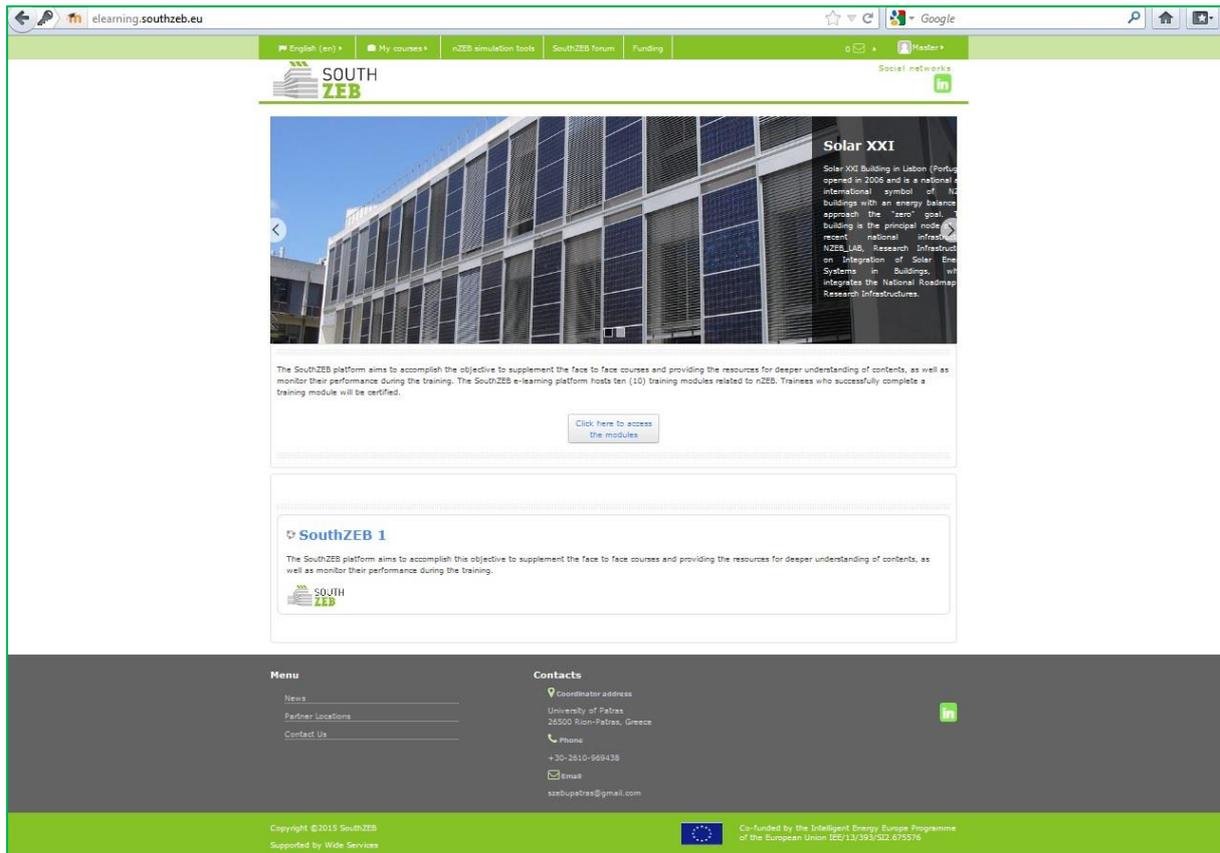


The screenshot shows the SouthZEB website home page. At the top left is the SouthZEB logo. To its right is a search bar with the placeholder text "Type your keywords..." and a "Search" button. Below the logo and search bar is a horizontal navigation menu with the following items: Home, About SouthZEB, Training, Good Practices, Links, News, and e-Learning Platform. To the right of the menu are flags for the United Kingdom, Greece, Portugal, and Italy. The main content area features a large graphic with the SouthZEB logo and the text "Applications are now open!" followed by a green bar and the text "APPLY NOW". Below this is a section titled "Towards near Zero-Energy Buildings (nZEB) Training in the Southern EU countries." which contains two paragraphs of text. To the right of the text is a calendar for September 2015, showing dates from 30 to 10, with the 29th highlighted as "2nd N".

Picture 2: Website home page

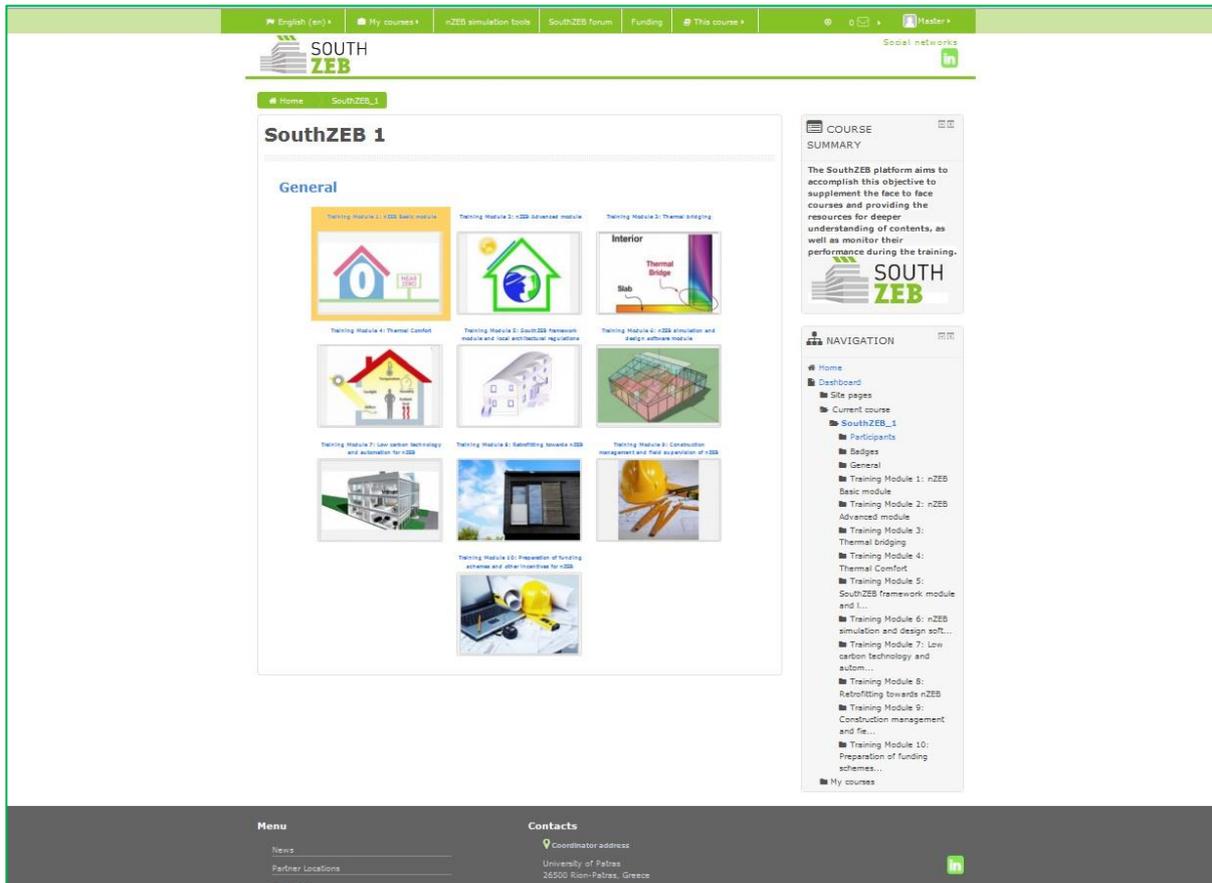


The users can register and/ or log on to the eLearning platform through the log on button, on the top right menu bar. Once logged on, the users have the possibility to access all sections of the platform, which leads them to the eLearning Platform home page, as shown in Picture 3.



Picture 3: eLearning platform home page.

The user can then access the section “My Courses” (Picture 4) which presents an overview of the 10 training modules available via the SouthZEB project. Moreover, the menu on the right hand side provides a quick access to the modules available, as well as the main menu of the portal.



Picture 4: SouthZEB eLearning platform: My Courses

When selecting a module, the user can find relevant information, such as its short description, the duration and target group (Picture 5), as well as the relevant training content (Picture 6).



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The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the SouthZEB e-learning portal. The URL is `elearning.southzeb.eu/mod/page/view.php?id=3`. The page title is "SouthZEB 1" and the content is titled "Duration and target audience". The main text states: "The duration of this module is estimated as 20 hours. The module will be addressed mainly to engineers and architects. Last modified: Monday, 6 July 2015, 7:58 PM". A navigation sidebar on the right lists various site pages and training modules. The footer contains a menu, contact details for the University of Patras, and copyright information for SouthZEB 2015.

Picture 5: Duration and target audience

The screenshot shows the cover page for "Training Module 1 Basic Module". It features the SouthZEB logo at the top left, the text "Towards Near Zero Energy Buildings on South European Countries", and the title "Training Module 1 Basic Module" in large green letters. Below the title, it says "Developed by the Cyprus University of Technology". The footer contains logos for partner organizations: AML, TECNICO, IABred Energy Institute, BEST, EUROTraining, bre, and habitech.

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portal development  
portal – overview of  
of the portal and its  
function and user





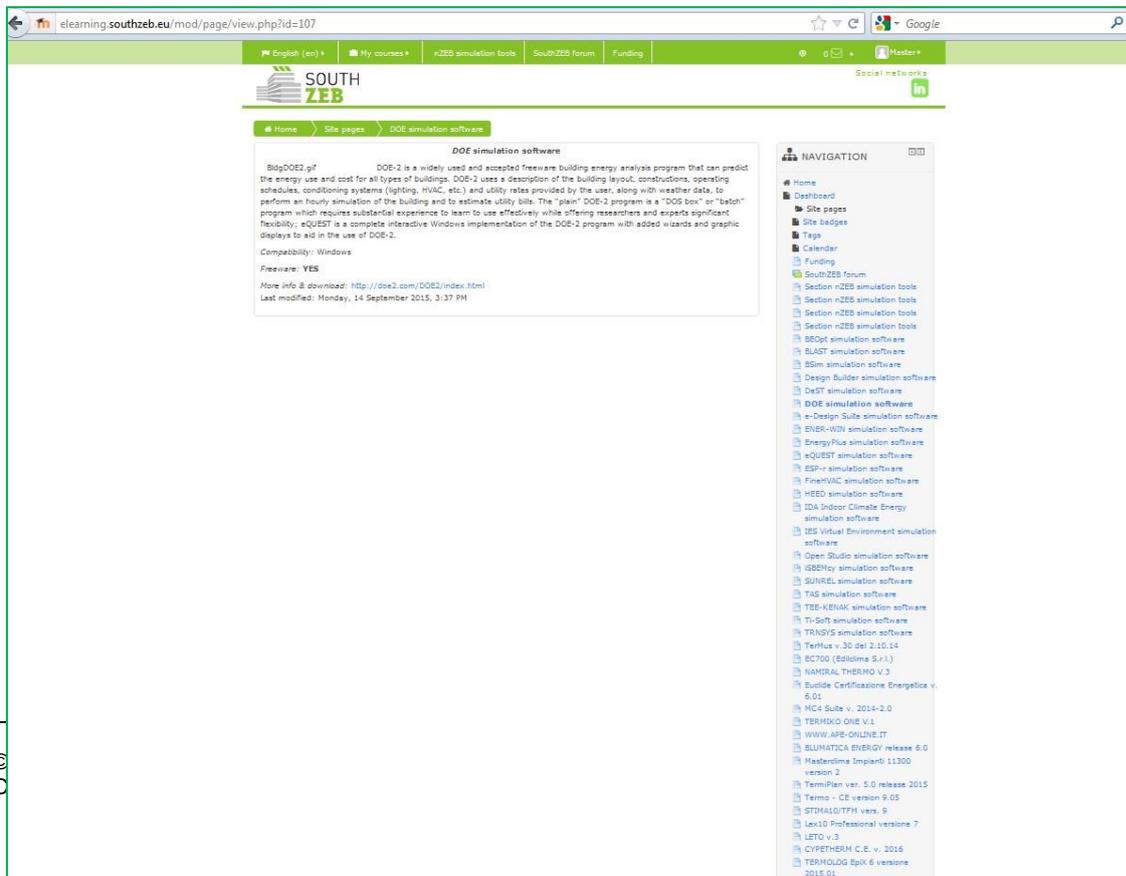
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Picture 7: nZEB simulation and design tools

The menu on the right hand side provides quick access to the tools presented, along with a short description and link (

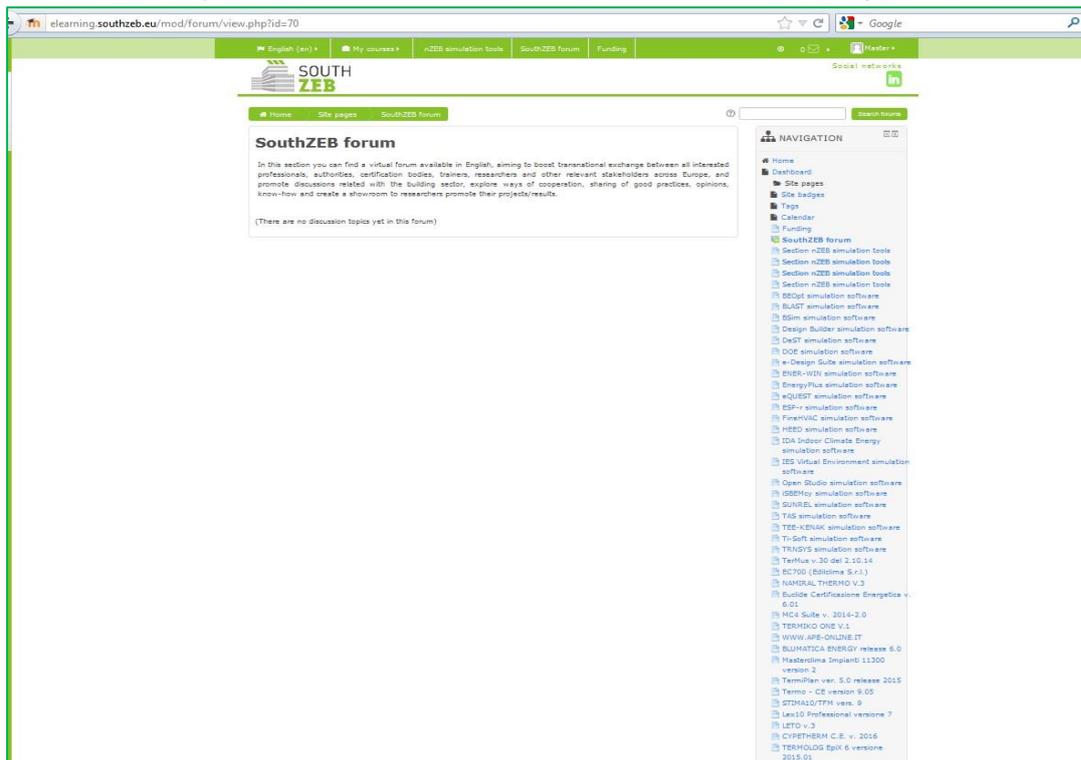
Picture 8 and 8).



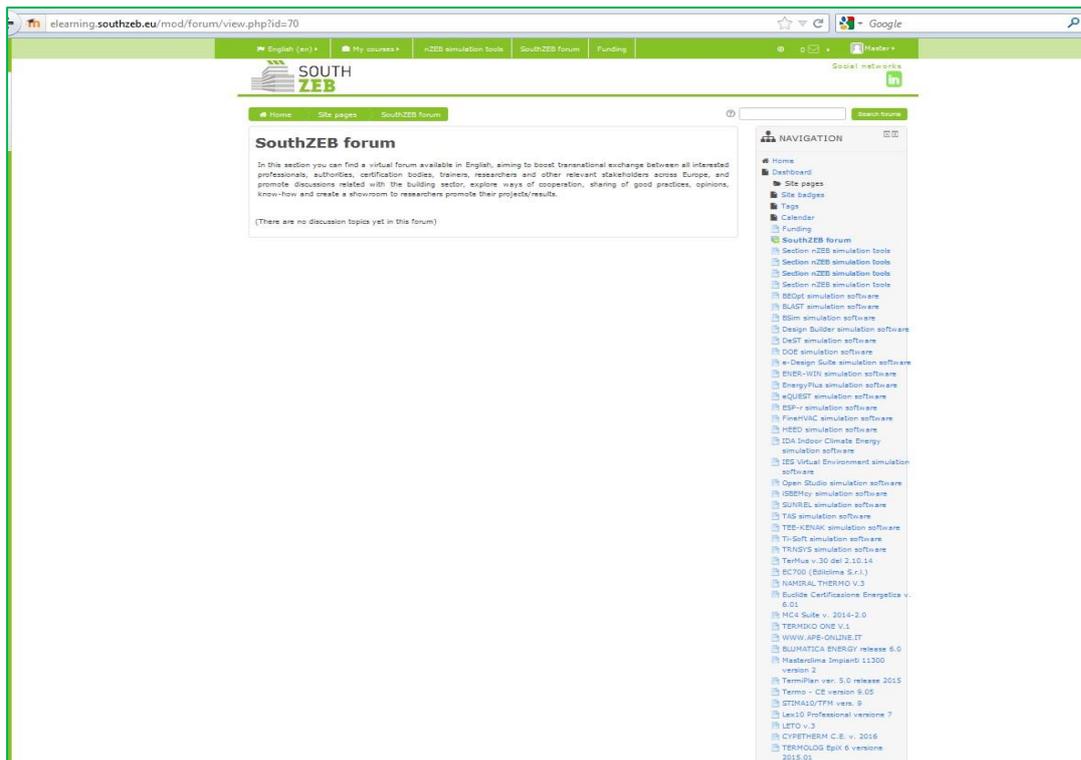
sections, integration and user acceptance

Picture 8: Example of a simulation and design tool

The section which follows is related to the forum, which is expected to be used as a means to interconnect the professionals for all nZEB issues within their own country, as well as at EU level (

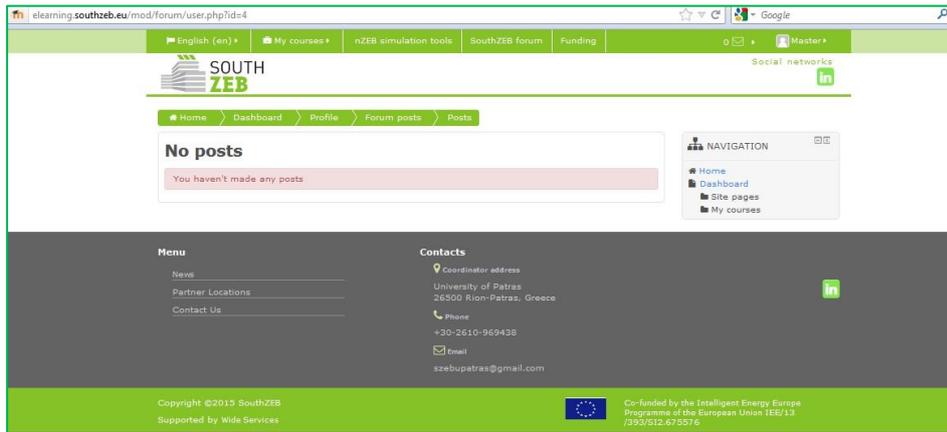


Picture 99).



Picture 9: Forum

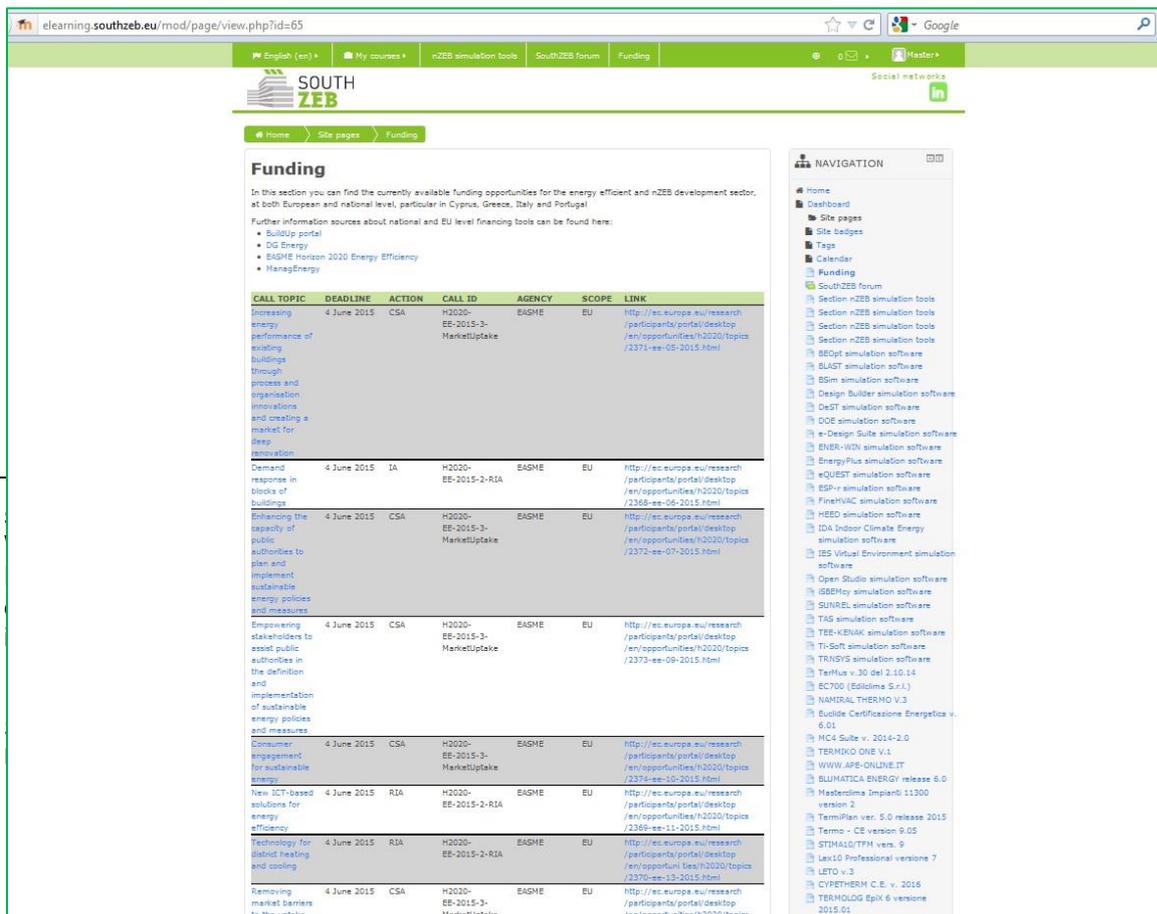
The users can get an overview of forum posts available, as well as the posts they have uploaded themselves, if any (Picture 10).



Picture 10: Forum posts

The funding section is the next important area of the platform, offering information on funding opportunities, including the topic, deadline, call identification, the funding agency, the geographical coverage and the relevant link to the call announcement (

Picture 11).



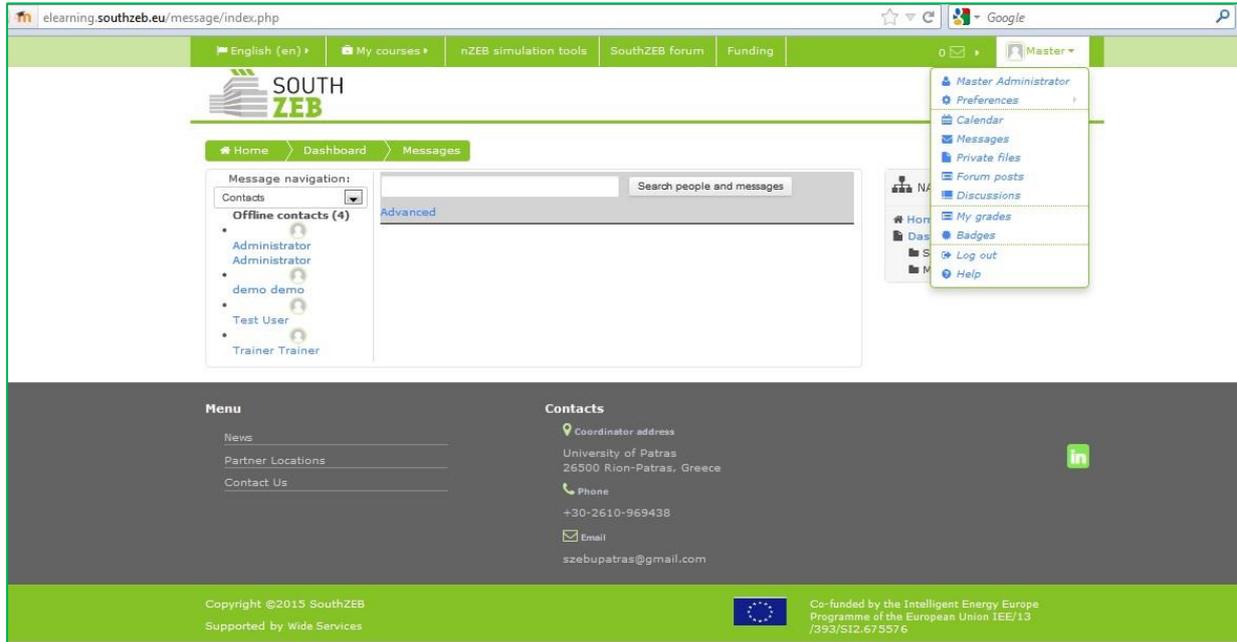


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#### Picture 11: Funding Opportunities

Besides attending a module, reading/ contributing to a forum post, getting information on nZEB simulation tools and funding, the users can edit/ modify their profile, send and receive messages, set their preferences, go through the calendar, view and manage their private files, etc., as it is illustrated in Picture 12.



Picture 12: List of options for the registered users



### **3. Procedure of updating the SouthZEB portal**

UMinho is the responsible partner for the update of the SouthZEB portal.

#### Training material

- A second and third rounds of collection of material will take place in December 2015 and April 2016;
- Feedback from the trainers collaborating in the training courses will also be collected in order to promote the actualization of the modules contents.

#### Software tools

- UMinho will keep in contact with all partners and especially with those responsible for the modules development, to assure a constant update of the modules content and last versions of related software tools;
- Feedback collection from trainers will be collected between December 2015 and April 2016.

#### Funding opportunities

- UMinho will coordinate with target countries and with BEST the way of collecting information regarding funding schemes;
- A second and third rounds of collection of material will take place in December 2015 and April 2016;
- In each partner country there must be a responsible for the collection of this information.

#### Partners at national level

- Verify and decide on the information, in national languages, that is relevant at national level. After agreement from UMinho it will be uploaded in the portal;
- If the information is relevant to other partners, the information or documents will be sent by UMinho to all partners to assess their opinion and decide on its relevance and possible upload in the portal.

#### Trainers

- Whenever appropriate, send a proposal of changes of the training modules or additional material to be included;
- UMinho will coordinate with the responsible of the modules development the way of updating the modules content.

#### 4. User Acceptance Test and Third Design Meeting

The purpose of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Design meeting, as per the Grant Agreement was to present the first operational version of the portal to the target groups and ask for their evaluation. In order for the meeting to take place UPATRAS had prepared a set of questionnaires which would be used during the 3<sup>rd</sup> design meeting in the target countries and which would facilitate the evaluation of the functionality and user-friendliness of the portal.

The questionnaires were targeted to address two important test categories: the Systems Integration Test (SIT) and the User Acceptance Test (UAT). The System Integration Test should be conducted by BEST, who is the responsible partner for the development of the SouthZEB portal and was scheduled to be conducted prior to the third Design meeting. The SIT should confirm the functionality of the portal and its sections and afterwards the third Design Meeting would be implemented, in which the UAT test would be performed by the focus group. The UAT test consisted of simple tests which were aimed at checking the SouthZEB portal and all of its functionalities, as well as the level of difficulty of each test, through which an indicator regarding the user-friendliness of the portal would occur. It is also noted that the UAT test was developed per user category. The user categories and their roles have been described in Deliverable D2.3 and are the following: student, teacher, national coordinator, administrator and master administrator. A UAT test is also planned to be implemented after the workshops, in order to evaluate once more the SouthZEB portal through multi-level users.

It should be highlighted that in Cyprus according to the partner responsible (CUT) it was not possible to gather the focus group for the evaluation of the portal either through email or via phone, since no response was received. Therefore, the results from CUT rely on the partner's internal team, who tested the portal according to the SIT test.

These tests as well as the procedure of testing were presented by the task leader partner, UPATRAS, during the Rovereto meeting and were commonly approved by all partners.

As planned, before the third design meeting, in June 2015 BEST carried out the SIT. The results from the test were not quite positive. In particular:

- The forum testing failed, through the account of the Master Administrator;



- The complaints and write complaint test failed through the account of Master Administrator;
- The test for accessing the material of the training modules was successful, but no other action was possible for the student category of users;
- Messages to teachers could only be sent as replies, not as new thread;
- The test to view / score / comment on the students' assignments/ replies to quizzes of the specific training module was not successful;
- Also, the following tests failed:
  - (As a teacher) Send message to the coordinator
  - Assign a quiz to one of your students
  - (As a National Coordinator ) View the progress of training modules of your country.
  - (As Administrator ) Read and reply to message sent by national coordinator.
  - (As Administrator ) Modify teachers' / students' credentials.
  - (As Administrator ) Modify input of teachers/ students in portal.
  - Print some of the material uploaded in portal
  - (As Administrator ) Create and extract report regarding progress in the training modules.
  - (As Administrator ) Backup the files uploaded.
  - (As Master Administrator) Edit administrator's credentials.
  - (As Master Administrator) Edit administrator's rights.

Some additional comments made in relation to the SIT were:

- The Master Administrator should be on top and be able to do all/ access all/ edit all;
- Contents and the other required parts need to be uploaded well before the organisation of the design meetings;
- The partners need to consider that the National Coordinator should be automatically enrolled to courses from own country, while Master Administrator and Administrator should be enrolled to all;
- Events (in calendar) from users should not be seen by others and no privacy settings were clearly visible to change this.
- From the majority of the users' profiles it was not possible to post anything on the Forum section.

Considering the results of the SIT, changes were made and the third design meetings organised (with the exception of Cyprus, as already mentioned). The summary of the findings presented below, have been received:

- From DTTN (for Italy): on the 31<sup>st</sup> of August 2015 and the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September 2015
- From KEK (for Greece): on the 11<sup>th</sup> of September 2015
- From IST-ID (for Portugal): on the 18<sup>th</sup> of September 2015
- From CUT (for Cyprus): on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September 2015

Assumptions		
	Section	Comment
1	SouthZEB portal	The access to the SouthZEB portal and to all menu and submenu categories (the ones available) was easily performed for all user categories.
2	“Forum” section	It was not possible for the majority of the user categories to edit a subject, thus the relevant tests were unsuccessful.
3	“nZEB simulation and design tools” section	The section was not accessible (in some tests it was recorded as empty, in others it was recorded as inaccessible), thus the relevant tests were unsuccessful.
4	“Funding opportunities” section	The expected outcome for the Student / Teacher / National Coordinator was achieved, but not for the Administrator and the Master Administrator, since they were not capable of modifying the data.
5	“Complaints” section	It was not possible to perform any of these tests, as the focus group members could not find them.
eLearning platform		
6	General comments	It was not possible to find the quizzes and all the relevant tests could not be executed by any user category.
	- Students	It was only possible to enter the section, access the material, edit own credentials and download the material. It was not possible (as it should) to modify the data in anyway. Likewise, it was not possible to monitor own performance, access the quizzes and send message to the teacher (the majority of the participants). The



	participants able to send a message mentioned the high difficulty of it.
- Teachers	In Italy and Greece all tests were unsuccessful. In Cyprus, the only successful test was editing of own credentials, whereas in Portugal it was possible to send a message to student / coordinator, view grades and edit own credentials.
- National Coordinator	It was possible to read/reply to a message from teacher and send message to administrator and to modify the information of training modules in own country. However, it should be stated that in Portugal and Italy it was recorded that the National Coordinator had administrator's privileges. In Portugal, it was stated that the National Coordinator could edit every page and the credentials of all user categories, even those of the Administrator's and Master Administrator's. Also, in Portugal it was stated that it was not possible to find the section with information on training modules of other countries. The view of progress has been recorded only in Italy.
- Administrator	It was possible only to read/reply to messages sent by the coordinator and download/print the material uploaded in the platform. In Italy it was also stated that it was possible to back up the files and create and extract a report regarding the progress in the training module. The rest of the tests were unsuccessful.
- Master Administrator	In Italy and Greece it was recorded that the tests were successful, however in Cyprus it was not possible to edit the administrator's rights.

### Additional Comments

<b>i</b>	A session for clarifying the tools, organisation of the platform and the grades and certification procedure should be developed. Also, instructions should be prepared for the enrolment procedure.
<b>ii</b>	The functionality and purpose of “flagging” some contents of the training modules should be clarified.
<b>iii</b>	Translation in local language was requested / proposed for several texts / sections of the SouthZEB portal in the majority of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Design meetings and improvements in translation have been provided for the Portuguese version of the platform.
<b>iv</b>	The title “SOUTHZEB 1” should be changed to “SOUTHZEB”.
<b>v</b>	Regarding the “Funding opportunities” section, proposals were made concerning mainly the format of it.
<b>vi</b>	The menu at the bottom of the website is not working (“News”, “Partner location”, “Contact us”)
<b>vii</b>	It was proposed to have a direct link for the SouthZEB application form. (Portugal)
<b>viii</b>	It was proposed the opening image and description to be of something related with the modules and the e-learning platform instead of the solar building example. (Portugal)
<b>ix</b>	The trainers and National Coordinators should not have badges and probably students should not be allowed to upload files. Also, the customization of the dashboard should not be available to students and should appear with all the relevant blocks at the beginning and should only be allowed to minimise them. (Portugal)
<b>x</b>	During the procedure of login as “Guest” nothing happens since the participants still have access to the same information they had before. There should be an alert saying that for now there is no information available if a user logs in as a “Guest”. (Portugal)
<b>xi</b>	In the creation of a new account there was an error in the “send an email of confirmation”: “Failed to send the email. Maybe due to an error in the SMTP server”. As a consequence, with this error it was impossible for the participants to proceed with the same “Username” and “Email”. There should be a “resend confirmation email” option. (Portugal) Also, in the registration page, the “CAPTCHA” is not placed correctly and is not well visible. (Cyprus)
<b>xii</b>	Format changes regarding the uniformity of the SouthZEB portal and the E-learning portal (Portugal).
<b>xiii</b>	Addition of a search button in SouthZEB portal (Portugal).
<b>xiv</b>	It is also recommended to allow the trainers to post at the forum and even trainees (appearing after teacher or national coordinator approval), both of them should have access to a table with all students’ grades and the teachers should be able to provide these grades to students and the trainer should be able to upload content to the respective module (Portugal).



**xv** The message button does not work properly and the location of the “Send message” button should be changed (Cyprus).

**xvi** It is not clear if the different user categories have different privileges (Cyprus).

Table 1: Summary of SIT, UAT and third design meeting proceedings

## 5. Recommendations

The SIT and UAT tests, along with the feedback received during the third design meeting indicate that the platform still needs to be fine-tuned and populated with content, in order to be functional for the smooth organisation and delivery of the trainings in the target countries. In particular, the following should be taken into consideration:

1. The Forum of the portal, which now appears to be unavailable;
2. The layout of the Funding Opportunities section;
3. Ensuring that the different users have the rights which should be attributed to them;
4. All links are functional and do not lead to errors or loops;
5. The “Guest” user should have limited access to the material and content of the platform;
6. Spelling and formatting changes should be carried out, for uniformity and improved user-friendliness.