



EQAVET

European Quality Assurance
in Vocational Education and Training

Supporting the implementation of the
European Quality Assurance Reference Framework
for Vocational Education and Training

EQAVET Working Group 1 on Developing guidelines to support the national implementation approaches for using the Reference Framework

Secretariat Report of the first meeting

17-18 June 2010

DG Education and Culture office

Room 25/046, Building MADO, Place Madou 1, BE-1210 Brussels

Participants

Dana Stroie (Chair and Steering Committee member), Keith Brumfitt (Expert), Michaela Jonach, Jan Meers, Jean-Pierre Malarme, Nicholas Andilios, Ana Gajzer, Eva Filipová, Marge Kroonmäe, Leena Koski, Thomas Gruber, Katalin Molnár-Stadler, Maurizio Mosca, Ruta Karvelyte, Siegfried Willems, Ellen Hanselman, Isilda Fernandes, Viorel Tiganescu, Simona Knavs, Javier Molina Tornero, Kim Ebrahim, Astrid Kristin Moen Sund (Utdanningsforbundet, Social Partners), Helen Hoffmann (UEAPME, Social Partners), Sophie Weisswange (EU Commission), Sean Feerick (Director) and Arancha Oviedo (Secretariat).

Apologies: Aivars Stankevičs and Margareta Nikolovska (European Training Foundation, scientific adviser)

Agenda Item 1: Objective of the meeting

The aim of the meeting was to establish the scope of the work to be undertaken, to set the objectives of the working group, agree a work plan, determine the expected outcomes of the group and to define concrete deliverables.

Agenda Item 2: EU Policy context and the role of EQAVET and quality assurance national reference points within it

The representative of the Commission, Sophie Weisswange, provided an update on:

1. The latest EU policy developments in education and training, in relation to:
 - the implementation of EQF (the European qualification framework) and ECVET (European credit system for VET) in the national contexts -she pointed out the important role played by the European quality assurance framework for VET (Reference Framework) to facilitate and ensure the effective implementation of EQF and ECVET-;
 - the agreement on targets and benchmarks for 2020, within the Education and Training 2020 Strategy; the VET Communication from the Commission adopted on 9.06.2010, which sets the Commission's vision for the next ten years on VET;
 - the fifth review of the Copenhagen Process, the Bruges Communiqué, 7.12.2010;

- the quality assurance theme in the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLL) which will focus on Leonardo da Vinci (LdV) projects with a quality assurance dimension to support National Reference Points and the coordination role QALLL (Quality assurance in LLL) is playing in current projects.

She noted the implications of these EU developments for the work of EQAVET and for the quality assurance National Reference Points; which should be informed by and complement the work undertaken within these processes.

2. The new context established by the ratification of the Recommendation on the establishment of the Reference Framework and the subsequent establishment of EQAVET to support its implementation. She listed the decisions and priorities for the EQAVET Network taken at the EQAVET Annual Forum, Madrid 29-30.04.2010. She also explained the role of the National Reference Points described in the Reference Framework Recommendation.

This presentation is available on the [website](#).

Agenda Item 3: EQAVET work programme 2010 and development of guidelines for supporting the national implementation approaches in the use of the Reference Framework.

The EQAVET Director, Sean Feerick, outlined the relevance of the work of the working groups within the EQAVET work programme and the EU context, as they are the main tool to support Member States to implement the Reference Framework and report on progress. The expected outcome will be clear guidelines for supporting quality assurance in VET and the development of national plans and approaches to the implementation of the Recommendation. This will ensure a sense of ownership among Member States of the implementation process. The results should be practical policy useful material of added value at EU policy making level and useable by the Member States and National Reference Points at regional and national level for the implementation and reporting processes.

During a 'tour the table' the participants gave an overview of varying quality assurance models and recent policy developments in use in their countries. The experiences of quality assurance procedures and assessment varied in each case as did the model and instruments in use.

Agenda Item 4: Building on the results of the ENQAVET thematic group on developing guidelines for supporting quality assurance in VET systems

The Expert, Keith Brumfitt, explained the important feedback learned during the work developed by the ENQAVET thematic group on 'developing guidelines for supporting quality assurance in VET systems', summarised in 4 lessons:

1. It is essential to establish a holistic system approach, in which the four phases of the quality cycle (planning, implementation, evaluation and review) are intrinsically related to each other.
2. There is a need to develop guidelines at national level targeting both the system level and the provider level.
3. It is important to produce materials that are practical and useful.
4. The focus should be on quality assurance of VET rather than quality of VET.

He presented the building blocks approach developed by the ENQAVET thematic group, and he proposed to base the work of the working group on this approach rather than starting from scratch.

The working group participants noted that the building blocks are relevant at system level but they need further development if they are aimed at being useful at VET provider level.

Participants also acknowledged the need to reach a common understanding of key terms, in particular those used in the Recommendation, if the group wish to establish guidelines applicable and useful at EU level.

In addition, working group participants pointed out that in order to develop a product that is relevant to the implementation process and useful to National Reference Points there is a need to establish clear links between the building blocks and the Recommendation's indicative descriptors (Annex 1) and indicators (Annex II).

Agenda Item 6-8: Discussion and exchange of ideas of the scope, mandate and objectives for the working group

After discussion, the working group agreed to focus on:

1. quality assurance of vocational education and training (VET) rather than in quality of VET;
2. supporting National Reference Points by producing products that are practical and useful to their work, making best use of the indicative descriptors and indicators.
3. developing further the building block methodology completed previously by ENQAVET to tailor the needs and requirements of both levels, system and provider.

The working group decided to:

- A. develop guidelines at the system level which would support National Reference Points by helping them to implement the Reference Framework. This support would be through the development of material and guidelines based on the “building block” methodology, using the indicators and the indicative descriptors of the Recommendation;
- B. develop, from June 2011, guidance for training providers based on the indicators, indicative descriptors and “building blocks” ;
- C. provide greater clarity in relation to a small group of key terms used in the Recommendation.

In relation to these 3 activities, the working group was keen to establish and support close cooperation with the other activities developed within the EQAVET work programme, notably in relation to the EQAVET working group on indicators; and the gathering information exercise undertaken by the EQAVET expert Serban Iosifescu, in particular in its role in describing the certification process among Member States. They also stressed the need to establish links between the guidelines to be produced by the working group and the other EU process, notably ECVET and EQF.

Participants also expressed the need to present the guidelines as a means of supporting the work of the National Reference Points and of developing a culture of quality assurance in VET between and within Member States rather than to be seen as something that is monitoring progress, making comparisons or setting benchmarks. In relation to this, participants emphasised the importance to recognise in the guidelines to be developed, that the indicative descriptors and indicators serve as a toolbox; and that they are indicative and not compulsory.

Participants also agreed that closer communication was necessary with the work CEDEFOP has developed in relation to terminology of VET. Sophie Weisswange assured participants that this communication will be established.

She and Secretariat Director, Sean Feerick, also assured participants that procedures have been put in place to ensure that all EQAVET activities developed within its work programme are informed, complemented by and interact with each other. They also reassured participants that cooperation with EQF and ECVET is progressing.

Agenda Item 9: Concrete outcome to be achieved by the working group

The group agreed that the guidelines should be practical. They should help National Reference Points to introduce the Reference Framework. The guidelines should include a collection of views of all National Reference Points (including those not participating in the working group) in order to have an overview of EU processes.

The working group agreed to:

- develop clear links between the “selected quality indicators” in Annex II of the Recommendation, the “quality criteria and indicative descriptors” at VET system level in Annex I of the Recommendation and the “building blocks” developed by ENQAVET’s working group on ‘developing guidelines’.
- identify links between the building blocks, the indicative descriptors and the indicators and how each of them refer specifically to one of the four stages of the quality circle of the Reference Framework; in order to
- formulate a model that allowed National Reference Points to be guided by one of three perspectives: the indicators; the indicative descriptors or the building blocks. This would allow access to a common system in the way that best meets the needs of individual National Reference Points.

Agenda Item 10: preparing the working group work programme

It was decided to divide the group in three sub-groups, in order to develop the first activity. The sub-groups will work on-line using the EQAVET Members’ Area between meetings. To facilitate the work, three leads were appointed for each sub-group (S. Knavs, S. Willema/E. Hanselman and T. Gruber). Each of the sub-groups will consider three of the building blocks and their links with the indicative descriptors and indicators. For this purpose, the Expert, Keith Brumfitt, will prepare a paper to be distributed to leads in order to initiate an on-line working process within the Member Area.

Sub-group 1 will consider building blocks 1-3; sub-group 2 building blocks 4-6 and sub-group 3 building blocks 7-9. The composition of the working group is as follow:

Subgroup 1	Subgroup 2	Subgroup 3
Jan Meers	Eva Filipová	Nicholas Andilios
Jean-Pierre Malarme	Siegfried Willems/Ellen Hanselman	Thomas Gruber
Ana Gajzer	Michaela Jonach	Ruta Karvelyte
Isilda Fernandes	Kim Ebrahim	Leena Koski
Viorel Tigănescu	Marge Kroonmäe	Katalin Molnár-Stadler
Javier Molina Tornero	Dana Stroie	Maurizio Mosca
Simona Knavs		

The activity focuses on identifying the links between the building blocks, the indicative descriptors and the indicators. The establishment of these relationships will allow National Reference Points to analyse their system through one of three perspectives: the indicators, the indicative descriptors or the building blocks.

The work of the small group working on key terms used in the Recommendation will also commence its work on-line using the Member Area. Ana Gajzer, Michaela Jonach and Nicolas Andilios volunteered to initiate the work. Sophie Weisswange will coordinate the group, which will report to the working group at the next meeting. This subgroup will also be open to members of the working group on indicators.

In order to provide a summary of key issues and decisions made during meetings, the Secretariat and the Expert will prepare and record a short presentation-video after each meeting to be uploaded on the EQAVET website. This will inform participants and a wider audience of National Reference Points and stakeholders. The objective is to prompt responses and contributions to the work of the working group, developing a sense of ownership of results and the implementation of the Reference Framework.

Agenda Item 11: Task setting and timelines for preparing the next meeting

Tasks: from 21.06.2010 to the 14.09.2010: to work on the paper prepared by the Expert using the Member Area facilities. The work on-line will lead to a draft report for the 2nd meeting, taking place on 30.09.2010, Brussels. This draft report will be prepared by the Expert, integrating the on-line work developed by the sub-groups.

The 3rd meeting of the working group will take place on 14.12.2010, Brussels.