

8 June 2011

*The International Auditorium, International Trade Union House
Boulevard du Roi Albert II, No. 5 / 2, B-1210 Brussels*

Participants

Dana Stroe (Chair and Steering Committee member), Keith Brumfitt (Expert), Maria Emília Galvão (Expert WG2), Michaela Jonach, Marge Kroonmäe, Leena Koski, Thomas Gruber, Katalin Molnár-Stadler, Ismene Tramontano, Siegfried Willems, Cecilia Lyche, Viorel Tiganescu, Simona Knavs, Javier Molina Tornero, Kim Ebrahim, Tellervo Tarko (EUproVET), Helen Hoffmann (Social Partner), Tina Bertzeletou (Cedefop), Sophie Weisswange (EU Commission), Sean Feerick and Arancha Oviedo (Secretariat).

Apologies: Jean-Pierre Malarne, Jan Meers, Nicholas Andilios, Eva Filipová, Giedre Beleckiene, Aivars Stankevičs, Ellen Hanselman, Isilda Fernandes, Astrid Kristin Moen Sund (Social Partner) and Margareta Nikolovska (ETF).

Agenda Item 1: Welcome and Objective of the meeting

This was the first meeting of the EQAVET Working Group on 'Developing guidelines to support the National Reference Points' (WG1) within phase 2 of the work programme. This new phase will further develop the work undertaken in phase 1.

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: Review of progress

Participants were asked to provide feedback on the quality cycle on-line tool. The general consensus was that:

- The quality cycle on-line tool is being used in the national contexts and is perceived as a useful tool for the national reference points in their daily work of defining their national approaches.
- Its use is still very limited and a communication strategy is necessary in order to reach the wider audience of relevant policy makers and practitioners. The group recognised that in order to achieve this goal, there is a need to consider the adaptation of the IT tool to national contexts and needs. Participants noticed that the translation of the tool into the Member States languages will boost the use of the IT tool in the national contexts.
- It needs to be further developed in order to make it relevant to VET providers. The objective is to offer a tool to national reference points which enhances their underpinning role of supporting national VET providers.

Agenda Item 3: Broader policy priorities for work in 2011-12

The representative of the Commission, Sophie Weisswange, provided an update of the EU policy context with implications for the work to be developed by WG1.

She noted that the work of the WG1 should be contextualised within three EU main policy initiatives:

1. The Bruges Communiqué (signed by the EU Ministers for VET, the EU Social Partners and the European Commission, Dec. 2010), which sets up among 11 strategy objectives of EU cooperation in education and training to “*by the end of 2015- establish a common quality assurance framework for VET providers, which also applies to associated workplace learning and which is compatible with the EQAVET framework*”. A *Copenhagen-group* at EU level has been established to follow-up progress against the Bruges Communiqué’s long and short term deliverables.
2. EU 2020 strategy and its two recent follow-up flagship initiatives: [Youth on the Move](#) and [New skills for new jobs](#).
3. Education and Training 2020 Strategy and its on-going work on a benchmark on employability and mobility in VET.

She also updated participants on the Lifelong Learning Programme. In this context she mentioned the importance of cooperating and utilising the 30 projects selected as good practices within the QALLL project. She also provided an update on the five EQAVET projects (from Austria, Germany, Malta, Netherlands and Romania) to support National Reference Points which will be coordinated by the Menon network. More information on these projects is available on the [EQAVET Newsletter](#) Issue 03, June 2011.

Sean Feerick, director of the EQAVET Secretariat, contextualised the work to be developed within the working groups in the work of the EQAVET network. He noted that:

- The mandate of the working groups reflects the agreed outcomes of the EQAVET Annual Forum. The Annual Forum in its role of policy and decision making forum of the network agreed at its last meeting (Budapest, April 2011) on the need to focus on the implementation process of the EQAVET Reference Framework. In order to achieve this, the Annual Forum agreed that actions should be towards VET providers, not directly, but through the national reference points.
- The work of the two working groups will be closely coordinated. A strategy has been put in place to ensure that the work of both working groups is developed holistically, reflecting the model of the EQAVET Recommendation of a quality cycle with indicative descriptors and indicators.
- The outcomes and products developed within the working groups should be incorporated into the IT tool, building and completing what has been achieved in the previous phase.
- It is important to produce materials that are practical and useful.

The group agreed that the new approach is the correct one and that the mandate reflects this. However, the mandate needs to be re-drafted in order to incorporate some comments from participants which outline the need to be clear about the central role of national reference points. The task is to develop guidelines and gather case studies/good practices at VET provider level in order to support national reference points in their role of supporting national VET providers. The guidelines and case studies should be relevant to VET providers as they are the focus of the work. The EQAVET Recommendation should be seen as the catalyst for the action to be undertaken. Participants also agreed that the Bruges Communiqué should be mentioned in the mandate as it frames the work of WG1. The new draft of the mandate integrating these comments is available at <http://eqavet.eu/gns/what-we-do/working-groups/working-group-1/working-group-1-phase-2.aspx>

Agenda Item 4: Addressing stakeholders needs

The group discussed its work-plan to achieve the objectives identified by the Annual Forum. These are the main messages which emerged during discussion:

1. The target audience is the national reference points. The material to be developed is at VET provider level to support national reference points in their role as catalyst.
2. The approach developed in the previous phase -the so called 'building blocks' linked to the EQAVET indicative descriptors- is the right one. The group needs to adapt this approach with the objective to be relevant to VET providers. The approach establishes guidelines that set out what needs to be in place to support a QA system that is compatible with the EQAVET Recommendation at VET provider level. Each of the guidelines will contain a "call to action" and suggests what needs to be done (if it is not already in place) to create an EQAVET compatible quality assurance system at VET providers level. The guidelines will identify a series of case studies and associated "lessons learnt". These case studies and lessons will help to frame and validate the discussions.
3. There is a need to cover the diversity of training contexts: IVET and CVET. School-based training, work based learning and in-company training. Therefore, the guidelines to be developed should be general in nature in order to better fit the diversity of training settings.
4. Concerning the case studies:
 - a) The group will use only those case studies that show practices at VET provider level on making progress in relation to or compatible with to the EQAVET Recommendation.
 - b) The projects selected by QALLL could be used.
 - c) The information to be provided by the EQAVET Secretariat Survey on the use of the EQAVET indicative descriptors at VET provider level should be used as a basis/indication for selecting case studies.
 - d) The formulation and selection of the 'building blocks' at VET provider level will guide the topics for the case studies that are important and relevant at VET provider level.
5. The IT tool needs to be adapted according to the above recommendations. At VET providers level the emphasis should be put in the idea of 'continuous improvement' rather on a well-defined partition between building and monitoring the QA system put in place by a particular provider.
6. A PDF version of the content of the IT tool should be made available.
7. The IT tool should be a user-friendly tool with the target of reaching VET providers.
8. Focus on benefits of using and implementing the EQAVET quality cycle model from a VET provider perspective.

Agenda Item 5 and 6: Sequencing of tasks and deliverables envisaged

The group broke into 3 subgroups to agree on:

- The identification of 'building blocks' relevant to VET providers;
- The identification of topics for the case studies;
- The identification of a structure/template for case studies.

Clear messages from the discussion were;

- The identification of 'building blocks' should define the selection of topics for case studies.
- The 'building blocks' should be linked to the EQAVET quality cycle and its indicative descriptors.
- Case studies should be linked to the 'building blocks' and to the EQAVET indicative descriptors and indicators. Therefore, cooperation with WG2 is very important.

The case studies need to be brief and succinct with links to related documents and/or national websites if users require further information

The Expert will identify and propose a set of 'building blocks' reflecting comments from the group and checking official literature on the issue. He will place the proposal onto the Members' Area seeking short and easy reaction from participants.

The identification of the 'building blocks' together with the 1st draft of the results of the Secretariat Survey will inform the selection of case studies to be discussed in September 2011.

The group agreed that it is important that national reference points who are not involved in the group should be informed about and should feed into the work developed by the group. The Expert will prepare a brief report on progress made at each meeting to be placed onto the NRP virtual Forum.

In relation to the work-methodology, it was agreed that the work between meetings will be led by the Expert maximising the work in meetings: the Expert will produce drafts that will be validated by the WG's members during meetings.

Agenda Item 7: Dates for the next meeting

- 2nd meeting: Tuesday, September 20th, 2011. Brussels.
- 3rd meeting: Wednesday, December 7th, 2011. Brussels.
- 4th meeting: Tuesday, February 7th, 2012. Brussels.