



# **QUALITY IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES IN THE HUNGARIAN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET) SECTOR**



Prepared by:  
Katalin Molnár-Stadler

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## Introduction

In Hungary quality and quality improvement of education and training has been in the focus for years. Especially since 2000 Hungary has made considerable efforts and invested considerable resources to transfer schools into learning organisations continuously pursuing quality management. It is the reason why for some years already a substantial number of the Hungarian vocational schools have been concerned with the management and improvement of the quality of their education and training provision.

A series of pilot projects were introduced on the initiative of the Education / VET Government in power resulting in a number of innovative tools to support and promote institutional-level quality assurance in VET. The approaches, methods and tools applied were adapted to the specific nature of education and training therefore they contribute(d) to a great extent to the continuous and sustainable improvement of the VET providers. Recently using European and Hungarian funds, VET providers have been introducing quality assurance systems in line with the quality cycles of common European quality assurance frameworks for VET, i.e. the Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF) and the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQAVET).

Self-assessment and self-assessment based quality improvement has been in the heart of all institution-level quality management activities. (This applies to other sectors of education in Hungary including general/public education and also higher education.) The Self-assessment Model for Vocational Schools (for IVET) and the Common VET Self-assessment Model (for VET in totality: IVET, CVET, higher level VET) incorporate in full the core quality criteria (key questions), the indicative descriptors and the indicators of CQAF / EQAVET.

Extensive external support has been provided to schools in the form of technical assistance to establishing / implementing or improving their quality management system.

You can read about the main milestones of a decade work of Hungary on Quality Assurance in VET and its quality journey to EQAVET in *Chapter I* of this brochure.

Since June 2010 the new VET government has undertaken the complex restructuring of the VET system with the aim of better serving the demands/needs of the labour market/economy and increasing the attractiveness of VET. The reforms (to be) introduced refer to both the IVET sector and the adult training system. New pieces of legislation – e.g. Act on VET, Act on Public Education – were adopted and the adoption of the new Act on Adult Training is in process now. The fundamental changes affect also the main elements regulating the structure, the content and the qualification requirements of VET as well as the organisation and implementation of practical / apprenticeship training. All these measures together with the change in the ownership of VET schools (as from January 1<sup>st</sup> 2013 they have become under the central responsibility of the state) and the development of the external evaluation / inspection system in VET are oriented towards a more uniform/common quality and tend to have a considerable effect on the effectiveness and efficiency of VET provision. The current 2012/2013 academic year is the piloting period of the new measures, based on the one-year experiences gained they will be finalised and launched in September 2013.

You can read briefly about the latest developments in restructuring of the Hungarian VET system in *Chapter II* of this brochure.

*For more information please contact Katalin Molnár-Stadler at [katalin.stadler @-online.hu](mailto:katalin.stadler@online.hu).*

## *Chapter I*

### **Hungary's quality journey to EQAVET 2000 – 2010**

The Hungarian approach to quality management in VET prevailing in the period between 2000 and 2010 has had several special features as follows:

1. Hungary was among the few countries in Europe (or even in the world) where quality assurance and quality improvement of education was stipulated by law.<sup>1</sup> Some examples:
  - The 1999 amendment of the Act on Public education aimed at enhancing the quality of education and to guarantee its standards.
  - The Decree No. 3 / 2002 (II. 5.) of the Minister of Education on Public Education Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement required all public education institutions<sup>2</sup> to have – as part of their pedagogical system – an assessment, control and quality assurance system and calls for continuous self-assessment based quality improvement activity [4.§ (1)]. The [15.§] of the same Decree established the Public Education Quality Award (PEQA).
  - The 2003 and 2006 amendments of the Act on Public Education made compulsory for the schools to elaborate their Institutional Quality Management Program containing amongst others the quality policy and quality improvement system of the institution, definition of long-term principles and concepts, definition of processes of the institutional operation: management, planning, control, assessment and evaluation, period and methods of self-assessment, criteria and procedure of the performance assessment system of teachers.
  - The Government Decree 22/2004 (II.16.) (and its 2007 amendment) stipulate the rules of accreditation of adult training providers and adult training programmes.
  - The Government Resolution nr. 1057/2005 which promoted the implementation of the VET Development Strategy for 2005 – 2013 (both adopted in May 2005) stated that “It should be ensured that by the end of 2008 all institutions - VET providers could implement a quality assurance system designed and developed by considering the European Common Quality Assurance Framework. Furthermore, in the course of implementation of the international programmes the adaptation of the models, methods, approaches proved to be successful in the member states to the Hungarian context should be promoted.”
2. In 1985 the school inspection which used to provide an external evaluation system for public educational institutions was terminated.<sup>3</sup> Priority was given to institution-level quality management activities.
3. Self-assessment and self-assessment based quality improvement was in the heart of all institution-level quality management activities.

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<sup>1</sup> Most of these provisions were abolished by the new Act on Public Education which has entered into force on January 1st 2012.

<sup>2</sup> In Hungary the vocational training schools and the secondary vocational schools are part of the public education system.

<sup>3</sup> The system will be reintroduced from September 2013 onwards. Piloting is now underway in 50 schools. Self-assessment of school leaders, teachers and the institution's as a whole remains in the centre of the evaluation.

**The practical initiatives, innovative tools developed and implemented within the Hungarian VET sector to support quality improvement and self-assessment include:**

- **2000 – 2004:** The **COMENIUS 2000 Quality Improvement Programme for Public Education** provided a national framework for the school-level quality assurance and quality improvement activities where the gradual and value-increasing improvement of quality, the development of the organisational culture, the evaluation and continuous improvement of the professional work of teachers based on regular self-assessment was emphasised. The COMENIUS 2000 institutional quality improvement models apply a set of requirements and instruments corresponding exclusively to the specific nature and needs of education and teaching. The institutions using these models are free to use a wide range of quality approaches and choose the methods, which best suit their specific features and needs.

The aim of the **Institutional Model I** – which has got the widest application – is to develop an organisational culture that is required for and promotes the development of **partner-focused operation**. The institution should identify its partners and regularly assess their needs and demands. Based on the analysis of these demands, the institution should continuously improve its own operation. In the process of continuous improvement it is the conscious and consistent implementation of the PDCA (Plan – Do – Check – Act) cycle, which offers a real help to the institution (*see Figure 1*).

The aim of **Institutional Model II** is to implement **Total Quality Management (TQM)** comprising every area of the institutional operation. For this purpose the institutions have to make significant progress in the following three areas:

- **Ability to control processes:** The institution should develop and introduce a documented quality management system, which covers all the processes affecting the educational and teaching activities of the institution. The results of process control should be implemented into the daily operation of the institution.

The processes to be controlled cover **8 areas** of the institutional operation as follows:

- the responsibility and commitment of the management of the institution,
  - the development of human resources,
  - safe institution,
  - education, teaching, training,
  - measurement, analysis and corrective action,
  - management of partnerships,
  - provision of other resources,
  - operation of the institution.
- **Ability to develop organisational culture:** The management of the institution should consciously develop the organisational culture by involving all staff members.
  - **Ability of continuous improvement:** The management and staff of the institution should be able to apply the PDCA cycle systematically in every single area of the institutional operation.

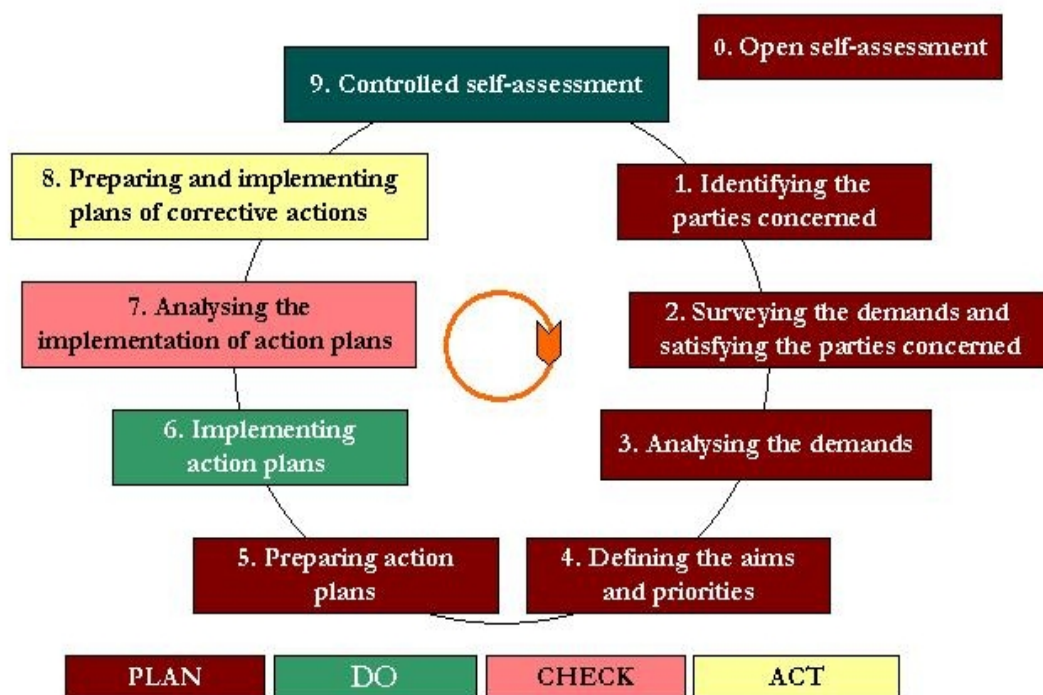


Figure 1: Logical flowchart of the COMENIUS 2000 Institutional Model I

The COMENIUS 2000 Programme was a huge innovation: 23% of all Hungarian public schools (approx. 2000 from among the 8.400) participated in it; 40% of them were VET providers; their quality improvement work was supported by 500 consultants. A large-scale professional support was provided to schools free of charge in the form of Quality Improvement Manual, methodological guidance materials, consultancy, training, monitoring and feedback, school network for promoting mutual learning, Public Education Quality Award etc.

- **2002:** The **Hungarian Public Education Quality Award (PEQA)** was established by the Minister of Education with the aim of recognising the outstanding performance and spreading best practices of schools in the field of public education Total Quality Management. This award also aimed at maintaining or even raising the enthusiasm and commitment of schools to (self-assessment based) quality improvement. The PEQA **Self-assessment Model** is based on the EFQM Excellence Model but the criteria were fully adapted to the Hungarian context and translated to the tasks and operation of the Hungarian schools. Accordingly, a public education version of the EFQM Excellence Model was elaborated. Besides, the requirements of the COMENIUS 2000 institutional quality improvement models were also incorporated. The criteria of the model can be applied to all types of public education institutions (kindergarten, primary and grammar schools, vocational and secondary vocational schools etc.), and their interpretation helps reviewing and evaluating the institution's operation and results. *Figure 2* below shows the structure of the PEQA Self-assessment Model.

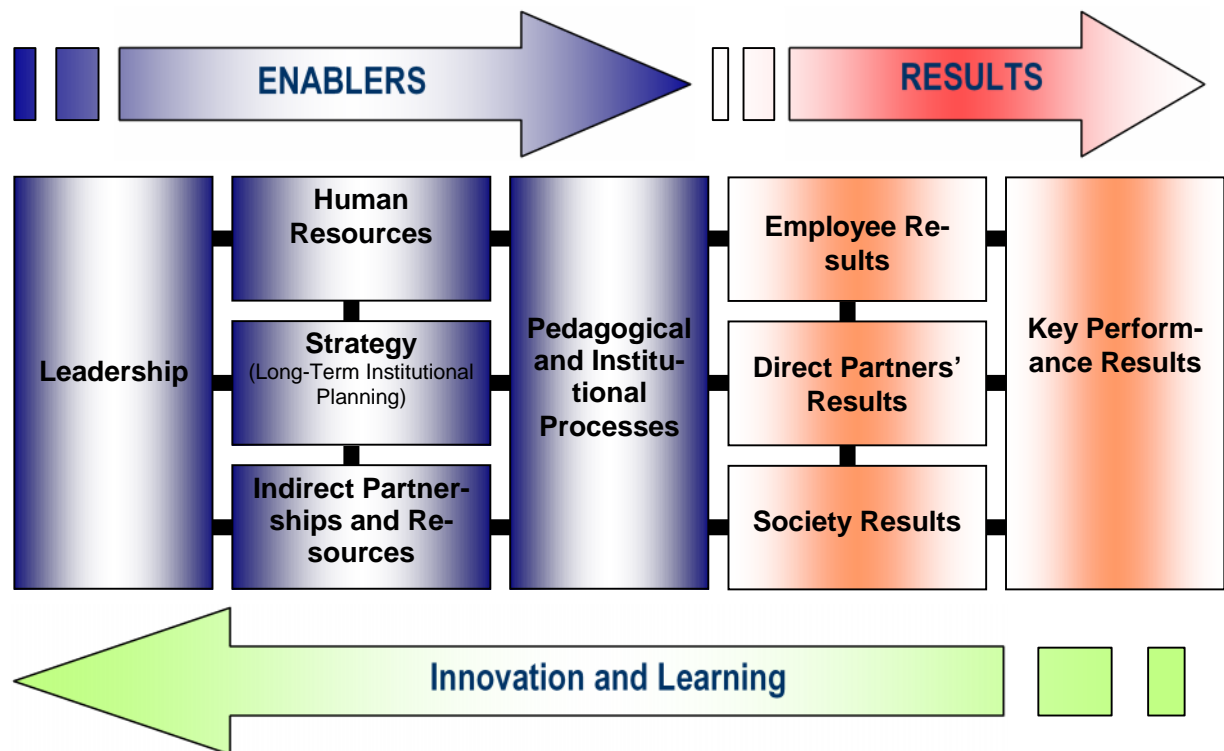


Figure 2: The Model of the Hungarian Quality Award for Public Education

The Hungarian Public Education Quality Award is the first award of its kind, a **unique** professional development, as until 2002, with the exception of the Malcolm Baldrige Award (USA), the set of criteria of all other national education quality awards was fully identical with the model used by industry. By the development of the Public Education Quality Award, Hungary has been fulfilling again a pioneer role in the field of school improvement. Between 2002 and 2008 more than 150 schools submitted their application for PEQA, one third of them were awarded recognition (gold-, silver- or bronze level Award or Certificate of merit), 50% of the prize-winners were VET schools. 2 institutions-PEQA winners participated in the European Excellence Award completion with success (one became Finalist, and the other one was awarded the recognition “5\* Recognised for Excellence” in the Public Sector category).

- **2002: The Adult Training Accreditation System**

The intention with introducing the adult training accreditation system was to provide guarantees for those participating in training that the institutions - adult training providers chosen by them and using public funds (either from state budget or EU funds) are operating in a **transparent, reliable, regulated and controlled** way. On behalf of the labour market there is a clear expectation towards the institutions - adult training providers, namely: to provide adult training and services related to adult training based on quality principles. The levels of quality assurance / accreditation are:

1. **Registration of institutions: precondition of adult training provision.** (5000 institutions)

Adult training institutions may provide adult training only if they are registered at the designated state agency in charge of employment (i.e. labour centre). In case of complying with the conditions defined in a separate provision of law, a certificate of entry in the registration shall be issued with effectiveness for a period of 4 years. The regis-

try of institutions - adult training providers contains data that provide information in sufficient details for the transparency of the specialised activity of the institutions.

2. **Institutional accreditation: precondition for applying public funds.** (1300 institutions)

The institutions of adult training included in the registry may request their accreditation. The purpose of institutional accreditation – in the interest of adults participating in the training and other stakeholders – is to ensure that the institution conducts its adult training activities in accordance with the higher quality requirements.

The basic condition of the accreditation is that the institution of adult training should have at least one already implemented, accredited training programme, a human resource development plan, descriptions of training processes as well as a quality policy, quality objectives, a quality management system and a self-assessment system in place.

3. **Program accreditation** (1200 accredited programs)

While the **registration of adult training providers** is obligatory and serves mainly statistical purposes, accreditation of training institutions and/or training programmes is optional. **Accreditation** serves as a mechanism for assuring quality and is a prerequisite of receiving public funds, training subsidy, too.

• **2003-2009: Quality Improvement in the Development Program for Vocational Training Schools (Phase I: 2003-2006, Phase II: 2006-2009)**

The Development Program for Vocational Training Schools was launched in 2003 by the Hungarian Education Government with the aim to reform the vocational school system and to improve the quality of education and training in these educational establishments as well as to improve the job opportunities and career prospects of young people on the labour market. The Program primarily focused on the **key areas** of the vocational training activity such as development of methodology in vocational grades, reintegration of disadvantaged students, renewal of prevocational training”, assessment and evaluation, school management and self-development. **Quality management and quality improvement were also among the key areas and top priorities of the Program** in the frame of which – one of the first countries in the European Union to adopt it – a quality management system based on the *Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF)* adapted to the Hungarian context was implemented and applied in the vocational schools involved (160). The Program contributed to a great extent to the institutionalization of quality assurance in VET and developed a national system based on the CQAF which was made available to every IVET provider (during 2006-2008). The schools participating in the Program had to conduct self-assessment on annual basis against the **Self-Assessment Model for Vocational Schools** developed in 2006 as part of the CQAF adaptation process. The Model incorporates the CQAF core quality criteria as well as the *key indicators*<sup>4</sup> (28) and the *benchmarking indicators* (70) also developed in line with CQAF.

On completion of the self-assessment exercise, the vocational training schools had the opportunity to pilot the European **Peer Review** procedure<sup>5</sup>, a method of external assess-

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<sup>4</sup> Key indicators are mandatory to be measured in all vocational schools; they are able to show in an objective way the compliance of the institutional operation and the efficiency of operation in a European Union environment as well. The key indicators should be such that are able to underpin the continuous improvement of the institutions in an objective manner in order to support decision-making on different management levels.

<sup>5</sup> Peer Review is a form of external evaluation with the aim of supporting the reviewed educational (VET) institution in its quality assurance and quality development efforts. An external group of experts, known as

ment and evaluation developed in close relation to CQAF, and implement national and transnational Peer Reviews.

In order to support the CQAF implementation and the self-assessment exercise of the schools, the Program provided a rich supporting environment which included training of the institution's staff (2 persons per school) in CQAF implementation and self-assessment; guides, methodological guidance materials such as the Self-Assessment Implementation Guide; expert support etc.

- **2006-2008: Adaptation of the Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF) to the Hungarian IVET (school-based VET) sector – Presentation of some selected results**

With the aim to meet the provision of the Government Resolution nr. 1057/2005, in December 2005 a large-scale project was launched on the **adaptation of CQAF to the Hungarian school-based vocational education and training sector** (which included approx. 1400 vocational schools – vocational training schools and secondary vocational schools). The aim with the establishment of the Hungarian Quality Assurance Framework of the School-based VET sector (in Hungarian Szakképzési Min ségbiztosítási Keretrendszer, **SZMBK** – see *Figure 3* below) was to encourage and support the implementation of quality management systems in the initial vocational education and training sector both on provider (school) and system (regional) level, as well as to link the quality management activities in VET with the relevant European policy objectives.

The adaptation covered **two different levels** of the school-based VET sector: institution (school) level and regional education / VET management (system) level. The reason behind this was that

1. in the previous 4-5 years Hungary has made considerable efforts to improve the quality of education. Priority was given to the institution-level quality improvement activities. CQAF provided a good opportunity to investigate that all what has been done and achieved, to what extent has met the criteria set on EU level.
2. the regional education / VET management has not had yet a well-established structure and operational framework in Hungary, so CQAF could be a useful tool in setting this up.

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Peers, is invited to judge the quality of different fields of the institution, such as the quality of education and training provision of individual departments or of the entire organisation. During the evaluation process, the Peers usually visit the reviewed institution.



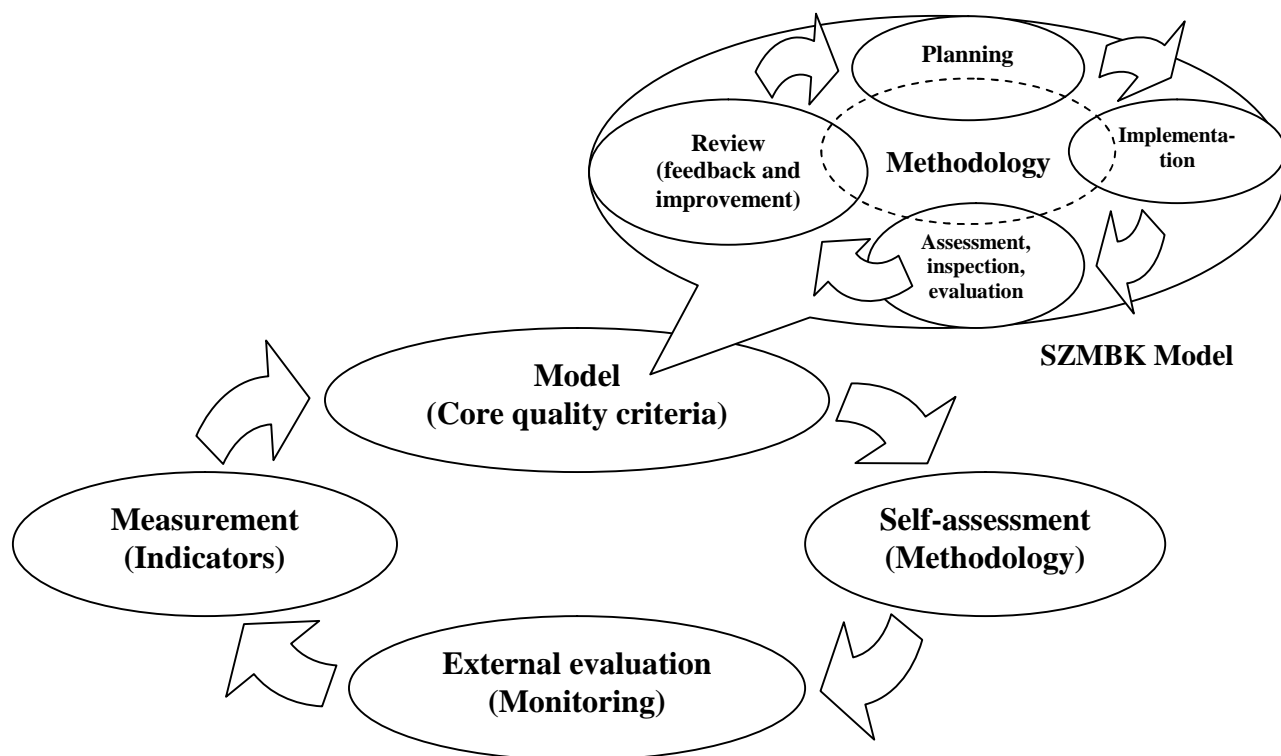


Figure 3: Elements of SZMBK

**Model (Core quality criteria)**

1. Elaboration of the Hungarian CQAF – SZMBK – Model of the school-based VET

- Interpretation of the key questions (core quality criteria) of the CQAF Model for the institutional level, with the aim to ease the common understanding and use of the Model ⇒ SZMBK Institutional Model (see Figure 4).

Key questions (core quality criteria)	Interpretation of the key questions (on the level of vocational schools)
<b>1. PLANNING</b>	
<b>1.1. Are the goals/objectives of the vocational school clear and measurable?</b>	<i>Explanatory notes to the key question with possible examples.</i>
<b>1.2. What are the goals/objectives of the vocational school in relation to VET?</b>	

Figure 4: The structure of the SZMBK Institutional Model


- Elaboration of a practical tool, the Guide to the implementation of the SZMBK  
The Guide aims to provide practical support to the vocational schools in designing and implementing their quality management systems in line with the SZMBK which is based on the European Common Quality Assurance Framework and adapted by considering the national peculiarities. It helps furthermore to understand what is the SZMBK about, what does it mean for the schools, and where and how can they find

the core quality criteria of the Model in their operation / quality management systems applied and what they have to do to meet these criteria.

- Comparison of (/identifying the relationship between) the key questions (core quality criteria) of the SZMBK Model and the major quality management approaches being in use in the VET schools in Hungary (like ISO 9001:2000 standard, EFQM Excellence Model, COMENIUS 2000 institutional quality improvement models I and II, Public Education Quality Award Model, Self-assessment Model for Vocational Training Schools etc.).

Our thinking was that as the SZMBK Model raises questions that are considered crucial for quality assurance and quality enhancement of VET and as such they are to be found among the set of criteria of almost any quality management system or self-assessment model (being in use in IVET in Hungary), it can lay down a common base for comparison and hereby play an **integrating role**.

## Comparatory tables ⇒ SZMBK as an integrating tool

SZMBK Model	ISO 9001:2000 standard	IMIP Institutional-QM Program	COM II. Institutional Model	PEQA Self-assessment Model	SZÖM Model
Here the key questions of the SZMBK Model are listed.	Here the relationship between the key questions (core quality criteria) of the SZMBK Model and the major quality management approaches being in use in the VET schools in Hungary is identified.				
					

*Figure 5: Comparatory tables*

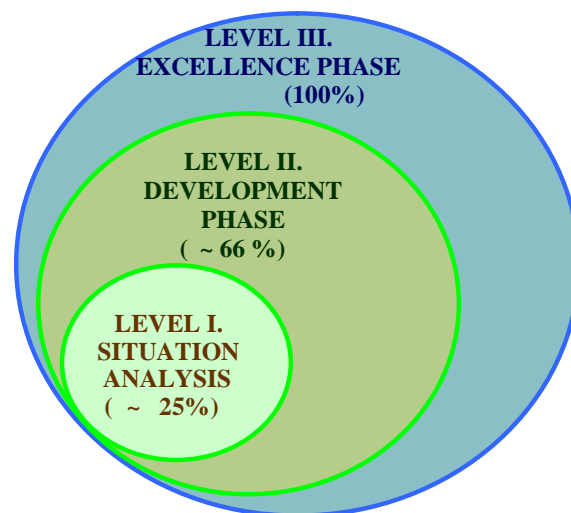
### *Self-assessment (Methodology)*

2. *Elaboration of the CQAF/SZMBK compatible Self-assessment Model for Vocational Schools* (on the basis of the already existing Self-assessment Model for Vocational Training Schools), by

- extending the Model criteria to all types of school-based VET (vocational training schools and secondary vocational schools),
- extending the Model criteria to all fields of operation of the vocational schools,
- revising the Model criteria against the SZMBK Model, and building in the missing SZMBK elements – core quality criteria,
- incorporating into the Model (Results criteria) the Key indicators for vocational schools,
- incorporating into the Model (Results criteria) the benchmarking indicators,
- revising the content of the 3 levels of the Model.

The Self-assessment Model for Vocational Schools is a complex self-evaluation tool tailored to the tasks and operation of the Hungarian vocational schools (i.e. vocational training schools and secondary vocational schools), their professional and operational characteristics. The Model has **3 levels** (see *Figure 6*). This means that the institutions can reach the level of organisation-wide (self-)assessment, i.e. the evaluation of their entire operation and meet the SZMBK core quality criteria gradually, step by step while continuously focusing on their pedagogical (education-teaching-training) activity.

- All three levels are based on the same model.
- The three levels / phases mean three different levels / scope of requirements.
- Each level has its own self-assessment tool / model.



**Figure 6: Levels of the Self-assessment Model for Vocational Schools**

*Figure 7* below shows the **scope** of the individual levels of the Self-assessment Model for Vocational Schools.

Criteria	Level I	Level II	Level III
<b>1. Leadership</b>	0%	60%	100%
<b>2. Strategy</b>	0%	100%	100%
<b>3. Human resources</b>	0%	40%	100%
<b>4. Indirect partnerships and resources</b>	0%	40%	100%
<b>5. Processes</b>	0%	60%	100%
<b>6. Direct partners' results</b>	100%	100%	100%
<b>7. Employee results</b>	100%	100%	100%
<b>8. Society results</b>	100%	100%	100%
<b>9. Key performance results</b>	100%	100%	100%
<b>In total:</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 7: The scope of the individual levels**

- **2009-2011: Developing and piloting of an integrated approach to quality management in the Hungarian VET sector as a whole** (comprising school-based VET, CVET, adult VET and higher level VET) **in line with EQAVET.**

The Hungarian Reference Framework which builds on the previous good practices and results of quality assurance and complement self-evaluation with systematic and standardised external evaluation of training organisations **was designed in 2009** within the New Hungary Development Plan Social Development Operative Programme 2.2.1. titled “**Improving the quality and content of training**” managed by the National Institute of Vocational and Adult education (NIVE)<sup>6</sup>. With this **Hungary is among the first EU Member States** who aligns the already existing quality assurance systems in the VET school system and adult training with the quality assurance framework of the European Union (EQAVET).

The **Common Quality Management Framework for VET** (in Hungarian Egységes Szakképzési Min ségírányítási Keretrendszer, **ESZMK**) is not a completely new system but based on the existing ones, utilizes their best practices, structures and approaches, while it is in compliance with the European Reference Framework and guidelines. This new quality assurance system would make institutions comparable, and enhance fresh graduates’ job opportunities in the national and international labour market. Comparability as a key aspect enables the institutions to get reliable feedback on the outcomes of their activities, and set a base for a fair and motivating competition among them, while it helps to improve the efficiency and quality of their training provision, too.

The **development activities** performed in 2009 and 2010 included

❖ **Elaboration of the professional methodology**

- ✓ Development of the Common VET Quality Management Framework (ESZMK) which is in line with the guidelines defined by the EU for Quality Assurance in VET (CQAF, EQAVET) and incorporates their criteria, elements.
- ✓ Elaboration of methodological aids, guidance materials to support the ESZMK implementation. A Methodological Handbook was prepared for the users (vocational schools, adult training providers and centres), which contains a detailed description of the system and its elements, the methods and conditions of the application.

❖ **Establishment and operation of the Quality Assurance Network**

- ✓ Selection and training of 53 mentors-experts (full coverage of all the 7 regions of Hungary).

❖ **Software and database development**

- ✓ Development of an on-line, user-friendly IT surface. This common database of the users makes possible the comparison of the results and generating statistics, reports as well as provides a platform for mutual learning.

The developed **Common Quality Management Framework for VET (ESZMK)**

- Is applicable to all levels and types of VET.
- Is in-line with the EQAVET principles and criteria (indicative descriptors and indicators).
- Is a common toolkit providing a common base in quality management of VET and for comparison.

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<sup>6</sup> Since January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012 National Labour Office, Directorate for VET and Adult Education

- Takes into account and manages the special features of the institutions (both of VET schools /IVET/ and institutions adult training providers /CVET/).
- Supports the institution-wide evaluations and the follow-up improvements.

As part of the **preparatory activities**, the developing experts revealed and analysed the quality management approaches used by VET and adult training institutions in Hungary, their compliance, common features, characteristics, and the Quality Management related legal regulations in place. They also examined the conformity of the presently applied quality management approaches with EQAVET and analysed in more depth how far the existing elements on providers' level meet the EQAVET requirements. It was also analysed how the school-based VET and the adult VET can be brought together on the basis of quality management and in line with EQAVET.

**The established Framework consists of 4 main elements:**

### 1. Quality Policy

A Quality Policy is to be elaborated to provide a focus to direct the organization. It determines the desired results and assists the organization to apply its resources to achieve these results. The quality policy provides a framework for establishing and reviewing the quality objectives. The quality objectives need to be consistent with the quality policy and the commitment to continuous improvement, and their achievement needs to be measurable. The Quality Policy should cover the

- Definition of the mission and the vision of the VET institution.
- Definition of the set of institutional goals and the related indicators, definition of quality objectives of the organisation.
- Definition of the quality strategy, the aims of having a quality management system (QMS) in operation.
- Commitment of the management towards quality management and providing the necessary conditions for the operation of the QMS.

### 2. Quality Management System

The ESZMK Quality Management System has again 4 component parts:

1. The ***Common process model for school-based VET and adult training*** containing processes to be controlled in 5 Operational fields of the VET institution. These are:
  - I. Leadership - management.
  - II. Management of partnerships.
  - III. Management of human resources.
  - IV. Operation of the VET institution, provision and management of their other resources.
  - V. Education-teaching-training.

Based on the common process model the institutions define and describe (i.e. elaborate written procedures):

- the processes that are mandatory to regulate / describe,
- the other processes that have an important role in the operation of the institution and can be included in the group of regulated processes.

There were 20 processes identified that are mandatory to describe, most of them are applicable in both fields but there are some of them which are specific to the one or the other field. The table below shows some examples.

	Process to be described	School-based VET (IVET)	Adult training (IVET, CVET)
1.	Making the legal requirements known and observed	X	X
2.	Strategic planning	X	X
3.	Annual planning	X	X
4.	Assuring the internal procedure of the operation of the institution	X	X
5.	Self-assessment of the operation of the institution	X	X
6.	Identification of partners, survey of their demands and satisfaction	X	X
7.	Communication with partners	X	X
8.	Control of information flow	X	
9.	Customer service and handling of complaints		X

2. The *System of surveying partners' needs and satisfaction* includes activities such as
  - Identification of partners.
  - Controlling the communication with partners.
  - Surveying the needs and satisfaction of the direct partners playing a key role in and from the point of view of the professional training.

The VET institutions can define the methods and tools of surveying partners' satisfaction on their own. The tools for measuring the partners' needs and satisfaction should be elaborated on the basis of the criteria 6 and 7 of the Common VET Self-assessment Model.
3. The *Common VET Self-assessment Model* (in Hungarian *Egységes Szakképzési Önértékelési Modell, ESZÖM*) is a complex tool for conducting self-assessment and identifying improvement opportunities within the VET institutions. The criteria of the Model are tailored to the tasks and operation of the Hungarian VET providers, their professional and operational characteristics. While taking the specific features of the VET institutions (IVET, CVET, adult training) into consideration, the Model focuses on the education-teaching-training activity of the VET institution throughout the entire SA process. The Model is fully compatible with EQAVET (incorporates the indicative descriptors and the indicators) and also with the self-assessment models used in other sectors of education in Hungary. The two levels enable the users to gradually introduce the model.
4. The *Common system / set of VET indicators* related to the Common VET Quality Management Framework (ESZMK) are included in the Common VET Self-assessment Model (ESZÖM) (criteria on the Results side). They include also the EQAVET indicators, the sectoral, regional and institutional indicators. The indicators are grouped in three groups:

- Key indicators (K) that are mandatory to measure and present in the self-assessment document.
- Recommended key indicators (AK) and
- Benchmarking (B) indicators that are recommended to measure.

The institutions develop and operate their own indicator systems based on these indicators which also include specific institutional indicators and indicators related to improvements.

In order to facilitate and support the use of the system, an *on-line Quality Assurance IT Database* (in Hungarian Min ségbiztosítási Informatikai Rendszer – **MBR**) was designed and developed which makes possible the Internet-based, anonym comparison of the performance indicators of the institutions interpreted, measured and calculated in the same way. For this purpose an Interpretation and Calculation Guide to the indicators was elaborated.

Beside this the system allows of making statistics and data-analyses thus supporting the evidence-based decision-making, and also provides opportunity for mutual learning by collecting and disseminating best practices among the institutions.

The preparatory activities for the implementation of the Hungarian Common VET Quality Management Framework were carried out and some elements of the system piloted in **1070** institutions - VET and adult training providers. They received 2x1 day free of charge methodological training and free of charge on-site technical assistance by mentors-experts.

## *Chapter II*

### **Main characteristics of the recently restructured VET system in Hungary**

In Hungary's new structure of public administration the Ministry for National Economy (MNE, Hungarian abbreviation NGM) is responsible for VET and Adult Training.

The new VET government has acknowledged the strategic role of VET and set – in line with the VET Development Strategy for 2005 - 2013 and the educational policy measures of recent years – as the main aims and direction of the complex restructuring of the VET system to

1. Better match the training supply and the labour-market demand: VET should serve and meet the demands/needs of the economy, labour-market.
2. Increase the attractiveness of VET.

The policy objectives and the (planned) actions of the new VET governance include

- increase the duration of practical training,
- better support the vocations in short supply,
- reduce the time period of training,
- simplify the examination requirements,
- further support apprenticeship training,
- develop external evaluation / inspection system in VET.

The steps/measures taken in 2011 and 2012 include amongst others

- Adopting the VET concept/strategy.
- Adopting the New Act on VET and the related new legislation.
- Establishing by law the 19 County Development and Training Committees (CDTC, Hungarian abbreviation MFKB) which are dominated by representatives of the economy and play an increasingly important role in establishing a demand-driven VET system and also in the county level coordination of VET development activities. The CDTCs contribute to aligning the labour market needs and the development of both school-based VET and VET outside the school system. They make recommendations for the county list of vocations / qualifications of short supply, the appropriate shares of student enrolment and also concerning the distribution of the development funds / subsidy among the institutions / qualifications in the county.
- Renewing the National Qualifications Register (NQR, Hungarian abbreviation OKJ). Changes aim at eliminating the overlaps and professional/content-related duplication (parallelism) among the qualifications. Their number has been reduced from 437 to 287. There are also less partial qualifications (146), and no branch qualifications and built-on qualifications any more.
- Revising the Vocational examination requirements (VER, Hungarian abbreviation SZVK) for the 77 qualifications under the MNE responsibility.
- Revision of the central programs of qualifications (curriculum). Elaborating and issuing the VET curricula recommendations for the 77 qualifications under the MNE responsibility.
- Changing the vocational examinations.
  - Complex (and not modular) exercises specific to each qualification.
  - Shorter examinations in time (2 days).
  - Simpler evaluation.



- Restructuring the practical (apprenticeship) training.  
A special Hungarian dual system is being introduced with vocational theory in school, and increased duration of the practical training at external training sites – companies, enterprises. The aim is to strengthen the apprenticeship training based on a student contract concluded between the student and the enterprise. The system is being piloted now; it will become compulsory as from September 2013.
- Reforming the adult training system.  
The adult training strategy was reconsidered in full and this resulted in a new concept paper and a new Act on Adult training. On this new basis the adult training accreditation system will also be re-organised.

Presently two large scale projects are running with the aim to develop – amongst others – new approaches to quality assurance and continuous quality improvement of VET institutions:

1. Social Development Operative Programme 2.2.1-12/1 titled “**Improving the quality and content of VET and adult training provision**” managed by the National Labour Office (Duration: August 2012 – July 2014).
2. Social Development Operative Programme 3.1.8. titled “**Quality improvement in public education**” managed by the Educational Authority (Duration: July 2012 – June 2014).

The aim of the project „**Improving the quality and content of VET and adult training provision**” is to establish a vocational and adult training system which takes into account also the demands of disadvantaged individuals as persons with low qualification, disability and reduced capacity of work. The structure and the content of the training should be able to meet the labour market needs.

The task of such a training system is to satisfy the specialist / skilled worker needs of the economy, thus to increase employability. To achieve this, in line with the new Act on VET and within the institutional and organisational framework of the restructuring VET system the content development and improvement of the vocational and adult training will be continued, yet made more complete through the elaboration and implementation of the process control documentation, the expansion of assessment and evaluation, the development of the VET process inspection system, the unification of the regulation and content of the individual training areas, and aligning them with the European systems.

The development of the tools and systems within the project will correspond with the new Act on Public Education, the National Disabilities Programme, the planned changes in the adult training system and the Hungarian Employment Programme of the Széll Kálmán Plan<sup>7</sup>; they will be piloted and the users will be trained.

The project has five development areas as follows:

*Subproject 1: Expanding assessment and evaluation*

This subproject will expand, further develop and renew the professional results achieved in the 1st phase of the project. The already existing publicly available databank of tasks (e.g. exercises, tests) for the module-based examination system will be broadened with a number of IT functions which make the use of the system more easy-going, comfortable and versatile for both the teachers / trainers and the students. There will be 2500 exercises developed to the

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<sup>7</sup> Hungary’s National Reform Programme

complex vocational examination activities related to the newly modified National Qualifications Register.

*Subproject 2: Aligning the National Qualifications Register (OKJ) with qualifications regulated by public authorities*

The task of this subproject is to establish the register of the regulated qualifications and regulated professions as well as the documents describing their content and professional features. A proposal will be elaborated for a more up-to-date, EU conform regulation system, too. In order to eliminate the anomalies between the vocational qualifications of the OKJ and the regulated qualifications and professions, on new bases the operational and regulatory system of this training subsystem will be developed which will be supported by an IT-based registration system.

In the result of the development activities the structure and the content of the documents describing the content of the regulated qualifications and regulated professions will be in harmony with those of the OKJ qualifications which makes possible their integration into the databank of tasks (see above).

*Subproject 3: Elaborating framework curricula of VET*

The task of this subproject is to elaborate framework curricula of vocational training which promote the unification and quality improvement of VET. They help to ensure the permeability between the institutions as well as the compatibility of the content of the school-based VET (IVET) and the VET provided outside the school system (CVET, adult training). With the aim to establish teaching and learning (management) practices satisfying the requirements of high quality VET provision, the institutions (teachers, trainers) have to be provided all-round professional support and made able to use and adapt these curricula to local needs therefore an IT-based web surface / platform will be developed to serve the preparation of the local curricula of the schools. On this platform the relevant professional materials, pieces of legislation, methodological aids and guidance materials will be made available for the implementation of framework curricula.

*Subproject 4: Developing a professional process inspection system in VET*

Within this subproject a professional process inspection system (external evaluation system in VET) will be developed which will use the positive experiences of the existing inspection / evaluation systems and act upon organically the new system and the new framework curricula of VET.

A process inspection methodological handbook and an IT system supporting the professional process inspection system will be developed and experts (inspectors) will be trained. The professional process inspection system will be tested in VET school environment, the experiences will be collected and analysed and based on this feedback, the system will be revised and finalised.

*Subproject 5: Developing the National Qualifications Framework*

The aim of this subproject is to reference the VET and adult training qualifications against the 8 levels of the National Qualifications Framework. Methodological guidance materials and an IT system will help this process.

The project “**Quality improvement in public education**” is implemented under the priority 3 – Providing quality education and ensuring access for all – of the Social Renewal Operative Programme (SRDP). The pillars of the project are as follows:

1. Improving the assessment of student achievement.
2. Self-evaluation of schools and uniform external evaluation system of institutions and teachers’ work.
3. Information management and feedback.
4. Supporting school development: Developing the standards of quality improvement in schools.
5. Developing the national framework of qualifications in public education.

*Pillar 1: Improving the assessment of student achievement*

The aim is to revise and renew the standardised secondary school leaving tests and the competency assessment tests. New content frameworks will be determined and adequate assessment tools will be developed.

*Pillar 2: Self-evaluation of schools and uniform external evaluation system of institutions and teachers’ work*

The aim is to create a standardised external evaluation system which has been absent from the Hungarian public education since 1985.

A group of experts – representing the various levels of public education: nursery-schools, primary schools, secondary schools, secondary vocational training schools, art schools, student hostels and special education schools – has developed the standards of external evaluation (inspectorate) for teachers, school leaders and schools. The standards (criteria) and tools (procedures, questionnaires, evaluation forms etc.) are currently being tested in 52 schools in the framework of a research and development procedure. The results of the testing are expected by the end of June 2013 when a revision of the standards begins and is due to be completed in August 2013. Meanwhile, in July 2013 forty experts will be trained to perform as trainers of inspectors (TTT programme). The training of inspectors (1000 persons first) will take place in autumn 2013.

In the period from January 2014 to June 2014 revision and improvement of the system will take place and further inspectors will be trained, the total number of the trained inspectors will make approximately 4000 persons. The inspectors’ tasks will not only be the evaluation of teachers, school leaders and schools, but they will also be trained to take part in the qualification process of teachers in the framework of the career cycle of teachers<sup>8</sup>. Both the inspection and qualification procedures will be supported by an information database system, which also helps the organisation of inspections and qualifications.

In the course of the pedagogical-professional evaluation the inspectors will rely on and use the results coming from the internal evaluations of the school such as the institution-wide self-evaluation, performance evaluation of teachers, feeding back and integrating the results of the national competency assessment into the continuous improvement process of the pedagogical work, surveying the satisfaction of parents and teachers as well as other partners of the school, evaluation of the effectiveness of managing the school organisation and the pedagogical work etc. Based on the results of the external evaluation, the headmaster of the school has to elaborate a 5-year action plan setting the tasks to improve the pedagogical-professional work of the institution.

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<sup>8</sup> The model of the career cycle for teachers is developed in the framework of another project (SROP 3.1.5.).

Meanwhile, the system of self-evaluation is being developed in close relation with the school external evaluation and with the standards of quality improvement in schools. The standardized system of self-evaluation should support external evaluation according to the quality improvement standards. The first version of the self-evaluation standards and tools will be developed by August 2013 and will be tested in 50 schools in autumn 2013. The finalised version of self-evaluation system is expected by the end of 2013, so in January 2014 – along with the external evaluation – it can be launched system-wide.

According to the new Act on Public Education „*The headmaster has to prepare, based on the public criteria, the self-assessment of the school which has to be approved by the teaching staff.*” (150§, (4)) This means that institutional self-evaluation remains in the focus of attention in the newly developed system, too.

### *Pillar 3: Information management and feedback*

The aim is to develop a set of indicators suitable for monitoring the developments in education. The chosen indicators must be given a clear focus and the required technical conditions have to be determined, developed and established. The outcome should be an integrated database of indicators in education.

### *Pillar 4: Supporting school development: Developing the standards of quality improvement in schools*

The aim is a complete renewal of the complex school quality management / improvement system which is closely related to self- and external evaluation. Quality improvement standards were determined and tested in 100 schools in spring 2013. Based upon the analysis of the results of the testing the standards are being improved at the moment and will be finalised by mid-June 2013.

### *Pillar 5: Development of the national framework of qualifications in public education*

The aim is to define the learning outcomes of the first four levels – related to public education – of the national framework of qualifications.

*The Figure 8 below shows the Framework of quality improvement in the Hungarian public education.*

