



European Centre for the
Development of Vocational Training

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP ON QUALITY IN VET

An European Guide on Self-assessment for VET-providers

Final Version

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Preface

The Council Resolution on ‘Increased cooperation in European vocational education and training’ ⁽¹⁾ - also called the ‘Copenhagen process’ - identifies a series of priorities to be pursued through enhanced cooperation in order to promote mutual trust, transparency and recognition of competences/qualifications and thereby establish a basis for increasing mobility and facilitating access to lifelong learning.

The Resolution stipulated that between late 2002 and 2004 work should focus on the development of a single transparency framework, on credit transfer in VET and on quality assurance.

Concerning quality the Resolution gives priority to ‘promoting cooperation in quality assurance with particular focus on exchange of models and methods, as well as common criteria and principles for quality in vocational education and training’.

The policy priorities, which served as guidelines for the work already started by the earlier European Forum on quality in VET, constitute the framework for the current work:

- better employability of the labour force;
- better match between training supply and demand;
- better access to vocational training, in particular for vulnerable groups on the labour market.

The Technical Working Group (TWG), which took over and further developed the results of the work of the European Forum, has confirmed the European dimension to its mandate and that work and conclusions should provide an European added value in initiatives taken at national level.

The wider perspective of the mandate is to develop an operational approach to quality in VET, based on a common core of quality criteria and set of indicators. Furthermore, to develop practical tools to support self-assessment as a basis for a cooperation framework to promote the exchange of good practise. Self-assessment forms an integral part of quality management systems in VET institutions. Encouraging the systematic practice of self-assessment by actors at various levels was and remains one of the objectives of the work on quality in VET at Community level.

The main outcome of this mandate is the European Common Quality Assurance Framework, which consists of the four areas: Model, Methodology, Monitoring, Measurement. The methodology is self-assessment and the model suggests four core criteria which constitute the frame for this self-assessment guide. Measurement is the set of European Indicators, which is also incorporated in the self-assessment framework.

This guide for self-assessment is addressed to the VET-providers operating in the fields of initial and continuing training, in the public and private sectors, and aims at assisting them in better managing the quality of their training provision.

The author, the Commission and Cedefop would like to express their thanks to the members of the Technical Working Group for their commitment and the examples of national self-assessment practices that they have provided.

⁽¹⁾ Resolution of the Council of the European Union (Education, Youth and Culture) adopted on 12 November 2002.

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Introduction

This first version of the Guide on Self-assessment is based on previous work on self-assessment by the European Forum, experiences from the Member States, The CAF ⁽²⁾ and Leonardo da Vinci projects.

The Self-Assessment Guide is intended as a tool to assist VET-providers across Europe to use quality management techniques to improve performance.

The Self-Assessment Guide provides a simple, easy-to-use framework, which is suitable for a self-assessment of VET provision and has two main purposes:

1. to serve as a tool for VET-providers who want to improve the performance of their organisation;
2. to act as a 'bridge' to facilitate dialogue across the various vocational educational and training systems in Europe.

A VET-provider is not 'an island on its own'. A national system (including various ministries, such as the ministry of education, etc.) can always adopt statutory provisions that will overrule a voluntary approach or a voluntary solution at VET-provider level.

VET-providers are facing increasing demands to react to rapid changes, to use new technologies, to be more effective, to respond to stakeholders'/users' needs, to learn from others and to be visible and competitive in the community. The purpose of self-assessment is to produce information about how you as a VET-provider respond to the demands facing you. How do you, as a VET-provider, balance the present and future needs of your different stakeholders with the available resources?

The value of performing a self-assessment lies both in the process itself and in the possibility of being able to take business decisions knowing what results actions will produce.

Self-assessment provides:

- a systematic and general view of all the activities in the VET institution;
- the possibility to verify the coherence between what the organisation does and the results obtained;
- a learning impact as experiences are worked out logically;
- a long list of areas for improvement which can be prioritised;
- continuity, since evaluation is a natural part of planning and activities;
- mutual recognition of the various contributors during the process, which makes it possible to focus on and motivate for forthcoming tasks;
- effectiveness, since personal decisions are taken at grassroots level and the evaluation data are relatively easily utilised;
- flexibility and appropriateness, since activities can be tailored to local needs from the beginning.

The self-assessment guide is based on a collection of quality criteria from different countries and VET systems. It is the only quality system with questions and explanatory statements directed at the

⁽²⁾ The CAF: the Common Assessment Framework is a self-assessment framework, resulting from cooperation between the EU ministers responsible for Public Administration

VET-provider and it reflects the conditions and everyday life of the VET provision generally. Although this Guide has taken those criteria into account, the Guide's purpose is merely to suggest that the specific issues relating to the criteria are considered and addressed in one way or other.

The possibility to focus on suitable explanatory statements in the self assessment questionnaire, which includes a large number of statements, enables small or large VET organisations, operating in the initial or continuing VET sectors, to select what they consider relevant for their teachers, trainers and staff and their chosen objectives. A smaller questionnaire is available for a quick assessment.

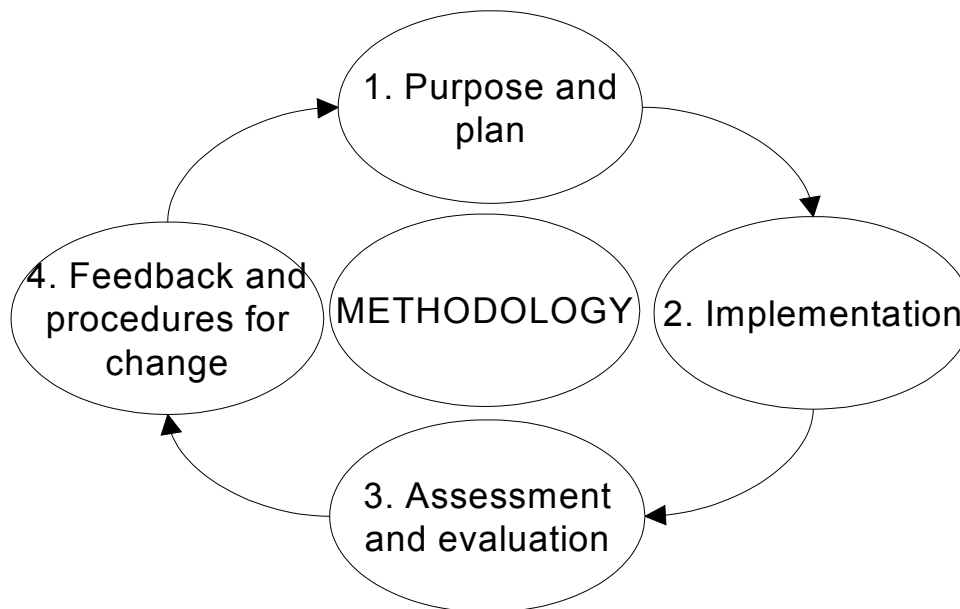
The order of this guide follows the logic of the self-assessment process. The first heading is *Self-assessment: the European Common Quality Assurance Framework* and describes the overall structure of the Core Quality Criteria for VET and makes a proposal for the overall mapping of VET. The second heading is *Preconditions*, and deals with the issues to be considered when management is trying to determine whether self-assessment is a suitable method for evaluation and development in its organisation. The third heading is *Organisation* and considers the aspects of preparing the practical organisation of a self-assessment process. The fourth heading is *The Process*, and deals with the actual self-assessment process. The fifth heading is *Fixing an order of priority*, and deals with methods for sorting out all the relevant, but often overwhelming, and necessary subjects that need improvement and the creation of an improvement plan. The sixth heading deals with the *Follow up* to the self-assessment process. The seventh heading *External verification* covers the aspects of verification and accreditation of the results achieved through self-assessment. The aspects of cooperation and exchange of experiences at national and European level are considered in the eighth heading *Benchmarking and cooperation*. Finally, the detailed description of the quality criteria of the -European Framework mentioned above, which of those criteria to consider, and suggestions for indicators and results are described in the ninth heading *Core Quality Criteria for VET-providers*.

The questionnaires or frameworks to use for self-assessment at VET-provider level can be found in Annex A.

As far as the system level is concerned, it should focus on specific quality criteria for improving quality in VET provision and construct a coherent system for VET-providers to operate within. In Annex B there is a small guide for performing self-assessment at this level, with a description of the preconditions to be considered and a framework for performing self-assessment at this level. Finally, this Annex also contains two Figures: B3 shows which of the European indicators defined so far by the former European Forum and the TWG on Quality in VET are relevant to both the key (i.e. training) and support (i.e. non-training) processes of a VET-provider; B4 shows how quality criteria are related to self-assessment of both the training and non-training processes of a VET-provider.

1. Self-assessment and the European Common Quality Assurance Framework

Figure 1: The Common Core Criteria from the *European Common Quality Assurance Framework*



Methodology is the central point of the Common Core Criteria.

When deciding on a quality approach at VET-provider level or VET-system level, it is possible to choose different methods.

A methodology of centralisation gives detailed and specific directions and rules on the basis of the quality criteria. This requires a set of rules and control measures to be applied to ensure a coherent and consistent system.

It is also possible to choose self-assessment as the method to achieve good results with the quality criteria. The self-assessment guide will ask the VET-provider to focus on delivering the desired results and to focus on specific quality criteria, but will not give directions as to how they are going to be achieved. When performing a self-assessment, the organisation is in a learning process during which it has to recognise which actions lead to improved results. This gives an opportunity for the organisation to react and take decisions at the grassroots level.

Often confusion rises regarding the use of the word self-assessment. It is used both as characterisation of the quality approach itself based on the quality criteria, and it is also used as characterisation of the process of evaluation. The specific pre-conditions that enable the organisation and its participants to perform self-assessment are described in Chapter 2.

Accordingly, the Common Core Criteria will appear as in Figure 2.

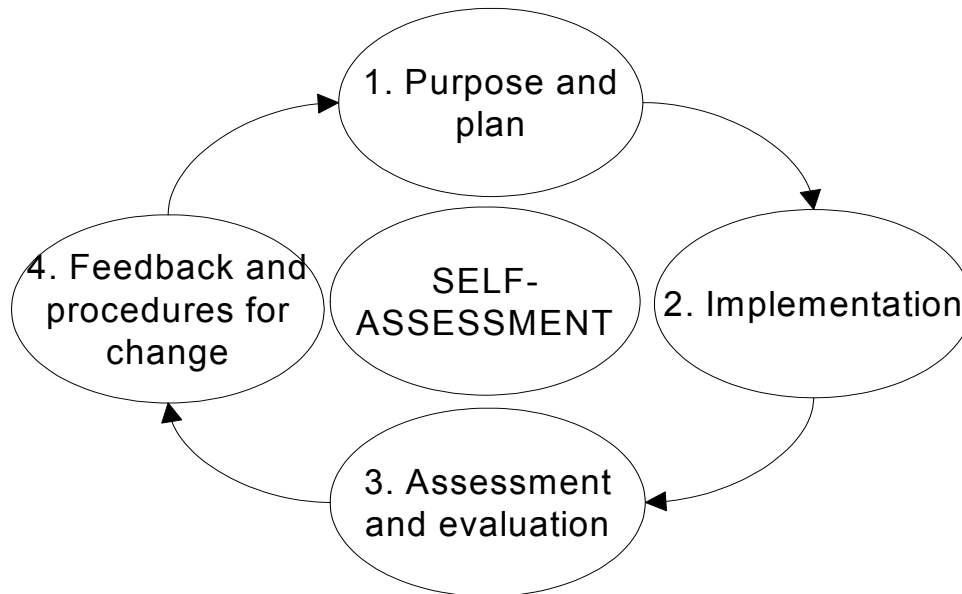


Figure 2: The Common Core Criteria: self-assessment is the methodology

The Quality Model for VET-providers provides a simple yet powerful framework to initiate a process of continuous improvement.

According to the model derived from the European Common Quality Assurance Framework, self-assessment provides:

- an assessment based on evidence;
- a means of measuring progress over time through periodic self-assessment;
- a means to achieve a stakeholder-focused strategy, consistency of direction and consensus on what needs to be done to improve an organisation;
- an assessment against a set of criteria, which has been carefully selected across initial and continuing VET in Europe;
- a link between goals and support strategies and processes;
- a means to focus improvement activity where it is most needed;
- a means to create enthusiasm among employees by involving them in the improvement process;
- opportunities to promote and share good practice within different areas of VET provision and with other VET-providers.

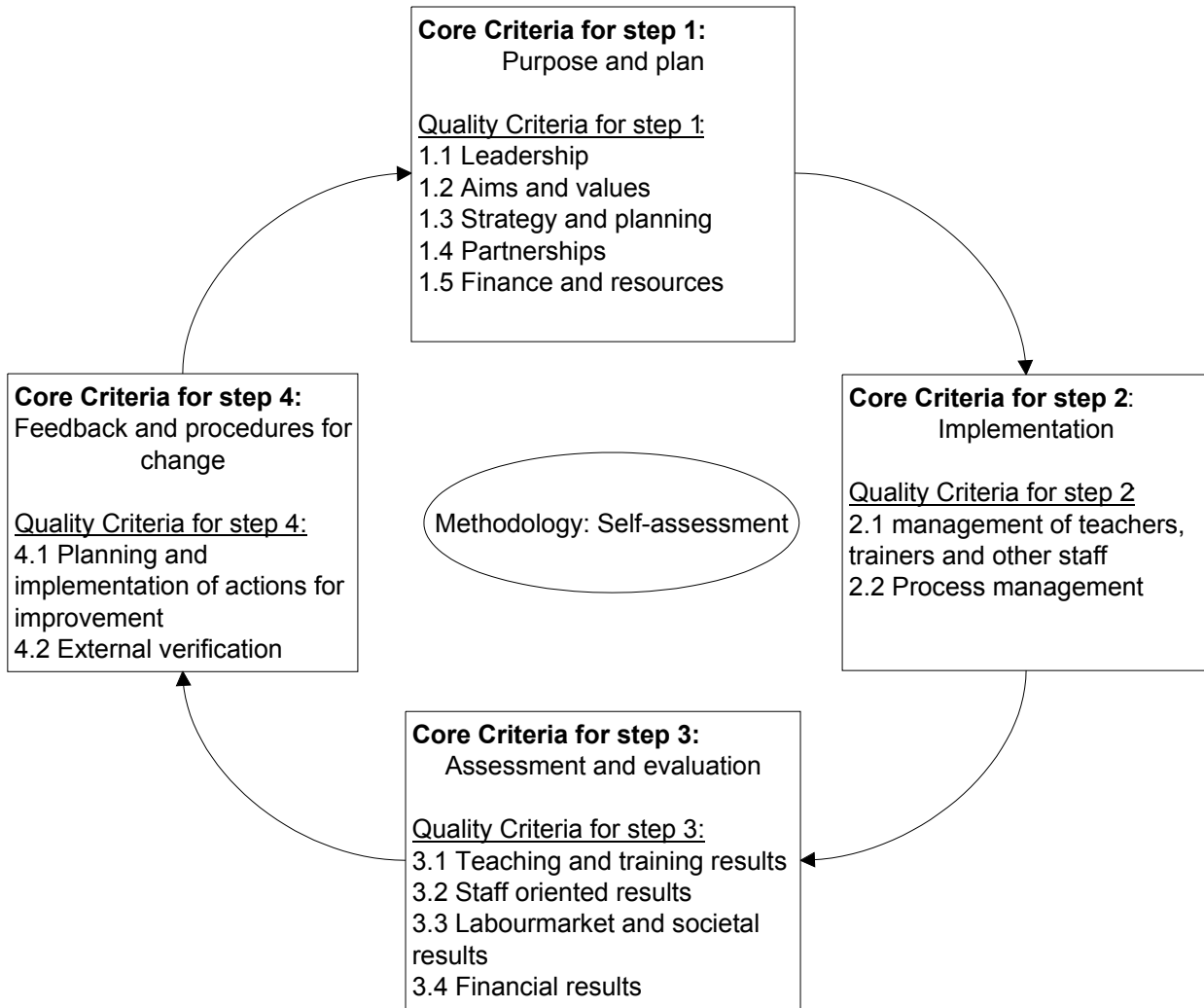


Figure 3: The Model derived from the European Common Quality Assurance Framework for self-assessment with the core quality criteria

To be able to get a picture of ‘the landscape of VET’ and of what and who are important to securing and developing quality at the level of the individual VET-provider, the following illustration can be used for inspiration.

The key processes in VET provision are defined as all activities directly related to teaching and/or training. They can be ascertained by following the trainees’ pathway through the educational system from access to exit, and hopefully to a job.

Support processes are defined as those processes necessary for making the organisation work properly and for the functioning of the key processes.

Figure 4 presents suggestions for key processes and support processes.

Stakeholders are organisations or people with a professional interest in the VET provision. Some are so familiar that they are easy to forget, but mapping the VET landscape helps to identify the stakeholders and thus makes the strategy of the VET institution clearer. Figure 4 contains suggestions as to who the stakeholders may be, but each VET-provider may define his/her own stakeholders and the number and type of them depends on the context of the individual VET-provider.

The important thing is that the number of stakeholders involved should not be more than is necessary but should be enough to ensure the development of the quality of the VET provision.

Landscape of VET

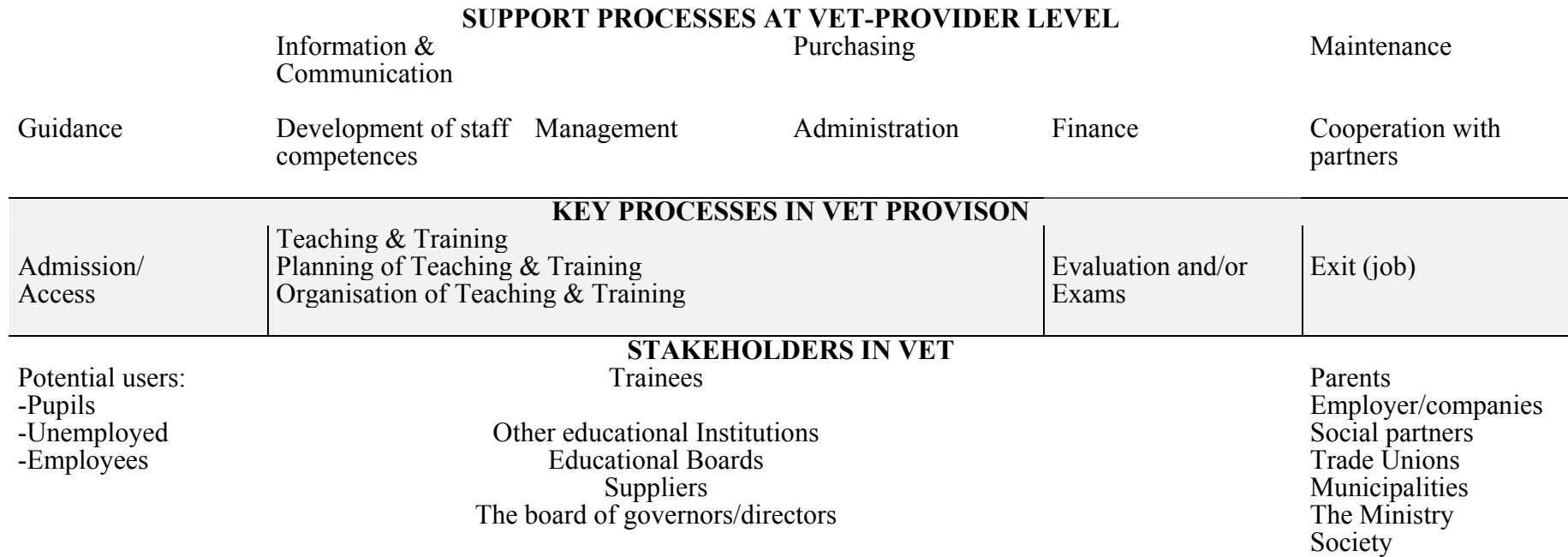


Figure 4: Landscape of VET

2. Pre-conditions

This chapter deals with the issues to be considered when management is trying to determine whether self-assessment is the suitable method for evaluating and developing its organisation. The first thing to be noted is that there are no limits to the implementation of self-assessment. Although every organisation, whether public or private, educational or training, initial or continuing, can self-assess, before starting the process, some issues need to be taken into account.

The self-assessment process in broad terms

Self-assessment work is a long-term process with continuous development of the organisational system and data collection methods. It takes time and the fruits of the process cannot be harvested quickly. It is linked with the regular (annual) work plan and its targets or objectives should be linked to the evaluation process.

When management has decided on self-assessment as the means to produce information on how the organisation performs, a long list of activities has to be drawn up, coordinated and followed. The process of self-assessment begins with selecting the objectives of the evaluation and the questionnaire, then all available results that exist in and about the organisation are then collected. After informing the participants in the self-assessment process of the available results, the individual assessment starts with the filling in of the questionnaire. This individual part continues with a meeting to reach a consensus on the list of the areas in need of improvement. As it is impossible to tackle all the tasks highlighted in the self-assessment, the next step is to prioritise the items that are to be focused on during the next period. Periods usually follow an organisation's accounting year and this often means annually cycles. To maintain the focus on the agreed areas for improvement, it is necessary to monitor and supervise the relevant tasks while carrying out daily work routines. Finally the self-assessment procedure is repeated, the gains and successes of the period are communicated, the new areas for improvement are prioritised, etc.

Preconditions or 'are we ready for self-assessment?'

Five issues should be considered in the process of determining whether self-assessment is the appropriate method for developing a VET institution:

- mission, vision and values
- commitment
- autonomy
- dialogue
- evidence

Self-assessment works best in communities in which the management has a clear view of the basic tasks of the VET institutions and where its is committed to participate in the evaluation. It works best when employees have a large degree of autonomy to perform their jobs, where there is an atmosphere of open and honest dialogue and mutual respect among colleagues. Finally self-assessment is based on evidence and requires more than talk and a good story; it takes time and resources. But self-assessment also frees up resources by redirecting them in a sensible and useful way.

If these conditions are far from the everyday life of the VET institution, it might be difficult to tackle all the organisational challenges in one go. On the other hand, if this is the case, the need for change is apparent. To enable the reader to decide whether or not self-assessment is necessary, a more detailed description of the five issues follows.

Mission, vision and values are the guiding principles of the organisation. It is the awareness of ‘why are we in business’, ‘where are we aiming to go’ and ‘what are our mutual codes of conduct’? Knowledge of this forms the basis for cooperation and mutual understanding in the organisation, and thereby the basis for obtaining consensus about the self-assessment process. It is the experience of many organisations that a self-assessment process starts discussions about and definition or revision of mission, vision and values.

Commitment of management is essential for a successful self-assessment process. Self-assessment is a central aspect of the management of an educational institution. The management of a VET institution must have a clear view of the basic task of the VET provision, of its *raison d’être*, of vision and its business idea. The task of performing self-assessment can be difficult, but the management can make the process of starting the self-assessment easier, by placing itself in the forefront of the evaluation.

Autonomy relates to the planning, execution and revision not only of one’s work but also of one’s self-assessment. Autonomy can apply at institutional level, at departmental level or even at teacher and trainer level. It is a necessary condition for carrying out a successful self-assessment. What to do and why to do it are rarely matters that many people or institutions can decide, but autonomy in the area of ‘how to do’ something is possible and important for participants if they are to take self-assessment seriously.

Another important point is the fact that achievement of greater autonomy is also the objective of the self-assessment process itself. Self-assessment is conducted so that the organisation can react adequately to changes. To do this it has to be performed at grassroots level. Self-assessment empowers the staff to evaluate and develop their own activities; hence autonomy is the basis of good performance.

Dialogue is a necessary condition for self-assessment and dialogue is also a successful outcome of the process. Dialogue should be conducted in an open and honest atmosphere with acceptance of differences and respect for the work of colleagues. Dialogue should also to be based on a strong feeling of self-confidence and a professional identity among management, teachers, trainers and other staff.

Evidence or data are the basis of decision making.

For example, the statement ‘we are very good at teaching, all the trainees say so!’ can only be accepted when there is the necessary documentation to back it up. If this documentation does not exist, procuring it should appear on as a priority area for improvement.

Establishing systems for measuring relevant results is one of the most common outcomes of the first self-assessment process.

Figure 5: Characteristic features of a self-assessment organisation

- The workplace community's activities are based on cooperation and constant interaction.
- The community questions its own values, its objectives and its action modes and examines them together from different points of view.
- Different operating modes are tried out within the community and experiences are analysed together.
- The community estimates its own functioning continuously and tries to make it transparent.
- The community develops its members' know-how continuously and tries to promote motivation to work and develop oneself.

Source: Self-Evaluation. National Board of Education. Finland

Suitability of self-assessment for the different types of VET-provider

Self-assessment is suitable for all types of organisation. It can be conducted in a department or in a part of an organisation with independent responsibility (autonomy) for budgets and personnel, but the best results are seen when the whole organisation participates. If this is not the case, since a lot of areas for improvement will be linked to the rest of the organisation, the self-assessment will not have much of an impact in terms of making the rest of the organisation change its practices.

As already stressed above, the described method of self-assessment is applicable to all types of VET and the logic behind it is based on that of the Model derived from the European Common Quality Assurance Framework, which reflects the normal procedure for taking action: first, establish a purpose and a plan, then implement the chosen actions together with teachers and trainers or other staff on the basis of available resources, then assess and evaluate the results obtained and finally process feedback and implement changes. This logic makes it easy for all types of VET to recognise their everyday experiences. Also, as mentioned previously, the self-assessment questionnaire allows different types of VET to choose from among the illustrative statements in the questionnaire, and to select those that are most suited to their objectives and line of business and also to be inspired by examples from other VET systems.

Degree of management involvement in the self-assessment process

The involvement of the management has to be great and visible to the organisation.

Without management involvement there is no reason for the organisation to take the decision to self-assess seriously, and it will be more than a waste of time: it will be a de-motivational factor. No quality approach has ever proven successful without the involvement of management.

3. Organisation

Processes of development and evaluation can be seen as going through different feelings. First a phase of denial where the task is conceived as not relevant, followed by a phase of resistance, where a lot of effort can go into finding reasons why the ‘self-assessment task is an incoherent, badly structured, badly worded task that is unsuitable for exactly my area of work’. If this phase is overcome, the exploration phase will start, where it becomes interesting to find out how this process can be used and how it is implemented in practice. Finally there is a phase of commitment and obligation and people identify themselves with the self-assessment process.

This can be illustrated as follows:

Phases of development

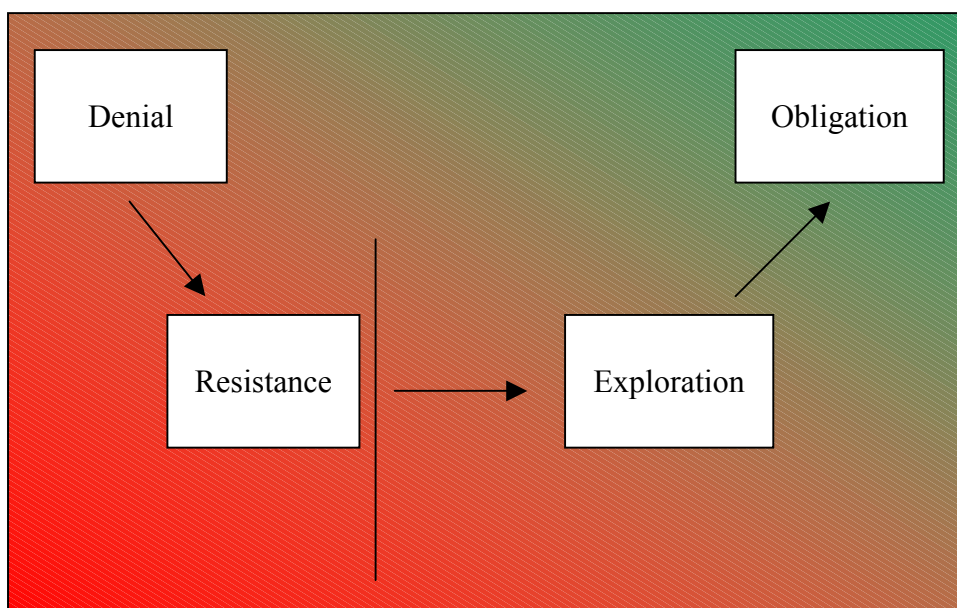


Figure 6: Phases in the development of a self-assessment process. From MARS

To be able to organise a positive process of self-assessment these phases have to be known and recognised as natural reactions to be overcome.

Commitment

Before a self-assessment project is launched, the senior management of the organisation should discuss and agree on the arrangements, regarding the organisation and allocation of resources, for conducting the assessment. It should also discuss the perceived purpose of the assessment and the intended actions following completion of the assessment.

It is a good idea for all participants in the management group to try out the self-assessment process on their own, before letting the assessment group or the entire staff carry out a self-assessment. To try out the process among equals gives a primary understanding of the strengths, areas for improvement and the problems involved and will make the managers better skilled in guiding teachers, trainers and other staff during the self-assessment.

Appointing a project leader

The coordination of the self-assessment process has to be done by a single person, otherwise confusion will arise in the organisation and there will be rumours about how other parts of the organisation are doing.

The self-assessment project leader participates in the meetings of the management when self-assessment is on the agenda.

The responsibility of the self-assessment project leader includes ensuring that all necessary information and documentation is provided to the self-assessment group, supporting contacts and information distribution within the group, arranging meetings, accommodation for meetings, reporting, etc.

Establish the assessment group

- **A large organisation**

Common arrangements for a self-assessment team involve an ad hoc group, which is as representative of the organisation as possible. It would be usual to include members from different sectors/levels within the organisation. The objective is to establish as small and effective a group as possible, but at the same time one which provides the most accurate and detailed internal perspective of the organisation. It is important to select participants on the basis of their personal (e.g. analytical and communicative skills) rather than professional skills. The chair could also be the project leader. The chairperson is responsible for the proper conduct of all group proceedings, in cooperation with the project leader if they are not one and the same person.

- **A large organisation with very autonomous departments**

Large VET institutions in particular can give their departments a great deal of autonomy. They are able to decide budgets, educational planning etc., to a large extent, on their own.

In this case a mutual self-assessment process, with one representative from every department, can have little or no meaning. They all have different experiences, maybe even different codes of conduct and they may not ever have met before, as they sometimes work at different locations or addresses.

This can call for the different departments to be treated as rather independent organisations, and they can be called on to decide for themselves how to perform their self-assessment. The results will then be delivered to the senior management of the institution, who will have the job of coordinating all efforts within an overall business plan and of ensuring that the different departments all follow the policies and strategies of the VET institution and that they are not contradictory.

- **A small organisation or department**

If the organisation or department undertaking self-assessment is smaller than approximately 20 persons, the setting up of an ad hoc group, a self-assessment team, can be dispensed and everybody participates in the process.

The manager/the management has to decide if everybody can be part of the self-assessment, which will have a great impact on the development process but will also require the allocation of substantial resources. If it is decided that only some of the people employed will participate, the procedure will be the same as in the case of a larger organisation.

Inform the entire organisation

The entire organisation should be informed of the decision to perform a self-assessment and the background to the decision. This is partly to reassure staff that the self-assessment is a developmental tool and that it is focused on improving the performance of the entire organisation on the basis of evidence. This will mean that most employees will experience the demand for evidence of the quality of their work, and it is vital for the participation of everybody that they have an understanding of the nature of this process. The purpose of self-assessment is to improve

everybody's performance and NOT to find scapegoats. This is why it is vital that the management is committed to being a good role model.

The entire organisation should be informed (or participate in the decision – depending on the culture and nature of the organisation):

- why the management has decided to conduct a self-assessment
- why they have chosen the European Common Quality Assurance Framework
- what objectives and targets are in focus
- how the schedule of the process is planned
- who is going to participate in the self-assessment
- the responsibility of the project leader
- when the results can be expected to be published

4. The process

Inform the self-assessment team about what the process is and how it is to be conducted

The self-assessment model with the core criteria should be introduced and the purposes and nature of the self-assessment procedure explained (the need to support scores with evidence, etc.). The group should be assured that nobody will suffer for expressing an honest opinion. A list with all relevant documents and information needed to assess the organisation in an effective way should be available to the group. To give the group a better understanding of how the self-assessment questionnaire is operating, one question from the core criteria 1 or 2 and one from the core criteria 3 should be assessed jointly. First everybody contributes to the list of improvements and strengths, and then a consensus has to be reached on how to evaluate the evidence of strengths and how to assign scores.

Undertake individual assessment

The chair must be available to handle questions from the members of the self-assessment group during the individual assessment. Each member of the self-assessment group is being asked to give an accurate assessment of the organisation based on their own knowledge and experience of working in the organisation. Besides the actual score it is important that individuals within the group write down key words and evidence about strengths and weaknesses to support their scores.

The key words on improvement are the basis of the development plan, hence they are obligatory. The strengths encourage the organisation, and are a positive acknowledgement of the work done so far. When continued assessments have been performed, the list of strengths will grow and be a visible sign of a learning organisation. The score is a help to validate the keywords, but self-assessment can be performed without scoring.

It may be seen, at the following consensus meeting, that the keywords noted are exactly the same, but when it comes to the score, there will be a wide variation. The opposite is also possible. The score may be exactly the same but there could be a huge difference in what are considered strengths and weaknesses.

The combination of both noting evidence of strengths and weaknesses and the effort to attribute an appropriate score improves the process of self-assessment and provides the best basis for discussion of the overall results of the self-assessment.

Undertake consensus

As soon as possible after the individual assessment, the group should meet and agree on how to score the organisation on each sub-criterion. A process of 'negotiation' may be necessary to reach agreement.

Sometimes the participants have experienced frustrations performing the individual assessment. Some of the questions or statements may have been difficult to answer with appropriate keywords or they have felt it annoying having to give a low score because of lack of evidence. It is best to tackle the frustrations from the beginning of the meeting. They will come out into the open anyway and may disrupt the process of reaching a consensus. The chair can make a short 'tour de table' so that everybody can relate their experiences, collect all the problematic experiences, and promise that they will be taken into consideration when the self-assessment process is evaluated.

Organisational problems can come into the open. The chair should politely refer them to the appropriate forums if they are of no relevance to the self-assessment process.

In the process of arriving at a consensus, a four-step method may be used:

1. presenting and writing down visibly to all, the range of keywords of strengths and weaknesses and the range of individual scores applied to each question;
2. identifying the significant points of consensus and difference;
3. discussing the background to any significant cases of difference;
4. attempting to reach consensus, possibly on the basis of a second assessment-round for selected criteria.

Steps 1 and 2 can be undertaken by the project leader in the time between the attributing of the individual score and the consensus meeting. Everybody will then have all the scores and keywords from every member of the self-assessment team on paper, and this provides an excellent basis for discussions and attempts to reach consensus.

The chair has a key role in conducting this process in a constructive way and arriving at a group consensus. In all cases, the discussion should be based on concrete evidence of efforts made and results achieved. It is important for the consensus, that the participants are willing to discuss their score and their evidence to back it up, in a positive and open manner.

In the absence of consensus a vote can be the last but not best solution.

5. Setting priorities

The record of the self-assessment should be communicated to the organisation and carefully examined by senior management with a view to identifying the main findings of the self-assessment, the areas in which action is most needed, and the kind of action, which is called for.

When communicating the results of the self-assessment to the organisation, please note that using a score often leads to comparisons. If it is possible to compare the individual departments, this can lead to a negative effect in the organisation and in future self-assessment processes. Some institutions keep the individual scores secret. At least the management of the organisation should consider what they want to do.

The senior management may find it helpful to group the areas of improvement under common themes before deciding relative priorities. In preparing such a plan, the management might wish to consider the use of a structured approach, including the questions:

- Where do we want to be in 5 years (goal setting)?
- What actions need to be taken to reach these goals (strategy/task definition)?

It is possible to make a priority list for smaller tasks using a more logical/mathematical approach. Figure 6 provides an example of a framework for doing so. But it should be kept in mind that it is only one example of how to draw up a priority list.

Remember!!! One should always look at the mathematical results and consult the other participants about its validity from a common-sense point of view. Common sense is a very important ingredient in arriving at a useful order of priority.

Some actions can be the basis for other actions, hence they should come first.

Others can be important but not feasible of lack of resources such as people, money, buildings, machinery, IT, etc.

All the issues on the list are probably important, but it is also important to realise and to bring to the attention of the organisation that the issues are on the list and have not been forgotten, and that the process of improvement is indeed a process, whereby achieved results are recognised and the focus is placed on future actions.

When this cycle is repeated, it will be possible to move some of 'areas for improvement' to the list of 'strengths', and hence visibly demonstrate the effect of the self-assessment process.

Figure 7: An example of a framework for making a priority list of subjects for improvement

CRITERIA FOR SETTING PRIORITIES				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More satisfied stakeholders (by improving the results of teaching and training) • Closer connection to employers and social partners • Ability to maintain competent staff • Ability to offer an appropriate range of courses and education • A more effective control of expenses 				
A	B	C	D	E
Action	Effect	Ability	Score (B x C)	ORDER OF PRIORITY
Development and introduction of a method for measuring employers' satisfaction and future expectations of trainees	2	3	6	3
To develop a vision and codes of conduct for the organisation and communicate them to all staff	1	5	5	4
To develop and implement a monthly follow-up on expenses and income and introduce a system for follow-up	4	2	8	1
Establish relevant statistics on trainees (access, waiting lists, guidance, types of job obtained, employment, results by groups)	3	1	3	6
Establishing a communication system for the entire organisation for knowledge improvement and sharing	2	4	8	2
Designing and implementing a programme to introduce teachers to and train them in peer review or colleague supervision in order to share and improve teaching methods.	4	1	4	5

Scale for effect of action on the organisation

<i>Major effect</i>	<i>Medium effect</i>	<i>Minor effect</i>
5 POINTS	3 POINTS	0 POINTS
This will have a big effect on achieving one or more of the objectives or targets set and it will improve the results of the organisation for the period in question.	This will have some effect on achieving one or more of the objectives or targets set and it will improve the results of the organisation for the period in question.	It is uncertain if this will have any effect on achieving one or more of the objectives or targets set or if it will improve the results of the organisation for the period in question.

Scale for ability to implement the actions

<i>Major ability</i>	<i>Medium ability</i>	<i>Minor ability</i>
5 POINTS	3 POINTS	0 POINTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be implemented in the period in question • Needs relatively few resources to accomplish • Is within the control of the organisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can probably be implemented in the period in question • Needs certain resources to accomplish • Is within the control of the organisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlikely to be implemented in the period in question • Demands many resources to accomplish • Dependent on factors outside the organisation's control

Source: Center for Ledelse. Denmark

Develop and implement an improvement plan

An improvement plan contains decisions on actions and aims, with intermediate aims listed as well. It also contains a time schedule for each aim and a list of responsible persons.

While a self-assessment is a start to a long-term improvement strategy, the assessment will inevitably throw up a few areas that can be addressed relatively quickly and easily. Acting on them will help with the credibility of the improvement programme and represent an immediate return on time and training investment.

It is a good idea to involve the people who carried out the self-assessment in the improvement activities.

Figure 8: An example of an improvement plan

Improvement plan						
Institution	VET					
Department	-					
Actions and intermediate targets	Responsible	Participants	Resources		Time schedule	
			Working hours	Amount	Start	End
<u>Peer review-pilot project</u>	FOR	LL,NN, GG,HH	100	2000	Jan	Feb
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreements on observation points and procedure • Pilot projects • Review and revision of procedures • Introduction to all teachers and trainers 					Feb	May
					June	June
					July	July

Source: MARS

6. Follow up

Once the improvement action plan is formulated and the implementation of changes has begun it is important to make sure that the changes have a positive effect and are not adversely affecting things that the organisation was doing well to begin with. Some organisations have built regular self-assessment into their business planning process – their assessments are timed to inform the annual setting of objectives and bids for financial resources.

The improvement plan can be published for everybody to follow the progress as the intermediate aims are met. Meetings can include ‘progress on improvement plan’ as an item on the agenda. It is important, that the management shows an active role and a visible interest in the implementation of the improvement plan.

Figure 9: Questions to use for evaluation of action plan

1. Is there a logical coherence between the results of the self-assessment and the action plan and projects for improvement?
2. How do we make apparent that the projects for improvement support other practices or procedures in the organisation?
3. Have all the projects for improvement in the action plan been started and does our evaluation take into account their effects?
4. Does the action plan include ‘owners’ and deadlines for all projects and have resources been allocated?
5. Do all participants get feedback on the progress of the projects for improvement?
6. Is learning derived from sharing a single project or from sharing good experiences from other projects?
7. Do all the projects in the improvement plan include measurable goals or criteria for success?
8. How do we prove that we have achieved improvements in terms of the expectations of trainees or companies?

7. External verification

The self-assessment should be validated by different means. External verification, such as inspections, is intended to assist the VET-provider with an impartial and realistic appraisal of the business, to avoid VET-providers overrating or underrating themselves, to reorient and reassure them.

Inspection

Obligatory validation by inspectors from national inspectorates or evaluation institutes is a widely used and respected way of controlling the use of public funds and of the extent to which it is realistic to assess one's own VET institution. But inspection is also very much intended to support and help the better running of an educational institution.

The background for inspection is often a self-assessment report on the basis of a fixed agenda. This makes it possible to compare different VET institutions, and to provide the educational area with indicators or benchmarks for the purpose of learning by comparison.

This method of validation is always regulated by national statutory provisions and will not be further explored in this guide.

Award schemes

An organisation wishing to benefit from the more intensive application of Quality Management might also consider participation in one of the national or international award schemes, which are used increasingly by public-service organisations. There is also the possibility of contacting some of the organisations which specialise in Quality Management, such as the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM), the ISO 9000 or the Speyer Quality Award, for support in developing a more thorough application of Quality Management and/or for participation in their award schemes.

External assessment

This assessment, taking place on the basis of the full results of the internal self-assessment, combined with on-site visits, would confirm the validity and accuracy of the self-assessment, adjust the results if necessary, or invalidate the self-assessment for external use (e.g. some form of quality certification). These assessors or 'validators' could be external consultants trained in organisational assessment and the use of evaluation techniques, or they could be employees of other public-sector organisations or representatives of stakeholders.

External assessors in the assessment team

The last method of validation mentioned here is a lightweight method, but is nevertheless a possible way of improving the accuracy and reliability of the assessment procedure. It involves the participation of one or more external assessors in the assessment team. They could be external consultants trained in organisational assessment and the use of evaluation techniques, or they could be employees of other public-sector organisations or representatives of stakeholders, invited to join the assessment process in order to add an element of external perspective and critical judgement.

8. Benchmarking and cooperation

The purpose of establishing benchmarking activities is to find better ways of doing things, based on better results achieved in other organisations. The self-assessment can be used to support benchmarking. At its simplest, benchmarking is a process by which an organisation finds relevant organisations with which it can compare, or benchmark, its own organisation and performance. The technique can be a powerful and effective tool for organisational development. Benchmarking can also have the purpose of validating the self-assessment.

VET institutions that have taken part in this activity find that benchmarking helps them to make an impact on the organisation and to debate whether or not it is possible to improve or change procedures internally.

‘Normally the burden of proof lies upon those who want changes to take place. With an excellent role model, the burden of proof moves to those who wish to conserve. They will have to prove why nothing should change’

To sum up, benchmarking is intended:

- to measure the results of one’s own organisation against others so as to be able to compare results, strengths and weaknesses;
- to identify methods, processes, educational programmes and services which are better or different than in most organisations;
- to learn from experiences and procedures of these organisations.

Developing links/exchanges between organisations at European level - suggestions

It is important to be able to find suitable partners for benchmarking purposes based on completed self-assessment in accordance with the quality criteria of the European Common Quality Assurance Framework. The Virtual Community on Quality in VET (see introduction for address of website) could be of help in this regard.

In the longer term, it may be appropriate to set up a VET database with an online evaluation form, as foreseen by the CAF project on the self-assessment of public administration organisations.

CAF describes its system in the following terms:

At the moment it is possible for public administration organisations to record the results of their self-assessment by the CAF via the website of the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA) – www.eipa.nl – which allows an organisation to fill in the evaluation form online after having conducted its self-assessment. The achieved results will remain anonymous, but the organisation will get feed-back on its scoring against the average of other organisations that have used the CAF in the same country or the same sector of activity. The self-assessment results will be part of the European CAF database, which contains information with regard to the organisations that have used the CAF, their sector of activity, the size of the organisations in terms of personnel and contact persons. By offering key information the database can help public sector organisations identify suitable benchmarking partners.

A similar system could be made to service European VET institutions and thereby make it possible for VET- providers from different countries to compare with a view to promoting mutual trust, transparency and recognition of competences. This system will also make it easier to find appropriate partners for Leonardo da Vinci projects.

9. Core Quality Criteria for VET-providers

In order to assist VET-providers to better manage the quality of their training provision, it is necessary to focus on the core quality criteria for VET provision.

When measuring staff performance, the focus should also be on the overall image of the organisation, the management and the satisfaction of staff. The logic behind this is that making the staff the most satisfied employees in the world is not the key issue, especially if other results, such as in their teaching and training, are poor. But mere recognition of the fact that dissatisfied staff do not perform at their best will also affect teaching and training. From this we can conclude that one single parameter cannot form the basis of a good or bad assessment; it is the coherence between the combinations of the various parameters that is important.

In society, the integration of an environmentally sustainable development is considered good, for example energy saving, recycling, etc. From this point of view, the possible effect of a VET-provider on his/her local and global environments is important, but the most important thing in relation to quality in VET is that he/she should be a good role model to trainees.

These considerations are an important part of the self-assessment process at the individual VET-provider level. They enhance the overall knowledge of the provision itself and raise awareness of a necessarily global approach, even in local teaching and training activities.

The following core quality criteria are of special interest for the management of quality in VET provisions.

Detailed description of the quality criteria:

Core quality criteria for Step 1: Purpose and plan

1.1 Leadership

How do managers of VET provision facilitate the achievement of their educational goals and aims and develop the necessary values for long-term success? How do they implement them through appropriate plans and actions? How are they personally involved in ensuring that the management system is developed and implemented?

Examples of the main factors for VET-providers when assessing their leadership performance:

- giving a direction to the organisation with a purpose and a plan
- establishing a value framework and codes of conduct for the organisation
- developing and implementing a system for managing the organisation
- communicating to the organisation a clear understanding of who the customers are and what they require
- acting in accordance with established objectives and values
- developing and implementing a system for the development of managers' expertise in both quality management and pedagogy.

Figure 10 : An example of required policies and procedures from Ireland

<p>Listed below are the areas of provision for which providers must establish policies and procedures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Access, Transfer and Progression▪ Equality▪ Staff Recruitment and Development▪ Programme Development, Delivery and Review▪ Recording and Evaluation of Learner Achievement▪ Sub-contracting/Procuring Programme Delivery▪ Protection for Learners▪ Fair and Consistent Assessment of Learners▪ Evaluation of Programmes and Services

Source: Draft Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Further Education and Training. (The guidelines are being piloted in the autumn 2003.)

1.2 Aims and values

How have managers of VET provisions generated a clear and shared sense of common aims and purpose among staff and its commitment to continuous improvement?

Examples of the main factors for VET-providers when assessing their performance in establishing aims and values:

- aims are concisely stated and have a strong focus on improving the quality of the trainees' educational outcomes and attainment of adequate skills;
- staff, trainees and other relevant stakeholders have a clear understanding of the VET-providers' aims, their core purposes and values and the way they are attained;
- aims provide a good starting point for strategy and planning and a clear point of reference for evaluation;
- the values are evident in practice;
- a strong commitment to developing a culture of continuous improvement is an explicit element within the stated values;
- equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all trainees achieve their potential.

Figure 11: An example of disabled trainees' rights

The right to achieve their full potential through a range of training options and supports congruent to their needs
The right to quality training consistent with commercial/industrial standards
The right to be offered non-stereotypical training opportunities
The right to a training allowance
The right of access to up-to-date information about state allowances and entitlements
The right to person-centred training options which serve to enhance the quality of life of each individual
The right to information in an appropriate format and to give/receive feedback
The right to protection from abuse/harassment
The right to privacy and confidentiality
The right of access to information as per legislative requirements e.g. Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts
The right to self-advocacy or the involvement of an advocate of their choice
The right to local, flexible and holistic programmes which address the changing social and occupational needs of the individual
The right to a good standard of facilities and conditions which serve to support the training objectives

Source: Standard for Training and Development of People with Disabilities. Application for Accreditation, Ireland

Figure 12: An example of who stakeholders in VET can be.

Stakeholders in VET

A stakeholder is a person or a group/organisation, which has an interest in the VET institution. This can be:

Users or customers: trainees, participants in a course.

Potential users: pupils, the employees of companies, the unemployed.

Staff: Teachers, trainers, management, technical assistants, maintenance, etc.

The 'owners': the governing body or the ministry, etc.

Partnerships: strategic partners who cooperate with mutual benefits and obligations.

Cooperative networks: the social partners, the employers, suppliers, contractors, other VET-providers

Society: parents, the press, local community, EU, etc.

See also Annexes B3 and B4

1.3 Strategy and planning

How do VET-providers implement their aims by means of plans with a clear stakeholder-focused strategy supported by objectives, targets and processes?

Examples of the main factors for VET-providers when assessing their performance in strategies and planning:

- operating within the legislative framework of the VET provision;
- identifying all relevant stakeholders (trainees, parents, staff, companies, social partners, etc.);
- systematically gathering information about stakeholders and their needs and expectations for the future;
- regularly gathering information about important variables such as social, ecological, economic, legal and demographic developments;
- developing, reviewing and updating strategy and planning on the basis of systematically gathered and valid information;
- systematically analysing internal strengths and weaknesses;
- implementing the updated strategy and planning in the entire organisation;
- having a communication and information strategy for all stakeholders;
- having a strategy for matching supply and demand for training and for employment.

1.4 Partnerships

How do VET-providers plan and manage their partnerships effectively?

Examples of the main factors for VET-providers when assessing their performance in partnerships:

- identifying and developing partnerships and networks with important stakeholders;
- involvement of partners and balancing stakeholder needs are clearly linked to the VET-providers' educational objectives;
- regularly monitoring and evaluating the process, the results and the nature of partnerships;
- participation in appropriate research activities in the field of VET and integration of results.

Figure 13: An example of communication with stakeholders

Quality element	Explanation	Examples of evidence of good practice
Communication with other stakeholders	Employers, community groups, funding agencies and other individuals / agencies with significant involvement in the provider are able to access information on programme(s) and services available.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prospectus of programme(s) / Course brochures • Correspondence with local groups and local industry • Reports of Open Days, community-based projects • Website • Surveys of local industry • Reports to funding agencies

Source: Draft Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Further Education and Training, Ireland. (The guidelines are being piloted in the autumn 2003.)

1.5 Finance and resources

How well do VET-providers evaluate and improve the use of financial and material resources?

Examples of the main factors for VET-providers when assessing their performance in managing finance and resources:

- key financial decisions are scheduled as part of a timetable for the development or improvement of the VET-provider's organisation;
- arrangements for managing the budget are open and fair and successful;
- all staff have an appropriate involvement in consultation at a suitable level of detail;
- expenditure under specific budget headings is monitored effectively to ensure value for money;
- spending priorities and the use of financial resources are clearly linked to VET provision and planning priorities and strongly reflect the VET-provider's educational objectives;
- it is clear how available funds are being targeted at important areas of weakness that have been identified through self-assessment;
- constant monitoring of the knowledge available in the organisation and its alignment with strategies and plans and the current and future needs of all stakeholders;
- monitoring technological progress and implementing relevant innovations;
- efficiently applying the appropriate technology to support the learning activities and the attainment of skills for obtaining educational objectives;
- ensuring that up-to-date books, manuals and other educational material are available for trainees;
- ensuring a cost effective and efficient use of facilities taking into account the objectives of the VET-provider, the needs of staff and trainees, the local culture and any physical constraints.

Core quality criteria for Step 2: Implementation

2.1 Management of teachers, trainers and other staff

How do VET-providers manage, develop and exploit the knowledge and full potential of their staff? How do they plan these activities with a view to supporting their strategies and the effectiveness of their staff?

Examples of the factors for VET-providers when assessing their performance in implementing staff management:

- developing and communicating a staff policy based on the VET-provider's strategies and planning;
- aligning tasks, authorities and responsibilities;
- ensuring good working conditions throughout the organisation;
- ensuring that all staff have access to reliable and valid knowledge relevant to their tasks and objectives;
- balancing the needs of the organisation, teams and individuals;
- activities are followed up and evaluated and the findings are used to influence future planning;
- recruited teachers and trainers have previous work experience and pedagogical experience or education;
- new staff undergoes an effective induction process;
- competences of staff are monitored and developed;
- staff development programme ensures effective support for implementation of the priorities identified in the VET-provider's development or improvement plan.

Figure 14: Staff access to information

Quality element	Explanation	Examples of evidence of good practice
Staff access to information	Information facilitating successful programmes and services to be available to the staff involved in their delivery. Information available on: developments in the programme developments in assessment upcoming events of relevance individual learner needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Team / staff meetings • Staff verification • Staff handbook • Notices • Email bulletins • Intranet

Source: Draft Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Further Education and Training, Ireland. (The guidelines are being piloted in the autumn 2003.)

Figure 15: An example of how processes can be defined

Processes

A process is the word for a coherent set of activities or actions which lead to a product or a service which directly or indirectly adds value to the customer or user.

Processes can be divided into different types:

- key processes, which are necessary for fulfilling the customers/users needs
- support processes, which are necessary for making the organisation work
- management processes.

Key processes can be:

the planning and organisation of teaching and training

the actual teaching and training

evaluation and exams

cooperation between training/practical activities and theoretical/educational activities

administrative activities related to the users

Support processes can be:

management

guidance (can often be considered a key process)

administration of staff

development of staff competences

financial management

development of IT

canteen and bookshop

marketing addressed to future customers

Management processes:

development of strategies

regular planning process

management of personnel

quality development

communication strategies

See also Annexes B3 and B4

2.2 Process management

How do VET-providers manage, develop and improve their processes in order to support their strategies and fully satisfy and generate increasing value for their trainees and other stakeholders?

Examples of the factors for VET-providers when assessing their performance in process management:

- identifying, designing and documenting the key processes of the VET provision and ensuring that they support the strategic objectives;
- systematic and regular contact with employers to ensure the relevance of the training programme;
- involving staff, employers and other relevant stakeholders in the design and development of key processes and also of educational programmes;
- allocating resources on the basis of the relative importance of the activities' contribution to the strategic aims of the VET-provider;
- designing and implementing cooperative frameworks with the purpose to enhance and support practical learning situations and theoretical learning;
- courses, programmes or curricula are designed on the basis of known and described pedagogical and didactical considerations;
- courses, programmes or curricula are evaluated and redesigned when necessary, to match the trainees' aspirations and potential, building on prior attainment and experience;
- courses, programmes or curricula are evaluated and redesigned when necessary, to meet external requirements and are responsive to local conditions;
- planning, implementation and evaluation of educational activities are systematically carried out and the necessary changes are communicated to the staff concerned;
- supply of educational activities and courses are adapted to demands, coordinated with other similar suppliers and participants are given exact and rapid information on their attending possibilities;
- conditions for access are open, fair and are being evaluated regularly;
- equality is taken into account in all educational activities.

Figure 16: An example of core processes from the development of education. Ministry of the Flemish Community, Department of Education, September 2001, Belgium

1. Curriculum 1.1 Basic education 1.2 Specific objectives 1.3 Cross-curriculum objectives	3. Pupil evaluation 3.1 Evaluation practice reporting
2. Pupil Counselling 2.1 Optimal integration in school 2.2 Adaptive education 2.3 Study counselling 2.4 Psycho-social counselling 2.5 Remediation and welfare 2.6 Career counselling 2.7 Optimal integration in society and the world of work	4. Quality assurance EP

Figure 17: An example of learner feedback mechanisms

Quality element	Explanation	Examples of evidence of good practice
Learner feedback mechanism(s)	Learners are able to give feedback on their individual and collective experiences of programmes and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner verification • Schedule of feedback meetings between staff and individual learners • Learners involved in review of programme design • Verification by learner representative body

Source: Draft Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Further Education and Training, Ireland. (The guidelines are being piloted in the autumn 2003.) See also Annex D3.

Figure 18: Staff feedback

Quality element	Explanation	Examples of evidence of good practice
Staff feedback mechanism(s)	Staff are able to contribute to the improvement of programmes and services in which they are involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Team / staff meetings • Staff verification • Survey/Questionnaire of staff views

Source: Draft Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Further Education and Training, Ireland. (The guidelines are being piloted in the autumn 2003.)

Core quality criteria for Step 3: Assessment and evaluation

3.1 Results of teaching and training

What results do VET-providers achieve in relation to trainees?

Results may include answers to the following questions:

How well are the trainees guided regarding conditions for access?

How effectively are the trainees guided and supported during their education or courses?

How well do the trainees perform?

Do the trainees themselves acknowledge their achieved skills and competences?

How well do the programmes, courses or curricula meet the interests and requirements of the trainees?

How consistent are the methods and styles of teaching with the course aims and learners' personal objectives?

How well do VET-providers ensure that trainees acquire knowledge and skills that are valuable to them and that will make a difference to their lives?

How effective are the assessment and monitoring of the trainees' progress?

How effective are VET-providers in raising achievement?

How do VET-providers follow the professional lives of trainees?

How do VET-providers ensure that the skills acquired are used in the workplace?

How do VET-providers monitor training results by groups (ethnic group, age, gender, training level, etc.)?

Suggestions for indicators relating to the assessment and evaluation from the trainees' side:

Grades for education or course in general	Number of complaints/compliments
Grades for specific tasks	Number of accidents
Medals or awards	Number of trainees to go on to further education activities
Percentage of new and revised VET courses	Number of trainees (with completed courses/education) in work
Number of trainees to start the education or continuing VET course	Results of satisfaction measurements
Number of trainees to finish their education or continuing VET course	Response rates for surveys
Drop-out rates	Results from observation of teaching and training activities
Rates of absence	Learning diaries
How many trainees have accreditation of prior learning	
Rates of re-entry	
Length of and reason for delays in education	

Figure 19: Quality in guidance

<p>Guidance should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be visible and with easy access • be targeted, defined and declared • take place in physical surroundings that support the guidance • be performed according to a guidance procedure • be coordinated with other types of guidance <p>The guidance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • will take its point of departure with the person seeking guidance • is performed on an ethical and professional basis • is inspiring, motivating and developmentally oriented • is a structured process <p>The guide or the instructor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has a formal education in guidance
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Source. The Council for Educational and Vocational Guidance. Denmark.
 (From 'Model for kvalitetsudvikling af uddannelses- og erhvervsvejledning')

Figure 20: Guide for Writing the Curriculum Self-Assessment Report

<p>Teaching, Training & Learning How effective are teaching, training and learning? Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well teaching and training meet individuals' needs and course or programme requirements? • How well learners learn and make progress? 	
TT 1 Tutors show knowledge, technical competence and up-to-date expertise, at a level consistent with effective teaching and assessment of the course.	TT 7 Tutors promote good working relationships that foster learning.
TT 2 Tutors plan effectively with clear objectives that all learners understand.	TT 8 Tutors ensure that teaching methods and learning materials positively value peoples' different backgrounds and cultures.
TT 3 Tutors use methods and styles of teaching consistent with the aims of their programmes and learners' personal objectives.	TT 9 Learners acquire new knowledge and skills, develop ideas and increase their understanding.
TT 4 Tutors challenge, motivate and inspire learners.	TT 10 Learners understand what they are doing, how well they are progressing and what they need to do to improve.
TT 5 Assignments and assessments reflect individuals' learning. Feedback is fair and constructive	TT 11 and TT 12 Learners are absorbed in their studies. They are able to work unsupervised on agreed assignments. They organise their work carefully. They plan and carry out learning activities outside learning sessions.
TT 6 Learning plans reflect learners' identified learning needs, interests and aspirations, as well as their prior learning. These are reviewed and updated to take account of learners' progress.	
<p>Sources of evidence could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • curricula vitae of staff, staff development records • observation of learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews • interviews with learners, tutors, managers • documents relating to learning programmes and learners' progress, including: schemes of work and lesson plans, learning resources including learning materials, individual learning plans • records of learners' progress reviews • records of learners' work, including photographs, videos and journals • summaries and analyses of learners' responses to questionnaires about the quality of courses, programmes and projects 	

Source: From Essex County Council. Learning Services (3).

(3) <http://www.qualityacl.org.uk/files/qualityacl/self%20assessment%20handbook%20-%20complete.pdf>

3.2 Staff-oriented results

What results do VET-providers achieve in relation to the management of their staff?

Results may include answers to the following questions:

How good is the overall image of the organisation?

How do organisations handle equal opportunities and fair treatment?

How does the management perform regarding task agreements, staff performance evaluation, goal-setting and rewarding of individual and team efforts?

How does management involve staff in dialogue, improvement activities and decision-making?

How does the organisation deal with personal problems?

How does the organisation create possibilities to balance work with family life and personal matters?

How willing is the staff to make an extra effort under special circumstances?

Suggestions for indicators:

<p>Satisfaction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Level of absenteeism or sicknessRates of staff turnoverNumber of complaints, strikes, etc. <p>Performance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Results of evaluations and/or appraisalsResults of the use of individual performance indicators	<p>Skills development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Participation and success rates in training activitiesStaff mobility (rotation inside organisation)Competence or qualification levelTraining of management <p>Motivation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Response rates for staff surveysParticipation in social events
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Figure 21: Training process criteria and quality indicators for the trainer

PROCESSES	CRITERIA	INDICATORS
Monitoring and quality improvement	Participation in advanced courses	Number of courses carried out in a year
		Adaptation of the course (or the courses) to the teaching activity of the trainer
	Participation in other professional activities (congresses, seminars, sector fairs, etc.)	Number of professional activities attended in a year
		Adaptation of the activity (or activities) with the teaching duties of the trainer
	Study report on companies in the sector in order to facilitate post-course job-placement	Number of companies in the sector classified by size and business activity
		Inclusion of information relating to each company
		Incorporation of analysis and interpretation of information relating to each company in the sector
		Presentation of contributions and recommendations

Source: Annex IV, page 14, Centro de Formación Ocupacional, Gobierno de Navarra. Spain

3.3 Labour-market and societal results

What results do VET-providers achieve in relation to their mandate and specified objectives and in satisfying the needs and expectations of stakeholders? The results are mainly non-financial.

Results may include answers to the following questions:

How do VET-providers have an impact on local, national and international society?

How do VET-providers perform regarding socially vulnerable groups?

How well do VET-providers match training supply and demand?

How do VET-providers improve access to vocational training, in particular for vulnerable groups on the labour market?

How do VET-providers prevent health risks and accidents?

How do VET-providers integrate the principles of environmentally sustainable development in teaching and training?

How do VET-providers contribute to better employability of trainees/the labour force?

How do VET-providers contribute to the mobility of trainees/the labour force?

How do VET-providers participate in programmes to promote mutual recognition of competences?

How do VET-providers monitor the future demands on trainees' vocational education and training?

Suggestions for indicators:

Number of cooperative projects or ventures with the local/central government and EU. Publications of research and development activities. Number of awards, prizes and rewards. Europass	‘Bottlenecks’ on labour market Energy savings – total energy use Reduction of waste Use of recycled material, etc. How is the mobility from declining to emerging occupations/trades/sectors?
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3.4 Financial results

What do VET-providers achieve in relation to their mandate and specified objectives and in satisfying the needs and expectations of everyone with a financial interest in the organisation? The results are measures of effectiveness and efficiency and will mainly be financial.

Results may include answers to the following questions:

How are the goals achieved in terms of input and outcome?

How high is the cost effectiveness ratio?

How well are budgets and financial targets met?

How good is the ability to satisfy and balance the financial interests of all stakeholders?

How well do VET-providers achieve the objectives set by local and/or central government policy?

How well do VET-providers achieve the objectives of the social partners, vocational trades and other stakeholders in their educational activities?

Suggestions for results and indicators:

Turnover Total salary costs Market share	and other economic key data
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Core quality criteria for Step 4: Feedback and procedures for change

4.1 Planning and implementation of action for improvement

How do VET-providers validate the effectiveness of their key processes, as delivered in practice, innovate the processes and generate increasing value for their trainees and other stakeholders?

Examples of the main factors for VET-providers when assessing their performance in change management:

- the process of self-assessment is carried out systematically and regularly with the participation of all relevant staff and stakeholders;
- regional, national and European statistical information and benchmarking data are used for analysing the VET-providers’ results from step 3;
- the views of parents, trainees, companies, social partners, and other stakeholders are systematically assessed and appropriately fed into the self-assessment process wherever they have a significant contribution to make;

- systematic monitoring of the effectiveness of the teaching and training activities in order to maintain a strong focus on improving the quality of the trainees' educational outcomes and attainment of adequate skills;
- the areas selected for development, as a result of the self-assessment process, are an appropriate response to the strengths and weaknesses of the VET-provider;
- development plans or improvement plans include targets. Tasks, responsibilities and time-scales are clearly defined. Success criteria are specific, measurable and achievable;
- managers systematically monitor the implementation of development plans and evaluate whether the expected outcomes have been achieved and take action accordingly.

4.2 External verification

How do VET-providers validate the effectiveness of their self-assessment?

Examples of the main factors for VET-providers when validating their performance:

- Peer review. Best practise on educational level is being recognised by participating in peer review at institutional, national and European levels;
- Peer review. Best practise at the VET-provider level is being recognised by participating in peer review at institutional, national and European levels;
- Benchmarking. The VET-provider's results are being benchmarked with those of similar organisations at regional, national and European levels;
- Benchmarking. The results of the self-assessment process and the improvement plan are systematically and regularly compared and benchmarked with those of similar organisations;
- Inspection. There is a regular system of independent external inspection and review, which evaluates and reports on the quality of the education achieved by the VET-provider and preferably moderates the reliability and impact of the processes and the planning for improvement;
- Accreditation. The VET-provider has committed its organisation to accreditation according to one or more of the known labels. (ISO, EFQM, Investors in People, GRETA, etc.).

Figure 22: An example of the English framework for self-assessment.

Common Inspection Framework (CIF)

The Common Inspection Framework sets out the principles of inspection of post-16 non-higher education and training. It's the framework used by inspectors to check:

- the quality of education and training
- the standards achieved by those receiving the education and training
- whether the financial resources are managed efficiently to provide value for money

The CIF is based around 7 key questions:

- how well do learners achieve?
- how effective are teaching, training and learning?
- how are achievement and learning affected by resources?
- how effective are the assessment and monitoring of learning?
- how well do the programmes and courses meet the needs and interests of learners?
- how well are learners guided and supported?
- how effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?

Source: The Common Inspection Framework for inspecting Post-16 Education and Training. UK.

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Annex A: Frameworks for self-assessment

This Annex contains two proposals for self-assessment of VET-providers, the first using a questionnaire and the second using a checklist. Both proposals use a scoring system: the first a six-level system and the second a four-level system. It should be noted that the approach already presented in the main body of this Guide is based on the first approach, which is ‘heavier’ than the second approach. The second proposal is considered sufficient for a VET-provider’s initial self-assessment. As far as scoring is concerned, in the first proposal it is also possible to perform the self-assessment without scores and to just write down strengths and areas for improvement.

Annex A1. Questionnaire with strengths, areas for improvement and a 6-level score

(Assessment panel from the CAF)

Assessment panel for Step 1 Step 2 Step 4	The quality of what you observe within each quality criterion can be judged against six levels.
--	---

Score

- 0 No evidence or only anecdotal evidence of an approach.
- 1 An approach is planned P (plan).
- 2 An approach is planned and implemented D (do).
- 3 An approach is planned, implemented and reviewed C (check).
- 4 An approach is planned, implemented and reviewed on the basis of benchmarking data and adjusted accordingly A (act).
- 5 An approach is planned, implemented, reviewed on the basis of benchmarking data, adjusted and fully integrated into the organisation.

Assessment panel for results Step 3	The quality of what you observe within each quality criterion can be judged against six levels.
--	---

- 0 No results are measured.
- 1 Key results are measured and show negative or stable trends.
- 2 Results show modest progress.
- 3 Results show substantial progress.
- 4 Excellent results are achieved and positive comparisons to own targets are made.
- 5 Excellent results are achieved, positive comparisons to own targets are made and positive benchmarks against relevant organisations are made.

Procedure: Your self-assessment starts by writing examples of strengths and improvements into the matrix. Finally you assess the performance by assigning the appropriate score from the correct assessment panel. This individual assessment is then followed by a consensus meeting where all participants’ lists of improvements and scores are sampled and discussed for consensus.

The self assessment framework in Annex A1

Step 1: Purpose and plan

1.1 Core quality criteria for leadership

How do you, as management, facilitate the achievement of the educational goals and aims and develop the necessary values for long-term success and implement them through appropriate plans and actions? How are you personally involved in ensuring that the management system is developed and implemented?

Score:

	<i>Examples of strengths</i>	<i>Areas for improvement</i>
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

The following statements are examples for your consideration on how your VET provision performs:

- Giving a direction to the organisation with a purpose and a plan
- Establishing a value framework and codes of conduct for the organisation
- Developing and implementing a system for managing the organisation
- Communicating to the organisation a clear understanding of who the customers are and what they require
- Acting in accordance with established objectives and values
- Developing and implementing a system for the development of managers' expertise in both quality management and pedagogy.

Step 1: Purpose and plan
1.2 Core quality criteria for aims and values

How do you have, as managers of your VET provision, generated a clear and shared sense of shared aims and purpose among staff and its commitment to continuous improvement?	<i>Score:</i>
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	<i>Examples of strengths</i>	<i>Areas for improvement</i>
1		
2		
3		
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The following statements are examples for your consideration on how your VET provision performs:

- Aims are concisely stated and have a strong focus on improving the quality of the trainees’ educational outcomes and attainment of adequate skills.
- Staff, trainees and other relevant stakeholders have a clear understanding of the VET-providers’ aims, their core purposes and values and the way they are attained.
- Aims provide a good starting point for strategy and planning and a clear point of reference for evaluation.
- The values are evident in practice.
- A strong commitment to developing a culture of continuous improvement is an explicit element within the stated values.
- Equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all trainees achieve their potential.

Step 1: Purpose and plan
1.3 Core quality criteria for strategy and planning

How do you implement your aims by means of plans with a clear stakeholder-focused strategy supported by objectives, targets and processes?	Score:
--	--------

	<i>Examples of strengths</i>	<i>Areas for improvement</i>
1		
2		
3		
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The following statements are examples for your consideration on how your VET provision performs:

- Operating within the legislative framework of the VET provision
- Identifying all relevant stakeholders (trainees, parents, staff, companies, social partners, etc.)
- Systematically gathering information about stakeholders and their needs and expectations for the future
- Regularly gathering information about important variables such as social, ecological, economic, legal and demographic developments
- Developing, reviewing and updating strategy and planning on the basis of systematically gathered and valid information
- Systematically analysing internal strengths and weaknesses
- Implementing the updated strategy and planning in the entire organisation
- Having a communication and information strategy for all stakeholders
- Having a strategy for matching supply and demand for training and for employment

Step 1: Purpose and plan
1.4 Core quality criteria for partnerships

How do you, as a VET-provider, plan and manage your partnerships effectively?	<i>Score:</i>
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	<i>Examples of strengths</i>	<i>Areas for improvement</i>
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
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10		

The following statements are examples for your consideration on how your VET provision performs:

- Identifying and developing partnerships and networks with important stakeholders
- Involvement of partners and balancing stakeholder needs are clearly linked to the VET-providers' educational objectives
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating the process, the results and the nature of partnerships
- Participation in appropriate research activities in the field of VET and integration of results

Step 1: Purpose and plan
1.5 Core quality criteria for finance and resources

How well do you evaluate and improve the use of financial and material resources?	<i>Score:</i>
---	---------------

	<i>Examples of strengths</i>	<i>Areas for improvement</i>
1		
2		
3		
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6		
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The following statements are examples for your consideration on how your VET provision performs:

- Key financial decisions are scheduled as part of a timetable for the development or improvement of the VET-provider's organisation.
- Arrangements for managing the budget are open and fair and successful.
- All staff have an appropriate involvement in consultation at a suitable level of detail.
- Expenditure under specific budget headings is monitored effectively to ensure value for money.
- Spending priorities and the use of financial resources are clearly linked to VET-provision planning priorities and strongly reflect the VET-provider's educational objectives.
- It is clear how available funds are being targeted at important areas of weakness that have been identified through self-assessment.
- Constant monitoring of the knowledge available in the organisation and its alignment with strategies and plans and the current and future needs of all stakeholders.
- Monitoring technological progress and implementing relevant innovations.
- Efficiently applying the appropriate technology to support the learning activities and the attainment of skills for obtaining educational objectives.
- Ensuring that up-to-date books, manuals and other educational material are available for trainees.
- Ensuring a cost effective and efficient use of facilities taking into account the objectives of the VET-provider, the needs of staff and trainees, the local culture and any physical constraints.

Step 2: Implementation

2.1 Core quality criteria for Management of teachers, trainers and other staff

How do you manage, develop and exploit the knowledge and full potential of the staff? How do you plan these activities with a view to supporting the strategies and the effectiveness of the staff?	<i>Score:</i>
---	---------------

	<i>Examples of strengths</i>	<i>Areas for improvement</i>
1		
2		
3		
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The following statements are examples for your consideration on how your VET provision performs:

- Developing and communicating a staff policy based on the VET-provider’s strategies and planning.
- Aligning tasks, authorities and responsibilities.
- Ensuring good working conditions throughout the organisation.
- Balancing the needs of the organisation, teams and individuals.
- Activities are followed up and evaluated and the findings are used to influence future planning.
- Recruited teachers and trainers have previous work experience and pedagogical experience or education.
- New staff undergoes an effective induction process.
- Competences of staff are monitored and developed.
- Staff development programme ensures effective support for implementation of the priorities identified in the VET-provider’s development or improvement plan.
- Ensuring that all staff have access to reliable and valid knowledge relevant to their tasks and objectives.

Step 2: Implementation
2.2 Core quality criteria for process management

How do you manage, develop and improve the processes in the VET provision, in order to support the strategies and fully satisfy the trainees and other stakeholders and generate increasing value for them? Score:

	<i>Examples of strengths</i>	<i>Areas for improvement</i>
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		

The following statements are examples for your consideration on how your VET provision performs:

- Identifying, designing and documenting the key processes of the VET provision and ensuring that they support the strategic objectives.
- Systematic and regular contact with employers to ensure the relevance of the training programme.
- Involving staff, employers and other relevant stakeholders in the design and development of key processes and also of educational programmes.
- Allocating resources on the basis of how far the various activities help to meet the strategic goals of the VET-provider.
- Designing and implementing cooperative frameworks with the purpose of enhancing and supporting practical learning situations and theoretical learning.
- Courses, programmes or curricula are designed on the basis of known and described pedagogical and didactical considerations.
- Courses, programmes or curricula are evaluated and redesigned when necessary, to match the trainees' aspirations and potential, building on prior attainment and experience.
- Courses, programmes or curricula are evaluated and redesigned when necessary, to meet external requirements and are responsive to local conditions.
- Planning, implementation and evaluation of educational activities are systematically carried out and the necessary changes are communicated to the staff concerned.
- Supply of educational activities and courses are adapted to demands, coordinated with other similar suppliers, and participants are given exact and rapid information on attendance possibilities.
- Conditions for access are open, fair and are being evaluated regularly.
- Equality is taken into account in all educational activities.

Step 3: Assessment and evaluation
3.1 Core quality criteria for results of teaching and training

What results do VET-providers achieve in relation to trainees?		Score:
	<i>Examples of strengths</i>	<i>Areas for improvement</i>
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- Results may include answers to the following questions:
- How well are the trainees guided regarding conditions for access?
 - How effective are the trainees guided and supported during their education or courses?
 - How well do the trainees perform?
 - Do the trainees themselves acknowledge their achieved skills and competences?
 - How well do the programmes, courses or curricula meet the interests and requirements of the trainees?
 - How well are the methods and styles of teaching consistent with the course aims and learners' personal objectives?
 - How well do VET-providers ensure that trainees acquire knowledge and skills that are valuable to them and that will make a difference to their lives?
 - How effective are the assessment and monitoring of the trainees' progress?
 - How effective are VET-providers in raising achievement?
 - How do VET-providers follow the professional lives of trainees?
 - How do VET-providers ensure that the skills acquired are used in the workplace?
 - How do VET-providers monitor training results by groups (ethnic group, age, gender, training level, etc.)?

Suggestions for indicators for criteria 3.1:

Grades for education or course in general	Number of complaints/compliments
Grades for specific tasks	Number of accidents
Medals or awards	Number of trainees to go on to further educational activities
Percentage of new and revised VET courses	Number of trainees (with completed courses/education) in work
Number of trainees to start on the education or continuing VET course	Results of satisfaction measurements
Number of trainees to finish their education or continuing VET course	Response rates for surveys
Drop-out rates	Results from observation of teaching and training activities
Rates of absence	Learning diaries
Number of trainees with accreditation of prior learning	
Rates of re-entry	
Length of and reason for delays in education	

Step 3: Assessment and evaluation
3.2 Core quality criteria for staff-oriented results

What results do you achieve in relation to the management of the staff?	<i>Score:</i>
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	<i>Examples of strengths</i>	<i>Areas for improvement</i>
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

Results may include answers to the following questions:

- How good is the overall image of the organisation?
- How do organisations handle equal opportunities and fair treatment?
- How does the management perform regarding task agreements, staff performance evaluation, goal-setting and rewarding of individual and team efforts?
- How does management involve staff in dialogue, improvement activities and decision-making?
- How does the organisation deal with personal problems?
- How does the organisation create possibilities to balance work with family life and personal matters?
- How willing is the staff to make an extra effort under special circumstances?

Suggestions for indicators for criteria 3.2:

Level of absenteeism or sickness Rates of staff turnover Number of complaints, compliments, strikes, etc. Results of evaluations and/or appraisals Results of the use of individual performance indicators	Participation and success rates in training activities Staff mobility (rotation inside organisation) Competence or qualification level Training of management Response rates for staff surveys Participation in social events
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Step 3: Assessment and evaluation
3.3 Core quality criteria for labour-market and societal results

What results do you achieve in relation to your mandate and specified objectives and in satisfying the needs and expectations of stakeholders? The results are mainly non-financial. Score:

	<i>Examples of strengths</i>	<i>Areas for improvement</i>
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		

Results may include answers to the following questions:

- How do VET-providers have an impact on local, national and international society?
- How do VET-providers perform regarding socially vulnerable groups?
- How well do VET-providers match training supply and demand?
- How do VET-providers improve access to vocational training, in particular for vulnerable groups on the labour market?
- How do VET-providers prevent health risks and accidents?
- How do VET-providers integrate the principles of environmentally sustainable development in teaching and training?
- How do VET-providers contribute to better employability of trainees/the labour force?
- How do VET-providers contribute to the mobility of trainees/the labour force?
- How do VET-providers participate in programmes to promote mutual recognition of competences?
- How do VET-providers monitor the future demands on trainees' vocational education and training?

Suggestions for indicators for criteria 3.3:

Number of cooperative projects or ventures with the local/central government and EU Publications of research and development activities Number of awards, prizes and rewards Europass	Use of recycled material, etc. Mobility from declining to emerging occupations/trades/sectors 'World Skills' participation	'Bottlenecks' on labour market Energy savings – total energy use Reduction of waste
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Step 3: Assessment and evaluation
3.4 Core quality criteria for financial results

<p>What results do you achieve in relation to your mandate and specified objectives and in satisfying the needs and expectations of everyone with a financial interest in the organisation? The results are measures of effectiveness and efficiency and will be mainly financial.</p>	<p><i>Score:</i></p>
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	<i>Examples of strengths</i>	<i>Areas for improvement</i>
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

Results may include answers to the following questions:

- How are the goals achieved in terms of input and outcome?
- How high is the cost effectiveness ratio?
- How well are budgets and financial targets met?
- How good is the ability to satisfy and balance the financial interests of all stakeholders?
- How well do VET-providers achieve the objectives set by local and/or central government policy?
- How well do VET-providers achieve the objectives of the social partners, vocational trades and other stakeholders in their educational activities?

Suggestions for results and indicators for criteria 3.4:

Turnover Total salary costs Market share and other economic key data Turnover per staff	Ratio of teachers and trainers to students Investment trends (buildings, equipment for teaching and training)
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Step 4: Feedback and procedures for change
4.1 Core quality criteria for planning and implementation of actions for improvement

How do you validate the effectiveness of your key processes, as implemented? How do you innovate the processes and generate increasing value for the trainees and other stakeholders? Score:

	<i>Examples of strengths</i>	<i>Areas for improvement</i>
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
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10		

The main factors for assessing performance in change management:

- The process of self-assessment is carried out systematically and regularly with the participation of all relevant staff and stakeholders.
- Regional, national and European statistical information and benchmarking data are used for analysing the VET-providers' results from step 3.
- The views of parents, trainees, companies, social partners, and other stakeholders are systematically assessed and appropriately fed into the self-assessment process wherever they have a significant contribution to make.
- Systematic monitoring of the effectiveness of the teaching and training activities in order to maintain a strong focus on improving the quality of the trainees' educational outcomes and attainment of adequate skills.
- The areas selected for development, as a result of the self-assessment process, are an appropriate response to the strengths and weaknesses of the VET-provider.
- Development plans or improvement plans include targets. Tasks, responsibilities and time scales are clearly defined. Success criteria are specific, measurable and achievable.
- Managers systematically monitor the implementation of development plans and evaluate whether the expected outcomes have been achieved and take action accordingly.

Step 4: Feedback and procedures for change
4.2 Core quality criteria for external verification

How do you validate the effectiveness of your self-assessment?

Score:

	<i>Examples of strengths</i>	<i>Areas for improvement</i>
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

The main methods of validating your performance regarding external verification:

- Peer review. Best practise on educational level is being recognised by participating in peer review at institutional, national and European levels.
- Peer review. Best practise at the VET-provider level is being recognised by participating in peer review at institutional, national and European levels.
- Benchmarking. The VET-provider's results are being benchmarked with those of similar organisations at regional, national and European levels.
- Benchmarking. The results of the self-assessment process and the improvement plan are systematically and regularly compared and benchmarked with those of similar organisations.
- Inspection. There is a regular system of independent external inspection and review, which evaluates and reports on the quality of the education achieved by the VET-provider and preferably moderates the reliability and impact of the processes and the planning for improvement.
- Accreditation. The VET-provider has committed its organisation to accreditation according to one or more of the known labels (ISO, EFQM, Investors in People, GRETA, etc.).

Annex A2. Questionnaire with a 4-level score
(Assessment panel from ESSE)

Levels	The quality of what you observe within each quality indicator can be judged against four levels.
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Level

4	<i>very good</i>	major strengths
3	<i>good</i>	strengths outweigh weaknesses
2	<i>fair</i>	some important weaknesses
1.	<i>unsatisfactory</i>	major weaknesses

Very Good

An evaluation of *very good* applies to a provision characterised, overall, by strengths. There are very few weaknesses and any that do exist do not have a significant adverse impact on effectiveness in the area being evaluated. The illustrations for level 4 reflect a high standard of provision, which should be realistically achievable by all VET-providers rather than representing an exceptional case.

Good

An evaluation of *good* applies to a provision characterised by many strengths. There are weaknesses, but neither singly nor collectively, do these cause major problems with regard to effectiveness in the area being examined. Overall, looking across the range of strengths and weaknesses, and taking account of the relative importance of each of them, strengths are judged to outweigh weaknesses.

Fair

An evaluation of *fair* applies to provision which has some strengths, but where weaknesses outweigh strengths in terms of their overall impact. This could result from a pattern where provision is broadly acceptable in some respects but is less than satisfactory in a number of other significant areas. It could also result from a pattern of provision which is good in some respects, but which also includes substantial weaknesses in some areas of key importance.

Unsatisfactory

An evaluation of *unsatisfactory* applies when there are major weaknesses in provision. Whilst some relatively isolated aspects of good practice may exist, the overall pattern is one of many weaknesses across a broad range of important aspects of provision.

Guidance on applying the quality indicators

In the complex context of education there are many ways in which provision can merit a particular evaluation. In both internal and external review, it will always be necessary for the reviewer to apply professional judgement in arriving at an overall level for any quality indicator. **Where there are no processes in place, a 0 should be given with an explanation of why it was not appropriate to evaluate the provision using the four-level scale.**

Core criteria		Elements	4	3	2	1
Step 1 - PURPOSE AND PLAN						
1.1	Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have implemented and are continuously developing a system for managing the organisation. We are acting in accordance with established objectives and values. We have implemented and are continuously developing a system for improving managers' expertise in both quality management and pedagogy. 				
1.2	Aims and Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our aims are concisely stated and have a strong focus on improving the quality of the trainees' educational outcomes and attainment of adequate skills. We have a strong commitment to developing a culture of continuous improvement as an explicit element within the stated values. We promote equality of opportunity and we tackle discrimination so that all trainees achieve their potential. 				
1.3	Strategy and planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are operating within the legislative framework of the VET provision. We systematically gather information about stakeholders and their needs and expectations for the future. We develop, review and update strategy and planning regularly on the basis of systematically gathered and valid information. 				
1.4	Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We identify and develop partnerships and networks with important stakeholders. We are regularly monitoring and evaluating the process, the results and the nature of partnerships. We participate in appropriate research activities in the field of VET and integrate the results in the processes. 				

Core criteria		Elements	4	3	2	1
Step 2 - IMPLEMENTATION						
2.1	Management of teachers, trainers and other staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We ensure good working conditions throughout the organisation. We recruit teachers and trainers with previous work experience and pedagogical experience. Competences of staff are monitored and developed. 				
2.2	Process management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Systematic and regular contact with employers to ensure the relevance of the training programme. Involving staff, employers and other relevant stakeholders in the design and development of key processes and also of educational programmes. Courses, programmes or curricula are designed on the basis of known and described pedagogical and didactical considerations. Courses, programmes or curricula are evaluated and redesigned when necessary, to match the trainees' aspirations and potential, building on prior attainment and experience. Courses, programmes or curricula are evaluated and redesigned when necessary, to meet external requirements and are responsive to local conditions. Planning, implementation and evaluation of educational activities are systematically carried out and the necessary changes are communicated to the staff concerned. Conditions for access are open, fair and are being evaluated regularly. Equality is taken into account in all educational activities. 				
KEY AREA 3 - ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION						
3.1	Results of teaching and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our results in relation to the trainees' education are monitored and progress, raising achievements and overall satisfaction are documented. Our indicators for educational processes document improvement. 				
3.2	Staff-oriented results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The results in relation to staff are monitored and progress, raising achievements and overall satisfaction documented. Indicators on staff performance document improvement. 				
3.3	Labour-market and societal results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The results in relation to local and/or central government or other bodies that regulate the sector are monitored and progress, raising achievements and overall satisfaction are documented. Indicators, such as employability and results on socially vulnerable groups, document improvement. Indicators on societal performance in general document improvement. 				
3.4	Key performance results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The results linked to our achievement of goals in relation to our mandate are improving. Financial results document progress, raising achievements and overall satisfaction. The effect on the environment is monitored and shows improvement. 				

KEY AREA 4 - FEEDBACK AND PROCEDURES FOR CHANGE

4.1	Planning and implementation of actions for improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We perform self-assessment systematically and regularly with the participation of all relevant staff and stakeholders. • We use regional, national and European statistical information and benchmarking data for analysing our results from step 3. • The views of parents, trainees, companies, social partners, and other stakeholders are systematically assessed and appropriately fed into the self-assessment process wherever they have a significant contribution to make. • We systematically monitor the effectiveness of the teaching and training activities in order to maintain a strong focus on improving the quality of the trainees' educational outcomes and attainment of adequate skills. • The areas selected for development, as a result of the self-assessment process, are an appropriate response to the strengths and weaknesses of our VET provision. 			
4.2	External verification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer review. Best practise at VET-provider level is being recognised by participating in peer review at national and European levels. • Benchmarking. Our results are being benchmarked with those of similar organisations at regional, national and European levels. • Inspection. There is a regular system of independent external inspection and review, which evaluates and reports on the quality of our education and training achieved. • Accreditation. We have committed our organisation to accreditation according to one or more of the known labels (ISO, EFQM, Investors in People, GRETA, etc.). • 			

Annex B: Considerations for the system-level

System-level is the level that defines the conditions of VET provision, regionally and/or nationally.

This annex analyses the influence of the system-level on the self-assessment of a VET-provider. Self-assessment is considered to be a quality approach of the VET-provider.

Arguments in favour of using self-assessment as a quality approach

This section should be read in the light of the information already given in Chapter 2.

As already mentioned, VET-providers experience increasing demands to react to rapid changes, to use new technologies, to be more effective, to respond to stakeholders/users needs and the need to learn from others and to be visible and competitive in the community.

It takes a very large and well-governed VET system to be able to provide necessary statutory provisions, to allocate the necessary resources, to check on results, etc. in due time, and for the VET-providers to respond and carry out the necessary changes.

The value of performing a self-assessment lies both in the process itself and in the possibility of being able to take business decisions knowing what results actions will produce.

From a system-level point of view, self-assessment provides:

- a systematic and general view of all the activities performed by all VET-providers;
- continuity, since evaluation is a natural part of planning and activities;
- effectiveness, since decisions are taken at grassroots level and the evaluation data are relatively easily utilised;
- flexibility and appropriateness, since activities can be tailored to local needs from the beginning.

Preconditions for self-assessment as a quality approach?

The following issues have to be taken into consideration when the system level is seeking to determine if self-assessment is a suitable method for evaluation and development for VET-providers.

At least four issues should be considered in the process of determining whether self-assessment is the quality approach for developing VET institutions. These issues concern the culture of the education system, the necessary support needed to perform adequately and the control measures that have to be taken.

- Autonomy
- Dialogue
- Evidence
- External validation

As mentioned above in Chapter 2, Autonomy relates to the planning, execution and revision not only of one's work but also of one's self-assessment. It is a necessary condition for carrying out a successful self-assessment. Statutory provision can supply the VET institutions with a framework within which to operate, but autonomy as to how to operate is important for participants if they are to take self-assessment seriously.

Another important point is the fact that achievement of greater autonomy is also the objective of the self-assessment process itself. Self-assessment is conducted so that VET-providers can react adequately to changes. Self-assessment empowers the VET-providers to evaluate and develop their own activities; hence autonomy is the basis of good performance.

Dialogue is a necessary condition for self-assessment and dialogue is also a successful outcome of the process. Dialogue should be conducted in an open and honest atmosphere with respect for differences and the work of VET-providers and the responsibilities of the system-level. For dialogue to take place, it needs appropriate communication strategies defined by the system-level. If there are no official channels for communication between stakeholders in VET, the dialogue will find unofficial ways to develop, and the management of VET provision by self-assessment will be difficult.

Evidence or data are the basis of decision-making at all levels.

First, for self-assessment to be performed at an appropriate professional level guidance is required on what VET-providers are expected to achieve and improve, but not decisions on what is 'good enough'. Ratings and benchmarking of VET-providers' results are the preferred instruments for management since the key word is 'improvement'.

Secondly, the establishment of systems for measuring and recording relevant results is a prerequisite for supporting VET-providers in their task of improving their VET provision.

External validation: for a self-assessment process to be of continuous value and to produce the desired results, it needs the input of an external validation.

This can be in the form of:

- regular (which can vary between 1 and 5 years) self-assessments, reporting to and inspections by an inspectorate;
- accreditations according to norms and standards, and independent validators;
- statutory provisions on which results of the educational outcome should be published on the Internet.

Annex B1. Self-assessment for the system level

<i>Step 1: Purpose and plan</i>		
<i>1.1 Core quality criteria for translation of policies</i>		
How does the (legislative) system behind VET translate the political aims and strategies into educational goals and aims and implement them through clear and coherent plans and actions, together with relevant stakeholders, to achieve long-term success?		<i>Score:</i>
	<i>Examples of strengths</i>	<i>Areas for improvement</i>
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<p><i>Examples of the main elements for a VET system when planning the translation of policies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you state the educational aims concisely so as to have a strong focus on improving the quality of the trainees' educational outcomes and attainment of adequate skills? • How do you describe the systematic approach behind the VET system in order to ensure every relevant stakeholder's future interests? • How do you develop, describe and implement a coherent system for managing the VET provision? • How do you identify and communicate future needs in the labour market? • How do you implement European as well as national objectives and values? • How do you describe the educational aims in order to achieve the desired degree of autonomy of VET provision? • How do you promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination so that all trainees achieve their potential? 		

Step 1: Purpose and plan
1.2 Core quality criteria for the involvement of stakeholders

How does the (legislative) system behind VET initiate a partnership- and trainee-focused strategy supported by objectives, measurable targets and appropriate involvement processes?	<i>Score:</i>
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	<i>Examples of strengths</i>	<i>Areas for improvement</i>
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Examples of the main elements for a VET system when planning the involvement of partners:

- How do you identify, cooperate and communicate with all relevant educational stakeholders to achieve a successful long-term educational outcome?
- How do you involve trainees on a legislative level so that they can have an influence on all relevant aspects of their education?
- How do you maintain and develop a process for systematically involving the labour-market partners?
- How do you regularly and systematically monitor and evaluate the process, the results and the nature of partnerships?
- How do you participate in appropriate national and international research activities in the field of VET and how do you integrate the results?

<i>Step 1: Purpose and plan</i>		
<i>1.3 Core quality criteria for financial allocation</i>		
How does the (legislative) system behind VET balance the use of financial resources for input-, output- and support-activities? Examples of the main elements for a VET system when planning financial allocation		<i>Score:</i>
	<i>Examples of strengths</i>	<i>Areas for improvement</i>
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<p><i>Examples of the main elements to consider for a VET system when managing and allocating finances:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you ensure that the process for allocating finances is open, fair and successful? • How do you involve all relevant stakeholders in consultation at a suitable level of detail? • How do you effectively monitor expenditure under specific budget headings to ensure value for money? • How is the use of financial resources linked to clearly identified VET-provision activities? • How do the financial resources for education and training of teachers and trainers correspond to the identified and agreed areas of development? • How does the use of financial resources correspond to the identified areas for future development? • How are available funds being targeted at important areas of weakness that have been identified through evaluation? 		

Step 2: Implementation

2.1 Core quality criteria for competences of teachers, trainers and management in VET

How does the (legislative) system behind VET define the necessary competences of VET management and pedagogical staff? How does it ensure this by means of direction, education and support?	<i>Score:</i>
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	<i>Examples of strengths</i>	<i>Areas of improvement</i>
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Examples of the main elements for a VET system when securing the necessary competences:

- How do you formulate the aims of the competences of teachers, trainers and managers in VET?
- How do you cooperate and communicate with all relevant stakeholders to achieve a successful long-term development of competences?
- How do you develop, describe and implement a coherent programme for continuous development of competences in VET provision?
- How do you regularly and systematically monitor and evaluate the process, the results and the nature of competence development?
- How do you identify and integrate future needs in the programme?
- How do you implement European as well as national objectives and values?
- How do you support equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination for all managers, teachers and trainers in VET?

Step 2: Implementation
2.2 Core quality criteria for educational processes

How does the (legislative) system behind the VET manage, develop and improve the educational processes (guidance and organisation, planning and actual teaching and training) in order to support the policy strategies, and fully satisfy and generate increasing value for the labour market and the national and international society?	<i>Score:</i>
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	<i>Examples of strengths</i>	<i>Areas for improvement</i>
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Examples of the main elements for a VET system when ensuring the development of the educational processes:

- How do you translate the policy aims into pedagogical aims, taking into consideration the desired degree of autonomy of the relevant stakeholders?
- How do you cooperate and communicate with all relevant stakeholders to achieve a successful long-term development of educational processes?
- How do you develop, describe and implement a coherent program for continuous development of educational processes in VET provision?
- How do you regularly and systematically monitor and evaluate the process, the results and the nature of the educational processes?
- How do you identify and integrate future needs in the programme?
- How do you implement European as well as national objectives and values?

Step 3: Assessment and evaluation

3.1 Core quality criteria for assessment of education/training

How does the (legislative) system behind VET measure the results achieved by VET-providers in relation to their educational and societal objectives and in relation to satisfying the needs and expectations of national and international stakeholders?

Score:

	<i>Examples of strengths</i>	<i>Areas for improvement</i>
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Examples of the main elements for a VET system when carrying out evaluation of education/training:

- How do you, against the background of VET policy, formulate the necessary conditions for mutual national and international recognition of trainees' competences and skills?
- How do you define the functions and responsibilities of the relevant stakeholders?
- How does your formal educational system recognise the achievement of people's non-formal competences?
- How do you build a reference frame for designing examinations and certifications?
- How do you secure coherence and equivalence between VET systems?
- How do you define and control the legitimacy of the examination and certification arrangements?
- How do you define and control the quality of the skills of inspectors, assessors and certification delivery networks?

Step 3: Assessment and evaluation
3.2 Core quality criteria for examination procedures

<i>How does the (legislative) system behind VET provide for procedures or regulations for examinations and acknowledge results/grades? How does the (legislative) system suggest or define necessary measurements of trainees' results?</i>		<i>Score:</i>
	<i>Examples of strengths</i>	<i>Areas for improvement</i>
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- Examples of the main elements for a VET system when providing for examination procedures:
- How do you cooperate with the relevant stakeholders (the professional sector), in relation to the examination procedures, to achieve successful long-term recognition of competences and skills?
 - How do you develop, define and provide information about the grades used in VET examinations and certifications so as to assure successful long-term recognition of competences and skills?
 - How do you define and control the legitimacy and competences of the inspectors/assessors and ensure that they are not disqualified from involvement in the examinations?
 - How do you ensure that the information provided to all participants in examination procedures is ethical, accurate and relevant?
 - How do you develop and implement control processes and corrective measures?
 - How do you develop a legally approved, mutually recognised and known procedure for handling complaints from the various participants in the examination procedures?
 - How do you ensure coherence between the educational goals, the methods used for teaching and training, the learning results, the methods of examination and the final results of the trainees?
 - How do you develop and implement new and valid methods for examinations so as to be able to adjust to new teaching and training methods?
 - How are vulnerable groups supported through examinations and certifications, so that their particular handicap is of little influence on the results they achieve?

Step 4: Feedback and procedures for change
4.1 Core quality criteria for validation of VET

How the (legislative) system behind VET validate the quality and effectiveness of VET-providers by providing directions for a systematic quality approach, by monitoring the results and by provision of appropriate benchmarks for VET?	<i>Score:</i>
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	<i>Examples of strengths</i>	<i>Areas for improvement</i>
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Examples of the main elements for validating the effectiveness of a VET system:

- How do you lay down or suggest instructions for the use of a systematic quality approach by VET-providers, which is coherent with the overall structure of the VET system?
- How are the results of VET monitored and validated so as to provide the necessary data and results for the control of the effectiveness of VET?
- How is the provision of data for the European indicators supported by national strategies?
- How are the available results and indicators made public so that all VET-providers can compare/benchmark?

Suggestions for measurements/indicators for criteria 4.1

- Rates of access to initial and continuing VET- Prevalence of vulnerable groups - Unemployment statistics - Satisfaction surveys of stakeholders - Evidence of improved guidance – Destination of trainees 6 months after completion of course/education
- Evidence of improvements in methods and results of teaching and training – Developments in curricula/content/technologies - Performance and competences of teachers and trainers – Drop-out rates – Results of examinations and certifications – The use of trainees skills at workplace – Satisfaction surveys of trainees – Cooperation with employers/companies
- Evidence of improvement in management strategies – Involvement of external stakeholders and trainees – The quality of the teaching and training environment and equipment – Satisfaction of staff – Improvements in effectiveness and efficiency – Capability of monitoring future demands
- Key economic data on: training, teachers & trainers and other staff, management, buildings, equipment and technology, development activities, IT investment, marketing, etc.
- Complaints

Step 4: Feedback and procedures for change
4.2 Core quality criteria for systematic and transparent feedback

How does the (legislative) system behind VET organise systematic and transparent feedback and procedures for change in VET, in order to innovate and generate increasing value for future trainees, the future labour market and national and international society?

Score:

	<i>Examples of strengths</i>	<i>Areas for improvement</i>
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Examples of the main elements for a systematic and transparent system of feedback:

- How do you stimulate or organise the systematic use of benchmarking for VET-providers regionally, nationally and internationally?
- How do you provide the system of VET with valid and strategic benchmarks and indicators?
- How do you stimulate or organise the systematic use of peer reviews for VET-providers at regional, national and international level?
- How do you initiate, support and communicate research and development activities and results to stakeholders in VET?

Annex B2: Mapping of VET and the use of the European Indicators

SUPPORT PROCESSES AT VET-PROVIDER LEVEL

	Information & Communication		Purchasing		Maintenance
Guidance	Development of staff competences I-2	Management I-1	Administration	Finance	Cooperation with partners

KEY PROCESSES IN VET PROVISION

Admission/ Access (I-10), I-4, I-5	Teaching & Training Planning of Teaching & Training (I-9) Organisation of Teaching & Training	Evaluation and/or Exams	Exit (job) I-3, I-6, I-7, I-8
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STAKEHOLDERS IN VET

Potential users: -Pupils -Unemployed -Employed in companies	Trainees Other educational Institutions Educational Boards Suppliers The board of governors/directors	Parents Employers/companies Social partners Trade Unions Municipalities The Ministry Society
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EUROPEAN INDICATORS ON VET

(I-10: Better Access) I-4: Prevalence of vulnerable groups I-5: Participation rates in IVT & LLL	(I-9: Changes in curricula)	I-6: Successful completion-rates I-3: Unemployment according to groups I-7: destination 6 months after training I-8: utilisation of acquired skills
I-2: Investment in training of trainers	I-1: Application of QM systems according to the European Common Quality Assurance Framework	

Annex B3: Mapping of VET and suggestions for points on which self-assessment should focus ⁽⁴⁾

SUPPORT PROCESSES AT VET-PROVIDER LEVEL					
	Information & Communication		Purchasing		Maintenance
Guidance *	Development of staff competences *	Management *	Administration	Finance *	Cooperation with partners
KEY PROCESSES IN VET PROVISION					
Admission/ Access *	Teaching & Training * Planning of Teaching & Training * Organisation of Teaching & Training			Evaluation and/or Exams *	Exit (job) *
STAKEHOLDERS IN VET					
Potential users: -Pupils -Unemployed -Employed in companies	Trainees* Other educational Institutions Educational Boards Suppliers The board of governors/directors				*Parents *Employer/companies *Social partners *Trade Unions *Municipalities *The Ministry *Society
FOCAL POINTS FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS					
Access improved	Improved methods of teaching and training Improved results of teaching and training Developments in curricula/content/technology Performance of teachers and trainers Involvement of trainees Suitability of the teaching and training environment			Monitoring of: Results of exams and evaluations Satisfaction of trainees	Monitoring of: Destinations of trainees Utilisation of skills Future demands

⁽⁴⁾ The point on which self-assessment should focus are marked with an asterisk.

Qualified and improved guidance	Improvement in competences of staff Satisfaction of staff	Evidence of improvement in management strategies through a known quality approach	Improved effectiveness and efficiency	Involvement of stakeholders Satisfaction of stakeholders
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Annex C

The reader will find several examples of frameworks and questionnaires in the Virtual Community on Quality Assurance in VET: <http://cedefop.communityzero.com>

Annex C1. Post-16 framework and guide. UK.

Annex C2. Training Process Criteria and Quality Indicators for the Trainer. Spain.
Centro de Formación Ocupacional, Gobierno de Navarra.

Annex C3. Guidelines and Provider Quality. Ireland