Study on quality assurance in continuous VET and on future development of EQAVET

Final Report

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Study on Quality Assurance in Continuous VET and on future development of EQAVET
Executive summary

Focus of the study and methodology

The Bruges Communiqué emphasises the need for high quality VET systems by stating that Europe needs "easily accessible and career-oriented continuing VET for employees, employers, independent entrepreneurs and unemployed people, which facilitates both competence development and career changes."

Without a quality assurance process for this provision, employers’ and learners’ confidence and trust will be undermined.

The EQAVET Recommendation and its main features (the quality cycle, the indicative descriptors and the indicators) were developed for the entire VET sector. However, to date, they were mostly taken up in debates in initial VET. The CVET sector was so far less well described and debated in the European cooperation on quality assurance in VET.

This study maps the quality assurance instruments in continuous VET (CVET) in ten selected European Member States and compares these with the European Quality Assurance reference framework in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET).

The study describes how 10 selected countries (Austria, Belgium-fr, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, The Netherlands, and UK-England) carry out quality assurance on system and provider level in CVET. The study is based on a review of 33 specific quality assurance measures or instruments. In addition in those countries where there are no system-level quality assurance measures (i.e. most of the countries covered) processes to ensure quality (even if not necessarily designated as quality assurance) were partially reviewed.

The data collection was carried out through:

- Desk research about all QA measures identified;
- Interviews with persons in charge of the QA measure in those cases where the information publicly available was not sufficient to prepare a country fiche. In total 42 persons were interviewed at this stage; and
- Thirteen additional interviews for six case studies on specific measures.

In addition to the comparative report, this study is supplemented by 10 country reports (Annexes 1-10) and six case studies (Annexes 11-16).

In addition to the mapping of quality assurance in CVET, the study also analyses possible options for future development of EQAVET. This part of the study is based on experts’ brainstorming and feedback from interviewees.

Quality assurance in CVET

The study found that there are many differences between initial VET and continuing VET which have implications for quality assurance. These concern governance, organisation of delivery, and funding as well as expectations of ‘customers’ to training. Consequently, quality assurance requirements in CVET on system level may differ from the IVET sector.

The following main differences were found:

- In parallel with the development of qualifications systems and frameworks (e.g. NQFs which are linked to the EQF) public authorities may wish to stimulate the use of quality assurance mechanisms to support trust in all levels of the educational system, including adult education and CVET;
- However, the public sector only governs some parts of CVET. Therefore, system level quality assurance requirements concern these parts of CVET only;
- Funding for CVET often comes from different sources (regional, public employment services, education) which may want to impose their own requirements in terms of quality;

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An important share of CVET operates in market conditions. Requirements for the development of quality assurance in CVET may therefore depend on standards expected by customers rather than those of public authorities;

Introducing transparency to ‘consumers’ of CVET ‘services’ (individuals or businesses) is another reason why states may want to intervene in quality assurance in CVET. Public authorities may wish to make the CVET market more transparent by improving the visibility and understanding of quality assurance procedures that providers comply with;

In summary the context of CVET is often more complex than that of IVET with multiplicity of organisations that wish to impose their standards on quality and quality assurance.

In some countries however (FI, NL, IE), quality assurance requirements for publicly funded CVET are no different from those on publicly funded IVET. This is also linked to the fact that in these countries publicly funded CVET is also delivered by the same providers as publicly funded IVET.

Comparison of EQAVET with existing QA on system level

The EQAVET quality cycle, descriptors and indicators identify the main dimensions of what processes, inputs and outcomes matter for measuring, assessing and supporting quality in VET. EQAVET proposes a specific set of descriptors for system level quality assurance.

However, the measures identified that countries label as ‘quality assurance’ are primarily about three things:

- Minimising the risk of misuse of public funding by ensuring that providers have the capacity to deliver training that meets at least minimum quality requirements;
- Ensuring the coherence of the qualifications system and of qualifications awarded; and
- Building trust and confidence in the system by putting in place mechanisms that ensure the qualifications (and related training) are relevant to the labour market.

The EQAVET descriptors give an indication of what EQAVET understands as system-level quality assurance. The analysis of existing quality assurance measures shows that most of these system-level features are not covered by what countries call explicitly quality assurance. These features may well be covered in countries’ VET systems but they do not form part of what is designated as quality assurance measures. While EQAVET is based on a general vision of how quality should be aimed at in VET systems and VET policies, countries’ existing quality assurance measures (in particular in CVET as studied here) are often more specific and concern precise elements of VET systems. In addition to the quality assurance measures, there are other practices in countries’ VET systems which can well ensure the quality of VET but which are not called/ designated as quality assurance. This difference between measures that are called quality assurance and those measures that do ensure quality of VET systems but are not called quality assurance makes it difficult to compare EQAVET with most countries’ VET systems QA measures.

The fact that EQAVET differentiates between system-level and provider-level measures stems from the understanding that, in order to achieve quality in VET at national level, there needs to be a more global reflection on quality assurance than what is required from individual providers. Some processes need to be in place at system level. This study shows that these processes are rarely embedded in what is called quality assurance. It is likely that many of these processes are present in most countries studied but they are features of the VET system rather than features of what is called and understood in the country as quality assurance.

The use of indicators as part of quality assurance measures at system level is not systematic in CVET. Though indicators are used in these countries they are not systematically part of those measures that are called quality assurance. However, in some countries quality assurance measures in CVET, such as accreditation, are underpinned by an indicator system.

As a result of this distinction between what is defined as quality assurance in the countries and what processes are expected to be covered according to the EQAVET descriptors, the study could not thoroughly compare system-level quality assurance measures and EQAVET.

It should also be noted that in a majority of the countries analysed there is no overarching system-level quality assurance framework for CVET. It is also not always possible to clearly differentiate what is a provider-level quality assurance measure and what is a system-level measure.
Comparison of EQAVET with existing QA on provider level

On provider level, comparison was easier; and 26 measures were analysed in detail. The study found that provider level quality assurance instruments either focus on the quality of processes in place to enhance quality; or they focus on the output (level of quality or performance regarding different aspects of VET provision).

The first set of instruments, those that focus on processes to manage quality, are more easily comparable with EQAVET as they are based on similar logics – those of management of an institution and the review of processes put in place. Those instruments that are based on certain levels of performance or requirements are less easy to compare with EQAVET since they are based on specific output-related indicators.

Comparison of the measures with EQAVET showed that 16 out of 26 instruments are based on a cyclic understanding of quality. Twenty four out of 26 instruments can be compared to at least some of the EQAVET descriptors. Those provider level quality assurance instruments that had a rather weak match with EQAVET were not designed for internal providers’ review but rather as instruments of external review focusing on specific aspects that are of concern to the funding authorities. However, none of the instruments shows a full match with all the EQAVET descriptors or even with most of the descriptors. Most of the quality assurance measures are comparable with some of the provider level descriptors of EQAVET.

The following specific observations as to the use of EQVET descriptors were made:

- The descriptor most frequently related to is ‘Staff Training Plans’. The existence of properly trained personnel seems to be a rather generic and uncontested precondition for the quality of training common to all quality assurance;
- Management related-descriptors like ‘alignment of resources with objectives, and consultation with stakeholders to identify needs’, were frequently identified as well. Hence, it is a common notion that suitable management processes in an institution help to enhance the quality of training;
- EQAVET-descriptors like ‘Early warning plans’ and ‘Availability of review results’ were very rarely identified in quality assurance measures analysed.

However, the comparison also brought to light that EQAVET differs to a certain extent from the quality assurance measures in place on provider level:

- EQAVET does not contain any descriptors referring to the adequacy of equipment and infrastructure in a VET-institution, which is a rather common criterion in QA for providers (and subject to external review);
- EQAVET does not have a focus on customers/learners and their feedback regarding their learning experience;
- EQAVET does not refer to the quality of information and guidance provided to the learner (e.g. a VET-providers’ effort to provide tailored solutions in relation to a specific learners’ pathway, e.g. through individual counselling).

Scenarios for the future implementation of EQAVET

The study also provides an analysis of possible future evolutions of EQAVET. It gives a range of options to strengthen the implementation of the currently existing EQAVET framework. These options are in particular looking at how the current framework could be used more concretely to enhance implementation at national and provider level. The analysis also identifies options that imply changes to the current framework as embedded in the Annexes of the EQAVET recommendation.

The analysis of future scenarios on EQAVET discusses the following main forms of use of the EQAVET framework:

- Continue mutual learning and exchange in its current form (status quo);
- Use the EQAVET indicators as a framework to collect data on performance of VET systems;
- Use the framework for peer-review of quality assurance systems;
- Use is for peer-review of VET providers;
- Issue a label on compliance with EQAVET to VET providers using the descriptors as a standard/criteria;
- Organise a prize on quality assurance using the EQAVET provider-level descriptors as a standard;
Make use of EQAVET a requirement for participation in the future programme replacing the Lifelong learning programme.

While the first three options are more about the use of EQAVET at the level of Member States and VET systems the other ones are more about its use among providers.

It also discusses the possibility for the EQAVET framework to evolve. Two options are considered:

- Making EQAVET and the European Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance in higher education more convergent; or
- Developing EQAVET into a meta-framework which contains less key principles than the current descriptors and indicators but distinguishes more clearly between aspects of quality assurance that are more comparable to how quality assurance is structured nationally.

It should be noted that the different scenarios are not mutually exclusive and could be combined.

For each scenario the report discusses their possible implications and likelihood. However, a more in-depth assessment would be needed to assess the respective strengths and weaknesses of a smaller set of options if these are to be considered for future decisions. The costs and potential benefits of the different options would need to be assessed more carefully. Furthermore, the choice of alternatives will also depend on the political priorities for future development of EQAVET and these have not been taken into account in this report.

Feedback to the scenarios showed that interviewees found it rather important that EQAVET would further adhere to its main principles and remain a voluntary instrument with a ‘toolbox’ character. Respective scenarios that are based on peer review, peer learning and the creation of awareness for quality and quality standards (e.g. prizes for excellence in VET) received a rather positive feedback. Scenarios that would give the instrument a de facto prescriptive character (e.g. data collection against the EQAVET indicators across Europe) were not received positively.
1 Introduction

This study was commissioned by the European Commission, DG Education and Culture to contribute to the future development of the European Quality Assurance reference framework in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET). The study has two main objectives:

- To map the quality assurance instruments in continuous VET (CVET) in selected countries and to compare these with EQAVET; and
- To provide a reflection on the possible alternatives for the future implementation of EQAVET.

The study builds on previous analysis and joint work in the field of quality assurance in VET and EQAVET. Before explaining the study scope and approach, this section presents how the study fits into the European work on quality assurance in VET.

1.1 What is EQAVET?

EQAVET was formally established through the 2009 Recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council\(^2\) (referred to as EQAVET Recommendation later in the text). It builds on earlier work at European level which began in 2002 with the adoption of the Copenhagen Declaration on enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training (VET). One of the priorities of the Copenhagen Process was ‘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.’

Following the adoption of the Copenhagen Declaration, the Technical Working Group on quality assurance (QA) in VET was set up. This group consisted of the representatives of 16 MS. The group developed the Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF) which was subsequently endorsed by the Education Council in May 2004 and strengthened through the 2006 Helsinki Communiqué\(^3\). This communiqué underlined the need to develop and implement common European VET instruments in order to promote a culture of quality improvement through participation in the European Network for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (ENQAVET). The ENQA VET Network was established in October 2005 and existed until December 31, 2009. In 2008 and 2009, it was a Lifelong Learning Programme funded network led by representatives of EU Member States and European social partners. The network completed its work in 2009 when it was replaced with an official and formal governance structure that is defined in the EQAVET Recommendation.

The EQAVET Recommendation\(^4\) invited Member States to promote and monitor continuous improvement in their VET systems. It was proposed that this should be done through the use of a quality assurance and improvement cycle based on 4 phases: Planning, Implementation, Evaluation and Review. EQAVET can be applied at the levels of VET-systems and VET-providers. It provides a systematic approach to quality assurance and emphasises the importance of monitoring and improving quality by combining internal and external evaluation with qualitative analysis. It covers all aspects of VET (formal, informal and non-formal) in both the initial and continuing VET sectors.

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\(^3\) The Helsinki Communiqué on Enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training. Communiqué of the European Ministers of Vocational Education and Training, the European Social partners and the European Commission arising from the meeting in Helsinki on 5 December 2006 to review the priorities and strategies of the Copenhagen Process.

\(^4\) The Recommendation refers to a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQRF) rather than EQAVET. Subsequent communications have clarified that EQAVET is the accepted acronym for the quality assurance framework outlined in the Recommendation.
1.1.1 Brief overview of existing European information on quality assurance in VET

Concrete support for quality assurance in VET at a European level began with the work of ENQA-VET. This network focused on developing guidance which could be used in the countries at a 'system level' for further development of quality assurance measures. One step in this work was the agreement on a set of definitions for each of the EQAVET indicators\(^5\).

ENQA-VET’s work provided a strong foundation for the work of the EQAVET network which, since 2010, has worked with European social partners, Member States and their National Reference Points (whose establishment had been recommended in the EQAVET Recommendation).

EQAVET network’s early work in 2010 – 2011 included the development of:

- System-level case studies to illustrate the range of approaches used to support quality assurance;
- A set of ‘building blocks’ which propose activities that can be used as references to create a quality assurance system;
- Two sets of guidance to Member States, one focusing on building a system of quality assurance and the other one focusing on using the quality assurance system for monitoring VET. This distinction reflected the fact that individual Member States were at different stages in creating a system-wide process for quality assurance;
- A glossary of key terms used throughout the VET sector;
- Clear links between the four stages of the quality cycle, the indicative descriptors, the indicators, the building blocks and the case studies.

All this information is presented on the EQAVET web-site in an interactive manner\(^6\).

EQAVET network’s work over the period 2011-2012 focused on developing support for the National Reference Points (NRPs) in order that they can support VET providers. It has used many of the approaches developed by ENQA-VET including the production of case studies. It has also produced:

- Guidance for VET providers on how to use the indicators to monitor their approach to quality assurance;
- A second set of ‘building blocks’ which can be used by VET providers to establish their approach to quality assurance or reflect on their existing approach;
- A set of training materials which can be used by NRPs to support VET providers (e.g. the EQAVET IT tool).

The output of the EQAVET working group’s work is available on the EQAVET website.

In addition to the above products that are a result of joint work between the Member States, other members of the EQAVET network and quality assurance experts, the EQAVET secretariat also carries out mapping exercises that collect information on state of play of quality assurance measures and systems in the participating countries and also on their progress in the implementation of the EQAVET Recommendation\(^7\). These take the form of surveys of EQAVET members.

From early stages the work of the EQAVET network emphasised the value of clear and concise messages which can be understood in the same way in a wide range of contexts. This need for simplicity and clarity motivated the production of the ‘building blocks’ and the early work to produce a consistent understanding of the indicators. To support Member

\(^5\) The Recommendation included a comprehensive set of indicators which could be used to support the evaluation and quality improvement of VET systems and/or VET providers. The Recommendation made clear that these indicators would be further developed through European cooperation.
\(^6\) [http://www.eqavet.eu/gns/home.aspx](http://www.eqavet.eu/gns/home.aspx)
\(^7\) Iosifescu (2011) *Information Gathering Exercise Quality assurance procedures in the processes of certification, curricula setting, accreditation and training of trainers in European VET systems; EQAVET Secretariat Surveys of 2011 and 2012*
States, EQAVET’s early (and ENQA-VET’s) work focused on demystifying the Recommendation and identifying actions that could easily be introduced.

The Recommendation invited the Member States to ‘each devise, not later than 18 June 2011, an approach aimed at improving quality assurance systems at national level, where appropriate, and making best use of the framework, involving the social partners, regional and local authorities, and all other relevant stakeholders in accordance with national legislation and practice.’ Hence, at the start of the support process, the EQAVET network concentrated on this system level task. The main aim of the Network was to support the countries in developing their national approaches (strategies). Moreover, this reflected national/regional priorities.

However as each Member State made progress with implementation of quality assurance measures, the focus for support moved to the VET provider level. This approach was in line with strategic objective 2a of the Bruges Communiqué; stating that ‘participating countries should establish quality assurance frameworks in accordance with the EQAVET Recommendation’.

Given the heterogeneity of existing quality assurance approaches - not only across countries but also within countries - offering advice to individual VET providers is difficult. As a result, making EQAVET tangible and understandable to VET providers remains a challenge for EQAVET implementation. Providing convincing arguments in favour of EQAVET and approaches that are based on similar principles is a challenge for NRP s, in particular in those countries where there are no nationally required provider-level quality assurance mechanisms and where providers have a choice of arrangements to use.

1.2 EQAVET and continuing VET

The majority of countries’ representatives in the EQAVET (and also ENQA-VET) network are from the ministries and/or departments in charge of initial VET. This meant that the activities of the Network in early stages focused mainly on initial VET (e.g. the examples discussed were mainly from this sector). However, the EQAVET Recommendation is expected to be applicable to all aspects of VET, including CVET. As the annex to the Recommendation explains ‘the indicators and indicative descriptors may be applied to initial vocational training and/or continuous vocational training, depending on the relevant individual characteristics of each Member State’s VET system and the type of VET providers.’

The importance of a quality assurance process for every part of the VET system was re-emphasised in the Bruges Communiqué which stated that Europe needed ‘easily accessible and career-oriented continuing VET for employees, employers, independent entrepreneurs and unemployed people, which facilitates both competence development and career changes. Without a quality assurance process for this provision, employers’ and learners’ confidence and trust will be undermined.

While the documents and products described in the section above do not explicitly focus on initial VET exclusively, the fact that they were mostly taken up in debates in initial VET means that the CVET sector was so far less well covered in the European cooperation on quality assurance in VET.

That is one of the reasons that motivated the request to carry out a study on EQAVET and CVET.

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1.2.1 The characteristics of CVET that are key for quality assurance

Quality assurance measures have to be fit for purpose in order to lead to the desired improvements in quality. The fitness for purpose means, among other things, that they are adapted to the context and the features of the system/ practice/ organisation concerned.

There are many differences between initial VET and continuing VET which have implications for quality assurance - as will be discussed throughout this study. These arrangements concern governance, organisation of delivery, and funding as well as expectations and fundamental principles in some cases. Compared to initial VET, continuing VET is often considered to be:

- Delivered by a diversity of types of organisations – from public bodies through private firms to individual trainers;
- Governed by different ministries, sectoral organisations with large segments of CVET being unregulated;
- Market driven and more focused on immediate needs of businesses or sectors;
- Characterised by informal or non-formal learning and often in-company training;
- Short-term and not always leading to a full qualification that would certify a comprehensive set of knowledge, skills and competence;
- Funded by a mixture of public authorities, individuals or business;
- Less tightly (or not at all) regulated when it comes to curriculum, certification process, qualifications but also the qualifications of delivering the training;
- Based on contractual relationship between the funding organisation (be it a public body or a private company) and the CVET provider. The provider has to ‘compete’ for its clients;
- Restricted to a specific group of people (either those who receive public benefits, those employed in a given sector or those who pay) as opposed to initial VET which is much less targeted and should provide (more) universal access.

As a result of these differences, in most countries (but not all), the rationale for introduction of government requirements in the field of CVET differs from those in the field of IVET. In initial VET, the government requirements for quality assurance are typically linked to the following arguments:

- The public sector is the main source of funding for initial VET in most countries (though in countries with strong work-based learning systems there are important inputs from businesses);
- Access to initial VET is a right for students and pupils and in some countries it is even part of the compulsory education. If the state guarantees individuals the right to education and training (including initial VET) as part of the social model (or welfare state), it also needs to ensure the minimum quality of this training. As a result, providers are asked to comply with certain requirements to make sure they can offer the required quality of training;
- The state, via the ministry of education or another ministry in charge of VET, often guarantees the quality of qualifications awarded and their comparability across the country;
- The delegation of important responsibilities to VET providers in a system where the state guarantees the quality of education and training and of the qualifications awarded imposes demands in terms of monitoring, reporting and accountability.

In continuous VET the rationale for introducing quality assurance requirements is often different:

- The public sector only funds some aspects of CVET and therefore in many instances it only imposes quality assurance requirements on these parts of CVET. Furthermore, the funding is often from different sources (regional, public employment services, education) and the different funding bodies may have the tendency to impose their own requirements which suit their objectives in terms of training and hence what is understood as quality;
- Introducing transparency to ‘consumers’ of CVET ‘services’ be it individuals or businesses is another reason why the state may want to intervene in CVET. In many
countries the policy approach to CVET is based on a liberal model whereby the state
does not regulate the market but tries to make the market more optimal by improving
information availability to those who purchase CVET;
- Increasingly with the development of qualifications systems and frameworks (e.g. NQFs
  which are linked to the EQF) that cover CVET as well as promotion of mechanisms for
transfer and recognition of credit, the public authorities stimulate the use of quality
assurance mechanisms to support trust in the system.

In addition to the above, the developments in quality assurance in CVET are also stimulated
from within the private market for training (not only from the side of public authorities). The
fact that there is a market for training services with large numbers of small and medium size
providers means that these actors are searching to signal the trustworthiness, validity and
reliability of their services to a large number of individuals and businesses. Accreditation
schemes, quality assurance certifications and labels are a way of communicating these
messages.

As a result of these driving factors, the quality assurance arrangements in CVET are
diversified, there is rarely a unified system of quality assurance in CVET and it is possible
that a CVET provider has to comply with several requirements at the same time, depending
on the source of funding and sub-system arrangements.

However, there are important differences between countries in the extent to which the above
assumptions hold true. In some countries, much of continuing VET provision is provided by
the same organisations that offer initial VET and therefore the distinction is not always
meaningful from the point of view of providers. There are also countries where the
distinctions are rather between different types of qualifications than between initial VET and
CVET. As a result, the boundaries between IVET and CVET can be blurred.

1.3 This study in the context of EQAVET implementation

EQAVET provides a general framework to which other, more specific and concrete, quality
assurance arrangements can be compared. The EQAVET descriptors and indicators identify
the main dimensions of what processes, inputs and outcomes matter for measuring,
assessing and supporting quality in VET.

A key expectation from this study is to show whether and how the existing
arrangements in CVET compare to EQAVET.

Such comparisons should bring greater transparency into CVET systems and support mutual
understanding and trust among the authorities concerned. It is not expected that each quality
assurance instrument would represent a perfect fit with all the descriptors and indicators in
EQAVET. Some of these may not be relevant for certain schemes. Nevertheless, identifying
areas where there is no overlap can be a basis for both:
- Reflecting on one’s system and the extent to which there would be any added value in
  incorporating the ‘missing’ dimension; and
- Explaining to others why a certain aspect is not of relevance to the given quality
  assurance scheme.

This study and the examples analysed show how such comparison can be undertaken and
how the different aspects of EQAVET can be interpreted in CVET quality assurance
schemes.

The study is therefore composed of:
- A comparative analysis that can be found in sections 2 and 3 of this report; and
- Annexes presenting the quality assurance schemes analysed on country by country
  basis as well as in form of more in-depth case studies for a small number of instruments.

The study also presents a reflection on the possible future scenarios for development of
EQAVET. These scenarios do not concern the field of CVET only but also cover initial VET.
They build on an understanding of the state of play of EQAVET and of its implementation.
and provide suggestions on how the instrument could develop further. This reflection is presented in the section 4.

1.4 Study scope, approach and methodology

In line with the objectives of the study, the research design was based on a qualitative approach that combines collection of descriptive information (via desk research and interviews), views of experts (via interviews) and forward looking reflection of core team members based on an understanding of the state of play of quality assurance in VET as well as of European policy making processes and implementation measures.

Caveat

The comparison between existing quality assurance instruments and EQAVET is based on an interpretation of the criteria underpinning the national measures compared to the EQAVET cycle, descriptors and indicators. This interpretation was done by the research team by comparing the focus of the national measures and the explicitly defined criteria with the existing texts on EQAVET. It is done using a rather general assessment of comparability and it is not based on a strict definition of judgement criteria. In some cases the comparability is quite evident from the choice of wording used in EQAVET and the instrument being used but in other cases it is less obvious. For example EQAVET descriptors insist in several places on staff training and development plans while the quality assurance instruments at national level often insist on staff qualifications. Though the focus is somewhat different, these two approaches were still considered comparable.

Therefore, given that many of the measures studied are formulated in quite different terms than EQAVET, the comparison relies significantly on interpretation which potentially introduces error into the detailed judgements made about the specific instruments. Nevertheless, given the relatively large number of measures covered by this study, small errors of judgement about comparability regarding some of the EQAVET descriptors and the national measures should not affect the reliability of the overall findings.

Given the exploratory nature of the assignment, the data collection focused on a limited number of European VET systems. The VET systems selected were:

- Austria;
- French speaking Community of Belgium;
- Czech Republic;
- Germany;
- France;
- Finland;
- Ireland;
- Italy;
- The Netherlands;
- United Kingdom – England

These systems were selected so as to represent:

- Various levels of decentralisation of CVET covering:
  - Countries with some level of centralisation at national level: CZ, FI, FR, IE, NL,
  - Countries with regional level regulations: AT, BE-fr, DE, IT, UK;
- Countries with existing national frameworks for quality assurance that cover CVET: AT, FI, IE and NL (same as for IVET) and those that don’t have such frameworks or where the system-level framework only covers some aspects of the system;
- Geographical diversity in terms of north-east-south-west and centre but also systems of different sizes and related to that with different levels of complexity.

Within the countries, the researchers did not make an exhaustive analysis of all quality assurance measures in place across the whole CVET system. Such comprehensive mapping would not have been possible given the high numbers of quality assurance arrangements and bodies governing quality assurance in some systems. For example in Germany national measures co-exist with regional ones as well as private certifications. Similarly in Italy each region has its own CVET sub-system. But even in countries with less complex systems there is a multiplicity of arrangements. For example in the Czech Republic different ministries fund and govern parts of CVET (education, labour, health care, home
affairs, justice, industry, being the main ones) and tend to have their own approaches to accreditation of programmes (though the measures described in the country report try to bring more coherence to these arrangements).

In each country the focus was on four to five measures.

The measures described were selected so as to:

- Illustrate different approaches to quality assurance: system-level framework, indicator based monitoring, pilot measures, accreditation, certification and self-assessment;
- Cover both voluntary and compulsory measures;
- Have different focus: the system, the provider, the programme or qualification or the trainer.

Though the researchers were also asked to cover the most widely used measures in the countries, some smaller scale examples are also included so as to illustrate the diversity of approaches.

Particular emphasis was put on making sure that across the ten countries initiatives were selected to cover accreditation or certification of not only institutions, but also programmes and persons/ trainers. These three levels of intervention were used to categorise the different approaches to quality assurance also in line with other literature on the topic of quality assurance in continuing training.\(^\text{10}\)

Once the specific measures to analyse were selected, the country level analysis was launched. The researchers were provided with a standardised structure for country reports. Their work was supported by a briefing note explaining the nature and objectives of the assignment, the information to be collected, the sources to be used as well as a generic topic guide to be adapted to the specificities of each interview (depending on the quality assurance instrument to analyse). In addition they were given oral briefing by the core research team.

The main sources of information were:

- Desk research on the CVET system in the country, the system level quality assurance frameworks and measures and the specific measures; and
- Interviews with key experts in charge of the national framework/ system and the specific measures.\(^\text{11}\)

In total 42 persons were interviewed in the ten countries, meaning that between three to five interviews were carried out in each country. The interviews covered persons from ministries, agencies of the ministry of education (or equivalent) with responsibilities in CVET and quality assurance, associations of CVET providers, regional education authorities, people in charge of specific certification or accreditation measures in external organisations and organisations with other roles in these instruments.

The names of organisations interviewed are presented in the Annex 12.

In addition to the mapping of measures in the ten studied countries, the research team carried out 6 case studies of specific quality assurance measures. The measures analysed in greater detail were:

- ISO 9001 standard and its application in education and training;
- EFQM excellence model;
- AZAV accreditation for CVET in Germany;
- Ö-CERT framework for CVET in Austria;
- Investors in people certification mainly used in the UK but also other countries; and
- The Label 'Lycées des metiers'\(^\text{12}\) in France.

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\(^\text{11}\) This approach implies a certain focus on publicly funded CVET and system level measures. However, wherever available, information about measures relevant for privately funded CVET was also included in the study.
Each of the examples was selected for a different reason and informs this assignment in a different manner:

- The two international measures ISO 9001 and EFQM are recognised by many public authorities. Therefore their comparison with EQAVET gives an understanding of how renowned quality assurance systems relate to EQAVET;
- The AZAV accreditation builds on existing provider level measures (including the two above) but it also requires providers to monitor certain specific outcome focused indicators. Given the importance of indicators in EQAVET this was considered an interesting approach to inform possible future development of EQAVET;
- The Ő-CERT is a national framework developed to recognise a variety of regional and private quality assurance measures. Given its ‘umbrella’ nature it is expected to operate in a similar manner to EQAVET but at national level;
- The label ‘Lycée des métiers’ recognises excellence of VET schools and one of the criteria is the diversity of target groups served by the institution, including provision of CVET. Given the growing interest at European level in the notion of excellence in VET the analysis of an excellence label was considered of relevance to EQAVET;
- The certification ‘Investors in People’ is also an international instrument though currently predominantly used in the UK. However, compared to ISO 9001 and EFQM it puts greater emphasis on human resource development in an organisation.

The data collection for the case studies was also based on desk research and interviews. Like for the country reports, researchers were provided with guidance and a standardised structure to describe the measure.

In total 13 persons were interviewed as part of the case study field work and the list of organisations interviewed is provided in the Annex 13.

The approach to the scenario development is presented in greater detail in section 4 focused on the forward looking aspects of the study.

A schematic overview of the methodology for this study is presented in Figure 1.1 below.

Figure 1.1 Schematic overview of the methodology

![Schematic overview of the methodology](image)

Source: ICF GHK

12 The expression does not translate well into English but an approximate translation would be *VET school of professions*. The emphasis is on the diversity of offer of the VET provider.
2 Quality assurance in CVET at system level

EQAVET distinguishes between quality assurance at system level and at provider level. This distinction is based on the logic that quality assurance at system level concerns system-level policy-making and related decisions and therefore has to be articulated around other issues than provider-level approach to quality assurance which is much more about supporting institutional management.

By system-level measures are understood those quality assurance mechanisms that are introduced from the system perspective and which have for aim to ensure the quality of CVET across the system. These are quality assurance measures to ensure that across the different providers the quality of provision and in some cases of outcomes meets the expectations of the funding bodies. The analysis focuses on measures supported by public funding.

In line with the EQAVET approach, this research attempts to differentiate between quality assurance measures at system level and those at provider level. However in most cases identified this distinction is not very clear in practice. In particular measures of external review of providers (such as accreditation, certification or inspection) can be considered as both system-level measures and provider level measures. On one hand they serve system-level purpose of managing the quality of the system itself and on the other hand they serve the providers themselves as they use the information for their internal processes and the continuous improvement of those.

Therefore this section compares those quality assurance approaches in CVET which have a system-level use and purpose. Some of them are discussed again in section 3 from the perspective of provider level use.

It should also be noted that in a number of countries there are no measures that would cover the whole of CVET (see also below) in which case those that concern parts of the system are being considered.

The section first makes a general comparison across the situation in the countries and then compares the system-level measures identified with EQAVET.

Note:
It should be born in mind when reading this section that the research is based on those processes and measures which are explicitly designated as quality assurance in the countries. The research team identified those measures that are referred to as quality assurance in the country and compared these with EQAVET. The research team was not asked to take the EQAVET technical specifications and see to what extent the features of the CVET system correspond to the cycle, descriptors and indicators. As will be shown below this has implications for the analysis and the conclusions on the fit with EQAVET.

2.1 Overview of CVET system level measures analysed

The 10 countries selected for this analysis represent a variety of approaches to quality assurance in CVET. This variety is related to the differences in governance of VET, the funding streams, the ways in which CVET provision is structured. Though the below analysis is based on 10 countries only, given the diversity of these countries, it is likely that similar patterns can be found in other EU countries as well.

This section discusses the main trends in how quality assurance at system level is conceptualised and structured in the countries analysed. A country by country summary of the key features of quality assurance can be found in table 2.1 below.

2.1.1 Distinct arrangements in CVET and IVET or not?

Firstly, it should be said that the border between what constitutes IVET and what constitutes CVET is not always very clear. In some countries the distinction is only about the type of target group (students versus adults returning to training), same qualifications can be
achieved through IVET as well as CVET. This is for example the case for certain types of qualifications in France, Finland, the Netherlands, Ireland as well as the UK. In other countries the distinction is much clearer and different types of qualifications can be achieved in IVET than in CVET – for example Germany, Austria or Czech Republic.

The distinction can also be made according to who funds CVET compared to IVET. Again in some countries the same funds are used for both – for example UK – and hence little distinction is made between IVET and CVET. However in most countries there are different funding arrangements for the two segments of VET.

Finally the distinction can be made according to who delivers CVET and IVET. In some countries the same organisations deliver IVET as well as CVET – for example Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, Ireland or UK. In others a small proportion of IVET providers engage in CVET (France, Czech Republic). In countries like Austria, Germany, French speaking Community of Belgium, CVET tends to be delivered by different organisations than IVET.

Where the distinction between IVET and publicly funded CVET is not clear cut and where most CVET is provided by the same bodies as IVET the quality assurance framework that applies to CVET tends to be the same as for IVET. This is the case in Finland, Ireland or the Netherlands.

It is also interesting to note that in some countries efforts are on-going to encourage IVET providers to deliver CVET. This is for example the case in the Czech Republic or France. In these countries there is willingness to encourage recognition of IVET quality assurance (QA) arrangements for CVET. For example in the Czech Republic, if a VET provider designs a CVET course in the same field/professional area as the ones they provide IVET for, they do not have to seek CVET accreditation to apply for public funding. In France, the excellence label ‘Lycée des métiers’ encourages VET school to serve various target groups, including adults.

2.1.2 System level quality assurance: focus on training institutions or qualifications?

Three distinct motivations for quality assurance in CVET by public authorities can be recognised:

- Minimising risk of misuse of public funding; and
- Ensuring the coherence of the qualifications system and of qualifications awarded;
- Building trust and confidence in the system.

The first concern leads to quality assurance requirements around the capacity of VET providers to deliver training (focused on inputs – equipment, human resources) and to be financially sustainable. This concern is also apparent in IVET but it is possibly more prominent in CVET where there is often more freedom to set up a training institution.

The second concern leads to introducing requirements at system level about qualification design and award. In several countries this is related to the development of unified qualifications systems and frameworks. This is for example apparent in the case of the Czech Republic where the development of the qualifications system based on nationally defined standards for CVET deeply affects the way in which quality assurance is considered. Similarly in the UK, the qualifications system and framework imposes requirements on awarding organisations which are around the design of qualifications and assessment and certification.

The third concern is important in terms of economic development. Countries need to ensure that qualifications match the demand of the labour market and workers acquire the right skills. To ensure national and, possibly, international reputation of the qualification of workers and, consequently the quality of products and services provided, countries need to ensure their qualification systems are trusted.

Though the CVET systems are fragmented when it comes to requirements for quality assurance of institutions, the introduction of qualifications frameworks (NQFs) and reforms of
qualifications systems introduces quality assurance requirements regarding the award of qualifications.

On the other hand, the aspect of qualification design and award is not always considered as a component of the CVET quality assurance system. The fact that this aspect is not included in the explicit quality assurance framework in the country does not mean that there are no rules which ensure the quality of those qualifications.

### 2.1.3 Growing emphasis on outcomes as aspects of quality assurance?

Several system level measures emphasise the measurement of outcomes of training and in particular completion and employment outcomes. Introduction of outcomes-based indicators in quality assurance of CVET is linked to the willingness to ensure better responsiveness of publicly funded CVET to labour market needs.

This can be observed for example in Germany where the accreditation of providers of training funded by public employment agency requires information on labour market outcomes of training. Furthermore, to renew the accreditation, the providers have to show that they are meeting the benchmark regarding this indicator (the benchmarks are adjusted to regional employment situations). Similarly, in the UK-England the Funding Skills Agency monitors’ VET providers’ performance on a set of outcomes-based indicators. The extent to which providers meet, exceed or don’t meet benchmark levels is published. The outcomes concern in particular successful qualification completion (not the labour market outcomes). Failure to meet the benchmark level of performance is linked with withdrawal of funding.

Enforcing these types of outcomes-based benchmarks requires that providers and the system level actors have monitoring systems in place which collect this types of data systematically. As will be discussed below (section 2.2.2 on indicators) this is rarely the case in CVET.

### 2.1.4 Need for mutual recognition of quality assurance arrangements

The governance and funding of CVET in many EU countries are fragmented and consequently the quality assurance arrangements are also often fragmented. Typically the establishment of quality assurance requirements follows the same logic as the governance and funding responsibilities, creating a range of sub-systems. These sub-systems can restrict VET providers in their development as they are required to comply with several quality assurance arrangements if they want to provide trainings under different schemes (regional, sectoral or focusing on different groups). For VET providers, this creates barriers in the market and imposes a certain administrative burden.

To reduce these restrictions and the administrative burden, several of the selected countries have introduced measures to support mutual recognition of quality assurance arrangements. In Austria the Ö-CERT scheme is a scheme through which the different regional accreditation schemes as well as international certification standards are recognised for delivery of publicly funded training. Ö-CERT requires VET providers to have one of the recognised certifications/accreditations and on top of this, the scheme verifies providers’ adherence to certain key principles. It is underpinned by a register of recognised providers.

Similarly, an agreement on mutual recognition of regional quality assurance schemes based on a common set of criteria for accreditation was put in place in Italy.

The German AZAV accreditation system recognises provider level quality management systems such as ISO 9001 or EFQM and adds some additional, training specific, requirements to these systems. Consequently providers have to demonstrate that they have a quality management system based on external review in place and that they comply with the additional criteria.

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13 E.g., Italy, The Netherlands et. al. (ICF GHK research – as identified through desk research or stated in interviews)

14 To ensure funding, additional criteria have to be met as well.
2.1.5 What is the structure of CVET provision in the system?

The characteristics of the CVET provision also influence the approach to quality assurance. The following three models can be observed in the countries analysed:

- The funding and governing body is clearly separated from the provider, the provider (independent of its legal form) competes (through tenders) for the possibility to provide publicly funded training. In other words there is a contractual relationship between those who request and fund training and those who provide it. This is the case for example in Germany, Czech Republic, UK, and in some parts of CVET in France. In these cases quality assurance is a requirement to be able to tender for provision of training as a service delivery. An important aspect of the quality assurance requirements is the focus on management, capacity and financial stability. This is possibly stronger than in the two other cases because the funding body is not represented in the governance of the provider hence does not have other means to influence these processes.

- The governing or the funding body sets up a network of providers that ‘belong’ to the CVET system. The providers are managed by the authority concerned and they do not have to compete for access to funding for training. At the same time they typically only provide the training that falls under the remit of the given competent authority. This is the case for example in the French speaking community of Belgium or parts of CVET in France. The quality assurance has less focus on ‘risk management’ for the funding authority as typically this is tackled through governance aspects of the provider.

- Initial VET training centres provide also CVET. They are typically publicly funded and governed. The training centres specialise in one or several sectors/ professional areas and constitute centres of expertise in the given field. They have the capacity to serve the training demand in the local area/ region and consequently there is little competition between providers.

  The quality assurance is similar or the same as for IVET providers.

2.1.6 Summary

The table 2.1 presents a summary of how the ten countries studied map across the distinctions discussed above.

However, when reading this table, it should be born in mind that not all the countries studied have an explicit quality assurance framework in VET. In these countries (in particular Belgium French speaking community, France, Germany), this analysis is based on a general view of the main existing quality assurance arrangements as presented in the country report.

Table 2.1 Summary of the overview of QA systems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QA mostly similar or the same in IVET &amp;CVET</th>
<th>QA arrangements mostly differ in IVET &amp;CVET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Italy, United Kingdom-England</td>
<td>Austria, French speaking Community of Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on training providers</td>
<td>Emphasis on qualifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria, French speaking Community of Belgium, Czech Republic (but moving towards qualifications), Germany, Finland (both), Italy, Ireland (both), the Netherlands, UK-England (both)</td>
<td>Czech Republic (progressively), France, Finland (both), Ireland (both), UK-England (both)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Clear emphasis on outcomes from CVET in the QA measures

| Germany, UK-England | Austria, Czech Republic (partly: between IVET and CVET), Germany (in discussion), Italy |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CVET provision is characterised by multiplicity of competing providers</th>
<th>CVET provision is characterised by networks of providers belonging to different governing/funding bodies</th>
<th>CVET provision greatly overlaps with IVET provision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Ireland (but also the same as IVET), UK-England</td>
<td>French speaking community of Belgium, France (some segments of CVET)</td>
<td>Finland, Italy, Ireland (but also characterised by competition), the Netherlands</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: ICF GHK own analysis*

The table 2.2 below gives an overview of the main characteristics of quality assurance systems in CVET in the 10 countries mapped.
Table 2.2 Overview of main characteristics of quality assurance systems in CVET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Main characteristics of QA at system level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| AT      | The national framework for quality assurance Ö-CERT is an umbrella accreditation for adult education (including CVET) that combines:  
  - External certification of audit via existing quality assurance standards such as ISO, EFQM or others; and  
  - Documentation and check of providers adherence to a set of basic principles specific to education.  
  The framework was designed to enable mutual recognition of providers across the country where regional quality assurance schemes pre-existed and are a condition for access to funding. |
| BE fr   | There is currently no system level quality assurance framework in CVET.  
  The different funding and governing organisations have their own networks of CVET providers who have to comply with the requirements of the specific sub-system. |
| CZ      | Traditionally the focus for system level QA is on accreditation of CVET courses – when it comes to publicly funded courses (in particular those for unemployed). Recent reforms of the qualifications system strengthen quality assurance of qualifications design and of the certification process in CVET. The focus is moved towards the quality of the outcomes (qualifications).  
  Efforts to develop indicators and collect data on CVET – project stage for the moment.  
  There is also work on-going to build the capacity of IVET providers to deliver CVET in which case the quality assurance requirements for IVET also become applicable in CVET (for example IVET providers who deliver CVET for the same qualification as IVET do not have to seek accreditation because they follow the QA system in IVET). |
| DE      | There is no unified framework of quality assurance at federal system level as most CVET is funded and governed at other levels (sectoral or Lander level). However, some parts of CVET are regulated by distinct national regulations (e.g. the definition of qualification requirements (training standards) at national level with strong involvement of representatives of employers and employees).  
  National regulations also exist for so-called vocational retraining funded by the public employment agency. The AZAV system for this part of CVET is based on an accreditation linked to fulfilment of outcomes-based benchmarks and the requirement for provider level certification (ISO, EFQM and others).  
  There is also a national approach for monitoring of CVET.  
  Finally, a dialogue between different authorities in charge of quality assurance is under-way as part of DEQAVET. |
| FI      | In Finland the CVET which leads to nationally recognised qualifications has to follow the same quality assurance framework as applicable in initial VET. This means providers have to have in place internal quality assurance management system and undergo external evaluation.  
  It should be noted that most CVET providers providing nationally recognised qualifications are public bodies governed by municipalities. Many are also IVET providers.  
  There is no national framework for quality assurance in non-formal CVET which does not lead to nationally recognised qualifications. |
| FR      | There is no unified system level framework for quality assurance in CVET. The competent authorities (different ministries, sectoral organisations and chambers) have their own requirements and there are also independent quality assurance certification schemes that providers can use.  
  The only national level quality assurance framework concerns qualification design and award for those qualifications in the qualifications framework and the related... |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Main characteristics of QA at system level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>In Italy the quality assurance approach in CVET is based on the requirement for CVET providers to be accredited. The legislation defines some basic criteria for accreditation but the accreditations were managed and delivered regionally and in the past there was no mutual recognition. The accreditation process is based on defining expectations, ensuing delivery and monitoring results compared to expectations. It should be noted that a significant proportion of CVET is delivered by IVET providers. In 2008 an agreement was signed between the regions on a new accreditation system for VET providers (including IVET and CVET). Particular emphasis is put on effectiveness and efficiency of training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IE</td>
<td>In Ireland the quality assurance in initial VET (outside mainstream schooling) is not different from that in CVET. Until 2012 FETAC was the national awarding body for further education covering different types of VET. The quality assurance is based on the following principles: - The awarding body validates programmes that lead to VET qualifications in the Common Awards System (i.e. nationally recognised qualifications); and - Through its provider accreditation procedures, ensures all providers have a quality assurance and management system in place and which is monitored by the awarding body.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NL</td>
<td>In the Netherlands the quality assurance framework for initial VET and for publicly funded CVET is the same. It is based on: - Requirement for VET providers to have internal quality assurance and management system in place; and - External evaluation by the inspection based on a framework defining assessment criteria and indicators. Most VET providers offer IVET as well as CVET courses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK-England</td>
<td>The national framework for quality assurance in CVET has multiple layers: - Register of providers who can be invited to tender for provision of training – this is primarily about the capacity and financial viability of the organisations; - Benchmarks (levels of performance) and comparison of providers against these; - Inspection; - Criteria for qualifications awarding organisations in the national qualifications framework. This system is related to the fact that the UK-England CVET has the following specificity: - There is a market for training provision (this is similar to other countries) with providers competing for the possibility to supply training; and - There is also a market for qualifications (this is rather specific to the UK) where qualifications awarding bodies are different than the providers and they are also different than the regulating body. They offer their qualifications and the assessment to providers based on a commercial relationship. As a result the public authorities regulate both: the level of providers and the level of awarding organisations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ICF GHK, country reports (see Annex)
2.2 Comparison of system level measures with EQAVET

This section compares the system level quality assurance measures to the EQAVET features:

- Use of a continuous improvement cycle;
- Use of descriptors;
- Use of indicators;
- Comparability with the EQAVET system-level building blocks.

2.2.1 Use of a cycle

Comparison between system-level quality assurance approaches in the ten countries analysed and the EQAVET QA cycle of planning-implementation-evaluation and review requires a lot of interpretation from the side of the researchers. This is due to several reasons:

- The countries analysed do not have one unified document which would describe the quality assurance at system level and its core principles. Instead, there is a range of legislations and practices which complement each other but these complementarities are not explicitly mapped in a national policy on quality assurance. In the absence of an explicit framework, the researchers have to interpret how these measures work together;
- At system level, the use of the cycle implies a systematic spiral-based approach to policy making based on development of a strategy/action plan, monitoring of its implementation, on-going evaluation of results and changes to the plan based on results achieved. This poses two difficulties for analysis:
  - This process concerns the general approach to policy making (in VET but also other areas of education and training policy) and is closely linked to the practice of evidence-based policy-making. It implies that there is a systematic approach to VET policy making which would be comparable to the rather ‘managerial’ vision of decision-making that is behind the quality assurance cycle approach. However, political science theories generally agree that decisions in policy making are less linear and more chaotic\(^\text{15}\).
  - Even where such process exists, the countries do not necessarily consider it as quality assurance and do not call it ‘quality assurance’. It is rather labelled evidence-based policy making, if it is being referred to at all. The national level measures which are explicitly labelled as quality assurance concern either the relationship between the funding body and the provider or the process through which qualifications are designed and awarded.
- The EQAVET cycle as such is very generic. To do a rigorous comparison between the cycle and national quality assurance measures (the ones which are explicitly labelled as quality assurance) a more detailed set of criteria would be needed. This set of criteria is represented by the EQAVET descriptors at VET system level. However, as will be discussed further below, the descriptors refer to aspects of CVET systems which are not captured in those measures that are explicitly designated as quality assurance. That does not mean the descriptors are not present in the system, but they are mostly not embedded in the quality assurance schemes.

Therefore, based on the information captured in the country reports, this analysis cannot provide a rigorous comparison between the EQAVET cycle and the explicit quality assurance measures identified and described. While the explicit quality assurance measures at system level are about the capacity of providers and the coherence of qualifications, the EQAVET cycle is about general VET policy-making. The indicative descriptors make it VET specific.

Having said this, some segments of CVET systems do explicitly refer to a cycle but this is typically the case at the level of a sub-system than the whole system. For example in the French speaking community of Belgium, FOREM quality assurance manual is built around

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\(^{15}\) see for example Smith, K. B. (2009) *The Public Policy Theory Primer*
the four stages of the EQAVET cycle. FOREM is one the key CVET provider networks in this part of Belgium. The Box 1 below shows how the cycle is used in this quality assurance system.

Box 1 – Quality assurance cycle as part of FOREM quality assurance (BE fr)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOREM’s QA mechanism is built upon the four phases of: planning, implementation, evaluation and review. Briefly:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Planning:</strong> In terms of planning, a Business Plan is developed twice a year. Based on the Business Plan, the management team establishes, in measurable terms, general and specific objectives setting the framework for the FOREM Formation for the next six months. These goals are reflected in several Action Plans (PAP), each unit being responsible for the implementation and monitoring of their respective PAP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implementation:</strong> Planning is followed by the implementation phase. A monitoring database is updated on a monthly basis illustrating key indicators related to the activities of FOREM Formation. These indicators are related to training, integration of trainees, trainee satisfaction, human resource development inside FOREM Formation, as well as budgetary and financial aspects of the organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation:</strong> Evaluation of the system takes place twice a year, whereby all aspects of the training provision and competence management offered by FOREM are assessed. FOREM staff at all levels is assessed (management, regional staff, staff in individual offices and in FOREM training centres). The system also has an inspection element. Inspection is done by FOREM trainers. Roughly one third of FOREM training is provided by external providers. These external providers are evaluated by FOREM staff who are trainers. FOREM also carries out internal audits of all its local training centres once a year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Review:</strong> Based on the results of the evaluation, on the internal audit reports, on an analysis of client satisfaction and other elements, the system is then reviewed every 6 months. The Quality Manual is now in its 15th revision (effective from 1 June 2012).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Country Report Belgium Fr – see Annex

2.2.2 Use of EQAVET descriptors

The EQAVET descriptors break down the stages of the EQAVET cycle into more concrete actions and processes. Like the cycle in general, several of the EQAVET descriptors concern general aspects of VET policy and systems rather than the content of specific quality assurance measures. For example the first descriptor on goals and objectives of VET is in most countries fulfilled by the existence of a national strategy for future development of VET or another form of policy document. It is rarely part of the explicit quality assurance measures. Exceptions being for example Austria where the Ö-CERT framework defines a generic understanding of quality in adult learning (including CVET) or the fact that FETAC in Ireland (main body in charge of QA until 2012) had a clear statement about quality assurance in its core mission definition.

The EQAVET descriptors are intentionally rather general in order to accommodate differences at national level. As shown in the country reports annexed to this study, the descriptors can indeed be interpreted quite differently. The main issues with interpretation of these descriptors when comparing explicit quality assurance mechanisms with EQAVET is presented in table 2.3 below. As apparent from this analysis, it is possible for the CVET system (or VET in general) to be compatible with these descriptors without the explicit quality assurance system being compatible with them. This raises the question to what should EQAVET be compared with – the VET systems or the explicit quality assurance measures?

The table 2.4 shows how the selected countries’ system level quality assurance measures map against the EQAVET descriptors.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EQAVET Descriptor</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goals/objectives of VET are described for the medium and long terms, and linked to European goals</td>
<td>The overall goals of VET and of VET reforms are typically defined in policy documents and strategies rather than in quality assurance measures. The quality assurance measures themselves sometimes, but not systematically, contain a definition of what is understood as quality in the given system. Such cases can be seen as complying with this descriptor. In some cases the quality assurance measure or framework defines the goals and objectives to be achieved by its implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The relevant stakeholders participate in setting VET goals and objectives at the different levels</td>
<td>Stakeholders’ involvement is also typically covered by policy making practices and rules for decision making rather than in the quality assurance measures as such.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targets are established and monitored through specific indicators (success criteria)</td>
<td>This aspect can be covered by quality assurance measures – some are based on targets and indicators. But it is also possible that the targets and the monitoring system are independent of the quality assurance schemes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanisms and procedures have been established to identify training needs</td>
<td>This is a key issue for ensuring quality of VET but it is often tackled by other features of a system than the quality assurance mechanism. The matching between training and labour market demand underpins the processes for qualification design. The way in which the quality assurance measures tackle this aspect is by requiring VET providers to base their provision on nationally defined qualifications. In other cases the quality assurance mechanisms may require VET providers to put needs assessment measures in place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An information policy has been devised to ensure optimum disclosure of quality results/outcomes subject to national/ regional data protection requirements</td>
<td>Where existent this is often part of quality assurance measures and concerns aspects such as publication of inspection results or of rankings/ratings of providers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards and guidelines for recognition, validation and certification of competences of individuals have been defined</td>
<td>As in the case of measures to identify training needs, this aspect is rather part of qualifications systems than of quality assurance measures as such.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation plans are established in cooperation with social partners, VET providers and other relevant stakeholders at the different levels</td>
<td>This descriptor concerns implementation of VET policies and measures rather than implementation of quality assurance. However in some countries stakeholders are indeed involved in implementation of quality assurance measures, even though this appears to be rather rare.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation plans include consideration of the resources required, the capacity of the users and the tools and guidelines needed for support</td>
<td>As above, this is rather about implementation plans for policies and measures rather than about implementation of quality assurance. However, decisions about quality assurance measures should indeed take into account the capacity of the different actors to implement them. Where such considerations take place they are not necessarily captured in the quality assurance measure itself but rather in documents or consultations for preparation of the quality assurance scheme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidelines and standards have been devised for implementation at different levels</td>
<td>This is typically covered by quality assurance measures. They are supported by guidelines on how to implement the QA scheme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation plans include specific support towards the training of teachers and trainers</td>
<td>This is the case if the QA measure is to be implemented by teachers or trainers. General aspects of training of teachers and trainers are covered by the rules in the education and training system and subsystems rather than the training schemes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQAVET Descriptor</td>
<td>Comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET providers’ responsibilities in the implementation process are explicitly described and made transparent</td>
<td>The guidelines for implementation of quality assurance measures usually make it clear what VET providers’ responsibilities are.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A national and/or regional quality assurance framework has been devised and includes guidelines and quality standards at VET-provider level to promote continuous improvement and self-regulation</td>
<td>This descriptor is about the existence of a quality assurance framework. It also prompts to check the existence of guidelines and quality standards at VET-provider level to promote continuous improvement and self-regulation. Therefore when comparing a quality assurance scheme to EQAVET it becomes somewhat redundant as the QA framework is what is being compared.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A methodology for evaluation has been devised, covering internal and external evaluation</td>
<td>This is typically the core of the quality assurance measures – though not all contain both internal and external evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder involvement in the monitoring and evaluation process is agreed and clearly described</td>
<td>Quality assurance schemes could be monitored and evaluated by stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The national/regional standards and processes for improving and assuring quality are relevant and proportionate to the needs of the sector</td>
<td>This is a judgement about the adequacy of the quality assurance measure and cannot be answered by looking at the requirements in the scheme alone. It requires evidence about the opinions and experience of those in charge of implementing it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems are subject to self-evaluation, internal and external review, as appropriate</td>
<td>This descriptor can be embedded in the quality assurance framework in form of a requirement for such evaluations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early warning systems are implemented</td>
<td>This could be a component of the quality assurance measure itself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance indicators are applied</td>
<td>Such indicators can indeed be an element of the quality assurance measure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant, regular and coherent data collection takes place, in order to measure success and identify areas for improvement. Appropriate data collection methodologies have been devised, e.g. questionnaires and indicators/metrics</td>
<td>If indicators are a component of the QA measure, data collection methods and mechanisms are necessary as part of the scheme. Moreover, the data collected should be used to measure success and identify areas for improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedures, mechanisms and instruments for undertaking reviews are defined at all levels</td>
<td>This could be about the review of the quality assurance scheme itself or about the review of the provision or other aspects of CVET policy that are being quality assured.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processes are regularly reviewed and action plans for change devised. Systems are adjusted accordingly</td>
<td>As above this can be either about the quality assurance scheme as such or about the aspects of VET to which the scheme applies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information on the outcomes of evaluation is made publicly available</td>
<td>This can be part of the quality assurance scheme.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ICF GHK own analysis
### Table 2.4  Comparison between system level QA mechanisms in the selected countries and EQAVET system level descriptors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EQAVET system level descriptor</th>
<th>AT</th>
<th>BE fr (FOREM)</th>
<th>CZ</th>
<th>DE</th>
<th>FI (National strategy on QA in VET)</th>
<th>FR</th>
<th>IE</th>
<th>IT (National Plan on QA in VET)</th>
<th>NL</th>
<th>UK-England</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Planning</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals/objectives of VET are described for the medium and long terms, and linked to European goals</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The relevant stakeholders participate in setting VET goals and objectives at the different levels</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targets are established and monitored through specific indicators (success criteria)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>wbmonitor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanisms and procedures have been established to identify training needs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>Partly in the wbmonitor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Greta Plus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An information policy has been devised to ensure optimum disclosure of quality results/outcomes subject to national/ regional data protection requirements</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>Partly in wbmonitor &amp; DEQAVET</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

X – not part of an explicit quality assurance measure; ✓ part of an explicit quality assurance measure
### Study on Quality Assurance in Continuous VET and on future development of EQAVET

#### EQAVET system level descriptor

| Standards and guidelines for recognition, validation and certification of competences of individuals have been defined | AT | BE fr (FOREM) | CZ | DE | FI (National strategy on QA in VET) | FR | IE | IT (National Plan on QA in VET) | NL | UK-England |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| X | X | | | | | | | | | | | |

**Implementation**

**Implementation plans are established in cooperation with social partners, VET providers and other relevant stakeholders at the different levels**

- √ Ö-CERT
- X
- X
- X
- X

**Implementation plans include consideration of the resources required, the capacity of the users and the tools and guidelines needed for support**

- √ Ö-CERT
- X
- X
- X
- X

**Guidelines and standards have been devised for implementation at different levels**

- X

**Implementation plans include specific support towards the training of teachers and trainers**

- √ wba
- X
- X
- X
- X

**VET providers’ responsibilities in the implementation process are explicitly described and made transparent**

- √ Ö-CERT
- X
- X
- X
- X
# Study on Quality Assurance in Continuous VET and on future development of EQAVET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EQAVET system level descriptor</th>
<th>AT</th>
<th>BE fr (FOREM)</th>
<th>CZ</th>
<th>DE</th>
<th>FI (National strategy on QA in VET)</th>
<th>FR</th>
<th>IE</th>
<th>IT (National Plan on QA in VET)</th>
<th>NL</th>
<th>UK-England</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A national and/or regional quality assurance framework has been devised and includes guidelines and quality standards at VET-provider level to promote continuous improvement and self-regulation</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>Varies across sectors and regions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Varies - Partly on regional level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A methodology for evaluation has been devised, covering internal and external evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Varies across sectors and regions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Varies due to region</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder involvement in the monitoring and evaluation process is agreed and clearly described</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Varies due to region</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The national/regional standards and processes for improving and assuring quality are relevant and proportionate to the needs of the sector</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Varies due to region</td>
<td></td>
<td>Being revised to diminish administrative burden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems are subject to self-evaluation, internal and external review, as appropriate</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mostly external review</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Varies due to region</td>
<td></td>
<td>encouraged but not required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early warning systems are implemented</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Varies due to region</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EQAVET system level descriptor</th>
<th>AT</th>
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<th>IT (National Plan on QA in VET)</th>
<th>NL</th>
<th>UK-England</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performance indicators are applied</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>AAZAV</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Varies due to region</td>
<td></td>
<td>inspection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant, regular and coherent data collection takes place, in</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>DV Monitor &amp; AAZAV</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>Varies due to region</td>
<td></td>
<td>inspection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>order to measure success and identify areas for improvement.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>benchmarks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate data collection methodologies have been devised, e.g.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>linked to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>questionnaires and indicators/metrics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>funding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Review**

| Procedures, mechanisms and instruments for undertaking reviews   | X   | X      |     |     | Varies                             | X   |     | Varies due to region           |
| are defined at all levels                                       |     |        |     |     |                                     |     |     |                                |
| Processes are regularly reviewed and action plans for change     | X   | X      |     |     | Varies                             | X   |     | Varies due to region           |
| devised. Systems are adjusted accordingly                        |     |        |     |     |                                     |     |     |                                |
| Information on the outcomes of evaluation is made publicly      |     |        |     | Varies | Varies                             | X   |     | Varies due to region           |
| available                                                        |     |        |     |     |                                     |     |     |                                |

*Source: ICF GHK, Analysis of Country Reports*
2.2.3 Use of indicators and comparison with EQAVET

Of the ten countries studied, the system level quality assurance frameworks of four of the countries have embedded the use of indicators within the quality assurance frameworks:

- In Germany, the AZAV QA framework requires providers to meet minimum benchmarks based on the indicator of employment insertion;
- In Finland, the quality management recommendation to VET providers defines indicators for each stage of the quality cycle and taking into account the different characteristics of VET excellence defined in the framework. The use of these indicators by VET providers is voluntary;
- In the Netherlands, the quality assurance framework of the inspection (which also applies to CVET) is based on an indicator system;
- In the UK-England, the different aspects of quality assurance put in place by the Skills Funding Agency and Ofsted (the inspection body) use indicators to measure VET providers’ performance in a range of areas.

There are two different ways in which the use of indicators is embedded in the quality assurance systems from national level:

- The data from individual providers is benchmarked against the performance of other providers (or against a pre-defined benchmark) and this has influence on re-accreditation, funding or it is made transparent to learners to inform their choice. This is the case in the German or UK-England examples above; or
- The provider is encouraged to use the indicators to improve their performance in a voluntary manner, but there is no national level comparison of institutions among each other.

In other countries, data on indicators on CVET is collected at system level but it is not necessarily an element of the quality assurance framework. For example:

- In Austria, the national centre on statistics also monitors data on CVET (as well as adult education) and the national lifelong learning strategy contains several benchmarks in this field though the data is not yet available\(^{16}\);  
- In the Czech Republic the pilot project DV monitor which presented and categorised in a systematic manner data from various sources about further education in the country;  
- In France the annual statistics year book on education and training contains a section with data on key indicators in continuous education and training\(^{17}\).

The indicators used differ from one country to another. When compared to the EQAVET list of indicators, the most commonly used concern data about:

- Numbers of accredited providers;  
- Participation rates;  
- Completion rates; and  
- Unemployment data.

Some systems use data on successful transition to labour market. This is in line with countries’ responses to the 2012 survey of the EQAVET secretariat as completed by the EQAVET National reference points\(^{18}\).

The use of indicators for quality assurance also depends on the extent to which the data concerning the given indicators is available in the system. In the countries studied, the necessary systems to collect data about CVET are in place to a varying extent. The indicators concerned can be based on different types of data such as administrative data

\(^{16}\) Statistik Austria (www.statistik.at) published data on continuing education (Weiterbildungsaktivitäten), adult education (Einrichtungen der Erwachsenenbildung)  
\(^{17}\) Ministère de l’éducation nationale, Ministère de l’enseignement supérieur et de la recherche, Direction de l’évaluation, de la prospective et de la performance (2012) Repères et références statistiques sur les enseignements, la formation et la recherche  
\(^{18}\) EQAVET Secretariat (2012) EQAVET Secretariat Survey
from VET providers or other system-level bodies, surveys of providers, surveys of individuals undergoing CVET or programme spending information. Given that CVET provision is typically more fragmented and differentiated than IVET provision, systematic collection of comparable data is also more challenging. Where CVET provision is characterised by fragmented networks of private providers, the collection of administrative data from providers is more challenging and resource intensive than in initial VET (in particular when it comes to school-based systems). Unless there is a mechanism requiring CVET providers to collect and report certain data (and this mechanism is enforced), they lack any incentives to provide the data. They are likely to object providing data arguing about the administrative costs imposed. Data protection issues about individuals may also be a problem in certain countries. Finally, resources are required for the collection and administration of the data at system level.

The table 2.5 below shows the use of indicators for quality assurance in the countries analysed.

Table 2.5  Use of indicators for quality assurance in the countries analysed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Use of indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Indicators are not part of the national Ö-CERT quality assurance framework. However, indicators are part of the national lifelong learning strategy and data on CVET is collected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French speaking</td>
<td>There is no national level quality assurance framework as such. But indicators are used as part of the quality assurance system of FOREM which is one of the main publicly funded providers’ network of CVET. FOREM uses performance indicators to monitor the different training centres in the network.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>community of Belgium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>The main mechanism for quality assurance, accreditation of providers, does not use indicators. An indicator system for further education was developed and completed with data as part of a pilot project measure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>The AZAV quality assurance framework requires CVET providers to meet benchmarks based on outcome indicators in order to be re-accredited. A monitoring of CVET against a set of key indicators is undertaken annually.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>The national recommendation to VET providers about quality assurance / management systems proposes a set of indicators for VET providers to monitor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>There is no unified quality assurance framework in the country. Data against key indicators is collected and monitored but not as part of explicit quality assurance measures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>FETAC quality assurance framework for VET providers is not based on indicators. In the past FÁS quality assurance framework monitored a range of indicators, however as FÁS is being replaced by another agency it is not clear what the new QA framework will be.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Italy has a provider accreditation system (IVET and CVET providers) designed on national level which has to be implemented by all Regions. This system is based on five quality criteria; each of which is underpinned with a set of indicators.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
<td>The inspection framework, which is applicable also to CVET as this is delivered by the same training centres as IVET, is based on a set of criteria and indicators.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom - England</td>
<td>The different governing bodies commonly use indicators to monitor VET providers’ performance. This is the case for the Skills and Funding Agency which uses performance against key indicators as basis for allocating funding. Indicators are also used in Ofsted inspection framework but also in other areas of the VET system (including CVET).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ICF GHK, Country reports

2.2.4  Comparability with the EQAVET building blocks

In addition to the cycle, the descriptors and the indicators, the EQAVET network developed a set of so called 'building blocks' for quality assurance at system level. These are expected to
provide operational steps for those in charge of setting up system level quality assurance (see table 2.6 below).

The text below discusses how the measures analysed can be compared to the building blocks.

Table 2.6  EQAVET building blocks - system level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building Block</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Set clear rules for deciding who offers VET provision</td>
<td>Member States manage the supply of high quality training by having clear systems to decide which organisations can offer courses and/or qualifications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Recognise and build on existing internal arrangements</td>
<td>The EQAVET recommendation can be supported through the use of existing provider-based systems and VET quality assurance arrangements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Set clear roles and responsibilities for different parts of the VET system</td>
<td>At both provider and system level (either nationally or regionally) it is important to be clear about what each organisation is expected to do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Identify what information and data should be collected and used in VET system</td>
<td>There is extensive data on vocational training, the challenge is to identify and use a relevant core set of data consistently – with a focus on providers, inspectors, evaluators and government using the same definitions of the indicators and measures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Define and implement a communications strategy</td>
<td>Whilst mainly relevant at the system level, there are clear needs for up-to-date, consistent and accurate information on the quality assurance process to be shared and understood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Pilot initiatives and value success</td>
<td>Quality assurance can be achieved through recognising effective practice. Staged approaches which include pilot programmes, awards and funding can all play a part in recognising successful quality assurance systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Use feedback to improve VET</td>
<td>VET has to both meet employers’ and learners’ needs. Key to any quality assurance system is the way feedback is used to improve the national or regional system, and training providers systematically collect and use the experiences and feedback from learners and employers to modify and improve their provision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Provide clarity over funding</td>
<td>Public and private sector funds are not limitless. The link between high quality provision and funding provides both an incentive as well as an accountability measure for quality assurance arrangements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Ensure quality assurance covers all aspects of VET provision</td>
<td>Quality assurance covers both the content of training and the administrative and staff arrangements which support teaching and learning. EQAVET should be seen as all encompassing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Ensure VET is founded on a strong involvement of external and internal partners and relevant stakeholders</td>
<td>VET is based on effective partnerships. These exist between government, social partners and national stakeholders; employers and training providers; and learners and society. They create the foundation stone of the VET system which gives it strength, relevance and acceptability.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


2.2.4.2  Clear rules for deciding on who provides CVET

In most of the cases studied, the quality assurance measures are actually a filter to decide who can provide recognised or publicly funded CVET. In other words only those providers
who comply with the quality assurance requirements can provide CVET according to the regulations of the given authority. This can be either linked to the form of funding (publicly provided CVET, or sectoral funded CVET) or type of qualifications (those that have national validity, figure in collective agreements or are otherwise regulated).

Therefore it can be said that in all the countries studied there are clear rules on who provides certain parts of CVET.

When it comes to training that is not (co-)funded publicly or by sectors but which is purchased by individuals or companies and which does not lead to officially recognised qualifications, this form of provision is not regulated in the countries. No specific requirements were identified for setting up a business which would provide training services on the open market.

Those who are entitled to provide CVET in the framework of the systems analysed are usually either:

- Accredited providers where accreditation is based on examination of certain documentation and evidence by a jury/committee (see examples from Germany, Austria, Italy);
- Registered providers where registration is different from accreditation as it is often a one off process and it is more about assessing compliance than about quality of the evidence and documentation provided (for example in initial VET in the Czech Republic or in UK-England);
- Providers who demonstrate they have quality assurance systems in place via a tendering procedure (this is mentioned in the French report);
- Subject to inspection requirements (examples from The Netherlands and UK-England).

### 2.2.4.3 Building on existing internal quality assurance arrangements

Indeed several of the system level quality assurance measures in CVET identified are based on the principle that providers are required to have internal quality assurance measures in place. It is part of the system level measures to only allocate public funding to those providers that have internal quality assurance measures in place or to entitle these providers to award officially recognised qualifications. This is for example the case in the AZAV framework in Germany, the Ö-CERT framework in Austria, the Dutch or Finnish approach to quality assurance in both IVET and CVET.

However, it is not systematically required. The programme accreditation in the Czech Republic does not require such internal quality assurance arrangements nor are these required for FAS training in Ireland.

### 2.2.4.4 Clear roles and responsibilities for different parts of CVET

Clarity over who does what in VET is one of the building blocks of quality assurance at system level. This concerns aspects such as:

- Who designs the rules and based on what;
- Who allocates funding;
- Who defines qualifications and how;
- Who and how ensures the matching of training supply, participation in programmes and labour market demand;
- Who develops and delivers training;
- Who is in charge of assessment, validation and recognition;
- Who monitors the system;
- Etc.

However, most of these issues are not tackled by the explicit quality assurance mechanisms as such. They are rather defined in different system-level rules and requirements.

The country reports show that the explicit quality assurance measures are used as a filter to designate those actors who can deliver CVET or those who can design and award...
qualifications. None of the examples of quality assurance measures identified concern all of the responsibilities and functions at system level.

Furthermore in many countries, CVET systems are fragmented with different bodies having the responsibility for the same type of issues but within a different sub-system. For example the public employment services fund training for unemployed while sectoral funds fund training for other target groups. In general this co-existence of several sub-systems results in quite complex matrices of responsibilities which are further complicated by levels of governance (for example regions being in charge of certain aspects of CVET while national level authorities of others). This complexity negatively affects the clarity of division of responsibilities in CVET.

Such fragmentation poses a problem for understanding of how quality assurance is managed at system levels in an international context but possibly also within a country.

2.2.4.5 Clarity over what data should be collected in CVET systems

As discussed in the section 2.2.3, collection of data in CVET is typically less comprehensive than data in IVET and poses a number of challenges. However as shown there, all the countries analysed have defined indicators and collect certain data on continuous VET, even though this is not always part of the quality assurance measures as such.

2.2.4.6 Communication strategy (about quality assurance)

This aspect of quality assurance in CVET at system level can concern two issues:

- Communication towards providers and other stakeholders about the quality assurance measures to enhance take up and understanding of quality assurance; and
- Communication about the results of quality assurance.

Some examples were identified regarding the first aspect. The German DEQAVET initiative sees communication about quality assurance in VET (IVET and CVET) as one of its main tasks. Annual conferences on quality assurance topics are organised and a website has been launched. In the Czech example the work of the UNIV projects with VET schools is also about communicating towards schools about the quality assurance issues around recognition of non-formal and informal learning or design of CVET and enhancing the take up of VET providers in this area. The Finnish recommendation on quality assurance to VET providers provides guidance on how to implement systems at provider level.

When it comes to the transparency of quality assurance results this is typically associated with measures such as inspection, accreditation or registration of providers. Some countries hold registers of authorised CVET providers or lists of accredited providers, e.g. Czech Republic, Germany (on regional level), The Netherlands, UK-England. The results of the inspections carried out by Ofsted in the UK-England are publicly available on Ofsted website.

2.2.4.7 Use of piloting measures in CVET policies

The country reports did not focus on identifying to what extent policy reforms in CVET were being piloted before being rolled out at a larger scale. The systematic use of pilots is rather a feature of the general approach to policy making in VET than a feature of quality assurance measures as such.

However, the Czech Report contains an example of a national level project which involves a large number of providers and which is about piloting and accompanying a CVET reform. The UNIV projects (there were three of them and the one described in the Czech report is the 3rd one) were designed to accompany the transition of Czech VET schools into centres of lifelong learning also providing CVET. The idea is that the schools would develop the capacity to design, market and deliver training for adults and companies in the region and that they would also develop their capacity to recognise the results of non-formal and informal learning and award related partial qualifications. Through these series of projects the methodology and tools for recognition of non-formal and informal learning were tested and co-developed.
This example shows that indeed piloting is important to support quality in the system. However while most if not all of the countries analysed recognise the importance of tests and pilots for quality, their use is not typically an element of a quality assurance system/measure. When reforms are introduced that require change of practice at provider level, there is a need to test how providers react and what needs they have when it comes to support. This difference between what is embedded in the VET system and what is part of the explicit quality assurance mechanisms illustrates the already several times mentioned difficulty of comparing EQAVET to explicit QA measures.

2.2.4.8 Use of feedback for CVET policy making

This building block highlights that the quality of VET-systems benefits from having a procedure in place which ensures that feedback will be used in e.g. CVET policy making.

It can be assumed that most, if not all countries mapped have at least some measures in place to collect data on the success of programmes and activities to support evidence-based policy making. These measures might however not explicitly be called ‘quality assurance’, or be part of a quality assurance strategy. They are part of a countries general approach to policy making.

An explicit emphasis on this aspect as part of a VET-quality assurance strategy was only identified in the Finnish country report. The VET quality strategy for 2011-2020 which covers both initial VET and CVET states that:

- Quality improvement will be based on continual learning and operational development. To this end, procedures will be developed for identification and utilisation of good practices. Further, cooperation in quality assurance will be stepped up with operators in other administrative sectors with the aim of harmonising procedures.
- The lines of the strategy and their implementation will be reviewed every three years and the strategy will be revised where necessary.

2.2.4.9 Clarity over funding – linking quality with funding

Linking quality (and quality assurance) with funding is a very prominent and widely used means of linking VET policy and quality assurance on system level.

Many examples have been identified which represent a specific manner of establishing this link between the quality of provision and the eligibility of a provider, a programme or a participant to funding. Those types of measures require the existence of quality assurance on provider level as a pre-condition to funding and/or provider accreditation.

It has shown that two types of measures can be identified here:

- **Measures set up by a specific institution requiring adherence to its own QA standards:** In principle, this is the case when a country has an accreditation system in place for public CVET-providers including a quality assurance aspect. Providers which seek access to public funding need to get an accreditation; and need to make sure they adhere to specific quality standards as set out by the accrediting body (FR, BE-fr, IT, NL, UK-England).

- **Measures set up as an ‘umbrella system’, accepting a range of QA instruments that are already in place:** For instance, AZAV in Germany which regulates provider accreditation for the eligibility to provide publicly funded training for the unemployed recognises a set of predefined QA measures. However, an additional procedure has been set up, it is not sufficient to just proof that there is already QA in place. The same goes for Ö-CERT in Austria which regulates providers’ access to funding for participants, and, to a certain extent, for AFNOR in France.

In doing so, both types of measures also ensure training providers and other stakeholders are clear about the links between funding and quality.
2.2.4.10 Coverage of all aspects of CVET – qualifications/programmes, staff, delivery, assessment and certification

Except the Finnish quality assurance strategy, none of the measures identified as explicit quality assurance measures, covers all aspects of CVET. In most cases the design of qualifications is governed separately from the delivery. Most of the QA systems identified are particularly concerned with the design of programmes, teachers and trainers’ profiles and assessment.

2.2.4.11 Stakeholder involvement

Stakeholder involvement in CVET is another area of EQAVET which poses difficulties when distinguishing between the system and its rules in general and the explicit quality assurance. The following explicit system level quality assurance mechanisms include stakeholders:

- The Ö-CERT framework was developed in cooperation with regions which are key stakeholders funding and commissioning training in Austria;
- The DEQAVET activities in Germany bring together all stakeholders involved in quality assurance with a view to develop trust, transparency and ultimately common understanding of quality assurance; and
- In Italy the preparatory work concerning the national approach plan for quality assurance also brought together central authorities as well as regions and social partner representatives.

However, the main aspects of stakeholder involvement in CVET, such as development of qualifications or mechanisms for monitoring skills needs are not tackled by the quality assurance mechanisms as such.

2.3 Conclusions

The main conclusion of this analysis is of a rather general nature and concerns the nature of EQAVET and its use. The above discussions show the difficulty of comparing EQAVET to national quality assurance measures. EQAVET was designed based on a ‘whole system’ approach covering a range of mechanisms and processes which define the VET system itself (be it CVET or IVET) and its management, decision-making and policy making. However, in most countries those measures that are designated explicitly as ‘quality assurance’ only cover parts of the system-level rules depicted as of importance by EQAVET. The other aspects, such as statutory stakeholder involvement or assessment of future skills needs at system level often exist (though this study does not analyse how often) but are not designed as quality assurance.

Therefore it is often not clear whether EQAVET should be compared with a quality assurance measure as such or whether it should be compared with the whole VET system and its rules, independent of whether the rules are defined as ‘quality assurance’ nationally.

The EQAVET Recommendation is an instrument for developing and improving quality assurance in VET (both IVET and CVET) at both system level and provider level (the latter is discussed in the following section). However, in most countries, in CVET, those measures that are explicitly designated as quality assurance concern rather different issues than those that are embedded in the EQAVET cycle, descriptors and indicators.

In most countries analysed what is explicitly labelled as quality assurance at CVET system level is not a process comparable to the EQAVET cycle and the descriptors underpinning it. It has been mentioned in section 2.1.2 that the measures that countries call quality assurance are primarily about three things

- Minimising risk of misuse of public funding: Minimising the chances that public money is spent on funding providers that do not have the capacity to deliver training that meets at least minimum quality requirements in terms of the process of training (training programme, staff, equipment, etc.) and more rarely outcomes (completion rates or even employment insertion);
- Ensuring the coherence of the qualifications system and of qualifications awarded; e.g. maximising chances that when a person is awarded a qualification ‘A’ that
is nationally recognised (i.e. it is supposed to have be equivalent independent of where the learning process took place), his or her knowledge, skills and competence are comparable to a person awarded the same qualification in another region or provider; and

- **Building trust and confidence in the system:** Putting in place mechanisms that ensure the qualifications (and related training) are relevant to the labour market. This is typically part of quality assurance measures around qualification design. However, these measures are not always explicitly designated as quality assurance.

The systematic planning and management process which is behind the EQAVET cycle at system level is not clearly apparent from the national requirements for quality assurance. A lot of interpretation of national practices, of which many are implicit, would be needed to identify whether such cycle approach does really underpin policy-making and decisions at VET system level. Making the interpretation objective and evidence-based would require major efforts in terms of collecting data about how decisions are made rather than on the quality assurance policy framework.

Therefore, this analysis fails to compare the system level quality assurance processes in CVET to the EQAVET quality cycle and in many cases it is also difficult to compare it to the EQAVET descriptors. This has implications for the future development of EQAVET that are further discussed in section 4.

When it comes to the use of indicators, in half of the countries studied indicators are used as elements of system-level quality assurance measures. In these countries indicators are used to monitor performance of providers in the system mostly (or to encourage them to monitor it on their own initiative). Indicators to monitor the performance of the system exist but these are not part of explicit quality assurance measures.
3 Quality assurance in CVET at provider level

The European cooperation on quality assurance in VET has since its early stages paid important attention to the topic of quality assurance at provider level. The CQAF framework proposed a methodology for provider-level self-assessment. Later on, fourteen quality areas for providers' quality assurance were identified as part of the European Peer Review procedure in the frame of a Leonardo da Vinci project between 2005 and 2008. The 14 quality areas are suggested for VET providers to monitor (be it through internal or external review).

These areas are:

- Curricula;
- Learning and teaching;
- Assessment;
- Learning results and outcomes;
- Social environment, access and diversity;
- Management and administration;
- Institutions’ ethos and strategic planning;
- Infrastructure and financial resources;
- Staff allocation, recruitment and development;
- Working conditions of staff;
- External relations and internationalisation;
- Social participation and interaction;
- Gender mainstreaming; and
- Quality management and evaluation.


These areas are also partly reflected in the EQAVET descriptors at provider level.

This early focus on quality assurance at provider level can be explained by the following:

- Organisations (hence VET providers) are most commonly the focus of quality assurance and management systems;
- VET providers are a key element of VET delivery and ultimately have very strong impact on the quality of education and training delivered; and
- Efforts to enhance quality assurance in education and training are closely linked to discussions about accountability in education systems and also the movements towards more provider autonomy in highly centralised systems. These debates also concern provider-level responsibilities and requirements.

Hence, ultimately, providers are the ones who have to implement the Recommendation.

This section compares the provider level measures identified in the countries analysed. As said in the introduction to section 2, some of these measures also have a system level focus.

By provider-level measures are understood interventions that have for objective to improve the quality/ performance of individual providers (not of the system as a whole) or to recognise their excellence/ exceptional performance. However a number of the measures covered in this section have a double purpose: they are used to regulate the system but they also affect how providers set up, implement and monitor training. Therefore some measures are covered both in this section on provider level measures as well as in the section 2 on system level.

While the vast majority of the measures identified concern providers as organisations, several measures were identified that focus on programmes or individual trainers (see table 3.1). This is in line with the research design as the objective was to ensure that all three levels: provider, programme and trainers are covered in the sample of measures compared.

Before comparing the measures identified to the EQAVET cycle and the descriptors, the section below gives a brief overview of the measures covered and some key characteristics identified.
3.1 Overview of the provider level measures analysed

As shows in table 3.1 below 26 measures at this level were identified. Of these, four are international measures: ISO 9001, EFQM model (both analysed through case studies), EduQua which is described in the Austrian country report and Investors in People (case study). A majority (17) of the measures discussed are voluntary for providers to adopt. Having said that, while the choice of a specific QA measure may be voluntary, providers may be required to have some QA measures in place (independent of which ones) by the system level actors. One example (RINA-group, Italy) also concerns sectoral requirements for training centres in a specific sector (incl. product certification). The vast majority (21) of measures concern providers as organisations, four concern programme level interventions and two individual trainer measures. Note that a few measures concern more than one of these levels.

The vast majority (24) of the measures discussed are based on some form of external review. This can be: certification, accreditation, inspection, registration, benchmarking, award or label. Only two measures concern guidance to VET providers on how to carry out internal quality assurance without having an element of external review. Only seven of the measures based on external review put great emphasis on existence of internal review at provider level.

Except ISO 9001, EFQM model and ‘Investors in people’, all the other measures identified are specifically developed for quality assurance in education and training.

It should also be noted that not all of these measures are of the same nature:

- Some are a template or guidance for institutional quality assurance management;
- Others are much less detailed and rather recognise or reward quality;
- Others build on internal quality assurance and management systems providing some additional requirements but these alone do not provide sufficient basis for an institutional QA system.

The text below discusses the key distinctions noted.

3.1.1 Focus on quality management versus focus on quality

There is a clear distinction between those instruments that focus on 1) how providers manage quality and what processes they put in place to enhance quality and 2) those instruments that assess to what extent providers reach a certain level of quality or performance (regarding different aspects of VET provision).

The first set of instruments, those that focus on processes to manage quality, are more easily comparable with EQAVET as they are based on similar logics – those of management of an institution and the review of processes put in place. Those instruments that are based on certain levels of performance or requirements are less easy to compare with EQAVET. These instruments embed a certain understanding of what constitutes quality in a given area which can be more of less explicit. These approaches are quite different from the approach taken in EQAVET.

Examples of measures that like EQAVET focus on the quality management process are:

- The EduQua label (AT country report);
- Cefora quality management process (BE fr country report);
- The recommendation on quality assurance for VET providers in the Finnish country report;
- AFNOR certification (FR country report);
- ISO 9001 and EFQM model (case studies).

Examples of measures that focus on judging VET providers against a set of criteria/standards that do not focus on internal quality management processes are:

- Accreditation in the Czech Republic;
- Accreditation in Italy;
- FETAC and FAS course validation procedures (IE country report);
Minimum standards of performance or the inspection framework in the UK.

The first set of measures can be described as quality management as it is about processes to manage the delivery of quality. Nevertheless, the instruments in the second category are considered as quality assurance by the national stakeholders and they fulfil the role of quality assurance that is why they were included in this review.

3.1.2 Who is the promoter/ ‘owner’ of the measure: market actors versus public administration

There are clearly two groups of quality assurance measures identified:

- Those that are developed, administered and implemented by public administrations; and
- Those that are issued by private or semi-private entities but operate in market conditions.

Examples of measures run by public administrations are:

- Accreditation of requalification courses in the Czech Republic;
- The Skills Funding agency measures and the inspection in the UK;
- The label ‘lycees des metiers’ in France;
- The initiatives identified in Finland.

The measures run by market players are ISO 9001, EFQM model, EduQua, Investors in people, ANFOR etc.

When developing or encouraging quality assurance measures, public administrations face this dilemma:

- They can decide to set up a system that fully corresponds to their needs but this has costs in terms of their own resources (human and material) in order to be implemented. Review of documentation, inspection, site-visits or any other mechanism for external review has a cost to the organisation implementing it; or
- They can decide to trust an existing quality assurance mechanism and require that providers have one of them in place (as it is for example in case under AZAV in Germany or Ö-CERT in Austria). This means that the existing measures fulfil the needs of the public authority and that they consider the criteria under the existing mechanisms as satisfactory.

If the second approach is chosen the public administration accepts that providers will have to bear the direct costs (sometimes quite high) of the external certification by a body that issues the certification (providers bear the indirect costs also when the external review is carried out by a public administration). On the other hand, when they introduce their own quality assurance mechanism they can impose additional administrative costs on providers who are likely to undergo the internationally recognised certification anyway (for their private clients for example).

3.1.3 Provider level, versus programme or individual trainer level

As said earlier most of the measures identified focus on the provider as an organisation. This is a somewhat natural ‘unit’ for measures that originate from a rather management perspective. Provider perspective is also the one taken in EQAVET. However, in CVET some measures focus on the programme rather than the provider. The rationale being that the programme is what constitutes the link with a nationally recognised qualification or in some cases the programme is what receives public funding as opposed to the whole institution. It is relevant to note that those measures that focus on the programme often show little compatibility with EQAVET as the main focus is on the programme design, assessment and the resources of its teaching and learning.

Furthermore, programme-level accreditation/ recognition is likely to impose higher costs on both the administration and the provider that needs to seek multiple accreditations in case they provide multiple programmes (which is likely).

Some initiatives focus on individual trainers. One of those measures identified focuses on certification of trainers and it is also linked to other QA measures in the system which require trainers to be qualified. The other one is an award and has for objective to give visibility and
recognition to the profession. Though it is about ‘quality’ it is not a quality assurance measure in the strict sense.

3.1.4 The core of the QA measure: defining quality versus defining the process

The measures identified in the sample analysed are either based on a clear definition of what is ‘quality’ in the given context or they are only about the organisational processes without defining the overall aim: quality.

EQAVET as such does not provide a definition of what is quality in VET. Though some of the EQAVET descriptors and indicators are based on certain understanding of what quality is, this is implicit. Examples of such descriptors in EQAVET are the ones concerning the relationship between programmes and labour market and those that relate to accessibility and specific target groups.

Some of the measures identified here take a different approach. The Finnish recommendation on quality management to VET providers defines excellence in VET. The French label to VET schools which also recognises excellence (Lycee des metiers) is also based on a definition of high quality provider and provision. A certain definition of quality is also behind the German LQW - Learner Oriented Quality Certification, which promotes learner centred approaches to adult learning.

On the other hand measures such as ISO 9001, EFQM model, EduQua or Investors in people are not based on a given definition of quality. They are based on a review of processes only. Nevertheless, some of these instruments, such as EFQM, guide the institutions themselves to define quality in their context (in form of a mission statement or similar) and to use this as basis for their systems. Therefore EFQM is considered to be outcome oriented as the processes it suggests require organisations to continuously assess outcomes while ISO 9001 is considered more process orientated as process optimisation is the core focus

3.1.5 External versus internal evaluation

As said above, most of the measures are based on some form of external review. This is not unexpected as these are measures mainly linked to the use of public funding or management of quality in the system. Those measures that are nearly purely implemented via an internal review are:
- The Finnish recommendation to VET providers on how to develop quality assurance systems; and
- The FOREM approach in the French speaking community of Belgium. This is an approach developed by FOREM which applies to all the training centres that are part of FOREM and in that sense it is internal.

All the others have an external review component which can take the form of:
- Registration (e.g. UK Skills funding agency or FETAC) – this is typically a baseline criterion to be able to apply for funding but additional requirements may exist;
- Accreditation (e.g. AZAV in Germany or accreditation of requalification courses in the Czech Republic) – through an accreditation a certain public authority recognises that the given programme/ provider is apt in a given area. It is based on a review of certain proofs in given areas but these are not necessarily in the form of standards;
- Certification (e.g. EduQua, ISO 9001, Investors in people, ANFOR) – typically done by an independent certification body against a set of rather detailed standards;
- Peer review (e.g. Finland) – typically using a defined methodology and structured against a set of key issues;
- Label (e.g. Germany – Hessia; or France) – communicates adherence to certain key criteria and is typically based on a certain understanding of quality;

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19 Brandenburg et al (2011) *IMS background study*
- Award or prize (e.g. example in the Czech Republic, EFQM Excellence Award) – recognises high achievement;
- Inspection (e.g. UK and NL) – possibly linked to sanctions in case of incompliance or very low performance.

3.1.6 What is the basis for external evaluation?

Depending on the form of external review the ‘evidence’ used to evaluate the organisation concerned also varies. Overall it is based on either of these:

- Paper-based description from the side of providers (without evidence of past performance);
- Paper-based description from the side of providers supported by evidence of past performance through data on results, provision of evidence of systems in place;
- Provision of references from clients or key stakeholders;
- Site visits based on self-assessment: This is typically used for peer-reviews and several certification measures (e.g. LQW in Germany). In that case, the reviewed institution is required to present a self-assessment report which is discussed with the auditors/reviewers. Beyond that, the organisation chooses freely what they disclose – there is no requirement to show certain potentially sensitive documentation to the auditors/reviewers;
- Audits or inspection visits – where the provider has to give access to internal documents and allow observation by the external reviewer (e.g. EFQM award process or visits by official national inspectorate (e.g. UK-England, The Netherlands)).

These different sources of information for the external review have impact on the extent to which the measure really has the potential to enforce the criteria expressed in a paper form. However, these forms of review also come with different costs (the most rigorous ones being the most costly ones) and it is therefore important for the institution in charge to assess the fitness for purpose of the type and source of information required. This is in particular sensitive when it comes to measures implemented by public authorities which are unlikely to be able to have the full costs of the review born by the provider (as it is the case in the certification measures such as ISO 9001, Investors in people, AFNOR etc.).

The table 3.1 below gives an overview on the measures that have been analysed as part of this study.
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<th>Country</th>
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<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>EduQua (also an international measure)</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>FOREM quality assurance system</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Voluntary quality label specifically for adult education providers</td>
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<td>Required for all training centres/providers within the FOREM system (these</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Based on external audit</td>
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<td>can be public providers 'owned' by FOREM or sub-contractors</td>
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<td><em>Key aspects</em>: responsiveness to needs, transparency of information on</td>
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<td>Based on recognition of prior learning and guidance for further development</td>
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<td></td>
<td>provision, education process, trainers, existence of internal quality</td>
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<td>development</td>
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<td></td>
<td>assurance, leadership</td>
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<td><em>Key aspects</em>: based on competence standards for the different profiles,</td>
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<td>includes practical experience</td>
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<td>Belgium</td>
<td>CEFORA/ CEVORA</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>CEFORA/ CEVORA</td>
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<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>Voluntary quality assurance system for VET providers (training centres)</td>
<td>speaking</td>
<td>Foremost core for voluntary quality assurance</td>
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<td>English</td>
<td>Providing CVET – focused on sectoral training</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Foremost core for voluntary quality assurance</td>
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<td><em>Key aspects</em>: Customer satisfaction, Effectiveness and continuous</td>
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<td>Foremost core for voluntary quality assurance</td>
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<td>improvement, Targeted growth, a policy based on results, flexibility and</td>
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<td>Foremost core for voluntary quality assurance</td>
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<td>expertise in the entire organisation</td>
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<td>Foremost core for voluntary quality assurance</td>
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<td>Czech</td>
<td>Accreditation of re-qualification courses</td>
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<td>Wba: academy of continuing education</td>
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<td>Republic</td>
<td>Required accreditation for VET programme that can receive public funding</td>
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<td>Voluntary certification of staff in continuing education</td>
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<td></td>
<td>as part of training for unemployed</td>
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<td>Based on recognition of prior learning and guidance for further development</td>
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<td>Based on external review of documentation</td>
<td>Swiss</td>
<td>Foremost core for voluntary quality assurance</td>
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<td><em>Key aspects</em>: graduate profile description, final assessment description,</td>
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<td>Foremost core for voluntary quality assurance</td>
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<td>programme description, equipment, trainers, programme grantees</td>
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<td>Foremost core for voluntary quality assurance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>Quality Management Recommendation for Vocational Education and Training</td>
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<td>Wba: academy of continuing education</td>
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<td>Voluntary guidance for VET providers to develop quality management</td>
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<td>systems. It describes characteristics of excellence.</td>
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<td>Based on guidance materials for internal review</td>
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<td><em>Key aspects</em>: consideration of functions as a whole, customer focus,</td>
<td></td>
<td>Foremost core for voluntary quality assurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>leadership, results orientation, learning and innovation, people as</td>
<td></td>
<td>Foremost core for voluntary quality assurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>resources, effective processes, relevance to the world of work, social</td>
<td></td>
<td>Foremost core for voluntary quality assurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>responsibility</td>
<td></td>
<td>Foremost core for voluntary quality assurance</td>
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</tbody>
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*Note: Wba = academy of continuing education*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Label Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| France | AFNOR quality standard for training providers (NF 214) | Voluntary measure for private CVET providers Based on external review – certification  
**Key aspects:** Communication and promotion of the training provider, Information about the training offer (‘catalogue’), Tailor-made training offer, Request management, Pedagogical design process, Organisation of training, Training delivery, Evaluation of training |
| France | Greta Plus quality label      | Voluntary measure for CVET providers in the Greta network Based on external review  
**Key aspects:** commitment to clients and beneficiaries, 21 commitments structured around: policy definition, implementation and monitoring, evaluation, adjustments |
| France | FFP and ISQ-OPQ – accreditation | Voluntary accreditation of providers focusing on recognition of professionalism and client satisfaction Based on external review by the national vocational training federation  
**Key aspects:** as in AFNOR since based on the standards defined there |
| France | Lycee des metiers label       | Voluntary quality label awarded to VET providers Based on an application form by the training centre, supported by opinions of the regional education authority and the inspectorate, award by a central committee  
**Key aspects:** range of programmes offered, diversity of target groups, diversity of qualifications, validation of non-formal and informal learning, partnerships, trainers and teachers, international activities, accommodation services to students (access), follow-up or support after graduation |
| Germany | Further Training Hessia label | Measure for further education providers though it is voluntary it is also a requirement to get access to several forms of funding Based on application by the provider and external review of this evidence  
**Key aspects:** Organisation and context condition, Staff, Infrastructure, Training courses, Learner-orientation and customer protection |
| Germany | LOW- Learner Oriented Quality Certification | Voluntary certification of CVET providers Based on a combination of internal and external review. The internal review process is crucial  
**Key aspects:** mission statement and own quality standards of the organisation being certified, self-assessment against the criteria, review of the self-evaluation by an external auditor.  
Also: personality development’ of the learner, social learning, acquiring specific knowledge and developing particular skills |
| Germany | AZAV                          | This measure regulates the requirements for accreditation of CVET providers offering training courses in the field of vocational retraining and further vocational training programmes funded by the Public Employment Agency  
Based on external review and possibly an audit  
**Key aspects:**  
Providers: Financially and technically able to conduct the training properly; Have adequately trained staff and well equipped training venues (meeting requirements of DIN ISO); Grant appropriate contract conditions to participants; Have a quality assurance system measure in place  
Programmes: In addition to the requirements fulfilled by the CVET-provider, there are also requirements connected to the training programmes: participants will find appropriate conditions of participation, programmes meets the principles of sound financial management; outcomes can be expected to contribute to the re-integration of participants into the labour market – this is based on fulfilment of benchmarks |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Scheme/Standard</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Ireland (until end of 2012)* | **FETAC Quality assurance of providers**                                                           | All providers operating under FETAC must register with FETAC. Based on external review, but requires having in place an internal quality assurance.  
**Key aspects:** Communication, Equity, Staff recruitment and development, Access, transfer and progression, Programme development, delivery and review, Fair and consistent assessment of learners, Protection for learners, Sub-contracting, procuring programme delivery, Self-evaluation of programmes and services. |
|                             | **FETAC Programme Validation**                                                                     | Applies to all programmes (required) awarded under the FETAC system of awards. Based on an external review of the programme definition.  
**Key aspects:** Aims/objectives/rationale; Programme learning outcomes; Programme content/activities; Learning strategies/methodologies; Assessment techniques; Accommodation, resources; Tutor and assessor profiles. |
|                             | **FAS Training Standards, Training Specification Standards (QA 58/10)**                           | To be used for all programmes delivered under FAS remit. Based on providing guidance to all those concerned about the standard (no external review).  
**Key aspects:** Training Title and Status; Training Aim; Programme Objectives; Outline Training Plan; Training Duration; Training Approach; Record System; Assessment and Certification System; Target Trainee Profile; Trainer/Instructioner/Workplace Supervisor Profile; Review; Copyright and Acknowledgements. |
| Italy                       | **RINA Group**                                                                                     | Specific certification schemes for metal and polyethylene welder training centres. Based on external review.  
**Key aspects:** Product, System, Personnel and Services. |
| The Netherlands              | **Inspectorate of Education and the Inspection Framework**                                           | It is a legal requirement for all VET-providers to comply with the Inspection Framework. Based on external review, but requires having in place an internal quality assurance.  
**Key aspects:** Four Assessment Areas: Educational Processes, Examination Aspects, Return and Quality Assurance. |
| United Kingdom – England    | **Skills Funding Agency – Minimum Levels of Performance**                                            | Required for all providers receiving public funding. Based on benchmarks and indicators.  
**Key aspect:** for each type of qualification a key success rate minimum level is identified and providers are benchmarked against it. |
|                             | **Skills Funding Agency Intervention Policy**                                                       | Required for all providers receiving public funding. Based on external review of the provider with a focus on risk assessment.  
**Key aspects:** Quality of provision; Delivery of provision; Delivery model; Financial stability; Control of public funds; Significant change (change in leadership for example). |
**The Common Inspection Framework (CIF) for Further Education and Skills (2012)**
- Compulsory for all further education providers
- Based on external review in form of inspection
- Key aspects: outcomes for learners, quality of teaching, learning and assessment, effectiveness of leadership and management

**Investors in people**
- Voluntary measure for all organisations that wish to linking staff development to business objectives (not specifically for education and training providers)
- Based on external review
- *Key aspects:* business strategy, learning and development strategy, people management strategy, leadership and management strategy, management effectiveness, recognition and reward, involvement and empowerment, learning and development, performance measurement, continuous improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International case study analysis</th>
<th>ISO 9001 standard</th>
<th>EFQM excellence model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary measure for organisations that wish to be certified for their quality management systems in place (not specifically designed for education and training providers)</td>
<td>Based on identification of key processes, a set of standards that define these, transposition of these processes to the organisation and external certification</td>
<td>Voluntary measure for organisations (not specifically designed for education and training providers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Based on external review in form of inspection</td>
<td><em>Key aspects:</em> Customer focus, Leadership, Involvement of people, Process approach, System approach to management, Continual improvement, Factual approach to decision making and Mutually beneficial supplier relationship</td>
<td>Based on a definition of excellence, model of quality management, self-assessment (internal review) and external review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Key aspects:</em> Business strategy, learning and development strategy, people management strategy, leadership and management strategy, management effectiveness, recognition and reward, involvement and empowerment, learning and development, performance measurement, continuous improvement</td>
<td><em>Key aspects:</em> Adding value for customer; Creating a sustainable future; Developing organisational capability; Harnessing creativity and innovation; Leading with vision, inspiration and integrity; Managing with agility; Succeeding through the talent of people; and Sustaining outstanding results.</td>
<td><em>Enablers:</em> Leadership, Strategy, People, Resources and Processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Results:</em> Customer, Staff, Society and Business/financial results</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The institutional landscape in VET in Ireland is undergoing major structural evolutions in 2012-2013 and hence this description concerns the situation as of end of 2012

*Source: country reports and case studies*
3.2 Comparison with EQAVET

This section compares the quality assurance measures at provider level with the EQAVET cycle, descriptors at provider level and the building blocks for providers.

3.2.1 Comparison with the EQAVET cycle

The majority of the measures identified (16 out of 26) are based on a cyclical approach that is comparable to EQAVET. These are measures that are based on the principles of continuous improvement based on evidence of past performance.

The sixteen measures in which a cycle-based approach can be recognised are shown in the box 2 below. However, it should be noted that in a small number of measures though the cycle can be recognised in the features of the instrument it is not explicitly described. This is for example the case regarding the label Lycee des metiers or the UK inspection framework. The EduQua label was being revised at the time of writing this report to integrate an explicit cycle-based approach.

Box 2 - Quality assurance instruments using a cycle-based approach

- EduQua label (AT);
- FOREM QA (BE fr);
- CEFORA (BE fr);
- Finnish quality assurance recommendation (FI);
- Peer-review among VET providers (FI);
- AFNOR certification (FR);
- Greta plus label (FR);
- FFP label (FR);
- Lycee des metiers label (FR);
- LQW label (DE);
- Accreditation in Italy (IT);
- Dutch inspection framework (NL);
- UK inspection framework (UK);
- Investors in people (case study - UK);
- ISO 9001 (international – case study);
- EFQM model (international – case study)

Where a cycle is in place it is not always applied to the process of institutional management as in EQAVET. In some measures the cycle approach is articulated around the learner’s journey (from choice of a programme to insertion on the labour market) rather that around institutional management. These quality assurance measures review the processes in place at provider level to manage learners’ journey successfully (see example in box 3).

Box 3 Approach to the quality cycle based on learners’ journey

The GRETA plus²⁰ label is based on the following thematic areas that correspond to how learners’ journey is managed in the institution:

Operational axis:
- Client needs and expectations;
- Reception, information and advice to the learner;
- Development of tailor made training;
- Delivery of tailor made training;
- Assessment of the training and of outcomes;
- Client satisfaction

²⁰ Greta, Manuel Qualité [http://www.greta37.com/media/Documents/manuel_qualit__version_B_20120425.pdf](http://www.greta37.com/media/Documents/manuel_qualit__version_B_20120425.pdf)
3.2.2 Comparison with the EQAVET descriptors

Most of the measures identified could be compared with some of the EQAVET descriptors at provider level. However, none of the measures perfectly matches all the EQAVET descriptors. Few of the measures cannot be compared with any of the EQAVET descriptors (or only one or two of them) because they are based on very different principles. This is the case of:

- The FETAC process for programme validation (IE) which is focused on how the programme is designed and how a qualification will be awarded rather than on the provider level arrangements for quality assurance;
- AFNOR certification standards (FR) is also based on a different logic than EQAVET and it does not focus on the management process at the level of providing institutions;
- The quality award (CZ) is only comparable with those descriptors that focus on staff qualifications.

The table below also shows that some of the descriptors were not identified in any of the quality assurance measures analysed. This is in particular the case regarding cooperation with other providers or availability of review results.

On the other hand some of the descriptors are relatively common. This is in particular the case of the following areas:

- Existence of internal quality assurance systems; and
- Staff training.

Some quality assurance instruments analysed contain criteria that are not explicitly captured in EQAVET for the moment. These concerns:

- Transparency of the education and training offer to learners (e.g. EduQua, AFNOR);
- Client request management (e.g. FOREM or AFNOR);
- Social responsibility (e.g. Finland recommendation to VET providers);
- Information and guidance to learners (e.g. Hessia, AFNOR) and support for learners’ insertion to the labour market (FOREM);
- Infrastructure and equipment (e.g. LQW, accreditation in the Czech Republic)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EQAVET descriptor</th>
<th>Quality assurance measure</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy objectives reflected in providers’ targets</td>
<td>Lycee des metiers label (FR), Accreditation in Italy, UK- England inspection framework</td>
<td>These measures link policy objectives with provider level quality assurance requirements – for example when it comes to employability, retention, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicit objectives defined</td>
<td>FOREM (BE fr), Hessia (DE), LQW (DE), Accreditation in Italy (IT), Investors in people (UK), ISO 9001, EFQM</td>
<td>These measures typically require the institutions to have a strategic plan in place with defined objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation with stakeholders to identify needs</td>
<td>FOREM (BE fr), Quality award (CZ), Recommendation on QA to VET providers (FI), Lycee des metiers label (FR), LQW (DE), Lombardy region accreditation (IT), Sicily region accreditation (IT), EFQM</td>
<td>There is a requirement for needs assessment as part of the QA measures. However the extent to which this involves stakeholders (as opposed to only learners) varies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality management responsibilities are defined</td>
<td>FOREM (BE fr), CEFORA (BE fr), Recommendation to VET providers (FI), Peer review (FI), LQW (DE), Sicily region</td>
<td>These measures mostly require clear quality assurance process at provider level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### EQAVET descriptor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EQAVET descriptor</th>
<th>Quality assurance measure</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Involvement of staff</strong></td>
<td>CEFORA (BE fr), EFQM</td>
<td>Most measures do not explicitly require staff involvement in quality assurance procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cooperation with other providers</strong></td>
<td>None of the measures identified explicitly require cooperation with other providers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Existence of a quality assurance system</strong></td>
<td>CEFORA (BE fr), Recommendation to VET providers (FI), Peer review (FI), Lycee des metiers* (FR), Inspection framework (NL), Investors in people (UK), ISO 9001, EFQM</td>
<td>These measures have as one of the criteria the existence of internal quality management systems at provider level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alignment of resources with objectives</strong></td>
<td>EduQua * (AT), FOREM (BE fr), Recommendation to VET providers (FI), Peer review (FI), LGW (DE), Accreditation (IT), ISO 9001, EFQM</td>
<td>Most of these measures assess efficiency of resource allocation or require clarity over resource management. The alignment between resources and objectives as such is not explicitly covered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff training plans</strong></td>
<td>WBA (AT), EduQua (AT), FOREM (BE fr), Cefora (BE fr), Quality award (CZ), Accreditation* (CZ), Recommendation to VET providers (FI), Peer review (FI), Lycee des metiers (FR), Hessia (DE), LGW (DE), FAS (IE), Accreditation (IT), Rina group (IT), Inspection framework (NL), Investors in people (UK), ISO 9001, EFQM</td>
<td>In most quality assurance instruments there is at least one criterion about staff qualifications and competence. In some there is a clear requirement about staff professional development or training plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-assessment</strong></td>
<td>EduQua (AT), FOREM* (BE fr), CEFORA (BE fr), Lycee des metiers label* (FR), Investors in people (UK), ISO 9001, EFQM</td>
<td>Like for the descriptor on existence of quality assurance systems, these measures require VET providers to carry out self-assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation of outcomes – including learner satisfaction</strong></td>
<td>EduQua (AT), CEFORA (BE fr), Accreditation* (CZ), Accreditation (IT), Accreditation Lombardy (IT), Inspection framework (NL), Investors in people (UK), ISO 9001, EFQM</td>
<td>Many of the measures require providers to explain the process of evaluation of outcomes from the learning process. The measures that explicitly require providers to quality assurance the processes related to outcomes of training are rare.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Involvement of stakeholders in review</strong></td>
<td>Hessia (DE), Lycee des metiers label (FR), EFQM</td>
<td>Measures that require external involvement in the evaluation/review stage are rare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Early warning systems</strong></td>
<td>ISO 9001</td>
<td>The vast majority of the instruments does not refer to the existence of early warning systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learners’ feedback</strong></td>
<td>EduQua (AT), FOREM (BE fr), Cefora (BE fr), Recommendation to VET providers (FI), AFNOR (FR), Accreditation (IT), EFQM</td>
<td>Collection of feedback from learners is not systematically required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Availability of review results</strong></td>
<td>None of the measures requires publication of providers’ results of evaluation/review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Review results feedback to organisation planning</strong></td>
<td>FOREM (BE fr), CEFORA (BE fr), FAS* (IE), ISO 9001, EFQM</td>
<td>Only a relatively small number of the measures requires evidence of the fact that review results feedback into the planning process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action plans based on review results</strong></td>
<td>FOREM (BE fr), EFQM</td>
<td>Requirement for having action plans based on review results in place is very rare</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This descriptor is only partially reflected in the given measure*

Source: ICF GHK country reports

### 3.2.3 Comparison with EQAVET building blocks for VET providers

Regarding the six EQAVET building blocks for providers the following are frequently identifiable in the quality assurance instruments analysed:

- Management culture (13 of the 26 measures) including leadership;
- Culture of self-assessment (11 of the 26 measures); and
- Staff training (20 of the 26 measures).

Measures that require processes which ensure use of data and feedback for planning and stakeholder involvement in quality assurance are rare.
The building block on arrangements that reflect providers’ situation is rather difficult to interpret for the purpose of comparison of quality assurance instruments. It relates to the possibly of VET providers to tailor make the quality assurance process to their needs. However given the nature of the quality assurance measures analysed the focus was mostly on identifying what is required (and hence has to be used) rather than on what is voluntary. Nevertheless some of the measures, such as the Finnish recommendation to VET providers, can be mapped against this building block as they are voluntary.

3.3 Lessons from case studies

This section draws together a number of lessons learnt from the case studies which can be of relevance to the reflection on the future of EQAVET.

- Costs of implementation of internal quality assurance to organisations tend to be relatively high

  Setting up processes, enforcing these as well as monitoring process implementation and results has a cost. High costs of implementation are mentioned in all three case studies on international certification measures: ISO 9001, EFQM model and Investors in People.

  It is possible that there is a critical organisational size below which these costs are not worth the investment. This would imply that a ‘one size fits all’ approach is unlikely to be successful given the diversity of VET provision and of the infrastructure of providers across Europe.

- Education providers’ motivation to obtain internationally recognised certification is related to their (business) development strategies or customers’ requirements.

  The case study on Investors in People cites research evidence on providers motivation to get accredited showing that the willingness to gain competitive advantage is one key rationale and the second one is pressure from clients.

  In this context it is also worthwhile noting that the same research suggests that providers do not seek to obtain multiple external certifications.

- Some standards are considered to have greater potential to create cultural change in organisations than others.

  The extent to which the standards engage staff in development of processes and their monitoring varies from one instrument to another. The case studies on EFQM and Investors in People suggest that this has impact on the potential for the measure to vehicle change in the organisation.

  EQAVET refers to the involvement of staff in the development of plans (one of the descriptors) but the question of whether this is sufficiently engaging could be asked.

- The language used to describe the standards matters

  The issue of vocabulary and formulations used to describe the standards is mentioned in the EFQM as well as ISO 9001 case studies. The standards have to be described in an understandable, clear and user-oriented manner to be useful for and understood by the end users.

  The user-friendly and ‘actionable’ character of EQAVET descriptors by VET providers could be further tested and evaluated.

- Clarity, transparency and validity of the process through which the standards were developed matters for the credibility of the instrument

  The ISO 9001 case study mentions that the transparency over how the standards are developed and updated is a critical factor for the credibility of this measure. It also notes down that this process is not sufficiently known and transparent for EQAVET.

- Scoring of performance against indicators/ benchmarking
Three of the measures described in the case studies use indicators to benchmark providers’ performance (EFQM, Investors in People, AZAV). In AZAV this is used as an element of system-level management of CVET (performance oriented). In the two other measures benchmarking gives information to providers themselves to improve their position.

The extent to which EQAVET could promote this form of use of the indicators could be considered.

- High performance is signalled

Linked to the above scoring system, Investors in People has a mechanism to signal to customers if the organisation exceeds the standard performance (using colours for the certificate/ label). Therefore the measure does both: certify compliance with standards and recognises excellence.

- The role, profile and organisation of assessors

The issue of who issues the certification/ accreditation is mentioned in the AZAV case study as well as those on EFQM and Investors in People. There is a need for these people/ organisations to be adequately prepared for this role. This is crucial for the credibility of the process.

- Existence of quality management is not always sufficient for improvement in outcomes

The AZAV case study mentions that outcome indicators were introduced to the system because relying on quality management measures like ISO 9001 is not always sufficient to achieve satisfactory outcomes – e.g. if the measures rather certify the process or the input than the outcomes. On the other hand the ‘Investors in People’ case study cites some evidence on improved performance as observed by organisations implementing this framework.

- System level quality assurance is also linked to system-level organisations’ using quality management for their own work

The Investors in People case study discusses the use of the framework by public administrations. This reflects the fact that the culture of quality assurance is filtered into the whole system and it is not just imposed on providers. It is not clear to what extent this this dimension is captured in EQAVET.

3.4 Conclusions

The comparison of provider level quality assurance measures shows that overall there is a better fit between these and EQAVET than when looking at system level measures. It also shows that in most cases it is easier to compare EQAVET to the explicit quality assurance measures at provider level than to those at system level which are often based on a different logic than that behind the EQAVET cycle.

At the same time none of the measures match EQAVET fully and some EQAVET descriptors are rarely tackled by the explicit quality assurance measures. In practice this means that none of the existing quality assurance instruments is fully comparable to EQAVET.

Some provider level quality assurance instruments have a rather weak match with EQAVET. These measures are not designed for internal providers’ review but rather as instruments of external review focusing on specific aspects that are of concern to the funding authorities.

The comparison also underlines some differences between EQAVET and other quality assurance measures. In particular these features are not clearly present in EQAVET:

- The adequacy of equipment and infrastructure which is a rather common criterion for external review;
- The focus on customers/ learners and their feedback but also the processes to manage their pathways; and
The extent to which providers cover not only the function of learning but also information and guidance.
4 Outlook: Scenarios for future development of EQAVET

One of the tasks of this study was to design a set of scenarios for future development of EQAVET. These scenarios are expected to feed into the discussions in the EQAVET network and its steering committee about next steps regarding European and national actions on EQAVET implementation. Therefore this analysis does not provide a definitive answer on the approach to follow but it rather presents each of the options outlining its strengths and weaknesses.

While the earlier sections of this study concerned predominantly CVET\(^1\), this section concerns VET in general not differentiating between IVET and CVET. Given that EQAVET has been designed as an instrument to promote quality assurance in the entire VET sector, it does not make sense to differentiate between sub-sectors when discussing the future development of the instrument.

4.1 Methodology

The scenarios presented in this section were developed using the following approach:

- First draft version of the scenarios was developed based on internal brainstorming of the core team for the study comprised of one EQAVET expert, one analyst with very good understanding of European policy making processes and one analyst with strong expertise in VET\(^2\).
- This draft was presented to the European Commission and the EQAVET secretariat for comments;
- The draft was discussed with 32 persons interviewed during the data collection stage. The interviewees were people in charge of quality assurance in initial or continuous VET and people in charge of specific quality assurance measures analysed in the country reports. All interviewees were sent a short note on the scenarios prior to the interview. The interviewees were asked about the strengths and weaknesses of the different scenarios, their likelihood, their potential impact and the risks associated.

Though the awareness of the interviewees about EQAVET varied greatly, overall valuable insights about the feasibility of the proposed solutions were obtained.

- Based on the feedback received and also informed by the analysis of country reports and case studies, the scenarios were further refined and described in greater detail as presented here.

4.2 Main assumptions behind the scenarios

When developing these scenarios, the authors assumed that the following aspects of EQAVET will remain unchanged:

- **Implementation of EQAVET by Member States is voluntary**;

  EQAVET is implemented based on the Recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council. It is for Member States to decide whether and how they implement it.

- **At European level, EQAVET is implemented through the Open Method of Coordination in Education and Training**;

\(^1\) IVET was touched upon in the sense that some CVET quality assurance arrangements are identical to those in IVET

\(^2\) Keith Brumfitt (expert on EQAVET), Daniela Ulicna (ICF GHK project director for this study and main author of the report) and Anette Curth (ICF GHK project manager for this study)
At European level, the implementation of EQAVET is supported through peer-learning and exchange within a network; follow-up by a steering committee of Member States' representatives and support services to the network by a secretariat.

- **Implementation of EQAVET can be supported through the successor of the Lifelong learning programme**

Actions of the programme that will succeed the Lifelong learning programme as from 2014 can be used to support implementation of EQAVET both at national and European level through projects or by integrating quality assurance into the programme.

- **EQAVET is a meta-framework, rather than a quality assurance system in its own right;**

Member States will continue to be encouraged to align their own approaches with the EQAVET framework and EQAVET will not be seen as a quality assurance system.

These assumptions form the baseline for reflecting on the future of EQAVET.

### 4.3 Main drivers for future development

Before analysing how EQAVET could evolve in the future it is necessary to reflect on why it would evolve. What are the drivers that can cause this European instrument to change?

Several possible drivers can be identified and grouped under the following main issues:

- New policy priorities at European level;
- Willingness to provide greater visibility to EQAVET among providers of vocational education and training;
- Need to make EQAVET a more concrete tool for countries and stakeholders;
- Developments in other areas of education and training and qualifications systems;

Since the adoption of EQAVET in 2009, the issue of quality assurance of education and training remains a relevant topic on the European policy agenda for education and training. Most recently, the need for the education and training systems to supply high quality VET graduates was underlined in the Council Conclusions of November 2012[^23], urging Member States to enhance work-based learning as part of VET as well as cooperation with the world of work. While the need for high quality of VET remains a concern at European level, the following two new orientations can give new impetus for EQAVET:

- The ambition for VET has been strengthened in the 2012 Communication of the European Commission (Re-thinking education[^24]) that calls – amongst others – for excellence in VET. VET should become an element of local and regional economic and development strategies requiring the existence of ‘champion’ VET providers and be a driver of innovation;
- Integrating different forms of work-based learning (apprenticeships, traineeships, on-the-job learning periods) into school-based VET has become a priority given their positive impacts in terms of employability[^25]. Therefore there could be more emphasis on quality assurance of work-based learning in the future. While in principle EQAVET was designed to be applicable to both work-based and school-based VET, in practice the principles are more used to inspire school-based systems[^26].

[^23]: Council conclusions of 26 November 2012 on education and training in Europe 2020 — the contribution of education and training to economic recovery, growth and jobs

[^24]: European Commission (2011) *Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes*

[^25]: See the initiative European Alliance for Apprenticeships http://ec.europa.eu/education/apprenticeship/index_en.htm#

[^26]: ICF GHK (2013) Evaluation of the implementation of EQAVET
Another EU-level policy development that can influence the future development of EQAVET is the growing willingness to streamline the European instruments in the field of lifelong learning. In the past decade several instruments were developed in parallel in higher education and vocational education and training. This trend can be observed when it comes to the existence of two credit systems: ECTS and ECVET, two sets of quality assurance frameworks/guidelines: EQAVET and European Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance in higher education\(^{27}\) and partly the development of qualifications frameworks with the Bologna framework for higher education coexisting with the overarching lifelong learning framework – European Qualifications Framework (EQF)\(^ {28}\). These instruments were initially developed separately due to structural differences in the education sub-systems concerned. However, to better support lifelong learning and mobility (not just geographical but also vertical and horizontal), the latest European Commission Communication Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes\(^ \text{29}\) calls for greater coherence of these tools.

From a more pragmatic point of view, Member States may wish more concrete support to develop transparent and comparable quality assurance in VET across Europe. EQAVET currently provides a set of principles and guidelines that countries can use as inspiration to develop national practice. The current framework and the European structures related to it do not foresee to make EQAVET ‘visible’ in countries’ systems; or to introduce a coherent structure across Europe. Unlike the EQF which is expected to be made tangible to citizens by appearing on individuals’ certificates and transcripts, the EQAVET recommendation does not contain any measures that would materialise EQAVET in the eyes of VET providers or citizens. Therefore EQAVET is for the moment visible and known only to a relatively small number of experts.

To push quality assurance as embedded in EQAVET to VET institutions the European Commission can either rely on countries’ take up of EQAVET at system level (current approach) or it can initiate measures to support use of EQAVET in VET institutions directly. This willingness to bring EQAVET to the ground is already reflected in the calls for projects of the Lifelong Learning Programme\(^ {30}\) as well as the discussions in the EQAVET network\(^ {31}\).

Furthermore, for a quality assurance instrument like EQAVET (but also for national instruments) to result in increased quality of VET, the greatest change has to happen within education and training institutions. Unless VET providers embrace the EQAVET principle of using information for continuous improvement of processes and results, which is behind the EQAVET cycle, quality assurance will not translate into better outcomes. Therefore reaching out to providers is a key challenge for quality assurance in VET in the years to come.

When looking at the indicators and the descriptors, the main emphasis is on provision of VET and the learning process while less emphasis is put on qualifications (though this dimension is not completely absent from EQAVET). Over the past decade, under the influence of development of qualifications frameworks and consolidation of qualifications systems, there is more and more focus on the quality of qualifications. This is in particular the case at European level with the development of other instruments for transparency of qualifications and more specifically the EQF. The need to strengthen the focus on

\(^{27}\) ENQA (2009) \textit{Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area}


\(^{29}\) \url{http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2012:0669:FIN:EN:PDF}

\(^{30}\) The use of EQAVET to support quality assurance in VET was a priority under the general call for projects under the Leonardo strand of the Lifelong Learning programme in 2011, 2012 as well as 2013. See for example: \url{http://ec.europa.eu/education/lif/dpc/call13/prior_en.pdf}

\(^{31}\) In 2013 a working group was set up to reflect on how to support use of EQAVET by providers \url{http://www.eqavet.eu/gns/what-we-do/events.aspx?EventItem=7ab3d610-1f82-47a9-a68c-fe3ff97440a3}
qualifications and learning outcomes so that EQAVET can be better linked to the other European instruments could also be a driver for evolution of EQAVET.

4.3.1 Key issues for the future scenarios on EQAVET

Based on the earlier analysis of comparability between existing quality assurance measures and EQAVET, the feedback from interviews and authors’ own analysis of European developments in quality assurance in education and training, the following key issues were identified and should be embedded in the considerations on the future of EQAVET:

- Cascading EQAVET to VET provider level (via National Reference Point's and nationally implemented EQAVET projects);
- Visibility of EQAVET as a European instrument;
- Complementarity with other European instruments;
- Added value of a European action compared to national action.

The extent to which the different scenarios tackle these issues is discussed for each scenario.

4.4 Overview of the scenarios

The developments of EQAVET can be divided into two groups:

- Those that concern the use of the instrument and implementation strategies – hence, the application of EQAVET; and
- Those that concern further development of EQAVET.

The following developments were identified as plausible future options for different uses and implementation approaches to EQAVET (application of EQAVET):

1. Baseline - do nothing;
2. Collect data against EQAVET indicators and publicise related rankings;
3. Peer-review of quality assurance among Member States;
4. Peer-review of quality assurance among providers;
5. Issue an EQAVET label to providers directly from the European level;
   a. Alternative: issue the label at national level;
6. Organise a prize/award that recognises providers’ excellence in their QA systems;
7. Make EQAVET a requirement for participation in the future programme for education and training (successor of the Lifelong Learning Programme).

When it comes to the content of EQAVET, the following developments can be suggested based on the analysis of national quality assurance mechanisms (development scenarios):

8. Merge EQAVET with European quality assurance arrangements in higher education;
9. Develop EQAVET into a meta-instrument for comparison of quality assurance measures.

**Note:** Only the set of scenarios regarding the applications of EQAVET were discussed with interviewees. The developments of the content of EQAVET were based on the analysis and comparison with existing quality assurance mechanisms. These were developed at a later stage of the study.

All these developments are discussed in greater detail below. It should be noted that the different options are not mutually exclusive. They can be pursued in parallel and in a mutually reinforcing manner.
4.4.1 Scenario 1-7: Application of EQAVET

Scenario 1: Do nothing, let the instrument evolve

Description: Under this scenario, the Commission continues its current efforts to encourage countries to use features of EQAVET through the exchange of good practice and mutual learning at European level. The Commission (or its contractor) identify and describe examples of good practice in using EQAVET to render the instrument more concrete and tangible. These are used as inspiration for countries/providers to improve their quality assurance measures. Countries maintain their national quality assurance systems, some of which are already compatible with EQAVET (when it comes to the use of the cycle, indicative descriptors and indicators). They do not call their systems or aspects of their systems or approaches using the term EQAVET.

Impact on promoting and monitoring continuous improvement in countries’ VET systems

As described in the scenario, countries can draw inspiration from EQAVET and from mutual learning to improve their own systems. Progress will depend on countries’ own goals and policy agenda; hence impact will be uneven across Europe.

Reach to VET providers

The extent to which EQAVET reaches VET providers under this scenario depends very much on the national level initiatives. In those countries where features of EQAVET are transposed to national quality assurance arrangements and tools, the principles of EQAVET reach to VET providers. However, the European Commission can do little to strengthen the reach to VET providers under this scenario.

This scenario does not contain any European actions that would create a pull or push factor for VET providers to engage with EQAVET.

Visibility of EQAVET

The visibility of EQAVET under this scenario is relatively limited. Member States can use elements of EQAVET to inspire their systems but they do not necessarily refer to EQAVET when doing so. VET providers have no means of showing that they are using the principles of EQAVET to other providers or to the learners.

Complementarity with other European instruments

This scenario has no impact on the complementarity with other European instruments in education and training. EQAVET continues evolving separately from quality assurance arrangements in higher education. There is little explicit relationship between EQAVET, EQF and ECVET even though these instruments are compatible\(^\text{32}\).

Added value of European action compared to national action

The existence of a European instrument on quality assurance encourages countries to take action in the field of quality assurance. The EU level exchanges create a certain peer-pressure for countries to act.

Considerations on likelihood and acceptance of this development

EU level exchanges on quality assurance are taking place since several years now (see section 1). It is likely that without a new impetus and a more concrete objective for these exchanges there will be a certain decrease in interest and engagement at a certain point in time. For the exchanges to remain relevant for participants there is a need for a certain

\(^{32}\) ICF GHK (2013) Evaluation of the implementation of EQAVET
renewal of the dynamics which could be created by adding a new objective or type of action as discussed under the remaining scenarios.

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**Scenario 2: Collect data against EQAVET indicators and publicise the resulting rankings**

**Description:** One of the elements of EQAVET is a set of indicators for quality assurance. Without changing EQAVET or its implementation model, the Commission could systematically gather the data against system-level indicators in all EU countries; publish it in an annual report and issue a commentary on countries’ success or shortcomings against these indicators.

This scenario can draw upon existing work on clarification of the indicators and their definition at European level (operational definitions of indicators agreed on European level, catalogue of indicators characterising each of them along 7 common features, guidance on how to use the EQAVET indicators for self-monitoring). Further work would be needed on use of data sources and ensuring comparability of the data across the countries.

**Impact on promoting and monitoring continuous improvement in countries’ VET systems**

This scenario would oblige countries to collect data against the EQAVET indicators. The result would be better data availability about VET across Europe. Those data could be used to inform countries’ decisions about priorities and areas where progress is needed.

Moreover, the scenario would encourage countries, through peer pressure, to address those indicators which they perform badly against.

One feature of this scenario is that it de facto makes the use of the EQAVET indicators a requirement at national level. It does not give countries flexibility in choosing which indicators to use nor to define the indicators as most suitable for their systems.

**Reach to VET providers**

This scenario does not particularly support the development of quality assurance at the level of providers. It does not make EQAVET better known to providers.

**Visibility of EQAVET**

The scenario would give visibility to one aspect of EQAVET which are the indicators. However, it does not enhance the visibility of the core quality assurance principles of EQAVET. The scenario only concentrates on making the data available to countries but it does not particularly encourage the use of the data for decision making.

**Complementarity with other European instruments**

This scenario brings no improvement to the complementarity between EQAVET and other EU instruments.

**Added value of European action compared to national action**

The availability of comparable data on VET in Europe cannot be achieved through national action alone and in that sense this scenario would have a clear EU added value. However, the added value is mainly about provision of information and data to countries, the scenario does not require countries to take action on the data nor does it clearly give new information to users about quality assurance in other countries’ systems.

**Considerations on likelihood and acceptance of this development**

Collection of comparable data from countries against all the indicators would require quite a lot of resources. Firstly all countries use only some of the indicators in a systematic manner. Secondly the sources of data for these indicators and the underpinning definitions certainly vary greatly. It is likely that the approach to the use of the indicators would have to be
progressive as countries are more likely to have the data for some of the indicators rather than others.

Given the investment that would be needed for countries to improve comparability of data against the EQAVET indicators, this scenario is not very likely.

Furthermore, the scenario was not perceived as desirable by most interviewees. In particular people underlined the fact that this scenario would create a certain ranking of countries which was not the initial idea behind EQAVET.

Scenario 3: Peer-review of quality assurance among Member States

**Description:** As part of this scenario, the compatibility of national quality assurance systems with EQAVET is reviewed through a process of peer-review.

Countries volunteer for their system to be peer-reviewed. The EQAVET descriptors and indicators are used as basis for peer-reviewed countries to explain the existing quality assurance mechanisms in the system.

Peer-reviewers are representatives of other countries and experts. There is a defined methodology for the peer-review and a clear set of guidelines to follow for the country undergoing the review and the peer-reviewers.

The result of the peer-review is an assessment and a set of recommendations to the country being peer-reviewed.

Impact on promoting and monitoring continuous improvement in countries’ VET systems

Similar to scenario 1, countries can draw upon inspiration from EQAVET and from peer learning to improve their own systems. However, the peer review process with its clear methodology, structured approach and involvement of renowned experts is likely to have a greater impact than other, more open, forms of mutual learning.

This scenario assumes that countries would be interested and willing to undergo such peer-review process. It also relies to a large extent on the availability of a sufficiently large group of credible experts at European level.

Reach to VET providers

This scenario does not have any impact on the current situation regarding reach to VET providers.

Visibility of EQAVET

The methodology for the peer-review would be based on the EQAVET descriptors making these a concrete tool for countries’ to use. This development would therefore enhance the visibility of EQAVET by showing how countries’ systems compare to it.

Complementarity with other European instruments

This scenario has no new impact on the comparability of EQAVET with other EU instruments.

Added value of European action compared to national action

System level peer-review of this form, based on international exchange cannot be achieved through national action alone.

The peer-review would improve the transparency of national quality assurance arrangements across the European countries.

Considerations on likelihood and acceptance of this development
To be successful the peer-review would have to provide clear added value to the countries undergoing the review. The added value would depend on the rigour of the methodology used and the quality of interactions as well as of recommendations. It would be important to develop recommendations that are feasible given the countries’ context. The methodology would need to take into account the different stages of countries’ development of quality assurance mechanisms.

There would be a need for engagement and commitment of both the peer-reviewing countries and the countries being peer-reviewed. The expertise, openness and constructive attitude of peer-reviewers would be crucial to the quality of the process. However, it may also be difficult to gain a full insight into a Member States’ system without extensive knowledge and considerable time in order for the peer-reviewers to provide adequately informed recommendations.

If the process is to be credible it could be envisaged that the peer-reviewed countries have to explain how they can translate the recommendations into practice (or at least some of them). Otherwise it is likely that the process would be another form of peer-learning and exchange as already currently in place.

In general this scenario was considered as beneficial by the interviewees who appreciate the potential benefits of the peer-review process. However, the extent to which there would be genuine interest from the side of the countries to have their quality assurance arrangements peer-reviewed remains unclear.

### Scenario 4: European peer-review among VET providers

**Description:** This scenario is about aligning the existing structures and methodologies for peer-review processes among VET providers (not the systems) with EQAVET to ensure quality assurance aspects are included.

A European methodology and procedure for peer-review in VET[^33] is currently used in transnational peer reviews among VET providers of different countries and also by some countries in national level peer reviews (e.g. Finland). This methodology could be reviewed and amended to follow the EQAVET descriptors at provider level and/or the EQAVET building blocks for VET providers.

VET providers would volunteer to take part in the peer-review; their quality assurance would be reviewed by VET providers/ experts from other countries. The peer-review would result in an assessment (for example in terms of strengths and weaknesses) and a set of feasible recommendations. The peer-reviews could have a thematic focus: focusing on mobility, cooperation with businesses, teaching and learning etc.

The process could be managed by a central secretariat in cooperation with the NRPs and the national Lifelong Learning Programme agencies (similarly to the management of study visits under the LLP).

**Note:** This scenario could be linked to the scenario number 7 related to the access to the Lifelong learning programme (its successor) or to the scenario number 5 on issuing an EQAVET label.

### Impact on promoting and monitoring continuous improvement in countries’ VET systems

This scenario would ensure impact on the ground, at provider level, where quality assurance needs to be ultimately implemented; and high quality VET needs to be available to learners. It would ensure the inclusion of EQAVET features in existing peer review procedures and

[^33]: See the results of the project Peer Review in European VET [http://www-peer-review-education.net/](http://www-peer-review-education.net/)
thus contribute to the coherence of actual instruments to enhance transnational cooperation, exchange and learning in VET.

**Reach to VET providers**

This type of actions has the potential to strongly enhance the visibility of EQAVET among VET providers if it succeeds in generating sufficient interest and involvement from the side of providers.

**Visibility of EQAVET**

This approach would be based on the EQAVET cycle, descriptors and possibly the EQAVET building blocks for VET providers. In the peer-review process EQAVET would be a set of principles against which providers’ practice is assessed. The resulting assessment and recommendations would be clearly linked to EQAVET thus enhancing the visibility of this instrument.

**Complementarity with other European instruments**

This measure alone would have no specific effect on the complementarity between EQAVET and other instruments.

**Added value of European action compared to national action**

Several countries are already using peer-review among VET providers as an element of quality assurance and quality improvement\(^ {34} \). This scenario would bring a transnational dimension to the process supporting transnational partnerships among VET providers. The added value compared to nationally organised peer-reviews would be clearer if there is a European objective such as the link to the Lifelong learning programme (its successor) or to a European label.

The added value would be greater in those countries where such peer-review processes at national level do not exist yet.

**Considerations on likelihood and acceptance of this development**

The success of this scenario will depend on:

- The extent to which providers are interested in taking part in such a process. To ensure their interest there has to be a clear added value for them and a concrete ‘reward’ in case of a positive assessment;
- The capacity of the peer-reviews to provide well informed assessment and recommendations. The process has to be critical but at the same time constructive. This requires a specific set of competence (including language skills) from the side of the peer-reviewers and it is not guaranteed that everyone could take on this role.

To reach a sufficient scale (in terms of number of providers reached) the process would require significantly higher investment than the other scenarios.

As already said above, the persons interviewed were in general positive about the benefits of the peer-review method.

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\(^{34}\) ICF GHK (2013) *Evaluation of the implementation of EQAVET*
Scenario 5: EQAVET label to VET providers

**Description:** This scenario is about awarding a label to those providers who meet a set of criteria that are clearly related to the use of EQAVET.

The European Commission designs a set of criteria for the award of EQAVET label to VET providers. These criteria would be linked to the existence of internal quality assurance that is clearly related to the EQAVET principles (cycle, descriptors, and indicators).

The VET providers apply for the label voluntarily. The award process could be:
- Based on the review of an application form against a set of criteria (by two reviewers or three in case of divergent views);
- Based on a peer-review process as described in the scenario 4.

In any case there is a need for:
- Communicating about the label to the providers;
- A body for management of the application process and the award process; and
- List or a searchable centralised database of providers that were awarded the label.

A decision would need to be made whether the label is awarded only for a certain duration (possibly renewed in case of positive assessment) or whether its award is not limited in time.

**Alternative:** The label is not awarded at European level but it is managed in a decentralised manner. Two options are possible:
- Either countries draw up criteria which have to be explicitly linked to EQAVET but also aligned with the national situation and develop the award procedure; or
- The criteria and the awarding procedure would be defined at EU level.

There are common European guidelines for the award of the label and the suitability of countries’ methodologies is approved at European level. As a result the labels are awarded based on somewhat different criteria from one country to another but on the other hand they are aligned with the national context.

**Impact on promoting and monitoring continuous improvement in countries’ VET systems**

Labels are helpful to create trust and promote quality standards to learners (and those who purchase training – e.g. companies). They can give a competitive advantage to a provider. At the same time, labels are an instrument to promote quality assurance standards or instruments and enhance their visibility.

When reflecting on the possibility of a European label or accreditation the extent to which this has the potential to give providers such competitive advantage or whether it can create pressure from the side of other bodies needs to be considered. An EQAVET label/ accreditation would compete with other widely used and recognised initiatives; either promoted on national/regional level, or issued by a certifying body (such as ISO).

The question of whether an EQAVET label would provide added value over existing certifications (unless it is for example linked to the successor of the Lifelong learning programme) should be considered.

**Reach to VET providers**

This scenario has a strong potential to bring EQAVET to VET providers if it succeeds in generating sufficient demand for the label from the side of providers.

**Visibility of EQAVET**
This scenario strongly enhances the visibility of EQAVET. EQAVET is the basis for the award of the label and the award of the label ‘materialises’ EQAVET in the eyes of VET providers.

**Complementarity with other European instruments**

This scenario alone has no impact on the complementarity with other instruments.

**Added value of European action compared to national action**

The label introduces transparency to the implementation of EQAVET across the countries. It signals which providers have in place quality assurance procedures that are in line with EQAVET.

**Considerations on likelihood and acceptance of this development**

There is likely to be resistance from the side of Member States to the idea of issuing a European label to education and training providers. On the other hand an equivalent measure already exists in higher education with the use of the ECTS label.

Furthermore, the implementation of this approach implies certain administrative costs for the management of the process and the decisions about the award.

In order for this development to be successful there is a need to create demand from the side of providers. The benefits should be clear and clearly communicated to them. The added value for the providers could be:

- Attractiveness for learners; and
- Visibility at European level and enhanced possibilities for creating partnerships.

The credibility of the label with providers will very much depend on the method used to award it. Purely ‘paper-based’ approach is less credible than a method that uses also visits or peer-review. On the other hand the costs of a more rigorous method are significantly higher.

Furthermore, if there is high interest in the label its management would become very heavy (assessment of numerous applications).

The interviewees were in general sceptical about the feasibility of issuing an EQAVET label and of the added value compared to the administrative costs. Interviews also noted that there is already a certain number of national labels and certificates and that an additional label would actually hinder transparency rather than support it.
Scenario 6: Organise a prize to recognise quality assurance improvement efforts

**Description:** Rather than a label, the European Commission awards a prize for VET providers to recognise their efforts in terms of quality assurance. The prize is awarded annually.

Criteria for the prize are defined to capture excellence (while the label is rather about compliance). As the prize rewards excellence it is possible to relate it to achievement of positive results – evidence of improved quality of outcomes.

Like for the label there is a need for:

- A methodology;
- Communication towards providers to encourage application;
- Process for management of applications.

The process for applications could be similar to for example the European Charlemagne Youth Prize that rewards youth initiatives supporting development of Europe. The Lifelong learning programme (successor) national agencies and/ or the NRPs could communicate about the prize and the application deadlines. The first step would be a national selection by national juries (participation of national agencies and NRPs). Only a smaller number of selected candidates are assessed by the European jury. There is an award ceremony attended by high level officials in addition to the nominees.

**Impact on promoting and monitoring continuous improvement in countries’ VET systems**

The prize would create attention for the idea of excellence in VET. Implicitly, this is linked to the quality of outcomes of VET. The quality criteria the prize is based upon should be communicated, since this provides an opportunity to promote the idea of quality standards in VET.

**Reach to VET providers**

Compared to the other options, this approach has strong potential to make EQAVET more visible among VET providers if it is widely communicated about.

**Visibility of EQAVET**

The prize would be based on the EQAVET cycle, descriptors and/ or building blocks for VET providers thus supporting the visibility of EQAVET. Furthermore the name of the award would clearly refer to EQAVET also making it more visible.

**Complementarity with other European instruments**

This approach alone has no impact on the complementarity with other European instruments.

**Added value of European action compared to national action**

The prize would recognise providers’ efforts in quality assurance. At European level it could therefore have a greater prestige than a national prize only however that would depend on the way the prize is awarded and communicated about. Furthermore some national prizes are already well established in which case they may be preferred by the providers. This prize would give the providers nominated European visibility as opposed to national awards.

**Considerations on likelihood and acceptance of this development**

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As this development is about a competition it should have the capacity to reach out to the best performers. The process of nominations and applications should have the capacity to identify and attract those providers across Europe who achieves best results in this area.

A clear challenge for a European prize in this area is that providers’ quality assurance arrangements differ greatly from one country to another. In some countries quality assurance at provider level is being promoted for more than a decade now whilst in others it is in early stages of development. Objectively speaking the best performers would most likely be always from the same small number of countries which would have a rather negative impact on the perception of the award. The criteria could be developed to capture the ‘distance travelled’ by the provider, i.e. the change implied compared to initial situation. However the assessment of progress made could be quite difficult to put in place in practice.

The award of a prize is a one-off event that rewards efforts at a given point in time. However, the institution can display the prize for years even if the situation of the institution may have changed considerably. This was seen as problematic by some of the interviewees.

The administrative costs for awarding a European prize are potentially lower than for a label (there is likely to be less applications to process). The costs will depend on the selection process and method chosen.

Scenario 7: Make EQAVET a requirement for the future education and training programme

**Description:** Under this scenario, the European Commission conditions VET providers’ access to the Lifelong learning programme by asking them to demonstrate that they use EQAVET. This would be a condition to both send and receive learners (and teachers/trainers) in the framework of mobility exchanges and/or to receive project funding from other lines of the programme.

Alternatively, those demonstrating the use of EQAVET could get preferential treatment or additional points for their applications.

This link with the programme could take several forms:

- A label, as described in the scenario 5;
- Description of the use of EQAVET in the application form;
- Requirement for providers to give evidence of the use of EQAVET such as description of procedures in place, copies of internal documents referring to EQAVET.

VET providers could be asked to demonstrate how they use EQAVET applied to the specific situation for which they are applying for funding – i.e. mobility or project management.

**Impact on promoting and monitoring continuous improvement in countries’ VET systems**

This use of EQAVET would on one hand encourage VET providers to develop quality assurance procedures. It would be a pull factor for use of EQAVET. On the other hand it would improve the quality assurance related to the programme use. Hence, a considerable impact is expected from this scenario - not only on quality assurance in general, but on the promotion of EQAVET in particular.

**Reach to VET providers**

This approach would strongly enhance the awareness about EQAVET of VET providers. It would encourage use of EQAVET at provider level.

**Visibility of EQAVET**

The programme application requirements would refer to the use of EQAVET thus improving the visibility of the instrument. There would be a template requiring providers to follow a
certain format when describing their processes. This template would be based on EQAVET and would make EQAVET a concrete instrument in the eyes of providers.

**Complementarity with other European instruments**

This approach alone has no impact on the complementarity with other European instruments.

**Added value of European action compared to national action**

This scenario links the European programme in the field of education and training with the European approach to quality assurance in VET, which is EQAVET. The same criteria would be used across the programme and the countries. This would not be achieved using national quality assurance arrangements.

**Considerations on likelihood and acceptance of this development**

As said earlier this approach would create added value not only for the use of EQAVET and promotion of quality assurance towards providers but it would also improve quality assurance of the use of the lifelong learning programme (its successor) funding. The interviewees underlined that it is acceptable for the funding authority to define the rules under which the funding is allocated, including quality assurance requirements.

One challenge for this approach would be not to set the requirements and the criteria too high. Placing the bar too high would negatively affect providers’ capacity to participate in the programme and would be counter-productive. Another challenge would be to ensure that this approach influences the practice and does not remain limited to describing the ideal situation on paper.

Developing a procedure that is not too restrictive and not too burdensome for administration could be a challenge.

Like for the EQAVET prize, VET providers from countries with quality assurance systems that are already related to EQAVET would be privileged compared to others.

At the time of writing this report, there is likely to be too little awareness of and understanding of EQAVET at provider level in order for this scenario to be feasible in short term.
Scenario 8 – Align EQAVET with European quality assurance arrangements in higher education

Description: This scenario would consist of development of an explanatory guidance on complementarity between EQAVET and the European Standards and Guidelines - ESG\(^{36}\). In the long run it could lead to the revision of EQAVET Annexes as well as of revisions of quality assurance in higher education in order to better align the two instruments. There is a number of commonalities but also of differences between EQAVET and ESG. The main commonalities are:

- Both instruments refer to internal and external review;
- Both instruments refer to stakeholder involvement and student feedback;
- Teaching and learning is a core element of both initiatives;
- Staff qualifications are highlighted;

On the other hand there are several structural differences:

- ESG is articulated around standards for internal and external review while EQAVET does not provide separate descriptors for these two processes. In this sense ESG is more directive giving clear indications of what should be assessed by higher education institutions and what by quality assurance agencies;
- The system level dimension covered in EQAVET is missing from ESG;
- There are no indicators in ESG;
- The focus on qualifications and programmes is tackled quite differently in the two instruments and this is linked to the way in which responsibilities for qualification and programme designed are different in higher education and VET;
- The quality assurance in higher education is implemented also via a European register of quality assurance agencies. There is no such equivalent in VET and generally the external review is not done by this type of organisations.

Beyond the issue of differences in concepts and principles, there is likely to be quite a deep institutional divide between the two sectors which traditionally interact very little. Though there are developments which indicate blurring of boundaries\(^{37}\) between the two sectors there is still a long way to go to achieve mutual understanding of the two.

Impact on promoting and monitoring continuous improvement in countries’ VET systems

Explanation of complementarities between EQAVET and ESG could support strengthening of both instruments. The explanation would identify areas which are not (sufficiently) covered in each of the instruments and stakeholders representing these instruments could work on EQAVET and ESG respectively to further develop them. Progressively more convergence between quality assurance in VET and Higher Education could be expected where appropriate. Such dialogue would also progressively develop mutual understanding between representatives of the two sectors. In the long term, this could help mutual recognition of quality assurance for lifelong learning.

The existence of a common approach to quality assurance at European level could also facilitate the understanding of QA among the broader audience of people (be it learners, stakeholders but also staff in education institutions not directly dealing with quality assurance).


\(^{37}\) See for example Cedefop (2011) Vocational education and training at higher qualification levels
On the other hand, it could be questioned whether the development of a more general framework would still enable to capture the specificities of VET and Higher education.

**Reach to VET providers**

It is not clear whether this development would have a more positive impact on the reach out to VET providers than the status quo situation. It could actually have negative results as those providers already aware of EQAVET are mainly in relatively early stages of working with it. Therefore the introduction of a new framework could be confusing for them. If the scenario is mainly about development of an explanation about complementarity between EQAVET and ESG (no common framework) than the difference with status quo when it comes to reach to providers is likely to be minimal. In any case rather large scale communication efforts would be needed to explain to those already aware of ESG and EQAVET the developments.

**Visibility of EQAVET**

The visibility of EQAVET itself would be likely to diminish if the instrument promoted would be the common set of principles. However, given that the nature of EQAVET would change under this scenario the issue of EQAVET visibility would no longer be a key feature for future development.

**Complementarity with other European instruments**

The complementarity with quality assurance in higher education would be strongly supported.

**Added value of European action compared to national action**

Some countries are already merging quality assurance agencies between different sectors of education and training (Finland, Malta, French speaking Community of Belgium, Ireland). In these countries the EU added value would be low. However, elsewhere this development could encourage countries to consider better alignment of quality assurance in the two sectors.

**Considerations on likelihood and acceptance of this development**

As said above there are already commonalities between EQAVET and ESG. Development of an explanation of complementarities should therefore be feasible. In the long run the development of a common framework would very much depend on the extent to which the complementarities would develop and be understood in practice.

While it would be possible to develop a common framework at European level and the experts could agree on common principles the main question is the extent to which these principles and the commonalities would be understood and accepted on the ground.

Furthermore, the added value of a (renewed) common framework could be questioned from a perspective of the provider of education and training (including universities).

Furthermore, the issue of European governance of this approach would need to be solved. Currently both instruments are managed by a quite large group of people. However simply bringing the two groups together would create a group too large to manage. On the other hand, maintaining separate groups would likely negatively affect the actual use of the common principles which would be less concrete than the two initiatives separately. If, on the long run, it is envisaged to abandon EQAVET and ESG in favour of a common set of principles, institutional resistance is very likely. The ESG have been in existence for a certain time and have influenced national and institutional developments. Similarly EQAVET has a history now and is progressively influencing national systems. Would the stakeholders in the

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38 ENQA (2011) *Mapping the implementation and application of the ESG*
two systems be willing to abandon the frameworks which they were promoting at national level and in some cases successfully translated into national developments? Furthermore the message this would send to them would be one of lack of stability of European tools.

The process of development of consensus on these principles would be key to the success of this scenario. It would need to be based on a broad and participative consultation. However, before such consultation is launched the feasibility of reaching a consensus should be tested as it could be too early to launch this initiative in the short term.

Scenario 9 - Develop EQAVET into a more general meta-instrument for comparison of quality assurance measures

**Description:** EQAVET is also intended to be used as a meta-instrument to bridge existing national quality assurance measures or frameworks (in addition to it being used to inspire national QA measures). However, it provides rather detailed guidance, in particular in form of descriptors. These are much more detailed than the other ‘meta’ instruments analysed in this report which also have for objective to bridge or to recognise different existing quality assurance arrangements.

Furthermore as highlighted by the analysis in earlier sections, the EQAVET cycle, criteria and descriptors are not easy to compare with existing national quality assurance measures.

For EQAVET to become more easily applicable as a meta-framework, the content of EQAVET Annexes could be reviewed to refocus it on those aspects that are directly relevant for explicit quality assurance measures. The cycle, descriptors and indicators could be used as further guidelines on the different aspects of quality assurance.

EQAVET could define a core set of principles for:

- Internal review of providers;
- External review of providers; and
- System-level evaluation and review; and
- Design and award of qualifications (system level measures).

The distinction between external and internal review would also bring greater comparability with ESG.

The cycle could be described within each of these facets of quality assurance. The system-level and provider level descriptors could be reviewed and simplified to fit into the relevant aspects of the framework.

**Impact on promoting and monitoring continuous improvement in countries’ VET systems**

This scenario would allow for EQAVET to better bridge and recognise different existing quality assurance arrangements. This does not mean that EQAVET should be designed as the lowest common denominator. On the contrary, it would recognise what has been done already and provide motivation for systems and providers to enhance their approaches and move towards excellence by embedding aspects that go beyond the most commonly present features in quality assurance.

**Reach to VET providers**

The primary effect of this development would not be on VET providers as such. It would rather be targeted at those in charge of designing quality assurance measures in VET systems. The effect on VET providers would be indirect through the national take up of EQAVET as in the status quo situation.

However, like with the previous scenario there is a risk that radically changing the content of EQAVET would confuse those already familiar with the instrument. Therefore the change
would need to build on those principles already in EQAVET and it would need to be widely communicated and explained.

Visibility of EQAVET
This approach would aim to make it easier to cross-reference EQAVET with existing quality assurance measures. This would make it easier for those in charge of quality assurance measures to clarify how they refer to EQAVET and to benchmark their systems to EQAVET.

Complementarity with other European instruments
The extent to which this approach would positively affect comparability with other European instruments would depend on the specific changes made to the content. Some dimensions could be strengthened in EQAVET making it more comparable with the ESG. If the focus on outcomes and qualifications is enhanced this could support complementarity with EQF, ECVET and validation of non-formal and informal learning.

Added value of European action compared to national action
The instrument would still contain elements which would support innovation of quality assurance measures in EU countries. It would also support transparency of comparability of these measures by making it easier to reference quality assurance instruments.

Considerations on likelihood and acceptance of this development
The review of the principles content of EQAVET would be technically feasible but it could raise resistance from the side of Member States, in particular those that used EQAVET in its current form to support developments at national level.

This analysis shows that it is in some cases difficult to compare existing quality assurance measures directly with EQAVET. A framework which is more similar to the structure of national quality assurance measures could be better accepted as a tool to present countries’ national quality assurance frameworks’ measures. However, this use of the revised framework would need to be explained and promoted. Current discussions in the EQAVET network (as well as the evaluation of EQAVET implementation39) show that countries mainly focus on using EQAVET to inspire national QA developments. The transparency dimension of EQAVET is currently under-developed.

The relationship between the reviewed framework and EQAVET as currently existing would need to be well demonstrated and explained to ensure acceptance by key stakeholders.

39 ICF GHK (2013) Evaluation of the implementation of EQAVET for the European Commission DG EAC
5 Conclusions

This study was commissioned to compare quality assurance measures in CVET with EQAVET and to propose a set of forward looking options for future development of EQAVET.

The comparative analysis of existing quality assurance measures in CVET in selected countries with EQAVET leads to several conclusions that concern the core features of EQAVET:

- In practice, the distinction between system level and provider level quality assurance measures (which is embedded in EQAVET) is not straight-forward to apply. In particular in CVET a lot of quality assurance measures that are designed at the level of the system concern what individual providers do or should do. These are for example measures concerning accreditation, inspection or certification of providers.

- The EQAVET descriptors give an indication of what EQAVET understands as system-level quality assurance. The analysis of existing quality assurance measures shows that most of these system-level features are not covered by what countries call explicitly quality assurance. These features may well be covered in countries’ VET systems but they do not form part of what is designated as quality assurance measures. While EQAVET is based on a general vision of how quality should be aimed at in VET systems and VET policies, countries’ existing quality assurance measures (in particular in CVET as studied here) are often more specific and concern precise elements of VET systems. In addition to the quality assurance measures, there are other practices in countries’ VET systems which can well ensure the quality of VET but which are not called/ designated as quality assurance. This difference between measures that are called quality assurance and those measures that do ensure quality of VET systems but are not called quality assurance makes it difficult to compare EQAVET with most countries’ VET systems QA measures.

- It is easier to compare provider-level EQAVET descriptors with existing quality assurance measures as both concern processes that need to be in place within an institution to ensure high-quality of learning. The logic embedded in EQAVET concerning VET-provider level is more comparable to the logic of quality assurance measure like, for instance, ISO.

On system level, the analysis showed that countries undertake efforts to ensure the quality of their CVET system and publicly funded CVET provision. The measures that countries explicitly designate as quality assurance in CVET are primarily about three things:

- Minimising risk of misuse of public funding: Minimising the chances that public money is spent on funding providers that do not have the capacity to deliver training that meets at least minimum quality requirements in terms of the process of training (training programme, staff, equipment, etc.) and more rarely outcomes (completion rates or even employment insertion);

- Ensuring the coherence of the qualifications system and of qualifications awarded; e.g. maximising chances that when a person is awarded a qualification ‘A’ that is nationally recognised (i.e. it is supposed to have be equivalent independent of where the learning process took place), his or her knowledge, skills and competence are comparable to a person awarded the same qualification in another region or provider; and

- Building trust and confidence in the system: Putting in place mechanisms that ensure the qualifications (and related training) are relevant to the labour market. This is typically part of quality assurance measures around qualification design. However, these measures are not always explicitly designated as quality assurance.

These issues can also be found in quality assurance measures in IVET but in many countries they are more prominent in CVET which is less regulated and often characterised by a much broader range of providers.
On the other hand, the systematic planning and management process which is behind the EQAVET cycle at system level is not clearly apparent from the national requirements for quality assurance.

The use of indicators as part of quality assurance measures at system level is not systematic in CVET. Though indicators are used in these countries they are not systematically part of those measures that are called quality assurance. However, in some countries quality assurance measures in CVET, such as accreditation, are underpinned by an indicator system.

On provider level, the analysis showed that all quality assurance measures analysed display some similarities to EQAVET but none of them is fully comparable to EQAVET. The cycle logic can be identified in many (though not all) quality assurance measures but the cycle is not always comparable to the EQAVET cycle. Rather than the management cycle of planning-implementation-evaluation-review (which is behind EQAVET) some quality assurance measures are built around the learner’s journey – from handling requests to transition to the labour market. The processes behind certain EQAVET descriptors are frequently also present in CVET quality assurance measures. This is mainly the case of descriptors about existence of internal quality assurance measures and those that concern staff training. On the other hand some of the EQAVET descriptors have not been identified in any or only very few of the analysed quality assurance measures. These are the descriptors about:

- Staff involvement in quality assurance (this is not explicitly required in most cases);
- Cooperation with other providers;
- Existence of early warning systems;
- Availability of review results (this is more often tackled at system level than at provider level);
- Existence of action plans based on review results.

Some processes that are present in several of the analysed quality assurance instruments are not present in EQAVET, namely:

- The reference to learner’s journey and how this is managed by the education and training institution and linked to that the ‘customer-focus’;
- EQAVET makes no reference to the adequacy of the infrastructure and equipment while many quality assurance measures do cover this aspect as one of the key criteria for verification;
- Some quality assurance measures also make reference to the provision of information and guidance.

The fact that EQAVET differentiates between system-level and provider-level measures stems from the understanding that, in order to achieve quality in VET at national level, there needs to be a more global reflection on quality assurance than what is required from individual providers. Some processes need to be in place at system level. This study shows that these processes are rarely embedded in what is called quality assurance.

The analysis of possible future evolutions of EQAVET shows a range of options to strengthen the implementation of the currently existing EQAVET framework. These options are in particular looking at how the current framework could be used more concretely to enhance implementation at national and provider level. The analysis also identifies options that imply changes to the current framework as embedded in the Annexes of the EQAVET recommendation.

The analysis of future scenarios on EQAVET discusses the following main forms of use of the EQAVET framework:

- Continue mutual learning and exchange in its current form (status quo);
- Use the EQAVET indicators as a framework to collect data on performance of VET systems;
- Use the framework for peer-review of quality assurance systems;
Study on Quality Assurance in Continuous VET and on future development of EQAVET

- Use is for peer-review of VET providers;
- Issue a label on compliance with EQAVET to VET providers using the descriptors as a standard/criteria;
- Organise a prize on quality assurance using the EQAVET provider-level descriptors as a standard;
- Make use of EQAVET a requirement for participation in the future programme replacing the Lifelong learning programme.

While the first three options are more about the use of EQAVET at the level of Member States and VET systems the other ones are more about its use among providers.

It also discusses the possibility for the EQAVET framework to evolve. Two options are considered:

- Making EQAVET and the European Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance in higher education more convergent; or
- Developing EQAVET into a meta-framework which contains less key principles than the current descriptors and indicators but distinguishes more clearly between aspects of quality assurance that are more comparable to how quality assurance is structured nationally.

It should be noted that the different scenarios are not mutually exclusive and could be combined.

For each scenario the report discusses their possible implications and likelihood. However, a more in-depth assessment would be needed to assess the respective strengths and weaknesses of a smaller set of options if these are to be considered for future decisions. The costs and potential benefits of the different options would need to be assessed more carefully. Furthermore, the choice of alternatives will also depend on the political priorities for future development of EQAVET and these have not been taken into account in this report.
ANNEXES
Annex 1  Country Report: Austria

A1.1  Brief description of the C-VET system

The Austrian C-VET-system (continuing vocational education and training) can be mainly defined through the participants’ age (in most cases over 20) and the type of educational programmes participants have previously completed. C-VET in Austria encompasses various forms like enterprise C-VET, external, institutionalised C-VET, qualification and skills training measures as an instrument of active labour market policy and general adult education and public education.40 Various institutions are institutionally responsible:

- The Federal Government (according to the Adult Education Promotion Act), provincial governments and municipalities promote C-VET in private and non-profit C-VET institutions;
- The Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture is responsible for C-VET provided at schools and higher education (HE) institutions; unless it is within the autonomy of the HE institution;
- Universities of applied sciences are also entitled to install courses for C-VET in the specialist branches of their accredited programmes;
- Other ministries are responsible for C-VET in specific sectors (e.g. the Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management and the Federal Ministry for Health. The Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection provides continuing education and training for older workers and people with disabilities. Labour market-related skills training and qualification measures are also within the political sphere of competence of this ministry; and are provided by the Public Employment Service (PES) Austria;
- The social partners with their educational institutions (Economic Promotion Institute (Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut, WIFI) on the employer side, the Vocational Training Institute (Berufsförderungsinstitut, bfi) on the employee side and the Rural Further Education Institute (Laendliches Fortbildungsinstitut - LFI) of the Austrian Chambers of Agriculture) are (next to other C-VET providers) largely responsible for CET provision outside schools and HE institutions in Austria.42

In Austria, there is no specific law that regulates C-VET. However, the Adult Education Promotion Act (EB-FG) law lays down the authorisation of the Federal Government to promote CET (e.g. by way of subsidies to institutions or financing of innovative projects). Funds only go to institutions whose activities are non-profit. The amount of subsidy is not specified. The EB-FG law does not include any organisational specifications for C-VET.43

The Act neither interferes with programme or curriculum design; nor does it impose conditions regarding the training methods used nor staff employed; hence grants education institutions independence.

Besides the EB-FG law, a wide range of legal rules are laid down in various school, university, tax and labour market laws. A number of collective bargaining agreements, which are negotiated between representatives of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber and trade unions, also have an impact on C-VET within the framework of employment relationships. However, these provisions are not mandatory.44

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40 Cf. Tritscher-Archan S. and Nowak S., 2011, p.47
41 CET (continuing education and training): CVET is seen as a part of CET, but often referred to synonymously
42 Cf. Tritscher-Archan S. and Nowak S., 2011, p.29p
44 Cf. Tritscher-Archan S. and Nowak S., 2011, p. 29
The financing of CET depends on the type of programme that is attended and is mainly granted for participants, not for programmes or institutions. For instance, there is a series of measures (e.g. educational leave) and financial subsidies (e.g. in the form of grants and tax relief) which help support the CET institutions and cover the participants’ and companies’ expenses.\footnote{Cf. Tritscher-Archan S. and Nowak S., 2011, p. 48.}

Examples for C-VET at various institutions include:

- VET colleges (Berufsbildende höhere Schule, BHS) for people in employment (ISCED 4A);
- Foreperson courses, part-time industrial master colleges (Werkmeisterschulen) and building craftsperson schools (Bauhandwerkschulen) for people in employment (ISCED 5B);
- School leaving examinations (ISCED 2);
- CET at institutions of the social partners;
- In-company C-VET.

### A1.2 Description of quality assurance arrangements in C-VET at system level

In Austria, there is no unified system level quality assurance in C-VET. In fact, a broad range of instruments for quality assurance have been implemented in various parts of the education system. Examples include:

- Development of educational standards in general education and VET (vocationally specific core subjects in I-VET and C-VET) in order to safeguard comparability and quality of training;
- VET Quality Initiative (Qualitätsinitiative Berufsbildung, QIBB);
- In apprenticeship training, quality assurance is mainly applied within the framework of the apprenticeship-leave examination, in which an external examination committee made up of social partner representatives examines the apprentices’ performances vis-à-vis an Austrian-wide valid standard;\footnote{Ibid, p. 34}
- Higher Education: In 2012, the Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria was founded based on a new law on a Framework of Quality Assurance in Higher Education;\footnote{Cf. http://www.fhr.ac.at/}
- Academy of Continuing Education (wba) as a system for the qualification and recognition/accreditation of adult educators;
- Adult Education initiative: Quality Assurance of selected programmes for access to basic education in adult education;
- Implementation of Ö-CERT as for educational providers in adult education and C-VET.

Ö-CERT (AT-CERT) is an umbrella quality label introduced at national level in Austria. Ö-CERT serves as framework to recognise the quality of adult education providers. The aim of Ö-CERT is a mutual recognition of quality concepts (quality assurance and development) and already existing quality management systems by the ‘Länder’ (Federal States of Austria) and the Federal Republic of Austria.\footnote{Cf. Kloyber, Ch., 2012} Ö-CERT was developed by the Federal Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture in cooperation with leading Austrian experts, representatives of the nine Austrian provinces and providers of Adult education. Ö-CERT has been implemented since 1 December 2011.

Ö-CERT was developed in reaction to the existence of nine different (external) quality management systems in the federal provinces as a basis for subsidies for course participation. Aim was to reach an agreement between the nine federal provinces to provide mutual recognition of quality assurance measures in the field of adult education across the
Austrian provinces and the federal state. Ö-CERT intended to create transparency and enable recognition of the other quality management systems; in order to make participation in adult education courses with public funding in other federal provinces be easier for participants.

Another main focus of Ö-CERT is the relation of Quality Management Systems and individual funding of participants of programmes in adult education through the nine provinces. The provinces are offering individual funding for participants in adult education programmes as long as the relevant education provider is certified through Quality Management System. Until 2011 it was possible that education providers had to apply for several Quality Management Systems in different provinces to enable regional funding for participants. Ö-CERT as umbrella framework now allows the recognition of different Quality Management Systems and therefore reduces the effort for each educational provider. Education providers which have not used a Quality Management System so far are encouraged to use Ö-CERT and implement one of the accredited quality management systems.

Ö-CERT requires five types of basic prerequisites (criteria) within organisations:

- General basic requirements;
- Basic requirements concerning the organisation of the provider;
- Basic requirements concerning the offers of the provider;
- Basic requirements concerning principles of ethics and democracy;
- Basic requirements concerning quality assurance.\(^{49}\)

Moreover the providers have to confirm their quality efforts by applying one of the valid Quality Management Systems or Quality Assurance Procedures according to the Ö-CERT list. The Ö-CERT list contains ten Quality Management Systems and Quality Assurance Procedures which are all based on an external audit.\(^{50}\)

However, the nine federal provinces subscribed to the reciprocal recognition through Ö-CERT are still independent with regard to their QA system, and adult education courses can still be offered without certification by Ö-CERT. Certification by Ö-CERT can thus be called voluntary, although the interdependence between Ö-CERT and public funding for participants constitutes a strong pull-factor.

Ö-CERT targets all education providers in the field of adult education in Austria, but it is mainly focussing on nationwide education providers as previously those had most of the trouble with the differing quality management systems across regions. The Ö-CERT certificate can only be awarded to providers which are also accredited by one of the 10 quality management systems. Nevertheless more and more institutions are attracted by Ö-CERT and consider engaging themselves in terms of quality assurance.

### A1.3 Processes entailed and actors involved

The implementation of Ö-CERT was done through a long bargaining process between the Federal State and the Federal provinces. Almost one year after its foundation it is now the main aim to develop Ö-CERT as a brand and to inform potential users of Ö-CERT (education providers) and participants.

In principal the process of certification through Ö-CERT is now the following:

- **Step 1:** The education provider carries out an external audit based on one of the 10 recognised quality certificates. The existence of an external audit within a quality management system is the most important criterion and prerequisite to be recognised by Ö-CERT. Moreover, the respective certificate has to be valid for four years. The list of


\(^{50}\) ÖNORM EN ISO 9001:2008 and 29990:2010; EFQM; LQW; QVB; EduQua; ÖÖ-EBQS; CERT-NÖ; S-QS; wien-cert.
quality management systems that are recognised by Ö-CERT is decided on by the
steering committee.

- **Step 2:** Ö-Cert checks if the education provider fulfils the basic requirements. If they are
  fulfilled, the respective education provider will be registered as one of the quality
  providers of adult education in Austria and receive Ö-CERT.
- **Step 3:** The documentation and registration process of Ö-CERT is done by the Ö-CERT
  office, where approximately 2 persons are working full-time.

The steering committee consists of representatives from the nine provinces and of four
representatives from the Federal Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture. The steering
committees’ tasks are:

- Updating the list of recognized quality management systems and quality assurance
  procedures in accordance with the criteria for the recognition of quality management
  systems and quality assurance procedures within Ö-CERT;
- Selection of the members of the accreditation group;
- Coordination of public relations;
- Compilation of internal regulations (for the steering committee and the accreditation
  group).

### A1.4 Evolutions and trends

Ö-CERT was implemented in December 2011; a first evaluation is planned for 2013. To
date, 114 adult education institutions obtained the Ö-CERT certificate.51

### A1.5 Comparison with EQAVET

Ö-CERT recognises quality management systems that are implemented on provider level.
These quality management systems all build on a quality cycle similar to the EQAVET cycle
of planning, implementation, evaluation and review.

In terms of indicators used in EQAVET and in the Ö-CERT QA system, a direct comparison
cannot be made, because Ö-CERT did not develop its own indicators, but relies on the
indicators as formulated by the acknowledged QA measures.

However, the Ö-CERT approach is compatible with the following EQAVET ‘building blocks’
for VET systems:

- Recognise and build on existing internal arrangements;
- **Provide clarity over funding.**

Moreover, it also put emphasis on self-assessment of providers; e.g. of aspects such as
reflecting about the own institution; defining the status-quo of quality assurance activities
within the institution; identifying possibilities for improvement and development; developing
the basics for quality assurance.

The table below shows whether and how the entire Austrian system of C-VET (Ö-CERT plus
other measures) corresponds to the EQAVET system level descriptors for quality assurance.

**Table A1.1 EQAVET system level descriptors and take-up in QA on system level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning</th>
<th>EQAVET system level descriptors and take-up in QA on system level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goals/objectives of VET are described for the medium and long terms, and linked to European goals</td>
<td>Strategic objectives, benchmarks and action lines are described within the lifelong learning strategy.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The relevant stakeholders participate in setting VET goals and objectives at the different levels</td>
<td>Not as part of the QA system, but in general stakeholders participate in setting goals and objectives at different levels of the VET system. However, as part of Ö-CERT, stakeholders on national and federal level have developed a joint strategy.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.bmukk.gv.at/medienpool/20916/lilarbeitspapier_ebook_gross.pdf">http://www.bmukk.gv.at/medienpool/20916/lilarbeitspapier_ebook_gross.pdf</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targets are established and monitored through specific indicators (success criteria)</td>
<td>Not as part of the QA system, but as part of the Austrian lifelong learning strategy.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.dukannstwas.at/">http://www.dukannstwas.at/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanisms and procedures have been established to identify training needs</td>
<td>Not within Ö-CERT, but within the VET system (manly VET).</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>An information policy has been devised to ensure optimum disclosure of quality results/outcomes subject to national/ regional data protection requirements</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards and guidelines for recognition, validation and certification of competences of individuals have been defined</td>
<td>Not within Ö-CERT, but several pilot projects are ongoing.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.dukannstwas.at/">http://www.dukannstwas.at/</a>; &quot;You have competences&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implementation</strong></td>
<td>Ö-CERT has been implemented based on an agreement between the Federal Ministry and the Federal States.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Implementation plans are established in cooperation with social partners, VET providers and other relevant stakeholders at the different levels</td>
<td>./</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation plans include consideration of the resources required, the capacity of the users and the tools and guidelines needed for support</td>
<td>No - Ö-CERT accepts standards as they were in existing QA measures.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidelines and standards have been devised for implementation at different levels</td>
<td>The basic requirements of Ö-CERT contain one descriptor with regard to training needs of staff. Furthermore, wba registers teacher and trainer qualifications.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation plans include specific support towards the training of teachers and trainers</td>
<td>The EB-FG law does not include any organisational specifications for C-VET.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET providers’ responsibilities in the implementation process are explicitly described and made transparent</td>
<td>Ö-CERT contains the basic requirements for C-VET providers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A national and/or regional quality assurance framework has been devised and includes guidelines and quality standards at VET-provider level to promote continuous improvement and self-regulation</td>
<td>A national and/or regional quality assurance framework has been devised and includes guidelines and quality standards at VET-provider level to promote continuous improvement and self-regulation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation</strong></td>
<td>Envisaged for Ö-CERT.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A methodology for evaluation has been devised, covering internal and external evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stakeholder involvement in the monitoring and evaluation process is agreed and clearly described</td>
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</table>
The national/regional standards and processes for improving and assuring quality are relevant and proportionate to the needs of the sector. Ö-CERT has been developed and implemented in close connection to representatives from the C-VET-sector. The sectors needs have been met.

Systems are subject to self-evaluation, internal and external review, as appropriate. For Ö-CERT only quality assurance system which contain external assessment are valid.

Early warning systems are implemented.../. Performance indicators are applied.../. Relevant, regular and coherent data collection takes place, in order to measure success and identify areas for improvement. Appropriate data collection methodologies have been devised, e.g. questionnaires and indicators/metrics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Review</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Procedures, mechanisms and instruments for undertaking reviews are defined at all levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processes are regularly reviewed and action plans for change devised. Systems are adjusted accordingly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information on the outcomes of evaluation is made publicly available</td>
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</table>

A1.6 Description of concrete quality assurances measures

A1.6.1 Name/designation: Academy of Continuing Education (wba)\(^55\)

Developer/owner/provider:
Academy of Continuing Education

Status:
Voluntary

Target group:
Teachers and Trainers

Description:
The Academy of Continuing Education, which was founded in 2007 (1\(^{st}\) February, 2007), offers an approach to recognise acquired competences of adult educators. It acknowledges prior learning results and offers guidance as regards the acquisition of missing skills.\(^56\)

Therefore, it is a voluntary system, assuring trainers and teachers based on internal assessment - self assessment and external assessment via an assessment center.

The WBA has been developed for Austria, but there are several similarities to mechanisms in other countries. Moreover, trainers from Germany or Italy have already been certified by the WBA.

\(^55\) [http://www.wba.or.at/english/about_us.php](http://www.wba.or.at/english/about_us.php)

\(^56\) Cf: [http://www.wba.or.at/english/about_us.php](http://www.wba.or.at/english/about_us.php)
Process:

The Academy of Continuing Education focuses at teachers and trainers in adult education who want to take part in a certification process of their qualifications to enhance their chances on the labour market. Suitable work fields include managerial positions in institutes of vocational and non-vocational adult education, responsibility for educational matters, planning, organising and accompanying of learning processes, teaching, counselling or librarianship. Furthermore it is also directed towards adult education institutions that want to have their offers of further education accredited by the Academy of Continuing Education.\(^57\)

Validation and recognition within the WBA is carried out along the following six steps:\(^58\)

- **Step 1:** Information and guidance;
- **Step 2:** Initial assessment;
- **Step 3:** Education and training plan;
- **Step 4:** Competence acquisition;
- **Step 5:** Certified Adult Educator qualification;
- **Step 6:** Graduate Adult Educator qualification.

In order to be awarded a wba-certificate, students have to:

- Bring along the required practical experience;
- Prove all the required competences (including Educational Theories, Social and Personal Skills and basic skills in all of the four competences related to the Academy’s four target groups);
- Take part and pass a certification workshop, a three-day assessment center including a multiple-choice-test on educational theories.

In order to be awarded the wba-diploma, students have to:

- Prove all the required competences (including Educational Theories, Social and Personal Skills and a special focus on one of the four competences related to the Academy’s four target groups);
- Write a theory-guided, work-related thesis on a subject from the field they specialise in;
- Take part and pass the final oral overall exam.\(^59\)

Two measurements are crucial within the certification process:

- **Online Portfolio:** The portfolio is filled in by the applicants themselves. It has to cover all occupations and qualifications including further education, non-formal learning etc.; evidence of which has to be provided. Afterwards, feedback from the WBA office will be given according to the WBA schema. It will be identified what kind of competences are still missing.
- **Assessment Center:** Within a three-day assessment center (‘Zertifizierungswerkstatt’) it will be determined if the information included in the portfolio are valid. Three fields are tested: Competence in the chosen focus area (e.g. guidance), social and personal competences. Moreover, applicants need to do a multiple-choice test in the field of pedagogics.

At organisational level, the following bodies carry responsibilities for the WBA:

- **Curatorship:** The curatorship is the central board within the ‘cooperative system adult education Austria’ - a common initiative to enhance quality development and professionalization of adult education in Austria. One of the main elements of the cooperative system is the WBA. The curatorship decides about exclusion and inclusion of new partners within the system.

\(^{57}\) Cf. [http://www.wba.or.at/ueber_uns/gremien.php](http://www.wba.or.at/ueber_uns/gremien.php)

\(^{58}\) Cf. Prokopp, Monika et al., 2010, page 3ff

\(^{59}\) Cf. [http://www.wba.or.at/english/about_us.php](http://www.wba.or.at/english/about_us.php)
**Steering committee**: The steering committee is responsible for the pedagogical fields within the cooperative system: wba, ‘basic principles of adult education’ and ‘educational management’. The committee steers all processes including evaluation and further development within the cooperative system.60

**Accreditation council**: The accreditation council is responsible for accrediting candidates’ competences, accrediting special courses offered by educational institutions to wba candidates and also addressing issues of quality assurance and monitoring.61

**wba office (Geschäftsstelle)**: The wba office is responsible for handling all applications of wba-students and education providers to the accreditation council. Additionally the team in the wba office conducts all organizational and administrative processes, public relations and marketing.

**Use:**

The following data on the use of wba with regard to the six steps were published:62

- **Step 1**: Information and guidance: 1266 persons registered (923 female, 343 male);
- **Step 2**: Initial assessment (no separate data);
- **Step 3**: Education and training plan (no separate data);
- **Step 4**: Competence acquisition (no separate data);
- **Step 5**: ‘Certified Adult Educator’ qualification: 502 persons have obtained the certificate;
- **Step 6**: ‘Graduate Adult Educator’ qualification: 126 persons have obtained the diploma
  - 61 wba-Diplomas, Focus educational management
  - 40 wba-Diplomas, Focus Teaching and Training, Group-leadership
  - 24 wba-Diplomas, Focus Guidance
  - 1 wba-Diploma, Focus Library system and information management

Within wba´s five year existence,

- The accreditation group has met 28 times to discuss applications;
- 31 assessment centres with three to four groups have been conducted;
- 18 final colloquia with three to nine wba-Diplomas have been conducted.

Moreover, 727 educational courses have been accredited and 129 education providers have closed a contract of quality assurance with the wba.

The wba provides a form of quality assurance for the adult education sector as a whole. wba certificates serve as a means of quality assurance for adult education professionals. The demand from candidates was much higher than originally expected and shows that a need for quality and professionalism was and still is present in this field.

The high acceptance of the wba certificate and diploma by employers in the adult education sector shows that stakeholders regard the wba-degrees as important tools for quality assurance.63

One of the wba´s main strengths is the flexible and part-time way of obtaining a certificate. It is only necessary to show what a candidate has already achieved and what other learning outcomes/competences are still needed. All competencies that have been achieved in other contexts (formally or non-formally) will be recognised. Informal competencies will be recognised when employers fill in the portfolio or when other evidence can be provided. The final recognition lies with the accreditation group.

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60 Cf. [http://www.wba.or.at/ueber_uns/gremien.php](http://www.wba.or.at/ueber_uns/gremien.php)
61 Cf. Prokopp, Monika; 2010, p. 7
62 Cf. [http://www.wba.or.at/ueber_uns/Zahlen_Daten_Fakten.php](http://www.wba.or.at/ueber_uns/Zahlen_Daten_Fakten.php) as from 22.06.2013
63 Prokopp, Monika et.al, 2010, p7f.
At the moment, it is planned to re-write the curriculum of the wba due to small changes; and to write the curriculum in a learning outcome oriented way. Moreover, it is planned to further develop the validation and recognition of non-formally acquired competences.

Comparison with EQAVET

The table below gives an overview on how main features of wba correspond to the main features of EQAVET.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use of cycle</th>
<th>Wba is not immediately based on a cyclic approach - the certificate awarded is not timely limited. However, the criteria to award certifications are regularly updated and discussed.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of descriptors</td>
<td>There are no descriptors used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of indicators / criteria</td>
<td>The certification is based on indicators.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQAVET building blocks</td>
<td>The measure relates to building block 4 on provider level – support staff training.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion:

Wba tackles a small part but nevertheless very important part of quality assurance in CVET: The qualification of trainers and teachers. Hence, it is not fully compatible to EQAVET, but can be seen as a model of how this aspect can be targeted at system level.

A1.6.2 Name/designation: EduQua

Developer/owner/provider:

SVAB - Swiss umbrella organisation for further education

Status:

Voluntary

Target group:

Adult education/CVET providers

Description:

EduQua, the Swiss label for quality assurance for adult education providers was founded in 2000. The label is based on external audits by auditors which are conducted after a first phase of self-assessment. In some Swiss cantons the EduQua label is required in order to acquire public funding, but in Austria it is voluntary.

Although eduQua has been developed in Switzerland, it is widely used in Austria and other European countries (e.g. Germany, France, Italy). The eduQua-certificate is awarded to institutions of further education and it aims at

- The development of transparency in the field of further education for customers;
- Quality assurance of further education institutions based on 22 standards and to assure continuing optimization;
- The creation of a legal basis for official decisions (e.g. funding of courses etc.).

In Austria, eduQua is one of ten recognised quality management certificates accredited by Ö-CERT.

http://www.eduqua.ch/002alc_00_fr.htm
Process:

The eduQua office is located in the SVEB (Swiss umbrella organisation for further education). Two more offices are in the Romandie and in the Tessin. SVEB is the main actor representing private and official institutions, associations and representative bodies of adult education as well as in-house training departments and personnel management. There is no separate office in Austria. A ‘supporting group’ monitors the eduQua label and the eduQua office. The supporting group consists of

- Representatives of the seco. Staatssekretariat für Wirtschaft und SVEB;
- Representatives of the EBBK, the Eidgenössischen Betrufsbildungskonferenz (German speaking Switzerland, Romandie) and one representative of the Tessin;
- Representatives of the Verband Schweizerischer Arbeitsämter (VSAA).

eduQua is based on six main criteria. Moreover, 22 standards and success factors are allocated to these six main criteria.65

- **Criterion 1:** Courses which respond to the educational demand for education and the needs of clients (market-orientation, educational objectives, content of learning, assessment of learning, evaluation of courses);
- **Criterion 2:** Information: Transparent description of courses, of the education provider and the policies (information about the education provider; information about the courses);
- **Criterion 3:** Education and training that enables, fosters and demands learning and enables successful learning (selection of participants; planning of instruction; teaching and training methods; teaching material; transfer of learning);
- **Criterion 4:** Trainers: Trainers that offer a high level of professional and methodical-didactical level (certificates, further education, feedback from learners);
- **Criterion 5:** Quality management system: Commitments are checked and fulfilled; quality development is carried out on a continuous basis (quality assurance and quality development);
- **Criterion 6:** Leadership/Management: Management, that guarantees a customer-focused, economic, efficient and effective provision of services (institutional concept and andragogical policies; leading instruments; organigram/functional diagram; infrastructure; client satisfaction in general; controlling and self-evaluation).

Use:

eduQua helps institutions in the field of adult education to organise themselves in a better way with instruments like an organigram or a mission statement. The audits which are done within eduQua help to get a better impression of the education itself. Teachers and trainers are strongly encouraged to regularly undertake further training.

eduQua has recently undergone changes after more than 10 years; a new handbook/guideline has been created, mainly to reduce bureaucracy. Moreover, three categories of eduQua have been introduced.

- Category A: Offered for institutions with less than 25,000 participants + lessons
- Category B: Offered for institutions with between 25,000 participants + lessons and 100,000 participants + lessons.
- Category C: Offered for institutions with more than 100,000 participants + lessons.

Scope/importance:

Although eduQua is being mentioned as one of the most popular QA instruments among Austrian VET-providers, there are no independent data on the number of certified VET-providers in Austria. In total, there are 1050 institutions certified by eduQua across countries.

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65 Cf. eduQua manual, 2012
(Switzerland, Austria, Germany, Italy et al.). Moreover, 7 certification authorities could be accredited.

**Comparison with EQAVET:**

The table below gives an overview on how main features of CEFORA correspond to the main features of EQAVET.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use of cycle</th>
<th>The criteria of eduQua which have been revised in 2012 should be compatible to the EQAVET cycle. In fact the eduQua criteria and the allocated standards are now designed within the same quality cycle as the EQAVET cycle.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of descriptors</td>
<td>eduQua is based on six quality criteria which relate to the EQAVET descriptors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of indicators / criteria</td>
<td>The descriptors are underpinned with indicators (standards and success factors).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| EQAVET building blocks | eduQua is compatible to five out of six EQAVET building blocks:
  - Ensure there is a management culture which is committed to quality assurance;
  - Develop approaches which reflect the providers circumstances;
  - Support a culture of self-assessment;
  - Support staff training;
  - Support stakeholder engagement. |

**Conclusion:**

eduQua seems to be fully compatible with EQAVET.

**A1.7 Sources**

**Literature:**


Websites:
EduQua website: http://www.eduqua.ch/002alc_01_en.htm
WBA website: http://www.wba.or.at/english/about_us.php

Interviews:
Interviews with five responsible persons in the following institutions
- wba-office
- eduQua Agency
- Ö-CERT Head Office
- Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture
Annex 2  Country Report: Belgium (French Community)

A2.1  Brief description of the C-VET system

In Belgium, the federal level has very limited responsibilities in the education and training field, most competences in this area lie at the level of the three communities (Dutch-speaking, French-speaking and German-speaking). C-VET in the French-speaking Community of Belgium is largely publicly funded.

As described on the EQAVET website, three distinct VET agencies have been set up in the 1980s in Belgium: FOREM (Community and Regional Office for Vocational Training), IFAPME (Regional VET Provider dedicated to management of SME and on the job training) for the French-speaking Community and SFPM for the Brussels region.

There is a variety of operators in CVET in Belgium (Fr) who are free to pursue their objectives in their training schemes, financed by a vast range of partnerships. FOREM in the French-speaking Community is aimed to help people manage their career plans and enterprises to manage their human resources. Similarly to its counterpart in Flanders (VDAB – Flemish Office for Placement and Vocational Training), FOREM is organized around a) centres directly set up and managed by FOREM, b) vocational training centres set up by FOREM jointly with enterprises and c) centres approved by FOREM. The Brussels Region has also set up its own VET agency the IBFFV (French-speaking Brussels Institute for VET), known as ‘Bruxelles Formation’.

For individuals in the French-speaking Community, FOREM Conseil offers consultancy work to help jobseekers find jobs by providing information about vacancies, vocational training with guidance, retaining or redeployment, and social and psychological assistance. For enterprises, FOREM Conseil transmits candidates’ profiles that best match the job’s qualifications required. FOREM Formation, Bruxelles Formation and IFAPME also offer vocational training for current and future personnel. However, associated VET centres are organised using their own resources, or by assistance of third party organisations, therefore acting within different circumstances between one another.

The majority (roughly 90%) of CVET provision is provided via a partnership between the three above-mentioned bodies (FOREM, Bruxelles Formation and IFAPME). FOREM is responsible for the bulk of trainees (around 40,000 per year), while the other two partners are responsible for another 10,000 trainees.

A2.2  Description of quality assurance arrangements in C-VET at system level

A2.2.1  Quality assurance framework

From the desk research and interviews, there appears to be no unified quality assurance mechanism at system level, but there are robust sub-systems of quality assurance. For example, the main CVET Agencies of the French-speaking community of Belgium are ISO 9001 certified and follows/promotes a QA system that is compatible with ISO certification. The cycles of the FOREM QA mechanisms correspond very closely to the EQAVET cycles.

Overall, the French-speaking Community has the following system-level quality assurance provisions in place:

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66 Interview with O.Francq
68 Interview with O.Francq
69 Based on information from EQAVET, Information Gathering Exercise: Belgium Fiche
In relation to **assessment, validation and recognition of the learning outcomes** is the responsibility of the Communities. In the French-speaking Community of Belgium [Belgium (Fr)], skills are formally recognised via qualifications issued in the name of the French-speaking Community.

The social partners are involved in the decision making processes regarding the assessment, validation and recognition of learning outcomes, since the social partners are represented on the management bodies of CVET training institutes.

In relation to **curricula setting**, the curricula are based on standards established at Community level. In CVET, decision making regarding curriculum development lies at the provider level, based on the Community frameworks. Curricula are based on competencies and on the National Qualification Framework (NQF). Qualifications are devised by the French-speaking Community's Qualification Agency.

In relation to **accreditation of VET providers**, the government of the French-speaking Community is responsible for the accreditation of VET providers. The social partners are represented in the management bodies of the training institutes.

In relation to **training of teachers and trainers**, the training of teachers is based on standards developed at Community level. For the training of CVET trainers, there are specific requirements established at community, regional and local level, but the picture is fragmented.

Centres for adult education are hosting training programmes for trainers of adults, increasing quality of education.

In IVET, the Inspectorate body is responsible for quality assurance. The system of inspections and school assessment has been recently reviewed to improve its efficiency. Moreover, the 2010 initiative on a ‘French-speaking service for professions and qualifications’ (Service francophone des métiers et qualifications) is currently developing job profiles and the respective training profiles (defining learning outcomes). These will be complemented by specific evaluation arrangements to assess if learning outcomes are attained in IVET establishments. While this in development, there is an open cooperation with the CVET level so that there is coherence between the QA systems in different parts of the VET system of Belgium (Fr)\(^70\).

In CVET, FOREM, the VET agency for the French-speaking Community has developed its own voluntary quality assurance system, while some training institutes have also developed their own systems (see Cefora fiche further below). Since FOREM is one of the largest players in CVET in BE (Fr), this country report focuses on the FOREM QA instrument, while the detailed fiches present QA mechanisms followed by training providers.

### A2.2.2 Basic description of the quality assurance approach

The three public VET providers in Belgium (Fr) all adhere to quality management. The overall QA strategy is described in the FOREM Quality Assurance Manual\(^71\) which outlines the broad principles of the quality assurance system followed, based on the principles of the international ISO QA mechanisms. This overall QA strategy is complemented by other documents, describing processes in more detail and offering detailed instructions on each aspect of the QA mechanism.

FOREM's QA mechanism is built upon four phases of: planning, implementation, evaluation and review. Briefly:

\(^70\) Interview with J. Soblet

\(^71\) Le Forem, Manuel Qualité, Révision n°15 du 1er juin 2012
Planning: In terms of planning, a Business Plan is developed twice a year. Based on the Business Plan, the management team establishes, in measurable terms, general and specific objectives setting the framework for the FOREM Formation for the next six months. These goals are reflected in several Action Plans (PAP), each unit being responsible for the implementation and monitoring of their respective PAP.

Implementation: Planning is followed by the implementation phase. A monitoring database is updated on a monthly basis illustrating key indicators related to the activities of FOREM Formation. These indicators are related to training, integration of trainees, trainee satisfaction, human resource development inside FOREM Formation, as well as budgetary and financial aspects of the organisation.

Evaluation: Evaluation of the system takes place twice a year, whereby all aspects of the training provision and competence management offered by FOREM are assessed. FOREM staff at all levels is assessed (management, regional staff, staff in individual offices and in FOREM training centres). The system also has an inspection element. Inspection is done by FOREM trainers. Roughly one third of FOREM training is provided by external providers. These external providers are evaluated by FOREM staff who are trainers. FOREM also carries out internal audits of all its local training centres once a year.

Review: Based on the results of the evaluation, on the internal audit reports, on an analysis of client satisfaction and other elements, the system is then reviewed every 6 months. The Quality Manual is now in its 15th revision (effective from 1 June 2012).

A2.3 Describe the processes entailed and the actors involved

FOREM Training (FOREM Formation) has two pillars of activity:

- **Training for jobseekers and for employees:** There are processes in place to receive unemployed trainees, train them, and help them improve their job search skills and employability. Each trainee is followed during the training and after, to assess his/her satisfaction. In what concerns workers, training requests from businesses are analysed in order for training to best meet the company’s needs

- **Recognition of competences:** One of FOREM’s missions is to help individuals recognise and manage their competences. In this context, FOREM offers various tools for persons wishing to verify or validate their professional skills (through validation of competences, competence screening, ReCaF - Recognition of Skills Acquired through Training\(^{72}\), etc.)

The QA mechanism of FOREM is based on five types of processes and there are descriptors attached and described in detail in relation to each of these five types of processes:

- **Processes focused on the clients.** FOREM clients are jobseekers, individual employees and enterprises. FOREM describes processes and descriptors of how to ensure client satisfaction and how to assess client satisfaction, both in terms of training offered and in terms of help in the recognition of competences.

- **Processes focused on the training products.** Descriptors of quality here are provided regularly to the FOREM training centres and concern the content of training modules in terms of target group, pre-requisites, duration, learning outcomes, and “savoir-etre” (knowing how to be, i.e. soft skills).

- **Processes focused on its teams of trainers.** Descriptors of quality have been developed for the initial training and the continuous training of trainers, for the regular

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assessments of trainers, for the validation of their existing aptitudes/competences and for the valorisation and best use of sub-contractors and external training providers.

- **Processes focused on resources.** Processes and descriptors here are how to procure training materials, equipment and other products, ICT matters, energy consumption issues etc.)

- **Processes focused on management arrangements.** Management tools are put in place to ensure the coherence between the tools to implement FOREM policy between the central headquarters and the training centers distributed in the regional directions.

### A2.4 Evolutions and trends

The Quality Policy adopted by FOREM (in fact, adopted by all three public VET providers in Belgium\(^{73}\)) has at its heart the needs of its customers, whether these are job seekers, workers, teachers or CVET students and this is what motivates the continuous improvement of the agency. As described in the Quality Manual, the means through which FOREM strives to constantly improve its management and quality system are:

- Modern management;
- Teams of well performing and motivated trainers;
- Effective partnerships;
- Adequate material resources;
- Suitable marketing;
- Organisation of training and management skills meeting the requirements of ISO 9001\(^{74}\).

This continuous evolution, with the QA system being reviewed every 6 months, leads to continuous improvement and upgrading of the quality of CVET being offered by the three public VET providers in Belgium\(^{75}\).

### A2.5 Comparison with EQAVET

A direct comparison can be made between the FOREM QA system which is guided by ISO principles and the EQAVET cycles of planning, implementation, evaluation and review.

There is evidence that the FOREM quality assurance process takes into account the results from the phases of evaluation and review. This happens twice a year, when the results of evaluations are fed into the quality manual updating it, and once a year when planning for the next phase takes place.

In terms of the descriptors used in EQAVET and in the FOREM QA system, it can be said that the descriptors are comparable because they follow similar QA principles.

In terms of indicators used in EQAVET and in the FOREM QA system, a direct comparison cannot be made, because the EQAVET indicators concern the VET system as a whole, while the FOREM indicators are linked to the very specific QA processes followed internally in the organisation.

The FOREM approach is also compatible with most of the EQAVET 'building blocks' for VET providers and especially with the following aspects:

- Management culture (FOREM emphasises the role of management and quality in management)
- Self-assessment (FOREM's approach puts emphasis on self-assessment of aspects such as learning and teaching, management and administration, institutional ethos and

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\(^{73}\) In Belgium

\(^{74}\) FOREM Quality Manual

\(^{75}\) In Belgium
strategic planning, infrastructure and financial resources, quality assurance measures focusing on teachers/trainers and teaching and learning delivery)

- Use of data and feedback.

The table below shows whether and how the Belgian (FR) system of C-VET corresponds to the EQAVET system level descriptors for quality assurance.

Table A2.1 EQAVET system level descriptors and take-up in QA on system level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goals/objectives of VET are described for the medium and long terms, and linked to European goals</td>
<td>Both general and specific goals/objectives are regularly reviewed (twice a year) and defined for the next 6 months. The overall QA strategy is furthermore described in the FOREM Quality Assurance Manual which outlines the broad principles of the quality assurance system followed, based on the principles of the international ISO QA mechanisms. The cycles of the FOREM QA mechanisms correspond very closely to the EQAVET cycles. However, no clear evidence is found across the report on the extent to which these objectives are to European goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The relevant stakeholders participate in setting VET goals and objectives at the different levels</td>
<td>The three public VET providers (FOREM, IFAPME and Bruxelles Formation) all adhere to quality management as defined by FOREM. In particular, these goals are reflected in several Action Plans (PAP) with each organisational unit being responsible for the implementation and monitoring of their respective PAP that they develop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targets are established and monitored through specific indicators (success criteria)</td>
<td>NA. In terms of indicators used in EQAVET and in the FOREM QA system, a direct comparison cannot be made, because the EQAVET indicators concern the VET system as a whole, while the FOREM indicators are linked to the very specific QA processes followed internally in the organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanisms and procedures have been established to identify training needs</td>
<td>The Quality Manual issued by FOREM sets priorities and means relating to the organisation of training and management skills meeting the requirements of ISO 9001. In the framework of the action FOREM training, there are processes in place to receive unemployed trainees, train them, and help them improve their job search skills and employability. Each trainee is followed during the training and after, to assess his/her satisfaction. In what concerns workers, training requests from businesses are analysed in order for training to best meet the company’s needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An information policy has been devised to ensure optimum disclosure of quality results/outcomes subject to national/regional data protection requirements</td>
<td>(-)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Standards and guidelines for recognition, validation and certification of competences of individuals have been defined. VET curricula are based on standards established at Community level. In CVET, decision making regarding curriculum development lies at the provider level, based on the Community frameworks. Curricula are based on competencies and on the National Qualification Framework (NQF). Qualifications are devised by the French-speaking Community’s Qualification Agency.

**Implementation**

Implementation plans are established in cooperation with social partners, VET providers and other relevant stakeholders at the different levels. In Belgium the federal level has very limited responsibilities in the area of education and training. In BEfr, implementation plans (PAP as noted above) are mainly established by the three above-mentioned VET providers. No clear evidence of the extent to which other relevant stakeholders are involved in FOREM QA system was found across the report.

Implementation plans include consideration of the resources required, the capacity of the users and the tools and guidelines needed for support. A monitoring database is updated on a monthly basis illustrating key indicators related to the activities of FOREM Formation. These indicators are related to training, integration of trainees, trainee satisfaction, human resource development inside FOREM Formation, as well as budgetary and financial aspects of the organisation.

Guidelines and standards have been devised for implementation at different levels. FOREM QA mechanism builds upon five types of processes and attached descriptors that target beneficiaries (jobseekers, individual employees and enterprises); training products (content of training modules in terms of target group, pre-requisites, duration, learning outcomes, and ‘savoir-etre’); teams of trainers (quality descriptors apply to both initial and continuing training); resources and management arrangements.

Implementation plans include specific support towards the training of teachers and trainers. Yes, as outlined in FOREM’s QA Manual.

VET providers’ responsibilities in the implementation process are explicitly described and made transparent. Yes, as outlined in FOREM’s QA Manual.

A national and/or regional quality assurance framework has been devised and includes guidelines and quality standards at VET-provider level to promote continuous improvement and self-regulation. Yes. Curricula are based on competencies and on the National Qualification Framework (NQF). Qualifications are devised by the French-speaking Community’s Qualification Agency.

**Evaluation**

A methodology for evaluation has been devised, covering internal and external evaluation. Yes as outlined in FOREM’s QA Manual. All aspects of the training provision and competence management offered by FOREM are assessed twice a year. For instance, FOREM staff are assessed at all levels (management, regional staff, staff in individual offices and in FOREM training centres). The system also has an inspection element. Inspection is done by FOREM trainers. FOREM also carries out internal audits of all its local training centres once a year.
Stakeholder involvement in the monitoring and evaluation process is agreed and clearly described

Yes, as outlined in FOREM’s QA Manual

The national/regional standards and processes for improving and assuring quality are relevant and proportionate to the needs of the sector

(·)

Systems are subject to self-evaluation, internal and external review, as appropriate

Yes. In addition to the above, FOREM’s approach puts emphasis on self-assessment of aspects such as learning and teaching, management and administration, institutional ethos and strategic planning, infrastructure and financial resources, quality assurance measures focusing on teachers/trainers and teaching and learning delivery)

Early warning systems are implemented

(·)

Performance indicators are applied

(·)

Relevant, regular and coherent data collection takes place, in order to measure success and identify areas for improvement. Appropriate data collection methodologies have been devised, e.g. questionnaires and indicators/metrics

Yes as noted above, a monitoring database is updated on a monthly basis illustrating key indicators related to the activities of FOREM Formation.

Review

Procedures, mechanisms and instruments for undertaking reviews are defined at all levels

Yes

Processes are regularly reviewed and action plans for change devised. Systems are adjusted accordingly

Yes. FOREM QA system is reviewed every 6 months. The Quality Manual is now in its 15th revision (effective from 1 June 2012). There is evidence that the FOREM quality assurance process takes into account the results from the phases of evaluation and review. This happens twice a year, when the results of evaluations are fed into the quality manual updating it, and once a year when planning for the next phase takes place.

Information on the outcomes of evaluation is made publicly available

(·)

A2.6 Description of concrete quality assurance measures

A2.6.1 Name/designation: CEFORA/CEVORA

Developer/owner/provider:
The institution responsible for the implementation of the CEFORA/CEVORA quality assurance mechanism is the Centre de formation de la CPNAE (Commission Paritaire Nationale Auxiliaire pour Employés).

Status:
Voluntary

76 http://www.cefora.be
Target group:

CEFORA quality assures providers/programmes/trainers and also other functions linked to training provision (training coach, training coordinator, etc.).

The QA system targets:

- CEFORA’s organisational structure: CEFORA has a quality team (quality manager, internal organisation service which executes internal audits to monitor and support quality assurance in the organisation);
- Sub-contractors: quality assurance processes for each type of sub-contractor:
  - training coordinators: annual review, client satisfaction assessed with participant observation, mystery shopping, annual internal audits, training assessment by participants, coordinators assessment by CEFORA team, financial controls, complaint form, etc.
  - training coach: participant satisfaction (questionnaire) and project manager assessment
  - trainers: pre-contract review, participant satisfaction (questionnaire), annual evaluation
- Working methods and processes: internal audit of working methods performed by a team of certified auditors;
- Relevance of training: internal evaluation of training offer (ex-post and/or continuous).

Description:

CEFORA’s quality policy is based on four pillars:

- Customer satisfaction
- Effectiveness and continuous improvement
- Targeted growth
- A policy based on results, flexibility and expertise in the entire organisation

More specifically, CEFORA has attempted to increase and maintain the quality of its services by taking action in a number of areas:

- Adapting its organisational structure;
- Selecting, quality controlling and evaluating subcontractors;
- Adopting uniform, transparent and effective methods of work (with powerful automation);
- Offering high quality training meeting client needs;
- Adapting its teaching methods.

CEFORA operates as a nucleus complemented by two outer circles, one organising the training provision for the unemployed and for employees and one implementing this training provision.

The core is composed of experts who develop training actions, oversee and drive the implementation before evaluating and proceeding to corrections that may be necessary. The first circle (“envelope”) around the nucleus consists of the various training enterprises that organise training and manage contacts with clients. The second circle consists of educators, trainers and coaches who implement training activities.
Study on Quality Assurance in Continuous VET and on future development of EQAVET

Figure A2.1 CEFORA work process diagram

Source: CEFORA/CEVORA, La Devise du CEFORA: L’assurance qualité, April 2009

Process:

The CEFORA mechanism is implemented at the level of training providers. The QA is based on internal assessment, where training participants are closely involved (subject to external review by ISO as CEFORA is ISO 9001-2000 certified since 2006). It is a voluntary initiative, used at national level, with a focus on sectoral training.

When there are new strategic priorities, changes are made to the QA system of CEFORA. For example, currently, CEFORA’s strategy prioritises contact with enterprises, so this aspect will be incorporated into the QA system. Hence, some changes are made in order to follow effectiveness in terms of strategic priorities, even though the general QA framework stays the same since it is based on ISO principles.

Scope/importance:

The take up of the QA framework concerns all providers, programmes and trainers cooperating with CEFORA itself, hence it concerns 2000 training courses, 350 training centres each of which has several trainers. So, 500-600 trainers are involved and in 2011, there were 70 000 trainees (figures refer to the whole of Belgium, not just the French-speaking community).

Use:

CEFORA devotes particular attention to the quality assurance and renewal of the training offer. The motivation is that CEFORA is interested in a solidarity-based system (meaning the supply of free training products and services), seeing this as essential in order to reach disadvantaged groups of workers (active and non-active) and enterprises (SMEs). However, for the free offer to (continue) to reach the target groups, it is necessary that both training
participants and company managers perceive CEFORA’s training offer to be of good quality, in constant improvement and perpetual renewal. Training must also demonstrate a clear “return on investment” both in the short term and in the long-term (a factor which is especially important for SMEs)\(^{77}\).

**Comparison with EQAVET:**

The CEFORA descriptors have been developed following the same key principles as EQAVET.

The key phases of the CEFORA QA processes are:

- Needs analysis and development of training courses
- Implementation
- Evaluation
- Adjustment

These four phases respectively correspond to all the phases of the EQAVET cycle (Planning, Implementation, Evaluation, and Review).

CEFORA put much emphasis on evaluation. The evaluation of trainers with whom CEFORA cooperates is done in two ways:

1. Evaluation by training participants: the project manager reviews the evaluation of the trainers given by participants and gives feedback to the trainer. In partnerships with each training center, the trainer assessments are collected and forwarded to CEFORA monthly.
2. Annual Evaluation (only applicable to certain training projects): each trainer is assessed annually on all the training he has dispensed for CEFORA during a given year. This is done primarily on the basis of a quantitative summary of all assessment forms from the training sessions that a trainer has provided. Each team must then indicate to management what actions it will undertake if a trainer gathers a low score.

The efficiency of training coordinators is evaluated in the following ways:

- Registering trainers into CEFORA training courses: senior team members regularly enter trainers to participate in CEFORA training courses as if they were a regular participant.
- Mystery Caller: since much of the contact between coordinators and clients is by phone, a specialised company performs a series of ‘mystery calls’ every year. Scenarios are developed by CEFORA for these telephone exchanges. Following this survey, each CEFORA office receives feedback and, if necessary, complementary training is organised. In 2007, the Mystery Call survey led to the drafting of FAQs and answers that coordinators are supposed to give.
- Internal audits: internal audits carried out annually, examine whether the coordination offices meet the specifications they are supposed to meet and where points for attention lie. Currently, CEFORA also requests a sample of documents relating to contacts with clients. The quality of these documents is assessed (indicators include use of appropriate language, respecting the CEFORA house style, supplying correct and complete information, compliance with deadlines etc.).
- Participant Assessment Forms: training participants score the training coordinator (for training administration, organisation). The criterion used by the CEFORA in this respect is that the average score cannot be less than a 3.5 / 5. If a lower score is obtained, the internal audit department of CEFORA takes steps to improve the situation.
- Listening to the clients: there are also procedures set up to deal with client complaints.

\(^{77}\) CEFORA/CEVORA, La Devise du CEFORA: L’assurance qualite, April 2009
The table below gives an overview on how main features of CEFORA correspond to the main features of EQAVET.

| Use of cycle | By comparing the description of the Quality Assurance processes adapted by CEFORA to the EQAVET quality cycle, it becomes apparent that the two processes are comparable in terms of QA phases of the two approaches. |
| Use of descriptors | The CEFORA descriptors have been developed following the same key principles as EQAVET. The key phases of the CEFORA QA processes (Needs analysis and development of training courses/Implementation/Evaluation/Adjustment) correspond to the phases of the EQAVET cycle. Evaluation takes place annually and CEFORA particularly emphasises the phases of ‘evaluation’ and ‘adjustment’. The phase of adjustment corresponds to the ‘Review’ phase of the EQAVET cycle when there are adjustments being made, in light of the evaluation findings in order to lead to continuous improvement. |
| Use of indicators/criteria | In more detail, looking at some of the descriptors and indicators used in the evaluation of, for example, training coordinators and trainers, it can be seen that they do, on the whole, address the descriptors and indicators proposed by EQAVET. |
| EQAVET building blocks | Forem’s QA process appears on the whole to follow the principles outlined by the 10 EQAVET building blocks |

**Conclusion:**

The main strength of the QA process is the principle of continuous improvement being followed which is based on continuous evaluation. Each training course is immediately evaluated by participants online. CEFORA pays attention to the analysis and mainly to the comments given by training participants. If scores are low for a particular trainer or for a particular programme, CEFORA takes action. Twice a year, CEFORA also analyses evaluation results for a specific course (e.g. a course that may be offered 50 times in a given year) or for a specific trainer to get address any recurring comments for improvement. The whole QA system is revised once a year following the publication of the CEFORA annual report.

On the other hand, one weakness could be considered to be the fact that, like in any organisation, internal audits may not be the priority at all times. According to what is going on in the organisation, internal audits are always done but maybe the attention they deserve is not always prioritised.

Another weakness could be considered to be that while the training offer evolves fast; the system does not evolve together with the training. For example, CEFORA offers training on e-learning but the QA system has not incorporated in detail new methods of how to evaluate such training that might use online tools etc, in the meantime the old methods are used to assess new training. Hence, the flexibility of the QA system might be improved.

### A2.7 Sources

**Literature:**


Decree of 14 November 2002 establishing the Agency for the evaluation of the quality of higher education organised or subsidised by the French Community. Available at http://www.gallilex.cfwb.be/fr/leg_res_01.php?ncda=27175&referant=l01


Le FOREM (2012), Quality Manual [Manuel Qualité], 15th revision, of 1 June 2012

Websites:

Walloon Public Service, Employment and Vocational Education and Training Department website:

http://emploi.wallonie.be/Pour_Vous/Associations/OISP.html
http://emploi.wallonie.be/Pour_Vous/OISP/Procedure.html

Interfédé website:
http://www.interfede.be/

CEFORA website:
http://www.cefora.be

Interviews:

Directorate General for Compulsory Education, Ministry of the French Community of Belgium (EQAVET network representative for the French Community of Belgium)

FOREM Formation, (EQAVET network representative for the French Community of Belgium)

CEFORA (Centre de Formation de la Commission Paritaire Nationale Auxiliaire pour Employés)

Interfédé (Interfédération des Organismes de Formation et d'Insertion Wallonie – Bruxelles), responsible for Agrément des Organismes d'Insertion Socioprofessionnelle (OISP)
Annex 3  Country Report: Czech Republic

A3.1  Brief description of the C-VET system

The system of continuing vocational education and training in the Czech Republic has seen significant developments in the last decade. The reform of both the conceptual background and the structural environment of C-VET is still in progress. Large sectors of C-VET are managed and regulated by public sector entities, and financed by the state budget as well as European funds (most importantly the European Social Fund, ESF). While private actors do play an important role, either on the level of C-VET provision or as social partners representing the employer sector, the regulation and systemic organisation of C-VET is the responsibility of public entities.

System of professional qualifications and recognition of non-formal and informal learning

The “Act no 179, of 30 March 2006, Regulating the Recognition and Validation of the Outcomes of Continuing Education (Continuing Education Recognition Act - further referred to as “the C-VET Act”) 78 has set grounds for the national policy in C-VET. It defined the basic concepts, processes and roles of stakeholders involved. It was reviewed several times since 2006.

The C-VET Act introduced a comprehensive conceptual framework for C-VET, reflecting the growing social and economic need for a flexible yet quality assured system of recognition and validation of prior and non-formal learning. It also introduces a system of qualifications into the field of C-VET where previously each provider developed its own programmes.

One of the key features brought about by the Act in 2006 was the distinction between full qualification [úplná kvalifikace] and partial qualification [dílčí kvalifikace]. A full qualification was defined as one completed through initial education and certifying that an individual possesses the ability to “duly carry out all activities inherent in a particular occupation” 79, while a partial qualification was defined as one completed through a process of validation and certification of an individual’s prior and continuing learning, proving their ability to “carry out a specific work activity or a set of work activities within a particular occupation.” 80 A 2012 novelisation of the C-VET Act will change the key terminology in order to avoid the misleading implication of educational deficiency invoked by the term “partial” qualification. The revised wording uses the terms comprehensive vocational qualification [úplná profesní kvalifikace] for the outcomes of I-VET, and vocational qualification [profesní kvalifikace] for C-VET and validated prior learning. The partial (or vocational) qualifications can be achieved via C-VET but also through recognition of prior learning without any formal training in the domain.

The implementation of (partial) vocational qualifications can be seen as a major development in the national C-VET system. It is complemented and endorsed by a variety of related mechanisms developed at the central public level, such as the National Register of Qualifications (NSK) 81, the National Register of Occupations (NSP) 82, the Central Database of Skills and Competences that bridges the former two 83, and the network of Sector Councils 84 that are of utmost relevance for the quality assurance aspect in Czech C-VET.

79 Act no 179, of 30 March 2006, Regulating the Recognition and Validation of the Outcomes of Continuing Education (Continuing Education Recognition Act), or here “the C-VET Act”, pp. 2097 – 2098.
80 Ibid., p. 2098.
81 http://www.narodni-kvalifikace.cz/
82 http://www.nsp.cz/
The design and maintenance of the system is the shared responsibility of a consortium of several key actors from both public and private sphere, representing the educational system as well as the labour market.

Requalification courses for job-seekers

The above described system of partial (vocational) qualifications is still relatively new in the Czech Republic. It currently co-exists with a fragmented offer of training courses which are governed and accredited by different public entities (ministries of education, health care, home affairs, etc.). The so called re-qualification courses for job-seekers represent a major part of the publicly funded C-VET. These are continuing vocational training courses and programmes designed primarily for the unemployed in need of better or different skills. Public employment services can only fund, as part of active labour market policy, those courses that are accredited as re-qualification courses.

A3.2 Description of quality assurance arrangements in C-VET at system level

A3.2.1 Quality assurance framework

System level quality assurance in C-VET in the Czech Republic is embedded in several legislations. However it should be noted that it is not always explicitly defined as “quality assurance”. There is no code of quality assurance at system level or a document that would define/ describe the system level quality assurance. Rather, quality assurance is embedded in a set of rules and requirements. Quality assurance is not necessarily distinct from the system/ rules being introduced. This implicit nature of quality assurance makes it somewhat difficult to analyse and compare with other systems.

In the past the quality of publicly funded C-VET provision was mainly ensured via programme accreditation by the ministry of education. The requirements for accreditation evolved over time from a purely inputs based system towards an approach that also emphasises the quality of outcomes.

The main evolution of the approach to quality assurance at system level in the past decade came with the above described introduction of the system of partial/ vocational qualifications introduced by the C-VET Act. This system is expected to:

- Ensure better matching between labour market demand and C-VET programmes via the nationally defined and recognised system of qualifications; and
- Link the accreditation of re-qualification courses with this system of qualifications.

However, the system is currently between piloted and full deployment is yet to be realised. Some of its components are still in development, and various parallel, more traditional processes are simultaneously in place.

A3.2.2 Basic description of the quality assurance approach

The main principles behind the C-VET act which are expected to ensure the quality of C-VET are:

- The identification of professional profiles and qualification needs by sectoral councils;
- The definition of partial/vocational qualifications in terms of learning outcomes based on the work of the sectoral councils;
- Qualifications are defined in terms of qualification standards and assessment standards. These are the basis for the design of C-VET programmes by providers;
- Systematic recording of all qualifications in the National Qualifications Register and related information system with data on C-VET providers and authorised entities to carry out the assessment;

Definition of conditions in which assessment to achieve the qualification has to be carried out; and
 Authorisation of entities/ persons to act as assessors for the partial/ vocational qualifications and to award these.

While C-VET can be provided by a range of organisations (public and private) there is support from the side of the state to transform VET schools (mainly active in initial VET until now) into centres for lifelong learning that would provide both I-VET and C-VET. All I-VET schools have to carry self-assessment and because of the greater involvement of VET schools in provision of C-VET the requirement for self-assessment is also having influence on C-VET.

Other than the above mentioned requirement for self-assessment of VET schools (who are also C-VET providers), there is no requirement for explicit quality assurance measures at C-VET provider level from the side of the public authorities. Providers are required to comply with nationally defined rules regarding programme design, assessment as well as documentation, etc. but they are not required to have their own internal process for quality assurance in place.

The process of programme accreditation for re-qualification courses continues to exist in parallel to the above system. Where the course is in a domain where a partial/vocational qualification exists in the national register, the course has to lead to that qualification and comply with the related qualification and assessment standards.

A3.3 Processes entailed and actors involved

- **Sector Councils**
  A Sector Council is a “group of key representatives of employers, professional organisations, educators, HR experts and other specialists in a given economic sector or field.”

Currently there are 30 Sector Councils established and operational in the Czech Republic.

The Sector Councils can be identified as the central system actor in terms of social partnership as well as quality assurance. They carry out the following tasks and activities:

- ensuring the correspondence of the knowledge, skills and competences defined in Qualification Standards with the requirements of the related occupations and/or type positions on the labour market;
- keeping the Qualification Standards and Assessment Standards up to date and responsive to the latest developments in the respective industries and sectors, as well as monitoring the emerging changes in skills supply and demand, and matching the two phenomena;
- defining in detail the Assessment Standards of Vocational Qualifications, and thus ensuring that the processes of validation and certification meet the defined quality criteria; that the candidates for the qualifications are able to demonstrate under standardised conditions that they possess the abilities described in Qualification Standards; that the authorised entities are able to measure, examine and decide on the candidates’ fulfilment of the defined criteria; that the technical, material and organisational background of the assessment is harmonised, fair and accepted by all stakeholders;

Other key actors in this process are the sectoral Ministries, who act as:

- **Authorising Bodies**

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who are the “central administrative authority having the power to grant, extend and revoke the authorisation to validate vocational qualifications for certain occupations that fall within its sphere of competence.”

The entities and/or persons that have received an authorisation by the authorising body become:

- **Authorised Entities / Authorised Persons**
  and are thus granted a licence “to validate a candidate’s achievement of professional competence set out in the respective Qualification Standard for which the authorisation is granted using the process and methods outlined in the applicable Assessment Standard”.

Analysis shows that this approach includes elements of internal review logic (the creators of Qualification Standards and Assessment Standards are at the same time responsible for their maintenance and revision) as well as elements of external review (there is a central authorising authority, the Ministries; Qualification and Assessment Standards are drafted, created and approved in close cooperation with a wide network of external stakeholders according to the sectoral and regional specifics of each qualification).

The accreditation process for re-qualification courses is:

- Regulated by the ministry of education; and
- Implemented by the accreditation commission which comprises representatives of different public entities, employers’ representatives and a representative of further education institutions.

**A3.4 Evolutions and trends**

The C-VET Act can be seen as both the facilitator and the result of the recent policy shift towards learning outcome-oriented measures and processes in the Czech Republic. The above mentioned novelisation of the Act changing its terminology is expected to facilitate further the process and win more trust of the general public as well as the teaching sector. So far, the policy development seems to be fully supported by the employer sector and by national qualification authorities. The success in other parts of the society will largely depend on careful design and realization of:

- a targeted and clear communication of the system’s objectives, benefits but also limitations;
- a true quality assurance framework that is not yet fully explicit within the system.

Evidence seems to suggest that such a view is supported by a large majority of the stakeholders involved. A growing number of employers and professional associations take part in the activities of the Sector Councils in the creation and/or update of vocational qualifications. The number of authorisations (see above for definition) keeps rising every month and reached 2260 in April 2012. Also the number of citizens applying for examinations for (partial) vocational qualifications is reported to be growing constantly, from cca 10 500 in May 2011 to over 38 000 examinations realised until April 2012.

However, some critical voices have been raised against this reform mainly questioning the use of learning outcomes and of qualifications standards as restrictive and too mechanistic.

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88 The C-VET Act, Para 2, Letter (k).
89 The C-VET Act, Para 2, Letter (h).
92 For a recent account of the discussions on the (in)adequacy of the concept of learning outcomes see Souto-Otero, M. (2012): Learning outcomes: Good, irrelevant, bad or none of the above? Journal of Education and Work, 25 (3), pp. 249 – 258. For a proposal for a conceptual way out see also, in the same volume, Lassnigg, L.
A3.5 Comparison with EQAVET

All the policy efforts described above, including the semi-explicit quality assurance mechanisms present in the system, are developed in line with the current European strategies, reference tools and principles.

The main challenge in comparing the above described measures with EQAVET lies in the fact that the Czech C-VET system does not consider quality assurance as a separate set of activities. Instead quality assurance is embedded in the different rules for the C-VET system and in fact the ‘system is the quality assurance’ in certain respects. As there is no explicit quality assurance framework that would be designated by the word quality assurance, the whole system and tradition to implementation are compared with EQAVET leaving a lot of scope for interpretation.

Furthermore, the measures currently being taken in the C-VET sector in the Czech Republic characterise a system in transition. Some quality assurance aspects will become permanent features of the system but are still in rather early stages. Other aspects (such as a number of support measures) are there to facilitate the transition and support the quality of the transition and are ultimately expected to be phased out when the rules become a common practice.

The above described system is not built on the principle of a quality assurance cycle as such. The cycle approach is not referred to explicitly and it is not apparent when looking at the processes implied. At the same time the process of implementation of these large-scale reforms with broad implications does have a cyclic nature. The implementation is progressive, it is supported by pilot measures, it builds on existing elements of the system, it is accompanied by monitoring of information and evaluation and as shown by the fact that the legislation has recently been revised, there is a process of review. Therefore a certain cycle can be identified even though the implementation plan is not explicitly described in those terms.

The table below shows whether and how the Czech system of C-VET corresponds to the EQAVET system level descriptors for quality assurance.

Table A3.1 Correspondence between quality assurance on system level in the Czech republic and EQAVET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Goals/objectives of VET are described for the medium and long terms, and linked to European goals | These are defined in national strategic documents, namely:  
- The long term plan for development of education and of the education system in the Czech Republic 2011-2015; and  
- The lifelong learning strategy |
| The relevant stakeholders participate in setting VET goals and objectives at the different levels | Stakeholders are systematically consulted in the design of the above strategic documents as well as form reforms specific to C-VET. |
| Targets are established and monitored through specific indicators (success criteria) | This is not systematically the case. For example there are no nationally defined targets for the introduction of recognition of non-formal and informal learning. However, the numbers of applicants and people certified are monitored |


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mechanisms and procedures have been established to identify training needs</th>
<th>This is the role of the sectoral councils (see above)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An information policy has been devised to ensure optimum disclosure of quality results/outcomes subject to national/ regional data protection requirements</td>
<td>This is not clearly defined though rules about sharing of information certainly exist regarding specific aspects of C-VET policy and provision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards and guidelines for recognition, validation and certification of competences of individuals have been defined</td>
<td>Yes. These are the main subject of the C-VET Act described above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implementation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation plans are established in cooperation with social partners, VET providers and other relevant stakeholders at the different levels</td>
<td>Not clear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation plans include consideration of the resources required, the capacity of the users and the tools and guidelines needed for support</td>
<td>Not part of the quality assurance instruments as such. Most of the measures to support reform implementation are funded through the European Social Fund. Most measures are supported through pilot projects/programmes or accompanying programmes through which VET-providers and other stakeholders are informed/trained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidelines and standards have been devised for implementation at different levels</td>
<td>The accreditation for CVET providers is supported by guidance to providers. Measures are typically supported by practical guidelines and standards. These are typically developed through the accompanying or piloting measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation plans include specific support towards the training of teachers and trainers</td>
<td>In general yes but this is not part of the quality assurance instrument. These are developed through piloting and accompanying measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET providers’ responsibilities in the implementation process are explicitly described and made transparent</td>
<td>In general the legislation defines VET providers’ responsibilities but this is not part of the quality assurance instruments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A national and/or regional quality assurance framework has been devised and includes guidelines and quality standards at VET-provider level to promote continuous improvement and self-regulation</td>
<td>Not specifically in C-VET but exists in I-VET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A methodology for evaluation has been devised, covering internal and external evaluation</td>
<td>Most support measures for reforms are funded from the European Social Fund and as such have to be evaluated. However, systematic internal and external evaluation is not yet always required. Furthermore these evaluations are not part of the explicit QA measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder involvement in the monitoring and evaluation process is agreed and clearly described</td>
<td>This depends on the way the evaluation is set up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The national/regional standards and processes for improving and assuring quality are relevant and proportionate to the needs of the sector</td>
<td>Depends on the measure concerned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems are subject to self-evaluation, internal and external review, as appropriate</td>
<td>Not systematically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early warning systems are implemented</td>
<td>Not systematically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance indicators are applied</td>
<td>This is the case for all ESF funded measures. Performance indicators are also used in CVET but rarely concern outcomes indicators. Furthermore, the indicators used are not part of the quality assurance measures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant, regular and coherent data collection takes place, in order to measure success and identify areas for improvement. Appropriate data collection methodologies have been devised, e.g. questionnaires and indicators/metrics</td>
<td>Regular data collection for CVET takes place through collection of administrative data on programmes and examinations. Regular survey of C-VET providers is also implemented (see below). However most data concerns participation rates rather than outcomes and impacts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Review**

| Procedures, mechanisms and instruments for undertaking reviews are defined at all levels | Measures and reforms are reviewed when needs are identified. There is not necessarily a formalised process to initiate a review. This is not part of the quality assurance measures. |
| Processes are regularly reviewed and action plans for change devised. Systems are adjusted accordingly | This depends on the measures concerned |
| Information on the outcomes of evaluation is made publicly available | Yes, where external evaluations are carried out, these are publicly available. However this is not part of the quality assurance measures. |

### A3.6 Description of concrete quality assurances measures

In addition to the system level approach to the design and award of partial/ vocational qualifications and the related system of recognition of learning outcomes, the following main quality assurance measures have been identified as part of this study:

- Accreditation of re-qualification courses (also touched upon above);
- DV Monitor – monitor of further education;
- Quality award for the training institution/ trainer of the year; and
- Methodology for creation and assessment of C-VET programmes developed and implemented through the large scale project UNIV 3.

These are further described below.

In addition to these measures C-VET providers can choose to adopt ISO or EFQM models but these are not required at national level nor is their adoption particularly encouraged by the public authorities.

As noted above, I-VET providers (VET schools) are increasingly encouraged to also provide C-VET. Therefore, the quality assurance measures in initial VET, in particular the requirement for providers to carry out self-assessment are also influencing C-VET.
A3.6.1 **Name/designation: Accreditation of re-qualification courses**\(^\text{94}\)

**Developer/owner/provider:**

Ministry of education, youth and sports together with other ministries, in particular the ministry of labour and social affairs.

**Status:**

Permanent feature of the system of active labour market policies

**Target group:**

CVET providers that want to provide training as part of active labour market policies (ALMP)

**Scope/importance:**

All courses funded as part of ALMP have to be accredited unless they are delivered by VET schools in the same field of study as their mainstream provision for students in initial VET.

**Description:**

Accreditation of re-qualification courses is a quality assurance measure for the C-VET that is funded as part of active labour market policies.

C-VET providers who provide courses for job seekers can only do so for those programmes for which they have received an accreditation. The only exception being VET schools when they train job-seekers for those programmes for which they also train students in initial VET.

To be accredited C-VET providers have to demonstrate their capacity to deliver training of good quality. The most significant areas on which the quality of the programme and of the provider is judged are:

- The description of the profile of the graduate (if other than an existing partial/ vocational qualification);
- The description of the final assessment (if the programme concerns an existing partial/ vocational qualification the assessment standard has to be respected);
- The description of the programme;
- The facilities and equipment available;
- The qualifications and profile of a grantee;
- The qualifications and profile of lecturers.

The ministry of education or the public employment service can carry out controls of C-VET providers that the programme is implemented in line with the accreditation.

The current system of accreditations builds on a system which has been operational for several years now. The main focus of this measure is to ensure that the training programmes are well designed, delivered and properly assessed. The accreditation also aims to avoid fraud due to aspects such as:

- Programmes that are artificially extended in duration to maximise income (as providers are paid per hour of training);
- Job-seekers are registered as attending the course while there is larger than acceptable absenteeism.

Comparison with EQAVET:

This accreditation process does bear limited commonalities with the approach described in EQAVET. The accreditation is a form of external evaluation. It does not require a process of internal evaluation to be in place.

| Use of cycle | The accreditation process does not explicitly refer to a quality assurance cycle. While it does require providers to put in place a clear planning of programmes, it does not explicitly support the approach of evaluation and review. In fact, providers are discouraged to modify the programme as when they do so they have to inform the accreditation committee and document the changes made. |
| Use of descriptors | The rules of the accreditation process are comparable with the following EQAVET descriptors at provider level:  
- Explicit goals/objectives and targets are set and monitored (for the training programme);  
- Resources are appropriately internally aligned/assigned with a view to achieving the targets set in the implementation plans. |
| Use of indicators/criteria | The accreditation process does not use indicators. The criteria for accreditation are not defined in terms of indicators or judgement criteria. |
| EQAVET building blocks | The accreditation process can be related to the following EQAVET building blocks at system level:  
- Set clear rules for deciding who offers VET provision  
- Provide clarity over funding  
It does not relate to any of the building blocks at provider level. |

Conclusion:

Accreditation of re-qualification courses is a means of external evaluation of courses. It does not require any internal quality assurance to be in place. It mainly focuses on the ways in which programmes are designed and the capacity of providers in terms of qualified staff and facilities. It also makes a link between programmes and qualifications standards defined nationally. There is no emphasis on impacts of training in terms of placement rates of learners for example.

A3.6.2 Name/designation: DVMonitor\(^95\)

Developer/owner/Provider:

The project is designed and managed by the Ministry of education, youth and sport and the National Institute for Education. It is implemented by the National Training Fund (an NGO active in the field of education) which is a service provider to these two organisations.

Status:

Project (2009-2013). It is currently not clear how the data collection and mapping will be ensured beyond project duration.

Scope/importance:

This is the first complex set of indicators for adult learning developed in the Czech Republic.

\(^95\) [http://www.dvmonitor.cz/](http://www.dvmonitor.cz/)
Description:
DV Monitor is the central national web portal collecting, systemizing and presenting information and data on further education in the Czech Republic. The “DV Monitor: Monitoring of Further Education” project was carried out between 2010 and 2012, and the online portal as the major outcome was published at the beginning of 2012. The main objective of this initiative is the collection, processing, categorizations and presentation of measurable evidence on the current state of further education in the Czech Republic. The focus ranges from big-picture national and even international comparisons, to regional and sectoral data, to learner-oriented information on the specific provision available.

The model observes 29 key indicators and 43 supplementary indicators contained in 4 main conceptual pillars. The indicators are organised according to the following logic:

Table A3.2 DV Monitor data model: key pillars and indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pillar I: CONTEXT</th>
<th>Pillar II: INPUT</th>
<th>Pillar III: PROCESSES</th>
<th>Pillar IV: OUTPUT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key indicators:</td>
<td>Key indicators:</td>
<td>Key indicators:</td>
<td>Key indicators:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.1 Educational levels in population</td>
<td>II.1 Individual investment in further education</td>
<td>III.1 Provision of formal further education</td>
<td>IV.1 Participation of adults in further education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.2 Salary differentiation according to education</td>
<td>II.2 Employer investment in further education</td>
<td>III.2 Provision of non-formal further education</td>
<td>IV.2 Participation of individuals in formal education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.3 Legislation and institutional background of further education</td>
<td>II.3 Public investment in further education</td>
<td>III.3 Enterprise training policy</td>
<td>IV.3 Participation of individuals in non-formal education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.4 Labour market conditions</td>
<td>II.4 Pedagogical staff and trainers</td>
<td>III.4 Quality in further education</td>
<td>IV.4 Recognition of outcomes of further education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.5 Adult population competence supply and demand</td>
<td>II.5 Education and training providers</td>
<td>III.5 Barriers to participation in further education</td>
<td>IV.5 Participation in work-based training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.6 Innovativeness</td>
<td>II.6 Capacity for recognition of outcomes of further education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Target groups:
Primary target groups: Central-level policy analysts and policy makers in education and training, researchers, educational designers and strategists, and bodies responsible for central and/or regional governance, quality assurance and evaluation in further education.
Secondary target groups: Private businesses using the data for conducting market analyses, formulating business strategies and identifying new opportunities.
Other target groups: learners searching the public and private market and looking for a specific sector or programme of training.

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Process:
DV Monitor developed a framework to monitor adult learning and the underpinning system of indicators. It does not collect original data but uses existing data from a variety of national and international sources to populate the indicators.

Use:
The added value of the Portal, apart from being a central point of reference for a variety of users, is the conceptual model that DV Monitor has been developing to structure, organise and categorise the plethora of miscellaneous information on further education available from a range of sources.

Comparison with EQAVET:
The DV Monitor is in particular compatible with those EQAVET descriptors and building blocks which concern data collection and monitoring.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use of cycle</th>
<th>The EQAVET cycle as such is not clearly apparent in the approach of the DV monitor At the same time the monitor can support the planning and evaluation phases of C-VET policies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of descriptors</td>
<td>The DV monitor project is comparable with the following EQAVET descriptors as system level: ■ Performance indicators are applied; ■ Relevant, regular and coherent data collection takes place, in order to measure success and identify areas for improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of indicators/criteria</td>
<td>The Monitor is based on a system of indicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQAVET building blocks</td>
<td>DV Monitor can be related to the following EQAVET building block at system level: ■ Identify what information and data should be collected and used in the VET system ■ It does not relate to any of the building blocks at provider level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It should be noted here that the III.4 indicator which is about quality in further education has not yet been finalised, and its detailed methodology is still under development. It is expected to function as a rating system where providers of further education and training are assigned quality marks in form of “stars” by a designated evaluation body and according to a set of supplementary criteria yet to be negotiated with stakeholders.

Conclusion:
The Monitor is a tool that supports quality assurance and not a quality assurance system as such.

A3.6.3 Name/designation: Quality Awards: Educational Institution of the Year / Trainer of the Year

Developer/owner/provider:
The annual Quality Awards are organised by the Association of Institutions of Adult Education (AIVD). AIVD is the largest adult learning provider association in the Czech Republic, uniting 240 member institutions.

97 http://www.aivd.cz/
Status:
Award

Target group:
The training institution or the trainer

Description:
The initiative aims at:
- recognising and making visible the quality of adult learning institutions and trainers; and
- it is also expected to have a broader impact on the perception of quality assurance in the adult learning sector but it is too early to assess such outcomes

There are two different awards granted annually by AIVD under this common scheme:
- Trainer of the Year108 (First awarded in 2011)
- Educational Institution of the Year109 (First award in 2012)

The system of the competition is based on a multi-level external review provided by Committees and Juries composed of the top officials of the Association as well as invited external representatives of stakeholders.

Procedure:

**Trainer of the Year:** Any trainer who is in a contractual relationship with an institution that is member of the Association can be nominated by his/her institution for ‘trainer of the year’. Each institution can nominate not more than one trainer in one year. The application contains:
- A recommendation from the training institution (describing trainer’s professional and personal qualities),
- A DVD with a video recording of the trainer’s work, reflecting his/her teaching style, methods and interaction with learners; and
- A sample of original educational material and tools created by the trainer or the nominating institution.

A maximum of 30 points can be awarded to each trainer based on the jury’s assessment of:
- The trainer’s nominating list, particularly the content of the explanatory comments and reasons given by the nominating institution (max 10 points);
- The trainer’s professionalism, creativity and mastery of teaching techniques evaluated through analysis of the video recording (max 10 points);
- The quality, innovativeness and efficiency of the presented didactical material and tools (max 10 points).

The trainer with the highest total score receives the award.

**Educational Institution of the Year:** Any institution that is a member of the Association and has been active on the adult education market for no less than 3 years can apply for this award. The application must contain a completed questionnaire including all required annexes for the jury to be able to evaluate all given criteria.

A maximum of 70 points can be awarded to an institution based on the jury’s assessment of the following criteria, each for a maximum of 10 points:
- pro-client orientation;

108 http://www.aivd.cz/lektor roku
109 http://www.aivd.cz/viroku
Development of original products and enhancement of the adult education market;

- quality of trainers and their further development;
- quality of education provided, certifications, memberships in professional associations;
- business ethics and fair competition;
- training methodology;
- references.

Comparison with EQAVET:

The main difference with EQAVET is that the awards are not a quality assurance tool as such but rather recognition of quality. They reward the achievement of a high standard in the delivery of training but they do not provide a tool for the management of quality at institutional level. Nevertheless the awards identify areas considered key for the quality of C-VET in the country and there is some (though limited) comparability with the areas emphasised in EQAVET.

| Use of cycle | The criteria for the awards do not clearly reflect a cycle approach. Emphasis is rather on the performance in certain areas considered key for the quality of training. |
| Use of descriptors | The institution award is related to the following EQAVET descriptors at provider level:
- The relevant stakeholders participate in the process of analysing local needs (this can be considered to be comparable to client orientation);
- The strategic plan for staff competence development specifies the need for training for teachers and trainers. |
| Use of indicators/criteria | The awards are based on a scoring system in a list of areas. However, it is not clear whether the scoring system is underpinned by a clear set of indicators for each score or whether it is based on expert judgement only. |
| EQAVET building blocks | The criteria for the institution award are comparable to the following EQAVET building blocks at provider level:
- Support staff training;
- Involvement of stakeholders. |

Conclusion:

As said earlier this initiative rewards quality rather than being a quality assurance system. At the same time it identifies key issues that adult learning providers’ quality assurance measures should focus on such as strategic planning, responsiveness to client needs or staff training.

A3.6.4 Name/designation: National methodology for creation and assessment of C-VET programmes – UNIV 3

Developer/owner/provider:

The project is implemented by the National Education institute (agency of the ministry of education, youth and sport). Regional authorities and schools are partners in the project.

Scope:

The project is implemented in all the regions of the country except Prague region (due to ESF rules on beneficiaries). A large number of VET schools is taking part.

100 http://www.nuv.cz/univ3
Status:
Project

Description:
This large scale national project (2012-2014) supports the implementation of the C-VET act described above. The initiative is a support measure that accompanies the transition of the Czech I-VET and C-VET field towards a system for lifelong learning. I-VET schools are being developed into centres of lifelong learning and the project (building on the work of previous projects) supports them in this transition. The project also aims to strengthen the quality of programme design and assessment among private providers.

Participation in the project is voluntary but the project aims to develop methodological guidelines and standards for creation of C-VET programmes that should be used as a norm.

The main focus of the UNIV 3 project is the quality of the process of requalification realised through the recently introduced concept of (partial) vocational qualifications. It aims to support the recognition of the outcomes of prior learning as well as to modernise the accreditation processes (also described above). The more specific aims are:

- To develop a common quality assurance methodology for the creators of (re)qualification modules (i.e. C-VET programmes to prepare candidates for the exams taken in the system of recognition of prior learning);
- To train the staff of training organisations in creating quality C-VET modules;
- To continuously monitor and evaluate the quality of C-VET modules being developed;
- To ensure the involvement of labour market stakeholders in the quality assurance procedures;
- To set up an online system of application for accreditation of C-VET modules;
- To develop new methodical guidelines for accreditation processes;
- To develop new methodical guidelines for monitoring and evaluation of the accreditation processes.

The development of the methodological framework for the creation and evaluation of the C-VET modules including quality criteria was still ongoing at the time of carrying out this analysis.

The criteria for the quality of C-VET trainers are already defined. These are based on the proposed qualification standard for “Trainer in Further Education” (NRQ/EQF level 7)\(^{101}\). They concern the following skills and competences:

- Designing the content and structure of courses based on defined educational targets including required competences;
- Elaborating courses into minutely scenarios including selection of didactical tools and teaching methods;
- Assessing the entry level of competences and other characteristics of learners;
- Presenting course topics using interactive techniques, problem solving approach and analyses of practical examples;
- Preparation, realisation and evaluation of model situations and group work techniques;
- Assigning individual and group tasks to learners;
- Evaluating the effects of selected teaching methods and meeting the planned educational targets.\(^{102}\)

\(^{101}\) [http://www.nuov.cz/koncept](http://www.nuov.cz/koncept)

Target group:

There are three basic target groups for the measure, whose members might, however, overlap to a certain extent:

- **Trainers in VET institutions**: This target group comprises trainers both in I-VET schools that have become “centres of lifelong learning” by adding C-VET to their provision and trainers of specialised public and private C-VET organisations.

- **Creators and Assessors of C-VET programmes and modules**: It is presumed that many of the above trainers are simultaneously among the key experts contributing to the process of creation of new C-VET modules leading to examinations in partial/vocational qualifications. The project aims to provide them with a comprehensive methodology and training for this task.

- **Assessors in C-VET examinations**: Along with training the creators and evaluators of C-VET programmes, UNIV 3 also aims to train the future assessors in the final examinations leading to a candidate’s acquiring a partial/vocational qualification based on a demonstration of the knowledge, skills and competences listed in Qualification Standards. The C-VET Act defines the assessors as Authorised Persons.

Use:

The project trains staff in VET schools to design CVET courses and carry out assessment according to the newly designed standards for vocational qualifications. In parallel it designs guidelines for the design of CVET courses to ensure that accredited CVET courses funded as part of ALMP are of adequate standard when it comes to design and delivery of teaching/learning.

**Comparison with EQAVET:**

The results of the project will be methodological guidelines/standards for the design of C-VET courses and for their assessment. Given the nature of this initiative is quite different from the aims and principles of EQAVET. However, some comparability with EQAVET can be identified (see below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use of cycle</th>
<th>The standards for C-VET trainers include elements of the EQAVET cycle (see above). Trainers are required to plan the course and to evaluate it. However, the review aspect is not explicitly present.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Use of descriptors | The whole project (UNIV 3 but also its predecessors) can be considered to be comparable with the following EQAVET descriptors at system level:  
|                  | implementation plans include consideration of the resources required, the capacity of the users and the tools and guidelines needed for support  
|                  | Guidelines and standards have been devised for implementation at different levels  
|                  | Implementation plans include specific support towards the training of teachers and trainers |
| Use of indicators/ criteria | The project is developing criteria and indicators for the quality of C-VET trainers (minimum standards) and the design of C-VET programmes. However, it is not developing indicators for a quality assurance process as such. |
| EQAVET building blocks | The project and its predecessors can be related to the following EQAVET building blocks at system level:  
|                  | Recognise and build on existing internal arrangements  
|                  | Pilot initiatives and value success  
|                  | Ensure VET is founded on a strong involvement of external and internal partners and relevant stakeholders  
|                  | The standards for trainers are related to the EQAVET building block at provider level that is about support to staff training. |
Conclusion:
This initiative is a support measure for a C-VET system in transition. It is not a quality assurance system as such but it is to ensure the quality of C-VET in line with newly introduced legislation.

A3.7 Sources:

Literature


Websites:
The association of adult education providers and its quality awards: http://www.aivd.cz/
http://www.aivd.cz/lektorroku
http://www.aivd.cz/viroku
The web-site of the national register of qualifications: http://www.narodni-kvalifikace.cz/
The project UNIV3 web-site: http://www.nuv.cz/univ3
The project Koncept web-site: http://www.nuov.cz/koncept
Accreditation of re-qualification courses http://www.msmt.cz/vzdelavani/zadost-o-akreditaci-1
The web-site of DV Monitor: http://www.dvmonitor.cz/

Interviews:
- Czech School Inspection – EQAVET NRP;
- National Institute of Education (NUV) – in charge of the project UNIV 3 but also other projects related to the implementation of the C-VET Act
  - 2 persons interviewed
- National Observatory for Employment and Education, National Training Fund – in charge of the project DV Monitor
- Association of Institutions of Adult Education
Annex 4  Country Report: Finland

A4.1  Brief description of the C-VET system

CVET in Finland is governed by the Vocational Adult Education Act (631/1998), which covers all education and training intended for adults at all levels of the education system. The Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) has the overall responsibility for the strategic development of adult education and training. This includes

- The regulation and financing of all public funded certificate-oriented CVET (i.e. education leading to formal vocational qualifications);
- Authorisation to provide education for CVET; and
- The confirmation of the overall vocational qualifications structure, including the titles of the qualifications.

Based on the major funding sources, CVET can be divided in three categories:

- Self-motivated professional education and training (governed by the MEC);
- Labour market training for special target groups (governed by the Ministry of Employment and the Economy); and
- Staff (or in-service) training (in responsibility of the employers).

The MEC regulates all certificate-oriented CVET taken up by self-motivation. The aim of the training can be a complete formal qualification or part of a qualification (e.g. a specific module). It can also aim at a more general aspect of professional self-development (thus not directly related to the qualification previously acquired).

A large part of formal CVET (issuing formal qualifications) is publicly funded. For instance, training leading to further and specialist qualifications is mostly publicly funded but may charge moderate fees from the participants. However, CVET also includes staff-development and other training provided or purchased by employers whereby the aim of the training is not necessarily a formal qualification.

Educational institutions and other organisations providing CVET can be divided in three groups:

- General and interest-oriented (upper secondary schools for adults, adult education centres, physical education centres, institutions providing basic art education);
- Vocational institutions (vocational adult education centres, specialised vocational institutions, continuing education centres of universities, polytechnics, home economics counselling organisations and organisations for crafts and design); and
- Other organisations (various commercial organisations offering training for CVET).

Organisations which belong to the third group do not belong under the jurisdiction of MEC, i.e. the Vocational Adult Education Act does not apply to them.

An organisation aiming at public funding for their provisions needs to follow the criteria of the present legislation. The MEC grants authorisations to education providers for provision of education and training, determining the fields of education in which they are allowed to organise education and that of their total student numbers. Each provider determines which vocational qualifications and which study programmes they offer. Should a provider wish to offer training for formal qualifications, it needs an agreement with the sectoral qualification committee in question (organised under the umbrella of the Finnish National Board of Education, FNBE).

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103  It is to be noted that even though labour market training aiming for vocational qualifications is financed by the employment authorities (through the Ministry of Employment and the Economy), the decisions and development concerning issues of content (curricula, guidelines) of the qualifications falls under the jurisdiction of MEC.

Private enterprises support and organise CVET by paying for in-service training and organising company-specific training for their staff, maintaining specialised vocational institutions, co-organising apprenticeship training, offering training places for adults studying at CVET institutions, financing part of their personnel’s self-motivated training by granting paid leave and by paying some training costs or granting study leave for the self-motivated study of the personnel.\(^{105}\)

### A4.2 Brief description of quality assurance arrangements in C-VET at system level

The quality assurance system in VET (IVET and CVET) in Finland is based on a Quality Management Recommendation and a VET Quality Strategy. The QM Recommendation serves as a practical assistant tool for VET providers to develop quality management and continuously improve the quality of their operations and results. The VET Quality Strategy defines the aims, guidelines and development measures of a common quality strategy for VET (IVET and CVET) on national level.

Hence, the quality assurance system in VET in Finland comprises of three major elements:

- National steering by national educational policy: For VET, a specific national VET Quality Strategy was developed;
- Quality management systems of individual VET/CVET providers: Guidelines were issued in QM Recommendations; and
- External evaluation of VET/CVET, carried out by the Finnish Education Evaluation Council.\(^{106}\)

The table below gives an overview of objectives of each element and the instruments connected to it.

**Table A4.1 Elements and instruments of the Finnish QA strategy in VET**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Scope</th>
<th>Implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National steering by national educational policy</td>
<td>Set national objectives for VET provision and its quality and ensure that the objectives are reached</td>
<td>The Development Plan for Education and Research (VET Quality Strategy)</td>
<td>Entire educational system, incl. VET</td>
<td>Adherence legally required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yearly defined aims for the quality management (VET Quality Strategy)</td>
<td>Entire educational system, incl. VET</td>
<td>Adherence legally required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Authorisations to provide vocational education and training (incl. criteria for funding operations and performance-based funding, qualifications requirements for teaching staff et al.)</td>
<td>All VET and CVET providers offering education and training for the formal qualifications</td>
<td>Legally required (Vocational Education Act 630/1998, The Vocational Adult Education Act (631/1998) and Decree (812/1998))</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Qualifications structure and the national core curricula (incl. requirements of competence-based qualifications)</td>
<td>All VET and CVET providers offering education and training for the formal qualifications</td>
<td>Legally required (Vocational Education Act 630/1998, The Vocational Adult Education Act (631/1998) and Decree (812/1998))</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^{105}\) ReferNet VET in Europe Country Report Finland, 2011, p. 36

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Scope</th>
<th>Implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality management systems of individual VET/CVET providers (QM Recommendations)</td>
<td>Ensure quality of VET providers and provisions</td>
<td>Requirement to have an adequate and effective quality management measure in place</td>
<td>All VET and CVET providers offering education and training for the formal qualifications</td>
<td>Legally required (Vocational Education Act 630/1998, The Vocational Adult Education Act (631/1998) and Decree (812/1998)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Obligation to evaluate their VET/CVET provision and its effectiveness on institutional basis</td>
<td>All VET and CVET providers offering education and training for the formal qualifications</td>
<td>Legally required (Vocational Education Act 630/1998, The Vocational Adult Education Act (631/1998) and Decree (812/1998)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET quality award</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>VET and CVET providers</td>
<td>Voluntary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Implementation of the quality recommendation for VET by individual provider</td>
<td></td>
<td>VET and CVET providers</td>
<td>Voluntary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External evaluation of VET/CVET (Education Evaluation Council)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Obligation to participate in external evaluation of the operations of the providers;</td>
<td>All VET and CVET providers offering education and training for the formal qualifications</td>
<td>Legally required (Vocational Education Act 630/1998, The Vocational Adult Education Act (631/1998) and Decree (812/1998)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ReferNET, national reference documents

The table shows that much emphasis is put on steering on national level; and many elements of the QA strategy are laid down in the Vocational Education Act, thus are legally required and in responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC).

Each provider is expected to have a **functioning operational system** to support the overall execution of the educational tasks in place; including QA. Providers have full autonomy to decide how they are implementing the requirements of the legislation. This means that they are free to choose what kind of QA systems or measures they are using. A wide variety of QA systems are used (EQFM, ISO, Balanced score card based, combinations of these and self-made “QA systems”). However, **internal evaluation** is a required part of each providers’ operational system. In addition, providers have to take part in **external evaluation**.

It is important to note that the system described above concerns mainly the sector of CVET for formal qualifications. However, commercial based training organisations often use well-established QA systems like ISO to provide orientation to customers. It is also possible that...
the educational sector has normative requirements concerning the provided training (e.g. in the field of social and health care).\textsuperscript{107}

A4.3 Processes entailed and actors involved

The \textbf{Finnish National Board of Education (FNBE)} supports the Ministry of Education and Culture in implementing and monitoring the VET system in Finland. It develops and presents the overall vocational qualifications structure, including the titles of the qualifications to the MEC, which confirms the proposal. Subsequently, the FNBE develops national core curricula and guidelines for vocational qualifications. Further training for the providers, teachers and trainers in the VET system is also provided and financed by the FNBE.

Different groups of stakeholders (e.g. social partners, central labour market organisations, student associations) have important roles in planning and in developing CVET as partners and supporters of adult education and training. They have representatives in the \textbf{Council for Lifelong Learning}, in the national education and training committees and in the qualification committees operating under the FNBE.

The \textbf{intermediate level administration} of CVET operates under the national central administration. From the beginning of 2010 the intermediate level administration was working with new structure constituting of two agencies: 6 Regional State Administrative Agencies (AVI) and 15 Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (ELY). Both AVIs and ELys have responsibilities in the educational sector including CVET. These intermediate level administration organisations have an important role in promoting vocational adult education and training and implementing continuing teacher education.

Even though there is no statutory obligation for the \textbf{local authorities} to organise vocational education and training, they have an obligation to co-finance it. The local authorities and the joint municipal boards maintain the majority of vocational institutions, including CVET.

\textbf{VET providers} are responsible for organising training in their areas, for matching provision with local labour market needs and for designing provider’s curricula based on the national core curricula and requirements of competence-based qualifications. They also decide autonomously on the types of institutions or units that they run.

A public VET provider is often a local authority, a municipal training consortium, a foundation or some other registered association, or a state enterprise. It is the independent task of an individual provider to define how to organise its work including administration, authority and duties of bodies and staff and other necessary matters in order to fulfil the educational tasks defined by the legislation and the authorisation for provision of VET/CVET by the MEC.

\textbf{Provider authorisation} is carried out by the MEC. The Ministry can re-assess the given authorisation due to the results of the assessment process. The authorisation can be cancelled or modified to better fit to the general pre-requirements of the authorisation.\textsuperscript{108} In addition, qualification committees (under the umbrella of the FNBE) evaluate the prerequisites of an individual provider to carry out education and training regarding specific qualifications.

External system level evaluation activities are mainly carried out by the \textbf{Finnish Education Evaluation Council} (see section A4.6.3).

\textsuperscript{107} E.g., training to become a certified OMT Therapist (Physiotherapy) which is provided by a special association (Suomen Ortopedinen Manuaalinen Terapia ry - SOMTY), a member of International Federation of Orthopaedic Manipulative Physical Therapists) which defines educational standards for the training.

\textsuperscript{108} It is planned that specific criteria and processes for the assessment of the requirements for the provision authorisation at the provider level will be developed (see e.g. VET Quality Strategy 2011-2020, p. 5).
A4.4 Evolutions and trends

The system level QA in Finnish VET and CVET is based on the principles of continuous improvement of the quality of vocational education and training. Constant work on the further development of the QA is being done at all levels.

To make sure that the individual measures and instruments for QA that are in use in Finland fit together and constitute a comprehensive system, a ‘VET Quality Strategy’ was developed, and a Quality Management Recommendation was issued.

There is a strong consensus that the past work on quality assurance in VET/CVET has had a truly positive impact on the overall quality of CVET in Finland. The nationwide evaluation on quality in VET from 2004 and 2009 show a clear improvement; but also help to define those areas which need more attention and support.

A4.5 Comparison with EQAVET

EQAVET (or its processor CQAF) have played an important role in the development and construction of Finnish QA instruments. The quality circle approach is clearly to be recognized in the approach of the Finnish QA system for VET/CVET. The descriptors and indicators of EQAVET are represented in the system level measures. National evaluations are carried out; the results are fed back to the new cycle.

The table below shows how the EQAVET system level descriptors are taken up in Quality Assurance measures in Finland on system level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EQAVET system level descriptor</th>
<th>Take-up in QA on system level in Finland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>A national quality strategy for VET (incl. CVET) was developed and reviewed; and QA recommendations were issued. The international policies and mechanisms relating to quality assurance (EQAVET, EOF, ECVET) are seen as important measures for the further development of the QA of VET in Finland and are explicitly stated in the respective policy documents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals/objectives of VET are described for the medium and long terms, and linked to European goals</td>
<td>The relevant stakeholders participate in setting VET goals and objectives at the different levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targets are established and monitored through specific indicators (success criteria)</td>
<td>Targets are set in the Development Plan for Education and Research; nationwide evaluations are carried out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanisms and procedures were established to identify training needs</td>
<td>Established through cooperation between governmental actors and stakeholders. However this is not part of the quality assurance approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An information policy was devised to ensure optimum disclosure of quality results/outcomes subject to national/ regional data protection requirements</td>
<td>Guidance by the educational administration through development and information services is provided. However, the above is not part of the quality assurance system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards and guidelines for recognition, validation and certification of competences of individuals were defined</td>
<td>All quality assured providers have to follow nationally defined qualifications standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation plans are established in cooperation with social partners, VET providers and other relevant stakeholders at the different levels</td>
<td>In general yes Qualification committees representing stakeholders assess providers’ capacity to deliver training in a given sector/ professional area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation plans include consideration of the resources required, the capacity of the users and the tools and guidelines needed for support</td>
<td>This is not clearly part of the quality assurance instrument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidelines and standards were devised for implementation at different levels</td>
<td>Yes – in the QA Recommendation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation plans include specific support towards the training of teachers and trainers</td>
<td>The FNBE finances and provides further training for the teachers and trainers However this aspect is not clearly covered in the quality assurance measure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET providers’ responsibilities in the implementation process are explicitly described and made transparent</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A national and/or regional quality assurance framework was devised and includes guidelines and quality standards at VET-provider level to promote continuous improvement and self-regulation</td>
<td>Yes - in the QM Recommendation and the VET Quality Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A methodology for evaluation was devised, covering internal and external evaluation</td>
<td>Yes, by the Finnish Education Evaluation Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder involvement in the monitoring and evaluation process is agreed and clearly described</td>
<td>The Council of Lifelong Learning (stakeholder organisation) cooperates closely with the MEC Not clear whether this concerns also quality assurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The national/regional standards and processes for improving and assuring quality are relevant and proportionate to the needs of the sector</td>
<td>Yes – these are based on the analysis of state of play of quality assurance implementation in the system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems are subject to self-evaluation, internal and external review, as appropriate</td>
<td>Yes – besides the external evaluation, providers need to carry out self-evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early warning systems are implemented</td>
<td>./</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance indicators are applied</td>
<td>Yes – the quality assurance strategy support the collection of data on these indicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant, regular and coherent data collection takes place, in order to measure success and identify areas for improvement. Appropriate data collection methodologies were devised, e.g. questionnaires and indicators/metrics</td>
<td>Yes – the data are collected on national level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedures, mechanisms and instruments for undertaking reviews are defined at all levels</td>
<td>The data collected through national evaluation feed back into review. The quality assurance strategy is based on an analysis of the state of play of quality assurance in the country</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Processes are regularly reviewed and action plans for change devised. Systems are adjusted accordingly. The quality assurance strategy was adopted for the first time in 2011 but the quality assurance approach is continuously improved since late 90’s. Information on the outcomes of evaluation is made publicly available. Yes

A4.6 Description of concrete quality assurances measures

A4.6.1 Name/designation:

The Finnish Quality Management Recommendation for Vocational Education and Training

Developer/owner/provider:

The QM Recommendation was prepared by the Finnish National Board of Education working in co-operation with VET providers, representatives of the world of work and business as well as students. It was adopted by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The first version of the Quality Management Recommendation was published in 1999. A revised edition was published in 2008.

Status:

The Recommendation serves as a practical assistant tool for VET providers to develop quality management and aims to encourage them to continuously improve the quality of their operations and results. It gives recommendations and raises issues and policies which are considered to be of importance for QM development work in VET. It does not present solutions or ready-made approaches or offer minimum criteria for Quality Management. The way in which the recommendations are applied is left to the users. The document is not intended to replace any existing quality assurance systems, mechanisms or steer users to apply any specific system or mechanism. The recommendations can be applied to existing QM systems.

Target group:

The Quality Management Recommendation for VET in Finland aims at all types of vocational education and training in Finland (thus including CVET).

Description:

The Quality Management Recommendation provides a framework for continuous and long-term development of quality management in all types of VET. The Recommendation can be applied to initial VET and further and continuous training, competence tests and training preparing for competence-based qualifications, as well as curricular or school-based VET, special needs VET and apprenticeship training. It can be applied at both VET provider and individual unit levels and is relevant to users at different stages of quality improvement.
The recommendation describes characteristics of excellence and gives a uniform structure for the QA implementation. It promotes the importance of QA on national and provider level and supports and encourages VET providers to implement national and European OM initiatives and policies, e.g. CQAF, EQAVET. It takes into account special characteristics, key priorities and development targets of vocational education and training, as defined in national strategies. The document also sets out specifications and examples intended to help VET providers to put the recommendations into action. The given examples are meant to be indicative and do not cover all forms and situations of vocational education and training.

Scope/importance:

The Recommendation has a valid status on present and future overall development of quality in VET/CVET and is referenced in other key documents concerning the future development of QA on system level (VET Quality Strategy 2011-2020).

Use:

The use of the recommendations is voluntarily. However, the Recommendation is widely used on the field of VET/CVET in Finland. It is seen as a practical guide in implementing various QA measures on provider level; supporting providers to meet the requirements of the legal regulation concerning quality assurance (obligation to evaluate their own operations and participate in external evaluation). According to the VET Quality Strategy 2011-2020, the Recommendation serves the providers well especially concerning the planning phase.

The main strength of the measure is that it provides a unified framework for the long-term development of quality assurance which is applicable for all types of VET and CVET. It also

Source: Finnish National Board of Education


As confirmed in interviews carried out by ICF GHK

VET Quality Strategy, p 22.
allows enough space for providers to decide which specific QA system, mechanism or tool suits their demands (EQFM, ISO etc.).

**Comparison with EQAVET:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use of cycle</th>
<th>The Recommendation works with the phases of planning, implementation, evaluation and review.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of indicators / criteria</td>
<td>Indicators and criteria are defined to each phase.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQAVET building blocks</td>
<td>The Recommendation corresponds to building blocks 5 (communications strategy) and 9 (quality assurance).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion:**

The Recommendation is based on the Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF). It is in coherence with the EQAVET recommendations even though it was developed before the publication of the EQAVET recommendations. In particular, the quality circle and descriptors for excellence are crucial elements of the Recommendation.

**A4.6.2 Name/designation: The Finnish VET Quality Strategy 2011-2020**

**Developer/owner/provider:**

The VET Quality Strategy 2011-2020 was prepared by appointed committee (2010-2011). The committee had 16 members representing various actors and stakeholders from the field of VET, the world of work and business as well as students. An extensive internet based interview survey was conducted for the support of the work of the committee. Through the survey, views of various stakeholders on what is high quality VET were gathered. Numerous experts of QA were also invited to be heard by the committee.

**Status:**

The VET Quality Strategy was endorsed by the Ministry of Education and Culture as a strategy paper defining quality management in VET in its various forms in Finland. It is meant to be a steering and supporting tool for the implementation of QA in VET.

**Target group:**

The strategy targets all sectors of national QA system and all forms of VET. The main target groups of the quality strategy are VET/CVET providers, their owner communities and the administration of VET/CVET.

**Description:**

The VET Quality Strategy is a proposal for national quality strategy for all VET provisions. It defines the aims, guidelines and development measures for the common quality strategy for VET so that all sectors of national QA system and all forms of VET are covered (incl. CVET). For example, according to the quality strategy, the quality assurance will be made systematic at all levels of operation and all forms of VET.

**Process:**

The main focus of the VET Quality Strategy is the improvement of the quality of VET/CVET on national level. It aims to create parallel principles for QA of different actors within the VET system.

The VET Strategy proposes several strategic definitions for QA in VET and for supportive development measures:
QA will be made systematic at all levels of operation and all forms of VET. In support of this aim, steering tools in VET will be developed to support quality assurance and continuous improvement;
- The evaluation of prerequisites for providing VET will be given a clearer role in QA and in continuous quality improvement. A set of criteria will be developed for the evaluation;
- The system of VET financing will support VET providers in achieving the aims set for the quality of operations and continuous quality improvement. The funding system will be clarified to apply uniform criteria to the funding of different forms of VET;
- The steering of and decision-making in VET will be based on reliable and varied performance and evaluation data and other knowledge bases. To this end, a uniform knowledge architecture will be developed in support of steering, monitoring and decision-making;
- The quality of education and training will be transparent and based on public performance data. To achieve this, all salient findings relating to the quality and impact of VET will be published;
- Systematic and long-term support will be given to VET providers at different stages of QA work in developing their QA by means of self-evaluation and peer learning, as well as peer review, recognition and incentives;
- Knowledge needed for the development of VET provision, administration and operation will be strong and up-to-date and will be constantly enhanced. To attain this aim, measures will be taken to ensure that the competencies of the teaching personnel, institutional management and on-the-job mentors are up-to-date;
- Quality assurance in VET will use uniform operational principles, procedures and processes which help achieve the aims set for VET;
- Quality improvement will be based on continual learning and operational development. To this end, procedures will be developed for the identification and utilisation of good practices;
- Quality assurance in VET will be practised and actively developed in collaboration with national and international partners;
- The lines of strategy and their implementation will be reviewed every three years and the strategy will be revised, where necessary.\textsuperscript{112}

Scope/importance:

The strategic definitions of the VET Quality Strategy are operationalized in the Education Development and Research Plan which is developed for every governmental period and divided in to specific actions and measures. A special Quality Workgroup for VET was established in 2011 with the mission to create and develop criteria for the evaluation of the provider level QA systems.

Use:

The VET Quality Strategy is relatively young. It is not yet possible to evaluate its take up or success. However, it can be stated that the VET Quality Strategy has a profound impact on the development of the QA in VET in Finland.\textsuperscript{113} Several measures were taken to implement the strategic definitions and development measures defined in the strategy. For example, a special funding is available to establish regional quality networks through which the further development of QA in VET is supported.

\textsuperscript{112} VET Quality Strategy 2011, p.5
\textsuperscript{113} Interviews carried out by ICF GHK
Comparison with EQAVET:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of cycle</td>
<td>The VET strategy is based on a cyclic understanding of QA and contains guidelines for all phases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of descriptors</td>
<td>The VET strategy contains a number of goals, which are very close to the EQAVET descriptors (see above).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of indicators / criteria</td>
<td>The VET Quality Strategy is not aiming to be a specific QA system, mechanism or tool therefore it does not seek to offer specific criteria, standards or indicators as such. More detailed criteria and indicators will be developed to support the implementation of the different aims or strategic definitions accordingly. However, the EQAVET recommendations have had a central role in developing the strategy for VET.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQAVET building blocks</td>
<td>The VET strategy corresponds to all ten EQAVET building blocks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion:

The EQAVET recommendations were a central starting point for the VET Quality Strategy. The VET Quality Strategy complies with the EQAVET building blocks, hence is in full compliance with the EQAVET recommendations.

A4.6.3 Name/designation: Evaluations by the Finnish Education Evaluation Council

Developer/owner/provider:

The council is appointed by the Ministry of Education and Culture and it is an independent expertise body with 14 members maximum.

Status:

Legal requirement defined in the Vocational Adult Education Act (law 631/1998).

Target group:

Educational institutions and training providers; incl. VET

Description:

The Council conducts evaluations of learning outcomes on system level. The purpose, role and tasks of the council are defined by law.\(^{114}\) In cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Culture, it is responsible for external educational evaluation and its development also in the vocational adult education. Evaluation supports decision making by the Ministry of Education and Culture, education providers, and educational institutes.

The Council and its operational unit aim to

- Develop an evaluation system;
- Develop evaluation methods for the needs of various users;
- Carry out evaluations through a network which is built on partnership with experts from fields of science and research, educational administration, teaching, and various interest groups;
- Disseminate good and successful practices;

The method applied by the Council for national evaluations makes use of self-evaluations carried out by educational institutions. International co-operation is seen as an important

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\(^{114}\) In the legislation of the Vocational Adult Education Act (law 631/1998) all CVET providers holding license to provide education and training for CVET have to evaluate the education and training they are providing internally. Furthermore, they are obliged to participate in external evaluations.
asset. Among the partners are the Nordic Council of Ministers, the CEDEFOP, the OECD, and the EU.  

Process:
The main focus of the work of the Education Evaluation Council and its Secretary is to produce information for the support of the decision making of making by the Ministry of Education and Culture, education providers, and educational institutes. The main tasks hence are:

- To gather and analyse information in order to provide a basis for national level education policymaking and educational development;
- To gather and analyse information in order to provide a basis for local efforts and decision making on educational development; and
- To support students' learning, educators' work and schools development.

Depending on the focus and evaluation task in hand, the methods and constellations of the evaluations vary, i.e. approaches, methods and used data is chosen according to the defined task.

Scope/importance:
The Council carries out nationwide evaluations of varying scope which can take up to 2-3 years to complete. The evaluations are an important source of information and feedback for decision making on system level.

Use:
At present, a ‘Working Group of Quality Development in VET’ is addresses the development of QA in VET/CVET at all levels. One key assignment is, among others, to define criteria and processes for the external audits of VET/CVET providers; for instance, to underpin the assessment of compliance to the authorisation requirements.

Comparison with EQAVET:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use of cycle</th>
<th>The work of the Council is based on a cyclic understanding of QA. It specifically feeds into the two last phases (review/evaluation) and contains guidelines for all phases.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of descriptors</td>
<td>A ‘Working Group of Quality Development in VET’ is currently busy defining criteria and processes for the external audits of VET/CVET providers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of indicators / criteria</td>
<td>The criteria used vary from one assignment to another. However, they are based on the existing QA system for VET/CVET in Finland, meaning that the principles of EQAVET are taken into consideration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQAVET building blocks</td>
<td>The work of the Education Evaluation Council corresponds particularly to building block 4 (identifying information and data).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion:
The work of the Finnish Education Evaluation Council feeds into the evaluation and review of systems and provisions; hence, plays an important role to feed into these phases of the quality cycle.

A4.6.4 Name/designation: Peer Review
Developer/owner/provider: Finnish
National Board of Education

115 http://www.edev.fi/portal/english5
Status:
Quality assurance on provider level - participation in Peer Review is voluntary.

Target group:
Peer Review in Finland is used to evaluate and review institutions (e.g. CVET providers), but can also be used for the review of strategies and policies.

Description:
Peer Review is a structured form of external evaluation based on pre-defined criteria. It aims to help and support the reviewed educational institution in its quality assurance and quality development work. It consists of four sequential phases (preparation, peer visit, peer report and implementation phases).

An external group of experts (‘peers’) is assessing the quality of different fields of the institution. The assessments can concentrate on a very specific aspect (e.g. student counseling) or take a wider perspective (e.g. organisational development). Peers are external but work in a similar environment and have specific professional expertise and knowledge of the evaluated subject.

The Peer Review method applied in Finland is based on the developed European Peer Review procedure which follows the guidelines of the CQAF model (Common Quality Assurance Framework). For the purpose of reviewing the Finnish competence-based qualification system; special national guidelines, evaluation areas and criteria were developed.

The FNBE is a supports the organisation for the Peer Review in Finland. It provides financing and training programmes for the peers.

Process:
The four main phases of a Peer Review procedure in Finland follow the European procedure:
3. Preparatory phase;
4. Peer Visit phase;
5. Production of a Peer Report;
6. Implementation of the Peer Review Results.

In line with a cyclic understanding of quality assurance, these four phases may eventually be followed by a new Peer Review procedure. A special feature of the Finnish Peer Review method is that it offers practical guidance for the evaluation process conducted by defining national areas of evaluation, criteria and indicators for different target groups.

Scope/importance:
The use of Peer Review and participation in Peer Review process is voluntary and is based on the self-initiative of a particular provider.

Use:
There is no up-to-date statistical data to assess how widely the Peer Review is used by Finnish CVET providers. However, according to experts Peer Review is an active and effective form of external evaluation which is not only used to evaluate activities of a specific school but it is also used for evaluation inside the competence-based qualification system as well as within various projects.\footnote{See more: European Peer Review Manual for VET 2009, pp.3-8.}

\footnote{Interviews conducted by ICF GHK}
Comparison with EQAVET:

| Use of cycle | The Peer Review method is based on a cyclic understanding of QA. The Finnish Peer Review Process is based on the European Peer Review procedure which follows the guidelines of the CQAF model (Common Quality Assurance Framework). |
| Use of descriptors | In a manual developed by the FNBE for Peer Review in VET, 14 different areas of quality were defined which need to be evaluated. A similar manual exist for the Peer Review of provision of education and training for competence based qualifications. Here, 16 different areas of quality were developed. |
| Use of indicators / criteria | For each area of quality, examples of the indicators together with criteria for evaluation are presented. For the Peer Review in the Finnish VET/CVET, the indicators and criteria are based on the development work of the European Peer Review. |
| EQAVET building blocks | The peer review process corresponds to the EQAVET building block 7, feedback and its importance to quality assurance. |

Conclusion:

In Finland, the instrument of Peer Review has found new areas of implementation. It is not only used to evaluate educational institutes and policies, but is also used for the purposes of quality assurance in the competence-based qualification system. Furthermore, it is successfully used in quality assurance of various development projects which have an important role in the overall development of the Finnish VET.

As the development of the European and Finnish Peer Review processes were based on the guidelines of the CQAF, the Peer Review complies with the EQAVET recommendations.

A4.7 Sources

Literature:


Websites:
http://www.oph.fi/saadokset_ja_ohjeet/laadunhallinnan_tuki/vertaisarvioinnit
http://www.oamk.fi/amok/taydennyskoulu/taydennyskoulu/kouluvalmennus/kouluvalmennuskalenteri/?ak_osio=tkkuvaus&id=470&kid=836&kieli=FI
http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Koulutus/ammattilainen_koulutus/?lang=fi
http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Koulutus/aijuskoulutus_ja_vapaa_sivistystyoe/?lang=fi

Interviews:
Interviews with three responsible people in the following institutions
- The Finnish National Board of Education (Opetushallitus);
- The Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, Department for Education Policy, Strategy and Steering Group (KOPO);
Annex 5  Country Report: France

A5.1  Brief description of the C-VET system

The French continuous vocational education and training (CVET) system is based on the principle that all adults (irrespective of their age and their employments status) should benefit from training in continuation of their initial (general, professional or vocational) education and training. This principle was given a legal value for employees in 2004 with a Law\(^{119}\) on lifelong (professional) training, which grants them the right to get (and claim) 20 hours of training per year.

In parallel, employers are required to participate in financing training of their employees\(^{119}\) during their working time. In each sector, employers apply national inter-professional (branch) agreements negotiated by social partners.

The 2009 VET reform extends this legal right to all and facilitates the portability of this right in the transition from employment to unemployment (and \textit{vice versa}). Job seekers can also benefit from training programs. In this case, funding is primarily based on unemployment insurance and supported by national or regional authorities. For self-employed (farmers, artisans, independents), professional organisations are responsible for vocational training (collecting contributions, pooling resources and allocating funds to training).

CVET is considered part of a wider lifelong learning strategy which includes, on top of continuous training: professional activities, volunteering, career guidance and competences identification and assessment\(^{120}\), support to employment, training and validation of non-formal and informal learning.

France reports spending 1.6% of its GDP in vocational training (more than EUR 30 billion), financed mainly by public authorities (more than 20% by national authorities and the national employment service; about 15% by regional authorities; and about 20% by the public sector for public servants), the business sector (more than 40%) and households (4%). Representatives of the actors described below are brought together at national level in a coordinating body: National Council for Lifelong Vocational Training\(^{121}\).

The following actors are involved in and responsible for some aspects of CVET in France:

- **Public authorities:**
  - At national level, several ministries are involved in CVET (e.g., but the two main ministries in charge are:
    - Ministry in charge of employment and social affairs\(^{122}\): policy orientation, legal dimension, frames dialogue with social partners, funding action for specific target groups (migrants, prisoners, etc.);
    - Ministry in charge of education\(^{123}\) (excluding higher education): strategy and operations (including the organisation of adult learning) related to lifelong learning. This Ministry also oversees the Greta Network (network of institutions of adult continuous education and training).
  - Regions are also involved in vocational training for young people and unemployed adults: they are competent for designing and implementing training policies, depending on economic and social priorities in their territory. Since 2009\(^{124}\), regional

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\(^{118}\) Loi du 4 mai 2004 relative à la formation professionnelle tout au long de la vie, le droit individuel à la formation (DIF)

\(^{119}\) Minimum 1.6% of payroll

\(^{120}\) Bilan de compétences

\(^{121}\) Conseil national de la formation professionnelle tout au long de la vie

\(^{122}\) Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi, de la Formation professionnelle et du Dialogue social

\(^{123}\) Ministère de l'Éducation nationale

\(^{124}\) Loi du 25 novembre 2009 relative à l'orientation et à la formation professionnelle tout au long de la vie
action plans for vocational training take the form of an agreement between regional and national authorities.

- The national employment service (Pôle Emploi) is the interface between job seekers and companies and, as such, aims to adapt its training offer to individual requirements, but also employment opportunities in the area. Its main mandate is to match training offer and job-seeker needs, but it also provides training to jobseekers.

- The business sector’s contribution to CVET is organised by branch organisations (OPCA). OPCA collect mandatory contributions paid out by companies for vocational training of their employees, pool resources and implement training policies defined by the branches.

- Social partners (professional and union organisations) contribute to the definition and implementation of FPC policy through negotiation of inter-professional agreements; participate in the management of OPCA.

Training is delivered by one of the 48,000 public and private training providers operating in the country (respectively 20% and 80% of the training activity). Public providers cover 20% of CVET provision in France. These include the local public education institutions group (Greta network), the national adult education society (AFPA), universities’ lifelong learning activities, agriculture-related training providers and CNAM. The private provision landscape is more open (there is no specific requirement in the country to set up a business that delivers training as a service - in general any legal entity may provide training services) and scattered (variety of training providers, from individual players to greater training provider organisations).

A5.2 Description of quality assurance arrangements in C-VET at system level

There is no unified system level quality assurance framework in France, but rather multiple sub-systems for quality assurance in CVET.

Quality assurance in CVET in France can be divided into two main strands:

- Quality of public CVET provision, and
- Quality of private CVET provision.

On top of these two strands, some other aspects of CVET provision in France also contribute to quality assurance in CVET.

Quality assurance framework for public CVET provision

The most structured and closer to a system-wide framework is the quality assurance system in place under the Greta network – the GretaPlus label. GretaPlus is a quality label for training providers within the Greta network (public providers for adult training) based on compliance with a good practice reference document. The label has been developed in the mid-1970’s with major changes until the adoption of new reference documents in 2009, designed together with the National Standardisation Agency AFNOR following the 2009 VET reform. GretaPlus focuses on providers and relies on external review. The Greta Plus label is also the only measure that has taken EQAVET into account in its latest developments.

However, the GretaPlus label only applies to only part of the CVET providers in the country: local public education institutions group under the Greta network. It does not apply to other public providers (AFPA, universities’ lifelong learning activities, agriculture-related training providers and CNAM), and to private providers, which deliver the large majority of training.

125 Organismes paritaires collecteurs agréés (OPCA)
126 Association nationale pour la formation professionnelle des adultes
127 Conservatoire national des arts et métiers
128 Personne physique ou morale
129 'referentiel'
Quality assurance framework for private CVET provision

The quality assurance landscape is complex for private providers: Quality assurance arrangements and actors involved are numerous. The most known and used measures apply to the entire French territory. Although internal quality approaches exist, most rely on external quality assurance of private players. These quality assurance arrangements may focus on quality at organisational level (management, such as ISO certification), service level (general or specific to the provision of training services).

This report presents examples of such quality assurance approaches for private CVET provision:

- The national vocational training federation (FFP\textsuperscript{130}), which initiated the establishment of the national training provider association (OPQF\textsuperscript{131}) and its accreditation system for training providers (organisations).
- The national standardisation organisation (AFNOR\textsuperscript{132}) developed standards relevant to the provision of service, including the provision of training services, all relevant to the context of this study. AFNOR is involved in designing standards on which most quality assurance systems are based (such as the Greta quality assurance framework\textsuperscript{133} and the accreditation of training providers by OPQF\textsuperscript{134}).

The complementarity of the tools relies on the fact that actors may choose a tool or another, depending on their nature and the objectives behind their quality assurance strategy. Those providers who look for wide/international visibility of their quality assurance and who would like to show that quality assurance is embedded in the organisation would go for ISO certification. Providers who want to promote client satisfaction would go for OPQF.

Other aspects of CVET provision which contribute to quality assurance

Beyond the formal quality assurance approaches, some other aspects of CVET provision in France also contribute to quality assurance in CVET:

- Competition between public and private providers: While public providers have to comply with quality assurance requirements such as those defined for the Greta network, quality assurance in CVET is voluntary for private providers. However, training delivery for public authorities (National authorities, regional authorities, public employment service, private sector, etc.) is often contracted following a tendering procedure. Calls for tender almost always require that tenderers provide evidence of the existence of a quality assurance system. Private users (companies or individuals) of training tend to require/rely on evidence of quality measures. As a consequence, quality assurance is de facto required for the provision of training services in France.
- Evaluation of teachers’ training: In the public provision of CVET, the Inspectorate body (national and its regional representatives) regularly evaluate public ongoing teacher education schemes. This contributes to ensuring quality of public CVET provision.
- National definition of professional qualifications and National Qualifications Registry: Professional qualifications in France are defined at national level and registered in a national qualifications registry. This ensures quality and transparency of qualifications awarded through CVET.

Additionally, it is worth mentioning that at regional level, some regional Councils, have adopted ‘quality charters’. These documents are co-signed by vocational bodies

\textsuperscript{130} Fédération de la Formation Professionnelle  
\textsuperscript{131} Office Professional de Qualification des Organismes de Formation  
\textsuperscript{132} French member to the CEN  
\textsuperscript{133} MEN/AFNOR X50-762  
\textsuperscript{134} NF X 50-091
representing particular sectors, or by training organisations that enter into contractual agreements with the region.²³⁵

A5.3 Processes entailed and actors involved

This sub-section defines the processes entailed and role of CVET quality assurance actors, per type of quality assurance approaches in place in France - charters and labels, certification, accreditation - and introduces the actors involved in each type of measure.

The following actors are involved in the CVET system (but not specifically for quality assurance):

- CVET policies are the responsibility of the Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs at national level. This includes policy orientation, legal dimension, dialogue with social partners, funding action for specific target groups (migrants, prisoners, etc.).
- Regional authorities are competent for designing and implementing training policies, depending on economic and social priorities in their territory.
- The national employment service is responsible for training unemployed people. It is the interface between job seekers and companies and, as such, aims to adapt its training offer to individual requirements, but also employment opportunities at national level.
- The Ministry of Education is in charge of coordination of the Greta network.
- Other stakeholders include the business sector. Enterprises’ contribution to CVET is organised by branch organisations.

These institutions are included in the goal-setting process in the following way:

- The Ministry in charge of employment and vocational training regularly publishes employment market statistics and analysis. These provide an overview of the job market situation in the country.
- Specific diagnosis on employment and training and forecast the future needs in specific business sectors are the responsibility of the observatories of occupations and qualifications, managed by the social partners (professional branch organisations).

Regarding the development of qualifications, professional qualifications in France are defined at national level and registered in a national qualifications registry. This ensures quality and transparency of qualifications awarded through CVET. Validation of non-formal and informal learning is guaranteed and defined (process and requirements) through the 2002 Social Modernisation Act.

More details about each process are provided in the description of concrete quality measures under section A5.6.

Charters and labels

A series of charters and labels have been developed at national and regional level. This is the case for GretaPlus and FL²³⁶ at national level and for the regional label ‘Languedoc Roussillon’. Labels imply the existence of a reference document that lists requirements (Charter). These requirements may take the form of standards (same as in the case of certification) or a set of requirements similar to the one used for accreditation. The main difference or labels with certification and accreditation is that labels mainly rely on self-assessment, i.e. training providers auto-declare their compliance with the requirements listed in the charter.

²³⁵ [http://www.laregion.fr/3217-charte-qualite.htm](http://www.laregion.fr/3217-charte-qualite.htm)

²³⁶ [Français Langue d'Integration](http://www.laregion.fr/3217-charte-qualite.htm)
Labels are more open and ‘soft’ than standardisation and certification, and give the opportunity to promote any aspect of quality assurance, depending on the principles compiled in the charter on which the label is based.

The award process of the GretaPlus label is as follows: Greta submit an application form to the Ministry of National Education. The Greta are then audited on site. Before the audit, the regional representation of the Ministry performs test audits. Following the audit and its result, a national label committee, bringing together Ministry representatives, partners and customers of Greta, decide on the label award. The label is renewable after three years.

By 2010, about 40 of 220 eligible Greta (representing 5,600 training sites all over the country) had been awarded the quality label GretaPlus. The GretaPlus label and its award process are further described under section Error! Reference source not found..

Certification

Certification is based on the use of standards understood as in the context of the CEN, i.e. a recognised and comprehensive reference documents. These standards focus either on a system or on an occupation:

- System-related standards cover management and organisational aspects of quality assurance, i.e. quality assurance embedded in the management and structure of the organisation. This is the case for the ISO 9001 standard. 180 training providers in France are ISO certified.
- Profession-related standards focus on a specific service, such as training provision. At international level, ISO 29990:2010 specifies basic requirements for providers of learning services in non-formal education and training. At national level profession-related standards can either be defined by AFNOR for the entire profession or developed in cooperation with a specific provider. The earlier is a general and national set of standards, such as ANF 214, which includes standards related to quality of service provision. This is the case for the ‘NF service metiers’ standard, which has been chosen by about 100 training providers in France. The latter is based on a commitment from a service provider to comply with a set of standards jointly defined with AFNOR and specific to their training provision. This is the case for instance for training offered by public postal services (La Poste) and the Greta.

Training providers may be certified against these standards, i.e. given (written) assurance by a third party that one (or all) of their processes or services conforms to specified requirements. Certification implies an expert audit (and follow-up audits e.g. every five years) assessing compliance with these standards.

The national standardisation body in France is AFNOR. AFNOR also provides certification services, i.e. provides certification against standards that it has (co-)developed.

Accreditation

Accreditation in CVET is the procedure by which the national training provider association gives formal recognition that a training provider (organisation) is competent to deliver a specific kind of training services.

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137 Academie
139 https://eduscol.education.fr/pid23192/demarche-qualite.html
140 European Committee for Standardization/Comite European de Normalisation
141 document, established by consensus and approved by a recognised body, that provides, for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their results, aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree of order in a given context (sources: http://www.cen.eu/bose/Pages/glossary.aspx)
142 ‘référentiel’
The national vocational training federation (FFP) is at the origin of the establishment of an accreditation system for training providers (organisations) by the national training provider association (OPQF). This accreditation is mandatory for all members of FFP and required for them to deliver OPQF-accredited training.

This accreditation focuses on recognition of professionalism and client satisfaction. This is based on a set of criteria (legal, administrative, financial, pedagogical, resources and client satisfaction). Accreditation is granted for a specific subject (OPQF offers 22 different accreditations for training provision).

900 training providers (organisations) are accredited OPQF.

A5.4 Evolution and trends

The GretaPlus label has evolved in the last years. The label was reformed in 2009, following the 2009 VET reform in France. Since October 2009, the old label framework was replaced with a new one, co-designed with AFNOR. One of the particularities of the GretaPlus compared to other measures in France is that the EQAVET Recommendation was taken into account in the revision of the quality assurance framework for GretaPlus in 2009 (see section A5.5)

Other quality measures in VET have also developed in the last years. This development is market-driven: users and clients have been more demanding in terms of quality. In reaction, the market has developed tools and measures to evidence the existence of quality approaches in CVET provision.

This trend is also influenced by the ongoing debate in France about the effectiveness and efficiency of public spending in CVET.

However, the VET quality assurance landscape in France has become quite complex. Interviewees claimed that there is a trend to multiply quality assurance measures and to make the landscape even more difficult to understand and to work with for training providers and trainees. Although existing measures and tools are complementary and pursue different objectives, quality assurance organisations have perceived a need for users to better understand the quality assurance landscape and have carried out information sessions on this topic. Recently, the regional branch of FFP in Languedoc Roussillon organised a conference on the quality assurance landscape for VET training providers. This might lead to resistance towards quality measures or new approaches, including in the framework of the EQAVET.

A5.5 Comparison with EQAVET

In general the EQAVET toolbox is perceived as being compatible with these tools. The basic principles behind the EQAVET framework, in particular its structure in line with the Deming cycle (plan, do, check, act) is followed by many actors, some referring to the EQAVET quality cycle (GretaPlus), other without referring to EQAVET (e.g. OPQCM). Most quality assurance systems comply with these general principles in it in their basic features.

The table below shows whether and how the GretaPlus framework corresponds to the EQAVET system level descriptors for quality assurance. Other aspects of CVET provision in France - as part of the CVET system but not necessarily part of the GretaPlus framework – are also specified, when relevant.

Table A5.1 EQAVET system level descriptors and take-up in QA on system level

| Planning |

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143 http://www.emploir.com/agenda/matinnee-de-conference-sur-les-demarches-qualite-pour-les-organismes-de-formation-organise-par-la-ffp-languedoc-roussillon_3364.html

129
Direct link with the 16th criterion of the GretaPlus quality Framework: ‘16. The management determines and evolves the policy of the organisation’

| Goals/objectives of VET are described for the medium and long terms, and linked to European goals | Direct link with the 16th criterion of the GretaPlus quality Framework |
| The relevant stakeholders participate in setting VET goals and objectives at the different levels | Yes |
| Targets are established and monitored through specific indicators (success criteria) | Direct link with the 17th criterion of the GretaPlus quality Framework |
| Mechanisms and procedures have been established to identify training needs | This is part of the 20th criterion of the GretaPlus framework. |
| An information policy has been devised to ensure optimum disclosure of quality results/outcomes subject to national/regional data protection requirements | Not specified |
| Standards and guidelines for recognition, validation and certification of competences of individuals have been defined | Generally yes in France, more specifically in the context of the GretaPlus label, (4th, 5th and 10th criterion of the GretaPlus framework). |

Implementation

Direct link with the 17th criterion of the GretaPlus quality Framework: ‘17. The management arranges the modalities for the implementation and monitoring of its policy and its commitments’.

| Implementation plans are established in cooperation with social partners, VET providers and other relevant stakeholders at the different levels | In the context of GretaPlus: social partners are not involved in the label award committee |
| Implementation plans include consideration of the resources required, the capacity of the users and the tools and guidelines needed for support | Partly covered in the 11th criterion of the GretaPlus framework. |
| Guidelines and standards have been devised for implementation at different levels | Not specified |
| Implementation plans include specific support towards the training of teachers and trainers | Implied in the 11th criterion of the GretaPlus framework. |
| VET providers’ responsibilities in the implementation process are explicitly described and made transparent | Implied in the 6th criterion of the GretaPlus framework |
| A national and/or regional quality assurance framework has been devised and includes guidelines and quality standards at VET-provider level to promote continuous improvement and self-regulation | This is the object of the AFNOR BPX50782 framework applicable to the GretaPlus label |

Evaluation

Direct link with the 18th criterion of the GretaPlus quality Framework: 18. The management evaluates its policy and the modalities of its implementation.

| A methodology for evaluation has been devised, covering internal and external evaluation | Linked with the 15th criterion of the GretaPlus quality Framework |
| Stakeholder involvement in the monitoring and evaluation process is agreed and clearly described | Yes |
| The national/regional standards and processes for improving and assuring quality are relevant and proportionate to the needs of the sector | According to Criteria 7-9 of the GretaPlus framework |
| Systems are subject to self-evaluation, internal and external review, as appropriate | Not specified |
| Early warning systems are implemented | Not specified |
Performance indicators are applied | Not specified
---|---
Relevant, regular and coherent data collection takes place, in order to measure success and identify areas for improvement. Appropriate data collection methodologies have been devised, e.g. questionnaires and indicators/metrics | Not specified

**Review**

Direct link with the 19th criterion of the GretaPlus quality Framework: 19. The management makes the necessary adjustments of its policies and the modalities of its implementation.

Procedures, mechanisms and instruments for undertaking reviews are defined at all levels | Not specified

Processes are regularly reviewed and action plans for change devised. Systems are adjusted accordingly | Not specified

Information on the outcomes of evaluation is made publicly available | Not specified

Source: ICF GHK, Cedefop, Ministry of National Education, AFNOR

### A5.6 Description of concrete quality assurances measures

#### A5.6.1 Name/designation: AFNOR NF 214 (service formation)\(^{144}\)

**Developer/owner/provider:**
The national standardisation organisation AFNOR

**Status:**
Certification

**Target group:**
This instrument targets private vocational training providers (initial, continuous, vocational, apprenticeship, dual education) with a focus on company training.

**Description:**
It is the provision of a specific service (training) by the organisation that is accredited. It is based on an external review and is voluntary.

The system is flexible (applicable to a wide range of training providers), certification process will be tailored to the applicant (see objectives setting above). Certified providers will also benefit from services from AFNOR (support to training design, information about training needs, etc.).

This certification is requested by the training providers. AFNOR assesses the eligibility of the request based on information provided in the application form. If eligible, providers have to agree on clear objectives with AFNOR regarding their client relationship, pedagogical approach, training programme design and implementation, assessment. They will be assessed against these objectives and, based on this assessment, receive the certification or not.

**Process:**
Certification requires compliance with two general (service providers) quality standards defined by AFNOR:

Standard NF X 50-760 (information about offer), which defines the minimal information that should be provided to clients/ beneficiaries in terms of:
- Communication and promotion of the training provider
- Information about the training offer (‘catalogue’)
- Tailor-made training offer

Standard NF X 50-761 (service provision): which identifies five key processes to be followed by training providers in their training provision activities:
- Request management
- Pedagogical design process
- Organisation of training
- Training delivery
- Evaluation of training

Scope/importance:

The certification is open to all training service providers.

Use:

About 100 organisations are certified NF 214 (service formation). The list of organisations certified includes training providers (core business) as companies that deliver training to their employees (e.g. La Poste, Michelin, Disney, etc.). This instrument has existed since 1998 and was extended to apprenticeship in 2002. It is planned to extend it to IVET in the future.

Comparison with EQAVET:

| Use of cycle | Without referring to EQAVET, AFNOR NF 214 is compliant with its quality cycle. AFNOR’s NF 214 refers to the quality management principles developed by Deming (Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle):
Develop a quality management policy and strategy within the organisation (training provider) ► Plan (Deming) / Planning (EQAVET cycle)
Implementation (organisation and resources) of training delivery ► Do (Deming) / Implementation (EQAVET cycle)
Quality assessment of the organisation of the training service and performance measurement ► Check (Deming) / Evaluation (EQAVET cycle)
Analyse and definition of action for continuous improvement ► Act (Deming) / Review (EQAVET cycle) |
| Use of descriptors | However, the detailed component of the NF 214 are not in line with (nor contradictory to) the quality criteria, descriptors and indicators presented in the EQAVET recommendation. |
| Use of indicators / criteria | NA |
| EQAVET building blocks | NA |

Conclusion:

The advantages of this quality measure compared to others are mainly linked to AFNOR’s position and its experience with standardisation:

Visibility of AFNOR: AFNOR being the national standardisation organisation, these measures benefit from AFNOR’s reputation in developing standards and delivering certifications.

European and international dimension: While NF 214 focus on the national market, AFNOR is experienced in the developments of international standards, in particular in relation to the activities of the CEN.
AFNOR's involvement in other quality measures in VET: AFNOR has contributed to the development of the Greta quality assurance framework\textsuperscript{145} and the accreditation of training providers by OPQF\textsuperscript{146}.

Moreover, AFNOR's standards are endorsed by representatives of customers and public authorities.

Some players criticised AFNOR's multiple hats position and in particular the fact that they are (1) involved in the public mission of defining standards as well as in (2) delivering certification against their own standards and as (3) training providers themselves (commercial activity).

A5.6.2 Name/designation: GretaPlus\textsuperscript{147}

Developer/owner/provider:
Ministry of National Education

Status:
Quality label

Target group:
All public CVET providers

Description:
GretaPlus is a quality label for training providers within the Greta network (public providers for adult training) based on compliance with a good practice reference document ('referentiel'). The label has been developed 35 years ago with major changes until the adoption of a new reference documents in 2009, designed together with AFNOR (Afnor X50-762).

This measure focuses on providers and relies on external review. Out of the measures selected for France, Greta plus is the closest to a system level quality assurance measure.

Process:
The award process of the GretaPlus label is as follows: Greta submit an application form to the Ministry of National Education. The Greta are then audited on site. Before the audit, the regional representation of the Ministry\textsuperscript{148} performs test audits. Following the audit and it result, a national label committee, bringing together Ministry representatives, partners and customers of Greta, decide on the label award. The label is renewable after three years.

Scope/importance:
GretaPlus is not applicable to the entire VET sector in the country or a given part if the territory, but applies (mandatory) to public CVET providers that are part of the Greta network (excluding AFPA, universities’ lifelong learning activities, agriculture-related training providers and CNAM).

Use:
By 2010, about 40 of 220 eligible Greta (representing 5,600 training sites all over the country) had been awarded the quality label GretaPlus\textsuperscript{149,150}

\textsuperscript{145} MEN/AFNOR X50-762
\textsuperscript{146} NF X 50-091
\textsuperscript{147} http://eduscol.education.fr/pid23192/demarche-qualite.html
\textsuperscript{148} Academie
\textsuperscript{149} Cedefop, Assuring quality in vocational education and training - The role of accrediting VET providers, 2011 (http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/3061_en.pdf)
Comparison with EQAVET:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use of cycle</th>
<th>Yes – use of a generic Plan-Do-Check-Act quality cycle since the 2000’s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of descriptors</td>
<td>Yes – see section A5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of indicators / criteria</td>
<td>Descriptors: Yes – see section A5.5 Indicators: No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQAVET building blocks</td>
<td>Not explicitly, but the GretaPlus label embeds each of the 10 EQAVET building blocks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion:

The Greta Plus label is also the only measure (among those covered under this study in France) that had taken EQAVET into account in its last developments.

A5.6.3 Name/designation: FFP and ISQ-OPQF

Developer/owner/provider:

Intellectual Services Qualification / Office Professionel de Qualification des Organismes de Formation (ISQ-OPQF)

Status:

Accreditation

Target group:

This accreditation targets training providers (organisations) focuses on recognition of professionalism and client satisfaction.

Description:

The accreditation was created in 1994 by the national vocational training federation (FFP) and the Ministry in charge of labour, employment and vocational training. It is voluntary as a principle but mandatory for all members of FFP and required for them to deliver OPQF-accredited training.

Process:

The accreditation process is based on an external review by a wide range of stakeholders including the Ministry in charge of labour, employers, higher education institutions, clients, training providers. ISQ also ensures follow-up and renewal of the accreditation. Steps to get the accreditation: accreditation request, eligibility check, assessment, opinion (assessment committee), accreditation decision, certificate delivery or appeal

Scope/importance:

Accreditation is open to CVET providers that are members of the FFP. It is voluntary as a principle but mandatory for all members of FFP and required for them to deliver OPQF-accredited training.

Use:

900 training providers (organisations) are accredited OPQF.

Comparison with EQAVET:

| Use of cycle | No |

[156] https://eduscol.education.fr/pid23192/demarche-qualite.html
Study on Quality Assurance in Continuous VET and on future development of EQAVET

A5.7 Sources


AFNOR (2009) Quality standards "BP X50-762", August


Websites:

Ministry of National Education website:

- http://www.education.gouv.fr/cid217/la-formation-tout-au-long-de-la-vie.html
- http://eduscol.education.fr/cid46988/label-gretaplus.htm
- Greta Plus presentation brochure. Available at: http://cache.media.eduscol.education.fr/file/Formation_continue_adultes/84/0/Gretaplus_112840.pdf

Centre Info website on "right to education/training":

- http://www.droit-de-la-formation.fr

AFNOR website:


FFP website:

- http://www.ffp.org/page-533-l-engagement-qualite.html
- The different quality measures http://www.ffp.org/doc-387-les-différentes-mesures-systématiques-de-qualité-des-organismes-de-formation.html

OPQF:

Interviews:
- Ministry of National Education (EQAVET network representative for France), 2 persons interviewed
- AFNOR Certification, 2 persons interviewed
- FFP (Fédération de la Formation Professionnelle)
  - OPQF (Office Professionnal de Qualification des Organismes de Formation)
Annex 6  Country Report: Germany

A6.1  Brief description of the C-VET system

Continuing Vocational Education and Training (C-VET) in Germany is understood to be ‘the continuation or resumption of organised learning following completion of an initial phase of education of varying scope’.\textsuperscript{151} For many C-VET training courses – especially those that are regulated - a completed I-VET qualification and/or professional experience are precondition to participation.

In Germany, the VET-sector is a joint responsibility of the national and the regional government (‘Länder’); with a close involvement of stakeholders such as employers’ organisations and trade unions. C-VET has a long tradition in Germany, especially in the Crafts sector; and is, to a certain extent, legally regulated on both national and regional (‘Länder’) levels. C-VET in Germany is provided by a wide variety of bodies and institutions - chambers, employers’ and trade associations, employee organisations and private providers. A survey from 2007 showed that the largest group of the roughly 17,000 continuing training institutions in Germany (56%) are private sector commercial organisations.\textsuperscript{152} Depending on the qualification and/or training aimed at, the learner is free to choose from a range of providers, courses, and certificates to acquire.

As to C-VET training courses, there are two types of courses and measures which lead to a formal vocational qualification: Further vocational training and vocational retraining. Further vocational training in Germany comprises two areas:

- **Further training for career advancement** (e.g. to achieve the required certificate for a certain career step in the qualification acquired through I-VET); and
- **Adaptive further training** (aimed at maintaining or extending vocational knowledge, skills and competences, or updating them in line with technical or economic developments).\textsuperscript{153}

Many C-VET courses and qualifications in both areas of further vocational training (and retraining) are based on nationally standardised statutory regulations. These regulations are part of the Vocational Education and Training Act (BBiG). They specify the content of a qualification, but also the examination requirements and the conditions for authorisation and awarding of the qualification (e.g. for master crafts-persons, business administrators, graduates in business administration, skilled workers etc.). In 2010, a total of 212 advanced training regulations were issued at federal level. These advanced training regulations are recognised throughout Germany.\textsuperscript{154}

Vocational Retraining in Germany is defined in the national Vocational Education and Training Act (BBiG). It is provided to individuals whose qualification is outdated or not sufficient to find a job. It is also provided to those who, due to health reasons, cannot perform work in their initial profession any longer. In most cases, these individuals are registered as unemployed and fall under the Federal Government's Social Security Code III (Sozialgesetzbuch III); which means retraining is in the responsibility of the Federal Public Employment Agency (Bundesagentur für Arbeit - BA). A comprehensive legislative act regulating training courses for vocational retraining (and rehabilitation) has been issued in


\textsuperscript{152} Wbmonitor (BIBB), 2007.

\textsuperscript{153} ReferNet - Germany; ibid page 66-69

\textsuperscript{154} ReferNet - Germany; ibid page 66-69
Study on Quality Assurance in Continuous VET and on future development of EQAVET

2006 (AZWV) and updated in 2012 (AZAV). AZAV describes a set of criteria providers need to have in place in order to get accreditation and be eligible for funding under SGB III.\(^{155}\)

However, another part of the courses and qualifications on offer in both sectors is unregulated and market-driven. In addition; a large share of continuing training is provided by companies to their employees as in-house training. This part of C-VET is completely in the responsibility of the particular company – although in some sectors (e.g. car industry), it might underlie sectoral demands (e.g. related to ISO certification).

A6.2 Description of quality assurance arrangements in C-VET at system level

A6.2.1 Quality assurance framework

In Germany, no unified system level framework for quality assurance in C-VET is in place. However, a wide range of legal regulations and QA measures for specific fields and sectors of C-VET exists.

- The content of a part of C-VET qualifications are nationally regulated through ‘advanced training regulations’;
- The examination and awarding of those qualifications is based on regulations concerning ‘advanced vocational training examinations’;
- Nationwide criteria for providers offering C-VET eligible for public funding under SGB III are set out (AZAV) and are underpinned by law;
- A ‘Distance Learning Protection Act’ is in place, regulating content and awarding of C-VET training courses through distance learning;
- A regular data collection undertaken by the Federal Institute of Vocational Education and Training (BIBB);
- A National German Reference Point for quality assurance has been established (DEQAVET); which works towards a common definition of quality in education and training and a common use of indicators to monitor quality.

In addition, there are system level approaches on regional level; for instance, regional associations promoting transparency and issuing standards for quality assurance in C-VET (see detailed description of ‘Weiterbildung Hessen’. On provider level, more than 85 % of C-VET providers have an official accreditation (requiring quality assurance) to provide a specific training.

A6.2.2 Processes entailed and actors involved

There is a broad range of governmental and private actors involved in C-VET in Germany, targeting a specific part of the system. All of these actors aim at achieving a certain degree of regulation of training courses, quality standards for providers and transparency for the learner. However, no overarching framework is in place; and the actors (different ministries responsible for different sectors of C-VET, employers, stakeholders) do not always align their efforts on a cross-sectoral or cross-ministerial level.\(^{156}\) Large-scale-accreditation measures such as AZAV require a renowned QA measure in place; hence, are based on and interlinked with existing structures. However, since they have set up their own demands towards the provider, a certain tendency of creating parallel structures is observable.

The C-VET sector in Germany is highly fragmented. Among the various actors, significant differences regarding the understanding of education and training are noted (holistic understanding of ‘learning’ and personal development vs. concentration on specific

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155 Verordnung über die Voraussetzungen und das Verfahren zur Akkreditierung von fachkundigen Stellen und zur Zulassung von Trägern und Maßnahmen der Arbeitsförderung nach dem Dritten Buch Sozialgesetzbuch (Akkreditierungs-und Zulassungsverordnung – Arbeitsförderung – AZAV)

http://www.bmvg.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Thema_Arbeitsmarkt/akkreditierung_arbeitsfoerdernrung_verordnung.pdf?__blob=publicationFile

156 Interview with Thomas Gruber, DEQAVET, carried out by ICF GHK, 31 October 2012
professional skills); which has an impact on success criteria and indicators for success. Hence, the understanding of quality assurance in education and training varies.

The table A6.1 below gives an overview on the individual measures.
Table A6.1  System level quality assurance mechanisms in Germany

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name and objective of the QA mechanism</th>
<th>Scope</th>
<th>Legal basis</th>
<th>Description of aim and main components</th>
<th>Processes entailed and actors involved</th>
<th>Relation to EQAVET building blocks&lt;sup&gt;157&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regulation of a part of C-VET qualifications through ‘advanced training regulations’</td>
<td>National – concerning C-VET qualifications</td>
<td>Laid down in Vocational Education and Training Act (BBiG)</td>
<td>The content of a qualification, but also the examination requirements and the conditions for authorisation and designation of the qualification are nationally regulated.</td>
<td>Qualifications are defined in a joint process by the relevant stakeholders (governmental representatives, employers, researchers, competent institutions et.al) Providers offering courses to acquire these qualifications have to follow the regulation. The examination has to be taken by an official assessor (see advanced vocational training examinations').</td>
<td>Set clear roles and responsibilities for different parts of the VET system (bb3); ensure VET is founded on a strong involvement of external and internal partners and relevant stakeholders (bb 10).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulations for ‘advanced vocational training examinations’</td>
<td>Regional – concerning the examination and designation of regulated C-VET qualifications</td>
<td>Laid down in Vocational Education and Training Act (BBiG)</td>
<td>The competent institutions define the conditions of how to carry out the examination of a regulated C-VET qualification.</td>
<td>The chambers of industry and commerce (IHK) and the chambers of crafts and trades (HWK) issue regulations for examinations which are valid in the specific chamber district. Chamber representatives are involved every examination.</td>
<td>Set clear rules for deciding who offers VET provision (bb 1); Set clear roles and responsibilities for different parts of the VET system (bb3); ensure VET is founded on a strong involvement of external and internal partners and relevant stakeholders (bb 10).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting out criteria for providers offering C-VET eligible for public funding under SGB III</td>
<td>National – concerning providers and training courses</td>
<td>Laid down in AZAV</td>
<td>AZAV regulates the accreditation of providers which offer courses eligible for public funding under SGB III (covering vocational retraining, but also a large share of further vocational training).</td>
<td>The accreditation process is based on external assessment. Accreditation requires the evidence of a quality assurance measure (see detailed description).</td>
<td>Set clear rules for deciding who offers VET provision (bb 1); Set clear roles and responsibilities for different parts of the VET system (bb3); provide clarity over funding (bb 8).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name and objective of the QA mechanism</th>
<th>Scope</th>
<th>Legal basis</th>
<th>Description of aim and main components</th>
<th>Processes entailed and actors involved</th>
<th>Relation to EQAVET building blocks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regional associations promoting transparency and quality assurance in C-VET</td>
<td>Regional ('Laender' level) – concerning providers</td>
<td>Voluntary for providers, but connected to regional public funding</td>
<td>Several German 'Laender' have implemented a regional association which promotes quality and transparency in C-VET.</td>
<td>Providers can become a member of the association if they follow specific standards. They are awarded a label if they can prove that they have a quality assurance mechanism in place. The process of acquiring the label is based on external assessment (see detailed description).</td>
<td>Set clear rules for deciding who offers VET-training courses (bb 1); Set clear roles and responsibilities for different parts of the VET system (bb3); provide clarity over funding (bb 8).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance Learning Protection Act</td>
<td>National – concerning providers and training courses</td>
<td>Distance Learning Protection Act (Fernunterrichtsschutz gesetz - FernUSG).</td>
<td>The Act regulates the rights and obligations of participants to and providers of distance learning. The range of subjects provided through distance learning related to C-VET is wide and comprises qualifications which fall under the advanced training regulations ('IHK Abschluss'); but also language and computer courses and measures of adaptive further training.</td>
<td>Courses offered by private organisations must be approved. The Central Office for Distance Learning (Staatliche Zentralstelle für Fernunterricht - ZFU) of the Länder is responsible for the approval procedure; which includes checks on: - The factual and didactic quality of the teaching material in relation to the course objective; - The form and content of the distance learning agreement to be concluded between the student and the distance learning institute; - The advertising of training courses.</td>
<td>Set clear rules for deciding who offers VET-training courses (bb 1); Set clear roles and responsibilities for different parts of the VET system (bb3).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data collection for 'Continuing training monitor'</td>
<td>National (System and provider level)</td>
<td>./</td>
<td>The 'Continuing training monitor' (wbmonitor) reports about recent developments in continuing training. Surveys are carried out every three years.</td>
<td>Collection of statistical data regarding further training as well as retraining in courses offered by public and private C-VET providers by the Federal Institute for Research in VET (BIBB).</td>
<td>Identify what information and data should be collected and used in VET system (bb4).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name and objective of the QA mechanism</td>
<td>Scope</td>
<td>Legal basis</td>
<td>Description of aim and main components</td>
<td>Processes entailed and actors involved</td>
<td>Relation to EQAVET building blocks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEQAVET</td>
<td>National German Reference Point for quality assurance</td>
<td>/.</td>
<td>Works towards a common understanding of education and training and, as a consequence, also towards a common definition of quality and use of indicators to monitor quality.</td>
<td>Brings actors together and supports the dialogue between them.</td>
<td>Ensure VET is founded on a strong involvement of external and internal partners and relevant stakeholders (bb 10).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ICF GHK research

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\[158\] ibid
A6.3  Evolutions and trends

As mentioned, one of the QA instruments used on system level in Germany is the regular data collection undertaken by the Federal Institute of Vocational Education and Training (BIBB). With the ‘Continuing Education Reporting System (Berichtssystem Weiterbildung, BSW)’ set up in 1979, a broad statistical basis for continuous and differentiated reporting on continuing education was established. Statistical data regarding further training as well as retraining in courses offered by public and private C-VET providers are collected. However, the monitoring system does not include data about in-company training.

Since 2001, the BIBB regularly issues a ‘Continuing training monitor’ (wbmonitor) which reports about recent developments in continuing training and makes them transparent to continuing training providers and the general public. Surveys are carried out every three years. The 2010 issue of the wbmonitor was dedicated to the subject the regulation of the C-VET market (incl. adult education).

The survey distinguished between provider accreditation and quality assurance. It showed that most providers (85%) have one or more accreditations in place – either by a public body, allowing to be eligible for publicly funded courses, or by a private organisations, allowing to work with certified products (e.g. in the IT sector). AZVV (now AZAV, see detailed description) has proven to be the accreditation model with the largest scope: 47% of providers taking part in the survey were accredited according to the AZVV. 35% were accredited or certified by a sectoral or business organisation; 22% were certified to undertake product trainings. A share of 71% was found to have two or three accreditations in place, a share of 25% even four or more accreditations.

The report also provides figures regarding the distribution of types of quality assurance mechanism among C-VET providers.

Figure A6.1  Distribution of Quality Assurance measures among C-VET providers in Germany

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Assurance Measure</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No QA</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate of a nat. association of C-VET providers</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFQM</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate of a reg. association of C-VET providers</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LQW</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-evaluation measure (e.g. TQM)</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIN EN ISO 9000 ff</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: wbmonitor, BIBB/DIE 2010, p. 3

The figure shows that the largest share is either certified by DIN EN ISO 9000ff or has a self-evaluation measure in place. Regional or national associations of C-VET providers also play a large role (see example of ‘Weiterbildung Hessen’ in the detailed fiche). Among the commercial QA mechanisms, the largest share of providers is certified after LQW (see detailed fiche).

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159  Wbmonitor 2010, Ergebnisbericht

160  Ibid, page 1

161  It has to be noted that these figures include accreditations necessary for provisions of adult education, a sector which is not in the focus of this overview.
Similar to accreditation, the figures regarding QA measure also show that providers tend to undertake more than one measure (e.g. are certified by LQW and, at the same time, member of a national or regional association of C-VET providers).

According to the wbmonitor, providers see the benefits of quality assurance mechanisms and accreditations in so far as it allows them to respond to the demands of important target groups of customers and eligibility of public funding. However, they also state that the need to have one or more accreditations and/or quality assurance mechanism in place requires much work and goes together with high costs. The relation between costs and benefits for accreditations and QA mechanisms seems not always justified. 67% of the respondents state that personnel resources required to acquire an accreditation and/or QA certification are too high. An even larger share (78%) claims that fees related to QA and accreditation are not appropriate.\(^{162}\) It is also criticised that the workload related to accreditation and QA puts a large burden on the pedagogic staff which does not always lead to the improvement of training courses.

### A6.4 Comparison with EQAVET

Quality assurance measures (system and provider level) which are broadly used in C-VET in Germany all work with the understanding of continuous improvement that underpins the EQAVET quality cycle. All instruments are based on a series of steps which have to be undertaken in different phases, and which can be allocated to the phases of planning, implementation, evaluation and review of the EQAVET quality cycle. The regulations issued are being reviewed on a regular basis, based on the experiences collected in the previous phase and based on labour market data. The system level QA mechanisms tackling providers (AZAV and regional associations) all work with the idea of a quality cycle and use the results of an on-going quality assurance process (in particular from the evaluation and review phases) to feed into a new cycle of planning(see detailed description). This can be stated across the different sectors of C-VET.\(^{163}\)

The table A5.2 below shows whether and how the German system of C-VET corresponds to the EQAVET system level descriptors for quality assurance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EQAVET system level descriptor</th>
<th>Take-up in QA on system level in Germany</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Planning</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals/objectives of VET are described for the medium and long terms, and linked to European goals</td>
<td>Yes - by DEQAVET and individually by initiators of specific measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The relevant stakeholders participate in setting VET goals and objectives at the different levels</td>
<td>Stakeholders are closely involved and take over important roles. They are responsible for specific sectors (e.g. Chambers responsibility for training regulations). Stakeholders are involved in DEQAVET but their involvement in the specific quality assurance schemes varies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targets are established and monitored through specific indicators (success criteria)</td>
<td>Yes as part of the wbmonitor and also in the AZAV initiative See table on indicators</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{163}\) ibid
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EQAVET system level descriptor</th>
<th>Take-up in QA on system level in Germany</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mechanisms and procedures have been established to identify training needs</td>
<td>In general there is close involvement of employers and business sector in VET The indicators in the wbmonitor are also used to identify needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An information policy has been devised to ensure optimum disclosure of quality results/outcomes subject to national/ regional data protection requirements</td>
<td>Partly done by DEQAVET and wbmonitor Moreover, comprehensive action has been taken to set up an independent counselling system addressing the learner directly. Every provider is required to set up independent counselling, and specific regional counselling institutions exist. However the latter is not part of the quality assurance measures as such</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards and guidelines for recognition, validation and certification of competences of individuals have been defined</td>
<td>This is ensured through training regulations on national level which the accredited providers have to respect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Implementation

- **Implementation plans are established in cooperation with social partners, VET providers and other relevant stakeholders at the different levels**
  - In general stakeholders are closely involved in VET and take over important roles. They are responsible for specific sectors (e.g. Chambers responsibility for training regulations), but interact with ministries on national and regional level. The extent to which they have a role in quality assurance in CVET varies.

- **Implementation plans include consideration of the resources required, the capacity of the users and the tools and guidelines needed for support**
  - The tendency to base measures on legal regulations does not leave much choice for providers and results in a tendency to create parallel structures and overburden providers with QA/accreditation demands.

- **Guidelines and standards have been devised for implementation at different levels**
  - Yes – by all measures

- **Implementation plans include specific support towards the training of teachers and trainers**
  - Yes – underlying legal regulations and defined in the criteria for QA

- **VET providers’ responsibilities in the implementation process are explicitly described and made transparent**
  - No overarching framework, but individual frameworks for specific sectors and/or regions (e.g. Weiterbildung Hessen).

### Evaluation

- **A methodology for evaluation has been devised, covering internal and external evaluation**
  - Not on national level, partly in sectoral measures. However, the wbmonitor evaluates regularly certain aspects of the system.

- **Stakeholder involvement in the monitoring and evaluation process is agreed and clearly described**
  - Stakeholders monitor their own provisions and feed into national monitoring.

- **The national/regional standards and processes for improving and assuring quality are relevant and proportionate to the needs of the sector**
  - The QA for public employment service funded training (AZAV) uses employment outcomes indicators – this is highly relevant for this form of training.
EQAVET system level descriptor | Take-up in QA on system level in Germany
--- | ---
Systems are subject to self-evaluation, internal and external review, as appropriate | Most system level measures in Germany are based on legal regulations and external review.
Early warning systems are implemented | Unclear
Performance indicators are applied | Yes - See table on indicators, core to the AZAV system

Relevant, regular and coherent data collection takes place, in order to measure success and identify areas for improvement. Appropriate data collection methodologies have been devised, e.g. questionnaires and indicators/metrics

Review

- Procedures, mechanisms and instruments for undertaking reviews are defined at all levels
- Processes are regularly reviewed and action plans for change devised. Systems are adjusted accordingly
- Information on the outcomes of evaluation is made publicly available

As to the EQAVET indicators, it can be stated that most of them are used to monitor the quality of the C-VET training courses on system level, although to a different extent.

Table A6.3 Uptake of EQAVET indicators in C-VET monitoring in Germany (system level)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EQAVET Indicator</th>
<th>Monitored</th>
<th>Not yet monitored</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indicator 1. Relevance of quality assurance systems for VET providers</td>
<td>Figures on the share of providers applying internal quality assurance systems and/or the share of accredited VET providers was provided by the Wbmonitor 2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicator 2. Investment in training of teachers and trainers</td>
<td></td>
<td>Since the training of CVET teachers/trainers in general is not based on standards or regulations, there is no general monitoring.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicator 3: Participation rate in VET programmes</td>
<td>Monitoring of the percentage of active population (15-74 years old) entering CVET and adult education programmes is part of the wbmonitor. Some regions (Laender) also undertake occasional monitoring on regional level.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EQAVET Indicator</th>
<th>Monitored</th>
<th>Not yet monitored</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indicator 4. Completion rate in VET programmes</td>
<td>Percentage of those completing (i.e. attaining a formal qualification) CVET programme(s) (which lead to recognition), compared to those entering CVET programme(s) is monitored through AZAV and underpinned with legal regulations (see detailed fiche). Some regions also undertake occasional monitoring on regional level.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicator 5. Placement rate in VET programmes</td>
<td>Share of employed learners at designated point in time after completion of training, according to the type of programme and the individual criteria is monitored through AZAV – based on benchmarks - and underpinned with legal regulations (see detailed fiche).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicator 6. Utilisation of acquired skills at the workplace</td>
<td>Information on occupation obtained by individuals after completion of training is monitored by AZAV. Satisfaction rates of individuals are monitored on provider level – with regard to internal self-assessment.</td>
<td>Satisfaction of employers with acquired skills/competences is not systematically monitored. Companies carry out surveys with regard to in-house training, for instance on the Return on Investment; and the Federal Institute for Research in VET is carrying out selected samples in companies. However, the data are not systematically compiled with data obtained from the public level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicator 7. Unemployment rate</td>
<td>The unemployment rate is monitored closely (on a monthly basis) by the Public Employment Services (nationally and regionally).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicator 8. Prevalence of vulnerable groups</td>
<td>The success rate of disadvantaged groups in CVET is monitored with regard to specific programmes and/or funded CVET activities, but not on a systematic level.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicator 9. Mechanisms to identify training needs in the labour market</td>
<td>The dual system is based on close links and shared responsibilities between the private and the public sector. Employers are closely involved in the development of qualifications. Evidence of the effectiveness of the system is provided through the annual 'VET-report' issued by BIBB.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The stakeholders provide comprehensive information on existing schemes at different levels and on the transparency and permeability. Evidence of the effectiveness of the system is provided through the annual ‘VET-report’ issued by BIBB.

Source: ICF GHK research

### A6.5 Description of concrete quality assurances measures

#### A6.5.1 Name/designation: Weiterbildung Hessen e.V. (Further Training Hessia - system level-regional)

**Developer:**
Hessian Ministry of Economics, Traffic and Regional Development

**Provider:**
Independent initiative monitored by Ministry

**Status:**
Network, issuing a label required for regional governmental funding

**Description:**
‘Further Training Hessia’ e.V. resulted from a political decision on regional level (Regional Ministry of Economics, Traffic and Regional Development) to create more transparency in the C-VET and adult education landscape for the learner; and support the development of a culture of quality assurance among CVET providers. It has been set up in 2004.

The initiative supports quality in CVET on two levels
- Quality of CVET training courses;
- Quality of publicly funded counselling for learners in CVET.

**Target Group(s):**
The target group of the measure is CVET-providers (adult education and further training).

**Process:**
Providers of CVET and adult education can apply to become a member of the society. This is connected to a set of requirements, e.g. a quality assurance measure in place. All renowned QA measures (ISO, EFQM, LQW, TQM, etc.) are recognised. Should a provider not be certified yet, they can acquire a QA certification from ‘Further Training Hessen’. CVET providers and counselling institutions which fulfil the standards set out by ‘Further training Hessen’ are awarded a ‘quality label’. The label is awarded through an external assessment.

The approach is based on the definition of five quality areas:
- Organisation and context condition,
- Staff,

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165 Desk research and interview with Alfred Toepper, Qualitätsgesellschaft Bildung und Beratung mbH carried out by ICF GHK on 12 November 2012
Study on Quality Assurance in Continuous VET and on future development of EQAVET

- Infrastructure,
- Training courses,
- Learner-orientation and customer protection;

All of which are described by different sub-categories. The table below gives an overview.

### Table A6.4 Quality areas for CVET providers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality area</th>
<th>Subcategories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organisation and context conditions</td>
<td>- Organisational data;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Management;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Mission statement / ethical principles;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Transparency of the structure of the institution;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Internal and external communication;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Responsibility / task allocation;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Quality management of the institution;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Key processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>- Qualification and competences of teaching staff;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Personnel development measures in place;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Further training of staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>- Rooms and equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training courses</td>
<td>- Development, planning and review of training courses;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Requirements regarding training courses and realisation of courses; design of process;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Support to the learner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learner-orientation and customer protection</td>
<td>- Transparency;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Complaint management;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Health &amp; Safety regulations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each sub-category is underpinned with standards, indicators and measuring instruments. Some of the criteria are a must, while others have a more indicative function.

The table below shows an example from the quality area ‘staff’:

### Table A6.5 Subcategories and quality standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality area: Management/Strategy</th>
<th>Sub-category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality criteria</td>
<td>Competence of the management team</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On the basis of their qualification and experience, the management of the institution is able to lead the organisation economically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The pedagogical management has the competence to structure the training courses according to didactical criteria</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The management has the required leadership competences (must);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The management has the necessary competences to facilitate sustainable business development (must);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The management has a conceptual understanding of further training (must);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teachers and trainers have appropriate pedagogical and didactical qualification and</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Use:

A special feature of the approach is that it also tackles the sector of counselling learners in CVET and adult education. A set of standards and quality criteria related to the counselling process is defined - counselling institutions need the label if they want to perform certain aspects of counselling connected to public funding instruments. Beyond that, the initiative is perceived as a network. The measure is governed by a public institution which supports the networking and cooperation between institutions by organising regular seminars and events. The members are invited to exchange information on trends and developments in the field and work on subjects related to quality assurance (collection of data, take up of indicators, setting benchmarks etc.).

Providers active in the sector are not formally required to become members of the network. However, public funding for certain measures carried out by providers and counselling institutions is connected to membership. The network also involves important stakeholders like Chambers of Commerce and Public Employment Services.

It is worth noting though that the idea of regional networks is not original to ‘Further training Hessia’. Across Germany, similar initiatives exist in other regional settings, on city level or on Laender level (City of Cologne, Land of Hamburg, etc.).

Scope/importance:

Currently, 358 institutions from all over the Land of Hessia are members of the network and have been awarded the label.166

Comparison to EQAVET:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality area: Management/Strategy</th>
<th>Sub-category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Measuring instruments</td>
<td>CVs of staff, records of further training in personal files, certificates, declarations of honour etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use of cycle</th>
<th>The EQAVET cycle as such is not clearly apparent in the approach of Further Training Hessia. However, the approach is based on the idea of continuous improvement, and certifications have to be renewed regularly.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of descriptors</td>
<td>For VET-providers five main quality areas are described, all of which are detailed by a number sub-categories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of indicators/ criteria</td>
<td>Each sub-category to the quality areas is underpinned with standards, indicators and measuring instruments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| EQAVET building blocks | The main features of the initiative can be compared to all of the six building blocks of EQAVET on provider level – regarding both CVET institutions and counselling institutions:167  
  - It ensures that the provider develops a management culture committed to QA;  
  - It reflects providers’ circumstances;  
  - It helps to develop an approach that reflects the providers’ circumstances,  
  - It supports staff training;  
  - It prompts providers to use data and feedback to improve their training;  
  - It supports the involvement of stakeholders. |

Conclusion:

Further Training Hessia is a system level measure based on a certification process through external review. After certification, the institutions are awarded a quality label. The label is required for several manners of public funding through the regional government. Certification connected to Further Training Hessia can be based on existing QA labels or certifications.

The label reached a wide scope of implementation in a quite short period of time. The link to public funding is a strong push factor for institutions (CVET providers and counselling institutions) to apply for the label. Furthermore, the network-character of the measure has led to enhanced cooperation between providers and stakeholders; which was welcomed by the community.

A6.5.2 Name/designation: LQW- Learner Oriented Quality Certification (provider level)

Developer:

Project funded by the National Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

Provider:

ArtSet Quality Certification GmbH

Status:

Commercial service

Description:

LQW was developed specifically for institutions in further training and adult learning between 2000 and 2005 in the context of a publicly funded project. It is a certification system based on the understanding of a C-VET provider as a ‘learning institution’. It differentiates between ‘Quality development’ and ‘Quality Certification.’ Quality development is understood as continuous work of the VET provider to enable ‘successful learning’ – according to its own definition; whilst quality certification is the formal process of getting certified by the LQW auditors. The process of certification is very individual for every institution; a certification is awarded against self-defined criteria the particular provider has laid down in a mission statement.

Target Group(s):

The target group of the measure are CVET- providers (adult education and further training).

Process:

Developing a mission statement and the criteria and standards for quality is the first step a provider has to undertake when aiming for a LQW certification. The second step is to undertake a self-evaluation against the criteria set out in the mission statement. In a third step, the self-evaluation is assessed by an external auditor. In a final workshop, strategic goals are being set for the future.

It also based on a specific notion of learning, which comprises three levels:

- The ‘personality development’ of the learner;
- The development of ‘social learning’;
- Acquiring specific knowledge and developing particular skills.

The LQW model emphasises the need for every provider to define its own notion of ‘successful learning’, based on all three of the above mentioned aspects. It comprises a process of self-assessment and certification based on a quality cycle with several phases.

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168 The notion of a ‘learning institution’ is connected to the idea of learning done by the institution connected to the idea of continuous improvement.
A LQW certification has to be renewed every 4 years.

**Use:**

LQW is very popular among CVET providers, but also among providers of adult education and private companies since it goes beyond the usual scope of QA and helps them clarify their goals and objectives. Several large companies in Germany have chosen LQW as the quality assurance mechanisms for their in-house training courses (Nord-LB Bank, Conti insurances) – although they use an ISO certification for their management processes and products.

Due to the limited duration of a LQW certification (4 years), a specific number of providers have to ask for the renewal of their certification every year. This process is voluntary. However, in 2012, the share of institutions applying for re-certification was at 100%. In 2010, under the influence of the economic crisis, this figure was significantly lower.

**Scope/Importance:**

To date, about 780 providers have been certified by LQW. These providers are mainly from Germany (about 80%). However, LQW is also taken up by a number of Austrian providers and a small number of providers in Bulgaria, Lithuania and Poland.

**Comparison to EQAVET:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use of cycle</th>
<th>LQW works with a quality cycle which is related to the certification process. In 11 steps, it describes the planning, implementation, evaluation and review of the certification.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Use of descriptors | LQW requires the development of quality in an institution in the following 11 quality areas:  
  - Developing a 'mission statement' (providers description of successful learning);  
  - Performing a needs analysis (identify the suitable tools to systematically analyse the needs of the specific target group of learners addressed by the provider);  
  - Defining key processes (the organisational and pedagogical work processes of the provider);  
  - Teacher-learner process (proof of the quality of their instructors, teaching processes, and indicators for 'successful learning');  
  - Evaluation of the educational process (against its own criteria of 'successful learning');  
  - Infrastructure (appropriate facilities, technical equipment, time, material and media to ensure 'successful learning');  
  - Management (appropriate management structures and processes);  
  - Human resources (appropriate staff development measures);  
  - Controlling (internal controlling based on key indicators - which need to be continuously checked against suitability);  
  - Customer Relations (standards for customer communication);  
  - Strategic development goals (based on providers’ mission statement and self-defined criteria and standards). |
### A6.6 Sources

#### Legislation:


#### Literature:


#### Quality standards of examined measures:


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170 Interview as carried out by ICF GFK on 18 October 2012.
Weiterbildung Hessen e.V. - Quality standards for CVET counselling institutions: http://weiterbildunghessen.de/fileadmin/download/Checklisten/110209_QBB_Qualit%C3%A4tsstandards_DIN_A4_web.pdf

Websites:
LQW website: http://www.artset-lqw.de
Weiterbildung Hessen e.V. website: http://www.weiterbildunghessen.de/aktuell/
AZAV/AZWV webpage: www.azwv.de/
QUACERT website: http://www.azwv.de/index.php/ablauf-zulassung

Interviews:
Interviews with 5 responsible people in the following organisations
- Weiterbildung Hessen e.V.
- TQM Total Quality Management Training & Consulting GmbH
- ArtSet – LQW Lernerorientierte Qualitaet in der Weiterbildung
- DEQAVET - Deutsche Referenzstelle fuer Qualitaet in der beruflichen Bildung
- QUACERT - Gesellschaft zur Zertifizierung von Managementsystemen
- Qualitätsgesellschaft Bildung und Beratung mbH
Annex 7  Country Report: Ireland

A7.1  Brief description of the C-VET system

In Ireland there is no clear distinction between I-VET and C-VET, it is the status of the learner that determines whether the education/training is initial or continuing rather than the system itself\(^1\). This is largely because there is no single system delivering either IVET or CVET. Instead there are a range of organisations delivering provision for young people and adults and as such there is a degree of overlap between the IVET and CVET qualification systems as they are not designed as separate systems.

The administration and implementation of government policy for IVET and CVET falls within the remit of the Department of Education and Skills (DES). This department is responsible for policy decisions in relation to lower secondary education, upper secondary, apprenticeships, post-secondary non tertiary education and tertiary education\(^2\). In Ireland there is a high level of public sector intervention in C-VET where responsibility for the delivery of both CVET and IVET has been devolved to 33 Vocational Education Committees (VECs) that are statutory local education bodies. They administer a part of secondary education in vocational schools and community colleges and the majority of adult education through a range of different programmes aimed primarily at getting people back into employment. They include for example the Post-Leaving Certificate course, the Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS), community education, adult literacy and basic education and the Back to Education Initiative\(^3\). The VECs work in close partnership with other state agencies and have statutory autonomy to identify and meet local needs for initial and continued VET.

In Ireland, other government departments fund a range of CVET provision. This includes the Department for Social Protection, the Department for Justice and Equality, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. In addition, FÁS, the state training board is one of the main state agencies involved in CVET and is responsible for delivering continuous skills training directly and for providing funds to other training providers to undertake training. Ireland’s CVET policy is largely driven by the ‘National Skills Strategy’\(^4\) (NSS) published in 2007. Priorities include:

- Addressing skill needs and widening access to lifelong learning in the context of an integrated approach to education and training;
- Tackling disadvantage in terms of literacy and numeracy, early school leaving and providing second chance education and training for those with low skills;
- Addressing ‘access’ barriers through the strengthening of financial supports, guidance,
- Counselling and childcare services and increased flexibility of provision.

CVET provision in Ireland is largely structured according to sectors where sectoral committees (which include representatives of the social partners)\(^5\) promote and advise on initiatives to provide training for the different industrial and services sectors. Typically, CVET provision in Ireland is generally modular in design and credit-based with a variety of assessment methods. CVET takes several forms including second chance/re-entry by adults into FE/HE, continuing education; publicly funded occupational and general skills, self-funded education and training and general part-time provision; education and training for unemployed and redundant persons.

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\(^4\) [http://www.skillsstrategy.ie/](http://www.skillsstrategy.ie/)
Central government is the main source of funding for publicly-provided CVET in Ireland. Providers delivering state funded provision must be accredited by FETAC who has in place a specific quality assurance policy for provider accreditation. All VET providers offering FETAC (Further Education and Training Awards Council) awards must demonstrate their capacity to monitor, evaluate and improve programme and service quality to learners. Successful providers register with FETAC and can offer awards from the national qualifications framework (levels 1 to 6). FETAC’s validation process examines how programmes meet the specifications for an award. This involves evaluation and review by FETAC of VET providers’ published quality assessment criteria and procedures.

An important feature of the CVET system in Ireland is the role of the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI). The NQAI was established in 2003 and covers all awards from initial schooling to further education and training including higher doctoral level. It is responsible for promoting the maintenance of the standards of all awards in the further and higher education training sectors and works with its partner agencies, the awarding councils, FETAC and HETAC in developing and implementing mechanisms for quality assurance in both further and higher education. It is important to note however, that significant changes taking place in Ireland at the moment. This follows the introduction of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Bill that was introduced in 2011. This legislation will amalgamate the existing national qualifications and quality assurance bodies (NQAI, HETAC, FETAC and the Irish University Quality Board) into one new agency - Quality and Assurance Ireland (QQAI).

In July 2011 further announcements were made to disband FÁS and to introduce a new state training authority called SOLAC. This will have significant implications for the delivery of CVET in Ireland. These changes together with the amalgamation of the awarding councils are discussed in further detail below.

A7.2 Brief description of quality assurance arrangements in C-VET at system level

Between 2005 and 2010, FETAC has put in place a range of policies and guidelines for providers relating to quality assurance as required by its legislative functions as set out in the Qualifications Act (Education and Training), 1999. These policies comprise a Quality Framework for providers. The framework is described by FETAC as a comprehensive and progressive strategy and includes a number of inter-related policies and procedures:

- Provider registration (based on providers meeting minimum criteria that include the assessment of learners and recognition of prior learning);
- Validation of programmes;
- Monitoring and effectiveness of providers;
- 5 year review of the providers quality assurance agreement and registration (through FETAC).

The main principle on which the approach is based is the accreditation of providers through FETAC. The requirement for providers seeking FETAC registration need to have processes and procedures in place in nine different areas:

- Communications;
- Equity;
- Staff recruitment and development;
- Access;
- Transfer and progression;
- Programme development;
- Delivery and review;
- Fair and consistent assessment of learners;
- Protection for learners;
- Sub-contracting;
- Procuring programme delivery and self-evaluation of programmes and services.
Provider accreditation against these nine areas is a mandatory requirement for all providers delivering FETAC awards.

Through FETACs existing provider quality assurance policy, all providers must have in place robust quality assurance systems with concrete measures in place to identify and phase out poor performing providers. However, there is no unified quality assurance code of practice. Through its monitoring policy (published in 2005), FETAC also carries out a systematic review of the effectiveness of a provider’s quality system, which typically includes desk monitoring, desk visits to centres (as required) preparing findings and outcomes and publication of the monitoring report.

Through the Qualifications Act 1999, FETAC’s role includes the responsibility to determine national standards for qualification awards, validate providers’ learning programmes, monitor the quality of programmes and ensure fair and consistent assessment of learners. Registered providers who have agreed quality assurance systems with FETAC will design and offer programmes leading to the new Common Awards System. As per the requirements of FETAC’s programme validation policy, all programmes must be validated by FETAC prior to delivery. FETAC then monitors the programmes to assure continuous improvement across the system. Agreement by FETAC on the potential efficacy of a provider’s quality assurance procedures is a prerequisite for gaining and retaining registration to offer FETAC awards.

In addition, there are also a number of voluntary measures that providers can engage in to support and strengthen their approach to quality assurance. For example, the FÁS’s Excellence Through People Programme, which can be described as Ireland’s national standard for human resource development to improve a company’s operational performance through staff training. Its main aim is to encourage companies to identify and plan their staff training activities.

A7.3 Processes entailed and actors involved

There are a number of key organisations involved in CVET in Ireland. At government level, the main government department responsible for CVET is the Department of Education and Skills (DES), complemented by FETAC, the national awarding body for further education and the national Qualifications Authority of Ireland – both of which are now being amalgamated into QQAI (Quality and Quality Assurance Ireland).

As mentioned above, publically funded provision is largely delivered through FÁS who typically provides training for adults who wish to enter or re-enter the workforce or to generally update their skills within it. Publically funded provision is also delivered through a wide range of sector representative bodies such as Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM), the Irish Sea Fisheries Board, Coillte, the Irish Forestry Board, Teagasc, the Agriculture and Food Development Authority, Fáilte Ireland, the National Tourism Development Authority, The Crafts Council of Ireland (CCI), Údarás Na Gaeltachta is the state agency with responsibility for the economic, social and cultural development of the indigenous Irish speaking regions called the Gaeltacht and Bord Altranais, the regulatory body for the Irish nursing profession.

According to FETAC there are approximately 1,400 providers delivering in excess of 8,000 programmes.176

Over the past two decades a system of National Partnership Agreements has been in place, comprising the government and the social partners (trade unions, employers, farming organisations and the community and voluntary sector). Every three years the social partners agreed a national programme for social and economic development which included policies relating to VET. The National Social Partnership Agreement ‘Towards 2016’, the ‘National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016’ and the current Programme for

176 Interview response
Government 2011, have all re-emphasised the government’s commitment to lifelong learning.\textsuperscript{177}

\section*{A7.4 Evolutions and trends}

As indicated above, in July 2011, the Minister for Education and Skills announced \textit{two key organisational changes} in relation to the further education sector in Ireland.

- A new authority called SOLAS will be created to replace FÁS
- Vocational Education Committees (VECs) will ultimately deliver all publicly funded further education and training programmes.

SOLAS will operate under the DES and will coordinate and fund the wide range of training and further education programmes around the country\textsuperscript{178}. The proposal in relation to SOLAS (as agreed by the government) also envisages a key role for the VECs in relation to the future delivery of further education and training in an integrated manner under the reforms that will be driven by SOLAS. Following much debate, the total number of VECs will be reduced from 33 to 16 which will lead to the merger of certain county VECs.

The background to this move follows a recommendation by the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes\textsuperscript{179} initially from 33 to 22 would represent an estimated €3.0m annual savings.\textsuperscript{180}

It is reported that these changes represent the most significant change in the further education sector in over 70 years and the most significant change in the training sector since the establishment of FÁS over 20 years ago\textsuperscript{181}. In the new arrangements, the DES and the Government will define the broad strategy and national priorities, decide on the funding level, develop the legislative framework and oversee implementation. SOLAS will, in turn, enter into annual service level agreements with VECs, Skillsnet and other bodies for the delivery of specific FET programme outputs for specified financial allocations. These changes suggest developments in the approach to quality assurance are also inevitable.

In addition, the amalgamation of FETAC, QQAI, HETAC and IUQB into a new single agency called \textit{Qualifications and Quality Assurance Ireland (QQAI)} is underway. It is expected that the QQAI will be responsible for a wide range of functions, providing a more integrated, efficient and coherent range of services to learners across the further and higher education and training sectors\textsuperscript{182}. One of its key responsibilities will be to review the effectiveness of the quality assurance systems of education providers.

In addition, QQAI will be responsible for:

- The maintenance and implementation of the National Framework of Qualifications,
- The setting of procedures for how learners gain access to programmes of education and
- Training and transfer and progress between programmes,
- The recognition of Irish awards internationally and the recognition of international awards in Ireland,
- The validation of programmes of education and training and the making of awards, and
- The regulation of providers of education services to international students.

\textsuperscript{181} http://www.nala.ie/news/future-vecs-and-solas-explained-oireachtas-committee-meeting
In the meantime, The Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) and the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) retain responsibility for the certification and accreditation of all CVET courses and through these Councils, though a number of policy areas are on hold as the organisations prepare for their amalgamation. For example, FETAC has not actively accredited any new providers since September 2011.

There is also a new national awards system is currently being introduced for all further education and training. The new system - the Common Awards System\(^\text{183}\) (CAS) provides awards at level 1-6 on the National Framework of Qualifications. The CAS will replace all FETAC awards over time - existing awards are becoming part of the FETAC legacy and are being referenced against the new Common Awards. As discussed in the detailed fiche for FETAC programme validation, this means that providers will need to ensure validation submissions meet the new requirements of the Common Awards and for some providers, this may represent a significant challenge.

### A7.5 Comparison with EQAVET

The table below shows whether and how the C-VET system in Ireland corresponds to the EQAVET system level descriptors for quality assurance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goals/objectives of VET are described for the medium and long terms, and linked to European goals</td>
<td>Since the introduction of FETAC in 2001, through the implementation of a number of different quality measures, FETAC has worked alongside key stakeholders to build a culture of quality. This can be demonstrated through the process of provider registration, programme validation, the National Frameworks of Qualifications and more recently through the introduction of a common awards system for further education. Building a culture of quality was reinforced in FETAC’s mission, corporate values with a key focus on internal quality management process to enable continuous improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The relevant stakeholders participate in setting VET goals and objectives at the different levels</td>
<td>In Ireland there is a tradition of stakeholder involvement in setting educational goals and objectives at different levels (e.g. in sectoral committees). This is not explicitly part of the FETAC quality assurance measures though</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targets are established and monitored through specific indicators (success criteria)</td>
<td>This is not the case – there are no specific targets in relation to quality assurance in Ireland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanisms and procedures have been established to identify training needs</td>
<td>This is carried out in several ways. For example, an Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) is a body appointed by the Irish Government to advise it on aspects of education and training related to the future skills requirements of the enterprise sector of the Irish economy. In addition, The National Skills Strategy (NSS) sets out the potential skills needs of the economy up to 2020, as well as the existing provision of training and the benefits of investment in training for individuals, employers and the nation as a whole. At provider level, FETAC’s validation process requires providers to have considered and identified mechanisms and procedures to identify training needs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

183 [http://www.fetac.ie/fetac/awardsinfo/overview/cas.htm](http://www.fetac.ie/fetac/awardsinfo/overview/cas.htm)
An information policy has been devised to ensure optimum disclosure of quality results/outcomes subject to national/ regional data protection requirements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standards and guidelines for recognition, validation and certification of competences of individuals have been defined</th>
<th>Yes, these are set out in Programme Validation Provider Guidelines and in the guidelines for Preparing Programme Descriptors. In addition, providers are obliged to widen access to education and training through the recognition of prior learning and by recognising previously certified learning.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation plans are established in cooperation with social partners, VET providers and other relevant stakeholders at the different levels</th>
<th>In Ireland there is a history of social partner and other stakeholder involvement in VET – this is evidenced through the commitment to lifelong learning in the National Social Partnership Agreement ‘Towards 2016’, the ‘National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016’ and the current Programme for Government 2011. However these are not part of the quality assurance measures as such.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implementation plans include consideration of the resources required, the capacity of the users and the tools and guidelines needed for support</td>
<td>FETAC has made widely available a range of tools and guidelines need to support providers in relation to quality assurance. These include the Quality assurance in FE: Policy and guidelines for providers; guidance on applying for provider registration, FETACs QA procedures when evaluating a providers’ application for quality assurance arrangements etc. In addition, FETAC programme validation process recognise that there a range of different providers, each with varying degrees of capacity and expertise in relation to programme design, development, evaluation and approval.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidelines and standards have been devised for implementation at different levels</td>
<td>The guidelines and standards apply to all providers. There are a range of guidelines and standards in relation to assessment, recognition of prior learning, access, transfer and progression for example.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation plans include specific support towards the training of teachers and trainers</td>
<td>As a requirement of FETACs provider quality assurance processes, providers are required to carry out staff training needs analysis and maintain staff training records.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET providers’ responsibilities in the implementation process are explicitly described and made transparent</td>
<td>Yes, these are clearly set out in FETAC policies and procedures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A national and/or regional quality assurance framework has been devised and includes guidelines and quality standards at VET-provider level to promote continuous improvement and self-regulation</td>
<td>Guidance on continuous improvement is embedded within FETACs policies and procedures for provider accreditation and programme validation. Accredited providers must carry out self-evaluation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Evaluation

| A methodology for evaluation has been devised, covering internal and external evaluation | FETAC evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of provider’s quality assurance system. This is set out in FETACs policy on monitoring published in March 2006. As part of FETACs Learner Charter, there is a commitment to consulting with learners in the development and review of policies and awards. |
Stakeholder involvement in the monitoring and evaluation process is agreed and clearly described

FETACs policy on monitoring clearly sets out the roles of the key stakeholders.

The national/regional standards and processes for improving and assuring quality are relevant and proportionate to the needs of the sector

Generally speaking the bureaucratic burden appears to be one that is considered appropriate.

Systems are subject to self-evaluation, internal and external review, as appropriate

Under the terms and conditions of registration with FETAC, providers must carry out an evaluation of at least one of its programmes within a calendar year of the date of its initial registration and at least once every five years thereafter. This is considered to be a critical component to ensure the effective application of quality assurance policies and procedures for providers.

Early warning systems are implemented

Not clear

Performance indicators are applied

Indicators are not used as such. Guidelines and criteria are used for programme validation and in terms of what a provider must demonstrate as part of the provider accreditation process.

Relevant, regular and coherent data collection takes place, in order to measure success and identify areas for improvement. Appropriate data collection methodologies have been devised, e.g. questionnaires and indicators/metrics

FETAC monitor and evaluate the quality assurance of providers and their validated programmes. Monitoring reports are published by FETAC. In addition, FETAC devises and publishes an annual national report on the extent and outcomes of its monitoring activities.

Review

Procedures, mechanisms and instruments for undertaking reviews are defined at all levels

FETAC as part of its Code of Business Conduct, made a commitment to review the code as appropriate. FETAC also reviews its own strategic plan. In terms of the review of providers, FETAC is responsible for the review of provider’s quality assurance agreements and their validated programmes. The procedures, mechanisms and instruments to do this are clearly set out in FETACs Monitoring Policy.

Processes are regularly reviewed and action plans for change devised. Systems are adjusted accordingly

At system level, processes are reviewed and systems are adjusted accordingly.

Information on the outcomes of evaluation is made publicly available

Information on reviews and consultations are made publically available.

A7.6 Description of concrete quality assurances measures

The following main quality assurance measures have been identified as part of this study:

   a. FETAC Quality assurance of providers
   b. FETAC Programme validation
   c. FÁS Training Standards Specification QA 58/10

These are further described below.

A7.6.1 Name/Designation: FETAC Quality assurance of providers

Developer/owner/Provider:

FETAC
Status:
Compulsory

Target group:
Providers delivering FETAC awards

Scope/ importance:
In order to deliver FETAC awards at levels 1-6 on the National Framework of Qualifications, all providers must register with FETAC by agreement of their quality assurance policies and procedures in order to offer FETAC awards to learners.

Description:
The focus of this measure is the quality assurance of providers. It is based on external review and it is a requirement of all education providers delivering FETAC awards. FETAC was established in June 2001 under the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999. This Act set the basis for those involved in education and training in Ireland to recognise and improve the quality of services offered to learners.

To assure the quality of programmes leading to its award, all providers offering FETAC awards are required to have a quality assurance system agreed by FETAC. In doing so, FETAC has developed a common framework for quality assurance which sets out nine main processes which a provider should establish relevant to its provision together with a system to monitor their implementation in order to achieve FETAC agreement.

These are presented in a Common Framework for Quality Assurance as presented in Figure A7.1 below:

**Figure A7.1  FETAC Common Framework for Quality Assurance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Title</th>
<th>Processes to address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>Communication with learners, Communication with staff, Communication with other stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity</td>
<td>Equity training, equity planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff recruitment and development</td>
<td>Staff recruitment and allocation, staff induction, staff development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access, transfer and progression</td>
<td>Information provision, learner entry arrangements, recognition of prior learning, facilitating diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme development, delivery and review</td>
<td>Need identification, programme design, programme approval, programme planning, programme delivery, learner records, provision and maintenance of resources, health and safety, review cycle of existing programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair and consistent assessment of learners</td>
<td>Coordinated planning, information to learners, security, reasonable accommodation, consistency between assessors, assessment performed by existing programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection for learners</td>
<td>Cessation of programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-contracting, procuring programme delivery</td>
<td>Selection of second provider, contract arrangements, reporting arrangements, monitoring arrangements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-evaluation of programmes and services</td>
<td>Assignment of responsibility, frequency, range, learner involvement, selection of external</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Policy Title | Processes to address  
---|---  
evaluator, methodology  

Source: FETAC

Detailed guidelines are provided in relation to all of the policies and procedures that providers are expected to put in place and the criteria for their agreement. This means that once the provider has completed the online application form (known as the descriptor), FETAC uses this information to evaluate the provider’s quality assurance policies for the purpose of arriving at an agreement.

Once the provider has submitted their application, FETAC uses this information to evaluate the provider’s quality assurance policies for the purpose of arriving at agreement. The criteria for their agreement are that the provider has:

- Developed and documented each of the policies which are relevant to the provider;
- Developed and documented procedure(s) to implement each policy;
- Identified the method(s) of internal monitoring for all relevant procedures;
- Identified the form(s) of evidence which should be available to show that the procedures have been implemented effectively.

The following documents are also to be included in the application for agreement:

- The policy and procedures for the assessment of learners must demonstrate the potential to deliver fairness and consistency;
- The policy and procedures for Protection for learners must comply with the requirements of the Qualifications Act;
- The policy and procedures for ‘Self Evaluation of Programmes and Services’ must demonstrate potential to operate effective evaluations with the potential to maintain and improve the quality of programmes and services.

Each application will then be evaluated by at least two experienced and trained evaluators and there are two possible outcomes – that the application has been agreed or referred. Provides can appeal FETAC’s decision not to agree the provider’s quality assurance system and there are formal procedures in place to facilitate the appeal process.

Comparison with EQAVET

The table below shows how the main features of the FETAC accreditation system can be compared to EQAVET.

| Use of cycle | Clear comparisons can be made between FETACs provider accreditation policy and the EQAVET cycle. As part of the accreditation process, providers must be able to demonstrate that they specific components in relation to quality are in place. These include policies (planning), procedures (designed to implement the said policies), internal monitoring (ensuring measures are in place to regularly measure the effectiveness of the procedures) and self-evaluation/improvement (review). |
|---|---  

| Use of descriptors | ■ A methodology for evaluation has been devised, covering internal and external evaluation.  
■ Stakeholder involvement in the monitoring and evaluation proves is agreed and clearly defined.  
■ System is subject to self-evaluation, internal and external review.  
■ Relevant, regular and coherent data collection takes place.  
■ Procedures, mechanisms and instruments for undertaking reviews are defined at all levels.  
■ Information on the outcomes of evaluation is made publically available. |

[184](http://www.fetac.ie/fetac/documents/Provider_Quality_Assurance_Policy.PDF)
This measure is not based on common indicators.

- The measure corresponds to the following building blocks:
  - Set clear rules for deciding who offers VET provision
  - Set clear roles and responsibilities for different part of the VET system (in so far that through FETAC provider accreditation there are very clear roles about the role of FETAC, providers)
  - Identify what information and data should be collected and used
  - Use feedback to improve VET (learner feedback is encouraged)

Conclusion:

There is clear comparability between FETACs quality assurance of providers and the EQAVET cycle. The measure also uses descriptors to define its quality processes. However, the system is not based on common indicators.

A7.6.2 Name/Designation: FETAC Programme Validation

Developer/owner/provider:

FETAC

Status:

Compulsory

Target group:

The programme validation process applies to all providers who wish to offer FETAC awards.

Scope/importance:

As part of FETACs quality assurance of providers, all programmes must be validated.

Description:

FETAC’s policy on Programme Validation was approved by the Council in March 2006 and aims to ensure that all programmes are evaluated by FETAC to verify compliance with quality assurance procedures and standards for awards.

The verification dimension of validation aims to ensure that the programme proposed by a provider to lead to an award complies with technical requirements for the award. This includes a wide range of components, ranging from the examination of the programme, consideration of the provider’s procedures for access, transfer, progression, recognition of prior learning and procedures to ensure learners are protected (health and safety, child protection) are in place.

The validation process involves an examination of the main quality elements of a programme that a provider must submit evidence of in relation to:

- Aims/objectives/rationale;
- Programme learning outcomes;
- Programme content/activities;
- Learning strategies/methodologies;
- Assessment techniques;
- Accommodation, resources;
- Tutor and assessor profiles;
- Once the provider has collated this information it is submitted to FETAC online. The main purpose of the valid.

The first step for a provider in their validation process is to present their validation submission content. This is an on-line process whereby providers are required to provide detailed information in relation to:
Provider information;
Award information;
General programme information;
Access, transfer and progression;
Specific programme information;
Accommodation and resources;
Protection for learners;
Second Provider Information;
Provider Declaration.

The submission stage is part of a five staged approach to the validation process, as illustrated in the figure below.

**Figure A7.2  Validation process**

**SUMMISSION**
Registered providers submit a programme in a standard format and consistent with FETAC’s requirements as outlined in the published Award Specification, Assessment Guidelines and Programme Validation Level 1 and 2: Provider Guidelines.

**EVALUATION**
The programme will be screened and then evaluated against FETAC validation criteria by programme evaluators assigned by FETAC.

**DECISION**
FETAC’s Programme Validation Committee validate or refuse to validate the programme

**APPEAL**
Providers may appeal the decision to refuse validation

**REVIEW**
FETAC reviews the programme. A decision to withdraw validation may be appealed to the Authority.

Once the validation content has been submitted, the submission will be evaluated by trained evaluators against the following criteria:

- Consistency with the award being sought, i.e. the proposed programme should enable the learner to meet the standards of the FETAC award at the relevant level within the framework of qualifications
- Coherence in respect of its stated outcomes, content, learner profile and assessment activities
- Capacity of the provider to deliver the programme to the proposed level
- Compliance with the Qualifications Act in relation to Access, Transfer and Progression and Protection for Learners as appropriate and compliance with any special conditions attached to the Award Specification e.g. legislation, specialist resources etc.

The outcome of the evaluation process will be a recommendation to the Programme Validation Committee.
Comparison with EQAVET:

The table below shows how the main features of the FETAC Programme Validation system can be compared to EQAVET.

| Use of cycle | Whilst not explicitly based on a cyclical approach, FETACs programme validation process can be compared to the different stages of the quality cycle, particularly in relation to planning and implementation. |
| Use of descriptors | Measures and procedures to identify training needs. Standards and guidelines for recognition, validation and certification of competences of individuals have been defined. Implementation plans include consideration of the resources required, the capacity of the users and the tools needed for support. Implementation plans include specific support towards the training of teachers and trainers VET providers responsibilities in the implementation process are explicitly described and made transparent. |
| Use of indicators/ criteria | This measure is not based on common indicators. |
| EQAVET building blocks | The measure corresponds to the following building blocks: Set clear roles for deciding who offers VET provision. Set clear roles and responsibilities for different parts of the VET system. Ensure quality assurance covers all aspects of VET provision (in so far that this measure covers both the content of training and the administrative and staff arrangements which support teaching and learning. |

Conclusion:

This measure is primarily focused on ensuring the quality of programmes validated by FETAC. The process requires providers to demonstrate their approach to planning (in terms of rationale for the award) and methods to support the implementation of the award – particularly in terms of the administrative and staff arrangements required to support teaching and learning.

A7.6.3 Name/Designation: FÁS Training Standards, Training Specification Standards (QA 58/10)

Developer/owner/provider:
FÁS (Training and Employment Authority)

Status:
Compulsory

Target group:
Training is delivered to a broad cohort of learners, including unemployed adults, unemployed early school leavers, people with disabilities, young people.

Scope/importance:
As part of its quality assurance processes, FÁS has developed training standards (No QA 58/01) to promote and improve the quality of training – from its design through to programme implementation.

Description:
The focus of this measure is the quality assurance of training programme design that is developed and delivered by FÁS and its associated centres and contracted training...
providers. Training is delivered to a wide range of learners, including unemployed adults, unemployed early school leavers, people with disabilities, young people.

FÁS is the Training and Employment Authority and was established in January 1988 under the Labour Services Act 1987 to provide a range of services to the labour market in Ireland including:

- Training and re-training
- Apprenticeships
- Recruitment service
- Employment schemes
- Placement and guidance services
- Assistance to community groups
- Advice for people returning to Ireland and those seeking employment elsewhere in the EU.

As a FETAC accredited provider, FÁS is therefore responsible for the quality assurance of its training materials in line with the requirements of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and FETAC’s policy on provider accreditation. In doing so, FÁS refer to a Training Standards – Training Specification – Standards No QA 58/01 to guide the design of training programmes, including apprenticeship training. This is a key component of FÁS’s Quality Assurance Training and Assessment Series.

In accordance with the FÁS Quality Assurance Training and Assessment Series, FÁS developed training standards (No QA 58/01) to promote and improve the quality of training – from its design through to programme implementation. For this purpose the training specification standard (No QA 58/01) is used as the basis to structure the development of any FÁS training programme.

The training specification provides a detailed statement of the items to be addressed when designing any period of training – programme, course, module or a unit. As such, it should take into account and make clear the training aim, programme objectives, an outline training plan, training duration, training approach, details of how records will be maintained, assessment and certification arrangements, the profile of the trainee (e.g. level of entry requirements), and details of the trainer/workplace supervisor, training facilities.

The measure serves as an aid to developing training programmes, organising training programmes, monitoring training programmes (review programmes and assist in the validation process) and it provides information required by funding agencies. In order to comply with the training standards specification, the following criteria must be met when drawing up the training specification:

- Training Title and Status;
- Training Aim;
- Programme Objectives;
- Outline Training Plan;
- Training Duration;
- Training Approach;
- Record System;
- Assessment and Certification System;
- Target Trainee Profile;
- Trainer/Instructor/Workplace Supervisor Profile;
- Review;
- Copyright and Acknowledgements.

**Comparison with EQAVET:**

There are clear links between what the training standards serve to achieve and the EQAVET indicators in particular. For example, in relation to indicator 6, FÁS has in place a mechanism to track the destination of learners 18 months after completion of their training. In relation to
indicator 8, a requirement of (QA 58/01) pre-programme planning is required in order to identify the training needs, rationale of the programme and its cost implications. Part of this is ensuring that training programmes are designed and developed in order to meet the needs of certain groups and support them in their return/integration into the labour market.

As such there is also some comparability with indicator 9 in that FÁS has established a research department who is responsible for collating labour market analysis from across its centres to inform. In relation to indicator 10, through the FÁS training standards, a wide range of programmes have been developed to support individuals in the access to training and employment in the longer term.

| Use of cycle | Though not explicaitely described in a cyclical approach, the range of activities outlined in the specification show stages of planning, implementation, evaluation and review in so far that the training specification should outline how and when the specification will be reviewed to ensure its continued conformance to industrial and commercial requirements. |
| Use of descriptors | ■ Mechanisms and procedures have been established to identify training needs.  
■ Implementation plans include consideration of the resources required, the capacity of the users and the tools and guidelines needed for support.  
■ Implementation plans include specific support towards the training of teachers.  
■ VET providers responsibilities in the implementation process are explicitly described and made transparent.  
■ A methodology for evaluation has been devised, covering internal and external evaluation.  
■ Procedures, mechanisms and instruments for undertaking reviews are defined. |
| Use of indicators/criteria | In order to comply with the training standards specification, a range of criteria must be met when drawing up the training specification. By way of illustration, criteria are set out in relation to what the training title should cover, what the aims of the training is in terms of its rationale for example. |
| EQAVET building blocks | ■ Set clear rules for deciding who offers VET provision.  
■ Ensure quality assurance covers all aspects of VET provision.  
■ Ensure VET is founded on a strong involvement of external and internal partners and relevant stakeholders. |

**Conclusion:**

The purpose of this measure is to support the curricula development and design, the FÁS training specification standard includes a formal requirement for pre-programme planning which includes identification of training needs, a rationale for the development of a training programme and a justification for cost implications. As such, FÁS considers and accommodates all aspects of training provision at programme design stage, that covers for example, organisation mission, labour market requirements, target population, programme design, delivery, assessment, learner access, transfer and progression, programme review and, where appropriate, relevant work experience and or placement.

**A7.7 Sources**

**Literature**


Websites

http://www.fetac.ie/fetac/providers/tools/qa.htm
http://www.fetac.ie/fetac/documents/validation_policy_march_06.pdf
www.qualificationsandquality.ie
http://www.skillsstrategy.ie/

Interviews

Interviews with four responsible people in the following organisations

■ FETAC – Standards and FETAC - Provider Registration and Monitoring
■ FÁS Training Standards
Annex 8  Country Report: Italy

A8.1  Brief description of the C-VET system

The CVET system in Italy is rather complex and fragmented, and it is based on a variety of instruments referring to a policy and legislative scenario which constantly evolves.

The concept of continuous vocational education and training includes all the education and training activities aimed at increasing knowledge and competences of participants after initial education and training. Roughly, two main typologies of CVET can be identified in the Italian system: 1) adult education addressed to all those individuals needing to acquire basic and general skills, and 2) vocational retraining and updating of workers’ skills.

A consolidated law regulating continuous vocational education and training does not exist in Italy, and the governance of the CVET system is guaranteed by a number of institutional bodies, including the Ministry of Education, University and Research and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies (national level), the Regions, the Autonomous Provinces and the social partners (regional level), and the Provincial administrations (local level).

Overall, the main continuous vocational education and training providers are the following:

- Training providers accredited by the Regions;
- Employers and trade associations, as well as professional associations;
- Non-accredited training/vocational guidance structures (who cannot release formal certifications);
- Universities and research institutes;
- Upper secondary schools, in collaboration with other training bodies;
- Job centres;
- Non-governmental organisations and voluntary associations.

The providers largely depend on the typology of training offered and its aims.

Continuous vocational education and training is generally addressed to employees. These training actions are centrally managed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and implemented/coordinate by the Regions and the Provinces at the local level.

Besides that, a number of other training initiatives exist in Italy, among which the more relevant ones are the following:

- Sectoral training funds (Fondi Paritetici Interprofessionali per la Formazione Continua) which are exclusively and directly managed by the social partners (central employers’ associations and trade unions) under the supervision of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies (in charge of their overall monitoring as well). Sectoral training funds were established by law in 2000 and started to be operational from 2004;
- Initiatives of continuous training initiated/funded by the Regions and providing either training opportunities (based on training catalogues including a wide range of opportunities) or employment services (i.e. skills assessment, vocational and occupational guidance);
- Higher Technical Education and Training system (IFTS) targeted at adults who do not a previous background in VET. This training is organised by Regions and allows employed/unemployed adults to broaden general knowledge as well as their technical and vocational training;
- Adult education, within the education system, is provided by Adult Education Centres hosted within public schools and having an autonomous educational institution status. Training programmes are aimed at the achievement of educational qualifications and certificates related to the first and second education cycle, and they are organised on an individual basis (an individual training agreement is established).

185  http://www.camera.it/parlam/leogi/00388I.htm
In relation to non-formal learning, continuous vocational education and training is provided and funded by the companies (employer-provided vocational training).

The conditions under which CVET training can be delivered are the following:

- All training providers providing continuous VET need to be accredited by the Regions according to standards established by each individual Region in coherence with the nationally identified minimum standards;
- Employers do not need to have an accreditation to provide employees with training, as this is considered as ‘employer-provided vocational training’ and does not lead to any certification/formal recognition. However, employers usually make reference to accredited VET providers in case the training is undertaken externally;
- Social partners and professional associations can provide training through the Sectoral Training Funds and have to respect a number of criteria which are set and agreed with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies;
- Adult Education Centres, which are hosted by public schools, are under the supervision of the Ministry of Education, University and Research. The AEC system is constantly monitored, and the results of learning are periodically assessed.

A8.2 Description of quality assurance arrangements in C-VET at system level

The first national instrument for QA system in Italy was established in 2001 and modified in 2008 through a State-Regions Agreement.\(^{186}\) The main purpose was to identify a set of criteria, indicators and guidelines that could ensure a minimum performance level of VET systems provided at regional level. In addition, the aim was also to make the system more homogenous. Therefore the current system aims to make the QA assurance easier and more effective in terms of results. According to a report by ISFOL, the QA system described at national level is more result-based than the previous model (prior to 2008 State-Regions Agreement).

In March 2012, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, the Ministry of Education, University and Research, and ISFOL (the public national agency dealing with labour market and training-related issues, and under the authority of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies), Regions and Autonomous Provinces approved a ‘National Plan to guarantee quality of the VET system and Education in Italy’.

The main purpose of the abovementioned national plan was to identify a common framework, based on shared criteria and standards, leaving to the Regions some autonomy to enlarge the scope of application and to add new indicators/criteria. This process should lead to the introduction of new elements that could enable the improvement and evolution of VET activities in the country, coherently with the European indications.

A8.3 Processes entailed and the actors involved

The main quality assurance mechanism currently in force in Italy is the accreditation of VET providers. All providers (both public and private) must be accredited to deliver publicly-funded training and guidance.\(^{187}\) The accreditation process is implemented by the Regions and the Autonomous Provinces in coherence with the national criteria outlined in the legislation.

This implies that Regions and Autonomous Provinces (who are responsible for the programming and management of training provision) set standards relating to both services and expected results to be respected by all those training agencies accessing public funding. The accreditation system is organised as a quality assurance mechanism and covers ex ante (minimal requirements are assessed beforehand), in itinere (requirements have to be

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186 The main changes referred to the strategic objectives and the implementation system.

187 As stated by Law nr. 59/1997 [http://archivio.pubblica.istruzione.it/dg_postsecondaria/allegati/legge150397.pdf](http://archivio.pubblica.istruzione.it/dg_postsecondaria/allegati/legge150397.pdf)
maintained during the performance), and \textit{ex post} (expected results have to be achieved and measured) phases.

In 2001 a ministerial decree\textsuperscript{188} of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies established the first regulation relating to the accreditation of VET providers where a framework of minimal standards to be respected by all publicly funded VET providers was established. The decree described the application context, the actors obliged to respect accreditation principles, the accreditation typologies and processes, the bodies responsible for accreditation, and the period of validity of the accreditation. Quality, mentioned in article 7 of the decree, made mainly reference to quality certification models (i.e. ISO 9001).

In 2008, the accreditation system was further developed thanks to an agreement reached by the State and the Regions\textsuperscript{189}. The objectives of this agreement are those of promoting and valorising accreditation as a tool for quality assurance. It defined the minimum standards of the new accreditation system and the quality of services.

On this basis, each Region and Autonomous Province issued its own law regulating the regional accreditation system.

The new national accreditation system takes into account five main criteria and provides specific instructions to regional authorities for defining their respective regional accreditation systems. The five criteria are:

1. **Criterion A** – Infrastructural and logistic resources
2. **Criterion B** – Economic and financial reliability
3. **Criterion C** – Managerial capacity and professional resources
4. **Criterion D** – Efficiency and effectiveness
5. **Criterion E** – Link with the regional territory.

### A8.4 Evolutions and trends

Following the impetus provided by the EQARF Recommendation, a National Plan for Quality Assurance for VET has been developed by the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Education and the Regions and Autonomous Provinces. The Plan was validated by all the relevant stakeholders. However the final overall validation is still under way (and has thus not yet been officially adopted and implemented).

### A8.5 Comparison with EQAVET

There is a general correspondence between the above-mentioned criteria of the national accreditation system and the EQAVET Recommendation. The comparison between the EQAVET indicators and the criteria issued to the regions shows the following:

- **Criterion C** (managerial capacity and professional resources) corresponds to indicator 1 (relevance of quality assurance systems for VET providers), indicator 2 (investment in training of teachers and trainers) and indicator 10 (schemes used to promote better access to VET)
- **Criterion D** (efficiency and effectiveness) corresponds to indicator 3 (participation rate in VET programmes), indicator 4 (completion rate in VET programmes), indicator 5 (placement rate in VET programmes), indicator 6 (utilisation of acquired skills at the workplace), and indicator 7 (unemployment rate according to individual criteria)
- **Criterion E** (relationship/link with the regional territory) corresponds to indicator 9 (mechanisms to identify training needs in the labour market), indicator 10 (schemes used

\textsuperscript{188} Ministerial Decree nr. 166/2001 [http://old.istruzione.lombardia.it/forter/forminteg/accreditam/dm166.htm](http://old.istruzione.lombardia.it/forter/forminteg/accreditam/dm166.htm)

\textsuperscript{189} [http://www.lavoro.gov.it/IR/40585/45495/bf9e3b0f7049/0/1Accordo_accreditamento_20_marzo2008.pdf](http://www.lavoro.gov.it/IR/40585/45495/bf9e3b0f7049/0/1Accordo_accreditamento_20_marzo2008.pdf)
to promote better access to VET), and partially with indicator 1 (relevance of quality assurance systems for VET providers).

According to the National Plan on quality assurance, the D criterion (efficacy and efficiency) and the C criterion (managing skills and professional resources) are those that better transpose indicators of European quality into Italian system. Criterion D (efficacy and efficiency) collects 4 of European indicators such as 3, 4, 5 and 6 (use of skills acquired on the workplace). Criterion C (managing skills and professional resources) is included in the European indicators n. 2 “investment in teachers and trainers training”, and n. 10, systems to improve education and professional training access. 190

The National Plan for Quality Assurance for VET follows the model proposed by the European recommendation, and it implies a systemic approach to quality assurance where the role of the different actors, their interaction, and the monitoring, measurement, and evaluation measures are described. For each of the four main components of the quality assurance and improvement cycle (planning, implementation, evaluation, and review) actions already in place and to be undertaken for conforming to the European framework are specified.

The table below shows whether and how the components correspond to the EQAVET system level descriptors for quality assurance.

Table A8.1 EQAVET system level descriptors and take-up in QA on system level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goals/objectives of VET are described for the medium and long terms, and linked to European goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The planning at system level is the main responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, the Regions and Autonomous Provinces with the co-operation of social partners and enterprises (depending on the typology of training paths)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General agreements between the Regions and the social partners, in accordance with the principles settled within a tripartite agreement signed in 2007 191, aims to a common planning of training activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The relevant stakeholders participate in setting VET goals and objectives at the different levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ministry of Labour and Social Policies (at the central level)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Regions and Autonomous Provinces (at the regional and local level)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The social partners (both at the central and regional level)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ministry of Labour and Social Policies supports through the ESF a project implemented by the Union of the Chambers of Commerce (Unioncamere) called Excelsior (Sistema informativo per l’occupazione e la formazione) 192, which takes into account a wide sample of enterprises and provides forecast data on labour market trends and on occupational needs of enterprises on an annual basis. Data are available at the national, regional and provincial levels</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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190 Ibid
192 http://excelsior.unioncamere.net/en/
Targets are established and monitored through specific indicators (success criteria)

- ISFOL is in charge to draft the Report of CVET activities in Italy\(^{193}\) based on a number of criteria ranging from the participation rate in formal and non-formal education and training, the number and characteristics of enterprises having organised training (sector, size, location, . . . ), number and characteristics of employees having participated in training actions (education level, position in the enterprise, . . . ), aims of training activities, etc.
- All those CVET courses organised through the ESF (mainly Adaptability strand) are monitored according to the rules governing the ESF.

Mechanisms and procedures have been established to identify training needs

- All accredited training providers are obliged to undertake needs analyses in strict connection with the actors active in their territory

An information policy has been devised to ensure optimum disclosure of quality results/outcomes subject to national/ regional data protection requirements

- Unclear

Standards and guidelines for recognition, validation and certification of competences of individuals have been defined

- The design, formalisation and implementation of institutional systems and devices aimed at the validation of non-formal and informal learning has only been fully developed at the regional level (i.e. Regione Emilia Romagna, Regione Piemonte)\(^{194}\).
- In December 2012, the State and the Regions reached an agreement on the outline of a legislative decree aiming at defining the general rules and minimum performance standards for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning, and the minimum service standards of the national system for competence certification\(^{195}\).

**Implementation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation plans are established in cooperation with social partners, VET providers and other relevant stakeholders at the different levels</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implementation plans include consideration of the resources required, the capacity of the users and the tools and guidelines needed for support</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidelines and standards have been devised for implementation at different levels</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation plans include specific support towards the training of teachers and trainers</td>
<td>VET providers are required (also in accordance with the accreditation system) to ensure regular training of teachers and trainers. Specific rules (number of hours, frequency, . . . ) are set at the regional level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

193 http://isfola.isfol.it/bitstream/123456789/263/1/Rapporto_Formazione%20continua.pdf


195 http://www.statoregioni.it/Documenti/DOC_038855_146%20cu%20%203.pdf
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VET providers’ responsibilities in the implementation process are explicitly described and made transparent</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A national and/or regional quality assurance framework has been devised and includes guidelines and quality standards at VET-provider level to promote continuous improvement and self-regulation</td>
<td>The National Plan for Quality Assurance for VET, which involved all relevant stakeholders (Ministry of Education, University and Research, Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, Regions and Autonomous Provinces, social partners, schools and VET providers) is currently in its final validation phase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A methodology for evaluation has been devised, covering internal and external evaluation</td>
<td>As VET is regulated mainly at the regional level differences could be observed on this point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder involvement in the monitoring and evaluation process is agreed and clearly described</td>
<td>As VET is regulated mainly at the regional level differences could be observed on this point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The national/regional standards and processes for improving and assuring quality are relevant and proportionate to the needs of the sector</td>
<td>As VET is regulated mainly at the regional level differences could be observed on this point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems are subject to self-evaluation, internal and external review, as appropriate</td>
<td>As VET is regulated mainly at the regional level differences could be observed on this point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early warning systems are implemented</td>
<td>As VET is regulated mainly at the regional level differences could be observed on this point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance indicators are applied</td>
<td>As VET is regulated mainly at the regional level differences could be observed on this point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant, regular and coherent data collection takes place, in order to measure success and identify areas for improvement. Appropriate data collection methodologies have been devised, e.g. questionnaires and indicators/metrics</td>
<td>As VET is regulated mainly at the regional level differences could be observed on this point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Review</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedures, mechanisms and instruments for undertaking reviews are defined at all levels</td>
<td>Currently unclear (differences between regions and typologies of training provision could be found)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processes are regularly reviewed and action plans for change devised. Systems are adjusted accordingly</td>
<td>Currently unclear (differences between regions and typologies of training provision could be found)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information on the outcomes of evaluation is made publicly available</td>
<td>Currently unclear (differences between regions and typologies of training provision could be found)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A8.6 Description of concrete quality assurances measures

A8.6.1 Name/designation: Provider accreditation

Developer/owner/provider:
State/Regions - ISFOL

Status:
Compulsory for all VET-providers

Target group:
VET providers – public and private

Description:
The Italian State (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs) has established a set of criteria for provider accreditation on national level that have to be implemented by all Regions (see previous section). The latter have, however, a certain degree of autonomy and can add additional criteria to the ones required at central level. This implies that Regions and Autonomous Provinces set standards relating to both services and expected results, which have to be respected by all those training agencies accessing public funding.

The main purpose of the measure is to assure the quality of the service provided. Minimal requirements are assessed beforehand, other requirements have to be maintained during the performance and expected results have to be achieved and measured. In 2008, the accreditation system was further enhanced through an agreement between the State and the Regions.196. Provider accreditation has been valorised as a tool for quality assurance, with particular regard to the evaluation of effectiveness and efficiency of training services in terms learning outcomes and employability.

The accreditation is compulsory for public VET providers, but also for NGOs and private companies applying for public funding. In regions where universities also provide publicly funded VET programmes, they also need an accreditation.

Process:
The measure is based on external review. Providers have to provide relevant documentation to the region to which they apply for the accreditation, followed by an audit in loco. Providers have to prove they comply with a set of criteria. Each criterion (A-E) is underpinned with specific requirements. For instance, to fulfil Criterion C (managerial capacity and professional resources) providers have to guarantee the following functions:

- Providers need to appoint a general director;
- Providers need to guarantee a minimum number of persons employed;
- They need to fulfil requirements on the educational background of the staff, and
- Requirements to regularly undertake further training (at least 24 hours every two years).

Criterion D (efficacy and efficiency) describes criteria and indicators for the monitoring of the provider’s quality and competences, and is divided in 3 categories:

- Planning skills: it refers to the provider’s ability to plan VET interventions according to planned objectives and to a sustainable budget.
- Rate of leaving: it measures the efficiency of VET programmes according to the rate of people who received training activities and completed the full cycle.
- Positive results in terms of employability and user’s level of satisfaction.

However, the monitoring is undertaken at regional level.

The Regions established their regional accreditation system by regional law or administrative decree. Before the 2008 Agreement State-Regions, each region used to launch calls for proposals for specific funded training activities to manage the VET offer onto the territory. Each provider that wanted to offer specific funded courses had to submit a proposal.

The main actors involved are the national Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, the regional authorities, providers, and other regional stakeholders involved in technical assistance and audit activities (external review). ISFOL (a public agency under the authority of the abovementioned Ministry) monitors the accreditation system at national level; and was the main promoter of the State-Regions agreement in 2008.

Scope/importance:
The measure is the most important system level quality assurance measure in Italy.

Use:

According to the interviewees, the strengths of the accreditation system are the use of criteria that enables a selection (and following reduction) of VET providers through accreditation. This ensures quality of the services provided. In all regions that have implemented the criteria modified after 2008 a steady decrease in the number of accredited providers has been observed. The planning phase also improved as a result of the accreditation system. Each region has a list of accredited providers on their territory and thus can now plan ahead instead of having to select providers according to measures that are written out in calls for proposals.

However, the heterogeneity of the Italian VET-system and the high degree of autonomy of the regions has led to high fragmentation. Some regions have not yet implemented the changes included in the 2008 State-regions agreement; others apply only the minimum standards or execute a very low level of checks and controls.

Comparison with EQAVET:
The measure is compatible with the EQAVET quality cycle in so far that the results of the quality assurance process (internal and external review) are fed into a new cycle of planning. It has been outlined in the previous section how the Criteria of the Italian Provider Accreditation system comply with the EQAVET indicators. In particular, criterion C are comparable with indicators 1, 2 and 10; criterion D to indicators 3, 5, 6 and 7; criterion E to 9, 10 and only partially to 1. However, there two indicators that are not included in the EQAVET framework:

- The requirement of establishing links with the local/regional actors; and
- The requirement of giving attention to the most vulnerable groups on the labour market.

The table below gives an overview on how main features of the accreditation system correspond to the main features of EQAVET.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use of cycle</th>
<th>Yes – regional and central monitoring is undertaken and fed back to review and planning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of descriptors</td>
<td>The criteria of the approach can be regarded as descriptors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of indicators / criteria</td>
<td>Yes – 5 Criteria underpinned with indicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQAVET building blocks</td>
<td>The approach corresponds to the following building blocks:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Ensure there is a management culture which is committed to quality assurance;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Develop approaches which reflect the provider’s circumstances;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Support staff training in relation to quality assurance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion:
The reform from 2008 has put the focus more on an outcomes-based approach. Before the reform, much emphasis was put on the structure and the logistics available at the provider’s premises. Now, a greater focus lies on trainers’ skills and competences and, most importantly, on the output of training. The approach is based on learning outcomes achieved and employability; which complies with the European VET-Agenda.\textsuperscript{197}

A8.6.2 Name/designation: Lombardy region

Developer/owner/provider:
Lombardy Region, Department for Labour and VET activities

Status:
System level measure

Target group:
VET-Providers operating in the regions and external evaluators. VET-Providers (incl. CVET)

Description:
Lombardy was one of the first regions in Italy to promote an accreditation system that went beyond the minimum standards set up at national level. In 2002, Lombardy Region shaped an accreditation approach that supports improvement of quality by promoting competition between VET providers.\textsuperscript{198}

Process:
In order to improve the quality of VET activities in Lombardy, regional authorities introduced a ‘ranking system’ for providers. The ranking system aims to compare VET providers on the basis of different indicators, the same as used for the accreditation system. The ‘score’ is based on the evaluation of the provider’s activity in VET and CVET and the structural characteristics of the providers. The latter has to be proved and documented by the providers through agreements with regional and local authorities, focus groups and training activities held on the regional territory.

The system calculates performances of providers, strengths and weaknesses. This, however, is not fed into the project cycle and into the process but only used as an added value to the basic standards for accreditation.

The ranking system is based on results achieved by providers in two main macro areas:
(a) Indicators regarding financially-supported training activities and in particular the comprehensiveness, efficiency and effectiveness of VET activities. Examples of indicators are:

- Provider’s \textbf{efficiency}, based on the number of trainees in the financial report against the number of trainees foreseen to take part in that specific training activity;
- Programme’s \textbf{effectiveness}, based on opinions collected through questionnaires on customer satisfaction. These questionnaires are provided by the Lombardy region and distributed by the provider. Providers have then to insert the results directly into the online monitoring system of the region. Trainees’ opinion on their employment situation is also used as indicator to evaluate VET programmes’ effectiveness;

\textsuperscript{198} Assuring quality in vocational education and training: The role of accrediting VET providers, CEDEFOP, 2011
Comparison between the number of former participants to training activities that are employed and the total number of participants in training. After completion of a VET programme, Lombardy region has to verify the employment situation of former participants.

(b) Indicators that refer to technical equipment and logistics of providers, the financial situation of providers’ organisation, professional competences of the human resources involved and the quality of relationships of the provider with the territory. Some examples:

- Professional competences of trainers are evaluated by measuring their level of education associated with years of working experience in this particular field;
- Relationship of the provider with competent bodies operating on the territory is measured against the number of formally signed memorandums of cooperation.\(^{199}\)

Each indicator is the result of the sum of sub-indicators, divided into percentages according to proportional weight – 65% for indicators belonging to parameter (a) and 35% for indicators belonging to parameter (b) – up to a total evaluation of 100%.

The main indicator is indicator A that is divided into three sub-indicators, as shown below:

- Sub-indicator A.1: is given by the total number of hours of training provided by the VET provider;
- Sub-Indicator A. 2: evaluates the efficiency of the activities implemented by the provider, notably those which received public funding;
- Sub- Indicator A. 3: evaluates the effectiveness of the financed activities carried out by the head office of providers.

Compared to the national system and the five management functions established by the Ministry of Labour and ISFOL, the Lombard system added professional standards for the training and management staff. For instance, providers have to appoint a person responsible for the certification of skills gained during VET activities, a tutor and an information desk for potential users of the services. As regards the management level, providers have to show an ethic code and to obtain a certification for quality management (e.g. ISO accreditation).

With regard to the staff training, trainers need to have specific skills and certification in order to deliver VET activities. In relation to controls and checks, the regional authorities are responsible for audits and controls. Monitoring and evaluation activities are also held by regional authorities and aim to improve efficiency, efficacy and quality of services provided in the VET area.\(^ {200}\)

Scope/importance:

The accreditation system concerns all VET-providers in the region which plan to offer publicly funded training

Use:

The accreditation system in Lombardy initially focused on the need to control the process of accreditation and it was decided to use quality certification ISO 9000-2001 for all accredited providers.

There was then a second phase in May 2003, characterised by a focus on greater selectivity of the system, better management of requirements, and thresholds for indicators of effectiveness and efficiency, greater flexibility and simplification of the whole system. This phase moved attention towards quality of performance of accredited bodies.

199. Assuring quality in vocational education and training: The role of accrediting VET providers, CEDEFOP, 2011
The third phase, which started in December 2004, is characterised by the reinforcement of structural and logistical requirements and professional competences able to ensure that accreditation constitutes the appropriate means for selecting organisations providing training activities. The main aim was to encourage the creation of a stable and solid training system in the region through by raising the thresholds for requirements related to structural, organisational and human resource aspects. Consequently, after this last stage, the number of accredited providers significantly decreased.

Comparison with EQAVET:

The system follows national and European guidelines on quality assurance. Therefore the ranking system can be compared to EQAVET and is compatible with its indicators.

The table below gives an overview on how main features of accreditation system in Lombardy correspond to the main features of EQAVET.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use of cycle</th>
<th>The ranking results are not fed into the project cycle and into the process but only used as an added value to the basic standards for accreditation.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of descriptors</td>
<td>The criteria of the approach can be regarded as descriptors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of indicators / criteria</td>
<td>Two groups of indicators are used: (a) Indicators regarding financially-supported training activities and in particular the comprehensiveness, efficiency and effectiveness of VET activities; (b) Indicators that refer to technical equipment and logistics of providers, the financial situation of providers’ organisation, professional competences of the human resources involved and the quality of relationships of the provider with the territory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQAVET building blocks</td>
<td>The approach corresponds to the following building blocks: ■ Ensure there is a management culture which is committed to quality assurance; ■ Support staff training in relation to quality assurance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion:

The accreditation system has produced a large impact on the number and quality of VET providers in Lombardy. It can be noted a steady reduction in the number of accredited training providers (from 1 739 to 945), approximately 45% less. These figures proved that the main aim of the region – to make the accreditation system a tool for classification of training and orientation services – was achieved.

According to a CEDEFOP report, ‘raising the level of requirements undoubtedly produced a selection effect. It allowed verifying the existence of requirements and their correspondence to statements included in the application for accreditation of VET providers.’

A8.6.3 Name/designation: Sicily Region

Developer/owner/provider:

Sicily Region

Status:

Mandatory

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201 Ibid, 2011 CEDEFOP report
Target group:

VET providers operating in the regional territory (Sicily) – public and private.

Description:

The accreditation system adopted by Sicily Region complies with the national guidelines laid down in the 2008 State-Regions agreement. Accreditation is mandatory and must be completed prior to the signing of the agreement between the provider and the regional administration which establishes the start of training activities. Furthermore, the accreditation is a warranty that the provider is in possession of all needed requirements.

The approach is based on three main aspects:

- Improvement of the overall quality of the training offer;
- Implementing a check and control system, undertaken before the accreditation as well as in the implementation phase;
- Implementing a renewed procedure for the evaluation of providers’ performance (effectiveness and efficiency).

There are several reasons why the region has developed a renewed approach, based on the 2008 reform. But mainly, regional departments’ operational units in the educational area were not always aware and able to use the services and information acquired through the accreditation system (e.g. requests of documentation or providers’ identification through the Accreditation Code); and the region wanted to introduce a computerised system.

The following changes have been introduced:

- The basic requirements for the accreditation have been revised;
- The macro-areas and topics related to accreditation have been redefined;
- A distinction between entry requirements and maintenance requirements as defined by the minimum standards was introduced (entry: compliance requirements, logistical, organisational, economic and financial reliability, maintenance: performance, relations with the territory, etc.);
- A redefinition of checks and controls through the drafting of new guidelines focusing on onsite audit and remote documentation control has been introduced;
- The system of sanctions in case of non-compliance has been redefined and now includes cases of suspension and/or revocation of accreditation.

On top of that, procedural changes have been introduced:

- A general computerisation of the system, accessible through the portal of the Regional Vocational Education and Training section including the ability of the administration to manage documentation with a digital signature; and
- Integration with other regional information systems.

Process:

Providers’ evaluation is carried out by the regional authorities on the basis of minimum standards or requirements. This determination is accomplished through two successive stages:

- **Investigation:** Consists in control on the documentation and self-certification proving the existence of the requirements, which must be submitted in .pdf format and digitally signed by the requesting parties. Provisional accreditation is granted after successfully proving the basic requirements;
- **Audit:** Is undertaken within 150 days after the conclusion of the investigation. It consists of direct and analytical control of the documents and application forms as well as the original documentation. Following successful final accreditation is released, which is indefinitely provided that the specified maintenance procedures are kept.

The criteria (requirements) used for the accreditation can be divided into two types: the eligibility and maintenance.
Criteria for eligibility include:
- Compliance and financial reliability of the provider and its legal representative;
- Logistics;
- Basic organisational skills and transparency and professional skills of the human resources used.

The maintenance requirements include:
- Quality management certification;
- Advanced organisational skills;
- Performances;
- Link with the territory.

Scope/importance:
The abovementioned approach refers to the changes that have been adopted in this final phase of Accreditation and which will become operational in early 2013. For this reason data are not available and / or information on the results.

Use:
The first legislation on accreditation of the Sicilian Region dates back to May 2000. That law was suspended by the Regional Administrative Tribunal due to the appeal of a limited company. In that legislation accreditation was not allowed to for profit entities as joint-stock companies. Subsequently, in 2003, Sicily region by Admin Directive n. 3, 30/04/2003 adopted the provisions on Accreditation according to the Ministerial Decree166/2001.202 The 2003 provisions were modified in 2006 with the Directive No1037 of 13/04/06 (currently in force). At present the system is under further review with the imminent approval of the third generation of the provisions for Accreditation.

Comparison with EQAVET:
The table below gives an overview on how main features of the Sicilian Accreditation system corresponds to the main features of EQAVET.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use of cycle</th>
<th>The measure feeds very much into the planning phase; also an evaluation of providers’ performance is carried out.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of descriptors</td>
<td>The entry requirements and maintenance requirements can be regarded as descriptors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of indicators / criteria</td>
<td>The requirements are underpinned with indicators.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQAVET building blocks</td>
<td>The approach corresponds to the following building blocks:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Develop approaches which reflect the provider’s circumstances;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Support staff training in relation to quality assurance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion
The approach seems to focus on establishing a functioning accreditation system that allows planning and steering provisions on regional level rather than on the outcomes of learning and employability.

A8.6.4 Name/designation: RINA group

Developer/owner/provider:
RINA group

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202 Available only in Italian: [http://old.istruzione.lombardia.it/forter/forminteg/accreditam/dm166.htm](http://old.istruzione.lombardia.it/forter/forminteg/accreditam/dm166.htm)
Status:
Mandatory for sectoral VET-providers

Target group:
Metal and polyethylene welder training centres

Description:
RINA has developed specific certification schemes for metal and polyethylene welder training centres. The aim is to establish a network of centres of excellence of schools and personnel training bodies for the practical preparation of workers making metal and polyethylene joints.

As VET-providers, metal and polyethylene welder training centres underlie the national/regional accreditation requirements (as outlined in the previous sections). However, the sector also requires a certification related to specific VET programmes for polyethylene welder training centres (based on a national regulation called UNI 9737, established in 2007). The certification assures the organisational, infrastructural and teaching capability of the specialised centre in question. It also relates to product, system and personnel qualification – in accordance with sectoral requirements.

RINA Group issues these certifications based on a national accreditation service called ACCREDIA (in accordance with international standards of the ISO 17000 series and guides and the harmonized European standards EN 45000).

Process:
There are criteria for the certification of metal and polyethylene training centres, established by the law UNI 9737. RINA Group follows these criteria and has also added some additional standards, included in the RINA Group regulation. The requirements applicable for the purpose of the certification in question are the Standards of series EN 287, EN 9606 and EN 1418.

RINA offers all the certification services connected with the main European Directives and provide a wide range of voluntary product/service certification services for which it has obtained accreditation from the competent organisations (Quality Mark, BRC, EUREPGAP, FEE ITALIA). The sectoral requirements for certification concern the following areas:

- **Product certification:** Product certification may be obligatory (e.g.: Certificate of conformity for CE marking purposes), and in this case, it is required in order to protect collective public interest. It may also be voluntary and therefore a free choice of the producer who may wish to add value to a particular product or category of products for the purpose of intensifying market interest. In this case, reference made to a product also includes the related service.

- **System certification:** System certification is a procedure which assures conformity of the management system of an organisation according to established requirements. System certification is always voluntary and, unlike product certification, it is indirect in the sense that it does not refer to specific product requirements, but guarantees that the organisation has made a systematic approach on the basis of different requirements (safety, traditionalism, sustainable development). RINA has been accredited by leading accreditation bodies (ACCREDIA, IATF, INMETRO, ISPRA, NABCB, SAAS, UNIFE) for the certification of management systems.

- **Personnel certification:** The certification of special processes, of the personnel used to carry them out and of the personnel used to control them is another important requirement that must be met by producers in order to guarantee the total conformity of production processes and the quality of finished products. In this field, particularly as regards welding and non-destructive testing, RINA provides certification services according to all the main European and international standards.
Sectoral training centres have to follow these requirements, based on the extent to which they apply the procedures described above.

RINA Group also implements a **Service Quality certification**. Its main aim is to affirm that the service quality levels, defined in specific regulatory documents for the activity considered and implemented as an undertaking towards its users, are reached and maintained. The purpose of Service certification is to check that service quality complies with the performance levels defined for the indicators chosen.

Access to certification is open to all organisations regardless of whether or not they belong to a particular association or group. There is a periodical review of the objectives reached according to the indicators established. A report on its result is made to achieve continuous improvement. Training centres may also be subject to ‘unexpected visits’.

**Scope/importance:**
The certification is mandatory for metal and polyethylene welder training centres.

**Use:**
An improvement in the level of quality services provided by training centres has been noticed. For example, the regulation UNI 9737 established that metal and polyethylene welders have to provide not only theoretical lessons, but also practical exercises. As this implies costs for the training centres, the control visits carried out by RINA Group ensures that the centres do not skip the practical part of the training.

**Comparison with EQAVET:**
The table below gives an overview on how main features of RINA certification correspond to the main features of EQAVET.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use of cycle</th>
<th>The certification is based on an understanding of quality as a process of continuous improvement.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of descriptors</td>
<td>Standards for the certification of metal and polyethylene training centres are established by law. RINA Group has added additional standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of indicators / criteria</td>
<td>The standards are underpinned with indicators.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQAVET building blocks</td>
<td>The approach corresponds to the following building blocks:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ensure there is a management culture which is committed to quality assurance;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Support staff training in relation to quality assurance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion:**
The certifications issued by RINA are in compliance with the main internationally renowned certifications systems. They represent classical quality assurance measures, established through VET centres, although under private/sectoral governance; underlie the national/regional mechanisms previously described. However, aim is to establish a standard of excellence of schools and personnel training bodies in a specific field of qualifications (workers making metal and polyethylene joints).

**A8.7 Sources**

**Literature**
Assuring quality in vocational education and training: The role of accrediting VET providers, CEDEFOP, 2011

ISFOL, Analysis of accreditation models and comparison between the new national accreditation model and EQARF indications, available at:
Regional Decree on the accreditation of VET providers, criteria for accreditation, available at: http://www.arifl.regione.lombardia.it/shared/ccurl/294/430/Allegati%20accreditamento%20De
creto%20n.%20166%20del%2025%20maggio%202001%20-%20A.pdf

Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, Cooperation between private and public actors, 2009, available at
http://bancadati.italialavoro.it/BDD_WEB_CONTENTS/bdd/publishcontents/bin/C_21_Strumento_7287_documenti_itemName_0_documento.pdf

Websites

RINA Group:
http://www.rina.org/EN/CATEGORIE_SERVIZI/Certificazione/SERVIZI/Saldatura_metalli.asp

Interviews

Interviews with 4 responsible persons in the following institutions

- ISFOL, Istituto per lo Sviluppo della Formazione Professionale dei Lavoratori
- Sicily Region, Office for Education planning - European Policies
- RINA group
Annex 9  Country report: The Netherlands

A9.1  Brief description of the C-VET system

C-VET provision in the Netherlands

The CVET system in the Netherlands is characterised by a high level of privatisation and decentralisation. The majority of CVET training courses are privately funded corporate training, organised and provided by sectoral providers in cooperation with employers. However, the courses offered in this part of C-VET are officially recognised in the CREBO register (central register for vocational programmes); for which quality assurance is one of the requirements and are under the same law and regulations as public funded VET.\(^2\)

In addition, there is also CVET eligible to public funding. This sector comprises a wide range of educational programmes (i.e. vocational or more general courses), mainly targeting jobseekers and the self-employed, but also – under specific circumstances - employees and employers.\(^3\) Courses include:

- Adult education (including civic integration courses for migrants) and general secondary education for adults;
- Training for the unemployed; mainly for the long-term unemployed and those with difficulties in (re)entering the labour market; and
- Training for employees (e.g. part-time vocational education).

Specific groups of participants (e.g. jobseekers) will get public funding for attending these courses.

However, the boundaries between IVET and CVET in the Netherlands are not very distinct.\(^4\)

Structure of VET in the Netherlands

VET in the Netherlands is structured according to sectors. VET-providers can be grouped as follows:

- 43 regional, multi-sectoral training centres ("Regionale Opleidingscentra" (ROC)), offering programmes in engineering and technology, economics, and health and social care;
- 12 specialist trade colleges which are branche or industry specific ("vakscholen"); and
- 12 agricultural training centres ("Agrarische Opleidingscentra (AOC)"), offering programmes in agriculture, natural environment and food technology.

VET providers in the Netherlands are hybrid organisations - they are part private, part publicly funded. The regional training centres and specialist trade colleges are subsidised by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the agriculture training centres are financed by the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation. In addition, there are also a number of private, non-subsidised providers who offer VET programmes; their programmes must however be recognised by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

There are two main learning pathways in VET in the NL; a full-time college based pathway (BOL-pathway) and a part-time work-based pathway (BBL-pathway). Both pathways lead to the same diplomas.

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\(^2\) EQAVET Secretariat survey 2012.


There are four training levels:

- **VET level 1**: Assistant level - training for simple practical work. Programmes in this category last six months to one year. There are no formal entry requirements for entry to this level. The level 1 diploma gives admission to VET level 2.
- **VET level 2**: Basic vocational training. Programmes last two to three years.
- **VET level 3**: Training to become an independent practitioner; Programmes last two to four years.
- **VET level 4**: Middle-management and specialist training. Programmes last three to four years.\(^\text{207}\)

Usually, a diploma acquired at one level grants access to the next level. However, it is no requirement – entry can also be achieved by other means, e.g. by a school leavers’ certificate. A level 4 diploma gives access to Higher Education (Bachelor Degree) professional or Higher Vocational Education (Associate degree, bachelor degree).

The VET-levels do not indicate whether a course is an I-VET or a C-VET course. For instance, qualifications on Level 3, 4 and beyond are described as ‘advanced vocational pathway’ and are based on entry conditions (as described above), but they are not labelled as ‘C-VET’. Courses on all four levels can function as I-VET as well as C-VET programmes; hence VET-providers offering comprehensive I-VET programmes are usually also involved in CVET. The distinction between I-VET and C-VET is only relevant in relation to the individual pathway, and in relation to different types of funding:

- For a school leaver with no previous qualification, attending a specific training would be initial training. Should the need occur, the course would be funded by specific allocated means;
- For an older person with a previous qualification; the same type of training would be classified as ‘advanced training’ or ‘re-training’ – meaning a different kind of funding for the participant could be possible.

VET students are generally in the age range of 16 to 35 years and older; hence are both school leavers and adults. VET-providers take learning pathways, age and previous learning into account: Thus, although the same programmes are provided to both young people and adults, this happens rarely together in the same classroom or training session.

### A9.2 Description of quality assurance arrangements in C-VET at system level

The Dutch approach towards quality assurance has been in practice since more than a decade and its main characteristics are laid down in the law regulating VET.\(^\text{208}\) Quality assurance measures make no distinction between IVET and CVET; the system in place applies to the entire VET sector.\(^\text{209}\)

Overall, the VET sector in the Netherlands is characterised by strong partnerships which include educational institutions, stakeholders and the social partners; and a monitoring system, using a set of quality standards with allocated criteria and indicators. The importance attached to stakeholder input in the quality assurance system is demonstrated by their involvement in the design of the Practical Vocational Training Protocol (BPV-Protocol) and the educational programmes.

Qualifications are designed in dialogue between all parties involved. VET-institutions and social partners can take the initiative to start a dialogue about new qualifications or the


\(^{208}\) Wet van 31 oktober 1995, houdende bepalingen mbt de educatie en het beroepsonderwijs.

\(^{209}\) The presence of one quality assurance system applying to the whole of the VET sector was confirmed by the responses to the EQAVET Secretariat survey 2012.
renewal of existing qualifications. Stakeholders are also involved in the design of the ‘qualification files’; stipulating the learning outcomes and competences which VET students need to acquire by the end of their training programme. Qualifications need to be is approved and registered in CREBO, (Central Register for Vocational Training Programmes). CREBO contains systematically collected data on vocational training programmes and associated training and examination institutions. This register is set annually. Once a qualification is registered, VET providers are autonomous in designing their training programmes.

Monitoring of quality in VET is carried out on national level. The Dutch Inspectorate of Education is implemented by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. It evaluates VET-providers through triennial inspection visits (see detailed description). A standard of criteria and standards with common indicators are used. These national standards and indictors are also used by VET providers to ensure comparability and a common basis for data collection. Institutions with unsatisfactory or weak quality assurance arrangements will be continuously monitored to ensure that their quality assurance will be improved within a one year ‘period of grace’. Moreover, the inspectorate makes sure providers deliver formally recognised training courses/programmes and that the provider, the course, and the location where the training course/programme takes place are registered in CREBO.

A9.3 Process entailed and actors involved

The main actors involved in the quality assurance arrangements at system level in the Netherlands are

- The Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science;
- The Inspectorate of Education carrying out the inspection visits at schools and VET-providers;
- The VET providers;
- The stakeholders (including social partners; students; and teaching staff).

The Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science

The Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science regularly issues policy letters (beleidsbrief) in which it gives an overview of the measures to be taken in the different education policy areas. The policy letter of 2 April 2012 concerns the provision of VET programmes. More specifically, measures are presented aiming at strengthening the effective and accessible provision of VET programmes. These measures are considered to be the implementation of the intention on improving the macro-efficiency in the MBO contained in the “Focus on Skills 2011-2015” action plan.

Inspectorate of Education and the Inspection Framework

The Inspectorate of Education is responsible for the external assessment of the quality assurance systems of the VET Providers and the Inspection Framework is their main assessment tool. On 1 January 2012 the renewed Inspection Framework entered into force which aims to assess the quality of VET providers and programmes and supports the institutions to comply with the minimum quality standards.


211 CREBO-vocational courses are recognised by the Ministries of Education, Culture and Science and of Economic Affairs (for agricultural education).

212 www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/beroepsonderwijs/mbo/mbo-examens


The Inspection Framework entails a set of assessment areas and indicators against which the performance of VET providers and programmes is measured. These assessment areas include: Educational processes, examination, return, quality assurance, compliance with legal requirements, quality of teaching staff and financial stability (further outlined below). The same criteria and standards are used across the entire Dutch VET system. Moreover, the Inspection framework requires a quality assurance system or measure in place.

**VET Providers**

VET providers are responsible for setting up their own quality assurance arrangements and are required to undertake internal evaluations (self-assessment) which are subsequently assessed by the Inspectorate of Education. The quality assurance systems at provider level need to be aligned to the seven assessment areas laid down in the Inspection Framework and therefore focus predominantly, although not exclusively, on the quality of

- The educational programme;
- The qualifications issued;
- The examinations;
- The teaching;
- Student support;
- The accessibility of programmes and provider, and
- Students’ educational pathways post-graduation (e.g. employment, further education, unemployment, or other).

On provider level, the Kenniscentra Beroepsonderwijs bedrijfsleven (KBBs) are national centres of expertise on VET and the labour market and therefore form the link between VET and the business sector. These expertise centres (17 in total) are organised by sectors and their managing boards consist of social partner representatives as well as, in most cases, educational institutions. The KBBs have the responsibility to develop a clear qualification structure in which the knowledge and the skills required by businesses are set out. Another of their tasks consists in deciding, on the basis of specific criteria, which companies or organisations are qualified to provide training places for students in their companies. If an employer meets the specific criteria, it receives official recognition and is entered on the centre’s register. Furthermore, they have to ensure a sufficient supply of work placements.

The umbrella organisation for the KBBs used to be the COLO which has been replaced by the Foundation for the Cooperation Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market (SBB) from January 2012 onwards. The SBB works with the MBO Council and industrial organisations. Moreover, the association for private VET providers is also involved as a stakeholder.

**Stakeholders**

The role of stakeholders (e.g. social partners, students, teaching staff) is an essential aspect of the Dutch quality assurance system. The importance attached to stakeholder input is demonstrated by the fact that one of the indicators in the Inspection Framework assesses the opinion of stakeholders against the VET institution, their involvement in the design of the Practical Vocational Training Protocol (BPV-Protocol) and the educational programmes.

The stakeholders are also involved in the design of the ‘qualification files’.

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215 [http://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/binaries/content/assets/Actueel_publicaties/2012/toezichtkader-bve-2012---formeleversje.pdf](http://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/binaries/content/assets/Actueel_publicaties/2012/toezichtkader-bve-2012---formeleversje.pdf)

216 Stichting Samenwerking Beroepsonderwijs Bedrijfsleven.

217 Council on Vocational Secondary Education.

In the Netherlands there exist 240 qualification files\(^{219}\) for all VET qualifications. The qualification files stipulate the learning outcomes which VET students need to acquire by the end of their training programme. Input from stakeholders (e.g., employers, employees) is regarded as essential for the design of the knowledge and skills-set, as this ensures smooth transitions from education into employment. Yet the VET providers are completely autonomous in designing the training programme leading to the acquisition of the qualification, i.e. how to achieve the learning outcomes.

Complementary to that, there are a number of key associations involved in the quality assurance processes:

- MBO Raad - Netherlands Association of VET Colleges;
- SBB (Foundation for the Cooperation Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market);
- MKB Netherlands (the Dutch Federation of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises); and
- VNO-NCW (The Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers).

These organisations cooperate with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science particularly through the BPV Protocol, an agreement regulating the practical vocational training period for VET students - outlining in detail the roles and responsibilities of students, training company, VET provider and the knowledge centres.\(^{220}\)

### A9.4 Evolutions and trends

During the last years, several actions have been taken to improve quality assurance in VET in the Netherlands.

- A renewal of the Inspection Framework of 1 January 2012 (see above);
- The development of the ‘Foundation for Cooperation on Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market (SBB)’ in 2012;
- The measures set out in the Action Plan ‘Focus on Skills 2011-2015’: Renewal qualifications framework, professionalisation of teachers and managers, improvement of quality management, intensifying coaching and education time while at the same time shortening education tracks, new financial system, and programmes that are more efficiency oriented (not offering all courses at each regional training centre);
- Specific developments for involvement of students in governance in 2010, central telephone number to address complaints;
- The development of a national benchmark in VET (Association of VET Colleges or ‘MBO Raad’);
- The JOB Monitor, providing student feedback from the VET Student Organisation JOB;
- The development of the Practical Vocational Training (BPV) Protocol.

The renewal of the **Inspection Framework of the Inspectorate of Education** is regarded as the most important recent development. On 1 January 2012 the renewed Inspection Framework entered into force and introduced three main changes in comparison to the previous frameworks:

- Increased emphasis on quality assurance; quality assurance is now one of the seven main assessment areas;
- Quality assurance is assessed at institutional level as opposed to programme level;
- Triennial inspections as opposed to annual inspections; and
- Intensive monitoring of unsatisfactory or weak performing schools.

The rationale behind the renewed framework was that under the previous framework the Inspectorate had fewer competences in the field of quality assurance. The renewed framework now addressed quality assurance out of seven assessment areas. A major


improvement has been the shift from quality assurance assessment at programme level to institutional level which allows the Inspectorate to now hold the institutional level as a whole responsible for unsatisfactory or weak quality assurance. This has had a greater effect as the Inspectorate found that the VET providers put more efforts into improving quality assurance when the institution is held responsible for poor management thereof. It is however the competence of the institution (and not the Inspectorate) to decide the approach adopted to improve the quality. The Inspectorate carries out a follow-up inspection to assess whether the quality assurance system has been improved.

With regard to satisfactory or good performing VET providers, the Inspectorate carries out triennial inspection visits as opposed to annual visits under the previous framework. The Inspectorate however continuously monitors VET providers through the media or complaints received from students. The Inspectorate can decide to undertake an ad-hoc inspection if there is reason to believe that quality assurance is at risk.

In addition to the renewal of the Inspection Framework, the qualification files have also been reviewed. The process of aligning qualifications with the newly designed NLQF – Dutch Qualification Framework – is under way.221

Another significant development was the introduction of a national benchmark in VET. The benchmark constitutes of indicators related to financial management, student success (how many participants leaving MBO graduate) and participants’ judgment.

A9.5 Comparison with EQAVET

The understanding of quality assurance in the Netherlands is based on a cyclic model (The ‘Deming Wheel’ or PDCA cycle, containing four phases: plan, do, check and act), which is largely in line with the EQAVET cycle.

As to the four phases, the following can be stated:

- In the planning phase, EQAVET stipulates that there is a need for planning by identifying goals and objectives in terms of policies, procedures, tasks and human resources which need to be regularly evaluated with particular emphasis on maintaining competences and skills set of the teaching staff. VET institutions are also required to publish annual reports on the evaluation of examination procedures.

- In the implementation phase, EQAVET refers to the implementation of quality assurance procedures to ensure the achievement of goals and objectives. The Inspection Framework is the main procedure in place which clearly defines assessment areas, aspects and indicators against which the quality assurance system in VET institutions will be assessed. VET providers are however autonomous as to the design and implementation of their quality assurance arrangements.

- In the evaluation phase, EQAVET suggests that there should be evaluation mechanisms in place which assess achievements and outcomes. In the Netherlands the Inspectorate of Education generally carries out triennial inspection visits to assess the quality of VET providers. Supplementary ad-hoc inspection visits may be undertaken if there quality assurance is at risk.

- In the review phase, Dutch providers are expected to set up new procedures to achieve targeted outcomes or new objectives. On the basis of the inspection visits, the Inspectorate will issue a report which subsequently should be used by the institution to make amendments to the quality assurance system or to set new objectives for future development. If the assessed institution has an unsatisfactory or weak quality assurance system in place, the Inspectorate will carry out a follow-up visit in the subsequent year. The provider is then expected to show remarkable improvements and have a satisfactory system in place.

The table below gives an overview on whether and how the Dutch quality assurance system of C-VET corresponds to the EQAVET system level descriptors for quality assurance.

**Table A9.1 EQAVET system level descriptors and take-up in QA on system level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goals/objectives of VET are described for the medium and long terms, and linked to European goals</td>
<td>Yes – in the Action Plan ‘Focus on Skills 2011-2015’ and the Reference document to the NLQF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The relevant stakeholders participate in setting VET goals and objectives at the different levels</td>
<td>Yes – the Dutch system is very much based on the participation of stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targets are established and monitored through specific indicators (success criteria)</td>
<td>Yes - through Inspectorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanisms and procedures have been established to identify training needs</td>
<td>Yes – through stakeholder engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An information policy has been devised to ensure optimum disclosure of quality results/outcomes subject to national/ regional data protection requirements</td>
<td>Publication of inspection results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards and guidelines for recognition, validation and certification of competences of individuals have been defined</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implementation plans are established in cooperation with social partners, VET providers and other relevant stakeholders at the different levels</td>
<td>Yes – through stakeholder engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation plans include consideration of the resources required, the capacity of the users and the tools and guidelines needed for support</td>
<td>Yes – through Inspectorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidelines and standards have been devised for implementation at different levels</td>
<td>Yes – through Inspectorate – common criteria and indicators are used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation plans include specific support towards the training of teachers and trainers</td>
<td>Yes, is included in criteria of inspectorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET providers’ responsibilities in the implementation process are explicitly described and made transparent</td>
<td>Yes, providers are the main responsible bodies for implementing quality assurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A national and/or regional quality assurance framework has been devised and includes guidelines and quality standards at VET-provider level to promote continuous improvement and self-regulation</td>
<td>Yes – through Inspectorate – common criteria and indicators are used</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A methodology for evaluation has been devised, covering internal and external evaluation</td>
<td>yes – success of training is monitored via outcome-related criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder involvement in the monitoring and evaluation process is agreed and clearly described</td>
<td>Yes – JOB monitor – executed in cooperation with stakeholders (more related to IVET than to CVET)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The national/regional standards and processes for improving and assuring quality are relevant</td>
<td>Granted through close involvement of stakeholders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and proportionate to the needs of the sector

| Study on Quality Assurance in Continuous VET and on future development of EQAVET |
| Systems are subject to self-evaluation, internal and external review, as appropriate | Yes – providers carry out self-assessment and are externally reviewed. |
| Early warning systems are implemented | Unclear |
| Performance indicators are applied | Yes – through Inspectorate and national benchmark |
| Relevant, regular and coherent data collection takes place, in order to measure success and identify areas for improvement. Appropriate data collection methodologies have been devised, e.g. questionnaires and indicators/metrics | Yes - JOB monitor (more related to IVET than to CVET) |

**Review**

| Procedures, mechanisms and instruments for undertaking reviews are defined at all levels | Inspectorate requires amendments should providers fall short of expectations |
| Processes are regularly reviewed and action plans for change devised. Systems are adjusted accordingly | Adaptations of Inspectorate framework and qualifications framework undertaken in 2012 |
| Information on the outcomes of evaluation is made publicly available | Unclear |

Moreover, the combination of self-assessment and external assessment applied in The Netherlands is equally in line with the underlying philosophy of EQAVET. However, the quality assurance instruments cannot directly be linked to EQAVET or the European agenda.

**A9.6 Description of concrete quality assurances measures**

**A9.6.1 Name/designation: Inspectorate of Education and the Inspection Framework**

**Developer/owner/provider:**
Ministry of Education, Culture and Science

**Status:**
Legal requirement for all VET-providers – system level

**Target group:**
VET providers, public and private (or both)

**Description:**
The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science monitors the quality of education and the compliance with legal requirements among VET providers. The notion of quality assurance in VET is a legal requirement for VET providers, which stipulates (among other criteria) that VET providers are obliged to establish a quality assurance system which needs to be regularly evaluated. It is also required that VET institutions produce annual reports on the evaluation of examination procedures. Hence, the Inspection is authorised to monitor whether the providers have established a well-functioning quality assurance instrument. To this end, the inspection employs a so-called...
“Inspection Framework” which includes a list of assessment areas and indicators against which the performance of the VET providers (including programmes and teachers) are assessed.

In 2012, a renewed Inspection Framework entered into force. Under the previous Inspection Framework, inspection visits took place annually which has now shifted towards triennial inspections.

Process:

The Inspection Framework entails a set of assessment areas and indicators against which the performance of VET providers and programmes is measured. These assessment areas include: Educational processes, examination, return, quality assurance, compliance with legal requirements, quality of teaching staff and financial stability.

The Inspectorate of Education generally carries out triennial inspection visits to assess the quality of VET providers. Supplementary ad-hoc inspection visits may be undertaken if the quality is at risk. Under the previous Inspection Framework inspections took place annually which has now shifted towards triennial inspections. The inspectorate however continuously monitors the VET providers (e.g. through media, complaints received from students) and will undertake ad-hoc inspection visits if there is reason to believe that quality assurance may be at risk. In such cases, the school is given a one year “grace period” to make the necessary improvements. If quality continues to be at risk, the Inspectorate is allowed to undertake further measures (e.g. meetings with Board of Governors, fines, close-down of institution).

It has been stated that quality assurance is one of the areas described in the Inspection Framework. In that area, providers have to

- Hand in an annual self-assessment report (addressing the criteria and indicators defined);
- Together with documents regarding a quality assurance system in place (e.g. certification documents);
- Subsequently these documents are examined by the inspectorate;
- During inspection visits, the stated givens are examined and assessed;
- A final assessment is made; taking all elements into account.
- If the institution fails to meet the expectations, the Inspectorate can carry out a follow-up inspection to assess whether the quality assurance system has been improved.

On the basis of the inspection visits, the Inspectorate will issue a report which subsequently should be used by the institution to make amendments to the quality of the provisions or to set new objectives for future development. Upon a follow-up visit in the following year, the provider is expected to show improvements and have a satisfactory system in place.

Scope/importance:

The Inspection Framework covers the entire education system and all schools, VET-providers among them. A total of 150 VET providers across the Netherlands fall under the inspection framework which include the regional training centres, the agricultural training centres, specialist trade colleges and private providers.

223 [http://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/binaries/content/assets/Actueel_publicaties/2012/toezichtkader-bve-2012---formele-versie.pdf](http://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/binaries/content/assets/Actueel_publicaties/2012/toezichtkader-bve-2012---formele-versie.pdf)

224 [http://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/binaries/content/assets/Actueel_publicaties/2012/toezichtkader-bve-2012---formele-versie.pdf](http://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/binaries/content/assets/Actueel_publicaties/2012/toezichtkader-bve-2012---formele-versie.pdf)
Use:

In 2012 the renewed Inspection Framework entered into force. Regarding quality assurance there are four main changes compared to the previous frameworks.225

- There is an increased emphasis on quality assurance, i.e. quality assurance is now one of the seven main assessment areas;
- Quality assurance is assessed at institutional level as opposed to programme level;
- Triennial inspections as opposed to annual inspections are taking place; and
- Intensive monitoring of unsatisfactory or weak performing schools is possible.

The shift from quality assurance assessment at programme level to institutional level allows the Inspectorate to now hold the institution as a whole responsible. It is however the competence of the institution (and not the Inspectorate) to decide the approach adopted to improve the quality.

It would be premature to assess the impact of the renewal of the framework. There are however a number of preliminary findings.

The inspectorate found that schools are working harder to ensure that they have a well-functioning quality assurance system in place. This is likely to be explained by the fact that there has been a shift from quality assurance assessment at programme level to institutional level which allows the Inspectorate to now hold the institutional level as a whole responsible for unsatisfactory or weak quality assurance. This has had a greater effect as the Inspectorate found that the VET providers put more efforts into improving quality assurance when the institution is held responsible for poor management thereof. The VET providers are however highly autonomous and therefore the authorities nor the Inspectorate have influence on how the institutions design and implement their quality assurance arrangements.

The results of the assessment are made publically available which makes it a sensitive issue for schools who are made known as having a unsatisfactory or weak quality assurance system in place.

Overall the initial findings of the renewed Inspection Framework are positive so far. The Inspectorate pointed however out that they faced challenges in carrying out thorough assessments as some VET providers are large institutions with a wide variety of programmes, a high number of teaching staff and students spread across different locations.226

Comparison with EQAVET:

The Inspection Framework is based on a cyclic understanding of quality assurance. It entails seven assessment areas which are sub-divided into aspects and indicators against which the inspectorate measures the quality of the VET provider, its programmes and teaching staff, indicated in the table below.

Table A9.2 Criteria and indicators used by the Dutch Inspection Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dutch Inspectorate</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment area 1: educational processes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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225 [http://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/binaries/content/assets/Actueel_publicaties/2012/toezichtkader-bve-2012---formeleversie.pdf](http://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/binaries/content/assets/Actueel_publicaties/2012/toezichtkader-bve-2012---formeleversie.pdf)

226 Interviews carried out by ICF GHK
### Dutch Inspectorate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coherence</td>
<td>Content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Programming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailor-made approach</td>
<td>Differentiation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning in the educational institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didactics</td>
<td>Interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support and guidance of learning activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feedback on learning activities and results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration of learning</td>
<td>Utilisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Workload</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning environment</td>
<td>Internal environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intake and placement</td>
<td>Provision of information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intake and placement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student counselling</td>
<td>Provision of information</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student counselling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care</td>
<td>First and second degree care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Third degree care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical Vocational Training</td>
<td>Preparation students and companies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Placement</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Guidance by training company</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guidance by VET institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment area 2: examination</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examination</td>
<td>Distinction development-based tests and examination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coverage of qualification dossier</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Caesura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transparency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>Assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reliability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certification</td>
<td>Decision-making on certification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responsibilities exam committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment area 3: return</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profitability</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment area 4: quality assurance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steering</td>
<td>Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continuity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>Monitoring</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improvement and anchoring</td>
<td>Improvement measures</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promoting expertise</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anchoring</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Summary:**
A study on quality assurance in continuous VET and on future development of EQAVET, focusing on aspects such as coherence, tailoring approaches, didactics, and learning environments. The table outlines key indicators for these aspects, covering areas like content programming, differentiation, learning in the educational institution, interactions, support and guidance, and feedback on learning activities and results. The study also examines duration of learning, utilization, and workload, as well as learning environment indicators such as internal environment, facilities, guidance, intake and placement, student counselling, care, and practical vocational training. Assessment areas include examination, focusing on examination coverage and assessment transparency, and certification, with a focus on decision-making and responsibilities of the exam committee. The study concludes with assessment areas related to return and quality assurance, including steering, assessment, improvement, and anchoring.
Study on Quality Assurance in Continuous VET and on future development of EQAVET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dutch Inspectorate</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aspects</td>
<td>Indicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialogue and liability</td>
<td>Internal External</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment area 5: compliance with legal requirements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compliance with legal requirements</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment area 6: quality of teaching staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didactics</td>
<td>Interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support and guidance of learning activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feedback on learning activities and results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher involvement</td>
<td>Autonomy teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Implementation of teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monitoring and improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalization</td>
<td>Professionalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training needs of teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Competent and qualified teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improvement and assurance of quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment area 7: financial stability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial position</td>
<td>Solvability</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fluid assets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Profitability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quality annual account</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial management</td>
<td>Annual and multiple-annual budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quality of financial management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Inspectorate of Education*[^227] / ICF GHK research

The table below gives an overview on how main features of the accreditation system correspond to the main features of EQAVET.

| Use of cycle | Yes, based on cyclic understanding |

[^227]: [http://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/binaries/content/assets/Actueel_publicaties/2012/toezichtkader-bve-2012---formeleversie.pdf](http://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/binaries/content/assets/Actueel_publicaties/2012/toezichtkader-bve-2012---formeleversie.pdf)
| Use of descriptors | Several descriptors are used:  
- Targets are established and monitored through specific indicators;  
- Implementation plans include consideration of the resources required, the capacity of the users and the tools and guidelines needed for support;  
- Guidelines and standards have been devised for implementation at different levels;  
- Implementation plans include specific support towards the training of teachers and trainers;  
- VET providers’ responsibilities in the implementation process are explicitly described and made transparent;  
- A national and/or regional quality assurance framework has been devised and includes guidelines and quality standards at VET-provider level to promote continuous improvement and self-regulation;  
- Performance indicators are applied (benchmark). |

| Use of indicators / criteria | Several input related indicators are used. However, output and outcome are monitored by other instruments in the Dutch VET-system (e.g. JOB Monitor). |

| EQAVET building blocks | The Inspection framework relates to the following building blocks of EQAVET on system level:  
- Set clear rules for deciding who offers VET provision  
- Recognise and build on existing internal arrangements  
- Define and implement a communications strategy  
- Use feedback to improve VET  
- Provide clarity over funding  
- Ensure quality assurance covers all aspects of VET provision |

Conclusion:
The Dutch Inspectorate Framework shows similarities to EQAVET. It is based on a cyclic understanding of quality and many of the indicative descriptors and indicators are used. As to indicators, companies’ satisfaction, the professionalisation of staff, quality and quality assurance of examinations and the nominal educational time are important features and are combined in a benchmark.

A9.7 Sources

Literature:

Websites:
Study on Quality Assurance in Continuous VET and on future development of EQAVET

http://maxius.nl/wet-educatie-en-beroepsonderwijs/artikel1.3.6/
http://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/binaries/content/assets/Actueel_publicaties/2012/toezichtka_der-bve-2012---formele-versie.pdf
http://www.duo-onderwijsonderzoek.nl/mbo_kaart.htm
http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/beroepsonderwijs/mbo/mbo-examens

Interviews

Interviews with three responsible people at

- Inspectorate of Education
- MBO Raad

A10.1 Brief description of the C-VET system

In England, no single piece of legislation provides an education and training legal framework and there is no distinction between C-VET and I-VET\(^\text{228}\). The distinction is essentially made between pre-19 education provision and post-19 education provision. The majority of pre-19 VET is delivered through FE colleges (for those aged 16+), Sixth Form Colleges and government funded work-based learning for young people. Post-19 VET provision is typically spread across the learning and skills sector and delivered by employers, training providers, FE colleges and by some universities. Nevertheless, there is a high level of public sector intervention and both pre- and post-19 provision is highly regulated:

- The main government department involved in post-19 education and training is the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS). There are also three main government agencies that are partner organisations of BIS. These include the Skills Funding Agency who is responsible for quality assuring and directing funding to FE colleges and post-19 providers in England. The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) who is responsible for funding and coordinating the delivery of Apprenticeships throughout England. In addition there is the UKCES provides strategic leadership in skills and employment issues.
- The main government department involved in pre-19 education provision is the Department for Education. Partner organisations include the Education Funding Agency, The Teaching Agency, Standards and Testing Agency and the National College for School Leadership.

In addition, Ofqual is accountable to Parliament and is the regulator of qualifications, examinations and tests in England and of vocational qualifications in Northern Ireland. As part of their role, Ofqual ensure that the organisations offering and delivering qualifications (awarding organisations) have good systems in place, and that they are held to account for their performance. Ofsted also reports directly to Parliament and amongst other areas, is responsible for the inspection of schools, colleges, initial teacher education, work based learning, adult and community learning and education and training in prisons. In relation to C-VET Ofsted use a Common Inspection Framework for further education and skills\(^\text{229}\) to inspect provision.

In England, Local Authorities are responsible for securing education and training provision for young people who are over compulsory school age but are under 19 years of age. This includes planning, commissioning, quality assurance and funding of provision for these learners. Commissioning decisions must take account of quality issues; maintain an interest in the quality of the provision they have contracted.

C-VET provision is structured according to sectors. Each sector is charged with boosting the skills and productivity of their sector’s workforce and improving learning supply through National Occupational Standards (NOS), Apprenticeships and further education for example. The quality assurance arrangements in relation to the different types of learning are discussed in more detail below.

Specific requirements are in place for education providers to deliver publically funded education and training provisions. All education providers delivering post-19 provision are required to register on the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) Register of Training Organisations. As part of the funding contractual arrangements between the SFA and education providers, a series of quality assurance measures and standards that providers are expected to meet.


\(^{229}\) http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/common-inspection-framework-for-further-education-and-skills-2012
These include the SFA Minimum Levels of Performance, and the Intervention Policy (discussed further below).

In addition, in England it is common practice to publish provider performance data with the intention that access to comparable data in relation to success rates, learner satisfaction and employer satisfaction\(^{230}\).

### A10.2 Description of quality assurance arrangements in C-VET at system level

#### A10.2.1 Quality assurance framework

The government’s policy document *New challenges, new chances – further education and skills system reforming plan*\(^{231}\) sets out a focused approach to improving quality assurance. The main focus is on providing better access to information on quality in order to empower learners to make informed choices. Creating competition and the incentive for providers to be responsive to learners and employers is considered to minimise the need for government-led quality system that are thought to divert providers from concentrating on the needs of learners and employers. In addition, the government plans to take swift action in relation to failing provision, providing intensive support, and, if necessary, intervening to ensure that alternative and innovative delivery approaches are secured for the future – the idea here is that where performance is poor, the government will intervene quickly to restore high-quality provision.

#### A10.2.2 Basic description of the quality assurance approach

The main principles of the quality assurance of further education provision in England is based on inspection, performance monitoring and provider accreditation. All providers in receipt of funding to deliver provision must be accredited by the Skills funding Agency (SFA) and are then subject to inspection by Ofsted and performance monitoring undertaken by the SFA. In addition to these mandatory requirements, a number of non-mandatory measures exist. For example, the SFA encourage all provides to use self-assessment as a tool for self-improvement and to submit them to the SFA annually on a voluntary basis. In the past this was a mandatory requirement of funding, however this is not a voluntary measure that is recognised as a sector-own tool for improvement.

The quality assurance arrangements in England are very distinct; yet the measures are interlinked. However, system level quality assurance measures display a certain degree of overlap between the roles and responsibilities of different QA approaches. For example, Awarding Organisations require education providers to comply with a set of quality requirements. In addition, the SFA also requires providers to meet certain quality requirements in order to be eligible to deliver provision that is publically funded.

### A10.3 Processes entailed and the actors involved

In England there are a number of government bodies/agencies involved in the overarching quality assurance arrangements of C-VET, most importantly the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and Ofsted.

Other bodies are also relevant, for example:

- **The Learning and Skills Improvement Service** is responsible for providing support and challenging improvement activity. LSIS has a responsibility to provide support needed to continuously improve practice and performance with the ultimate goal of ensuring

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learners receive an inspiring and quality experience. Their focus is on improving teaching and learning, developing the leaders and managers of the future and addressing areas of underperformance is long-term.

- **Institute for Learning** is the independent the professional body for teachers, tutors, trainers and student teachers in the further education (FE) and skills sector.

- **National Apprenticeship Service** (NAS) focuses on increasing the number of apprentices in England. They work with employers to help them introduce apprentices into their businesses, help those looking to start their careers find an Apprenticeship job opportunity, and contribute towards the costs of the training and qualifications within an Apprenticeship. The NAS engages with a wide range of partners to help design the Apprenticeship frameworks, and they implement all government policies aimed at improving the quality and quantity of Apprenticeships.

- **UK Commission for Employment and Skills** is a non-departmental public body providing strategic leadership on skills and employment issues in the four nations of the UK.

- In addition there has recently been an announcement of the **Commission on Adult Vocational Teaching and Learning** with its aim of raising the quality and improving the outcomes and impact of vocational teaching and learning for learners and employers offers the sector an opportunity to turn the spotlight on this critical priority. The Commission is supported by 19 Commissioners who are representatives from across the FE sector.

The main quality assurance arrangements at system level associated with C-VET include:

- **Market entry and exit – SFA Register of Providers**: In order to be included on the Register, FE colleges and independent training providers wishing to enter the market are required to pass a Due Diligence Assurance Gateway (which can be described as an online tendering portal).

- **Ofsted inspection – Common Inspection Framework**: Ofsted regulate and inspect a variety of education providers in England.

- **Skills Funding Agency - Minimum Levels of Performance**: The SFA use Minimum Levels of Performance that is based on a methodology that provides an analysis of a providers qualification success rates.

- **Skills Funding Agency – Intervention Policy**: The SFA has developed a process to address provider risk assessment and management through an intervention policy. The starting point for the Agency is an assessment of the risk of a provider failing to deliver post-19 provision that makes efficient and effective use of public funds.

- **Skills Funding Agency - Financial Performance Reporting and Assurance**: The SFA is also responsible for carrying out financial performance reporting and assurance of providers. This assessment is a condition of funding. A set of indicators are used to grade a providers financial health, where a provider is rated as ‘inadequate’ the Agency will step in and the intervention escalation process described above will commence.

- **Ofqual – Recognition Criteria and General Conditions of Recognition**: Ofqual is responsible for regulating awarding organisations and their qualifications. Before awarding organisations can be recognised to carry out regulatory activity, they must demonstrate that they meet the Criteria for Recognition and that they are capable of complying with the General Conditions of Recognition.

### A10.4 Evolutions and trends

In England there are still on-going structural changes taking place as a result of the Coalition Government coming into office. The most significant change has been a split in Government departments responsible for education and skills and a more widespread reform of government agencies. As such the roles and responsibilities for managing quality assurance is now divided between different government departments and agencies as education provision is split pre-19 and post-19.

In relation to quality assurance measures, there is some evidence to suggest that the profile and importance of quality assurance is being raised. For example, Ofsted is reverting back to
a regional approach where regional directors will be in place to take responsibility for the regional quality improvement agenda. This approach is set to raise the profile and importance of inspection at both regional and local levels.

It is the Government's intention to revoke entirely the regulations that require teachers to register with the Institute for Learning (IfIL), the requirement to complete a specified number of hours of continuing professional development (CPD), and to submit a record of that CPD to the IfIL with effect from 30 September 2012. Qualification requirements will, however, be retained for a further year to allow time for the sector to develop an alternative approach.

In terms of tensions within the overarching concept of quality assurance, it was noted that in England a wide range of additional approaches to quality assurance with a number of different organisations with a role and duty to play in quality assurance across the sector. For example, the funding agencies use minimum standards – minimum levels of performance requiring providers to ensure they are above a certain threshold in terms of qualification success rates.

However the new Ofsted Chief Inspector is voiced concerns about the need for a more proactive approach to quality improvement in England and taking an active role in improving quality when inspection grades are poor. This has important implications for the current approach to quality assurance in England with potential implications for other organisations. For example, the LSIS is responsible for providing support to providers who do not perform well in inspection. A shift change in quality will have certain implications for LSIS in the future.

A10.5 Comparison with EQAVET

The quality assurance approach used in England has been designed and developed in a way that meets the needs of what policy makers perceive to be the most appropriate approach to the quality assurance. At individual measure level, these methods have not been influenced by the EQAVET approach to quality assurance.

However, the following comparisons can be drawn:

- **Quality assurance systems for VET providers**: There is some comparability with indicator number 4 – Completion rate in VET programmes that serves to track the number of successfully completed/abandoned VET programmes.
- **The SFA Minimum Levels of Performance** can be compared to a number of the EQAVET indicators – particularly in relation to Indicator 1 on relevance of quality assurance systems for VET providers.
- **The Ofsted Common Inspection Framework** represents a framework for providers to follow in terms of how the plan, implement, evaluate and review their provision and monitor their own quality assurance approaches.

There are other quality assurance approaches used in England that could also be compared to EQAVET. For example it is common practice for statistics to be published in relation to success rates. Statistics are also available prevalence of vulnerable groups across a range of provision that can provide evidence to report against indicator 8 for example. Labour market analysis is also available from the Office of National Statistics and is used together with labour market research carried out by UKCES and Sector Skills Councils to inform programme rationale and design. This also provides clear comparability with the planning aspect of the EQAVET cycle and indicator 9 on mechanisms to identify training needed.

The table below shows whether and how the C-VET system in England corresponds to the EQAVET system level descriptors for quality assurance.

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### Planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals/objectives of VET are described for the medium and long terms, and linked to European goals</th>
<th>The goals/objectives of VET are set out in New challenges, new chances: further education system and skills reform plan. The Skills for Sustainable Growth strategy document sets out the government’s strategy on improving and using skills for sustainable growth. Its key objective is to deliver a skills system driven from the bottom up, able to respond to the needs of individuals, communities and a dynamic economy. However, these are policy strategies and not clearly part of the QA measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The relevant stakeholders participate in setting VET goals and objectives at the different levels</td>
<td>Stakeholders are systematically consulted in setting out what the VET system is seeking to achieve – typically through large scale national consultations, sector specific consultation – led by SSCs. Stakeholders are typically involved in reforms specific to CVET – this could be qualification/Apprenticeship design, the review of national occupational standards. In March 2011 an independent review of further education – the review of vocational education was commissioned. The government then carried out a public consultation and published its plans in December 2011 for the FE sector. In addition, the Skills for Sustainable Growth strategy follows a consultation on the future direction of skills policy (see ref: URN 10/1073) However, as above this is not an element of the QA measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targets are established and monitored through specific indicators (success criteria)</td>
<td>Specific QA mechanisms are based on targets and indicators – namely the inspection framework and the Skills Funding Agency Minimum levels of Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanisms and procedures have been established to identify training needs</td>
<td>In England, this role is carried out by the Sector Skills Councils and their umbrella organisation – UKCES. It is not part of the specific quality assurance mechanisms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An information policy has been devised to ensure optimum disclosure of quality results/outcomes subject to national/ regional data protection requirements</td>
<td>It is standard practice in England that Ofsted inspection reports are published and freely available on the Ofsted website. In addition, the Skills Funding Agency publishes performance related data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards and guidelines for recognition, validation and certification of competences of individuals have been defined</td>
<td>In recent years there has been a concerted effort to provide information about the recognition, validation and certification of competences. Key stakeholders including SSCS, employers, providers, educationalists and unions are involved in the design of qualifications. Competency based qualifications are designed by SSCs and form part of the qualifications and credit framework. There are clear links between the quality of provision and funding. This is through the SFA minim standards in order to improve the quality of SFA funded activity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Implementation

| Implementation plans are established in cooperation with social partners, VET providers and other relevant stakeholders at the different levels | New challenges, new chances: further education system and skills reform plan sets out the plan for the further education sector. This plan has been informed by the views of all key stakeholders, individual |

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Implementation plans include consideration of the resources required, the capacity of the users and the tools and guidelines needed for support. The introduction of new measures typically follows a pilot phase/period of implementation. VET providers and stakeholders are informed/engaged in the process. A good example here is the development of the qualification and credit framework. This followed pilot studies and extensive support to providers. As above, this practice is not specifically related to quality assurance measures.

Guidelines and standards have been devised for implementation at different levels. There are very clear guidelines to support the further education sector and the range of quality assurance measures in place – these range from guidelines in relation to inspection, minimum levels of performance, financial management, funding arrangements, Ofsted inspection.

Implementation plans include specific support towards the training of teachers and trainers. LSIS provide support for teachers and trainers. The SSCs provide support to trainers. Teaching regulations though currently been revised. These measures are not part of the quality assurance framework.

VET providers’ responsibilities in the implementation process are explicitly described and made transparent. Through national guidance provided by Ofsted and the SFA, training providers are clear about their role in implementing quality assurance systems. This has also been reinforced in the governments New Challenge, new chances document. One of the key advantages of the SFAs intervention process is that it is structured, transparent, efficient, and has support processes in place to ensure providers are supported appropriately.

A national and/or regional quality assurance framework has been devised and includes guidelines and quality standards at VET-provider level to promote continuous improvement and self-regulation. Although there is not a single national quality framework/strategy for quality assurance in England, the national approach and the measures within it (through Ofsted, Skills Funding Agency, LSIS for example) include clear guidelines on what is expected in terms of quality. There is a clear commitment to continuous improvement. Through the work of LSIS there is a drive towards a self-improving sector – a key focus here being on professionalisation of the sector.

**Evaluation**

A methodology for evaluation has been devised, covering internal and external evaluation. Through the Skills Funding Agency Minimum Levels of Performance measure, stakeholders are clear about how progress is measured. Though it is no longer a mandatory requirement, providers are also encouraged to carry out internal self-assessment. Awarding organisation need to approve centres to offer their qualification and therefore the centres are subject to further quality assurance requirements. This must be upheld by the awarding organisations who are recognised to award qualifications via the General Conditions of Recognition. The quality assurance arrangements specified by the...
| Stakeholder involvement in the monitoring and evaluation process is agreed and clearly described | Through guidelines made available from the Skills Funding Agency in relation to funding, performance levels, stakeholders (in this case the providers) understand and are clear about what is expected from them. They are also made clear of the consequences of failing to deliver on quality and the process involved – e.g. notice to improve – withdrawal of funding. |
| --- |
| The national/regional standards and processes for improving and assuring quality are relevant and proportionate to the needs of the sector | In the past there has been much criticism about the bureaucratic burden placed on providers in particular – this follows concerns about the number of different quality procedures they need to go through to comply with the funding agency, the awarding organisation etc. Both the Skills for Sustainable Growth strategy and the New Challenges, New Chances policy make a commitment to ensuring the system is not hampered by over-complicated bureaucracy and regulation. To this end a number of systems and procedures have been simplified and a new performance management system will focus on self-assessment. |
| Systems are subject to self-evaluation, internal and external review, as appropriate | Self-assessment is encouraged but no longer a requirement of SFA funding. Inspection is a mandatory requirement of all providers. |
| Early warning systems are implemented | There are a number of triggers in place that aim to address/improve the quality of provision, enabling providers to act quickly. For example, A provider receives an ‘inadequate’ Ofsted Inspection judgement for overall effectiveness; when provision falls below the post-19 minimum levels of performance and when a provider is rated as ‘inadequate’ by the Agency for financial health and financial control. |
| Performance indicators are applied | The SFA FE Choices site provides public comparable information for colleges and providers and provides information on key performance indicators in relation to success rates, learner destinations, learner and employer satisfaction. |
| Relevant, regular and coherent data collection takes place, in order to measure success and identify areas for improvement. Appropriate data collection methodologies have been devised, e.g. questionnaires and indicators/metrics | There are robust arrangements in place to collect data on quality in order to measure success and identify areas for improvement. Data is generated and collected through learner satisfaction surveys, Ofsted inspection, funding data – e.g. funding on the basis of delivery, carrying out performance reviews. In addition, the SFA publishes data at institutional and sector level. |

**Review**

| Procedures, mechanisms and instruments for undertaking reviews are defined at all levels | When reviews are undertaken the procedures and mechanisms to conduct the review are clear. |
| Processes are regularly reviewed and action plans for change devised. Systems are | Changes to measures and existing approaches to quality assurance take place as a result of systematic |
A10.6 Description of concrete quality assurances measures

In addition to the system level approach to the design and award of partial/vocational qualifications and the related system of recognition of learning outcomes, the following main quality assurance measures have been identified as part of this study:

a. SFA – Minimum Levels of Performance
b. SFA – Intervention Policy
c. Ofsted – Common Inspection Framework for further education and skills

These are further described below.

A10.6.1 Name/Designation: Skills Funding Agency – Minimum Levels of Performance

Developer/owner/provider:
Skills Funding Agency (SFA)

Status:
Current feature of the SFA quality assurance procedures

Target group:
Providers in receipt of public funding

Scope/importance:
Minimum Levels of Performance is a methodological approach to ensuring and driving up quality. It applies to all providers in receipt of funding to deliver post-19 provision funded by the Skills Funding Agency.

Description:
Minimum Levels of Performance (MLP) are a series of reports which provide an analysis of a providers qualification success rates. They show the volume of provision which falls below a particular threshold, expressed as a percentage. Currently there are different thresholds, varying according to level, duration and funding type. Minimum Levels of Performance represent the absolute minimum success-rate performance. Providers are expected to exceed these levels, as meeting the levels is not necessarily enough to guarantee continued funding.

The main focus of this approach is driving out poor provision in so far that MLP represent the absolute minimum success-rate performance that providers are expected to exceed. Within the context of post-19 provision, MLP applies to different types of provision each of which have an associated minimum level threshold applied. Success-rate information from the previous year is used to determine how and why the minimum level threshold is calculated. So for example, for the 2011/12 academic year, consideration of provider performance against the minimum levels will use the most recent available success-rate information from 2009/10. Table A10.1 shows the minimum levels of performance thresholds.
Table A10.1  Academic year 2011/2012 Minimum levels of performance thresholds (extracted data)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme/Qualification type</th>
<th>Minimum level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FE long qualification Level 1</td>
<td>63 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FE long qualification Level 2</td>
<td>63 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-levels</td>
<td>75 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FE short qualification (all levels/5 to 24 weeks)</td>
<td>65 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticeships (full framework)</td>
<td>53 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Apprenticeships (full framework)</td>
<td>53 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Train to Gain</td>
<td>68 per cent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SIA, 2010, Minimum levels of Performance and Notice to Improve Guidance.

By way of illustration, in relation to Apprenticeships – the methodology allows for an analysis to show performance at an overall headline success-rate level this is then broken down to national, regional and local authority level. It is also broken down to sector subject area and sector framework code. Where provision is below the MLP threshold of 53%, provision will be removed. Where performance exceeds the threshold of 53% the provision will be retained. Where pockets of underperformance exist, the SFA will expect the provider to set and share with their SFA account manager appropriate improvement indicators in line with the conditions of funding.

Where the provision falls below the minimum threshold, the SFA intervenes. Specifically, the SFA will serve ‘Notices to Improve’ if 15% or more of provision (namely short/long qualifications) falls below the minimum level. If a provider is deemed not to have in place adequate financial health or financial management/control in place or it receives an Ofsted inspection judgement of ‘inadequate’ for overall effectiveness of provision is will also receive a Notice to Improve.

A Notice to Improve triggered by an analysis of 2009/10 success rates against the minimum levels will be issued for the 2011/12 academic year, and ‘Notices to Improve’ will be issued in early spring 2011. The provider will then be required to demonstrate improvement within an agreed timeframe. The Learning Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) is also available to support the provider and develop an improvement plan to address under performance. In addition, Ofsted may be invited to undertake either an enhanced monitoring visit or a full inspection of that provider. It is worth highlighting here that the staged approach used in the MLP methodology means that it takes some time for underperformance to be detected, for intervention to then occur and even longer for actions to be put in place by the provider (with support from LSIS) to improve performance.

Comparison with EQAVET:

The table below shows how the main features can be compared to EQAVET.

| Use of cycle | MLP does not explicitly refer to a quality assurance cycle though some comparability with a cyclical approach can be drawn in terms of the process MLP implies. For example, there is a methodological procedure in place to plan and determine what minimum levels of performance equate to (in terms of the threshold). There is then a period of implementation and a mechanism to then evaluate and monitor provider performance and collect |

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236 Notices to Improve have been reviewed and have been replaced by Inadequacy Warning – Notice of Concern as set out in the SFA 2012 Provider Risk Assessment and Management policy document that presents the SFA intervention strategy.
data in a systematic way. Processes are in place to review measures – e.g. revising the minimum levels of performance. Through the MLP and in conjunction with other quality measures, review procedures are in place for provides, the outcomes of which are publically available.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use of descriptors</th>
<th>MLP are comparable with the following EQAVET descriptors at system level:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>■ VET providers responsibilities in the implementation process are explicitly described and made transparent;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>■ A national quality assurance (approach) has been devised and includes guidelines and quality standards at VET provider level to promote continuous improvement;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>■ A methodology for evaluation has been devised covering internal and external evaluation;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>■ Stakeholder involvement in the monitoring and evaluation process is agreed and clearly described;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>■ The national standards and processes for improving and assuring quality are relevant and proportionate to the needs of the sector;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>■ Early warning systems are implemented;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>■ Performance indicators are applied;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>■ Relevant, regular and coherent data collection takes place;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>■ Procedures, mechanisms and instruments for undertaking reviews are defined at all levels;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>■ Processes are regularly reviewed;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>■ Information on the outcomes of evaluation is made publically available.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Use of indicators/ criteria | The MLP is not based on indicators as such, but rather a methodology to determine the MLP per type of award. So for example, the application of MLP is unique to each type of provision however the above serves to illustrate MLP in its most practical terms. Where the provision falls below the minimum threshold, the SFA intervenes. Specifically, the SFA will serve ‘Notices to Improve’ if 15% or more of provision (namely short/long qualifications) falls below the minimum level. If a provide is deemed not to have in place adequate financial health or financial management/control in place or it receives an Ofsted inspection judgement of ‘inadequate’ for overall effectiveness of provision is will also receive a Notice to Improve. |

237 Notices to Improve have been reviewed and have been replaced by Inadequacy Warning – Notice of Concern as set out in the SFA 2012 Provider Risk Assessment and Management policy document that presents the SFA intervention strategy.
EQAVET building blocks

MLP can be related to the following building blocks at system level:

- Set rules for deciding who offers VET provision
- Recognise and build on existing internal arrangements – though providers have complain there are too many requirements on them to meet the quality assurance standards of various organisations involved – e.g. SFA, Ofsted and the Awarding Organisation.
- Identify what information and data should be collected and used in VET system – in so far that data collected on performance and inspection is used to drive up quality
- Use feedback to improve VET
- Provide clarity over funding
- Ensure quality assurance covers all aspects of VET provision (e.g. content of training and also financial health of providers)
- Ensure VET is founded on a strong involvement of external and internal partners and relevant stakeholders (in so far that the MLP approach implies working in close partnership with the provider and together with Ofsted and stakeholders involved in the provision of 16-19 provision.

Conclusion:

The Minimum Levels of Performance measure is highly compatible with EQAVET, particularly in relation to the implementation and evaluation components of the cycle. In terms of comparisons with the EQAVET indicators, there is clear comparability with Indicator one in so far that providers are encouraged through MLP to apply internal quality assurance. The main principle behind MLP is to promote a quality improvement culture at VET provider level, increase the transparency of quality and training and to ensure that provision best meets the needs of employers and learners. There is also comparability with Indicators three and four that deal with participation in VET and completion rate in VET programmes.

It should be noted that MLP will soon be replaced by Minimum Quality Standards that are currently being developed by the SFA. The proposed new methodology outline below implies that continued and strengthened comparisons can be drawn between EQAVET and MLP/Minimum quality standards. In summary the new methodology:

- Removes the complexity and exemptions methodology of the current MLP by applying minimum thresholds to the performance of post-19 FE provision at an overall institution level rather than to many individual sub-categories of provision
- Means Minimum Standards will be more transparent to providers and stakeholders, by using the conventional Qualification Success
- Empowers providers to take action
- Is a more equitable system that is consistent across all providers delivering different types of provision.

A10.6.2 Name/Designation: Skills Funding Agency Intervention Policy

Developer/owner/provider:
Skills Funding Agency

Status:
Compulsory

Target group:
Providers in receipt of SFA funding

Scope/importance:
The SFA’s Provider Risk Assessment and Management policy document sets out the end-to-end process for the assessment and management of risk associated with providers in receipt of funding from the SFA. All Education providers funded through a contract for services through the SFA are subject to the SFA assessment, escalation and intervention process.
This is a mandatory requirement and is part of the contractual arrangements between the SFA and the provider.

Description:

The SFA assessment, escalation and intervention process is a staged process. To be assured that public money and learners’ interests are protected, the starting point of the SFA is the assessment of the risk of a provider failing to deliver post-19 provision that makes efficient and effective use of public funds. In doing so, the SFA consider a range of different factors. These include:

- Quality of provision;
- Delivery of provision;
- Delivery model;
- Financial stability;
- Control of public funds;
- Significant change (change in leadership for example).

Information on any of these factors may cause the SFA to seek additional assurance that the provider has the necessary controls in place to protect public money and meet the needs of learners.

The following factors lead to the SFA to intervene and take action:

1. A provider receiving an ‘inadequate’ Ofsted inspection judgement for overall effectiveness
2. Provision falling below the post-19 Minimum Quality Standards being developed as a successor to the current Minimum Levels of Performance
3. A provider being rated as ‘inadequate’ by the SFA for financial health or financial control.

The main focus of the SFA Intervention Policy is risk assessment and risk management in order to provide an assurance that public money and learners’ interests are being protected. This is enforced through legislation introduced through the Education Act 2011. The legislation means that the Chief Executive of Skills Funding has the power to fund post-19 provision, and the power to impose conditions of funding to seek assurance that public money and learners’ interests are being protected. It does this through the implementation of the SFA Intervention Policy.

As indicated above, the SFA use the term provider to include colleges, training organisations, local authorities and employers in receipt of funding from the Chief Executive of Skills Funding to deliver education and training.

Comparison with EQAVET:

As indicated above, the Intervention Policy is part of the SFAs Provider Risk Assessment and Management policy document that sets out arrangements for the end-to-end process for the assessment and management of risk associated with providers in receipt of funding.

| Use of cycle | There is clear comparability with Indicator one in so far that providers are encouraged through the Intervention Policy to apply internal quality assurance. The Intervention Policy together with MLP are aimed at promoting a quality improvement culture at VET provider level, increase the transparency of quality and training and to ensure that provision best meets the needs of employers and learners. There is also comparability with Indicators three and four that deal with participation in VET and completion rate in VET programmes. |

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### Use of descriptors

The SFA Intervention Policy is comparable with the following EQAVET descriptors at system level:

- An information policy has been devised to ensure optimum disclosure of quality results in so far that all stakeholders are clear about where information on performance and inspection outcomes can be found – this is the basis on which the Intervention Policy has been developed.
- Implementation plans are established in cooperation with key stakeholders – the Intervention Policy requires the collective cooperation with various organisations responsible for pre and post 19 provision.
- Guidelines and standards have been devised for implementation at different levels.
- Implementation plans include specific support towards the training of teachers and trainers – if identified through Ofsted or the SFA, the LSIS provides support to teachers and trainers across the FE sector.
- A methodology for evaluation has been devised, covering internal and external evaluation.
- Stakeholder involvement in the monitoring and evaluation process is agreed and clearly described.
- Early warning systems are implemented.
- Procedures, mechanisms and instruments for undertaking reviews are defined at all levels.
- Information on the outcomes of evaluation is made publically available.

### Use of indicators/ criteria

This measure is not based on any set criteria/standards or indicators as such. It is a staged approach with clearly defined processes explained (see above).

### EQAVET building blocks

The SFA Intervention Policy can be related to the following EQAVET building blocks at system level:

- Set clear rules for deciding who offers VET provision
- Set clear roles and responsibilities for different parts of the VET system
- Identify what information and data should be collected and used in VET
- Provide clarity over funding
- Ensure VET is founded on a strong involvement of external and internal partners and relevant stakeholders (the Intervention Policy is built on a partnership approach – particularly with Ofsted and LSIS).

### Conclusion:

The SFA Intervention has processes in place to ensure providers are supported appropriately. In terms of evidence to show that the quality assurance approach leads to higher quality, recent data published by the SFA shows that the number of Notices to Improve has declined significantly in recent years – a Notice to Improve is triggered when a provider does not meet minimum levels of performance or has been judged as ‘inadequate’ by Ofsted for overall effectiveness or who has been determined as having poor financial health/control.

Status:
Compulsory

Target group:
Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the following providers will be inspected:
- Further education colleges, sixth-form colleges and independent specialist colleges
- Independent learning providers
- Community learning and skills providers, including local authorities, special designated institutions and not for profit organisations
- Employers
- Higher education institutions where they provide further education
- Post-16 academies wholly or partly funded by the current Skills Funding Agency and/or the Education Funding Agency to provide education and/or training for those aged 16 and over.

Scope/importance:
Inspection of all school and FE provision funded by the SFA is a legal requirement of all providers.

Description:
The Common Inspection Framework (CIF) for further education and skills 2012 sets out the criteria that inspectors make judgements against when they inspect education and training in England for learners between 14–16 years old attending a college course or learning programme and for all learners over the age of 16 except for those in school sixth forms or higher education participating in publically funded provision. Inspectors use an evaluation schedule to carry out the inspection. The evaluation schedule includes:

1. The main considerations for evaluation under each of the CIF principal criteria
2. The illustrative grade characteristics for each aspect and overall effectiveness

Inspectors will make three key aspect judgements during an inspection. These are:

1. Outcomes for learners
2. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment
3. The effectiveness of leadership and management

Inspectors will judge the quality of the provider’s overall effectiveness taking account of the three key aspect judgements and the extent to which the education/training meets the needs of the range of learners at the provider. In making judgements, inspectors use the following grade scale:
- Grade 1: outstanding
- Grade 2: good
- Grade 3: requires improvement
- Grade 4: inadequate

The main focus of the CIF is on the effectiveness and quality of teaching, learning and assessment. To be judged as ‘outstanding’ overall, the provider must now achieve ‘outstanding’ in teaching, learning and assessment. As reported by the interviewee, the focus of the CIF is therefore about getting the right learners on the right course and making sure
learners are given the best opportunity to enable them to complete their programme of learning and progress to positive destinations. Inspection is therefore driven by inspecting and monitoring the processes that underpin learning.

Ofsted carries out a risk-assessment in order to select providers for inspection. This risk-assessment process has two stages: Stage one is a provider assessment based on an automated analysis of publicly available data. Stage two is where further analysis is necessary and the provider receives a desk-based review from an inspector.

Ofsted also use additional indicators to select providers for inspection. This may include the provider’s previous inspection report, annual self-assessment reports, performance data, change in leadership/principal, concerns from the Skills Funding Agency or views from employers, learners or their parents gathered through on-line questionnaires.

The actual inspection of the provider is carried out against criteria and characteristics set out in the inspection framework and evaluation schedule. This schedule sets out the expected quality and effectiveness of the provision. Inspectors make judgements against three aspects:

1. Outcomes for learners
2. Quality of teaching, learning and assessment
3. Effectiveness of leadership and management.

Within each judgement a set of criteria is used to enable inspectors to evaluate the evidence. Within each criterion, inspectors make judgements on more details characteristics. Figure A3.1 provides an example of the criteria against each of the key judgements:

**Figure A10.1 CIF 2012 Evaluation schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes for learners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In judging Outcomes for learners, inspectors must evaluate the extent to which:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ All learners achieve and make progress relative to their starting points and learning goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Achievement gaps are narrowing between different groups of learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Learners develop personal, social and employability skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Learners progress to courses leading to higher-level qualifications and into jobs that meet local and national needs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality of teaching, learning and assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In judging the Quality of teaching, learning and assessment, inspectors must evaluate the extent to which:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Learners benefit from high expectations, engagement, care, support and motivation from staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Staff use their skills and expertise to plan and deliver teaching, learning and support to meet each learner’s needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Staff initially assess learners’ starting points and monitor their progress, set challenging tasks, and build on and extend learning for all learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Learners understand how to improve as a result of frequent, detailed and accurate feedback from staff following assessment of their learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Teaching and learning develop English, mathematics and functional skills, and support the achievement of learning goals and career aims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Appropriate and timely information, advice and guidance supports learning effectively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Equality and diversity are promoted through teaching and learning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effectiveness of leadership and management.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inspectors must evaluate the extent to which leaders and managers at all levels, including, where relevant, governors:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ demonstrate an ambitious vision, have high expectations for what all learners can achieve, and attain high standards of quality and performance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
improve teaching and learning through rigorous performance management and appropriate professional development
- evaluate the quality of the provision through robust self-assessment, taking account of users’ views, and use the findings to promote and develop capacity for sustainable improvement
- successfully plan, establish and manage the curriculum and learning programmes to meet the needs and interests of learners, employers and the local and national community
- actively promote equality and diversity, tackle bullying and discrimination, and narrow the achievement gap
- safeguard all learners.

Comparison with EQAVET:

Although the CIF is not based on a cyclical approach there are clear comparison with EQAVET – particularly in relation to the indicators, descriptors and building blocks. In relation to the indicators the following comparisons can be drawn:

- Indicator 1: Relevance of quality assurance systems for VET providers (in so far that the CIF and the role of Ofsted more broadly aims to promote a quality improvement culture at both system and provider level.
- Indicator 2: Investment in training of teachers and trainers (as illustrated in the evaluation schedule, a key focus is on the quality teaching. As such Ofsted currently works alongside LSIS and the Institute of Learning to support providers with poor inspection grades. This support often entails investment in training of teachers and trainers.
- Indicator 3: Participation rate in VET programmes (in so far that Ofsted inspection focus on the outcomes of learners requires providers to ensure all learners achieve and make progress relative to their starting points and learning goals and that achievement gaps are narrowing between different groups of learners.
- Indicator 4: Completion rate in VET programmes (inspection obtains information in relation to the quality of training processes and works alongside the SFA to monitor completion rates).
- Indicator 8: Prevalence of vulnerable groups. As indicated above, Ofsted inspection requires providers to demonstrate all learners are supported in making progress and that achievement gaps are narrowing between different groups of learners.

Use of cycle

In terms of assessing the extent to which the CIF is comparable/compatible with the EQAVET cycle, it should be noted that the CIF is not a planning cycle but as a framework it sets out key indicators to be met in order to deliver quality provision. FE providers (especially colleges) have clear cycles of activities. The CIF serves as a reference tool to enable providers to benchmark their activity, providing them with a tool to consider all aspects of quality.

Use of descriptors

The CIF is comparable with the following EQAVET descriptors at system level:

- A methodology for evaluation has been devised, covering internal and external evaluation.
- Stakeholder involvement in the monitoring and evaluation process is agreed and clearly described.
- Early warning systems are implemented.
- Performance indicators are applied – in so far that a set of criteria is provided in an evaluation schedule.
- Relevant, regular and coherent data collection takes place, in order to measure success and identify area for improvement.
- Procedures, mechanisms and instruments for undertaking reviews (e.g. inspection) are defined at all levels (e.g. the inspectors must comply with a code of practice; providers must behave appropriately during inspection).
- Information on the outcomes of evaluation is made publically available (inspection reports are published).
Use of indicators/ criteria

The CIF is based on a set of criteria set out in the evaluation schedule. This schedule sets out the expected quality and effectiveness of the provision in relation to outcomes for learners; quality of teaching, learning and assessment and the effectiveness of leadership and management.

EQAVET building blocks

The CIF can be related to the following EQAVET building blocks at system level:
- Identify what information and data should be collected and used in VET
- Use feedback to improve VET
- Ensure quality assurance covers all aspects of VET provision
- Ensure VET if founded on a strong involvement of external and internal partners and relevant stakeholders (partnership approach employed by Ofsted)

Conclusion:

The CIF sets out an approach underpinned by key judgements and criteria that enables individual education provides to address/meet at various stages of their approach to quality assurance. For example, colleges have a cyclical approach to their activity as providers of education and this largely reflects the stages as set out in the EQAVET cycle. So for example, colleges would plan, implement, evaluate and review activity. Here the CIF is used as a framework to benchmark and challenge quality assurance measures within each stage of the quality cycle. In that respect, the CIF key judgements and criteria are comparable with the EQAVET cycle and to a certain degree, comparable with the EQAVET descriptors.

A10.7 Sources used

Literature:

MLP and Intervention Policy:
- SFA Provider Risk Assessment and Management, July 2012


Ofsted Annual Report 2010/11 Learning and Skills.


Interviews:

Interviews with three responsible people in the following institutions:
- Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
- Skills Funding Agency
- Ofsted
Annex 11 Case Study: Ö-CERT (AT-CERT), Austria

A11.1 Key features of Ö-CERT

Ö-CERT was implemented in Austria in December 2011 with the aim of achieving mutual recognition between existing quality assurance instruments and quality assurance concepts in adult education across institutional and Federal borders. It is the central instrument for quality assurance in Austria’s adult education / C-VET system; and was developed by the Federal Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture in cooperation with leading Austrian experts, representatives of the nine Austrian provinces and providers of Adult education.

Ö-CERT is a meta-framework specifically developed for quality assurance in C-VET and adult education that builds on 10 recognised quality assurance systems. Institutions with a recognised quality assurance measure in place can apply to be integrated into the list of Ö-CERT providers and are allowed to use the Ö-CERT logo for marketing purposes.

Ö-CERT is voluntary for education providers, CVET training and adult education courses can still be offered without certification by Ö-CERT. However, participants of programmes of labelled education providers gain access to public funding for their training in all Federal states of Austria, which can be seen as a strong pull-factor. Before Ö-CERT, nine different (external) quality management systems were in place in all federal provinces as a basis for subsidies for course participation. Thus Ö-CERT should make the participation in adult education courses and acquisition of funding easier by recognising the other quality management systems. As a result, the participation in adult education courses with public funding in other federal provinces should now be easier for participants.

The main aim of the Ö-CERT initiative was to create an instrument that builds on existing quality assurance instruments within the Federal Austrian provinces and is compatible with established quality certificates within certain institutions. Ö-CERT should not compete with established instruments and concepts. Therefore, it was necessary to develop a framework which builds on the success of existing instruments and provides added value. Moreover, the new framework needed to provide comparability without a complete homogenisation of quality assurance initiatives. In order to achieve these goals, a special process of implementation of Ö-CERT was developed which accounts for the heterogeneity of quality assurance in adult education.

Ö-CERT requires five types of basic requirements within organisations:

- General basic requirements;
- Basic requirements concerning the organisation of the provider;
- Basic requirements concerning the offers of the provider;
- Basic requirements concerning principles of ethics and democracy;
- Basic requirements concerning quality assurance.238

All of those prerequisites are underpinned with more detailed requirements.

Moreover the providers have to confirm their quality efforts by applying one of the Quality Management Systems or Quality Assurance Procedures according to the Ö-CERT list. Ö-CERT is only open to providers which are accredited/certified by one of these 10 quality management systems.239 Four of these ten systems are based in Federal States (Vienna, Upper Austria, Salzburg, Lower Austria), Six of the ten quality management systems are recognised at the international level (ISO 9001, ISO 29990, EFQM, eduQua from Switzerland, LQW and QVB from Germany).

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238 Cf. http://oe-cert.at/weg-zum-oecert/grundvoraussetzungen.php; (in German)
Nevertheless more and more institutions are attracted by Ö-CERT and consider engaging themselves in terms of quality assurance. Therefore Ö-CERT offers a guideline for self-assessment\(^{240}\) which shall help institutions

- To reflect about their own institution;
- Define the status-quo of quality assurance activities within their institution;
- To identify possibilities for improvement and development;
- To develop the basics for quality assurance.

Figure A7.1 shows the process a provider has to follow when applying for integration to the Ö-CERT list of recognised providers.

Figure A11.1 Structure of quality framework (Ö-CERT)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Source: Gruber/Schloegl 2011}\text{\textsuperscript{241}}.
\end{align*}
\]

Ö-CERT provides minimal standards (basic requirements) for established (and upcoming) quality assurance instruments and enables comparison. In doing so, Ö-CERT enhances transparency of quality assurance instruments in adult education/C-VET; and enables comparability between education providers with regard to their activities in quality assurance.

Consequently, the crucial part in developing Ö-CERT was the definition requirements for quality assurance instruments and their selection for the Ö-CERT list. This was done in two stages.

\[^{240}\text{Cf. http://oe-cert.at/media/oe-cert-selbstevaluierungsleitfaden.pdf}\]

\[^{241}\text{Translated into english based on http://erwachsenenbildung.at/magazin/11-12/meb11-12_02_gruber_schloegl.pdf; p.2}\]
In the first stage, desk research was carried out and a survey among representatives of education providers, Federal States and Federal Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture was initialised, complemented by an analysis of established quality management systems;

- In the second stage, a comparative analysis of identified quality management systems and quality assurance certificates was carried out.

Finally, the Ö-CERT working group, consisting of representatives of education providers, Federal States and the Federal Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, determined the basic requirements that quality management systems should meet in order to be integrated into the list of accredited systems. The basic requirements comprise the following criteria:\(^2^{242}\)

- The quality assurance instrument should be independent and autonomous. An external examination is required. A visit to the assessed institution is expected.
- The instrument is implemented in the broad field of adult education/C-VET and it is not limited to certain parts or organisations.
- The validity of the certificate is limited to four years. Clear and transparent rules for monitoring and follow-up processes are implemented.
- An explicit definition of quality is implemented. This definition relates to participants and foresees customer protection in adult education.
- An explicit relation to organisational development and human resources is part of the quality assurance process.

Ö-CERT publishes a list of C-VET providers which have gone through the procedure and are allowed to use the Ö-CERT logo for their marketing purposes.\(^2^{243}\) These C-VET providers fulfill the basic requirements with regard to central paradigms of the adult education institute, with regard to organisation, to provision, to ethical and democratic principles and with regard to quality.

Providers are allowed to use the Ö-CERT logo as for the same period as the individual Quality Management System they have implemented. As soon as the individual Quality Management System expires, Ö-CERT expires too and has to be requested again.

A11.2 Basic facts about the use of this instrument in education and training

Ö-CERT was implemented on 1 December 2011. Quality assured institutions were invited to apply. By the end of 2012, 400 education providers (excluding local branches) had applied for the Ö-CERT label.

Institutions which had not yet implemented a quality management system were also invited to apply - under the precondition that they submit proof of an implemented quality management system to Ö-CERT by 31.12.2012. In setting this deadline, Ö-CERT prompted education providers to proceed with the implementation of a quality assurance system in order to become part of the Ö-CERT system.

At the time of writing\(^2^{244}\) 155 Ö-CERT labels have been awarded (to a total of 813 education providers – umbrella organisations and local branches).

To date, the following impact on the field of Austrian adult education/CVET can be stated:\(^2^{245}\)

- Ö-CERT has deepened the discussion around quality issues with education providers and established greater coherency in adult education; and
- The implementation of Ö-CERT has generated quality-related discussions between certain public authorities. Quality related criteria have become a more significant factor in

\(^{242}\) Cf. Gruber, Elke/Schlögl, Peter, 2011, p.8f
\(^{243}\)
\(^{244}\) January 2013
\(^{245}\) According to interviews carried out by ICF GHK
adult education alongside the market-driven dimension of adult education/C-VET in Austria.

It is expected that the example of Ö-CERT will further influence

- The debate around harmonising areas like examination in adult education; and
- The discussion around minimum standards of education and professional experience of staff in education contexts (to date not yet part of the basic requirements).

A11.3 Key success factors for this instrument

A11.3.1 Success factors of Ö-CERT for providers

Ö-CERT gives education providers the opportunity to obtain an additional quality label without high costs or the need to implement a large number of additional procedures.

It acknowledges the heterogeneity of the landscape of adult education and C-VET in Austria and builds on already implemented quality management systems and quality assurance instruments. It complies with established quality management systems such as ISO, EFQM, LQW etc., self-evaluation systems (TQM), and quality assurance instruments which have been developed within each federal state.

Currently, the relationship between Ö-CERT and public funding only operates at an individual level. It enables participants of accredited providers to gain public funding in all Federal States of Austria. There are no plans to establish a broader link between Ö-CERT and general public funding of institutions.

As a side effect, Ö-CERT has triggered the facilitation of a nationwide list of education providers and the respective quality assurance mechanism they have acquired. This is the very first time that such an overview is available for the Austrian adult education / C-VET system.

A11.3.2 Success factors of Ö-CERT for public authorities

Ö-CERT is a cooperative initiative between the Federal Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture and the nine Federal States of Austria (corresponding agreement article 15a B-VG). Both the Federal ministry and all Federal States collaborated to develop the principles and goals of Ö-CERT, and come to an agreement on the structure and implementation of the framework.

Consequently, the topic of quality assurance is viewed as important by all parties and new measures are planned for the future (e.g. certain agreements between the Federal Ministry and associations of education providers (KEBÖ).

A11.3.3 Difficulties for education and training providers in using the QA measure

Although Ö-CERT builds on existing quality assurance instruments, certain practical difficulties were identified within the first year of implementation. The most important issue concerns basic requirements relating to the organisation of the provider. One of the five requirements underpinning this quality area states that the head of the respective organisation, or at least one person within the organisation, must be skilled in pedagogical education and show at least 2 years of relevant professional experience.

This requirement is not included within some of other quality assurance instruments that are accredited by Ö-CERT – hence, in this regard; Ö-CERT is stricter than other QA measures. Therefore, it could be possible that an education provider could be refused Ö-CERT accreditation although it is accredited through another quality assurance instrument.
A11.4 Comparison with EQAVET

One of the main goals of Ö-CERT development was that it should meet international standards and comply with EQARF and EQAVET.\textsuperscript{246}

In general, Ö-CERT and EQAVET are comparable as both are compatible with the steps of the quality cycle. Although Ö-CERT itself does not work with the quality cycle, it is built on other quality management systems that are composed out of the four stages of the quality cycle. A difference between the two instruments is that EQAVET is seen as a system monitoring-approach, while Ö-CERT does not gather monitoring information and data.

Another difference is that Ö-CERT does not provide detailed quality descriptors. It leaves the responsibility for the definition of (high) quality training to education providers, who autonomously create their portfolio. Instead, Ö-CERT rather aims at steering processes that are seen as related to quality on organisational level, assuming that this will lead to high(er) quality education from the provider.

The table below gives an overview on the comparability of Ö-CERT with EQAVET.

Table A11.1 Comparison with EQAVET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use of cycle</th>
<th>Ö-CERT does not use the cycle directly, but it builds on quality management systems which use the cycle (e.g. eduQua).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of descriptors</td>
<td>Basic requirements for the acceptance into the framework of quality for adult education (Ö-CERT) are in place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of indicators/ criteria</td>
<td>Ö-CERT does not use criteria for the accreditation of institutions, but for the recognition of quality management systems and quality ensuring procedures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQAVET building blocks</td>
<td>Ö-CERT can be related to the following EQAVET building blocks:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>■ Recognise and build on existing internal arrangements (2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>■ Set clear roles and responsibilities for different parts of the VET system (3).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>■ Define and implement a communications strategy (5).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>■ Provide clarity over funding (8).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>■ Ensure quality assurance covers all aspects of VET provision (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>■ Ensure VET is founded on a strong involvement of external &amp; internal partners and relevant stakeholders (10)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A11.5 Lessons learnt

Ö-CERT aims at:

■ Creating an instrument that builds on existing quality assurance instruments and is compatible with established quality certificates;
■ Avoid competition with established instruments and concepts;
■ Develop a framework which builds on the success of existing instruments and provides added value;
■ Develop a framework to provide comparability without a complete homogenisation of quality assurance initiatives.

Ö-CERT succeeded in developing a meta-framework which builds on existing instruments without overburdening providers with additional (parallel) demands and requirements. This is due to the fact that Ö-CERT succeeded in formulating basic requirements that are common to most quality assurance instruments and creating transparency as to the related quality assurance procedures.

\textsuperscript{246} Cf. Gruber, Elke/Schlögl, Peter, 2011, p.2
In doing so, Ö-CERT created mutual trust between CVET providers in different Austrian provinces. To a certain extent, Ö-CERT can also serve as a steering instrument for the national Ministry of Education since it allows for greater clarity on the number of institutions with QA in place.

However, being a meta-framework, Ö-CERT does not use common criteria and indicators.

A11.6 Sources

Literature:


Qualifikationen, Professionalität und Qualitätssicherung des Personals in der Erwachsenenbildung - was kann die Universität beitragen? Ein E-Mail Interview mit Elke Gruber, Universität Klagenfurt. http://wwwg.uni-klu.ac.at/ifeb/eb/qualifikation_profess_qualitaetssicherung.pdf


Interviews:

Interviews with two responsible people in the following organisations:

- Öibf – Oesterreichisches Institut fuer Berufsbildungsforschung;
- Ö-CERT office.
Annex 12 Case Study: AZAV, Germany

A12.1 Key features of the quality assurance mechanism concerned and its application to education and training

AZAV\(^{247}\) is based on a legal regulation issued by the Federal Public Employment Agency (Bundesanstalt fuer Arbeit) in Germany. It regulates two aspects of vocational retraining and further vocational training funded by the Public Employment Services:

- Provider accreditation; and
- Accreditation of training measures and programmes.

AZAV is in place since April 2012. It is an update of AZWV, the previous comprehensive legislative act regulating training courses for vocational retraining (and rehabilitation) which was issued in 2006. In contrast to AZWV, AZAV has a yet wider scope since it also addresses rehabilitation institutions (carrying out training courses for persons with physical and/or psychological restrictions regarding their ability to work).

A12.1.1 Provider Accreditation

AZAV regulates the requirements for accreditation of CVET providers offering training courses in the field of vocational retraining and further vocational training funded by the Public Employment Agency.

When the First and Second Acts on Modern Services in the Labour Market (known as the Hartz reforms) came into force, the promotion of continuing education under the Third Book of the Social Code (SGB III) was reformed. All CVET-providers which would like to conduct training funded by the Public Employment Agency (addressing learners eligible to those measures) need an accreditation.

To acquire such accreditation, providers need to prove that they have a set of criteria in place. In detail, they need to prove that they are

- Financially and technically able to conduct the training properly;
- Have adequately trained staff and well equipped training venues (meeting requirements of DIN ISO);
- Grant appropriate contract conditions to participants;
- Have a QA measure in place.\(^{248}\)

As to the last point, it is not specified which measure that needs to be. However, a wired range of measures is provided which is accepted, covering all of the common and well-known instruments in Germany (ISO, EFQM, LOW, TQM, etc.).\(^{249}\)

With the reforms mentioned above, the task of accrediting providers and programmes of continuing education to confirm eligibility for assistance pursuant to SGB III was transferred from the Federal Employment Agency to private accreditation organisations (fachkundige Stellen, FKS).\(^{250}\) In practice, these are private quality assurance providers, who on their part have also gone through an accreditation process to be granted the right to become such an official accreditation organisation. The qualification of auditors needs to meet the requirements of DIN ISO.

\(^{247}\) Anerkennungs- und Zulassungsverordnung Arbeitsfoerderung (AZAV) - Recognition- and Accreditation system for vocational retraining

\(^{248}\) http://www.bmas.de/DE/Themen/Arbeitsmarkt/Arbeitsfoerderung/akkreditierung.htm

\(^{249}\) Stated in interviews carried out by ICF GHK

Once they are endorsed, these private organisations have the right to execute the accreditation process. Training providers are free to choose which organisation they would like to work with.

For the accreditation process, providers hand in written documentation which is checked by the accreditation organisation. Auditors can perform visits and check validity of documentation. An official certificate is issued. After the official accreditation is issued, monitoring visits will take place. After a period of 5 years maximum, the accreditation has to be renewed.

The following figure gives an overview on the process of an AZAV accreditation.

**Figure A12.1 Process of AZAV accreditation**

A provider addresses one of the endorsed accreditation organisations and hands in a request;

An auditor is allocated;

A pre-audit takes place;

The accreditation process is initialised.

After 5 years: Re-Accreditation

First Monitoring Visit after accreditation (Audit 1)

Second Monitoring Visit after accreditation (Audit 2)

Source: QUACERT website (translation by ICF GHK)

### A12.1.2 Accreditation of training measures and programmes

AZAV also regulates the accreditation of courses eligible for funding under SGB III (Legal Social Act, part 3). In addition, to the requirements fulfilled by the CVET-provider, there are also requirements connected to the training programmes. Those are:

- The participants will find appropriate conditions of participation
- The provisions should meet the principles of sound financial management;
- The outcomes can be expected to contribute to the re-integration of participants into the labour market.

The last criterion is defined by benchmarks for the impact of courses on the employability of participants. These benchmarks can take the form of concrete placement rates; set out by

[251](http://www.quacert.de/index.php/download)

[252](http://www.bmas.de/DE/Themen/Arbeitsmarkt/Arbeitsfoerderung/akkreditierung.html)
the regional Public Employment Services. Hence, the benchmarks for a similar course (e.g. forklift driver training) can vary from region to region – according to the chances of employment in that sector.

Should the PES in question see no evidence for the demand of labour force in the particular field in the region (e.g. no employment chances for forklift drivers), training providers can be denied accreditation for a specific course.

A12.2 Basic facts about the use of this instrument in education and training

The measure is legally required and a precondition for funding, hence, all providers in question will have to take-up AZAV.

In a survey conducted in 2010, AZWV (predecessor of AZAV) was found to be the measure with the largest outreach in Germany. 43% of all training providers were accredited by AZWV. Since AZAV has broadened the scope (including also rehabilitation institutions), it can be assumed that this figure has grown over the last couple of years.\(^{253}\)

To grant a smooth transition between AZWV and AZAV, all providers previously accredited under AZWV will keep their current accreditation. When the period of validity transpires, the process of re-accreditation will be done according to the new AZAV regulations.

A12.3 Key success factors for this instrument

C-VET in Germany is very fragmented and highly competitive. Consequently, quality assurance is an important instrument to

- **On system level:** Regulate the market, identify training needs, ensure quality of training courses and providers, and help to create orientation for the learner – e.g. through informed quality assured guidance and counselling;

- **On provider level:** Get access to specific markets (regulated by public funding), plan and monitor training courses, advertise courses and qualifications, manage the companies’ risks, and create visibility on the market.

A12.3.1 Success factors of AZAV for public authorities

One of the main drivers for the development of AZAV was to ensure an appropriate use of public funding related to training of the unemployed. Furthermore, Public Employment Services needed a steering instrument enabling them to monitor the landscape of funded providers and courses.

AZAV fulfils this function by focusing on the **financial, economic and technical aptitude of a provider and on the quality of the outcomes of training.** It requires that accredited providers are able to give evidence that their management is financially sound and their training courses are successful in terms of clear impact on the employability of participants. In addition to the process-related indicators most QA mechanisms apply, AZAV introduced indicators for success in terms of employability. Hence, it **adds another (outcome-oriented) dimension of quality** to the existing landscape. Benchmarks are defined which the providers need to reach (for example, evidence needs to be given that 75% of participants who have finalised the course enter into employment).

These benchmarks are oriented at regional givens and are defined by the regional PES - in consultation with regional labour market actors and stakeholders and the training provider in question. Should a provider fail to achieve the benchmark, the benchmark will be either redefined or the measure will be cancelled.\(^{254}\)

\(^{253}\) Wbmonitor 2010, Ergebnisbericht


\(^{254}\) Stated in interviews carried out by ICF GHK
AZAV does not set up its own criteria for the process-oriented side of quality assurance in education and training. It does not set out criteria for high quality training as such. However, since AZAV requires QA as a precondition for accreditation, it prompts providers to work with a QA measure of their choice and thus indirectly promotes the culture of quality assurance.255

A12.3.2 Reception of AZAV by providers

Since AZAV is a requirement, providers that are specialised on providing training in the sector of vocational retraining and further training funded by PES are obliged to get an accreditation for their institution and their measures. Hence, the high take-up rate of AZAV cannot be seen as a sign of positive reception of AZAV in the field. However, AZAV is an instrument which regulates the access conditions to specific markets and thus helps to make sure that providers all underlie the same conditions.

CVET providers also raised a few critical points with regard to AZAV, mainly connected to the fact that they experience a high amount of pressure to adhere to several standards on national and regional level. For instance, a provider in Germany may have to meet the following requirements of QA instruments in parallel:

- For its own quality assurance purposes and risk assessment; the provider chose to acquire a LQW certificate;
- Providing training in regulated qualifications, a provider has to follow the standards issued by the competent institutions regulating these qualifications and their examination;
- Providing the training in form of a distance learning course, the provider is legally required to adhere to the criteria set out in the ‘Distance Learning Protection Act’;
- On regional level, a label has been introduced which is connected to public funding on regional level and grants access to regional networks (as is the case in various German ‘Laender’). The label acknowledges LQW, but requires an additional procedure of certification;
- Since the provider offers training for the unemployed, it has to acquire an AZAV accreditation (as an institution, and for the specific measures it has on offer). Again, AZAV recognises LQW, but requires an additional procedure of accreditation.

Moreover, it was criticised that AZAV seems to confirm a trend in Germany to issue legal regulations for quality in VET and make adherence to certain quality standards a legal requirement. This approach has two sides to it: on one hand, it assures that measures have a broad scope; on the other hand, since it is a top-down approach, it does not promote a bottom-up culture of quality assurance (e.g. the ideas of idea of self-assessment and continuous improvement).256

However, the impact of AZAV (and its predecessor AZWV) is indeed an increase of the number of providers having a quality assurance mechanism in place.257

A12.4 Comparison with EQAVET

A12.4.1 AZAV and the EQAVET cycle

The AZAV accreditation for providers is issued for five years maximum, the accreditation of training measures and courses is provided for three years maximum. Consequently, the approach is based on the idea of a quality cycle and operates with the idea of planning, implementing, evaluation and review.

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255 Thomas Gruber, interview carried out by ICF GHK on 21 January 2013
256 Stated in interviews carried out by ICF GHK
257 Interview with Thomas Gruber, DEQAVET, carried out by ICF GHK, 31 October 2012
Moreover, AZAV builds on QA measures that have a cyclic model at the core (ISO, EFQM, LQW, TQM etc).

A12.4.2 AZAV and the EQAVET building blocks

On system level, AZAV corresponds to several of the EQAVET building blocks:

- It sets out clear rules for deciding who offers VET provision in the field of training funded by the PES;
- It recognises and builds on existing internal arrangements (by building on existing QA instruments);
- **Identify what information and data should be collected and used in VET system** by adding an outcome indicator (benchmark for success) to existing process indicators (as defined by existing QA instruments);
- It uses feedback to improve VET by enhancing the links to the labour market;
- It provides clarity over funding.

For a provider, AZAV is an accreditation system, not a quality assurance instrument. Yet, as stated above, it has an impact on the QA culture among providers. The main features of AZAV can be compared to four out of the six building blocks of EQAVET on provider level:

- It ensures that the provider develops a management culture committed to QA;
- It reflects providers’ circumstances;
- It supports staff training;
- It prompts providers to use data and feedback to improve their training.

A12.4.3 Use of criteria/standards/ indicators

AZAV contains several overarching process-related criteria and standards in connection to its main features for provider accreditation (financial and technical ability to conduct the training properly; adequately trained staff and well equipped training venues, appropriate contract conditions to participants) and measure accreditation (appropriate conditions of participation, sound financial management, outcome grants measureable contribute to the re-integration of participants into the labour market).

It is expected that these general criteria will be underpinned with the more detailed procedures connected to the existing QA instruments used by the provider (e.g. ‘appropriate qualification of the training staff - what exactly does that mean?’) Many of the common QA instruments have issued recommendations of how the criteria/standards and indicators they use fit with the AZAV requirements.

It has been outlined above that AZAV also introduced outcome-related indicators (benchmarks) to monitor the success of measures – e.g. the placement rate of participants who finalised a particular course and/or training measure. Those benchmarks are defined regionally and for specific courses taking the context conditions into account. Hence, in a prosperous region, a benchmark for placement rates could be at 80% while in less prosperous reasons the benchmark could be fixed at 50%.

Hence, it is complementary to most existing QA in CVET and adds to the indicators and descriptors defined there.

A12.5 Lessons learnt

AZAV focuses on the outcome-oriented dimension to quality assurance. It puts much emphasis on the aspect of economic soundness and the impact of the training by defining criteria and benchmarks for success.

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This is based on the experience that previously, many training courses funded by PES did not have the desired impact on the employability of participants - although providers had a quality assurance measure in place. Hence, quality assurance which focuses on products, processes and customer satisfaction seems to be in danger to fall short in the outcome dimension. AZAV has set up a complementary structure which, on system level, helps to steer and monitor the provisions and adds value to in terms of defining criteria for success.

AZAV can also be seen as an example of a measure that is implemented on an overarching (national) system level; trying to make sure that existing measures on (lower) system level are being linked sensibly. However, despite the efforts, AZAV has been criticised to overburden providers. A better way of linking QA in place with overarching requirements would be to develop a sound system of transparency and comparability of QA measures. Such system should allow checking the existence of specific criteria and indicators across models, ideally by ticking boxes. Such comparative framework for criteria, standards and indicators used in quality assurance framework would not only help to avoid setting up parallel structures for providers to adhere to.

A12.6 Sources

Literature

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Qualitaetsgesellschaft Bildung und Beratung mbH website: http://www.qbb.de/

Interviews:
Interviews with two responsible people in the following organisation
- DEQAVET - Deutsche Referenzstelle fuer Qualitaet in der beruflichen Bildung
- Qualitaetsgesellschaft Bildung und Beratung mbH.

260 Alfred Toepper, Interview carried out by ICF GHK on 22 January 2013
Annex 13 Case Study: The EFQM Excellence Model

The main purpose of this case study is to present the key features of the EFQM Excellence Model (EEM) – as one of the most widely used quality management approaches –, the key success factors for its implementation and also to compare it with the EQAVET Framework.

A13.1 Key features of the EFQM Excellence Model and its application in education and training

The EFQM Excellence Model was launched in 1991 to measure the progress in the implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) and stimulate continuous improvement. The European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) – a non-for-profit membership foundation with more than 500 member organisations who share a common goal: the pursuit of Excellence – is the custodian of the EEM, and is also responsible for managing the 5 level EFQM Recognition Scheme (including the European Excellence Award). EFQM’s main task is to increase the awareness of and to support the systematic implementation of the EEM through the EFQM portfolio, i.e. the products and services they have developed and offer in the field of Sharing, Training, Assessment and Recognition. EFQM is also responsible for the revision of the Model based on a 3 year improvement cycle (the latest reviews were in 2009 and 2012) and on the learning from the organisations that are using it.

The EFQM developed a complex quality tool which integrates three components:

- The Fundamental Concepts of Excellence: these are the underlying principles of the EEM which are the essential foundation of achieving Sustainable Excellence for any organisation.
- The Criteria (of the EEM): they provide a framework to help organisation convert the Fundamental Concepts and the RADAR logic into practice.
- The RADAR is a dynamic assessment framework that provides a structured approach to assess and evaluate the performance of an organisation.

The Fundamental Concepts of Excellence contain 8 principles:

- Adding value for customer;
- Creating a sustainable future;
- Developing organisational capability;
- Harnessing creativity and innovation;
- Leading with vision, inspiration and integrity;
- Managing with agility;
- Succeeding through the talent of people; and
- Sustaining outstanding results.

These can be used as the basis to describe the attributes of an excellent organisational culture. They also serve as a common language for senior management. The principles are embedded into the set of criteria of the EEM so with the help of the EEM the organisation can assess the degree of implementation of these principles in the organisation culture.

The EEM provides a common non-prescriptive management framework for the organisations regardless of sector, size, structure or maturity. It also provides a common language that facilitates the effective sharing of information, experience and practice between organisations transcending cultural barriers. The Model helps to understand the organisation’s operation, to examine the organisation’s achieved results and to understand the cause and effect between the operation and the results.

The EEM is based on nine criteria:

- Five of these are “Enablers” (Leadership, Strategy, People, Resources and Processes) which criteria cover what an organisation does;
- The other four criteria are “Results” (Customer, Staff, Society and Business/financial results) which criteria cover what an organisation achieves. ‘Results’ are caused by ‘Enablers’ and feedback from ‘Results’ help to improve ‘Enablers’.

The arrows emphasise the dynamic nature of the Model, showing that learning, creativity and innovation help to improve the Enablers that in turn lead to improved Results (see Figure A9.1 below).

**Figure A13.1  The structure of the EFQM 2013 Model**

Source: © EFQM

Each of the nine criteria has detailed descriptions which explain the high level meaning of that criterion. To develop the high level meaning further each criterion is supported by a number of criterion parts. Criterion parts are statements that describe in further detail what, typically, can be seen in excellent organisations and should be considered in the course of an assessment. Finally, below each criterion part are the guidance points. Many of these guidance points are directly linked to the Fundamental Concepts mentioned earlier. Use of these guidance points is not mandatory nor is the lists exhaustive but they are intended to further exemplify the meaning of the criterion part.

With the help of the EEM the organisation’s current capabilities to achieve Excellence can be assessed. During the assessment the organisation can identify clearly its strengths and also areas for improvement which can help to further develop the organisation’s management system.

To support this assessment EFQM developed an assessment tool, called RADAR (see Figure 2). The RADAR logic follows in full the PDCA cycle and means that the organisation should

- Define the required **Results** as part of the organisation’s strategy.
- Plan and develop **Approaches** which deliver the required results.
- **Deploy** the approaches in a systematic way and implement them in all relevant areas.
- **Assess and Refine** the implemented approaches to improve the organisation’s operation and results based on ongoing monitoring, analysis and learning/benchmarking activities.

The main tool of the EFQM quality approach is the
self-assessment method which is based on the EEM and the RADAR logic. Self-assessment in this case means a comprehensive, systematic and regular review of the organisation’s activities and results referenced against the criteria of the EEM. Beside self-assessment, there is also an external assessment system developed and attached to the EEM on which the European Excellence Award and many other national quality and Excellence awards (e.g. Hungarian Quality Award, UK Excellence Award, and German Ludwig Erhard Prize) are based. This external assessment provides the organisation with an external feedback and also a score about their performance on the way to reach excellence. It is the RADAR logic which is used for scoring in both – internal (self-) and external – assessment processes. This RADAR scoring matrices promote the application of the RADAR logic in practice and specify the evaluation scale of scoring based on the weights allocated to the criteria of the Model (see Figure 1 above) and following the PDCA (Plan/Do/Check/Act) cycle.

The EEM is a business model which is universal for organisations regardless of their size, sectors and also profit and non-profit status. This means that it is also suitable for education and training institutions to assess evaluate and improve their performance. The latest – 2013 – simplified version of the Model works generally well, it is much easier to apply, and less work is needed for interpretation. Education organisations are also involved in the revision of the Model which can help to consider educational aspect during the EEM development. In the Core Team a representative of a UK university is responsible to collect input to the revision of the Model from the educational organisations.

The EEM is a generic model. It's up to the users how they make it applicable to their organisations. They have to think what do the Model, the criteria, the key indicators etc. mean to them, what they have to do and how they have to do things. The crucial thing is to understand and make the connections to education and training.

As the EFQM recognition data in Figure 3 below show, the EEM is quite well taken up in the education services sector. Recognition in this field is pretty advanced mainly because this is a stepped process, the lowest – Committed to Excellence, C2E – level gives an easy start, and they can clearly prove they're moving forward.

By using the Model, education and training institutions get continuous feedback on their performance from different stakeholders so they can focus on where to start improvements. The continuous improvement cycle is what’s important. In the time of the crisis when institutions become more accountable, using the model helps to run the education and training business more effectively and efficiently.

The EEM is considered to be the highest level quality approach. When one starts implementing the EFQM Model, it is a very expensive process, needs a lot of time, measurements, resources to measure the performance of the organisation/company. Organisations striving for Excellence all have (to have) indicators, strategy, mission, vision, values, and objectives in place. To reach 600-700 points (from 1000) takes long time, 6-7 but sometimes 8-10 years. And CVET managers are interested in achieving results quickly, on short(er) term. This is a fact that might hinder / set back the widespread use of the EEM in the CVET sector.

A13.1.2 The benefits of using the EFQM Excellence Model in education and training

The EFQM Model

- Is a high quality model for the end user. It gives the opportunity to understand how the organisations could improve their management system and could achieve Excellence.
- Draws the organisation’s attention to thinking in business terms, and to focusing on service provision and on the importance of effectiveness.
- Has a strategic focus on the key aspects and concentrates on the processes that support strategy.
- Draws the organisation’s attention to focusing on the management system as a whole - from leadership to the process management including the core processes (i.e. education and training services).
Helps to expand the organisation’s attention to the Results fields. The Model is focusing on all kinds of results of the organisation not only on the education and training related results (e.g. customer and people results, and results of the operation, i.e. business results, financial results). This helps the evidence based decision making and improvements.

- Orientates the users not to measure everything but to concentrate on the really important results, and indicators.
- Based self-assessment helps to identify not only the organisation’s areas for improvement but also its strengths on which they can build upon in the future. Self-assessment provides also regular feedback on the stakeholders’ satisfaction with the training provision and educational services, the skills and competences acquired etc. Dealing with areas identified by self-assessment helps to ensure high quality training provision.
- Gives the common framework to exchange ideas, information, experiences and do benchmarking also with organisations outside the education and training sector.

Using the Model and doing self-assessment against it at regular intervals drive the improvement and make the (C)VET provider to become better in the services they provide and also in the way they provide them. E&T institutions using the Model understand and talk easier to the businesses, the world of work on how they prepare their students for work.

A13.2 Basic facts about the use of the EFQM Excellence Model in education and training

EFQM is working in 31 countries. The EFQM member organisations (about 500) cover more than 55 countries and 50 industries. The EFQM has no data about the exact number of the Model users in Europe and all over the world. They have an estimate – based on the number of copies of the EFQM 2010 Excellence Model brochure sold (all languages) – that the Model is used by more than 30,000 organisations which suggests that the EEM is a popular (if not the most popular) quality instrument in Europe. (But there are no data available on breakdown by sectors.) They measure the application of the EEM with some other indirect measures, e.g. Total People attending EFQM Events, Total People Trained by EFQM, Total Organisations Receiving EFQM Recognition.

However, based on EFQM’s long-year experience with using the Model it can be stated that quite a lot E&T organisations are using the Model and they also actively participate in the EFQM recognition schemes (especially on lower levels like Committed to Excellence, 3*Recognition for Excellence). The data on the numbers of the achieved EFQM recognition is the other indicator which helps to analyse the spread and application of EEM (see Figure 3 and Figure 4 below).
respectively which shows that the number of organisations receiving EFQM Recognition in the last two years has considerably increased as compared to 2010 (see also Figure 4).

The EFQM strategy is focusing on recruiting and retaining as members organisations with international focus and reach. Education and training organisations generally tend to work more with the EFQM national partner organisations (because of local language, adaptability to local needs). And there was no data collected before from national partner organisation so there is no specific data about the use of EEM specifically in the VET sector.

Public authorities generally do not promote the EEM as a quality assurance tool in education and training. The reason behind this might be that each country has different policy on education and training, so it would be inappropriate to drive the EEM centrally. However, EFQM is often used by public authorities to quality assure their own provisions. As an example, the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted, Inspectorate) in the UK (England) can be mentioned as they use the EEM as a basis of their assessment framework.

Outside Europe, in South-America (in Columbia and Ecuador) massive government funded programs were launched to support the use of the EEM in schools.

### A13.3 Key success factors of EFQM Excellence Model implementation

The key success factor of the implementation of the EEM is that the model helps to define organisational assets and clarify actions to improve the business planning process.

The efficiency of using EEM is highly depending on the appropriate use of general project management factors (e.g. planning, management engagement, people involvement, follow up and information-communication processes). The use of EEM can be managed and coordinated in the most effective way by setting up a core self-assessment team.

On the other hand, there are some other factors of the successful implementation of the EFQM Model:

- It is crucial for successful implementation to understand and to adapt the EEM criteria, its concepts and the assessment method (RADAR), and to train people for the use of the EEM. This understanding is helped by conducting case studies.
- In some cases it is difficult for the (C)VET providers to interpret the EEM for their organisation. For example for (C)VET providers it is difficult to differentiate between the society and the customers, and also the customer and society related results.
- The difficulty is getting people to understand how the Model applies to their organisation, i.e. to link the Model and what they do. If they find and understand this connection – and the simplified language makes it easier for them –, they can overcome this barrier.
- The Model does not give direct requirements only guidelines which describe the operation of an excellent organisation. This requires (C)VET providers to identify themselves what can be considered as their strengths and areas for improvement compared with an excellent organisation.
It is helpful to focus also on the organisation’s strengths instead of the areas for improvements alone. This helps to motivate people and to give a possibility to keep and even further strengthen these strengths of the organisation.

It is important to define a lean set of key indicators for the evaluation of the organisation’s performance based on the EEM that allows monitoring the attainment of the institutional goals and objectives.

It could be helpful to ask for external help (e.g. consultancy or training) from experts for the implementation of the EEM.

To support the use of EEM in the public sector and particularly in education and training, EFQM makes some efforts, e.g. simplify the language of the model, develop supporting materials and involve organisations / experts in the development and review processes from the education and training sector. The (E&T) sector specific version of the Model could make it easier to people to get started. But on the other hand, the sector specific versions would not give the opportunity for cross-fertilisation with other sectors. So the EFQM does not plan to develop sector specific versions of the EEM, e.g. for education.

That’s why during the last revision of the Model in 2012 the language of the Model was further simplified but it still remains generic. These versions are easier to people – including those in the education and training sector – to understand. EFQM thinks that due to the easier language no different (sector) variations of the Model are needed.

To support the use of the Model, EFQM developed and published a guide for public, voluntary and social profit sector organisations which helps the use of EEM in practice by giving a specific interpretation of the Fundamental Concepts in these sectors. EFQM has also collected a good number of case studies about the use of the EEM and quality approaches based on this model in different types of organisations, including educational service providers. This guide and the case studies (best practice descriptions) can help (C)VET providers to implement and use the EEM.

A13.4 Comparison of the EFQM Excellence Model with EQAVET

The EFQM Excellence Model is a common non-prescriptive evaluation framework like the EQAVET. Both approaches are based on the same TQM philosophy which integrates the PDCA logic and its application for the organisation’s continuous improvement. In EQAVET the PDCA (Quality) Cycle is clearly visible in the structure of the reference framework. In case of the EEM the PDCA cycle is present in two forms – it is integrated into the EEM structure (the arrows in the model /see Figure 1 above/ and the structure of the criterion parts) and also into the assessment and scoring system (RADAR logic).

Both the EQAVET and the EEM promote and support the change of the organisations’ culture and the move towards a culture of continuous quality improvement focusing on similar basic principles. Whilst the EEM focuses on general expectations (guidelines) describing the key features of an excellent organisation which are applicable to any organisation, regardless of its size and field of activity, the EQAVET principles (e.g. ensuring transparency, consistency, mutual trust) are integrated into the text of the EQAVET Recommendation and include VET specific characteristics.

Both quality management approaches promote continuous quality improvement based on regular self-assessment to identify strengths and areas for improvement. The EFQM defines the model and the method of self-assessment, EQAVET gives only guidelines for self-assessment. An independent external assessment is connected to each approach. However, while EFQM has a specific, well defined and described methodology and system of both self-assessment and external assessment, the EQAVET Framework allows VET systems and providers to choose from the different assessment methods the most appropriate one to their context and defines only some focus areas where these assessments should be directed to, i.e. system, processes and procedures.

The EFQM assessment provides the organisation with numerical results (scores) at the end of the evaluation which helps to measure the improvement of the organisation in a concrete
way. This kind of quantitative assessment is not connected to the EQAVET based self-assessment.

The EEM covers more areas of the organisation’s operation and gives a more detailed set of criteria for its assessment, evaluation and improvement than the EQAVET Framework but these criteria are not specified for (C)VET providers. EQAVET contains VET specific indicative descriptors which help to understand and translate these guidelines into practical initiatives.

The EQAVET Recommendation defines 10 quality indicators with the aim to support the evaluation and promote quality improvement of VET. The EEM does not define exact indicators, it addresses the areas where the measurement of the organisation’s performance would be important more broadly than EQAVET, but these are not VET specific areas/measure. Each of the 10 EQAVET indicators has its place in the EEM's Results criteria. One example: EQAVET Indicator No.2. Investment in training of teachers and trainers is part of the EEM Criterion 7. People Results and more concretely Criterion part 7.b. Performance measures which contain training and carrier development related indicators.

When comparing in detail the content of the EEM and EQAVET Framework on Quality Criteria level it can be stated that EEM addresses more areas and includes entirely the EQAVET Quality Criteria. The table below shows an example for referencing the Review Phase of the EQAVET Quality Cycle against the criterion parts of the EEM.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EQAVET Quality Criteria – Review</th>
<th>EFQM Excellence Model criterion parts related to Review</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review (which includes feedback and procedures for change)</td>
<td>1b. Leaders define, monitor, review and drive the improvement of the organisation's management system and performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1e. Leaders ensure that the organisation is flexible and manages change effectively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2c. Strategy and supporting policies are developed, reviewed and updated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5b. Products and Services are developed to create optimum value for customers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The referencing exercise showed that EQAVET Quality Criteria are included in several criterion parts of the EEM, and there can be more EQAVET Quality Criteria allocated to one single EEM criterion part.

When examining the EQAVET indicative descriptors in EEM we can state that all of these descriptors are included in EEM. But these indicative descriptors are diffused in EEM and each descriptor can be allocated to more than one criterion part and also to many different guidance points. Figure 6 shows an example for this referencing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EQAVET indicative descriptor at VET provider level / Evaluation</th>
<th>Related EFQM Excellence Model criterion parts and guidance point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation and review includes adequate and effective mechanisms to involve internal and external stakeholders</td>
<td>1c. Leaders engage with external stakeholders …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2a. Strategy is based on understanding the needs and expectations of both stakeholders and the external environment …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gather stakeholders' needs and expectations for input to the development and review of their strategy and supporting policies, remaining constantly alert to any changes …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4a. Partners and suppliers are managed for sustainable benefit …</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To support the implementation of EQAVET, Building Blocks were developed which identify possible key activities to be undertaken when building, monitoring and improving a quality management system in VET. For the same reason EFQM also developed some user guides (e.g. Excellence One Toolbook) and case studies. Similarly, EFQM has the same WEB tool (Knowledge Base 2.0) as EQAVET IT too with case studies to support the implementation of the EEM.

Finally, EEM shares what works, i.e. supports the identification and sharing of good practices within the organisation and also with other organisations in and outside the sector concerned. Due to the same criteria and assessment methodology applied, the Model can generate benchmarking processes in and among the EEM user organisations. In case of EQAVET the particular focus on exchange of models, methods, tools, practices etc. is one of the guiding principles of the European cooperation in quality assurance of VET, and is embedded in the activities of the EQAVET Network (e.g. working groups, sectoral seminars, peer learning visits), but this is not appearing among the indicative descriptors of the EQAVET Framework.

On the basis of the above comparison of the two quality management approaches, there can be some good practices identified:

- Good practice sharing (benchmarking): EFQM developed a system which supports the benchmarking and good practice sharing activities of the member organisations, e.g. with the EFQM Benchmarking database. EEM gives the common framework to exchange ideas, information, and experiences and to do benchmarking also with organisations outside the education and training sector.
- Integration of the PDCA cycle: the EFQM Model integrates the PDCA logic in a very easy and clear, understandable way both in the model criteria and the assessment process.
- Systematic approach: EFQM has a systematic approach which addresses all important areas of organisation management (5 Enablers Criteria) and all kinds of results of the organisation (4 Results Criteria). The criteria are divided into other criterion parts which help to specify the organisational Excellence related expectations.
- External evaluation: EFQM has a clear and transparent process for external evaluation within the EFQM Excellence Award scheme and the 3 level EFQM Recognition system. As the result of the external evaluation organisations get a score which helps them to measure the attainment of the targets and the organisation’s improvement.
- Model and process review and development: EFQM has a defined and transparent process for the review and development of the EFQM Model as well as of their own activities. They involve experts from different sectors (including the public, education and training sector) into the review and development process of the EEM.
- Communication and acceptance: EFQM has almost 500 member organisations, trained together with the national partner organisations more than 2000 people on how to use the EFQM Model and sold 33.000 copies of the Model brochure since 2011.
- Scope: the EFQM Model focuses on the organisation processes and results from all areas of operation which is important for an organisation striving for Excellence. It does not limit the focus of evaluation and improvement to the core processes and a few results only.

The new policy developments in VET in the light of the Communication of the EU Commission “Rethinking education” put VET Excellence in the focus of attention stating that “European VET must aim at world excellence, both as regards what it aims for and as regards its actual performance”. The combination of these two instruments – EFQM Excellence Model and EQAVET Framework – could considerably contribute to achieving (and sustaining) Excellence in VET, at all levels.

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A13.5 Sources

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- 2013 EFQM Excellence Model
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- EFQM Annual Report 2010
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- Excellence in Action – Summary of the EFQM modell changes in 2013
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Websites:

http://www.efqm.org/en/

Interviews:

Interviews with one expert in QA in industry and in E&T (with special regard to CVET), and two responsible people at the EFQM head office.
Annex 14 Case Study: Label “lycée des métiers”, France

A14.1 Key features of the quality assurance mechanism concerned and its application to education and training

Launched in 2001, lycée des métiers is a renewable label awarded to institutions providing an extensive range of vocational training and services, notably through active partnerships with the business world and local authorities. The label does not address quality of the learning process. Instead it highlights: a coherent range of training, consideration of students’ expectation and adaptation to employers’ needs. The main goal of the Ministry of Education is to promote quality and excellence in VET and to increase its attractiveness.

The label is aimed at public and private vocational high schools (lycées professionnels - LP) or polyvalent high schools (lycées polyvalents - LPO) combining general, vocational and/or technological pathways. General and technological high schools (lycées d’enseignement général et technologique - LGT) can only apply for the label if a partnership with a vocational high school has been established.

Participation is voluntary. The institution applying for the label has to comply with nine criteria defined in Article D335-1 of the Education Code and further described in Circular n° 2005-204 of 29-11-2005. The criteria are key elements in order to facilitate the integration of young people into the professional world. An institution not meeting all criteria on its own can still obtain the label if it establishes partnerships with one or several institutions which complete the remaining requirements. The institution has to:

- **Criterion 1**: Offer a range of vocational training programmes built around a coherent set of occupations in the same cross-sector occupation group (e.g. sales), related occupations (e.g. maritime occupations) or complementary occupations (e.g. sales and maintenance of motor vehicles). This criterion applies to the main training stream(s) which enable the institution to apply for labelling. This does not preclude the existence of other training programmes in the establishment;
- **Criterion 2**: Be open to trainees with different statuses: pupils/students, adults in continuing training, apprentices. This is not a prerequisite but a goal which can be achieved at a later stage through a network of institutions for example;
- **Criterion 3**: Provide a range of qualifications starting from the first qualification level (Certificat d’aptitude professionnelle) to higher education diplomas (Brevet de Technicien Supérieur). As for criterion 2, this can be achieved through networking with other institutions.
- **Criterion 4**: Provide validation of non-formal and informal learning. Every candidate institution should have at least one staff person trained to provide information and guidance on this topic.
- **Criterion 5**: Develop partnerships with regional and local authorities, the business community or higher education institutions. The institution formalizes existing partnerships or expands them on the basis of national and academic agreements. If necessary, the academy helps the applicant to develop partnerships.

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262 CEDEFOP (2011) Assuring quality in vocational education - The role of accrediting VET providers
264 if operating under contract with the Ministry of Education
265 Available at: [http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichCode.do;jsessionid=B0C2831120E3299D453C20E6AACFB692.tpdp09v_1?idSectionTA=LEGISCTA000006166831&cidTexte=LEGITEXT000006071191&dateTexte=20130128](http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichCode.do;jsessionid=B0C2831120E3299D453C20E6AACFB692.tpdp09v_1?idSectionTA=LEGISCTA000006166831&cidTexte=LEGITEXT000006071191&dateTexte=20130128)
267 An academy is administrative structure for governance of all educational institutions in a certain territory. There are 30 academies in France.
Criterion 6: Set up activities for teachers and trainees in order to improve counselling and learning conditions for trainees;

Criterion 7: Be open towards Europe or exchange with foreign countries. This can take various forms: a pedagogical project integrating the European dimension, implementation of the Europro diploma supplement\(^{268}\), cultural/linguistic/professionals exchanges using information and communication technologies, meeting with professionals from foreign companies operating in France.

Criterion 8: Offer accommodation services. The institution should at least be able to provide an external solution for local accommodation.

Criterion 9: Provide a support mechanism for professional integration or a follow-up mechanism after graduation. The applicant should at least participate in national surveys (IVA\(^{269}\) and IPA\(^{270}\)) in order to be able, amongst others, to assess the relevance of its training programmes.

Furthermore, an institution holding the label keeps its initial legal status; a lycée des métiers is not a new type of school.

The broad framework of the label award process is provided by the Education Code and is rather flexible. The process is directed by the rector of the academy. The rector sets up a working group "lycée des métiers" bringing together representatives of the local representatives of the Inspectorate body, heads of IVET institutions, teachers and parents, representatives of the regional council and of the business community. The group is responsible for adapting the national criteria to the particularities of the academy, organising the approval process of labelling requests. Together with educational inspectorates, the working group also supports and continuously evaluates compliance with the criteria by institutions holding the label. The label is awarded for five years and can be renewed after this period. However, institutions have to report annually on compliance with the criteria (annual progress report)\(^{271}\).

The table below shows the awarding process of the label.

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\(^{268}\) The Europro vocational diploma supplement may be issued to validate a work-linked training done in another Member State of the European Union. It complements the Europass-Training initiative but differs from it as it is only issued after an evaluation of the competences acquired on that occasion.

\(^{269}\) Integration into Working Life (Insertion dans la Vie Active) national survey

\(^{270}\) Professional Integration of Apprentices (Insertion Professionnelle des Apprentis) national survey

\(^{271}\) CEDEFOP (2011) Assuring quality in vocational education - The role of accrediting VET providers
Table A14.1  Label award process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 1: Intention of the school to obtain the label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Follows usually a discovery phase</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 2: Thinking about the idea and the project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Request for the application file to the Academy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Consultation (if required) of lycée des métiers in the department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Presentation of the project at the School Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Agreement of the School Council, approval of inspectorate body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The school is responsible for informing all its partners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 3: Development of the application file</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Identification of response elements to the Terms of Reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Constitution of the file (support provided by the unit of the Academy responsible for partnerships with companies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Analysis of the relevance of the response to the Terms of Reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Successive iterations until completeness of the application file</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Application file finalized in 2 copies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 4: Evaluation of the application file</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Synthesis and drafting of an assessment report the unit of the Academy responsible for partnerships with companies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provision of the application file to the inspectorate body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Opinion of inspectorate body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Application file made available to the members of the LdM Committee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 5: Passage through the LdM Committee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Presentation of the application file by the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Opinion on the issuance of the label by the LdM Committee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 6: Issuance of the label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Validation of the label by the Rector of the Academy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Communication to the Academy Council (Composed of: 24 local elected officials, 24 representatives of the education system and 24 representatives of the users/economic sector/social partners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 7: The school is officially awarded the label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Ministerial Announcement by decree, publication in the Official Bulletin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### A14.2 Basic facts about the use of this instrument in education and training

For the first six years, the success of the label was rather modest. 331 institutions273 out of about 1500 were awarded the label by 5 April 2007. In order to increase take up of the label, a campaign was launched in the same year by the Ministry for Education, aiming to reach an objective of 800 labelled institutions by 2010 (representing half of the potential applicant). The campaign was a success, as in less than 3 years the total number more than doubled with 695 institution labelled as of 31 December 2009. A year later, on 31 December 2010, the objective was achieved with 799 institutions holding the label.

Out of these, 608 were public vocational high schools or polyvalent high schools with a VET section. They represented 40% of public vocational high schools and polyvalent high schools with a VET section that could have been labelled in Metropolitan France. The remaining 191

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273 Institutions may have more than one label.
Study on Quality Assurance in Continuous VET and on future development of EQAVET

Institutions are private high schools (144), public general and technological high schools (34) or overseas high schools (13) (see table below).

Table 5.1 State of institutions holding the label by academy and by type on 31/12/2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academies</th>
<th>Public LP &amp; VET sections that could be labelled</th>
<th>Public LP + VET sections</th>
<th>Public LGT</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% of labelled LP + VET sections compared to LP + VET sections that could be labelled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aix-Marseille</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amiens</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Besançon</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bordeaux</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caen</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clermont-Ferrand</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corse</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Créteil</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dijon</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grenoble</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lille</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limoges</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyon</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montpellier</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy - Metz</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nantes</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nice</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orléans-Tours</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paris</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poitiers</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reims</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rennes</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rouen</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strasbourg</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toulouse</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Versailles</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Metropolitan France</strong></td>
<td><strong>1518</strong></td>
<td><strong>608</strong></td>
<td><strong>34</strong></td>
<td><strong>144</strong></td>
<td><strong>786</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The latest figures from 2011 show that there is a steady increase of labelled institutions. At the end of 2011, 871 VET providers had received the label. Out of these, 669 were public vocational high schools or polyvalent high schools with a VET section; 148 private high schools; and 54 public general and technological high schools.

A14.3 Key success factors for this instrument

Through interviews, several factors have been identified as key to the success of the label among VET institutions:

- Strong involvement of VET institutions: the Ministry of Education set up label taking into account the vocational high schools’ needs by involving them in its design;
- Communication campaign: promotion of the label at national and academies’ levels to let vocational high schools know about the usefulness of the label. The take up proved to be higher after the 2007 promotion campaign. Such a campaign should be tailored to regional needs, in particular as the take up varies greatly from a region to another;
- Evolving nature of the initiative: criteria have been clarified and adapted throughout the years;
- Flexible label award process: criteria are defined at national level but academies can further define them taking into account territorial particularities;
- Increased visibility of the labelled institution among:
  - its regional council, which is responsible for funding high schools. Holding the label gives each high school more weight when negotiating for funds;
  - parents and students: for promoting the institution among students and their parents as the label helps shape the professional identity of the institution;
- Strong support from the academy working group meeting the criteria;
- Continuous monitoring: annual progress reports and renewal of the label after five years, if the criteria are still met.

A14.4 Comparison with EQAVET

The label was developed prior to the EQAVET Recommendation and to the work leading to this Recommendation at European level. As a consequence, EQAVET could not be taken into account in the initial developments of the label. However, the following features of the label are compatible with EQAVET:

- The label process is in line with the Deming Quality Cycle Plan-Do-Check-Act, in particular with the support provided by the academic working group in checking the strategic objectives of the institution (label application process), supporting and monitoring implementation through the annual progress reporting and feedback on implementation.
- Several key success factors for the label (as presented above) are related to several of the EQAVET building blocks on system level (bb5 – Set up a communication strategy, bb6 – launch pilot projects and initiatives, bb10 – Stakeholder involvement).
- The label is based on a set of clearly defined descriptors. Some of the national criteria are directly linked with EQAVET descriptors, as presented in the table below.

http://www.education.gouv.fr/pid25535/bulletin_officiel.html?cid_bo=60842
Table A14.2  Linking LdM criteria with EQAVET descriptors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National criteria</th>
<th>EQAVET descriptors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. Provide validation of non-formal and informal learning</td>
<td>Standards and guidelines for recognition, validation and certification of competences of individuals have been defined (system level)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Develop partnerships with regional and local authorities, the business community or higher education institutions</td>
<td>Relevant and inclusive partnerships are explicitly supported to implement the actions planned (provider level)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Set up activities for teachers and trainees in order to improve counselling and learning conditions for trainees</td>
<td>Staff undertake regular training and development cooperation with relevant external stakeholders to support capacity building and quality improvement, and to enhance performance (provider level)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A14.5 Lessons learnt

However, the Ministry of education is currently working on a revision of the label. The EQAVET framework plays a decisive role in the design of the revision.

Two levels are tackled: System and provider level. At **system level**, the Ministry set up a working group in 2011 to review the list of criteria. More emphasis should be put on the quality approach and indicators should accompany the criteria. The Ministry is aiming for the new list of criteria and indicators to be ready in 2013\(^{276}\). However, the Ministry did not formally take into account the principles of EQAVET while developing the new criteria and indicators.

The Ministry will also introduce a new compulsory self-evaluation procedure for labelled vocational high schools (**provider level**) in order to align the label with the 2009 VET reform\(^{277}\). This self-evaluation approach is currently being developed through the QALEP project supported by the Lifelong Learning Programme. France aims to learn from the experience of the other European partners (Austria, Hungary and Romania) in the projects in order to develop this new self-evaluation methodology. The objective under QALEP is to develop a set of indicators for self-evaluation, directly inspired from the EQAVET Recommendation. Below, the key stages and outcomes of the project\(^{278}\):

- Analysis of the conditions for conducting the self-evaluation in view of the French context, the European recommendation establishing the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training and tools produced by European partners;
- Production of the specifications for drafting the French self-evaluation guide;
- Drafting of the methodological guide for self-evaluation for French institutions;
- Trial run of the guide in 10 ‘lycées des métiers’ located in three regional education authorities;
- Setup of a training plan for management staff in using the tool.

The project runs from October 2011 to October 2013.

For the time being the project it is at piloting stage (a draft version of the self-evaluation guide is being tested with ten VET schools. Preliminary results show that users would need

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\(^{276}\) As this is work in progress, working documents were not made accessible to the country researchers.


\(^{278}\) [http://eduscol.education.fr/pid26375-cid59930/european-project-qalep.html](http://eduscol.education.fr/pid26375-cid59930/european-project-qalep.html)
to be trained on how to use the tool. The project partners anticipate that training will be a key success factor for the future of the label.

Moreover, it was emphasised that the work done on national level to see how the label fits with EQAVET is expected to add a value to the quality assurance instrument. The project partners see the approach they are taking – a national label integrating those features of EQAVET which match their needs – as an appropriate way to combine the national framework with the European perspective.

A14.6 Sources

Literature:
CEDEFOP (2011) Assuring quality in vocational education - The role of accrediting VET providers

Websites:
http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichCode.do;jsessionid=B0C2631120E329D4D53C20E6AACFB692.tpdop09v_1?idSectionTA=LEGISCTA000006166831&cidTexte=LEGITEXT000006071191&dateTexte=20130128
Loi n° 2009-1437 du 24 novembre 2009 relative à l'orientation et à la formation professionnelle tout au long de la vie.
http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000021312490&categorieLien=id
http://eduscol.education.fr/pid26375-cid59930/european-project-qalep.html

Interviews:
Interviews with two responsible persons in the French Ministry of Education (MEN), as carried out by ICF GHK in January 2013
Annex 15 Case Study: Investors in People, England

A15.1 Key features of Investors in People and its application to education and training

Investors in People (IiP) was developed in 1990 as a national framework aiming to improve business performance by linking staff development to business objectives. It was designed and developed as part of government policy during a time of economic recession.

In April 2010, the UK Commission for Employability and Skills (UKCES) took over strategic ownership of IiP and is responsible for developing and maintaining the integrity of the IiP Standard and frameworks. There are eight IiP centres across the UK and licence agreements in 20 countries worldwide.

IiP focuses on core practices and capabilities around work organisation, performance management including recognition of good performance and feedback for improvement, communication and employee involvement in organisational decision-making, and the provision of learning and development opportunities to support business strategy. This is underpinned by management capability and skills development to improve business outcomes. It is a voluntary measure and is carried out through an external assessment.

The delivery infrastructure for IiP differs by nation.

- In Northern Ireland IiP is administered from the Department for Employment and Learning (DELNI);
- In Wales, IiP structures are similar to those in Northern Ireland. IiP sits within the devolved government and is linked to other business support initiatives;
- In Scotland, IiP is delivered and administered through Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Scottish Enterprise;
- In England, IiP operates independently to other business support services.

Each nation has its own subsidy policy to encourage employer engagement with IiP. For example, in Wales, targeted subsidy covers half of the costs of IiP assessment for employers with fewer than 250 employees. The same funding is available for re-accreditation (UKCES, 2011).

IiP currently has approximately 26,000 clients of which 22,000 have already achieved the IiP standard with a further 4,000 clients working towards IiP. The number of clients has increased since 2009 when the figure stood at 24,000 clients (UKCES, 2010). The target group for IiP was initially defined as all businesses – this includes larger and public sector organisations and typically private-sector SMEs experiencing high-growth. As such, IiP works in close partnership with organisations of different sizes across a range of sectors. This includes construction, health, hospitality, local government and the education sector for example.279

The framework has three core principles and is based on 10 key indicators and includes 39 evidence requirements which must be met for an organisation to be recognised as meeting the IiP Standard, as shown in the figure below.

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279 As confirmed by the UKCES interviewees
A15.1 Core principles and key indicators

Figure A15.1

Source: UKCES, 2012

Organisations can also access additional indicators alongside the 39 core (Standard) indicators and thereby have the ability to have Bronze, Silver and Gold award levels mentioned on their IiP plaques. This denotes that the organisation is working beyond the Standard. Recognition in the form of Bronze, Silver and Gold award levels means that organisations must provide evidence that they meet at least 65, 115 or 165 evidence requirements respectively.

IiP Accreditation is awarded for three years with a mid-point interaction at 18 months. At the end of the three year cycle, organisations are assessed for the purpose of re-accreditation. Where an organisation does not meet the evidence requirements of the 39 core indicators, an action plan is devised and the organisation is set a twelve month timeframe to meet the requirements set out in the plan. If the organisation fails to meet the plan, accreditation is withdrawn.

A15.2 Basic facts about the use of this instrument in education and training

Sector Skills research carried out by UKCES (2012) reports the significant contribution the education sector makes to the UK economy. Next to public administration and health, it is one of the largest employing sectors in the UK, employing approximately 2.7 million people. In taking forward reforms to create a more educated workforce, the report stresses that these aims will only be realised if the skills in relation to management and leadership, teaching and lecturing and the various support role are in place. A further dimension is the need to ensure that those working in the sector, particularly teaching staff are equipped with the skills and competences to respond to curriculum changes and advances in knowledge and therefore supported through continued training.

At organisational level, IiP can be considered a suitable instrument for education and training institutions, particularly for those institutions that are looking towards organisational
improvement and improving the way in which change is managed. UKCES research\(^{280}\) shows that this is due to a number of reasons:

- IiP covers a range of policies and practices that have the potential to support institutions in their business planning, staff training and development, induction of staff, staff consultation process, appraisals and learning and development more broadly;
- Education providers use IiP to further enhance and develop their approaches to continuous professional development and as a tool to demonstrate a commitment to continuing staff training and development in the workforce;
- Education providers recognise the external value of IiP accreditation. Employers value the fact that their processes have been externally benchmarked and validated against an international standard;
- IiP helps organisations to develop their HR practices at a critical juncture, such as when the firm had grown or where there was a fresh impetus to renew policies. Particularly important for education and training providers is the use of IiP in business plan and supporting organisations in their approaches to self-assessment.

In terms of the number of education and training providers using IiP a recent employer survey undertaken by UKCES (2012) reported that education is one sector where the take-up of IiP is high. Here it was reported that 28% of organisations are accredited in the education sector compared to 16% across all other sectors (Davies et al., 2012 cited in UKCES, Sector Skills Insight 2012).

As indicated above, there are IiP licence agreements in 20 countries worldwide. In terms of the extent to which IiP is used by public authorities, in the past IiP was actively encouraged amongst local authorities across the UK, though this may not be so widespread now. From a public authority perspective, one interviewee noted that there are two key rationales for using IiP. The first is in relation to the value and benefit of IiP as a policy tool and the second is IiP as a business tool. A real example is the way in which IiP has been used by employers and the government across the UK as a tool for the training and development of the UK PLC. In this sense, it was asserted that IiP is conceived as an organisational development tool to enhance and support continuous improvement – an ethos of which schools and other educational providers can identify with.

A15.3 **Key success factors of Investors in People**

In 2012 UKCES commissioned an employer survey to develop a deeper understanding of how IiP is perceived by employers and provide evidence of the impact of the Standard on the businesses which are accredited. The research finds report that the largest impacts of IiP are in relation to:

- Improving the ability of staff to do their jobs;
- Increasing workforce productivity;
- Raising levels of staff commitment;
- Improving levels of customer and user satisfaction;
- Increasing the quality of the services and products provided.

The survey report provides evidence to show that IiP has led to improvements in quality and productivity. For example, 53% of employers saw an increase in the productivity of their workforce, and 78% of these attributed the improvement directly to IiP. In addition, 54% of employers saw an improvement in the quality of products/ services, and 75% of these attributed the improvement directly to IiP as illustrated in figure 2 below. It should be noted however that it is not clear from the research the extent to which the IiP measure individually has lead or contributed to improvements in quality in relation to C-VET or the education sector more broadly. The survey report does however state that those in the education industry placed particular emphasis on the competitive advantage they hoped IiP would

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\(^{280}\) 2011 UKCES report
provide (96% of respondents indicated that this was an influencing factor for engaging with IIP). 281

Figure A15.2 Impacts of IIP

Source: UKCES, 2012

The survey also reported that employers which made a large number of changes to policies and practices were most likely to attribute improvements to IIP: 66% of these attributed an improvement in the ability of their staff to do their job to IIP, compared to 34% for those employers making few or no changes. This suggests that closer engagement with IIP results in greater benefits for businesses and their competitive advantage.

A15.4 Comparison with EQAVET

There is clear comparability between the EQAVET quality cycle and the IIP framework. This reflects the cyclical approach to plan, do and review with clear comparability with the EQAVET quality criteria.

With regard to comparability with the building blocks on provide level, IIP can be related to the following building blocks:

- Develop approaches which reflect the provider’s circumstances;

281 2012, p. 14
The study on second vice there second one between These less hand, necessarily require a description of the example, whilst these, namely explored three IIP 2010.

With regard to comparability with the building blocks, IIP can be related to:

- Recognise and build on existing internal arrangements;
- Pilot initiatives and value success (in the sense the IIP plays an important role in recognising successful quality assurance systems – especially in relation to HR practices)

With regard to comparability with the EQAVET descriptor at system level, the following comparisons can be made with IIP (attempts have been made to carry out this application in the context of IIP in the education sector):

- Mechanisms and procedures have been established to identify training needs;
- Implementation plans include specific support towards the training of teachers and trainers;
- Guidelines and standards have been devised for implementation at different levels;
- A methodology for evaluation has been devised, covering internal and external evaluation;
- Stakeholder involvement in the monitoring and evaluation process is agreed and clearly described;
- Early warning systems are implemented;
- Procedures, mechanisms and instruments for undertaking reviews are defined at all levels;
- Processes are regularly reviewed and action plans for change devised.

In terms of the extent to which IIP is comparable with the EQAVET indicators there are obvious links to Indicator 1 – Relevance of quality assurance systems for VET providers. For example, when used by education providers, IIP aims at support and promoting a quality improvement culture. There are also clear links to Indicator 2 – Investment in training of teachers and training. For example, organisations must demonstrate they provide opportunities for the development of staff.

Although there is little research comparing employer engagement with IIP with that of other quality standards such as EFQM and ISO, an IIP tracking study was carried out by MORI in 2010. The research findings have found that levels of employer awareness were highest for IIP (91 per cent awareness), then for the ISO standards (83 per cent awareness) and of the three quality standards awareness of the Excellence model was lowest (29 per cent). Though somewhat dated now, in 2002, the then Department for Education and Skills explored the extent to which IIP compares with other quality standards and accreditation, namely EFQM and ISO. One of the key findings from this aspect of the research is that whilst IIP and other standards are generally seen as being complementary, the basis on which one standard was deemed to be more useful than other raised is interesting. For example, their research findings show that Investors in People was most frequently described as more useful than ISO 9000 / BS 5750 because the latter was often a requirement of customers, rather than something the organisations in question would necessarily pursue of their own volition.

Less frequently, Investors in People was described as being better at bringing about cultural change within organisations; and for formalising procedures and processes. On the other hand, ISO 9000 / BS 5750 were sometimes regarded as being better because it involved less paperwork.

These findings invoke important questions about the extent to which employers differentiate between different standards and on what basis. Is it enough for employers to achieve just one reputable quality standard and is there any scope/desire for them to work towards a second standard and for what reason? Interestingly, the research findings have shown that there is no clear evidence that Investors in People leads to the pursuit of other standards, or vice versa. The point being, justification for investing time and resources in acquiring a second standard would need to be significant, providing additional added value.
A15.5 Lessons learnt

As indicated above, liP was a Government flagship workforce development initiative, providing a framework for good practice and investment in the development of employees at all levels within an organisation. As noted earlier, achievement of the (Investors in People) Standard was and continues to be open to all organisations, irrespective of size, sector, and ownership.

One key lesson relates to the level of recognition, status and reputation liP has generated across UK businesses and overseas since its inception. Drawing on the range of UKCES research findings, employers initially engage with liP in order to gain ‘benefits by association’. This reflects the status of liP as a recognised, well-respected Standard with a reputation of generating ‘benefits by practice’ particularly in relation to driving change and improving people management practices. It is the status and reputation of liP that continues to position liP as one of the leading Standard in the UK. liP benefited from significant government investment (in terms of finance and support) and years of continuously improvement and effort to promote and position liP as the leading standard for good practice across UK businesses. Nevertheless, during a time of reduced public spending, quality tools such as liP requires active promotion from senior Government officials. Their endorsement and promotion of such a tool would be a good way of encouraging greater use of liP. Reinforcing the value of liP as a quality tool for continuous improvement has been acknowledged in policy documents e.g. the Skills Strategy, however stronger political, strategic support/leadership is required to reinforce the business benefits of liP.

As indicated above, one of the key lesson in maintaining the quality and reputation of liP is in relation to the delivery of liP through its centres and assessors. A key challenge is ensuring a consistency in the approach employed by the assessors in terms of organisations meeting the evidence requirements of the framework.

A15.6 Sources

Literature
Centre for Enterprise (2003) The snakes and ladders of Investors in People. Leicester, UK
DfES (2002) The Wider Role and Benefits of Investors in People by Mark Cox and Rod Spires, PACED.

Websites:

Interviews
Interviews with two responsible people at UKCES
Annex 16 Case Study: ISO 9000

The main purpose of this case study is to present the key features of the ISO 9001 standard – as one of the most widely used quality management approaches –, the key success factors for its implementation and also to compare it with the EQAVET Framework.

**A16.1 Key features of the ISO 9001 standard and its application in education and training**

The ISO 9000 series of quality management standards are developed through global consensus by groups of experts and published by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) which is the world’s largest developer of voluntary International Standards. ISO has 163 national members all over the world and over 250 technical committees.

The ISO 9000 series of quality management standards create a framework of the fundamental generic elements for internationally recognised quality management systems. The generic nature of the standards’ allows for their application in any type of organisation. The standards provide guidance and tools for companies and organizations who want to ensure that their products and services consistently meet customer’s requirements, and that quality is consistently improved.

The best known and most widely used standard of the ISO 9000 family is the **ISO 9001:2008** standard which specifies the basic requirements of a quality management system. The implementation of this standard is supported by other international standards like the **ISO 9000:2005** standard describing the fundamentals of quality management systems, and also defining the related terms thus helping the understanding of the requirements, the **ISO 9004:2009** standard providing guidance to organizations on how to make their QMS more efficient and effective and the **ISO 19011:2011** standard providing guidance on internal and external auditing of quality management systems.

One of the key features of the ISO 9001 is a quality management system standard that specifies quality management system’s requirements to fulfil regulatory and customer requirements (assurance of conformity) and to enhance customer satisfaction through the effective application of the system, including processes for continual improvement. It can be used by any organization, large or small, regardless of its field of activity. ISO 9001 is the only standard in the ISO family that can be certified to (although this is not a requirement).

The standard is based on 8 basic quality management principles as Customer focus, Leadership, Involvement of people, Process approach, System approach to management, Continual improvement, Factual approach to decision making and Mutually beneficial supplier relationship. These principles were developed and revised on the basis of the TQM principles focusing on process and system approach and also on the PDCA cycle. These principles have been taken into consideration during the development of ISO 9011 standard.

The ISO 9001 standard helps the organisation to adapt a process approach, i.e. to implement and improve the processes in a systemic way based on the PDCA (Plan/Do/Check/Act) logic. Figure A11.1 shows a process based quality system structure which models the main quality management areas and their interrelations.
The ISO 9001 standard covers this process based system and the standard’s content follows the same structure. The quality management system requirements an organisation has to meet when developing their quality management system are defined in chapters 4 to 8. The standard deals with measurement, analysis and improvement in a separate chapter (8) where it defines some mandatory assessment and evaluation to be carried out by the organisations (like monitoring information relating to customer perception (satisfaction), internal audit, monitoring and measurements of processes and products) and also the methodological basis of the internal assessments. These assessments and evaluations – together with the management review (subchapter 5.6.) where the management has to evaluate the organisation’s management system on the basis of the collected data – form the integral part of the PDCA based evaluation system of the ISO 9001 standard.

The ISO 9001 standard was created to be suitable and applicable to all organizations, regardless of type, size and product provided. The standard is also useful for all kind of activities which have to satisfy (different) clients’ needs. This means that the ISO 9001 standard is applicable in the education/VET/CVET sector. However, all requirements of the standard are generic therefore they should be adapted to the education and training activities; it can be adapted easier to CVET than to IVET as in CVET ISO 9001 is considered in a different environment meaning that CVET providers are more economy-related and business-minded.

There is a higher acceptance among CVET providers to implement ISO 9001 requirements, especially by those operating inside commercial companies, associations. However, in CVET the ISO 9001 standard is mainly used to get external recognition. This is very much in line with the findings of the EQAVET Secretariat Survey conducted in 2012 which says that in the EU 27 countries the national quality standards for CVET providers are mainly used either as a condition of accreditation / approval (22 countries, 85%) or as a condition of funding (20 countries, 77%).

On the other hand VET and especially CVET providers are close to the private sector (e.g. industries or other service companies) where the ISO 9001 standard is a well-known and widely used quality management tool so this standard can give a common language in the field of quality assurance between the providers and their customers. By using this standard
CVET providers can also show the companies that their students are at top level, this is important for their image.

Benefits of using the ISO 9001 standard in education and training include that the standard

- Is written on high level, it is not very specific, gives freedom to the users – including the (C)VET providers – to interpret the requirements to their business, objectives and culture.
- Requires the definition of quality objectives in line with the quality policy of the (C)VET providers and to meet the requirements of education and training services.
- Introduces strictness inside the organisation (formalisation of roles, procedures, responsibilities, everybody knows what he/she and the others have to do).
- Helps to identify, design and control the organisation’s processes by considering customer expectations, to think on how to run the core processes and to identify where improvements are necessary in the process management system.
- Assures the overall effectiveness of the education organization’s quality management system and the delivery and continuous improvement of its educational and training service.
- Prescribes to develop and improve the organisation’s documentation system on the basis of the standard requirements.
- Provides – through the third party audit - an external assurance to clients that the (C)VET provider have a good quality assurance system in place. The ISO 9001 certification is worldwide known, it is a key to good reputation of a (C)VET provider.

A16.2 Basic facts about the use of the ISO 9001 standard in education and training

ISO executes every year a survey of certifications to ISO management system standards. In this survey ISO 9001 standard related data are also collected. According to this, up to the end of December 2011, at least 1.111.698 certificates had been issued in 180 countries and economies. In Europe (51 countries) there were 492.248 certificates awarded which makes approx. 44% of certificates awarded worldwide. The ISO survey also contains data which are segmented by different sectors including education (see figures 283 below).

As Figure A11.2 shows, the trend of the number of certificates issued in the education sector follows the trend of the total amount of ISO 9001 certificates issued worldwide. If we analyse the number of certificates divided by the public sector related area we can see almost the same positive trends. According to figure A11.3, the education and healthcare sector is the leader in the public sector regarding the number of ISO 9001 certificates issued worldwide. However, there are no specific data available about the number of the ISO 9001 certificates issued in the VET or in the CVET sector. If we accept the fact that the VET and CVET sector have the same trends as the education and the private sector we can establish the same growing trends in VET and CVET sector, in connection to the number of ISO 9001 certificates issued.

There is originally the possibility of promoting the Learning certificates. However, the quality might be possible in the training system. In the world, the scheme was not designed to be compulsory. It should be a voluntary process in the education and training sector.

In 2010 the ISO 29990:2010 standard for Learning services for non-formal education and training was issued. It contains basic requirements for service providers. The standard is a possible alternative for VET and especially for CVET providers to implement and certify their quality management system.

The wide-spread use of ISO 9001 in the education and training sector highly depends on the promoting system which is established and managed by public authorities. Legal regulation could be an option as the external assessment attached to certification would give the possibility to make its use mandatory but this is not a common practice. On the other hand, originally this standard was not designed to be compulsory. It should be a voluntary process in the education and training sector.

There can be three main trends identified of how public authorities promote (or accept) ISO 9001 as a quality assurance tool in (C)VET:

- Providing financial or other support to providers to implement and certify the ISO 9001 standard based quality management system. In Hungary there was an application scheme managed by the Ministry of Industry and Trade in which SMEs including (C)VET

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Figure A16.2 Number of ISO 9001 certificates in the education sector compared to the world total

Figure A16.3 Number of ISO 9001 certificates issued in some public sector related areas

284 [http://www.iso29990.biz/](http://www.iso29990.biz/)
providers could apply for financial support for the implementation and certification of their ISO 9001 standard based quality management system.

- A mandatory requirement of the accreditation process. In France the National Education Ministry developed a quality label (GretaPlus) which demonstrates the conformity to the national quality reference framework with a strong reference to ISO 9000 standards. In Italy the certification according to the ISO 9001 standard was the precondition for the (C)VET providers’ accreditation imposed by the Ministry of Labour. ISO 9000 was chosen because it is a well consolidated model, largely acknowledged by the business world, and it had the wider use than the other approaches. (But this regulation was changed and today only a few regions ask for the ISO 9001 certification as a precondition of accreditation).
- The ISO 9001 certification of (C)VET providers is accepted and/or is regarded as an advantage in many European countries in the public procurement procedures.

A16.3 Key success factors of ISO 9001 implementation in education and training

Nowadays it is an accepted fact that the implementation of a quality management system would not be possible without the change of culture in the organisation which can help to accept and integrate the principles (fundamental concepts) of the system. In line with this cultural change there are some important factors of the ISO 9001 implementation which are valid for any kind of system implementation and development project (e.g. management engagement, staff involvement and motivation, precise planning, regular feedback and follow up).

On the other hand there are some specific factors of the successful ISO 9001 implementation:

- The standard uses specific technical terms. Therefore it is necessary to translate these terms to the (C)VET providers’ language (e.g. the interpretation of product or verification and validation).
- The standard is focusing on the service processes in a general way but does not contain any kind of education and training related specific requirements. The providers have to interpret the standard requirements for their services and adapt them to the characteristics, objectives and the specificities of the E&T activity.
- The process approach and systemic thinking can be difficult in the education and training sector. So it is crucial for (C)VET providers to understand this kind of process and system approach.
- It is very important to appoint and train a quality management team which is responsible for the implementation of the ISO 9001 based QMS.
- The implementation is targeted to the whole organisation. It is important to involve the whole staff (teachers, trainers and other staff members) from the (C)VET provider.
- During the implementation it is vital to focus on the core processes which in case of a (C)VET provider are the education and training related processes. The procedures should be easy to introduce and use.
- The implementation of ISO 9001 needs extra resources (both human and financial). In many cases the organisations use external resources for the implementation, e.g. consultancy, training but these together with the certification fee cost money (therefore CVET providers prefer to develop their own QA tools).

Another important factor of the successful ISO 9001 implementation is to develop and publish guides and guidelines which make for the CVET providers easy (easier) to adapt and implement the standard's requirements. The ISO’s response to the sector’s needs was the issue of the IWA2 Guidelines for the application of ISO 9001:2000 in education which made this standard much more friendly with the E&T providers as its language and vocabulary were interpreted to education (e.g. product = educational and training services). (However, still it is not clear what the term “supplier” means in (C)VET.) The guidelines are not intended for use for conformity assessment or for certification. On the other hand, in the ongoing revision process of the ISO 9001 the ISO/TC/176 has created a new working group on “education organizations” which is developing a new standard - ISO 18420: Quality
management system requirements for educational organisations. On national level for example AFNOR (France) has developed and published several guides – very concrete, clear and practical documents – for education and training providers, e.g. on agricultural training (Bpx50753, September 2012) which gives examples of the procedures on how to manage processes; on the improvement of the processes and the performance of SMEs (including (C)VET providers (FDX 50818, January 2012) to. A new guide is being developed on how to check and evaluate the results of the training at the end of the course (to be published in a few weeks).

A16.4  Comparison of the ISO 9001 standard with EQAVET

In general ISO 9001 and EQAVET have the same basic philosophy based on TQM principles and the PDCA logic. These two quality management approaches help to change the organisation culture focusing on customer satisfaction, continuous improvement and people involvement.

The Quality Cycle is one of the main features of EQAVET. In ISO 9001 the PDCA cycle is integrated into the requirements and it is not embedded directly into the structure of the standard. The standard structure follows a process-oriented approach.

The EQAVET Quality Cycle is not a „simple” cycle which means that common quality criteria – quality / indicative descriptors – were defined and agreed at European level for each phase of the cycle. These quality descriptors should be taken into consideration (the more so be in compliance with, see Strategic objective 2a and 2b of the Bruge Communiqué) when building and improving any VET QA system.

Both of the two quality approaches apply basic principles but the way they are made visible are a little bit different. ISO 9001 has general fundamental concepts which are applicable to any organisation, regardless of its size and field of activity. These fundamental concepts are laid down and explained in a separate standard ISO 9004:2009. In case of EQAVET these underlying principles are incorporated in the text of the Recommendation and also in the indicative descriptors (e.g. staff involvement, stakeholders’ participation, cooperation with other VET providers) and are not collected in a structured way and not explained to ease their common understanding. These fundamental concepts have also some similarities, e.g. customer focus (ISO 9001) and stakeholder focus, involvement (EQAVET).

None of the two quality approaches define how the organisations should establish, implement and operate their quality management system; they only provide a framework for this. At the same time, ISO 9001 is a heavily standardized approach while EQAVET is more a philosophy, a general approach. ISO 9001 sets compulsory requirements and their fulfilment can be verified through the certification process. EQAVET has a toolbox nature: the indicative descriptors and indicators are for guidance only, and the users can choose that they consider more relevant to their needs. ISO 9001 defines the main task of the implementation of a quality management system. EQAVET provides more freedom for the training providers to choose the methodology depending on their needs and choose their own way to improve quality.

ISO 9001 contains more requirements than the EQAVET Framework. But ISO 9001 contains general requirements applicable to any sector and takes no notice of VET specifications. The EQAVET indicative descriptors are VET specific and thus help to make the general quality management system’s requirements VET specific. E.g. in Planning phase of the EQAVET QC specifically the goals/objectives of VET have to be referenced.

When examining in detail the content of the two quality approaches, it can be stated that ISO 9001 includes all the EQAVET Quality Criteria but in different structure. The EQAVET Quality Criteria address many different part of the ISO 9001. The figure below shows an example for referencing the Evaluation Phase of the EQAVET Quality Cycle against the requirements of the ISO 9001 standard.
Figure A16.4  Example – Referencing EQAVET and ISO 9001 on Quality Criteria level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EQAVET Quality Criteria – Evaluation</th>
<th>ISO 9001 chapters related to Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of outcomes and processes is regularly carried out and supported by measurement</td>
<td>5.6 Management review … 8.1 Measurement, analysis and improvement 8.2 Monitoring and measurement 8.2.1 Customer satisfaction 8.2.2 Internal audit 8.2.3 Monitoring and measurement of processes 8.2.4 Monitoring and measurement of product … 8.4 Analysis of data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is also possible to compare the EQAVET indicative descriptors and the ISO 9001 standard requirements. This exercise shows that most of the EQAVET indicative descriptors are included in the ISO 9001 standard (see Figure A16.5).

Figure A16.5  Example – Referencing EQAVET and ISO 9001 on indicative descriptor level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EQAVET Indicative descriptors at VET-provider level / Planning</th>
<th>ISO 9001 requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explicit goals/objectives and targets are set and monitored</td>
<td>5.4.1 Quality objectives Top management shall ensure that quality objectives, including those needed to meet requirements for product, are established at relevant functions and levels within the organization. The quality objectives shall be measurable and consistent with the quality policy. … 5.6 Management review … This review shall include assessing opportunities for improvement and the need for changes to the quality management system, including the quality policy and quality objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European, national and regional VET policy goals/objectives are reflected in the local targets set by the VET providers</td>
<td>ISO 9001 has no requirements in connection to this indicative descriptor. Only general requirements are defined about target setting and it is not defined how to adjust these targets to the objectives set on higher levels (e.g. national, regional, European).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The referencing exercise can clearly show the differences between the requirements of these two quality management approaches. It can also strengthen that ISO 9001 addresses more areas of the organisation operation but is not as specific for VET as the EQAVET Framework.

The referencing exercise can help also VET providers to investigate the compliance of their ISO 9001 based QMS against EQAVET and define on that basis the actions required for covering the gaps. The other difference between the ISO 9001 standard and the EQAVET Framework description is that EQAVET is focusing on two different levels – the system level and the provider level. ISO 9001 does not differentiate between these levels. Another specific feature of EQAVET is that it covers all kinds of VET (IVET, CVET, higher level VET, apprenticeship etc.).

There are 10 concrete VET specific indicators attached to the EQAVET Framework which help to measure, evaluate and improve of the "outputs" and "outcomes" of VET in terms of the three key EU policy priorities: increasing employability, improving the match between
supply and demand for training, and promoting better access to lifelong training (especially for vulnerable groups). This way EQAVET can support more the statistical work and thinking about and measuring the progress, success.

The ISO 9001 standard controls the processes but it gives any information on the results, output of the process (e.g. about the level of the training and the level of the skills acquired at the end of the training). ISO 9001 does not define direct measures and indicators but it defines the areas where measurement is required (e.g. process and system audit, customer satisfaction, processes, and products/services) and also the requirements of the data collection and analysis of gathered data. The standard is focusing on the customer results and the process indicators but VET providers have many other important parameters which are not specified in the standard (e.g. completion rate, employment at a certain period of time after the completion of training, participation in further training).

Both EQAVET and ISO 9001 define an internal and external assessment system as part of the quality management approach. ISO 9001 uses audit which can be executed internally (internal audit) or externally (third part audit – certification). For the execution of these audits there is a separate standard ISO 19011:2011 which provides guidance on auditing management systems including ISO 9001. Additionally, the ISO 9004 standard provides a self-assessment tool which helps to evaluate the organisation maturity against a defined Maturity model. In this model there are no indicators defined either; but it gives more detailed criteria for self-evaluation.

The EQAVET Framework also comprises of monitoring processes (a combination of internal and external evaluation mechanisms) but there are only some main principles defined about self-assessment and the process of self-assessment is not specified as it is in ISO 9004 standard.

Finally, to support the implementation of the EQAVET Framework Building Blocks were developed which identify possible key activities to be undertaken when building, monitoring and improving a quality management system in VET. In ISO 9000 family the ISO 9004 standard has the same function. Both supporting materials interpret the main principles of the two quality approaches (EQAVET Framework and ISO 9001 standard), and give some examples and help for the implementation of the quality management approach. While Building Blocks define the key questions/success factors, the ISO 9004 standard explains in more detail these aspects from the point of view of the standard implementation.

On the basis of the above comparison of the two quality management approaches, there can be some good practices identified which could be transferred from ISO 9001 to the further development, improvement of the EQAVET Framework:

- Credibility and transparency: The process of how the ISO 9001 standard is produced and improved (the revision process) is known and transparent. EQAVET is a clever, smart instrument but the process is not well known: how was it created, who was behind it, how it will be improved?
- Communication and acceptance: Up to the end of December 2011, at least 1 111 698 certificates had been issued in 180 countries and economies by ISO 9001 standard.
- Systemic and process approach.
- Scope: ISO 9001 addresses all management areas within the organisation while EQAVET is mainly focusing on education and training activities, process of VET provision
- Assessment system – checking and verifying fulfilment: The processes and conditions for internal and external assessment (internal audit, self-assessment and certification) are well defined in the ISO 9000 standard series. The certification gives an opportunity for the organisation to get external recognition of the implementation and operation of

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285 See in ISO 9004:2009 Appendix A.
their quality management system. In case of EQAVET it is difficult to measure the implementation and verify the compliance with the EQAVET Framework.

In summary it can be concluded that ISO 9001 is a good system that works. However, the implementation of an ISO 9001 standard based quality management system does not mean the full implementation of the EQAVET Framework.

A16.5 Sources

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- Wouter Van den Berghe (Director Quality Management Services, Deloitte & Touche, Belgium): Application of ISO 9000 standards to education and training, Vocational Training European Journal No 15
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- ISO 9001:2008 Quality management systems -- Requirements
- ISO 9004:2009 Managing for the sustained success of an organization -- A quality management approach
- ISO 19011:2011 Guidelines for auditing management systems
- ISO 29990:2010 Learning services for non-formal education and training -- Basic requirements for service providers
- ISO Survey of Certifications_2011

Websites

EQAVET website: www.eqavet.eu
ISO website: www.iso.org
World register of ISO 2990 certificates: www.iso2990.biz

Interviews

Interviews with 3 experts on European education systems and training policies, QA in industry and in VET
Annex 17 Persons interviewed to prepare country reports

In total, 42 persons were interviewed to prepare the country reports.

- Information about system level QA was collected from 28 out of 42 interviewees.
- Information about provider level QA was collected from 14 out of 42 interviewees.
- The scenarios for further implementation of EQAVET were discussed with 32 out of the total 42 interviewees.

Table A17.1 Overview on persons interviewed to prepare country reports and topics discussed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country/ QA measure discussed</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Institution/Organisation/ Company</th>
<th>Collecting information on system level measures</th>
<th>Collecting information on provider level measures</th>
<th>Discussion of scenarios</th>
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<tbody>
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<td><strong>Austria</strong></td>
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<td>Karin Reisinger</td>
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<td>eduQua</td>
<td>Ruth Jermann</td>
<td>eduQua Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>AT-CERT</td>
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<td>AT-CERT office</td>
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<tr>
<td>AT-CERT/System level QA</td>
<td>Jürgen Horschinegg</td>
<td>Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture (ARQA-VET)</td>
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<td>FOREM</td>
<td>José Soblet</td>
<td>Ministry of the French-speaking community - Directorate General of compulsory education</td>
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<td>FOREM</td>
<td>Olivier Francq</td>
<td>Quality, Safety and Environment Management Forem Formation (FOREM)</td>
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<td><strong>Czech Republic</strong></td>
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## Study on Quality Assurance in Continuous VET and on future development of EQAVET

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**TOTAL** 42 persons 28 14 32
Annex 18 Persons interviewed to prepare case studies

In total, 13 persons were interviewed to prepare the 6 case studies.

Table A18.1   Overview on persons interviewed to prepare case studies

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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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- World register of ISO 2990 certificates: [http://www.iso29990.biz](http://www.iso29990.biz)