

This report presents the results of a Peer Learning Activity, which has been prepared by the independent expert named on the cover. The report is based on a peer learning activity where policymakers and practitioners from a number of countries exchanged ideas and experiences on an issue of shared policy interest. This report reflects the opinions of the participants and does not constitute an official European Commission or ENQA-VET position.

Peer Learning Activity on Quality
Assurance of Evaluation Procedures

30March-1April, 2009 - Fulda

Peer Learning Report
June 2009

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Peer Learning Activity on Quality Assurance Procedures on Evaluation was organised in Fulda, Germany, (Hessen Land), from 30 March to 1 April 2009. The representatives of 13 countries took part in the peer learning activity (PLA): Germany (Host), Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Italy, Estonia, Luxembourg, Romania, Slovenia, UK (Scotland).

2. The focus of this PLA was on quality assurance procedures on evaluation for vocational education and training (VET). The main topics discussed were the interpretation and management of the quality assurance in national contexts, the State responsibility in the vocational school area, the role of the social partners, the responsibility of the different actors in the field of setting standards for the recognition of training occupations and training schemes, and the employers' responsibility in the area of further education, the transfer of good practices.

3. The PLA programme considered the German Dual System in VET. The German Dual System is based on cooperation partnership model between companies and schools (both institutions being legally independent of each other). The learner completes the vocational education and training in occupational training centres.

Cooperative Studies from VET and universities were taken in consideration.

Hessencampus, a Centre of Lifelong Learning in the region of Fulda, was visited.

The introduction and development of obliging quality assurance procedures for internal and external evaluation for suppliers were discussed.

4. Through the visits, and the following discussions, the participants had the opportunity not only to deepen their understanding of some characteristics of the German vocational system, but to better know and compare some institutional and structural features of the different national evaluation systems. The different approaches and methods to quality assurance were considered and compared as well.

5. The European quality assurance cycle in education management was taken into account and/or proposed to the participants in all the phases of the PLA. The discussions revealed that in many cases the steps planning-implementation-evaluation-review were informally applied, sometimes without awareness.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following list is based on the answers given by the majority of the participants in the pre-activity and post-activity questionnaires sent to the expert. Some indications on priorities, moreover, emerged from the discussions (mainly during the final tour de table).

The key requirements in ensuring further development of quality assurance in evaluation procedures at national, European and network level are:

MEASURES AT NATIONAL LEVEL

- Set up national educational standards
- Establish national qualification frameworks
- National evaluation criteria for exams
- More investment in VET
- Invest more on educational research and on procedures for employing learning outcomes
- Introduction of coherent quality evaluation procedures, based on the European quality assurance cycle
- More partnerships between enterprises and VET providers
- Focus more on non-financial results than the financial ones
- Evaluation system supporting the development and improvement process
- Self-evaluation should be generalised
- Systematic review of qualifications to better meet the needs of employers
- More simple assessment model and tools for management procedures and teachers

MEASURES AT EUROPEAN LEVEL

- Opening up of the European labour market
- Launching of evaluation pilot projects
- Improve the direct involvement of the top political and technical decision makers
- Develop learning and comparison opportunities for decision makers and experts
- More equilibrium between the provision of VET and the requirements of the labour market taking in account the perspectives (future development of economic areas)
- Increase the quality and quantity of adult participation in education and VET

MEASURES AT ENQA-VET LEVEL

- Increase exchange-platform programmes like the PLAs which are seen as a key means of improving VET across Member States and an important voluntary cooperation and dissemination tool
- Increase the exchange of good practice, including guidelines
- Study visits should last for a longer period
- Establishment of a common platform for PLAs
- Develop indicators to be used for benchmarking between European countries

- Establish a European network of VET providers to share experiences of PLAs, projects, Peer reviews, etc.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 European policy context

Discussion on quality assurance as an European issue started in 2000, with the launch of the European forum on quality, developed in the context of the large debate raised by the definition of the Lisbon strategy.

The Barcelona European Council in March 2002 defined the goal to put the European education and training systems at the first place in the world as for quality and competitiveness by 2010.

A pre-condition for reaching this goal was the improvement of the national Vocational Education and Training (VET) systems. In order to attain the goal, therefore, the Copenhagen Declaration in November 2002 invited all European countries to start initiatives in VET quality assurance, enhancing the transnational cooperation.

In 2003 a Common Quality Assurance Framework for VET (CQAF) was established proposing common principles, guidelines and tools. The CQAF was endorsed by the Council in May 2004. The CQAF constitutes a European reference framework to ensure and develop quality in VET, building on the key principles of the most relevant existing quality assurance models. It is intended as an instrument that can help policy makers and practitioners to get a better insight of how the existing QA models work, to identify areas of provision that need improvement, and take decisions on how to improve them, based on common quantitative and qualitative references.

The CQAF can be applied at both the system and VET provider levels and can therefore be used to assess the effectiveness of VET.

This is the background for the starting of the *European Network for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training* (ENQA-VET), launched by the European Commission in October 2005. The main purpose of ENQA-VET is to create a solid platform for member countries with the aim of exchanging information and experience, learning from each other in a cooperative, interactive way, and enhancing the Quality Assurance culture all in Europe.

The Helsinki Communiqué in December 2006 underlined the need to progress from the CQAF to a culture of quality improvement and to strengthen cooperation on quality improvement in VET.

This approach to quality assurance is reflected in the general principles contained in the Resolution on the proposal for a Recommendation on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), adopted by the European Parliament in October 2007. The EQF was adopted by the European Parliament and Council on April 2008. The implementation of the EQF by the member States needs a special attention for the evaluation of the results (competences) acquired by the learners. ENQA-VET work

programme can help the States in reinforcing the culture of Quality Assurance. Peer Learning Activities (PLAs) play a strategic role in this process.

A proposal for a recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (EQARF) was finally approved in November 2008. Each Member State is recommended to devise within 2 years from the adoption of the recommendation an approach aimed at improving quality assurance systems at national level and making best use of EQARF involving the social partners, regional and local authorities and every other relevant stakeholder. This approach includes the establishment where this does not already exist of a Quality Assurance national reference point, as well as an active participation in the European quality assurance reference framework network.

The reference framework, based on the **quality cycle**, comprises the four phases:

- setting of policy goals/objectives and planning,
- implementation phase,
- evaluation phase which deals with the design of the mechanisms for evaluation and the assessment of achievements/outcomes at individual, provider and system levels,
- review, based on a combination of internal and external evaluation results, processing of feedback and organisation of procedures for change.

The relevance of QA systems has been reaffirmed by the Council of the European Union in a recent meeting (Brussels, 12 May 2009). In the “*Council conclusions on a strategic framework for European cooperation in Education and Training*”, the Strategic objective 2 (“*Improving the quality and efficiency of Education and Training*”) underlines the importance of developing “*effective Quality Assurance systems*”.

2.2 PLA's rationale

The focus of the PLA in Fulda was on the quality assurance in vocational education and training. So, the main topics discussed were:

- the interpretation and management of the quality assurance in the specific national contexts
- the State responsibility in the vocational school area
- the role of the social partners
- the responsibility of the different actors in the field of setting standards for recognized training occupations and training schemes
- the employers' responsibility in the area of further education
- the transfer of good practices

The PLA **programme** considered the German Dual System model for VET, based on the cooperation between companies and schools (both institutions being legally independent of each other) in different ways and contexts.

The Cooperative Studies were taken into consideration (both vocational training and studying from universities).

The VET in occupational training centres is completed by the trainee.

Hessencampus, a Center of Lifelong Learning in the region of Fulda, was visited.

The introduction and development of obliging quality assurance procedures for the internal and external evaluation of the VET suppliers was discussed.

Through the visits, and the following discussions, the participants had the opportunity not only to deepen some characters of the German vocational system, but to better know and compare some institutional and structural features of the different national evaluation systems. The different approaches and methods to quality assurance were considered and compared as well.

2.3 National/regional policy context

The national policy contexts are different and peculiar for each of the participating countries. Anyway we can divide them into two great groups as for the institutional profile of the evaluation systems.

The first one gathers the countries where a national evaluation system covers both general education and VET. The countries are **Austria** (a national programme - Quality in Schools (Q.I.S.) was launched by the Federal Ministry of Education since 1999), **Bulgaria** from 2003, **Czech Republic** from 2005, **Finland** from 2003 (1990 for general education), **Slovenia** (a new Council for quality and evaluation is in progress), **Luxembourg** and **Romania** (from 2006).

The second group concern, on the contrary, the countries where a national evaluation system does not cover both general education and VET. These ones are **Germany** (each Land has the responsibility as for evaluation) **Denmark** (all VET providers have a responsibility to establish an evaluation system), **Estonia** (the educational system is highly decentralized, only internal evaluation is compulsory for both GE and VET since 2006), **Cyprus** (external evaluation every second year), **Italy** (the national agency for the evaluation of both GE and VET exists, but is not yet fully operational), **Scotland** (the VET system is partially market-driven, only General Education evaluation is under the responsibility of Scottish Government).

As for the indicators used in the different countries, the panorama is not uniform: some countries have evaluation systems based on standardized indicators (**Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Luxembourg, Romania, Scotland**), other countries have not standardized indicators (like **Finland, Denmark, Estonia, Cyprus**), and use mainly self-assessment or internal evaluation. In **Slovenia** the indicators are mixed (some are standardised, others not standardised). In **Germany** the enterprises have their own evaluation system.

In **Italy** some statistics concerning the State VET system are collected by the Ministry of Education, while the data concerning the Regional VET systems is on the responsibility of regional authorities.

2.4 Relevance of the PLA in relation to the national policy context of the participants

The participants identified the main tools and procedures for improving the QA of their VET systems as follows. The list is based both on the questionnaires and the discussions in the PLA.

It is interesting to note the great majority of the 13 participating countries converged on the hereby listed measures independently from the respective institutional structure (centralized or decentralized) and policy context:

Pilot projects
Self-assessment
Bench-marking/learning-marking
Interviews/questionnaires
Publicity of reports/evaluation documents
Annual reports on implementation made by the schools
School reports on non-financial indicators
Meetings
Training
Technical documents/guidelines
Comparison with other European experiences
Greater involvement of employers

3. CONTENT

3.1 Issues emerged

The main problem regarding to the development of quality assurance (QA) in evaluation procedures, based on the European Quality cycle, have been generally identified by the participants as follows:

- Different evaluation culture in different countries
- Lack of common procedures for quality evaluation and quality improvement
- Low reputation of VET
- Lack of motivation
- Complexity of Quality reporting

3.2 Key findings relevant for the policy making process

The following measures are considered necessary:

- Better definition of priorities
- Strengthen promotion and communication
- Strategic resource management
- Systematic personnel development
- Teacher and trainer qualification for QA procedures

- Better textbooks and infrastructure
- Modernization of equipment for practical training
- To review QA procedures more systematically linking them to the evaluation process
- Quality procedures more process oriented
- Indicators, results, reports should be useful for everybody, not only for the Ministry
- To spread the adoption of QA procedures (and other evaluation procedures)
- To check more deeply the added value and returns of QA procedures used

3.3 Transferable elements or national practices in relation to Quality Assurance

The pre-activity questionnaires, summarised in the overview presented by the expert to the participants (see annex 6.4) revealed that many countries are working in a European perspective.

The guiding principles of QualitätsInitiative BerufsBildung (QIBB for short) in **Austria** (e.g. results orientation, transparency, participation, economical use of time and financial resources, ethics in relation to evaluation objectives) are strictly linked to the implementation of the Common European Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF) in VET, as for objectives, guiding principles, priority and structure.

In **Finland** the evaluation system is based on CQAF and quality assurance orientation is adopted in national VET evaluation. **Luxembourg** is creating a national agency for the development of quality in education and training. **Romania** stresses the importance of the social dialogue: the CLDPS model (acronym for Local Committees for the Development of Social Partnership) could be transferable at the European level. The training of the students at the working place is considered a transferable element. Other countries, like **Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Cyprus** and **Slovenia**, are interested in the good practices based on CQAF, but at present seem mainly engaged in the building of national criteria for the evaluation of the acquired knowledge, skills and competences for every profession. Some countries, like **Finland** and **Italy**, believe that the plurality of evaluation models and approaches could be integrated at European level. **Germany** and **Estonia** stress the relevance of social dialogue as a European model, a pre-condition for the success of QA procedures. **Scotland** underline the importance of international benchmarking, based on shared methods for collecting data.

3.4 European added value and/or new knowledge as an outcome of the exchange of experience process

All the participants stressed the importance of increasing the exchange of experience and the necessity to exceed the national boundaries in the implementation of evaluation systems. In this perspective the EQARF/CQAF could become the common denominator

for the development of Quality Assurance policies finalised to improve the efficiency and the effectiveness of VET, in spite of the different contexts and traditions.

All countries participating in this PLA are aware of the high return of investments aimed to the introduction of QA principles and methodology in the management of VET systems. However, not always and not everywhere the EQARF/CQAF is sufficiently known and correctly managed. So, the increase of the exchange of experience seems crucial for the future of a shared European approach to QA, based EQARF/CQAF principles and methodology.

4. IMPACT

The expectations for the PLA by the participants

The joint analysis of the pre-activity and post-activity questionnaires shows that the main needs expressed by the participants are the following, in priority order:

- 1) Exchanging experience, good practice
- 2) Exchanging knowledge and opinions
- 3) Comparison between systems
- 4) International contacts and cooperation

On the basis of the answers to the post-activity questionnaires we can say that the initial expectations for this specific PLA were largely satisfied. But we can say as well that after the PLA the need of exchanging experiences, knowledge and opinions becomes obvious.

This is a list of the more frequent items cited by the participants:

- Exchange knowledge in a forum for discussion and the exchange of experience
- To learn more about this issue and to see examples of good practice in other countries
- More sustainable peer learning activities
- Foreign examples of good practice
- To have opportunities for future cooperation in the field of evaluation
- More knowledge of evaluation procedures and quality assurance work in the different EU countries
- To get into touch with potential future cooperation partners from EU countries
- International contacts and cooperation for quality assurance in VET
- Better understanding of quality evaluation procedures
- Methods for creating a quality evaluation culture accepted by all stakeholders
- To meet new people and to share professional and personal opinions
- To take back some ideas for improvement in the national context
- To see different models of quality evaluation in education in order to have a bigger image about the EU framework of the lifelong learning activity

5. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Methodological aspects: the PLA as a way of working

The majority of the participants considered the PLA in Fulda an effective and useful way of improving the QA of their VET systems through the reciprocal information and cooperation and the dissemination of good practice. Anyway some of the countries stressed the necessity of more time for the visits (3 days) and above all for the discussions. Czech Republic, besides, suggested to provide a “portfolio of printed materials” (summaries, powerpoint presentations, list of participants with their professional background) to be sent to everybody before the beginning of the PLA.

5.2 Content aspects: development and implementation of QA of evaluation procedures at European, national and provider level.

The answers given by the majority of the participants in the pre-activity and post-activity questionnaires underline the following items:

AT EUROPEAN LEVEL

The opportunity of launching evaluation pilot projects

More equilibrium between the provision of VET and the requirements of the labor market taking in account the perspectives (future development of economic areas)

Increasing exchange programmes for PLAs

Increasing exchange of good practice, including guidelines

Establishment of a common platform for PLAs

To find indicators to be used for benchmarking between European countries

AT NATIONAL LEVEL

To set up national educational standards

To establish national qualification frameworks

National evaluation criteria for exams

More investment in VET

Focus more on the non-financial results than the financial ones

Evaluation system supporting development and improvement process

More simple assessment model and tools for the management and the teachers

To invest more in educational research and in translation of results in practices

Introduction of coherent quality evaluation procedures, based on the European quality assurance cycle

Systematic review of qualifications to better meet the needs of employers

AT PROVIDER LEVEL

To establish a European network of VET providers to share experiences by PLAs, projects, Peer reviews

More partnerships between enterprises and VET providers

Generalisation of self-evaluation

6. ANNEXES

6.1 PLA Programme



Peer Learning Activity

Quality assurance and management in vocational education and training
-Quality assurance procedures for evaluation-

30-31 March 2009

Hosted by: Hessisches Kultusministerium
Ministry of Education of Hessen / Germany

Sunday, 29th March 2009

Arrival of participants

Day 1- Monday, 30th March 2009

- 08:30 Welcome and introductions at the hotel by:
Wolfgang Kreher, Hessisches Kultusministerium
Gerhard Herget, Hessisches Kultusministerium
Mr. Orazio Niceforo, expert
- 09:00 Transfer to EDAG GmbH & Co. KGaA
- 12:30 Lunch: offered and hosted by EDAG
- 13:30 Transfer to the EDUCATIONCENTER BBZ Fulda
- 16:00 Transfer to HessenCampus Fulda

Center of Lifelong Learning in the region of Fulda

18:00 Return to the hotel

Day 2- Tuesday, 31st March 2009

08:30 Meeting at the reception desk of the hotel and transfer to Konrad-Zuse-School, Hünfeld (Vocational School):

13:00 Lunch at Konrad-Zuse-School

14:00 Transfer to Fulda

14:30 Presentation: quality framework for educational management

14:30 Structured dialogue between the participants on the implications for quality assurance procedures for evaluation within their own systems

17:30 Reception in the townhall by the Lord Major of the city of Fulda

18:00 Conclusions
Tour de table on what has been learnt from this PLA

Wednesday, 1st April 2009

09:30 – 11:30 Cultural event: a guided tour to the historical centre of Fulda (the tour was anticipated and was organised on 31 March in the evening, after the conclusions).

11:30 Departure of participants

6.2 List of Participants

COUNTRY	NOMINEE
1. AUSTRIA	Manfred SCHÖRGHUBER (LQPM OÖ, HAK Steyr) manfred.schoerghuber@hak-steyr.eduhi.at
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3. CYPRUS	Andreas Eleftheriou Inspector Ministry of Education and Culture a_elef@yahoo.com
4. CZECH REPUBLIC	Mrs. Jana Vašátková Department of Education School-wide Activity of Faculty of Education of Palacký University Olomouc. vastatko@pdfnw.upol.cz ; vastatko@seznam.cz ; tel. +420 585 635 164 Mrs Hana Žufanová hana.zufanova@csicr.cz ; tel: +420 251 023 310
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12. SLOVENIA	Simona Knavs The National Institute of VET simona.knavs@cpi.si
13. GERMANY (host)	Gerhard Herger Ministry of Education of Hessen gerhard.herget@hkm.hessen.de Wolfgang Kreher Ministry of Education of Hessen wolfgang.kreher@hkm.hessen.de
14. Expert	Orazio Niceforo University of Rome – Tor Vergata niceforo@mclink.it

6.3 Pre-activity questionnaire

Peer learning activities are a central part of the ENQA-VET work programme. They provide an opportunity for participants to reflect collectively and individually on how their own professional practice can develop as a result of the opportunity of constructive engagement with other countries/institutions/organisations' experiences of addressing similar issues.

This peer learning activity will focus on the quality assurance aspects of evaluation. The attached pre activity questionnaire is designed to enable participants to reflect on the subject of the peer learning activity before the activity commences and is an essential part of your preparation as a participant. Your responses will be collated by the Expert, Orazio Niceforo, who will be working with participants throughout the peer learning activity, and will be used to inform the group of national processes and procedures in evaluation. The analysis of the questionnaire will also be used to facilitate further reflection during the peer learning activity.

To be completed and returned to Orazio Niceforo at niceforo@mclink.it and copied to Arancha Oviedo at aoviedo@engavet.eu

Not later than 20 March 2009

PRELIMINARY NOTE

The focus of this PLA is on the Quality Assurance aspects of evaluation, not on the general structure of the evaluation systems. So, the participants should limit the description of the respective systems to the essential information, focusing on the aspects concerning the Quality Assurance in the evaluation procedures and processes.

The approach therefore should be not static photography of the situation but dynamic: origin, development and trends of the evaluation system focusing on the specific aspects concerning the quality of the evaluation.

Answers should be as brief as possible (1-10 lines max for each issue). Any other useful material and document can be attached. Thank you.

SECTION I – YOUR OWN PRACTICE

In this section we would like to obtain information about the practical steps, which have been taken in order to implement and support the quality assurance procedures on evaluation mainly at national level. When answering the questions please keep in mind the steps of the quality criteria cycle (CQAF/EQARF) model.

Purpose and plan

In your country is there a national evaluation system covering both general education and VET? If yes, describe it briefly (when it started, main purposes, who is responsible...). If not, explain why, and what is done in the field of VET evaluation.

State the periodicity and the main indicators used in your national (or regional, if the national level is missing) evaluation system concerning VET

Implementation

How was the evaluation system initially organised in your context?

State the selection criteria and the number of the assigned personnel

Describe the main changes (if any) concerning your national (regional) evaluation system after its creation

State the financial amount allocated to the evaluation system and % of total expenditure within the Ministry of Education's budget (VET included)

Assessment and evaluation

Was your initial national (regional) evaluation system revised in some aspects as a consequence of the evaluation of its quality (effectiveness, reliability)? If yes, state which specific aspects have been revised

Who were (are) the evaluators of the evaluation system? (Political authorities, ministerial bureaucracy, experts, university researchers...)

Feedback and procedures for change

Which were the feedback elements for changing the initial evaluation model? Which aspects have been changed?

Which procedures have been adopted in order to introduce the change (decrees, pilot projects, training...)?

Methodology

Is the national (regional) evaluation system based on standardised indicators? (yes/no)

State the main standardised (and/or non standardised, if any) indicators concerning the quality of VET provision

To what extent does the national (regional) evaluation system takes into account VET providers self-assessment (if any)?

How and by whom is the evaluation data (results/products) of system collected?

Is the data on VET quality assessment accessible to the public? If yes state what methods are used. If no state how the data is maintained.

Trends

Above you have given a description of the current situation. Now we want you to describe the main developments and trends planned or expected in next 2-3 years

State max 3 elements in priority order

SECTION II - REFLECTIONS

In this section we would like an assessment of the situation you have described above and your personal opinion on the different aspects.

Strengths

State 3 strengths in priority order

Weaknesses

State 3 weaknesses in priority order

What can be transferred and mainstreamed?

Which elements of your evaluation system concerning quality assurance could be transferred to other European countries?

Which elements of your evaluation system concerning quality assurance could be assumed/mainstreamed at European level?

SECTION III - DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE PROGRESS

Challenges

In this section we would like to obtain more information about the challenges ahead and the questions to be addressed the coming years.

State 3 challenges for improving the quality of your VET system

State 3 problems to be solved in order to improve the quality assurance procedures in your VET system

Proposals

Finally we would like to make recommendations and proposals:

In your opinion how should cooperation in VET in general and specifically the quality assurance procedures on evaluation at European level can be enhanced?

In your opinion how can the transfer of experience in quality assurance procedures be achieved between different countries?

SECTION IV - EXPECTATIONS FOR THE PLA

What do you expect of the Peer learning Activity?

State 3 expected results in priority order

SECTION V - CONTACT DETAILS

Country	
Organisation	
Name	
Address	
e-mail	
List of Sources	
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6.4 COMPARATIVE OVERVIEW BASED ON THE PRE-ACTIVITY QUESTIONNAIRES PRESENTED BY THE EXPERT

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SECTION IV – EXPECTATIONS FOR THE PLA

SECTION I – STATE OF THE ART

1. COUNTRIES WHERE A NATIONAL EVALUATION SYSTEM COVERS BOTH GENERAL EDUCATION AND VET

AUSTRIA	A national programme (Q.I.S. - Quality in Schools) was launched by the Federal Ministry of Education since 1999
BULGARIA	Started in 2003. State examinations for acquiring qualifications
CZECH REP.	Started in 2005. Verification in progress since 2008
FINLAND	The Finnish National Board of Education (1990) is now responsible only for learning outcomes. Since 2003 an independent agency, the Finnish Educational Evaluation Council, is responsible for research and all other evaluation activities on educational system, VET included
LUXEMBOURG	Evaluation is carried out by the statistical department of the Ministry of Education, in cooperation with the University of Luxembourg and the VET providers
ROMANIA	Since 2006 a national agency (ARACIP) is responsible for the evaluation of both systems
SLOVENIA	The Council for Evaluation is responsible for national evaluations. A new Council for Quality and Evaluation is in progress

2. COUNTRIES WHERE A NATIONAL EVALUATION SYSTEM DOES NOT COVER BOTH GENERAL EDUCATION AND VET

CYPRUS	In all VET schools there is an external evaluation every second year
DENMARK	All VET providers have a responsibility to establish an evaluation system. A national student satisfaction survey takes place once a year
ESTONIA	Educational system is highly decentralized. No national external evaluation system. Internal evaluation is compulsory for both General Education (GE) and VET since 2006
GERMANY (Hessen)	The Laender are responsible for the evaluation of GE and VET schools. No national (federal) system.

ITALY	The national agency (INVALSI) for the evaluation of both GE and VET is not yet operational. VET courses are managed both by the State and the Regions. The Regions assess their local VET system for accreditation of providers
SCOTLAND	General Education evaluation is under the responsibility of Scottish Government. VET system is partially market-driven and the evaluation is partly managed by the Government and the SQA (Scottish Qualification Authority) for accreditation

3. EVALUATION SYSTEMS BASED ON STANDARDIZED INDICATORS AND PERIODICITY OF EVALUATIONS

AUSTRIA	FOCUSES ON VARIOUS MATTERS - EVERY YEAR
BULGARIA	STATE EXAMINATIONS AT THE END OF TRAINING PROCESSES
CZECH REPUBLIC	EVERY FOUR YEARS
LUXEMBOURG	ANNUAL, SEMESTRIAL, TRIMESTRIAL EVALUATIONS, BASED ON STUDENTS ACHIEVEMENTS
ROMANIA	PERIODICITY DEPENDS ON SINGLE ITEMS
SCOTLAND	EVERY TWO YEARS
SLOVENIA	EVERY YEAR

4. EVALUATION SYSTEMS NOT BASED ON NATIONAL STANDARDIZED INDICATORS

CYPRUS	External evaluation every second year in all VET schools
DENMARK	Self-assessment by the VET providers within 3 years, together with a follow-up report
ESTONIA	Internal evaluation (compulsory since 2006) based on criteria introduced by a ministerial regulation
FINLAND	Self-evaluation by the schools, based on a model defined by the National Evaluation Council

GERMANY (Hessen) Evaluation is carried out at Land level with different indicators. In Hessen the Institute for Development of Quality (IQ) makes use of 7 "Quality ranges"

ITALY Some statistics concerning the State VET system are collected by the Ministry of Education

LUXEMBOURG Annual, semiannual and trimestrial students performances are acquired by the statistical department of the Ministry of Education

5. MAIN STANDARDIZED INDICATORS

Educational results/achievements
Completion rate/qualification take-up
Placement in labor market/graduates employment rate
Share of students drop-outs/repeating the class
Number of students per teacher
Average number of students per class
Competences/qualification of teachers
Financial conditions/resources
Resources for personnel education and training
Compliance of the school educational programme with legal regulations

Note. *In Finland some of the above listed indicators are used by the providers in self-evaluation. In Italy some of the collected quantitative data are used by the Ministry of Education as statistics, not as indicators*

6. MAIN NON STANDARDIZED INDICATORS

Partnership with business community and interest groups
Meeting employer needs
Meeting students needs
General/customer satisfaction
Career prospects
Social environment
Leadership and management
Systematic personnel development
Up-to-dated, innovative programmes
Atmosphere at school and in class
Image
International orientation of the education and training programmes
Use of statistics by the educational institution
Integration of the gender dimension

7. MAIN TOOLS AND PROCEDURES FOR CHANGE

- Pilot projects
- Self-assessment
- Bench-marking/learning-marking
- Interviews/questionnaires
- Publicity of reports/evaluation documents
 - Laws and ministerial decrees
- Annual reports on implementation made by the schools
- School reports on non-financial indicators (Denmark from 2010)
- Meetings
- Training
- Technical documents/guidelines
- Comparison with other European experiences
- Greater involvement of employers

8. TRENDS

AUSTRIA

- Planning and commissioning of the evaluation externalized (the competent Regional Education Board decides)
- Strengthening existing VET quality initiative (QIBB)
- Enlarge nationwide indicators

BULGARIA

- Measures for VET quality assurance
- VET attractiveness
- Links with business circles enhanced

CYPRUS

- Development and implementation of VET evaluation system
- A new law for school evaluation
- Increase of the number of qualification acquired by VET students

CZECH REPUBLIC

- Standardized evaluation of educational programmes of schools
- Involvement of principals/headteachers in teams for external evaluation
- Contribution from CSI (Czech Schools Inspectorate) on teachers education

DENMARK

- More use of indicators
- More focus on improvement of results (bench-learning from “best practice”)
- More involvement of the governing body of the college

ESTONIA

- Accreditation of vocational education institutions

FINLAND

A new law for evaluation

GERMANY

Better cooperation among all evaluation bodies (schools and enterprises)

Assessment of all evaluation bodies by the Institute for development of quality (IQ)

More standardized evaluations

ITALY

General improvement of contents and methods of the evaluation activities

Development and implementation of schools external evaluation

Improvement of the links between evaluation results and political decisions

LUXEMBOURG

Implementation of an agency for the development of quality in education and training, based on standardized tests

ROMANIA

Improvement of some programmes and activities

Definition of priorities for every strategic decision, emphasizing communication

Diversification of the financial sources

SCOTLAND

Increased employer participation in the design and development of qualifications

Increased number of qualifications recognized by central authorities

Increased number of qualifications acquired by the VET students

SLOVENIA

Better cooperation among all evaluation bodies through the Council for Quality and Evaluation

More standardized evaluations

SECTION II – REFLECTIONS

1. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

AUSTRIA

S - Objectives clearly formulated, achievement of the objectives transparent for all
Systematic support to the effort of continuously improve educational work
Quality as a central topic
The new VET Quality Initiative (QIBB) can attract students while supporting the recognition of qualifications

W - Each student has to take part in quality process himself: the contrary of quality management systems in business processes
Missing process orientation in teaching and learning interactivities like industrial processes oriented quality management systems (e.g. ISO 9000)

BULGARIA

S - Legal framework, cooperation with social partners, national standards and examination programmes

W - No overall system for internal and external evaluation in VET
Insufficient control activities, low administrative capacity
Insufficient assurance with methodical materials and guidelines for internal evaluation

CYPRUS

S – Results accessible to the public
Educational reform is under way
Increased participation of the stakeholders

W - No formal evaluation system
Low number of VET inspectors
No enough business to provide support

CZECH REPUBLIC

S - File of standardized indicators for quality of schools
High quality staff for the external evaluation
The cooperation with NIVE (National Institute of Vocational Education)

W - Low number of school inspectors
Low interest of principals about cooperation with CSI (Czech School Inspectorate)
Too much time devoted to data administration

DENMARK

S - Many results/information at all levels
Results/information accessible to the public
Only one quality report from each college to the Ministry (from 2010)

W - Use of the results/information should be improved through more dialogue and action plans

ESTONIA

S - Functional system for internal evaluation and its development
Positive attitude of schools and VET providers

W - Inadequate cooperation between different interest groups
Weak self-assessment of skills and competence

FINLAND

S - Evaluation system not based on control
Evaluation based on developmental orientation, i.e. CQAF orientation
Very active role of providers and schools in the national evaluation
W - Too many organizations responsible for national evaluation
Lack of resources
Unclear evaluation policy

GERMANY

S – System is developing on the basis of European Recommendations and expertise
Synergy between enterprises and school evaluations
W – Not enough cooperation among evaluation and assessment bodies
No standardized evaluation on all fields and aspects of education
Too slow implementation of changes because of the lack of education of the teachers and other working in the field

ITALY

S - Growing awareness of the importance of a systematic, structure and scientifically based evaluation system
Growing availability of evaluation results concerning the quality of educational system (GE and VET): learning achievements, processes and results
Institutionalization of evaluation tanks to some public national agencies and institutions (Ministries of Education and Welfare)
W - Balance/division of responsibilities on VET between State and Regions
Poor external evaluation culture in educational system in general and specifically in GE (the situation is better for regional VET system)
Poor political support to the development of effective and usable evaluation practices, models and instruments

LUXEMBOURG

S - Development of a coherent national evaluation strategy
Development of national standardized tests
Statistical monitoring
W – No evaluation of exam procedures
No self-evaluation procedures for training providers
No peer-evaluation procedures for training providers

ROMANIA

S - Teacher and trainers well trained
Attention for student needs for education
Wide and diversified educational offer
W - Not easy initial impact of innovation concerning quality assurance in VET
Weak cooperation between the stakeholders at national and regional levels

SCOTLAND

S - Systematic review of qualifications to better meet the needs of employers
Increased awareness by employers of the available qualifications
Increased participation and involvement of stakeholders

W - The offer made by free-market does not meet the needs indicated by the government and the employers

The free-market qualifications may not be placed in the Scottish credit and qualifications framework, damaging students seeking credit transfer opportunities

Quality issues in the provision offered by the free-market

SLOVENIA

S - System is developing on the basis of European Recommendations

Synergy between national and providers evaluations and assessment

W – Low cooperation between evaluation and assessment bodies

Not yet standardized evaluation on all fields and aspects of education

Too slow implementation of changes because of the lack of education of the teachers and other working in the field

ELEMENTS OF THE NATIONAL EVALUATION SYSTEMS THAT COULD BE TRANSFERRED AND MAINSTREAMED

AUSTRIA

The guiding principles of QIBB model (e.g. results orientation, transparency, participation, economical use of time and financial resources, ethics in relation to evaluation objectives
Implementation of the Common European Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF) in VET, as for objectives, guiding principles, priority and structure.

BULGARIA

The State examinations under unified criteria for evaluation of the acquired knowledge, skills and competences for every profession

CYPRUS

State examinations

Creation of educational research and evaluation centre

CZECH REP

Support of personal development of pupils

Results of education concerning the relationship with the labor market

ESTONIA

Counseling system and its support to educational institutions

FINLAND

CQAF orientation in national evaluation

Developing orientation in VET evaluation

Evaluation system based on CQAF and quality assurance orientation

GERMANY

The Council for Quality and Evaluation

ITALY

Some system of indicators for quality evaluation (i.e. that developed by Isfol)

The plurality of evaluation models and approaches could be assumed at European level

LUXEMBOURG

Creation of a national agency for the development of quality in education and training

ROMANIA

The training of the students at the working place

Social dialogue could be assumed at the European level (see CLDPS model: Local Committees for the Development of Social Partnership)

SCOTLAND

The process by which the benchmark data was undertaken

No suggestions for Europe (due to yet insufficient knowledge of European initiatives)

SLOVENIA

Legally based responsibility of providers to perform self-evaluation

SECTION III – DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE PROGRESS

1. CHALLENGES TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF THE VET SYSTEM

To set up national educational standards

External evaluation

External and internal evaluation

Establish a National qualification framework

More investment in VET

Opening European labor market

Increasing the interest in voc. Training

More simple assessment model and tools for the management and the teachers

Focus more on the non financial results than the financial ones

More dialogue with all involved on the results of evaluation

Partnership between enterprises and VET

National curriculum

Evaluation system supporting development and improvement process

Development of different methods and models for providers and schools

External audit system

To improve quality and quantity of adult participation in education and VET

To limit regional differences or to implement a national framework

To invest more in educational research and in translation of results in practices

National evaluation criteria for exams

Introduction of a coherent quality evaluation procedure

Introduction of self-evaluation

Implementation of the National Framework of Qualifications

Realizing partnerships with representative organizations (students, parents, employers)

Participation to projects implicating evaluation and quality management

Systematic review of qualifications to better meet the needs of employers

Increased awareness and understanding by employers of the qualifications available

Increased involvement of a range of stakeholders in the State managed VET

2. PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED

Motivation A

Quality reporting A

Strategic resource management A

Systematic personnel development A

Teacher and trainer qualification B

Textbooks and appliances B

Modernization of equipment for practical training B

Relationship between VET and lifelong learning C

Cooperation between schools and future employers C

Bad reputation of VET CY

Low expectation by the students CY

Cooperation between schools and society CY

Quality procedures more process oriented D

Indicators, results, reports useful for everybody, not only for the Ministry D

Reputation of VET E

Downtrend of the number of students E

Diversity between providers and schools F

Different evaluation culture in different countries F

To spread the adoption of QA procedures (and other evaluation procedures) I

To review QA procedures more systematically linking them to all evaluation processes I

To check more deeply the added value and returns of QA procedures use I

No common quality evaluation culture L

No common procedures for quality evaluation and improvement L

Definition of new learning outcomes L

Definition of priorities R

Bigger accent on promotion and communication R

Introduction of some form of regulation/QA to ensure that the free-market offer is of the required standards S

More system review of the free-market as well as the State-market S

INITIALS

A AUSTRIA

B BULGARIA

C CZECH REPUBLIC

CY CYPRUS

D DENMARK

E ESTONIA
F FINLAND
G GERMANY
I ITALY
L LUXEMBOURG
R ROMANIA
S SCOTLAND
SL SLOVENIA

3. PROPOSALS

3A – TO ENHANCE QA PROCEDURES ON EVALUATION AT EU LEVEL

- Establish a common platform for PLAs
- Increase exchange programmes for PLAs
- Increase exchange of good practice, including guidelines
- Establish a study group on the evaluation processes in the European countries
- Find indicators to be used for benchmarking between European countries
- Cooperation, partnership for projects
- Learning from best practices
- No standardized systems in evaluation
- Evaluation pilot projects
- Similar system than higher education
- Improving the direct involvement of the top political and technical decision makers
- Developing learning and comparison opportunities for decision makers and experts
- Make cooperation pay-back (considering pay back as success criterion)
- Organization of peer learning activities
- More equilibrium between the provision of VET and the requirements of the labor market taking in account the perspectives (future development of economic areas)
- Dissemination and information sharing

3B - TO TRANSFER EXPERIENCE IN QA PROCEDURES

- Study visits for a longer period
- Virtual community platform
- Peer reviews
- Exchange of good practice through detailed procedures
- Development of common elements in the different VET systems
- Establish a European network of VET providers to share experiences by PLAs, projects, Peer reviews
- Sharing competence, benchmarking
- Study visits
- Specific projects of common interest for 2/3 countries in the field of QA procedures
- Publication of evaluation reports
- To increase international relations focusing on good (and bad) practice examples

SECTION IV – EXPECTATIONS FOR THE PLA

(first item = 3 points; second item = 2 points; third item= 1 point)

SYNTHESIS OF THE ANSWERS

- 5) Exchanging experience, good practice: points 28
- 6) Exchanging knowledge and opinions: points 17
- 7) Comparison between systems: points 11
- 8) International contacts and cooperation: points 8
- O. Other: points 7

DETAILED EXPECTATIONS FOR THE PLA

AUSTRIA

1. Team-building spirit and supportive relationships
2. Exchanging knowledge in a forum for discussion and the exchange of experience
3. Sustainable peer learning activities

BULGARIA

1. To gain information about applicable successful practice in VET evaluation procedures
2. To exchange opinions
3. To discuss an opportunity for future cooperation in the field of evaluation

CYPRUS

1. Exchange experience
2. Learn good practices
3. Comparison of systems

CZECH REPUBLIC

1. Foreign examples of good practice
2. Comparison of national system evaluation with others

DENMARK

1. More knowledge of evaluation procedures and quality assurance work in the different EU countries
2. To learn more about the German VET System
3. To get into touch with potential future cooperation partners from EU countries

ESTONIA

1. Comparison of quality assurance systems VET in participating countries
2. The accreditation (implementation and development) of VET
3. International contacts and cooperation for quality assurance in VET

FINLAND

1. Projects

GERMANY (Hessen)

1. To learn about other European systems of VET, QA of VET, evaluation systems

ITALY

1. Learning more about the PLA topics and reorganizing/update what I already know on the subject
2. Developing (new) relations and discussing about specific experiences
3. To be helped to develop feasible ideas in QA and Educational/VET systems evaluation

LUXEMBOURG

1. Better understanding of quality evaluation procedures
2. Methods for creating a quality evaluation culture accepted by all stakeholders
3. Knowledge about steering of quality evaluation systems

ROMANIA

1. To learn more about this issue and to see examples of good practice in other countries

2. To see different models of quality evaluation in education in order to have a bigger image about the EU framework of the lifelong learning activity
3. To meet new people and to share professional and personal opinions

SCOTLAND

1. Increased awareness of how other countries undertake this
2. To be able to take back some ideas for improvement in the Scottish context
3. To make contacts to enable further dialogue and information exchange post the PLA

SLOVENIA

1. To learn about the German system
2. To learn about QA of VET
3. To learn about the assessment of VET

6.5 Post-activity questionnaire

Peer learning activities are a central part of the ENQA-VET work programme. They provide an opportunity for participants to reflect collectively and individually on how their own professional practice can develop as a result of the opportunity of constructive engagement with other countries/institutions/organisations' experiences of addressing similar issues.

This peer learning activity focused on the quality assurance aspects of evaluation. The attached post activity questionnaire is designed to collect participants' reflections on the subject after the activity and is an essential part of your contribution as a participant. Your responses will be collated by the Expert, Orazio Niceforo. The analysis of the questionnaire will also be used to evaluate the added value of the peer learning activity.

To be completed and returned to: niceforo@mclink.it

Copy to: aoviedo@engavet.it

Deadline: 24 April 2009

SECTION I - Learning and dissemination

Expectations

Did the peer learning activity meet your expectations? (**Select one answer**)

--- Not at all (<25%)

--- Partially (50%)

--- Fair (75%)

--- Completely (>90%)

Added value (max 3 lines for each item)

What has been the added-value of your participation in terms of your personal learning?

What has been the added-value of your participation in terms of the professional context in which you are working?

What do you consider to be the specific European added-value of the peer learning activity?

Insights (max 3 lines for each item)

What insights have you gained that you feel may be useful to a wider audience of your peers at regional and/or national level?

What insights have you gained which will be used by a wider audience at European Level?

Dissemination and contribution (max 5 lines for each item)

How will your experiences / learning during the PLA be disseminated to a wider **audience** within the system in which you are working?

What contribution will your participation in the PLA enable you to make to policy **development** in your country?

What contribution will your participation in the PLA enable you to make towards policy **implementation** in your country?

How has the PLA contributed to a common understanding at European level that will enhance the quality assurance aspects of **evaluation**?

SECTION II – The organisation

In this section we would like to have your personal opinion regarding the way the Peer Learning Activity was managed

Strengths

What were the main strengths of the PLA management and organization? (max 3 in priority order)

Weaknesses

What were the main weaknesses of the PLA management and organization? (max 3 in priority order)

SECTION III – PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Finally, we would like you to make recommendations and proposals regarding the future development of PLA

What do you think would assist in further improving the PLA? (max 3 recommendations and/or proposals)

SECTION IV – CONTACT DETAILS

Country	
Organisation	
Name	
Address	
e-mail	