Developing guidelines for supporting quality assurance in VET systems

Results of the work undertaken by the thematic group on Developing guidelines for supporting quality assurance in VET systems

ENQA-VET

Report drafted by Keith Brumfitt

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

FOREWORD

The work undertaken in the context of the ENQA-VET work programme (2008-2009) which has been funded by the European Commission within the framework of the Lifelong Learning Programme, has had a two-fold character. At one level it has sought to produce policy-useful material to support Member States in developing the instruments and tools which will be important for the implementation of the EQARF Recommendation. At a second level, the intensive cooperation between countries in areas of shared policy concern, has contributed to a greater level of understanding of each others systems, mutual learning, and an increased culture of quality assurance in Member States.

This process has involved policymakers and VET providers as well as the social partners as key players in developing appropriate responses to policy implementation issues in regional and national contexts within the Member States.

The work of the thematic groups has provided an opportunity to mobilise policymakers and specialists in areas of key policy interest for improving the quality of VET, such as the common understanding of indicators, peer review the development of guidelines to support quality, and how to make VET more attractive. The outcomes of this work will play a significant role in supporting Member States in developing their national plans for the implementation of EQARF, as well as informing the policymaking process at Member State and European levels.

The results of the thematic groups will also be of particular interest to the European Commission as it addresses the issue of how to best support the successful implementation of the EQARF in the coming years.

The reports of the thematic groups are not designed to be static however. They represent best thinking at a particular moment in time. They will now be used at a more general level, involving actors and countries who are at different stages of development, as they reflect on what effective implementation of the EQARF will mean in their context. This material will feed into this process and in turn support the development of the incremental policy learning which is a key part of the open method of coordination as applied to education and training.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report covers the work of the ENQA-VET's Thematic Groups on "Developing guidelines for supporting quality assurance in VET systems" from summer 2008 to September 2009. Over these 15 months, the Group met four times in The Hague under the leadership of the Dutch chairperson. The focus of the Group's work was the production of guidance to support improvements in quality assurance systems which are compatible with the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQARF).

When the Group (the members of the Group are listed in annexe A) started its work the prevailing European quality assurance system for VET was the Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF); the EQARF Recommendation was accepted by the European Parliament in April 2009. To reflect this changing environment, the Group focused their work on guidance on quality assurance systems in VET that reflect the EQARF requirements.

The Group's guidance (annexe B) shows how Member States can develop their VET quality assurance systems in line with the EQARF. This guidance is supported by a series of 40+ examples from Member States (annexe C) which will be available on the ENQA-VET website. At the heart of the guidance is an analysis of the ten key "building blocks" of quality assurance systems in VET. This analysis, by members of the Thematic Group, reflects their experience of developing and implementing a range of national and European quality assurance systems and indicates what needs to be in place to support improvements in VET quality.

The Group's guidance identifies ten "building blocks" that set out what needs to be in place to support a quality assurance system that is compatible with the EQARF Recommendation. Each of the "building blocks" contains a "call to action" and suggest what needs to be done (if it is not already in place) to create an EQARF compliant quality assurance system. The "calls to action" in each building block are set out below:

- ➢ set clear rules for deciding who offers VET provision;
- ➢ recognise and build on existing internal arrangements;
- ➢ set clear roles and responsibilities for different parts of the VET system;

- ➢ identify what information and data should be collected and used in the VET system;
- ➢ define and implement a communications strategy;
- ➢ pilot initiatives and value success;
- ➢ use feedback to improve VET;
- ➢ provide clarity over funding;
- ➢ 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.

These "calls to action" are designed to support policy makers at the national and regional level in Member States. They could also be adopted by quality assurance managers or other staff with responsibility for quality assurance in training institutions and information officers and others in the National Quality Assurance Reference Points. These "calls to action" cover both initial VET and continuing VET, and are applicable to both school- or centre-based training and training that takes place on employers' premises.

1. POLICY CONTEXT

1.1 Introduction

The work of ENQA-VET has been framed by the European Union's call in 2000 for the adaptation and modernisation of education and training systems within a lifelong learning perspective. This "call" set a target for the EU to become the most dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010. Within the context of the Education and Training 2010 work programme (as the follow-up of the Lisbon process is known) the quality of vocational education and training is a key priority for the EU and its Member States as they work to reform and adapt their vocational education systems to meet the needs of the knowledge society.

Within this context, and to support the achievement of ENQA-VET's objectives, the Thematic Group (one of four) was set up in summer 2008 with the following mandate:

"This Thematic Group will examine the experience of Member States in using the Common Quality Assurance Framework. It will identify factors of success in implementing the CQAF and reflect in terms of translating policy into practice. The thematic group will also pursue its reflection on the basis of the proposed recommendation on the establishment of a common European framework for quality assurance with a particular focus on supporting systems and key actors in developing a culture of quality assurance."

The Group was asked to "*work on the basis of materials existing at European and national contexts and produce results which will contribute an added-value in terms of practical measures to support policy implementation and suggestions for practical ways in which the use and implementation of the CQAF can be improved.*"

In the light of the EQARF Recommendation, members of the Thematic Group decided to focus their work on quality assurance systems which were compatible with the EQARF rather than the CQAF[1]. This reflected their view that it was more important to focus on the future and support policy teams seeking to implement these new arrangements. This

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[1] In May 2004 the Education Council endorsed the Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF) which was designed to support the development and reform of vocational education and training (VET) at the system and provider level, while respecting the responsibility and autonomy of Member States to develop their own quality assurance systems. Member States, the Commission and relevant stakeholders were invited to promote the CQAF on a voluntary basis.

approach was seen as more productive and more in line with the Thematic Group's mandate to consider practical measures and to identify "*factors for success.*"

The work of the Thematic Group has been supported by a series of "peer learning activities", European conferences and the members-only section of the ENQA-VET website. In addition some of the Thematic Group members have participated in other Thematic Group meetings or have been members of ENQA-VET's General Assembly and/or Board. The Chair and ENQA-VET-appointed expert[2] supporting the Thematic Group also met their counterparts from the other three Thematic Groups on four occasions in Vienna to ensure there was clear alignment and cohesion across all ENQA-VET's Thematic Group activities. At all times the Thematic Group worked within the Open Method of Co-operation (OMC) and within the rules of subsidiarity set out by the European Commission in the field of education and training.

1.2 Content

The Thematic Group has produced two reports, attached for information in annexe B and C. These inter-linked products were designed to be used in a range of formats: through a PowerPoint presentation; through a published official report; and through a series of web-based case studies which allow for a deeper investigation and analysis of specific examples.

The main output of the group, the *Guidance on Implementing Quality Assurance in VET* is based on a description and analysis of how some Member States have introduced quality assurance processes which recognise the approaches set out in the EQARF. The Group's analysis has identified that an incremental approach to quality assurance is more likely to provide success. Such an approach can be represented by a series of interdependent 'building blocks' which help to:

> ➢ identify what has already been achieved;
> ➢ review the evidence surrounding the lessons learnt;
> ➢ identify the key factors for success.

The guidance is designed to support policy makers at the national and regional level in Member States. It could also be useful to quality assurance managers or other staff with

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[2] For full details of the work of ENQA-VET's expert see Annex 3.

responsibility for quality assurance in training institutions and information officers and others in the National Quality Assurance Reference Points established as part of the recommendation on the EQARF. This paper covers both initial VET and continuing VET, and is applicable to both school- or centre-based training and training that takes place on employers' premises.

Central to the analysis of implementing quality assurance systems is the Group's identification of ten "building blocks". Each of the "building blocks" contains a "call to action" and suggest what needs to be done (if it is not already in place) to create an EQARF compliant quality assurance system. The "calls to action" in each building block are set out below:

- ➢ set clear rules for deciding who offers VET provision;
- ➢ recognise and build on existing internal arrangements;
- ➢ set clear roles and responsibilities for different parts of the VET system;
- ➢ identify what information and data should be collected and used in the VET system;
- ➢ define and implement a communications strategy;
- ➢ pilot initiatives and value success;
- ➢ use feedback to improve VET;
- ➢ provide clarity over funding;
- ➢ 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.

In analysing these building blocks, the Group identified a series of case studies and associated "lessons learnt". These case studies and lessons helped to frame the discussions; validate the selection of the ten building blocks; and create a structure for a practical resource to help policy makers. The Group worked to a very tight timetable to produce the guidance and each part of the resource has been reviewed through discussion at the Thematic Group meetings and in subsequent discussions with the Chair. Among the Thematic group members there is widespread ownership of both the analysis and the examples set out in the guidance.

A key part of the guidance was the explicit linkages between the building blocks and the four stages of the EQARF quality assurance cycle. This was an important piece of analysis for the Group as they wished to ensure the building blocks were part of the approach to implementing the EQARF – rather than being seen as an alternative system. Gaining consensus on this analysis took time and a lot of negotiation. (mainly through email exchanges) However it does provide a level of detail that grounds the work in the EQARF, its indicative descriptors and common indicators.

The second resource produced by the Thematic Group is a selection of 40+ web-based case studies which will be added to ENQA-VET's web-site. At the third meeting of the Thematic Group, there was agreement to develop a three-tiered resource (we called it the "wedding cake" model) which would allow uses of the Thematic Group's resources to drill into the examples that caught their interest or reflected their policy needs.

The case studies are all real, they are based on current practice, and they have been "signed-off" by members of the Thematic Group. As such they are a rich resource for those who seek to understand how individual Member States have implemented quality assurance systems in VET. By producing a web-based resource (up to date in summer 2009) the Group has developed a structure which will allow ENQA-VET (or their successor) to add further examples of quality assurance which supports the EQARF.

The Thematic Group, through the Chair, has ensured that the guidance will be available for the ENQA-VET's Board to review the content in mid-September and the web-based case studies are available for ENQA-VET's December conference.

2. GUIDANCE ON IMPLEMENTING QUALITY ASSURANCE IN VET *–first steps towards EQARF*

2.1 Introduction to the EQARF

The European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQARF) provides a European wide system to help Member States and stakeholders to document, develop, monitor, evaluate and improve the effectiveness of their vocational education and training (VET) provision and quality management practices.

Education and training are essential aspects of the European Union's Lisbon strategy for jobs, growth and social cohesion. In 2000 the European Council called for the modernisation of education and training systems within a lifelong learning perspective, and set a target for the EU to become the most dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010.

The EQARF recommendation, accepted by the European Parliament and Council in April 2009, [http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/] can be applied at the VET system, provider and qualification awarding level. This recommendation invites each Member State to:

- ➢ devise, within 24 months, an approach aimed at improving quality assurance systems at national level, where appropriate, and making best use of the EQARF;
- ➢ participate in the EQARF network;
- ➢ establish a Quality Assurance National Reference Point for VET;
- ➢ undertake a review of implementation every four years.
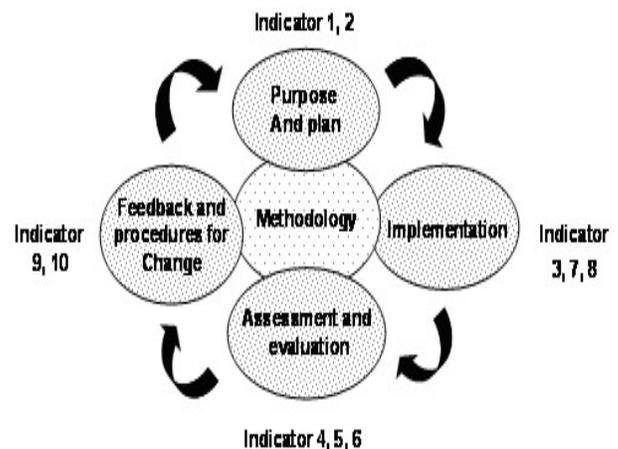
The EQARF builds on the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), the European Credit for VET (ECVET) system and previous European quality assurance systems (such as the Common Quality Assurance Framework - CQAF) in that it:

➢ includes the need for regular monitoring (including the use of internal and external evaluation mechanisms) and reporting on progress;

➢ uses common quality criteria and indicative descriptors to underpin the monitoring and reporting arrangements;

➢ stresses the importance of common indicators to support the evaluation, monitoring and quality assurance of VET systems and providers. For more information on the EQARF descriptors and indicators please see annexe A.

2.2 Introduction to results

• This paper is based on a description and analysis of how some Member States have introduced quality assurance processes which recognise the approaches set out in the EQARF. The analysis suggests that an incremental approach is more likely to provide success. Such an approach can be represented by a series of interdependent 'building blocks' which help to:

➢ identify what has already been achieved;

➢ review the evidence surrounding the lessons learnt;

➢ identify the key factors for success.

• Each building block is different. Some focus on initiatives which are best led by training providers, some focus on centrally driven changes and others are system wide changes where all the key stakeholders are involved. The building blocks focus on the quality assurance (rather than the quality) of VET and identify:

➢ those experiences which are common to implementing quality assurance arrangements which are compatible with EQARF;

➢ examples from individual Member States;

➢ the key lessons that have been learnt;

➢ factors for success.

• This paper is based on examples provided by members of ENQAVET's Thematic Group on *Supporting Quality Assurance in VET* in July 2009 – there are many more that could have been selected. The analysis identifies a series of common themes – called building blocks in this paper – that have been used to establish and strengthen system-wide quality assurance processes. For each Member State

it is the outcomes of the quality assurance system that are important, rather than the means that have been chosen to achieve these outcomes. As such, the approach in this paper is only one way of building a quality assurance system which meets the requirement of the EQARF recommendation.

- This paper, alongside the case studies on the ENQA-VET web site [http://www.enqavet.eu/] is designed to support policy makers at the national and regional level in Member States. It could also be useful to quality assurance managers or other staff with responsibility for quality assurance in training institutions and information officers and others in the National Quality Assurance Reference Points established as part of the recommendation on the EQARF. This paper covers both initial VET and continuing VET, and is applicable to both school- or centre-based training and training that takes place on employers' premises.

2.3 Early analysis of quality assurance approaches which match the EQARF

The early analysis of quality assurance approaches which match the EQARF has identified a number of interdependent building blocks.

The EQARF is complex and its implementation will take time. The four stages of the quality assurance cycle are interrelated and need to be addressed holistically. Member States have made significant progress in developing and implementing quality assurance systems in VET through both incremental approaches as well as through system-wide reform.

New approaches are being developed at both the provider and system level.

Each of these ten building blocks is based on an analysis of the early lessons and experiences of developing quality assurance systems in Member States.

The building blocks support and complement each other and build on the EQARF descriptors and indicators as set out in annexe A.

1) Set clear rules for deciding who offers VET provision	2) Recognise and build on existing internal arrangements	3) Set clear roles and responsibilities for different parts of the VET system
4) Identify what information and data should be collected and used in VET system	5) Define and implement a communications strategy	6) Pilot initiatives and value success
7) Use feedback to improve VET	8) Provide clarity over funding	9) Ensure quality assurance covers all aspects of VET provision

10) Ensure VET is founded on a strong involvement of external and internal partners and relevant stakeholders

A clear understanding of the needs of the labour market and a recognition that occupations have their own requirements and traditions underpin all the early lessons around implementing quality assurance systems in line with the EQARF. This understanding of the needs of the labour market can be enhanced through research, through monitoring and analysing the needs of industry, through liaison with training providers and through regular and systematic monitoring of quality.

2.4 An analysis of the building blocks

The ten building blocks can be implemented from different perspectives. Our analysis of what has been successful to date shows that parts of the quality assurance system have been implemented by:

- training providers;
- national or regional organisations;
- all stakeholders working collaboratively.

There are no obvious conclusions about whether an individual building block should be developed by training providers, national or regional organisations or by all stakeholders.

The ten building blocks and their relationship to the four stages of the quality assurance cycle	Plan	Implement	Evaluate and assess	Review and revise
1. Set clear rules for deciding who offers VET provision	√			
2. Recognise and build on existing internal arrangements		√		
3. Set clear roles and responsibilities for different parts of the VET system	√			
4. Identify what information and data should be collected and used in VET system	√		√	√
5. Define and implement a communications strategy	√	√	√	√
6. Pilot initiatives and value success		√	√	√
7. Use feedback to improve VET			√	√
8. Provide clarity over funding	√			
9. Ensure quality assurance covers all aspects of VET provision	√	√	√	√
10. Ensure VET is founded on a strong involvement of external and internal partners and relevant stakeholders	√	√	√	√

2.5 What the building blocks mean

1. Set clear rules for deciding who offers VET provision	Member States manage the supply of high quality training by having clear systems to decide which organisations can offer courses and/or qualifications.
2. Recognise and build on existing internal arrangements	The EQARF recommendation can be supported through the use of existing provider-based systems and VET quality assurance arrangements.
3. Set clear roles and responsibilities for different parts of the VET system	At both provider and system level (either nationally or regionally) it is important to be clear about what each organisation is expected to do.
4. Identify what information and data should be collected and used in VET system	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.
5. Define and implement a communications strategy	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.
6. Pilot initiatives and value success	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.
7. Use feedback to improve VET	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.
8. Provide clarity over funding	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.
9. Ensure quality assurance covers all aspects of VET provision	Quality assurance covers both the content of training and the administrative and staff arrangements which support teaching and learning. The EQARF should be seen as all encompassing.
10. Ensure VET is founded on a strong involvement of external and internal partners and relevant stakeholders	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.

2.6 What does the emerging practice tell us?

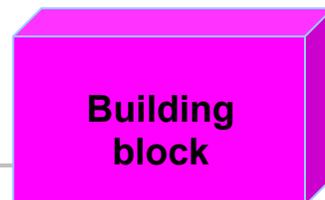This paper looks at the detail of each building block and identifies:

- the key issues and factors for success;
- Member States' experiences to date;
- the issues that should be considered alongside the lessons learnt.

Each building block contains a "call to action" and sets out activity that helps to develop a quality assurance system for VET in line with the EQARF recommendation.

The 'lessons learnt' column is based on an analysis of the examples and case studies provided by members of ENQA-VET's Thematic Group on *Supporting Quality Assurance in VET*. Full details of each case study is available on the ENQA-VET web site at http://www.enqavet.eu

The emerging practice suggests that each of the ten building blocks of quality assurance in VET needs to be in place to ensure there is an effecting the EQARF. It is important for all four stages of the EQARF cycle to be covered to ensure system-wide quality assurance arrangements are in place.

Explanation of the table

Building block

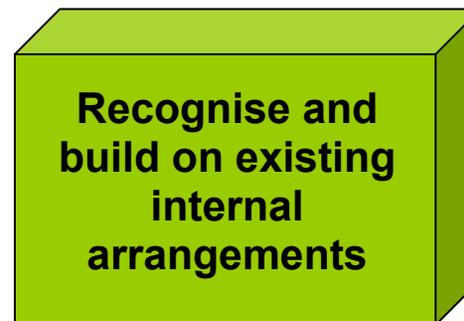| Key questions	Member States' experience to date	Lessons learnt
Features of the building block that are relevant to quality assurance systems that align with the EQARF – this includes questions about key factors for success.	*Things that have already happened in Member States to develop or embed quality assurance systems which are in line with the EQARF.*	*An analysis of emerging practice which synthesises recent experiences and suggests new ways forward. This section also identifies key issues for Member states to consider.*

3. BUILDING BLOCKS

Building block 1

• **How are decisions made about which qualifications training providers offer?**
• **How are decisions made about which organisations should provide training?**

Set clear rules for deciding who offers VET provision

Key questions	Member States' experience to date	Lessons learnt
How important are decisions on agreeing which organisations can offer VET? How important are decisions on the content of training or qualifications in assuring quality? What processes are needed to approve which qualifications and programmes can be offered by individual training providers? How can the supply of training be best managed, at a national, sectoral and regional level to ensure the demand for high quality training is met?	Italy has rules for accrediting training providers which have been developed nationally and implemented regionally in 2000. Published criteria are used and the arrangements are based on agreement between the Ministry of Labour, the regions and social partners. Romania has a two stage accreditation process for initial VET based on the right to provide training and the right to award qualifications. Estonia is developing an accreditation and licensing system for initial VET. Portugal has removed the re-accreditation process for training providers and replaced it with an annual audit. Cyprus is developing an on-line assessment process to approve training providers to deliver publicly funded training programmes.	Clear processes need to be in place to agree who should offer training. The structure and content of qualifications and units are seen as essential parts of the quality assurance process. Processes for deciding which organisations offer training provide a good opportunity for Member States to manage the supply of formal training and qualifications as well as ensure that effective quality assurance arrangements are in place. Accreditation and approval systems, while important, do not by themselves guarantee high quality VET provision.

Building block 2

Recognise and build on existing internal arrangements

• **Is it better to develop voluntary arrangements or use legislation?**
• **How can "early adopters" be identified among training providers?**
• **Is it better to phase the introduction of quality assurance systems?**

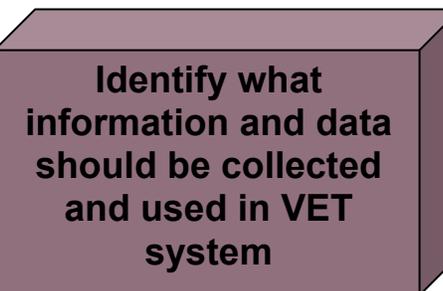| Key questions	Member States' experience to date	Lessons learnt
What is the best way to support training providers to develop their own quality assurance systems? How can all providers learn lessons from the best?	Austria has built its system on existing institutional arrangements in the VET school system, and has started using internal self-evaluation on a voluntary basis. Romania is building a culture of quality assurance in institutions through supporting IVET school networks. Portugal has set up similar centres of vocational excellence. In a voluntary system, changing training providers' approaches to quality assurance takes time. In Estonia providers have the autonomy to use the quality assurance model of their choice. Fewer than 10 per cent use an EQARF model, though over 60 per cent of initial VET providers are using another quality assurance model. In Slovenia there has been a staged introduction to the use and monitoring of indicators based on the EQARF. With a range of pilot projects since 2000, developments have been staged which has helped to ensure lessons are leant and good practice shared.	System-wide reform is complex and takes time. Changes are more likely to be successful if the training providers build on their experiences and take ownership of any new arrangements. Success is more likely if training providers are encouraged to see that quality assurance processes can help them to improve practice and develop a culture of quality. Change is incremental and small steps which build on existing practice will help training providers to build quality assurance systems that cover all four stages of the EQARF cycle. Using existing systems as the basis for developing the EQARF compliant arrangements is likely to be a winning strategy.

Building block 3

• **What is expected from providers?**
• **Is there a need for legislation?**
• **Who will ensure that quality assurance systems are effective?**

Set clear roles and responsibilities for different parts of the VET system

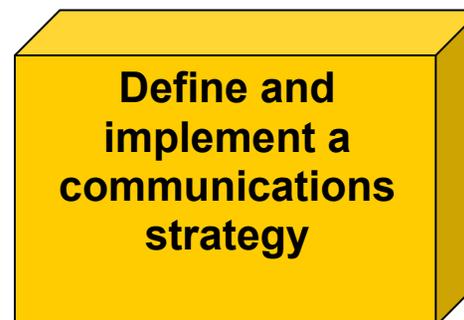| Key questions	Member States' experience to date	Lessons learnt
How important is legislation in creating a culture of quality assurance? How can you ensure that training providers are likely to see the EQARF expectations as reasonable? How clear are training providers about their roles and responsibilities in organising quality assurance systems?	Romanian providers are required to complete an annual self-evaluation. All internal and external self-evaluation processes are co-ordinated by a national agency. Slovenia introduced new legislation to cover quality assurance at both the provider and national level in 2006. This was followed by legislation in 2008 to make self-evaluation the responsibility of training providers. In the Netherlands legislation makes it clear that education institutions are primarily responsible for the quality of education and exams, quality assurance, and that they are publically accountable. In Austria responsibility for quality management is set at three levels: at the school level, at the regional level and at the system level through the Ministry. Close liaison between all parties is crucial.	Legislation is needed to set a framework, for quality assurance. However without other activities and support to training providers, legal systems will not guarantee quality assurance in VET. Institutions need support and encouragement to demonstrate they have a culture of quality. Without clarity over what is expected from training providers, quality assurance systems are less likely to be in place. Clear expectations and structures provide transparency within the VET system and allow learners, training providers, inspectors and other stakeholders to understand what quality assurance processes are being used.

Building block 4

• **Does it help if the same definitions of indicators are used throughout the system?**
• **How should performance be reported?**

Key questions	Member States' experience to date	Lessons learnt
How important is it for different parts of the VET system to use the same definition of data? How can training providers use data to support self-evaluation and quality improvement? How do you ensure that only valid, reliable and accurate data is collected? How do you minimise the data collection burden on training providers and employers?	Estonia has a set of mandatory indicators which are monitored at the provider and system level. Providers are able to design and use other indicators to support the mandatory data systems. In the Netherlands training providers are primarily responsible for quality assurance and the inspectors use the same data sets and indicators to comment on the overall performance of the system. The inspection system uses this data to assess the risk of poor performance which forms the basis for inspection. In Finland the learners' performance in the 'skills demonstrations' provides a proxy indicator of the quality of the whole system. Learners, training providers and the national planners all use the same data sources which forms part of Finland's performance based financing system. The results of these assessments are published on the Finnish National Board of Education's website in order for VET providers to use the information as a benchmark of their own performance. Germany's Federal Ministry publishes an annual report on supply and demand of VET in order to support planning of training provision	The more the training providers, inspectors, evaluators, and national planners use the same definitions of indicators the greater is the level of transparency and accountability. Making VET data collection, collation and analysis a predictable event helps to regularise the use of information. This is particularly the case when everyone uses the same measures of success. Publishing information on performance aids transparency and provides incentives for improvement. As it is important to be clear why data is collected, each Member State is identifying the more relevant the EQARF indicators. To reduce burdens it is important to decide how data will be used before it is collected. The indicators set out in the EQARF have been supplemented by Member States when they have identified that additional data is needed.

Building block 5

Define and implement a communications strategy

• How important is it to have clear communications across the VET system?
• How important is it to have consistent messages?
• How can a communication strategy be used to support implementation?

Key questions	Member States' experience to date	Lessons learnt
To what extent should the outcomes of quality assurance be available publically? How important is it to include the training providers and other stakeholders in developing the communication plans? What role will the Quality Assurance National Reference Points (QANRPs) have in developing communications strategies?	Members of ENQA-VET are actively promoting existing and new quality assurance arrangements; typically through websites, conferences, publications, training and support for VET providers e.g. Romania has published a national quality assurance manual. In the Netherlands the outcomes of the risk-based inspections for each training provider are available on the internet and are used to compile an annual report on the system's performance. Austria is developing an internal management culture of quality assurance with objectives achieved through consensus and negotiation. The Italian Quality Assurance National Reference Point (QANRP) is developing a twofold communication strategy which includes: - a "top down" approach from the institutions responsible for VET at system level to the training providers; - a "bottom up" approach involving the existing networks of VET training providers.	To create a common culture of quality assurance, there is a need to develop a communications strategy which makes use of effective communication channels. Communications need to cover all four stages of the quality assurance cycle. Communications are a system wide issue and it is important that training providers, stakeholders, policy teams and the general public are aware of how VET is quality assured. The communications work needs to focus on providing confidence to the general public, setting out clear accountabilities, providing transparency, and conveying expectations to training providers.

Building block 6

**Pilot initiatives
and value success**

- **How can you recognise both success and poor performance?**
- **As it takes time to change, what is the best way for institutions to learn?**

Key questions	Member States' experience to date	Lessons learnt
What is the best way to share effective practice? How effective is a staged approach to implementing quality assurance?	Austria has focused on providing support to institutions as this helps to safeguard training providers' autonomy. This support is set within a framework of common principles and a range of strategic and operational tools for the work on quality. Romania piloted self-assessment quality assurance processes from 2003-2006 in order to introduce new requirements from the 2006-2007 school year. Since 2003 Hungary has introduced a series of pilot projects to support and promote institutional-level quality assurance in VET. Using European and Hungarian funds, VET providers have been introducing quality assurance systems in line with the four stages of the EQARF cycle. The Finish National Board of Education organises an annual seminar of VET providers where those winners of the national "quality awards" are invited to share their best practice.	Support is better than prescription if change is to be embedded and owned. Setting up, supporting and acknowledging effective practice provides a "win-win" scenario for VET training providers and central administrators. Quality awards and other formal processes that recognise success can be effective.

Many Member States have used funds from Leonardo da Vinci, Comenius, European Social Funds and other European sources to pilot quality assurance initiatives in VET. See, for example, the Leonardo projects *Proqavet*, *Revimp* and *Peer Review in European VET* at http://www.peer-review-education.net and other activities on the Cedefop website at http://communities.training village.gr

Building block 7

Use feedback to improve VET

• **How important is student and employer feedback in quality assurance systems?**
• **How can feedback contribute to the effectiveness of the VET system?**

Key questions	Member States' experience to date	Lessons learnt
How can training providers best respond to feedback? How can you ensure that students see the importance of providing accurate feedback?	In the Netherlands the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science commissions an independent research organisation to measure student satisfaction with VET training. These monitoring arrangements report at an institutional and system level. In Finland there is a web-based feedback system which collects information from students and employers. In addition, assessors for the *Quality Awards* (representatives of employers, employees, teachers, VET providers and students) also provide systemic feedback on the system and process. This feedback is used to make improvements on a yearly basis. In Estonia, VET schools are run by councils where the majority of places are taken by employers. In order to review the school's performance, the council receives an annual report from the school principal.	Some learners only get one chance to access VET. As such training providers need to ensure they have systems in place to ensure high quality provision. Direct, instant and honest feedback helps training providers to improve the quality of provision. Feedback provides an important role in ensuring employers and learners receive high quality training.

Building block 8

• **With limited budgets, how can successful quality assurance be supported?**
• **How should information from quality assurance systems be used to adjust funding?**

Provide clarity over funding

Key questions	Member States' experience to date	Lessons learnt
How can quality assurance be used to establish a link between the quality of provision and the availability of funding? How do you ensure training providers and other stakeholders are clear about the links between funding and quality?	In Cyprus there is a clear link between the quality of training and funding provided to employers by the Human Resource Development Authority (a semi-government organisation). Funding for VET provision is increasingly recognising the quality of provision and in the Netherlands 20 per cent of the funding is based on quality. In Finland a funding premium is now offered to high quality providers. This helps to influence the national system and the activities in individual training providers as all the information is published on the Finnish National Board of Education's website.	It is much easier to offer additional funding when quality assurance processes identify high quality provision. Explicit links between quality and VET funding at the provider level is difficult and needs careful management. Funding is an important lever in supporting quality assurance, and it is one of many incentives to training providers to introduce and strengthen their systems.

Building block 9

• Should a quality assurance system cover all the activities of VET providers?
• How can quality assurance systems support improvements in quality across all aspects of provision?

Ensure quality assurance covers all aspects of VET provision

Key questions	Member States' experience to date	Lessons learnt
What aspects of the training providers' arrangements should be covered by quality assurance arrangements? How do you ensure that all the separate quality assurance processes are compatible and aligned?	Austria has offered training on quality assurance and quality development for the staff in VET institutions at all levels of the VET school system. Hungary is providing greater support for improving the quality of VET teachers and trainers, and is seeking to establish "parity of esteem" with school teachers. Since 2003 Estonia has used an EFQM based voluntary Quality Award model for VET institutions (EKKA). The aim of EKKA is to develop a culture of self-evaluation and constant improvement with in order to enhance the quality of VET institutions' processes and results. In Finland, since 2000 (updated in 2008), the Quality Management Recommendation for VET has set out the characteristics of an excellent organisation and these have been linked to the four stages of the quality assurance cycle. In Luxembourg, the quality assurance arrangements that underpin the framework for curricula development in VET include content, assessment, certification and the award of qualifications, staff development etc. In Italy, the Regions' Accreditation system considers indicators which are related both to professional skills (needs analysis, curriculum planning and evaluation, teaching competences) and to managerial skills (administration, networking expertise etc).	Quality assurance systems in VET need to be holistic and coherent; they also need to be comprehensive and cover all aspects of provision. Designing and implementing a system-wide quality assurance approach takes time. As such staged approaches which for example cover different sectors, different aspects of provision, different types of providers is likely to be successful. The EQARF provides a coherent and comprehensive quality assurance system for VET.

The foundation stone of VET: partnerships

- How can you ensure that involvement is genuine and not tokenistic?
- How important is it to gain consensus even though stakeholders' views sometimes conflict?
- How can you ensure that there is a genuine shared responsibility for quality assurance?

Key questions	Member States' experience to date	Lessons learnt
How do you ensure social partners' involvement is genuine and valued?	The 2008 reforms of VET in Luxembourg have reinforced the role of stakeholders through the creation of the national VET committee comprising all the relevant partners: ministries, social partners, learners, training providers, students, parents etc.

In Germany all the responsible organisations, including the ministries, the chambers of commerce and the social partners are involved in developing VET.

In Finland, competence based qualifications have been designed by ministries, trade unions, employers, training providers, teacher unions and student unions to ensure they are a fair way of assessing learners' skills. The assessment itself is conducted by employers and training providers as well as the student's self-assessment of their work. | In all systems (and particularly in those that rely on legislation) gaining consensus is critical to success.

Time spent winning the "hearts and minds" of national and regional partners is time well spent.

Ad hoc arrangements which involve stakeholders are not sufficient; structural arrangements and systems need to be in place. |

Ensure VET is founded on a strong involvement of external and internal partners and relevant stakeholders

4. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS and CONCLUSIONS:

In producing these two outputs, the Thematic Group identified how their current quality assurance arrangements were compatible with the EQARF; the lessons they had learnt in developing their own quality assurance systems at national level; and a series of recommendations for users of their guidance. The main messages from their work can be summarised as follows:

> ➢ the EQARF offers a comprehensive and coherent approach to quality assurance. All the pieces of the jigsaw need to be in place for a fully functioning system to operate. The whole system, each of the four stages of the EQARF cycle and the connections between them needs to be considered;

> ➢ the planning and implementation stages of the EQARF cycle are more likely to be well developed at both provider and system level. The evaluation and assessment stage, the review and revise stage and the connections between each of the four stages in the cycle will need more attention;

> ➢ as Member States are in the early stages of developing quality assurance arrangements that align with the EQARF, there is much that can be achieved by building on existing systems and developing an incremental approach to implementation;

> ➢ much has already been achieved by Member States in developing quality assurance systems for VET and these can support the EQARF. While each Member State's approach varies, there is a common focus i.e. the creation of an effective quality assurance system. The case studies [available at http://www.enqavet.eu/] show a wide range of approaches to quality assurance, and each emphasises that it is the quality of the outcomes of VET (e.g. in terms of certificates and stakeholder satisfaction) that matters most in the design of any quality assurance system;

- the development and implementation of a comprehensive, coherent and systematic quality assurance system cannot be taken for granted. It has to be nurtured, supported and regularly reviewed;

- effective quality assurance systems in VET are dependent on the strong involvement of internal and external partners and relevant stakeholders.

Developing the guidance through an iterative and reflective process has enabled the members of the Thematic Group to be confident about both the main messages and the lessons learnt. The Group, through detailed discussion at each meeting, has thoroughly tested the ideas in the guidance. As such we can be confident about the universal nature of the materials produced by the Group and the applicability of these ideas to VET systems in other Member States.

4.1 Conclusions

In reflecting on the work my contribution as ENQA-VET's expert for this Thematic Group, it may be worth noting that:

- while the timelines were tight, a longer period for reflection would not have added much to the task-driven nature of the process;
- the Group contained many national and international experts. And while this could have been daunting for those unfamiliar with working at European level, the process worked well;
- the focus on the EQARF was unsettling for some Group members as their system had only recently come to terms with the CQAF;
- the prevalence of peer learning activities, conferences and "between-meeting" discussions helped the Thematic Group's work
- it was essential to have a member of the ENQA-VET secretariat at each Thematic Group meeting.

ANNEX 1: Case studies

Case study – Austria and staff development

The example from the guidance says:

> *"Austria has offered training on quality assurance and quality development for the staff in VET institutions at all levels of the VET school system."*

Austria has launched a comprehensive quality management system which is at present focused on initial vocational education and training (IVET). This quality initiative – QualitätsInitiative BerufsBildung (QIBB) – covers teaching and learning and administrative processes in every type of school and at every institutional level in the VET school system.

Introduced in 2004, the QIBB system has been supported by quality assurance training for staff at all institutional levels. This support includes training for staff to acquire a wide range of specific skills and qualifications (e.g. to run the quality assurance circle; management by objectives; to moderate the management and performance review or to line up the agreement on objectives; human resources development; to outline a strategy and to plan for continuous professional training; to work with the QIBB internet evaluation platform; to collect, to process, to analyse and interpret data; change management etc.) It allows participants to acquire and consolidate the competences they need to perform all the tasks related to the management of quality assurance.

For more information on the Austrian VET quality initiative QIBB, please go to www.qibb.at. Information about quality assurance in VET in Austria can be found on the website of ARQA-VET, the National Quality Assurance Reference Point at www.arqa-vet.at

Austria and clear roles and responsibilities

The example from the guidance says:

> *"In Austria responsibility for quality management is set at three levels: at the school level, at the regional level and at the system level through the Ministry. Close liaison between all parties is crucial."*

Austria has launched a comprehensive quality management system which is at present focused on initial vocational education and training (IVET). This quality initiative – QualitätsInitiative BerufsBildung (QIBB) – covers teaching and learning and administrative processes in every type of school and at every institutional level in the VET school system. Each institution is responsible for implementing the four stages of the quality assurance circle. The basic principles underpinning the model are the same at all three levels: school level, regional level (regional education boards – school inspectorate) and national level (Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture). And each part of the VET sector sets out their mission; the measurable objectives arising from their mission; and the ways in which they will monitor and manage their quality assurance.

The QIBB model builds on existing institutional arrangements, and agreement on the implementation of objectives and future development is reached through discussion between the executive managers at one organisational level and their colleagues at the next level (e.g. a headmaster of a school and a school inspector). This discussion about objectives is part of the management and performance review of the institution.

The QIBB project architecture requires quality project managers to be responsible for the operational quality activities at the school level and at the regional level (school quality project managers and regional quality project managers).

To support the implementation of QIBB, training on quality assurance has been introduced for staff and a range of guidelines, handbooks and tools have been developed. The QIBB model, which is one element of the national strategy to implement EQARF, can be summarised as follows:

plan
planning
objectives & work programme
- mission statement
- Q-matrix
- work programme
- school programme

do
implementation
- target agreement/ achievement session
- processes
- measures

check
evaluation & assessment
- evaluation strategy
- indicators
- tools & instruments
- data/results

act
review
reports, analysis, change management- & performance review

QIBB quality circle

For more information on the Austrian VET quality initiative QIBB, please go to www.qibb.at. Information about quality assurance in VET in Austria can be found on the website of ARQA-VET, the National Quality Assurance Reference Point at www.arqa-vet.at

Austria and building a culture of quality

The example from the guidance says:

> *"Austria is developing an internal management culture of quality assurance with objectives achieved through consensus and negotiation."*

Austria has launched a comprehensive quality management system which is at present focused on initial vocational education and training (IVET). This quality initiative – QualitätsInitiative BerufsBildung (QIBB) – covers teaching and learning and administrative processes in every type of school and at every institutional level in the VET school system.

The system seeks to create a culture of quality assurance by covering all schools and colleges in the VET school system: i.e. schools and colleges of engineering, arts and crafts; colleges of business administration and business schools; colleges of social and service industries; VET colleges for agriculture and forestry; secondary training colleges for nursery school teachers and colleges of social pedagogy; and part-time vocational schools for apprentices. The model covers all institutional levels e.g. schools, the inspectorate (regional level – regional education boards) as well as the Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture (at national and federal level). This consistent use of one model ensures all those with an interest in VET subject their activities to the same quality assurance process.

Each institution produces a mission statement that identifies their long-term vision or strategy. It includes core messages regarding self-image and purpose, objectives, and areas of responsibility and activity (see for example some of the QIBB mission statements at www.qibb.at). From this mission a quality matrix (Q-matrix) of measurable objectives and sub-objectives is produced and summarised in written form. This Q-matrix is used to plan medium-term development objectives and their implementation (see for example the Q-matrix of the General Directorate for VET of the Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture at www.qibb.at).

The introduction and implementation of QIBB is a co-operative endeavour which began in 2004. As such the implementation of a consistent quality assurance process is seen as part of a management culture that involves all stakeholders. The mission of the institution and its objectives are reached through negotiation and agreement. And clearly formulated objectives that are recognisable and easy to understand for everyone are essential for ensuring high levels of commitment.

For more information on the Austrian VET quality initiative QIBB, please go to www.qibb.at. Information about quality assurance in VET in Austria can be found on the website of ARQA-VET, the National Quality Assurance Reference Point at www.arqa-vet.at

Austria and internal self-evaluation on a voluntary basis

The example from the guidance says:

> *"Austria has built its system on existing institutional arrangements in the VET school system, and has started using internal self-evaluation on a voluntary basis."*

Austria has launched a comprehensive quality management system which is at present focused on initial vocational education and training (IVET). This quality initiative – QualitätsInitiative BerufsBildung (QIBB) – covers teaching and learning and administrative processes in every type of school and at every institutional level in the VET school system.

QIBB is focused on a quality assurance process of continuous improvement based on the four stage quality cycle. Each institution is responsible for implementing the quality assurance circle. QIBB values institutional autonomy and choice, while creating a clear framework and set of expectations around the process of quality assurance. Agreement on objectives and future development is reached through discussion between the executive managers at one organisational level and their colleagues at the next level.

As part of the four stages of the quality assurance circle, each institution carries out their own internal evaluation. QIBB includes internal self-evaluation on a voluntary basis and asks institutions to consider school management and the extent to which objectives have been met.

As part of the internal evaluation of outcomes and processes, qualitative and quantitative data are collected by using a range of evaluation instruments, tools and processes. A set of tools for standardised data evaluation are available to all VET providers on the QIBB internet evaluation platform. Qualitative and quantitative indicators (as set out in the Q-matrix) are used to check whether the intended objectives have been achieved. In addition to the internal evaluation nationwide evaluation focuses are specified for the national system evaluation every school year.

A next step will be to introduce external evaluation elements to the QIBB model. To date a peer review pilot project has been carried out, and based on this pilot phase a national peer review implementation strategy has been developed.

For more information on the Austrian VET quality initiative QIBB, please go to www.qibb.at. Information about quality assurance in VET in Austria can be found on the website of ARQA-VET, the National Quality Assurance Reference Point at www.arqa-vet.at

Austria and the provision of support to institutions

The example from the guidance says:

> *"Austria has focused on providing support to institutions as this helps to safeguard training providers' autonomy. This support is set within a framework of common principles and a range of strategic and operational tools for the work on quality."*

Austria has launched a comprehensive quality management system which is at present focused on initial vocational education and training (IVET). This quality initiative – QualitätsInitiative BerufsBildung (QIBB) – covers teaching and learning and administrative processes in every type of school and at every institutional level in the VET school system.

Introduced in 2004, the QIBB system has been supported by quality assurance training for staff at all institutional levels. This support includes training for staff to acquire a wide range of specific skills and qualifications. It allows participants to acquire and consolidate the competences they need to perform all the tasks related to the management of quality assurance.

Central to the QIBB approach has been the belief that it is better to offer support than to prescribe a particular set of activities. This allows training providers to work with autonomy within a national, regional and institutional framework. Alongside this professional autonomy comes responsibility for training and supporting individuals to use the QIBB framework. A range of strategic and operational tools have also been produced to support institutions and individuals in developing their own approach to using the quality cycle.

For more information on the Austrian VET quality initiative QIBB, please go to www.qibb.at. Information about quality assurance in VET in Austria can be found on the website of ARQA-VET, the National Quality Assurance Reference Point at www.arqa-vet.at

Case study – Cyprus and funding links to QA

The example from the guidance says:

> *"In Cyprus there is a clear link between the quality of training and funding provided to employers by the Human Resource Development Authority (a semi-government organisation)."*

Cyprus has developed a centrally planned system for vocational education and training (VET). Since 1979 the Human Resource Development Authority (HRDA) has overseen the planned and systematic training and development of Cyprus´ human resources, at all levels and in all sectors, in order to meet the economy's needs.

As part of its work, HRDA is developing a quality assurance system for assessing and certifying training providers (i.e. trainers of vocational training, vocational training institutions and vocational training infrastructures). The main aim for the development of the system is to set minimum quality standards and improve the quality of training for any relevant activity undertaken or funded by the HRDA.

From 2013 only certified training providers will be allowed to participate in any training activity undertaken or subsidised by HRDA. This new system was approved by HRDA's Board of Directors following discussions with key stakeholders and interested bodies in 2008. The on-line application process, which will be fully computerised, is currently being developed.

The main features of the system are:

- vocational training institutions are assessed against three main criteria: ability to organise and deliver training activities, human resources, and administrative infrastructure;

- vocational training infrastructures are assessed against the following criteria: general specifications, training classrooms, administration facilities, coffee break area, hygiene facilities and equipment;
- trainers of vocational training are assessed mainly on the basis of their academic and professional qualifications, their professional experience and their training experience. In addition consideration is given to individuals' participation in the HRDA's 'training the trainer' activities and the demonstration of a sample training programme.

For more information on the Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus (HRDA) go to http://www.hrdauth.org.cy Information about quality assurance in VET in Cyprus can be found on the website of the National Quality Assurance Reference Point at http://www.moec.gov.cy

Cyprus and on-line accreditation

The example from the guidance says:

> *"Cyprus is developing an on-line assessment process to approve training providers to deliver publicly-funded training programmes."*

Cyprus has developed a centrally planned system for vocational education and training (VET). Since 1979 the Human Resource Development Authority (HRDA) has overseen the planned and systematic training and development of Cyprus´ human resources, at all levels and in all sectors, in order to meet the economy's needs.

As part of its work, HRDA is developing a quality assurance system for assessing and certifying training providers (i.e. trainers of vocational training, vocational training institutions and vocational training infrastructures). The main aim for the development of the system is to set minimum quality standards and improve the quality of training for any relevant activity undertaken or funded by the HRDA.

As part of the new approval system, applications will be made on-line and will be assessed as follows:

- vocational training institutions are assessed against three main criteria: ability to organise and deliver training activities, human resources, and administrative infrastructure;
- vocational training infrastructures are assessed against the following criteria: general specifications, training classrooms, administration facilities, coffee break area, hygiene facilities and equipment;
- trainers of vocational training are assessed mainly on the basis of their academic and professional qualifications, their professional experience and their training experience. In addition consideration is given to individuals' participation in the HRDA's 'training the trainer' activities and the demonstration of a sample training programme.

For more information on the Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus (HRDA) go to http://www.hrdauth.org.cy http://www.hrdauth.org.cy Information about quality assurance in VET in Cyprus can be found on the website of the National Quality Assurance Reference Point at http://www.moec.gov.cy

Case study – Estonia and school councils

The example from the guidance says:

> *"In Estonia, VET schools are governed by councils where the majority of places are taken by employers. In order to review the school's performance, the council receives an annual report from the school principal."*

The Estonian school councils represent local interests, including those of employers. They comprise representatives from:

- the school owner (when a school is in the private sector or owned by the municipality) or the ministry (when the school is state owned);
- the local government;
- the local bureau of the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund (the national employment authority);
- sector specific employers or employees (at least four).

The Councils usually meet four times per year and approve the plans for the VET school; authorise applications to the State for student numbers; approve new programmes of study; and agree the annual budgets and financial reports. This is a governance role where the Council guides and monitors the performance of the VET school. The day-to-day management of the VET school is led by the principal or director with support from the management team.

For more information on the Estonian vocational education and training system, please contact the Department of Vocational and Adult Education.

Estonia and choice of QA system

The example from the guidance says:

> *"In a voluntary system, changing training providers' approaches to quality assurance takes time. In Estonia providers have the autonomy to use the quality assurance model of their choice. Fewer than 10 per cent use an EQARF model, though over 60 per cent of initial VET providers are using another quality assurance model."*

The Estonian vocational education and training (VET) system invites training providers to select the most appropriate quality assurance system. The Estonian system values all types of quality assurance models (e.g. EFQM/EKKA, Balanced Scorecard, ISO 9000 etc) and recognises that training providers use different approaches for formal, informal and non-formal learning. The Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF) has been unofficially adopted by the Ministry for their measurement at the system level. Since 2003 quality assurance tools have been developed in order to offer training providers additional and voluntary quality assurance options.

Central to the choice of which quality assurance system to use is the belief that it is the outcomes of the system that matter rather than the particular system that is chosen. With 45 VET training providers only one has so far selected an European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (or CQAF) model of quality assurance, other training providers use EFQM, IS0 9000 or systems designed internally. The current legislation recognises that the choice of a quality assurance system is one that is made by training providers and, as autonomous institutions they are responsible for both quality and quality assurance.

The development of quality assurance for training providers began in 2003 following extensive consultation with VET stakeholders. This led to the creation of an interim plan for 2005-2008 which helped to describe the current system and set out what needed to happen to strengthen quality assurance. The next stage in the development of the quality assurance system will be the focus on external evaluation and accreditation.

For more information on the Estonian vocational education and training system, please contact the Department of Vocational and Adult Education.

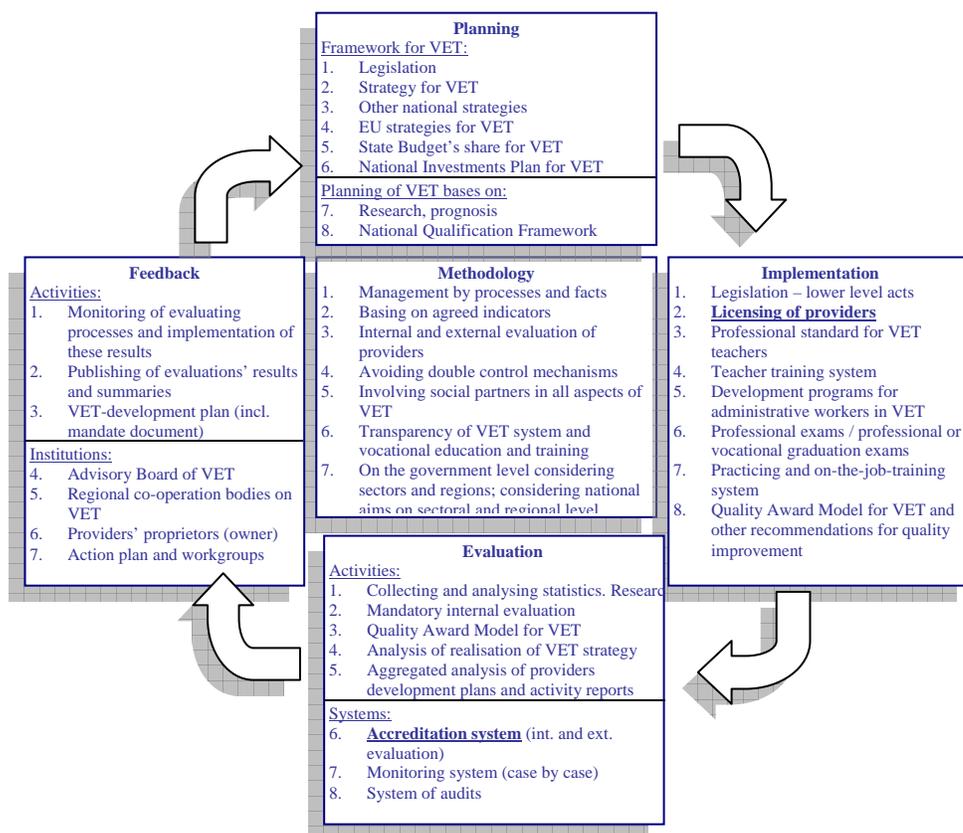### Estonia and licensing training providers

The example from the guidance says:

"Estonia is developing an accreditation and licensing system for initial VET."

The initial vocational education and training system in Estonia has implemented a number of significant changes since 2005/06 and uses the Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF) as the main way of describing quality assurance. The main focus for the development of quality assurance is the establishment of an accreditation and licensing system for providers. The intention is for this to be developed, piloted, amended and fully operational by 2012.

The following diagram sets out all the components of the Estonian quality assurance system for vocational education and training (VET). It includes all four stages of the quality assurance cycle.

For more information on the Estonian vocational education and training system, please contact the Department of Vocational and Adult Education.

Planning

Framework for VET:
1. Legislation
2. Strategy for VET
3. Other national strategies
4. EU strategies for VET
5. State Budget's share for VET
6. National Investments Plan for VET

Planning of VET bases on:
7. Research, prognosis
8. National Qualification Framework

Feedback

Activities:
1. Monitoring of evaluating processes and implementation of these results
2. Publishing of evaluations' results and summaries
3. VET-development plan (incl. mandate document)

Institutions:
4. Advisory Board of VET
5. Regional co-operation bodies on VET
6. Providers' proprietors (owner)
7. Action plan and workgroups

Methodology
1. Management by processes and facts
2. Basing on agreed indicators
3. Internal and external evaluation of providers
4. Avoiding double control mechanisms
5. Involving social partners in all aspects of VET
6. Transparency of VET system and vocational education and training
7. On the government level considering sectors and regions; considering national aims on sectoral and regional level

Implementation
1. Legislation – lower level acts
2. **Licensing of providers**
3. Professional standard for VET teachers
4. Teacher training system
5. Development programs for administrative workers in VET
6. Professional exams / professional or vocational graduation exams
7. Practicing and on-the-job-training system
8. Quality Award Model for VET and other recommendations for quality improvement

Evaluation

Activities:
1. Collecting and analysing statistics. Research
2. Mandatory internal evaluation
3. Quality Award Model for VET
4. Analysis of realisation of VET strategy
5. Aggregated analysis of providers development plans and activity reports

Systems:
6. **Accreditation system** (int. and ext. evaluation)
7. Monitoring system (case by case)
8. System of audits

Estonia and self evaluation

The example from the guidance says:

"Since 2003 Estonia has used an EFQM based voluntary Quality Award model for VET institutions (EKKA). The aim of EKKA is to develop a culture of self-evaluation and constant improvement with in order to enhance the quality of VET institutions' processes and results."

The first steps towards introducing quality assurance models in Estonian VET began in 1997 with the use of the ISO-9000 standards. This was good preparation for the introduction of other quality assurance models and increased the number of VET schools working purposefully on

quality assurance. At 2003 the EFQM Excellence Model was adopted in VET schools (acronym in Estonian – EKKA) and the first EKKA Awards was made. Underlying the EKKA model has been a set of principals, namely that:

- it must remain voluntary for VET schools and be independent from central authorities (no ranking will be introduced and no decisions will be made on the basis of a school's decision to use EKKA);
- it must be attractive and beneficial for the VET schools and visible in society;
- it is supported, but not controlled, by the ministry

Since 2003 there have been five award processes which have engaged 60 per cent of VET schools. The EKKA model and the annual award process has been an efficient way to influence and support staff in schools to use self-evaluation as a tool for improving their systems and performance. Self-evaluation is seen as a normal part of running a VET school and is a necessary prerequisite for implementing the accreditation (external evaluation) of VET schools and providers.

For more information on the Estonian vocational education and training system, please contact the Department of Vocational and Adult Education.

Estonia and mandatory indicators

The example from the guidance says:

> "Estonia has a set of mandatory indicators which are monitored at the provider and system level. Providers are able to design and use other indicators to support the mandatory data systems."

The Estonian vocational education and training (VET) system invites training providers to select the most appropriate quality assurance system. However within the initial VET system the Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF) has been used as a way of describing the quality assurance tools that are available for VET at a national and institutional level. Following extensive consultation with stakeholders and social partners in 2003, the quality assurance system for initial VET has been strengthened through the production of development plans at the system and training provider level.

In Estonia, a number of key indicators are used at the national level to monitor the performance of the VET system. Included in a wide range of indicators are:
- support to students with special educational needs;
- the percentage of students who choose to take the optional examination associated with the qualification;
- the percentage of students who do not complete their studies (the drop-out rate);
- the percentage of gaduates who are in employment six month after graduation;
- the percentage of students who continue training at the next educational level;
- the percentage of lecturing staff who have teaching qualifications;
- the average number of hours of further training provided to lecturers or teachers;
- the age profile of the lecturing work force;
- the percentage of lecturing staff who leave employment each year;
- the training providers' ability to fill state-funded study places in each curriculum area.

Within the plans for quality assurance, the Estonian system has highlighted the development of a set of 45 new national curricula and a new accreditation and licensing system. A key part of the system is the use of data to monitor and record the performance of the initial VET system. The system is based on a set of mandatory and public available indicators and information is collected at the provider and state level. The collection and reporting on this information has helped Estonia to identify the following positive trends in their initial VET system:

- *per capita* and total investment has increased;
- learning content has been made more consistent between training providers and more teachers have been trained;
- employers' satisfaction with training providers and the quality of training has increased;
- despite the negative demographic trends the number of students in initial VET has remained constant;
- rapid increase in the amount of training provision available (both initial and continuous) for adult learners;
- improved image and perception of initial VET.

For more information on the Estonian vocational education and training system, please contact the Department of Vocational and Adult Education.

Case study – Finland and funding links to quality

The example from the guidance says:

> *"In Finland funding for VET provision is increasingly recognising the quality of provision and a funding premium is now offered to high quality providers. This helps to influence the national system and the activities in individual training providers as all the information is published on the Finnish National Board of Education's website."*

The vocational education and training (VET) system in Finland is underpinned by the Ministry of Education's support for training providers to pursue excellence when improving the quality of their provision. Working within the Common Quality Assurance Framework, the Finnish system has adopted a Quality Management Recommendation which provides for the long term development of quality management in all types of initial and continuing VET including school-based VET, special needs VET and apprenticeships.

The choice of which quality assurance system to implement is made by training providers and they are asked to adopt the methodology that best meets their needs. The system encourages and support self-evaluation combined with external evaluation in which training providers are obliged to participate. This builds on the absence of inspection procedures in Finland though the Ministry of Education, supported by the National Board of Education, does perform some specific inspections e.g. to verify the validity of funding criteria.

The Finnish government and local authorities fund most of the initial and continuing VET. And while the internal self-evaluation and external evaluations provide assurances on quality, increasingly the quality of training provision is reflected in the available funding. Since 2002 the VET funding system has included a performance-based measure which considers, for example:
- the number of learners with qualifications who gain employment in the labour market or on further programmes;
- the drop-out rate;
- the completion of qualifications in the agreed timescale;
- the number of staff with formal teaching qualifications;
- the resources assigned to staff development.

At the moment performance based financing accounts for two per cent but it will increase in coming years to three per cent of the total funds. In the performance based funding system some VET providers receive no extra money while others can get over ten per cent extra funding,

For more information on the Finnish vocational education, training and financing system, please go to www.edu.fi/english or www.ammatillinenkoulutus.com Information about quality

assurance in VET in Finland can be found on the website of the National Quality Assurance Reference Point at http://www.oph.fi

Finland and joint assessment

The example from the guidance says:

> *"In Finland, competence based qualifications have been designed by the ministry, trade unions, employers, training providers, teacher unions and student unions to ensure they are a fair way of assessing learners' skills. The assessment itself is conducted by employers and training providers as well as the student's self-assessment of their work."*

The national core curricula for upper secondary vocational qualifications and the requirements for competence-based qualifications are common to education and training for young and adult students.

Competence based qualifications

The Finish legislation recognises three types of qualifications:
- for upper secondary vocational qualifications, candidates demonstrate their command of basic assignments in the field;
- further vocational qualifications involve proof that individuals have the vocational skills required of skilled workers;
- specialist vocational qualifications are for those able to demonstrate command of the most demanding work assignments in the field.

The legislation requires all these as competence-based qualifications to sit within the qualifications framework which is determined by the Ministry of Education. The Ministry revises the qualifications framework annually and at the beginning of 2008, the qualifications framework included 360 qualifications. A description of each qualification is published annually by the Finish National Board of Education.

The qualification frameworks are based on modules which are designed in collaboration with representatives from the world of work. Since 2008 adult vocational training has been based on over 3,500 modules, each of which is based on competences. Those participating in vocational training are provided with an opportunity to take competence tests as part of their training. A certificate for completion of the competence-based qualification is awarded once all parts of the qualification have been completed to an acceptable standard. The latest version of the qualifications framework (in English) can be accessed at:
http://www.oph.fi/instancedata/prime_product_julkaisu/oph/embeds/47642_competence_based_qualifications_2008.pdf

For more information on the Finnish vocational education and training system, please go to www.edu.fi/english. www.oph.fi/english or www.ammatillinenkoulutus.com Information about quality assurance in VET in Finland can be found on the website of the National Quality Assurance Reference Point at http://www.oph.fi

Finland and Quality Management Recommendation

The example from the guidance says:

> *"In Finland, since 2000 (updated in 2008), the Quality Management Recommendation for VET has set out the characteristics of an excellent organisation and these have been linked to the four stages of the CQAF quality assurance cycle."*

The Quality Management Recommendation for Vocational Education and Training was adopted by the Ministry of Education to support and encourage VET providers to pursue excellence when improving the quality of their operations. The 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.

The purpose of the Quality Management Recommendation is to provide a framework for the long-term development of quality management in all types of vocational education and training. The recommendations can be applied to vocational education and training implemented in different ways: initial VET and further and continuing training, competence tests and training preparing for competence-based qualifications, as well as curricular or school-based VET, special needs VET and apprenticeship training. In addition, the Recommendation has been prepared so that it can be applied at both VET provider and individual unit levels and that it is relevant to users at different stages of quality improvement.

The Quality Management Recommendation is designed to assist VET providers to develop quality management and to encourage them to continuously improve the quality of their operations in order to pursue excellence. The purpose of the document is to raise issues and policies that are important in terms of quality management in order to support development work. The document neither presents solutions or ready-made approaches – the selection of these is up to individual VET providers – nor does it offer any minimum criteria for quality management, but it does encourage users to develop their operations in pursuit of excellence. The way in which the Recommendations could be applied has also been left to the discretion of users. The full document (in English) can be accessed at: http://www.oph.fi/instancedata/prime_product_julkaisu/oph/embeds/47655_quality_management_recommendation_for_vocatinal_education_and_training.pdf

For more information on the Finnish vocational education and training system, please go to www.edu.fi/english or www.ammatillinenkoulutus.com Information about quality assurance in VET in Finland can be found on the website of the National Quality Assurance Reference Point at http://www.oph.fi

Finland and quality awards

The example from the guidance says:

> *"The Finish National Board of Education organises an annual seminar of VET providers where those winners of the national "quality awards" are invited to share their best practice."*

Training providers in the vocational education and training (VET) system in Finland are encouraged to manage and improve quality through the national Quality Management Recommendation, annual Quality Awards and through the use of performance based funding. As such Quality Awards are a key aspect of improving quality. They are based on the EFQM Excellence Model and the Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF) and are held annually.

The objectives of the Quality Award for VET are to:
- encourage and promote quality management and evaluation of education;
- support the exchange of good practices;
- highlight the role of VET;
- improve the image of VET.

The Quality Awards are assesses by an external board including representatives of stakeholders including employers, employees, VET providers, teacher and student organisations. The evaluation involves individual assessors reviewing the written application, producing a consensus between assessors and deciding which organisations to visit. Those

organisations which are visited also get feedback from the evaluation board which includes their strengths and areas of improvement. There are a maximum of four Awards to be offered to organisations and the minimum sum the price winners get is 50 000 euro.

There are also a Quality Award for apprenticeship training and a Quality Award for civic colleges/open colleges. The Minister of Education gives the prices and FNBE organises the annual Quality Award competitions

For more information on the Finnish vocational education and training system, please go to www.edu.fi/english or www.ammatillinenkoulutus.com Information about quality assurance in VET in Finland can be found on the website of the National Quality Assurance Reference Point at http://www.oph.fi

Finland and feedback

The example from the guidance says:

> *"In Finland there is a web-based feedback system which collects information from students and employers. In addition, assessors for the Quality Awards (representatives of employers, employees, teachers, VET providers and students) also provide systemic feedback on the system and process. This feedback is used to make improvements on a yearly basis."*

Information about quality assurance in VET in Finland can be found on the website of the National Quality Assurance Reference Point at http://www.oph.fi

Finland and skills demonstrations

The example from the guidance says:

> *"In Finland the learners' performance in the 'skills demonstrations' provides a proxy indicator of the quality of the whole system. Learners, training providers and the national planners all use the same data sources which forms part of Finland's performance based financing system. The results of these assessments are published on the Finnish National Board of Education's website in order for VET providers to use the information as a benchmark of their own performance."*

In 1998 the Finnish Ministry of Education decided to include a practical demonstration of skills in every vocational qualification as a way of making all learners show they had met the aims of their vocation training. These skills test are an integral part of the teaching and learning process and are designed to be work- based, reflect local conditions and improve the quality of vocational education and training (VET). A secondary, though no less important aim, was to consider whether learners' success in the skills demonstrations could be seen as an indicator of the success of the whole VET system. As such, the collation of results from the skills demonstrations would provide a useful external evaluation of the quality of VET.

Following external evaluation, the skills demonstrations have formed part of all student assessment for vocational qualification since 2006. These demonstrations are planned, implemented and evaluated jointly by the educational institution and the employer. The content of each demonstration and its assessment is based on discussions between the tutor, the learner and an on-the-job trainer. The intention of the system is to bring the world or work and the world of the VET training provider closer together and ensure learners are fully prepared for employment. Learners must pass the skills demonstration in order to gain their vocational qualification. To support the training providers and employers, national test materials have been produced. While the skills demonstrations have proved to be a valid and reliable way of measuring learners' competences, in the 2002-2007 pilot programme there was too much

variability in the way they were organised. Subsequent training and support has sought to address this issue of variability in order to strengthen learner assessment and provide a more accurate means of measuring the success of the whole system.

For more information on the Finnish vocational education and training system, please go to www.edu.fi/english or www.ammatillinenkoulutus.com Information about quality assurance in VET in Finland can be found on the website of the National Quality Assurance Reference Point at http://www.oph.fi

Case study – Germany and chambers of commerce

The example from the guidance says:

> *"In Germany all the responsible organisations, including the ministries, the chambers of commerce and the social partners are involved in developing VET."*

In Germany all the responsible bodies and institutions (e.g. ministries, vocational schools, chambers, social partners etc) are involved in developing and modernising the VET training regulations and framework curricula. This:
- ensures that training meets the future requirements of businesses, industry and commerce;
- ensures that in-company training and school-based training are aligned and compatible;
- guarantees that the legally binding training regulations are meeting the needs of a changing labour market;
- ensures that the regulations are developed and implemented with the consent of employers' and employees' associations.

The German "dual system" accommodates more than 60 per cent of school leavers. (Twelve months after passing their examination 59 per cent of students are employed by the training enterprise which delivered the training; only 11.1 per cent are unemployed.) The system is based on a series of about 340 training regulations which are continuously monitored by social partners and modernised when necessary.

Vocational training is provided in a company and at part-time vocational school. In the company, the trainees acquire practical skills in a real working environment. On one or two days per week, the trainees attend part-time vocational school, where they are taught general and vocational knowledge related to their training occupation. With the final examinations trainees demonstrate their ability to work in a combination of written, oral and practical examinations in order to reflect typical work processes.

To oversee and improve quality of vocational training chambers establish local vocational training committee consisting of six employers' representatives, six employees' representatives and six vocational school teachers (the teachers have the right to speak but not to vote). The vocational training committee has to be informed of and consulted on all important matters connected with vocational training. Within the scope of its tasks, it seeks to steadily improve the quality of training.

The procedure is described in "Dual training at a glance" which is available at http://www.bmbf.de/publikationen/2711.php Information about quality assurance in VET in Germany can be found on the website of the National Quality Assurance Reference Point at www.deqa-vet.de

Germany and annual planning document

The example from the guidance says:

"Germany's Federal Ministry publishes an annual report on supply and demand of VET in order to support planning of training provision."

Germany does not have a comprehensive national strategy on quality assurance in vocational education and training (VET). Reflecting its federal nature VET is organised on a federal, regional and local level. Representative from the State and industry alongside the social partners cooperate closely to monitor the demand and supply of training places in the dual system (Dual training at a glance: http://www.bmbf.de/en/publications/2711.php). Quality improvement in VET is the responsibility of the Federal Ministry for Education and Research which, in line with the Federal Vocational Training Act, submits an annual report on the VET system.

The law requires:
- the Federal Ministry of Education and Research to constantly track developments in VET and submit an annual report to the Federal Government by 1 April each year;
- the report to describe the current state and probable further development of VET. If there are indications that should an imbalance in the regional or sectoral supply of initial training places be developing (or is at risk of developing) the report has to include proposals for remedying;
- the report to include data from training providers and other competent bodies on the number of the initial training contracts that have been started, the number of initial training places offered to the Federal Employment Agency which were not filled and the number of people registered with the Federal Employment Agency as seeking initial training places;
- the report to comment on further development in the current year.

Federal statistics are compiled used to plan and organise VET. The Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training and the Federal Employment Agency assist the Federal Statistical Office in preparing the statistics.

The annual report (http://www.bmbf.de/pub/bbb_08.pdf) also includes information about national, regional and international initiatives and projects and results of VET research. An English summary of the report can be found at http://www.bmbf.de/pub/bbb_2006_eng.pdf Information about quality assurance in VET in Germany can be found on the website of the National Quality Assurance Reference Point at www.deqa-vet.de

Case study – Hungary and pilot projects

The example from the guidance says:

> *"Since 2003 Hungary has introduced a series of pilot projects to support and promote institutional-level quality assurance in VET. Using European and Hungarian funds, VET providers have been introducing quality assurance systems in line with the four stages of the EQARF cycle".*

In Hungary there has been a series of initiatives to support improving the quality assurance of VET since 2002. These have included:
- a national system based on the CQAF which is available to every VET provider;
- a Quality Award based on institutions whose graduates have been successful in finding vocationally-relevant employment;
- a requirement for each institution to develop their own Quality Management Programme;

- activity within the Comenius Public Education Quality Assurance Programme where 40 per cent of VET providers participated in a scheme to improve their quality assurance practices;
- support for 160 Vocational School Development Programme which aims to develop the institutionalisation of quality assurance;
- establishing a deadline of December 2008 when all VET institutions should use a quality assurance model based on CQAF;
- using the Social Renewal Operative Programme to support the implementation of quality assurance in VET schools; (60 mentors, 1200 vocational and adult education institutions)
- the Social Renewal Operational Programme provides support for the establishment of a career monitoring system in IVET including full-scale data collection and surveys on learner satisfaction and experiences.

Information about quality assurance in VET in Hungary can be found on the website of the National Quality Assurance Reference Point at http://www.nive.hu/

Case study – Italy and the QANRP

The example from the guidance says:

> *"The Italian Quality Assurance National Reference Point (QANRP) is developing a twofold communication strategy which includes:*
> - *a "top down" approach from the institutions responsible for VET at system level to the training providers;*
> - *a "bottom up" approach involving the existing networks of VET training providers."*

The Italian Quality Assurance National Reference Point has established a Board comprising the relevant Institutions (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour, and Regions), the Social partners and VET provider representatives. The direct involvement of the Institutions has ensured the EQARF Recommendation is considered as part of the process of School reform. In addition the new decrees, prepared by the Ministry of Education for defining the reform of technical and vocational schools, includes references to the EQARF Recommendation and the need to develop indicators for self-evaluation and external evaluation. This is an example of the "top down" process.

On the other hand the Quality Assurance National Reference Point is making direct contact with VET providers through their associations or through the school networks on quality issues which have been established during the last few years in Italy. The Quality Assurance National Reference Point also promotes pilot projects and new approaches to quality assurance e.g. peer review. This gives VET providers opportunities to enhance their quality assurance culture. This approach aims to embed quality assurance more quickly than through the use of a more bureaucratic process.

Information about quality assurance in VET in Italy can be found on the website of the National Quality Assurance Reference Point at
www.isfol.it/Istituto/Attivita/Ricerche/Reference_point_per_la_qualita/index.scm

Italy and regional accreditation

The example from the guidance says:

> *"In Italy, the Regions' Accreditation system considers indicators which are related both to professional skills (needs analysis, curriculum planning and evaluation,*

teaching competences) and to managerial skills (administration, networking expertise etc)."

In Italy responsibility for VET provision is held at both the national and regional level. Over time there has been increasing decentralisation of responsibility and regional authorities are now exclusively responsible for planning vocational training, within and according to a set of national general principles. According to national law the Umbria Region, and other Italian Regions, has developed a VET providers' accreditation system which takes account of indicators, standards and evaluation. Accreditation is granted to training agencies in Umbria for initial, higher, or continuing vocational training.

To obtain the accreditation training agencies need to consider the following criteria:
- quality of management including the need's analysis process, forecasting processes and the supply of services;
- the organisation's structure and technology;
- the organisation's economic and financial accountability;
- managerial competences and professional skills;
- strength of relationship with other institutional, social and economic organisations;
- efficiency and quality of outputs (drop-out, placement, etc.)

Each year the Region verifies that the training agency continues to meet the criteria**.** Guidelines and technical support for applicants is available, and a training programme to improve quality of VET providers' management culture has been launched.

The accreditation process is the first step in the regional VET quality assurance policy. In addition to other instruments – such as the regional system of professional profiles and the setting of training standards - accreditation helps to raise the quality levels of VET supply. To support this approach, the Region is disseminating knowledge of approaches to quality - in particular through support for self evaluation and peer review – in order to set clear rules and a consistent" bottom-up" strategy of quality assurance including the development of an institutional culture which supports quality.

Further information is available at http://www.formazionelavoro.regione.umbria.it/
Information about quality assurance in VET in Italy can be found on the website of the National Quality Assurance Reference Point at
www.isfol.it/Istituto/Attivita/Ricerche/Reference_point_per_la_qualita/index.scm

Italy and the approval of training providers

The example from the guidance says:

> *"Italy has rules for accrediting training providers which have been developed nationally and implemented regionally since 2000. Published criteria are used and the arrangements are based on agreement between the Ministry of Labour, the regions and social partners."*

In Italy responsibility for the provision of vocational and education training (VET) is held at both national and regional level. Over time there has been increasing decentralisation of responsibility and regional authorities are now exclusively responsible for vocational training planning, within and according to national common general principles.

In 2001 the Ministry of Labour, following consultation with the social partners and the regions, introduced a model of accreditation for vocational education and training providers. Based on national criteria and indicators, the model was applied by the Italian regional governments which have responsibility for regulatory and operational issues in the field of vocational training. Each region, supported by a national task force organised by ISFOL (www.isfol.it) applied the model so that it met their own needs.

The model, based on the four stages of the quality assurance cycle was monitored by the regions and ISFOL for seven years. The results of this monitoring, together with feedback from the training providers led to a formal review of the original legislation. This review led to a new committee of the Ministry of Labour, the regions and the social partners preparing new accreditation regulations which were formally adopted in March 2008. Throughout the process of developing this accreditation system, the Italian VET system has planned a new system, implemented the proposals, assessed and evaluated practice, and finally reviewed the arrangements through legislation.

Innovations in the Umbria Region introduced through the review phase of the regional accreditation include:
- allowing some types of training providers to be selected in response to a "public call" for institutions that wish to be accredited;
- the gradual transformation of the procedures and systems of accreditation in order to offer a simplified "counter-based" service which focuses on continuous improvement;
- the choice to look at accreditation across regions in order to increasingly develop mutual recognition processes in different accreditation systems.

For more information on the Italian system for accrediting vocational education and training providers, please go to http://formalavoro.regione.lombardia.it/rl/accreditamento.nsf

or
http://www.regione.piemonte.it/formaz/accredit/man_form.htm

or
http://www.regione.emilia-romagna.it/wcm/ERMES/Canali/istruzione/enti_formazione/accreditamento.htm

Information about quality assurance in VET in Italy can be found on the website of the National Quality Assurance Reference Point at
www.isfol.it/Istituto/Attivita/Ricerche/Reference_point_per_la_qualita/index.scm

Case study – Luxembourg and curriculum development

The example from the guidance says:

> "In Luxembourg, the quality assurance arrangements that underpin the framework for curricula development in VET include content, assessment, certification and the award of qualifications, staff development etc."

The legislation for VET requires initial vocational education and training to be set within the context of lifelong learning and be focused on skills development and learning outcomes. To achieve these objectives, curriculum development teams play a key role. They are responsible for developing the framework programmes which synchronise the training in a company and the school based training; and preparing the guidelines, methods and standards of assessment.

To ensure there is a quality management system in place to develop these frameworks, a system of partnership between the State, the employer associations and the employee associations is used. The curriculum development teams include representatives of the labour market (training companies) and representatives of the educational environment (VET-colleges) as follows:
- representatives of labour market, proposed by the chambers of employers and of employees and representatives of training companies;

- an equal number of representatives of the educational environment, appointed by the minister.

The outcomes from the curriculum development teams are published on an interactive national platform. These resources are then used by teachers, trainers and professionals involved in curriculum development, and are used as the basis for continuous training and coaching.

In addition to developing the curricula, the curriculum development teams also:

- oversee the assessment and certification processes;

- set out the basis for the national system of validating and recognising non-formal and informal learning.

For more information on the Luxembourg vocational education and training system, please go to:
http://www.men.public.lu/priorites/formation_professionnelle/index.html

Information about quality assurance in VET in Luxembourg can be found on the website of the National Quality Assurance Reference Point at http://www.men.public.lu

Luxembourg and stakeholder committee

The example from the guidance says:

> "The 2008 reforms of VET in Luxembourg have reinforced the role of stakeholders through the creation of the national VET committee comprising all the relevant partners: ministries, social partners, learners, training providers, students, parents etc."

Under the new Act, vocational education and training refers to basic VET, initial VET, continuing VET and professional retraining. The approach to VET is characterised by lifelong learning, skills development and a focus on learning outcomes.

The VET system is based on a partnership between the State, the employer associations and the employee associations. These partnership arrangements cover:
- the analysis and definition of training needs;
- the production of guidance and information;
- the definition of the professions or trades covered by basic and initial VET;
- the training offered to individuals;
- the organisation of training;
- the development of a training framework for each programme of study;
- the assessment system;
- the certification of candidates;
- the accreditation of prior experiential learning.

Planning and implementation are supported by a VET committee which has the following functions:
1. to advise the Government on VET policy;
2. to promote a better match between the objectives of VET and the needs of the different sectors of the economy while taking into account gender differences;
3. to ensure the actions of ministerial departments and professional associations are coordinated in relation to professional development of the labour market.

This committee comprises:
1. government departments with responsibility for VET, employment, the economy, education and the middle classes;

2. the Government's director of VET;
3. the director of the adult training department;
4. the director of the centre for psychology and educational guidance;
5. a delegate from the professional guidance department of the Employment Service.
6. a delegate from each of the professional chambers;
7. a delegate from each of the employer federations representing the various sectors of the economy;
8. a delegate from each of the most representative national trade union organisations;
9. two delegates from the college of directors for technical secondary education;
10. a representative from students' parents;
11. a representative from the National Students' Conference;
12. a representative from social sector employers;
13. a representative from the health and care sector.

For more information on the Luxembourg vocational education and training system, please go to:
http://www.men.public.lu/priorites/formation_professionnelle/index.html   Information   about quality assurance in VET in Luxembourg can be found on the website of the National Quality Assurance Reference Point at http://www.men.public.lu

Case study – Portugal and centres of excellence

The example from the guidance says:

> *"Portugal is building a culture of quality assurance in institutions by supporting centres of vocational excellence."*

In Portugal there is a significant number of private training providers, some of which benefit from public grants. By signing contracts with the public administration, the most important ones are responsible for the technical, administrative and financial management of public funds, allocated by the European Social Fund (ESF) and the State budget.

Every year, these training providers offer thousands of vocational courses, aimed at small and medium enterprises and unemployed young people and adults. Their activity operates under a set of principles and standards of quality assurance required by national legislation. The quality assurance focuses on pedagogic capacity, procedures and practices at each stage of the quality assurance cycle.

A new legislative framework for education and training was published in 2007 and established the National Qualifications System *[Sistema Nacional de Qualificações (SNQ)]*. As part of the SNQ a network of VET providers, the New Opportunities Centres *[Centros Novas Oportunidades (CNO)],* was established. The CNOs include public and private VET providers, vocational training centres, municipalities, companies and other associations. The CNOs are expected to attract school leavers by offering them better prospects for lifelong learning and access to more highly qualified occupations. The network (currently there are 459 CNOs) has a central, structural role in the national system.

There is a Quality Charter for New Opportunities Centres *(Carta de Qualidade dos Centros Novas Oportunidades)* which defines their structure and the rules that each centre must comply with. The success of the NCOs is evaluated through quality reference indicators, which allows:
a) self-regulation of by reference to a shared set of standards;
b) development of a quality assurance system which must be used for external or internal evaluation;
c) a strengthening of the supervision and monitoring system through joint responsibility for the results and quality standards.

In addition there are 12 centres of vocational excellence ─ the Joint
Management Vocational Training Centres *[Centros de Formação Profissional de Gestão
Participada]* ─ which are partnerships between the Public Administration, employers
associations and trade unions. These partnerships have a long historical background and have
enabled the establishment of a predominantly sectoral network of vocational training centers
which complements the public VET network. These centers have administrative and financial
autonomy and cover the main economic activities. They are also responsible for validating their
own courses and certifying competences.

For further information on the Portuguese VET system, please go to www.dgert.mtss.gov.pt or
www.anq.gov.pt.

Portugal and the audit tool

The example from the guidance says:

> *"Since 1997, Portugal's accreditation system has been mandatory for training
> providers wishing to access public funds, and voluntary for other situations. It is
> based on an EQARF compliant quality standard and compliance is verified by
> documental analysis and audits."*

Portugal's accreditation system for VET aims to increase VET provider's quality and promote
their external recognition, increase the credibility of the system and guarantee a better use of
public funds for training activities. Accreditation is mandatory for those organisations which
receive public funds and voluntary for the others.

Accreditation means a formal recognition of the pedagogic capacity of the VET providers and of
the quality of their procedures and practices at each stage of training cycle. To be accredited
the providers must show compliance with the required standards and prove their management
and pedagogic practices meet the quality criteria.

The quality assurance standards relate to:
- policy and strategic planning (with strategy and projects clearly defined, taking in to
  account territorial or sector context and the training needs of the target population);
- management and human resources (efficient management of training activities and
  skilled human resources with suitable professional and pedagogic experience);
- the evaluation of results and continuous improvement;
- the rules of conduct and ethical behaviour (i.e. the proper relationships with
  stakeholders which respect their rights and interests);
- specific requirements for developing each stage of the training cycle.

Application for accreditation begins with a technical evaluation of the training provider through
an analysis of document and sometimes an audit. The renewal process involves a self-
assessment exercise made by the training organisation, with the definition of an improvement
action plan and an indicators scorecard. In some cases there is an audit to confirm the training
provider complies with the requirements. Currently the audits are usually only used for those
seeking to renew accreditation and cover ten per cent of training providers.

Within a wider reform of the Portuguese VET system, the accreditation process is changing to a
certification model to reflect the evolution of the national quality assurance processes. This
certification system will include an annual audit of the accredited VET provider's capacity in the
different education and vocational areas.

For further information on the Portuguese VET system, please go to www.dgert.mtss.gov.pt or
www.anq.gov.pt.

Case study – Romania and a two-stage accreditation process

The example from the guidance says:

> *"Romania has a two stage accreditation process for initial VET based on the right to provide training and the right to award qualifications."*

The Romanian national quality assurance framework in initial[3] vocational education and training (IVET) was introduced through legislation in 2006. The framework includes a set of national quality assurance principles, measures, methodologies and actions including standardised arrangements for assuring the quality of the initial vocational training at both the system and provider level.

As part of the national quality assurance framework, which is coordinated by the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education, the following system of accreditation and approval has been adopted:

➢ in order for an IVET provider to operate, the school must demonstrate that its training programmes have met the predetermined standards. The training provider must also seek approval for each training programme. Accreditation is granted by order of the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth, based on the approval of the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education. Accreditation requires training providers to complete a two stage process:
  • provisional authorisation grants the training provider the right to undertake educational activities and organise their application for individual IVET programmes;
  • accreditation grants the training provider the right to issue diplomas, certificates and other study documents recognised by the Ministry of Education and Research, and to organise examinations.

➢ independent experts complete an external evaluation of the quality of IVET providers and their programmes every five years. This considers the extent to which an IVET provider and its programmes meet the predetermined quality standards.

For more information on the Romanian initial vocational education and training system, please go to www.tvet.ro

Romania and IVET school networks

The example from the guidance says:

> *"Romania is building a culture of quality assurance in institutions through supporting IVET school networks."*

The Romanian national quality assurance framework in initial vocational education and training (IVET) was introduced through legislation in 2006. The framework includes a set of national quality assurance principles, measures, methodologies and actions including standardised arrangements for assuring the quality of the initial vocational training at both the system and provider level.

The IVET sector in Romania is slowly developing a "culture of change" as it moves from an extremely centralised to a decentralised system based on self evaluation and responsibility for quality assurance. The quality assurance framework sets out national expectations, and

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[3] Initial VET (TVET) is part of the formal system of education

requiring training providers to be accountable through their annual self-assessment process and report is part of this process of decentralisation.

In the majority of VET schools quality assurance processes have begun to be implemented. This has been supported through the appointment of quality assurance commissioners who have worked with school management teams to involve all staff in the development of the quality assurance system. Developing the culture of quality assurance takes time, and encouraging schools to be more open to the needs of earners, employers and communities requires sustained support and commitment at the system level.

One way of supporting this changing culture has been the promotion and support of IVET school networks. At present, all IVET schools are associated with a network which supports cooperative activities in relation to monitoring, collecting evidence, staff training, peer learning and peer review activities. The process has progressively expanded to cover:

> ➢ in 2004, 122 IVET schools assisted by an EU – funded project;
> ➢ In 2005, the networks extended to cover 150 rural schools in a Phare TVET project;
> ➢ In 2006, all (1376) TVET schools were part of an assisted schools network.

For more information on the Romanian vocational education and training system, please go to www.tvet.ro

Romania and self evaluation

The example from the guidance says:

> *"Romanian providers are required to complete an annual self-evaluation. All internal and external self-evaluation processes are co-ordinated by a national agency."*

The Romanian national quality assurance framework in initial vocational education and training (VET) was introduced through legislation in 2006. The framework includes a set of national quality assurance principles, measures, methodologies and actions including standardised arrangements for assuring the quality of the initial vocational training at both the system and provider level. Training providers are responsible for self evaluation. Their responsibilities are set out in the national quality assurance manual (see web link) and can be summarised as follows:

The self evaluation processes require training providers to:
> ➢ plan all their VET activities through a strategic and operational plan. This becomes the School Action Plan 2007 – 2013, which responds to regional and local priorities;

- internally monitor the planned activities are completed and includes evaluation of teaching and learning process through lesson observations. This process has to evaluate the school's difficulties in meeting its objectives, issues arising from teaching and learning, and it identifies appropriate solutions;
- self-assess their performance based on evidence and produce a self-assessment report;
- identify revisions and develop an improvement plan, to underpin the next cycle of the operational plan
- develop a quality manual for the school.

For more information on the Romanian vocational education and training system, please go to www.tvet.ro

Romania and QA manual

The example from the guidance says:

> *"Members of ENQAVET are actively promoting existing and new quality assurance arrangements; typically through websites, conferences, publications, training and support for VET providers e.g. Romania has published a national quality assurance manual."*

The Romanian national quality assurance framework in initial vocational education and training (IVET) was introduced through legislation in 2006. The framework includes a set of national quality assurance principles, measures, methodologies and actions including standardised arrangements for assuring the quality of the initial vocational training at both the system and provider level.

Using the EU-funded Phare project (http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/how-does-it-work/financial-assistance/phare/index_en.htm) a self- assessment manual and an external inspection manual were developed. From 2003-2006 the manuals were trialed by 120+ IVET schools and adopted for all IVET providers from 2006-2007. The manuals include a series of self assessment activities external monitoring processes (see below) and a two-stage accreditation system (link to case study 29). The external monitoring processes include the following activities that are coordinated by the VET inspectorate:

- external monitoring of the quality of VET providers and their programmes. This includes offering guidance and support to VET providers on quality assurance process, quality control to ensure quality is maintained and enhanced, and proposals for quality improvement measures;
- validation of VET providers' self-assessment reports;
- approval of TVET providers' improvement plans

For more information on the Romanian vocational education and training system, please go to www.tvet.ro

Romania and self assessment

The example from the guidance says:

> *"Romania piloted self-assessment quality assurance processes from 2003-2006 in order to introduce new requirements from the 2006-2007 school year."*

The Romanian national quality assurance framework in vocational education and training (VET) was introduced through legislation in 2006. The framework includes a set of national quality assurance principles, measures, methodologies and actions including standardised arrangements for assuring the quality of the initial vocational training at both the system and provider level.

The quality principles, the methodology and the quality assurance instruments are based on the four stages of the Common Quality Assurance Framework in VET (CQAF). For each of the principles (the management of quality, responsibility for quality, management of resources, development of learning programmes, teaching and learning, evaluation, the award of certificates, and the measurement of performance) a set of performance descriptors have been developed which set out what is expected at the provider and system level.

Self assessment forms the main quality assurance process which is supplemented by internal and external monitoring. From 2003 to 2006, the self evaluation and inspection system in the new framework were piloted as part of an EU-funded Phare technical assistance programme. In 2003-2005 the systems were piloted in 22 VET units with a further 122 units in 2005-2006 school year

Following the analysis of the pilots, the self-evaluation and inspection system, supported by nationally available manuals began in 2006-2007 school year

For more information on the Romanian vocational education and training system, please go to www.tvet.ro

Case study – Slovenia and self evaluation

The example from the guidance says:

> *"Slovenia introduced new legislation to cover quality assurance at both the provider and national level in 2006. This was followed by legislation in 2008 to make self-evaluation the responsibility of training providers."*

In July 2006 Slovenia introduced the new Vocational and Technical Education Act which included provision for quality assurance at provider and national level. Each training provider or school is required to assure the quality of their provision based on the principles of total quality management, which consider the Common Quality Assurance Framework for VET (CQAF/EQARF). The legislation also established quality indicators for the national system which are determined by the National Council of Experts for VET.

In April 2008 Slovenia changed the Act of Organisation and Funding Education to assign new responsibility for headmasters (for all pre-university education and training) to complete an annual self evaluation which is used to report the school's performance to the Constitutional school council. At a national level the minister of education is responsible for nominating members of the Council for Quality and Evaluation, deciding on the Council's recommendations on how to measure quality assurance at a national level, and reviewing the Council's proposals for evaluations.

The Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training (Slovenian Institute for VET) has prepared recommendations for training providers to evaluate their own performance. This suggests self-evaluation should cover the following areas:
- school management
- quality assurance system
- education plans
- learning and teaching
- testing and assessment
- meeting educational objectives
- work-based practical training
- counselling and support to students

- professional development of teachers and other practitioners
- the school as the centre of life-long learning
- development projects

Each area has defined a set of quality indicators, guidelines for improving quality and what quality looks like at a basic level. The guidelines for improving quality define optimal objectives that schools should strive to attain, while the basic quality level is seen as the lowest level that schools need to achieve without compromising their quality. This self-evaluation provides schools with a system to design their own assessment and develop improvement measures. Each school is asked to evaluate two or three areas in their first year of using the system with more areas being added over time. The Council of Experts for VET will in future determine mandatory areas and indicators that each school has to cover in its quality assurance report.

The Slovenian Institute for VET offers schools support in developing a methodology for self-evaluation and preparation of reports on quality. The Institute produces a yearly report on the quality of VET based on quality indicators for the national system. This yearly report is published on the Institute website.

For more information on the Slovenian vocational education and training system, please go to the Institute's website at http://www.cpi.si/en/, the Institute's publication on developing a Common European VET Area at http://www.cpi.si/files/cpi/userfiles/Publikacije/ESF_eng.pdf or at Cedefop publication on vocational education and training in VET (2007) at http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Upload/Information_resources/Bookshop/486/4072_en.pdf or http://libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/eu/pub/cedefop/eknowvet/2007_TO_SI.pdf

Slovenia and staged introduction

The example from the guidance says:

> *"In Slovenia there has been a staged introduction to the use and monitoring of indicators based on the EQARF. With a range of pilot projects since 2000, developments have been staged which has helped to ensure lessons are leant and good practice shared."*

In Slovenia the quality assurance legislation for vocational education and training (VET) established an agreed set of quality indicators which are (the first annual report covers the school year 2007/2008) used at a national level. These national indicators were considered by the National Council of Experts for VET[4]. The agreed seven national indicators are:

1. the percentage of training providers applying internal quality assurance systems defined by law;
2. the percentage of teachers and trainers with teaching qualifications;
3. the percentage of teachers and trainers participating in further training, the amount and share of funds invested by providers in their training programmes;
4. the percentage of students who successfully complete their programme on schedule;
5. the percentage of learners who succeed in final exams;
6. destination of VET learners in six and twelve months after completion of training;
7. the percentage of programs developed in response to employers.

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[4] This National Council is a decision making body on most of VET area and consultative body for policy making decisions of government and ministry about VET. The Council has 14 members and a president, who is chosen by the ministry of education. At least one third of members must come from VET providers. Five members are proposed by ministries (at least two by the ministry of educations), five are proposed by chambers of commerce and four are proposed by the trade unions. The Council is one of three (the others cover general education and adult education) permanent (new members are elected every five years) expert bodies in the Slovenian education system.

The National Council of Experts for VET decided that quality assurance systems should be implemented gradually. Therefore the first national report on quality in VET (for school year 2007/08) includes only the first three indicators, the second report (for school year 2008/09) will include the first three and the fifth indicator. Indicators four and six are going to be trialled in a few schools in order to develop the methodology for these two indicators. The methodology for collecting data is also being developed progressively taking into account the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational education and training (hereinafter: Slovenian Institute for VET)'s capacity to prepare a yearly report, the needs of providers, and the interests of other stakeholders involved in the system.

Using this staged approach, Slovenia has identified that 30 per cent of providers have organised their quality assurance system in line with the legislation and a further almost 30 per cent of providers have established a group with responsibility for quality assurance. The new quality assurance system at provider level is mandatory and:
- providers have to establish a group with responsibility for quality assurance which includes school experts, employers, students and their parents (when learners are under age);
- requires the headmaster to be responsible for self-evaluation;
- requires training providers to publish an annual report on quality which is presented to the Constitutional school council which includes representatives from national and local government, parents and school employees.

For more information on the Slovenian vocational education and training system, please go to the National Institute's website at http://www.cpi.si/en/ or the National Institute's publication on developing a Common European VET Area at
http://www.cpi.si/files/cpi/userfiles/Publikacije/ESF_eng.pdf

Case study – the Netherlands and monitoring student satisfaction

The example from the guidance says:

> "In the Netherlands the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science commissions two pieces of research to measure student satisfaction with VET training. These monitoring arrangements report at the system level and one of them also reports at the institutional level."

In the vocational education and training (VET) system in the Netherlands, education institutions are primarily responsible for quality assurance. As part of the national quality assurance system, independent researchers monitor the students' perception of their VET provision. Using indicators and measures that are particularly relevant to students (e.g. the quality of careers guidance, the reasons for "drop out etc[5]), the quality of provision is considered at institutional and national level. At a national level an annual report is produced to support policy developments in improving the quality of VET.[6]

Training providers use this information and feedback from students mostly at the institutional or faculty level to improve quality.

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[5] Warthenberg, F., Brukx, D., Roelofs, M., Broek, A. van den, Hövels, B., Thomassen, M. & Buis, T. (2008). Studentenmonitor MBO 2007. Nijmegen: ResearchNed/KBA.
[6] Warthenberg, F., Broek, A. van den, Brukx, D. Çelik, P. & Thomassen, M. (2008). Job Monitor 2008. Nijmegen: ResearchNed.

For more information on the Dutch vocational education and training system, please go to http://www.minocw.nl/english/education/369/Vocational-education-training-and-adult-education.html Information about quality assurance in VET in the Netherlands can be found on the website of the National Quality Assurance Reference Point at www.enqa-vet.eu

The Netherlands and inspection outcomes on the internet

The example from the guidance says:

> "In the Netherlands the outcomes of the inspections for each training provider are available on the internet and are used to compile an annual report on the system's performance which is also available at internet."

In the vocational education and training system in the Netherlands, education institutions are primarily responsible for quality assurance. As part of the national quality assurance system vocational education and training (VET) providers are monitored through a national inspection system, organised by the Ministry of Education.

The current monitoring and inspection system has been in place since 1 January 2008 (developed in July 2007) and is risk-based. Under the terms of the Education Inspection Act institutions which perform well 'earn' the right to less supervision, whereas inspection is intensified at institutions with deficiencies in quality.

The inspectorate draws up an annual inspection schedule which focuses on potential risks, which may be educational or financial in character. If no risks are detected, an individual institution is awarded a 'basic arrangement' or basic inspection status, which means the inspectorate does not think any further studies into the quality of education are required. However, if the inspectors identify one or more risks, documents and data from the institution are examined in greater depth.

If the inspectors decide that an inspection is required, supplementary information is collected and during the inspection there is discussion on the risks and problems that have been identified, and the ways in which the inspectorate intends to intervene. Intervention then follows at the institutions where this is necessary, with the aim of making a thorough quality assessment or introducing measures for improving quality. As part of the inspection, inspectors consider the VET provider's performance in terms of the quality of provision and the internal quality assurance arrangements. In order to keep the inspection burden to a minimum for institutions, the risk analysis is based as far as possible on available data, such as educational outcomes, annual reports, signals and findings from previous inspections.

All institutions – including those that perform well – are visited at least once a year. The inspectors discuss in their visit the results of the risk-analyses with the board of the institution. Reports of inspections are published on the inspectorate's website (http://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl). Occasionally the report is not published, for privacy reasons or because the nature of the report does not lend itself to publication.

For more information on the Dutch vocational education and training system, please go to http://www.minocw.nl/english/education/369/Vocational-education-training-and-adult-education.html Information about quality assurance in VET in the Netherlands can be found on the website of the National Quality Assurance Reference Point at www.enqa-vet.eu

The Netherlands and use of common definitions

The example from the guidance says:

> "In the Netherlands training providers are primarily responsible for quality assurance and the inspectors use the same data sets and indicators to comment on the overall

performance of the system. The inspection system uses this data to assess the risk of poor performance which forms the basis for inspection."

In the vocational education and training system in the Netherlands, education institutions are primarily responsible for quality assurance. As part of the national quality assurance system vocational education and training (VET) providers are monitored through a risk-based national inspection system, organised by the Ministry of Education. As part of this system inspectors use a standard set of data, with common definitions. These national definitions are also used by VET training providers to ensure data collection, collation and analysis is simplified and there is a more consistent and reliable set of measures of performance.

Under the terms of the Adult and Vocational Education Act, the competent authority of a VET institution is required to set up a quality assurance system. This ensures that institutions pay systematic attention to their own performance and how they can improve it. Under the Act, VET institutions must regularly supply information to the Ministry and to the inspectorate. The institutions provide administrative data on registration and certificates of students to a central registration base (BRON) so that on a system level, as well as the institutional and educational level, data become available on completion rates and drop out. This data is also allows comparison to be made between individual institutions and the national level, so that benchmarking is possible based on the results and performance of the institution, including the success rate, the destination of target-group students and learners' access to education. The information is used to determine how much funding the institution receives and to support and evaluate government policy.

Up to 2004 the inspectors issued a standardised report card on vocational education institutions following an inspection. These provided information on the institution's quality of teaching and the results achieved in an easily readable form. Reports from individual VET institutions are published on the inspectorate's website (http://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl . In 2007 the format of the report card was adapted to take account of the risk based inspection system and the report cards have now been replaced by inspection cards, which provide information about the quality of each VET course.

For more information on the Dutch vocational education and training system, please go to http://www.minocw.nl/english/education/369/Vocational-education-training-and-adult-education.html Information about quality assurance in VET in the Netherlands can be found on the website of the National Quality Assurance Reference Point at www.enqa-vet.eu

The Netherlands and performance based funding

The example from the guidance says:

> *"Funding for VET provision is increasingly recognising the quality of provision and in the Netherlands 20 per cent of the funding is based on quality."*

The funding of adult and vocational education is governed by the Adult and Vocational Education Act. And the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science funds vocational education courses directly, based partly on the number of students per course/learning pathway (80 per cent of the available budget) and partly on the number of certificates awarded per institution (20 per cent of the available budget).

For more information on the Dutch vocational education and training system, please go to http://www.minocw.nl/english/education/369/Vocational-education-training-and-adult-education.html Information about quality assurance in VET in the Netherlands can be found on the website of the National Quality Assurance Reference Point at www.enqa-vet.eu

The Netherlands and public accountability

The example from the guidance says:

> *"In the Netherlands legislation makes it clear that education institutions are primarily responsible for the quality of education and exams, quality assurance, and that they are publicly accountable."*

In the vocational education and training system in the Netherlands, education institutions are primarily responsible for quality assurance. Their job is to determine, assess, assure and, where necessary, improve the quality of their own vocational training courses. Education institutions are free to choose their own model of quality assurance. They are also required to meet the following legal requirements:

- organise and employ a quality-assurance system to guarantee the quality of training and examinations;
- establish relevant policy and goals in dialogue with stakeholders and in cooperation with other institutions;
- assess periodically the quality of education with the involvement of independent experts and relevant stakeholders;
- publish periodically (for examination results annually) assessment results, information about the quality of education and institutional improvement plans.

Education institutions are visited by inspectors who consider the institution's performance in terms of quality and quality assurance. The inspection is based on the education institution's internal processes and documents (e.g. the institution's annual report). Decisions on which institutions to inspect are based on an analysis of the risks associated with poor performance. Institutions that perform well have less supervision and those with severe problems are monitored more intensively.

When there are risks detected and an inspection follows, the inspectors looks at governing capacity, how well the legal requirements are met, learner accessibility to programmes, the content of the study programmes, the learning process, the quality of leaner guidance, performance in terms of completion rate and drop-outs, the education programme, relationships between learners and tutors and safety, examination results and satisfaction of the students on those areas. If the examination results or the quality of education is insufficient more than two years, the government reviews the financial arrangements or withdraws the institution's licence to provide education or offer public examinations.

Reports of individual education institutions are published on the internet (see web link) and an annual report on the performance of the vocational education and training system is send to the government. The Minister and State Secretary discuss the reports and their improvement policy in the Parliament.

For more information on the Dutch vocational education and training system, please go to http://www.minocw.nl/english/education/369/Vocational-education-training-and-adult-education.html Information about quality assurance in VET in the Netherlands can be found on the website of the National Quality Assurance Reference Point at www.enqa-vet.eu

ANNEX 2: List of Participants

Title	Name	Country	Organisation name
Ms	Helene Babel	Austria	Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture
Ms	Monica Ioannou	Cyprus	Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus
Mr	Kalle Toom	Estonia	Ministry of Education and Research of Estonia
Ms	Leena Koski	Finland	Finnish National Board of Education
Ms	Karin Kuessner	Germany	Federal Ministry for Education and Research
Ms	Magdolna Benke	Hungary	National Institute of Vocational and Adult Education
Ms	Antonia Petetti	Italy	Regione Umbria
Mr	Giorgio Allulli	Italy	Institute for the Development of Vocational Training of Workers (ISFOL)
Ms	Chantal Fandel	Luxembourg	Ministere de l'Education nationele et de la Formation professionnelle
Ms	Thea van den Boom	The Netherlands **Chairperson**	Ministry of Education Culture and Science/Directorate of VET
Ms	Edite Vieira	Portugal	Directorate General for Employment and Industrial Relations
Ms	Isilda Fernandes	Portugal	Directorate General for Employment and Industrial Relations
Ms	Nela Plugarescu	Romania	Consiliul National de Formare Profesionala a Adultilor / PHARE Project Implementation Unit for Establishment of National Authority for Qualifications
Ms	Simona Knavs	Slovenia	National Institute for VET
Mr	Keith Brumfitt	**TG Expert**	

ENQA-VET

European Network for Quality Assurance
in Vocational Education and Training

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