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## Editorial:

**Sophie Weisswange, Policy officer, European Commission,  
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*'Goals are dreams with deadlines'*

Diana Hunt

On 7 December 2010, the European Ministers for vocational education and training, the European Social Partners and the European Commission met in Bruges to review the strategic approach and priorities of the Copenhagen process for 2011-2020. The vision underpinning the discussions was to be viewed in the light of the following statement by Ms Vassiliou, the Commissioner for Education and Training: "*Vocational training needs to fulfil two central objectives: to contribute to employability and economic growth on one hand, and to respond to larger societal challenges, in particular social cohesion, on the other.*"

The document resulting from this meeting, the "Bruges Communiqué", represents the roadmap for European work in the area of Vocational Education and Training (VET) over the next ten years. It should be viewed in the context of the Europe 2020 strategy and the strategic framework for Education and Training 2020/**Strategic Framework** for European Cooperation in **Education & Training – ET 2020**. The novelty of the Communiqué lies mainly in the short-term deliverables that it lists alongside the strategic objectives identified. In that sense, it is highly focused and output oriented, which makes it a strong document which reflects the work method known as the open method of coordination.

The Bruges Communiqué takes up the four priorities of the strategic framework for Education and Training 2020/**Strategic Framework** for European Cooperation in **Education & Training – ET 2020** and places them in the new wider and evolving European Union (EU) policy context. The result of all this is the presentation of a new vision for VET for the next ten years, together with 11 strategic objectives and 22 short-term deliverables alongside the reassertion of general principles of governance.

VET 2020 is described as attractive and inclusive, based on a learning outcomes approach and offering flexible pathways, as well

as flexible validation and recognition possibilities, within European education and training. In this vision, the importance of quality assurance of VET is reasserted and confirmed.

Furthermore, the Communiqué lists short-term deliverables specific to quality assurance. Some of them derive directly from the Recommendation adopted in June 2009 on the establishment of a European reference framework for quality



**Sophie Weisswange, Policy officer,  
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reference framework for quality assurance in VET (EQAVET Recommendation), such as the need for a review of implementation in 2013 or the need for guidance and technical support at EU level for the implementation of EQAVET.

Other short-term deliverables are new, such as asking the Member States to make progress towards national quality assurance frameworks for VET. Specific EQAVET strategic objectives are also set out, such as asking the Member States to establish a national quality assurance framework for VET providers by the end of 2015.

Other deliverables involve EQAVET but are broader in scope, such as asking the Member States to establish communication strategies focused on implementation and added value of European transparency tools or asking for support at EU level for the setting up of an enhanced coordination procedure which would see such tools implemented in the field of education and training.

Lastly, the Bruges Communiqué calls for intensified cooperation in the field of vocational education and training, with the use of the open method of coordination in particular, relying on the usual stakeholders of European governance, but also on a deeper involvement of VET providers through cooperation with VET provider associations.

The Bruges Communiqué represents a substantial step forward towards the achievement of these objectives, which were also embodied in the spirit that guided the development of the EQAVET Framework.

**Sophie Weissnagne**  
 Policy Officer, Directorate General Education  
 and Culture, European Commission

## Five important messages from Bruges Conference keynote address *“Towards a quality assured and integrated lifelong learning implementation strategy”<sup>1</sup>*

Never before has it been as important to ensure that European education and training systems equip our citizens to participate fully in society and to continue their professional and personal development throughout their lives. The Bruges Conference in December, hosted by the Belgian Presidency, addressed the importance of quality assurance in ensuring transparency between systems, and in fostering stronger links between VET and higher education as a key factor in building such a lifelong learning culture.

We have identified five key messages from the keynote address which could create a strategic policy context for future work.

The messages enable us to see education and training in a lifelong learning context which supports the learning progression of individuals and also strengthens the education and training sector across Europe. Coherent lifelong learning policies will enable education and training systems to respond successfully to the current pace of economic and social change, to the rapid transition to a knowledge-based society and to demographic pressures resulting from an ageing population in Europe.

The key messages are:

- 1. To make lifelong learning a reality we need to instigate a paradigm shift that puts the learner at the centre of the action so that policy initiatives at a European and national level will meet the diversity of needs.** More cohesive, integrated national systems which eliminate fault lines and facilitate flexible pathways for learners across the sub-sectors will, by their nature, be more cost effective and efficient. Such a paradigm shift requires a connected system covering the whole lifecycle, comprising all forms of formal, non-formal and informal

learning. Education and training provision needs to be re-structured to create flexible pathways that support lifelong learning.

## 2. A more coordinated, cooperative and comparative EU policy approach across education and training sub-sectors.

European policy achievements to date have been framed, mainly, to meet the needs of particular education and training sub-sectors (general, VET, higher and adult education). Quality assurance has evolved organically in each of the education and training sub-sectors over the last decade. Now is the time to look at how the sub-sectors can further enhance their respective quality assurance systems in a more unified and coordinated way thereby building greater mutual trust across sectors. The further development of the two quality frameworks – ESG<sup>2</sup> and EQAVET – over the coming decade should complement the renewed effort to realise lifelong learning by ensuring a more coordinated, cooperative and comparative approach to embedding a quality culture across vocational and higher education.

## 3. Member States need to review and renew their commitment to lifelong learning.

National lifelong learning strategies should be framed in very concrete terms and include integrated implementation strategies that span the entire education and training sector and are aligned with national employment policies by means of the provision of lifelong guidance services to all, including older adults.

## 4. Member States should develop concrete, coherent and comprehensive implementation plans that will ensure greater connectivity across their own education and training systems.

The development of comprehensive national frameworks, quality systems and lifelong guidance services will support this objective. There needs to be greater consensus amongst national education partners regarding lifelong learning strategies, objectives and implementation plans. The common principles for quality assurance in higher education and VET, agreed as part of the EQF

Recommendation, provide a basis for further dialogue and cooperation across all sub-sectors at both European and national levels.

## 5. Put in place a real and effective lifelong learning strategy, building on existing European tools and supports.

This can only be achieved by all education and training sub-sectors working collaboratively together at European and national levels. We need to promote discussions across the various sub-sectors in order to deconstruct the barriers that divide the sub-sectors and impede the development of flexible pathways for learners. In metaphorical terms, we need to break down the Berlin wall and construct a more unified system.

### End notes

1. Background paper for the Belgian EU Presidency conference on "[Quality assurance and transparency as interface between Vocational Education and Training, Schools and Higher Education to enhance mobility and to promote easier pathways to lifelong learning](#)" (Bruges, 6 December 2010).
2. [Standards and Guidelines in the European Higher Education Areas \(ESG\)](#). For more information check [www.engq.eu/files/ESG](http://www.engq.eu/files/ESG)



# FOCUS ON:

## 2<sup>nd</sup> EQAVET Annual Forum, Budapest 2011



25 EU countries were represented at the 2<sup>nd</sup> EQAVET Annual Forum

The second EQAVET Annual Forum took place in Budapest on 30 March to 1 April 2011. It was hosted by the National Institute of Vocational and Adult Education, Hungary. Twenty-five EU countries were represented at the Annual Forum, as well as the social partners at European level (ETUC, Business Europe, CEEP, UAPME). Of particular interest was the participation of Eurochambres, European Providers of Vocational Education and Training association (EUproVET), the Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions (OBESSU) and the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR).

for the EQAVET Network to discuss and agree on the strategic objectives and the actions to be undertaken by the Network up to 2012. They agreed that the focus has now shifted from a content process to an implementation process. Actions should henceforth be concentrated on the implementation and use of the EQAVET Recommendation in national contexts. This requires EQAVET to:

- a) foster an environment in which Member States and national reference points feel supported in the development of their strategies for the implementation of the Recommendation
- b) enhance cooperation in the field of quality assurance involving relevant stakeholder and EU initiatives, in ways which
- c) embed a culture of quality assurance within and across EU countries.



Dr Sándor Czomba, Minister of State for Employment Policy in Hungary opened the Annual Forum

The Annual Forum was officially opened by Dr Sándor Czomba, Minister of State for Employment Policy in Hungary. He noted that the Recommendation on the establishment of a European quality assurance reference framework for VET provides Member States with the appropriate instrument to respond to the current challenges by increasing EU cooperation in education and training and the quality and competences of human capital in the EU. This will allow the EU to compete globally.

Based on these principles, the work of the EQAVET Network will be centred on four thematic areas:



EQAVET members' discussion at the workshops

The thematic areas mirror the four strategic objectives which Member States agreed to be of crucial importance for supporting national implementation processes. There was a strong message from the social partners declaring their willingness and interest in supporting the use and

The Annual Forum provided an

and implementation of the EQAVET Recommendation in the Member States.

The major content of the work over the coming year will include:

**W**orking groups focusing on national reference points, social partners and other relevant stakeholders in developing guidelines to support a culture of using the Quality Cycle to build VET quality assurance systems and VET provision nationally.

**C**lustering of national reference points under common themes, issues, traditions, characteristics, etc., thereby creating opportunities and activities for the sharing and exchanging of information and good practice.

**D**eveloping a 'cascading approach' which identifies national reference points as the nodal point from which the information reaches and is 'translated' and adapted to very diversified national VET systems and providers.

**T**he crucial involvement of EU VET providers associations in the different actions and activities of the Network.

**S**ectoral Seminars which will involve industry representatives (employer associations, national sectoral councils/chambers, etc.) and national reference points and which will provide an important means of enhancing engagement with the labour market.

**I**ncreased cooperation with EQF and ECVET through the Reflection Group.

**I**ncreased cooperation with the EQAVET LEONARDO Project and with QALLL in order to ensure that a coherent image is projected to the target public and to avoid duplication of efforts and information.

Discussions and presentations at the Annual Forum are now available to view on **YouTube**

Click here to download the [report](#) or to view the videos



[EQAVET Annual Forum:](#)  
Uploaded by eqavet  
*youtube.com*

# EQAVET Quality Cycle - an online tool to support the development of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET in national contexts

The EQAVET Quality Cycle is an on-line software tool for assisting Quality Assurance National Reference Points and other relevant stakeholders to improve and implement their quality assurance system in line with the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQAVET Framework). It is designed to support national implementation processes and actions aligned to the Recommendation on the establishment of the EQAVET Framework.

The EQAVET Quality Cycle integrates the work achieved by the EQAVET working groups on guidelines and indicators (June 2010-February 2011). It complements the work carried out by ENQAVET (2008-2009) to create a multimedia guidance tool of high quality.

The tool is accessible from the homepage of the EQAVET website at [www.eqavet.eu](http://www.eqavet.eu)

The site is structured around the four stages of the EQAVET Quality Cycle – i.e. Planning, Implementation, Evaluation and Review. From any of the stages you can access information on the EQAVET indicative descriptors and indicators related to each stage of the Quality Cycle.

The tool provides a bundle of guidelines on how to develop and improve the quality assurance national systems for VET and addresses the needs of those countries that are in the process of building their systems and/or monitoring their systems. Thus, the tool is divided into two main sections which provide guidance on:

1. **Building your system or how to build and improve quality assurance systems (and VET provision)**
2. **Monitoring your system or how a system/provider can self-monitor its system and self-assess progress against targets**

The other main features of the IT tool are:

3. **Case studies**
4. **Glossary**

**1.** The **Building Your System** section focuses on the EQAVET indicative descriptors of each stage of the EQAVET Quality Cycle. From here, you can access three types of guidance in relation to indicative descriptors of the four stages of the Quality Cycle:

- **Case studies**, which provide illustrations of existing good practice in Member States in relation to each indicative descriptor.
- **The EQAVET indicators** that can be used to improve further and monitor each indicative descriptor.
- **Building Blocks** (developed by ENQAVET in 2008-2009) and related information derived from national experiences.

**EU Quality Assurance**  
in Vocational & Educational Training



Enter Site >

**2.** The **Monitoring Your System** section offers advice in terms of self-monitoring and self-measuring within the VET system/provision. It focuses on the Evaluation and Review phases of the EQAVET Quality Cycle. The Evaluation section focuses on the EQAVET indicators, offering technical, operational and practical direction or advice in relation to the application and/or implementation of ten EQAVET indicators. Each EQAVET indicator provides technical information in relation to the following implementation issues:

- Recommended use (indicators' policy rationale and usefulness)
- Related EQAVET indicators
- Technical and contextual caveats (implementation challenges)
- Technical notes (data elements needed to generate the indicators in the national context)
- Existing practices among Member States in relation to each indicator

The Review section advises Member States on how to report on the implementation of the Recommendation, which will form part of the E&T 2020 reporting process (which is being developed at the moment).

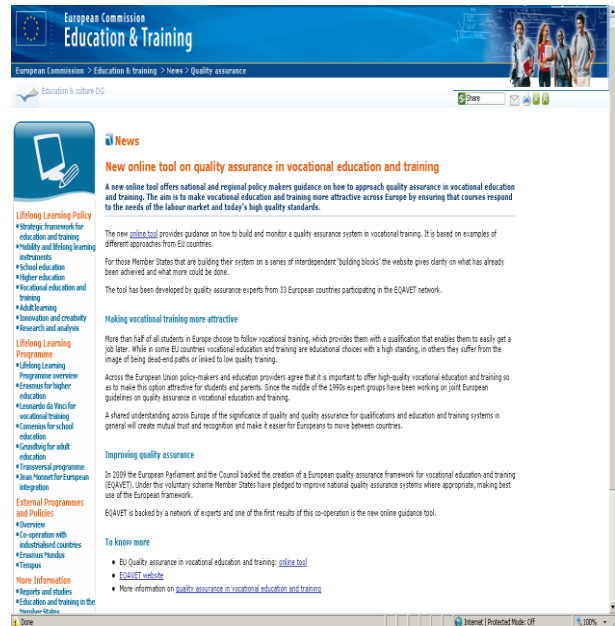
### 3. Case Studies

The IT tool gathers 55 Case Studies, which provide illustrations of existing practice among Member States in relation to the EQAVET indicative descriptors. Each case study offers access to national websites which provide more detailed information on the case study in question.

### 4. Glossary

offers an extended glossary of terms on quality assurance in VET, in which each term is defined in accordance with 'official' sources. These sources are provided together with their electronic links to related websites and documentation.

or from the EU Commission website at [www.ec.europa.eu/education](http://www.ec.europa.eu/education)



The Quality Cycle is accessible from:

[www.eqavet.eu](http://www.eqavet.eu)







## We asked some of our EQAVET experts 3 important questions



**Keith Brumfitt**



**Serban Iosifescu**



**Franz Gramlinger**

**How does good QA management increase the quality of VET provision?**

**P**arents, employers and learners want to know that their training is high quality and relevant. They want assurance that training organisations are continuing to improve, are committed to excellence and that they will put things right if something goes wrong. Good quality assurance and quality managements systems give everyone confidence in VET.

**G**ood quality management means observing standards but also meeting and even exceeding the needs of the customer. In this respect, better quality management in VET leads to improved access to education, enhanced employability and a better match with labour market needs and social needs, generally. Finally, good quality management generates stakeholder confidence in education and training systems.

**M**anagement means planning, doing as planned, keeping a close eye on outcomes and achievements, thinking about what to keep and what to change, how to improve - and then beginning to plan again. So it is simply the idea of the quality cycle and repeating that cycle continually with a view to increasing the quality of a product, a service or of VET provision.

**How does the EQAVET Reference Framework support the development of a culture of quality assurance and management?**

**Q**uality assurance can be complex and sophisticated – however at its simplest it is a process of checking and putting things right. The EQAVET Framework is simple and straightforward and can be used by any VET provider. It can be adapted for use by large and small organisations, for both initial and continuing training, and can be implemented at both system and training provider levels.

**T**he EQAVET Reference Framework offers a common ground for a better understanding of quality matters in education and training. The body of the Recommendation, the indicative descriptors and the indicators agreed at European level, were designed to achieve convergence for the further development of a common quality culture, generating transparency in qualifications, mobility of people and trust among stakeholders.

**T**he Reference Framework promotes the idea of the Quality Cycle and tells the Member States what they should do (use the Cycle and QM instruments, find the right indicators, learn from each other...) and why they should do it (to improve the VET system permanently, strengthen lifelong learning, support the implementation of the EQF, promote a quality culture...).

**How can the National Reference Points support this process?**

**E**ven simple systems need to be developed and training organisations need support. The national reference points are central to this process – they disseminate effective practice from across Europe in general and from within individual countries. They help training providers develop the four stages of the quality assurance cycle and they support Ministries in monitoring and developing the national systems of quality assurance.

**T**he national reference points are important in two ways. Firstly, they are an interface between European and national levels and serve to create an “alloy” of European policies and national policies. Secondly, they play at national level the role played by EQAVET at European level: developing the quality culture in education and training and generating transparency, mobility and trust.

**O**n a systems level, support is needed in two ways: 1. promote Quality Management as an important instrument in educational institutions in general (through information, events and networking); and 2. the Ministry of Education in implementing and improving a QM system for all VET schools and colleges.



## Promotion and development of the use of EQAVET framework unit: the support of the 5 selected EQAVET projects!

*Written by Pauline van den Bosch and Erica Delucchi on behalf of the Project consortium of the “EQAVET promotion and development of the use of EQAVET framework unit”:*

The development of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQAVET) is an important landmark in the move towards mainstreaming a quality approach across and within the European member states.

In order to promote the national development and implementation of EQAVET, the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, European Commission (EACEA) launched in 2010 a call for proposals “to support national projects for the development of a national approach to improve the quality assurance of vocational education and training systems by promoting and developing the use of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework in vocational education and training (EACEA/09/2010).”

As a result of the selection process of this call, the following 5 projects were selected for funding:

- “Qualification as a way to quality” (coordinated by the Austrian Agency for International Cooperation in Education and Research -OeAD);
- “Supporting the implementation of EQAVET in The Netherlands” (coordinated by the Centre for the Innovation of Education and Training -CINOP, The Netherlands);
- “Quality Assurance Tool for VET institutions” (coordinated by Malta Qualifications Council);
- “Capacity Building for the Romanian NRP: Promoting Quality” (coordinated by the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance on Pre-university Education - ARACIP);
- “Europeanisation of the national model for quality development in VET” (coordinated by the Centre for the Innovation of Education and Training - BIBB, Germany)

The co-funding of these national projects, which seek to develop original approaches to quality assurance by adopting the EQAVET, is a cornerstone of the EQAVET implementation strategy. In that respect, it is essential for

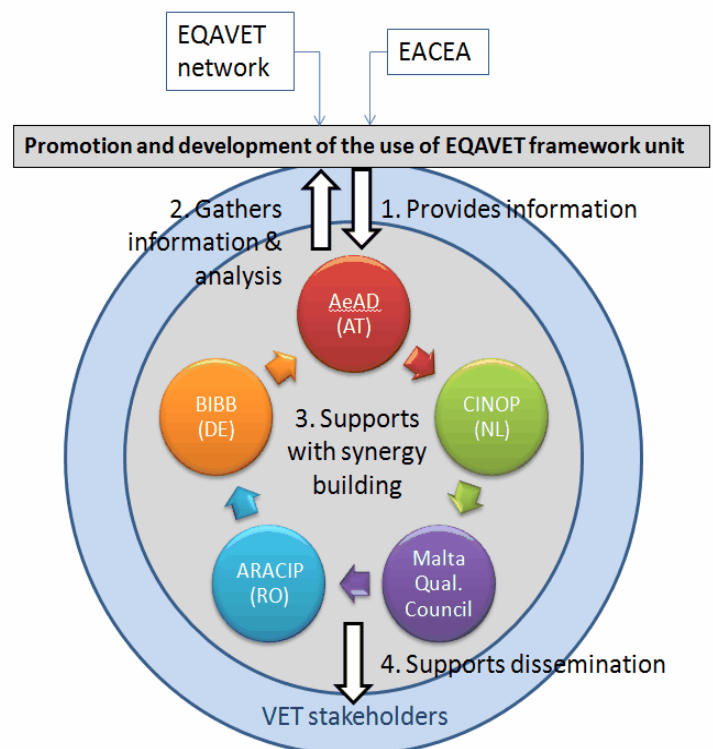
these projects to be part of the same strategic and result-oriented action, aimed at increasing their impact and their reach at the EU level.

To this aim, a specific section was dedicated in this call to “assistance with pooling and consolidating the work and outcomes of all proposals funded”....

This is exactly the aim of the “**Promotion and development of the use of EQAVET framework unit.**” It was set up to support the 5 national EQAVET projects in their work of pooling and consolidating the outcomes of their projects.

In headlines, the activities of the “EQAVET promotion unit” will revolve around four interlinked components:

- Information gathering and internal dissemination: Collection and information concerning the projects and developments in VET and Quality assurance in Europe.
- Knowledge processing, analysis and dossiers production: Analysis and research aimed at producing analytical reports for the Agency, the EC, the 5 projects and the EQAVET network.
- Synergy building: Establishing co-operation between projects with the aim of maximising impact.
- Network-based dissemination: Active contribution to dissemination of the concepts and philosophy of EQAVET.



The “EQAVET promotion unit” consists of four partners, all of whom have many years of experience in research, analysis, innovation and dissemination in VET:

- MENON Network: European Economic Interest Group in the field of innovation in learning; Develops observatories and marketing intelligence on learning, skills acquisition and key developments in human resource building. [www.menon.org](http://www.menon.org)
- SCIENTER: Centre for research and innovation in the field of VET and the development of quality approaches in different learning segments. [www.scienter.org](http://www.scienter.org)
- EFQUEL: The European Foundation for Quality in eLearning: The leading European network in the field of eLearning quality with over 100 member organisations all over Europe. [www.efquel.org](http://www.efquel.org)
- EVTA: The European Vocational Training Association; a European network with actors and experts in VET and labour market, covering 15 different countries. [www.evta.eu](http://www.evta.eu)

*More information on the 5 projects and the activities of the “EQAVET promotion unit” will be available on the website of EQAVET in the middle of July right after the first project seminar, which will be held on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of July in Vienna.*

## What's New



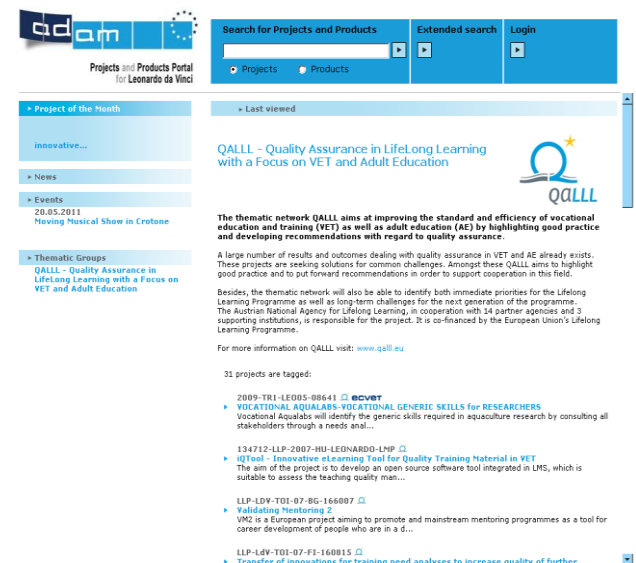
## QALL and good practice projects on quality assurance

**Find a list of good practice projects on quality assurance of the Leonardo da Vinci as well as of the Grundtvig programme on ADAM, the Projects and Products Portal.**

Thereby gain direct access to the results and products of QALL projects that have been recommended for further dissemination. On ADAM you can download project and product information including the following details:


- a short marketing and summary text of the projects,
- basic facts on project contractors, coordinators and the list of partners,
- specific information concerning quality assurance aspects,
- a link to the homepage of the projects.

**QALL projects on the ADAM portal at <http://www.adam-europe.eu/adam/thematicgroup/QALL>**



The screenshot shows the ADAM portal interface. At the top, there is a search bar with the text "Search for Projects and Products" and "Extended search" options. Below the search bar, there are tabs for "Projects" and "Products". The main content area displays a list of projects, including a "Project of the Month" section. The QALL project is highlighted, with a description: "QALL - Quality Assurance in Lifelong Learning with a Focus on VET and Adult Education". The description mentions that the thematic network QALL aims at improving the standard and efficiency of vocational education and training (VET) as well as adult education (AE) by highlighting good practice and developing recommendations with regard to quality assurance. It also states that a large number of results and outcomes dealing with quality assurance in VET and AE already exists, and that the thematic network will also be able to identify both immediate priorities for the Lifelong Learning Programme as well as long-term challenges for the next generation of the programme. The Austrian National Agency for Lifelong Learning, in cooperation with 14 partner agencies and 3 supporting institutions, is responsible for the project. It is co-financed by the European Union's Lifelong Learning Programme. For more information on QALL visit: [www.qall.eu](http://www.qall.eu)

31 projects are tagged:

- 2009-TR1-LEON5-08641  **EQAVET**
- VOCATIONAL AQUILABS- VOCATIONAL GENERIC SKILLS FOR RESEARCHERS  
Vocational Aquilabs will identify the generic skills required in aquaculture research by consulting all stakeholders through a needs anal...
- 134712-LFP-2007-HU-LEONARDO-LMP 
- iQTool - Innovative eLearning Tool For Quality Training Material in VET  
The aim of the project is to develop an open source software tool integrated in LMS, which is suitable to assess the teaching quality man...
- LFP-LDY-T01-07-BG-166007 
- Validating Mentoring 2  
VM2 is a European project aiming to promote and mainstream mentoring programmes as a tool for career development of people who are in a d...
- LFP-LAY-T01-07-FI-160815 
- Transfer of innovations for training need analyses to increase quality of further 

# EVTA: a new "one stop website" with the most relevant info and projects on mobility

EVTA has developed a "thematic dossier" on mobility as part of their website, with special reference to the European reference tools, including EQAVET. . The "thematic dossier" compiles an account of what is happening in Europe in the VET field (left side) and what EVTA is doing (right side). In the middle, users have access to related information which contextualises the subject matter. The main purpose of this website is to make EU policies more readily available to EVTA members.

**Find more at:**

[http://www.evta.net/evta\\_mobility\\_html/about\\_quality.html](http://www.evta.net/evta_mobility_html/about_quality.html)

