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Introduction

The five national projects set up to support the EQAVET implementation at a national level have now come to an end. The projects approached EQAVET from different perspectives. They have prepared stocktaking and inventory reports, manuals for quality assurance, curricula and certification processes for quality managers, Guidelines and a solid communication strategy to involve stakeholders in Quality assurance.

The projects also tested their approach and tools towards developments and combinations of the existing quality cultures. The work of the pilot projects was a crucial opportunity to get stakeholders on board on quality issues at a larger scale.

EQAVET-projects has initiated several activities in order to disseminate the outcomes of the five projects to a larger audience and group of beneficiaries.

On the 17th and 18th of January 2013, in Brussels, a European conference was organized to offer more insight in these results of the work of the EQAVET projects. The methods and tools elaborated by the projects were shared, and participants reflected on the needs for further development of EQAVET from different perspectives.

The conference hosted about 150 persons bringing together policy makers at different levels, as well as practitioners, researcher, experts and representatives from the national ministries, stakeholders and multipliers, such as for example the Lifelong learning programme National Agencies. The attendance level was high, confirming that the interest for EQAVET is high among European stakeholders and policy makers and the need to exchange

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views and work together is widely felt.

More information about the conference can be found online: <http://eqavetprojects.eu/conference-main-page/>

From the feedback received, it was clear that the topics addressed by the conference were interesting to a wider audience, who would welcome further interventions in the field of Quality assurance in VET. Therefore, a series of webinars were organized by Eqavet Projects to build further on the topics which were expressed by the partners as highly relevant and interesting.

In the period from April till June 2013 four webinars are planned to provide an opportunity for in-depth discussion on themes that have been raised during the conference and merit further attention on the European scene.

Another initiative is the development of the “EQAVET toolbox”, where all the tools, methodologies and experiences of the five EQAVET projects are brought together per challenge and per project in an online tool.

Read more about the webinars and the toolbox in this edition of the EQAVET newsletter supplement, or online on the EQAVET PROJECTS website: <http://www.eqavetprojects.eu/>.

The webinars: capitalizing on the outcomes of the European Conference on Quality in VET

Following the success of the ‘European Conference on Quality in VET’, held in Brussels on 17-18 January 2013, the EQAVET Projects team has launched a series of webinars on topics connected to the themes of the conference. Speakers from the conference have been invited to present a practical point of view related to their expertise and deepen the ties between VET and other education levels and mechanisms. Since webinars are first of all opportunities for discussion and exchange between practitioners, rather than intellectual exchanges, speakers were invited to give brief presentations and then stimulate the discussion among

participants. This approach was very well received in the first webinar, which took place on April 23rd. The following session is held on May 30th, then the last two webinars will be held on June 6th and June 19th. Registration is free and easily carried out online, more information here: <http://eqavetprojects.eu/webinars/>.

The programme of the next two webinars follows:

WEBINAR

Thursday 6 June 2013, 10.00 – 12.00 CET

Quality Assurance in VET and Higher Education: creating synergies

Times are changing, and boundaries between higher education and vocational education systems are becoming more and more blurred. We can imagine for example that a university and a VET provider collaborate to organise programmes of high professional qualification; or the short specialized “executive” courses that HEIs provide to company professionals. In order to create more transparency and mutual trust between educational systems, quality assurance can contribute to solutions. New questions then arise, such as:

- Are Quality Assurance approaches really different in VET and Higher Education?
- What happens when there is a single authority dealing with both?
- Are there convergence areas in the way VET and Higher Education Quality Assurance are evolving?

Speaker: Maria Kelo, Director of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)

WEBINAR

19 June 2013, 10.00 – 12.00 CET

VET quality for all: going beyond pilot projects

Many people in organisations have carried out a project or other initiative in the field of quality assurance. But how can we turn a “concept” into a “daily routine”? Sustainability will only be reached if people share the same passion or interest and when people see the benefit and opportunities for use in their own context. As projects are context related, it is therefore also a challenge to see why good practices are working in a particular context and under which conditions they can be used in other contexts.

- What can be done to transfer and scale up successful pilot projects?
- How to guarantee that quality in VET is generalized across places and sub-sectors?
- What is the role of practitioners' communities in generalizing quality?
- How important is it to raise learners' awareness on the VET quality criteria?
- How important is it that learners' representatives participate in the technical and institutional processes where VET quality culture and procedures are defined and updated?

Speaker: Tiia Meuronen, Policy Officer of Vocational Education and Training (VET) of the Organising Bureau of European School

The EQAVET Toolbox: An opportunity to benefit from good practices and tools in EQAVET implementation

“When proposing Quality Assurance for Vocational Education and training (VET), what can be standardized internationally and how much needs to reflect contextual specificities of VET systems?”

From 2011 – 2013 five projects on EQAVET implementation were carried out by the National Quality Assurance Coordination Points. Each of the five projects had a different target groups, a different scope and different approach to improve quality assurance in VET with the help of the EQAVET framework.

They have prepared stocktaking and inventory reports, manuals for quality assurance, curricula and certification process for quality managers, communication strategy to involve stakeholders in Quality assurance and Guidelines. These documents answer to a growing need for information, innovative examples and guidelines on the implementation of EQAVET at different systemic levels.

Even though the projects are set up from different perspectives, it seemed that the projects all had to deal with similar challenges in their ‘journey towards EQAVET promotion and implementation.’ However, the solutions for these challenges defined by the projects differ in type, action and priority.

The varieties of scope, of priorities and approaches are an asset and make exchange and capitalization rich and useful.

The “EQAVET Toolbox” has been set up to make all the actors in quality assurance at system or VET providers level aware of existing practices in the field of EQAVET implementation. The toolbox captures the most important tools, methodologies, and experiences in a ‘one-stop’ website.

The toolbox is designed with the 4 challenges (culture, stakeholders, compliance and sustainability) as entries for the products. The reason for this approach is recognition. It is likely that other actors in quality assurance have to deal with similar



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challenges when promoting and implementing EQAVET.

“The “EQAVET Toolbox” is developed to support all people who are interested in quality assurance or those who are responsible for setting up quality assurance systems in their organization. It provides not only awareness raising strategies and tools, but also concrete examples of how to create a culture for quality improvement at VET providers' level.”

What can you find in the toolbox?

- Competence profiles, curricular frameworks and certification frameworks for persons involved in quality assurance management;
- Methods for setting up stocktaking surveys at VET providers' level;
- Good practices on how to improve a culture for quality improvement at VET providers' level from a bottom up approach;
- Good practices on how to involve stakeholders via regional workshops;
- Guidelines for practitioners, bringing together and clarifying the most relevant information on QA for the users;
- Recommendations on how EQAVET and existing quality assurance system can work together;
- Testimonials from the five EQAVET projects;
- An online community of practice to get and stay in touch with peers.

<http://www.eqavetprojects.eu/toolbox>