Projects
EQAVET

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Introduction

As the Maltese team has stated: "One year has passed since the First EQAVET Project Meeting. It was an eventful day indeed. We were all so full of ideas, questions, and concerns about our journey towards EQAVET."

In the previous newsletter supplements you got to know the EQAVET projects better: aims, objectives, activities and first challenges but…where are they right now?
How was the enthusiasm channeled?

VET-CERT Qualification as a Way to Quality: Certification of Persons Holding Functions in Quality Management Systems in Initial VET and in Adult Education (www.vet-cert.at)

During the second project year, the VET-CERT project will be finished with the aim of achieving all the set aims and goals. At the moment they have completed the work on two of the products: Stocktaking Report and the Competence Profiles which are also available at the project website www.vet-cert.at.
Accordingly they have already started the work on the Curricular Framework and on the Certification Concept and this work will continue until the end of November 2012.
The last part of the project year will be devoted to the development of the recommendations for implementations of the VET-CERT project products and results both in Austria and participating countries.
Versatile dissemination work will continue to play a major role among the project activities. The project website will be regularly updated and maintained and it will serve as the main forum for the project communication, 3 new issues of

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project newsletter will be published during the second year of the project and presentations of the project and its results in various events both in Austria and abroad are to be conducted, just to give some examples of the core dissemination activities planned for the second project year. Project workshops will be organized, at least 2 national and 1 international, beside the workshops with the development team for Curricular Framework and Certification Concept. Project intern work meetings and consultations will also be organized for the support of efficient and successful project implementation.

On the 3rd of December 2012, the VET-CERT Final Conference will be organized in Vienna, Austria where all the products and results as well as the concept for the recommendations of implementation will be presented and discussed.

Supporting the implementation of EQAVET in The Netherlands (http://www.eqavet.nl/)

The project aims at stimulating a culture of quality improvement at provider level to do Test and Taste for VET providers, promote the EQAVET recommendation in the Netherlands and have all the stakeholders in QA on board.
The project developed an inventory providing information about QA practices at provider level. The report (in Dutch) can be found here.
In the second phase pilot teams now work on stimulating quality awareness at team level with team and management meetings. Often quality assurance focusses on the 'visible' aspects like handbooks and structures. With these pilots we aim to foster change by focusing also on the 'less visible' aspects like individual values and team culture.

The results of the pilots will be gathered, together with the instruments used during the team and management sessions for other schools and interested teams to use and learn. This publication will be available end 2012 and presented during our final conference.

Quality Assurance Tool for VET Institutions (www.eqavetmalta.org.mt)

The Quality Assurance Manual for VET Institutions, the main deliverable of the EQAVET Malta Project, will provide Maltese public and private VET providers alike a step by step guidance to the creation or alignment of a Quality Assurance System based on and compliant to EQAVET Standards.

This Manual will first and foremost introduce the reader/VET institute to the concept of Quality Assurance and to its pertinence to the provision of quality education. The said Manual will also inform the reader on the Copenhagen Process, the EQAVET Community and the journey to improve the performance, quality and attractiveness of VET in Europe.

The Quality Assurance Manual will be developed after the pilot implementation of EQAVET in Malta in the 4 Partner VET Institutions i.e. the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST), the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS), the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) and Clear Dimension Limited (CDL), which pilot exercise will be finalised by end August 2012. Challenges, solutions and good practices in the implementation process will feed into the final Manual. The foreign partners in the Project CNDIPT (RO), ISFOL (IT), IDEKE (GR) have so far provided and will continue providing their expert advice in the development of all Project deliverables.

The Final EQAVET Conference is the 18th January 2012 and it will be a one-day conference. This conference will serve the aim of presenting the Project outputs and mainly the Quality Assurance Manual which would have been published by that time. The Conference will particularly aim to reach out to VET providers which through national laws will eventually be required to create a Quality Assurance system or to align their existing Quality Assurance system to EQAVET standards in order for them to obtain provider accreditation from the Maltese Accreditation Body. Copies of the Quality Assurance Manual will be distributed on the day.

The project website www.eqavetmalta.org.mt will be further enhanced with the inclusion of all the deliverables developed by the Partnership, with the facility for the general public to access all the information pertinent to EQAVET and its Implementation in Malta.

On 5th April, 25th April, 26th April and 9th May, ITS, ETC, CDL and MCAST respectively, organised a Quality Assurance Seminar for their academic and non-academic staff. In the case of CDL the seminar targeted the private VET Providers in Malta. These seminars were organised to inform the audience about the EQAVET concept, about EQAVET's implementation in Malta through the Quality Assurance Tool for VET Institutions Project but most importantly to elicit and collect the feedback of the Institutes' academic and non-academic staff and their perceived role in a Quality Assurance System. The seminars also consisted of Workshops which enabled and facilitated discussion amongst the interested parties. The Maltese VET Institutes participating in the Project attended each other's Seminars to provide support and to further develop their knowledge on Quality Assurance.

QUALVET@RO Capacity Building for the Romanian NRP: Promoting Quality

On short term, this project is working on ensuring a proper dissemination of information regarding the EU Tools (mainly EQAVET but also EQF, ECVET, Europass) and a closer cooperation among stakeholders – mainly with the social partners. All the projects deliverables are conceived for this purpose:

♦ The website and database will ensure a sum of relevant information, in Romanian language, contributing at the implementation of relevant EU Policies in Romania. One of the conclusions issued at the last EQAVET Forum (Budapest - 31 March and 1 April 2011) was the lack of relevant information in other languages than English, French and German – especially for the "grass-roots" stakeholders: training providers, employers, employees searching workplaces or following training programmes etc.).

♦ The printed materials, the Regional Workshops and the Conferences will reach the stakeholders who prefer the classical ways of dissemination.

♦ The communication strategy, "appropriated" by the relevant stakeholders, will ensure sustainability and continuity of the communication process and will consolidate the mutual trust among stakeholders. The draft strategy was presented in January and made public in February. It will be finalized in October 2012 after having

received feedbacks from relevant stakeholders via website, conferences and workshops.

On medium and long term, due to the national context, the Communication Strategy and the dissemination of the information regarding the EU Tools (EQAVET, EQF, ECVET etc.) is even more necessary. The Communication Strategy will cover both IVET and CVET (the coherence and the communication among these two subsystems being major issues in Romania). The project is administrated by two national agency with technical role (ARACIP for quality assurance issues and CNDIPT in the field of initial VET development) but all main institutions with roles in policy making there will be involved: the Ministries of Education and of Labour, the National Qualification Authority and the National Centre for Staff Training In Pre-University Education. The project strongly support the idea that a commonly developed strategy for communication will enhance the cooperation at national level in the field of VET policies, ensuring:

♦ an enhanced cooperation among the Romanian National Reference Point members;

♦ an improved communication with all stakeholders, leading to a better quality of VET;

♦ a faster adoption of measures regarding the implementation the EQAVET Recommendation and of all other EU policy initiatives and tools (as such EQF, ECVET etc.);

♦ a better knowledge of the European Policies and the development of best practices in VET;

♦ am improved input for the EQAVET network.

Europeanisation of the National Pilot Initiative for Quality Development and Assurance in Company-Based Vocational Education and Training (www.deqa-vet.de/en/ENIQAB.php)

ENIQAB links the European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET) initiative with the 10 National Pilot Projects focusing on quality assurance and quality development. The latters have been promoted by BIBB using funding made available by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF).

The project ENIQAB creates transnational synopses on quality development and assurance in VET. Particular emphasis is placed on the three research foci of the pilot projects, which all relate to the company-based training process and focus on SME:

♦ Development of instruments of in-company quality assurance and development;

♦ Development communication and cooperation structures;

♦ Development of a qualification concept for the training personnel.

In order to achieve the aims of ENIQAB, we still plan the following measures for the remaining project period:
The next step will be the publication of an English-language brochure on the pilot projects. This will allow the partners a more intense involvement in the projects and the developed tools and a further possibility to give their feedback. Subsequently we considered to offer the partners a visitor's programme at a project they are especially interested in.

Obviously the partners will continue to achieve newsletters about the projects. Parallel to this, German-language newsletters will further inform the stakeholders of the pilot projects about European initiatives in quality assurance and development.

Furthermore we are organizing two more ENIQAB workshops. The next one will take place on 13th/14th September together with the DEQA-VET Annual Conference.

In addition, project partners will organize dissemination activities (conferences and seminars) to present project results and discuss the concepts of QA.

An important result of the project ENIQAB will be the assessment of guidelines/examples of good practice referring to the pilot projects and the tools they developed.

Once upon a time, a year ago…

The direction towards EQAVET has taken the shape of a "possible harmonization" balancing flexibility and standardization. In order to keep the national systems embedded in the European dimension the projects had experienced different solutions- from effective communication strategy and awareness raising, synergies with other European tools, bridges with current QA systems to opportunities to stakeholders- at different system levels (micro-meso and macro).
The projects' stage of development is advanced – as it is noticeable above- and in late autumn the very final results- already agreed by the stakeholders - will be ready for a wide spreading in both classical and internet based ways.