EQAVET

European Quality Assurance
in Vocational Education and Training

Supporting the implementation of the
European Quality Assurance Reference Framework
for Vocational Education and Training

WORK PROGRAMME
TO SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE RECOMMENDATION ON THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF A EUROPEAN QUALITY ASSURANCE REFERENCE
FRAMEWORK FOR VET

2010-2012

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INTRODUCTION

This work programme presents an overview of the policy context for the development and improvement of quality assurance in European VET systems within the parameters of the European Network responsible for the implementation of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (Reference Framework).

The work programme is designed to give a concrete shape to the implementation of the Recommendation on the establishment of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework by addressing the new dynamic for European cooperation in quality assurance which it offers. There are three main strands to the work programme:

1. It focuses on the creation of a well functioning community of practice for the quality assurance of VET at European level brings together the Member States, the Social Partners and the European Commission.
2. It provides technical and content support to the Quality Assurance National Reference Points.
3. It strengthens links with the Lifelong Learning Programme and the Leonardo da Vinci projects, as well as the other European instruments to foster mobility and transparency such as ECVET and EQF that have an important quality assurance dimension.

The work programme suggests the range and type of activities which are necessary to ensure that the Recommendation is implemented in a way which embeds a culture of quality assurance throughout the EU.

The work programme builds on the results of the work already undertaken in quality assurance of VET at European level, most notably within the framework of the European Network for Quality Assurance in VET (ENQA-VET) in its work programme 2008-2009[1].

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[1] In October 2005, ENQA-VET was established by the European Commission in order to provide a platform for members to support the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration. Since then, ENQA-VET has provided support to its Members and the Commission as they worked together in reaching an increased level of understanding of the importance of quality assurance in VET and working towards the achievement of common priorities and objectives.

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1. BACKGROUND: EUROPEAN POLICY CONTEXT

Since 2000 and the launch of the Lisbon Process there has been a clearly articulated high level political commitment to the importance of education and training in ensuring that Europe develops as the leading high performing knowledge society in the world. Similarly since 2002 the Copenhagen Process has created the policy context which has contributed to increasing voluntary cooperation in vocational education and training, in order to promote mutual trust, transparency and recognition of competences and qualifications. This is seen as a basis for increasing mobility of young people and workers and for facilitating access to lifelong learning. This year 2010 marks the beginning of a new phase with the update of the Lisbon strategy on 3 March 2010 through the adoption of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth[2] and the review of the Copenhagen Process for the next 10 years with the adoption of the Bruges communiqué foreseen on 7 December 2010.

1. 1. Education and Training – key players in developing Europe's response to the challenges of the global economy

European cooperation in education and training is a key driver of reform and has created new ways of working between Member States and other key stakeholders throughout the continuum of the lifelong learning process. The Bologna Process in higher education, the Education and Training Work Programme 2010 and its successor, the Renewed Education Strategy 2020, and an increased focus on the importance of early years and adult education in a lifelong learning context have contributed to creating an enhanced awareness of the importance of holistic approaches to policymaking in education and training and the need to focus on issues of context when addressing implementation issues.

This new reality is mirrored in the EU Lifelong Learning Programme[3] which has as its priority to reinforce the contribution made by education and training to achieving the Lisbon goal of making the EU the most competitive knowledge-based economy, with sustainable economic development, more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. The Lifelong Learning Programme plays a key role in raising skill levels, supporting the implementation and development of coherent and comprehensive lifelong development strategies and promoting innovation and creativity.

The European Council of Spring 2008 invited the Commission to provide an assessment of skills needs up to 2020, taking account of technological and demographic change.

The Commission's Communication (Dec 08) on New Skills for New Jobs: *Anticipating and matching labour market and skills needs[4]*, sets out a strategy in four strands:
- Improve the monitoring of short-term trends on the European labour market and develop tools and services to promote job guidance and mobility and to address skills mismatches.
- Help to develop better information on skills needs in the EU in the medium and long-term, with regularly updated projections of future labour market trends and analysis of skills needs by sector (e.g. most notably via CEDEFOP which has recently published a skills forecast to 2020[5]).
- Improve our understanding of global challenges related to skills and jobs through cooperation with third countries and international organisations (OECD and ILO).

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[2] COM (2010)2020.
[3] Lifelong Learning Programme General Call for Proposals 2008-2010-Update 2009- Strategic Priorities.
[4] *'New Skills for New Jobs. Anticipating and matching labour market and skills needs'*, Communication from the Commission, COM(2008) 868, 16 December 2008
[5] CEDEFOP: *'Skill needs in Europe: Focus on 2020'*; Luxemburg, 2008.

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- Help Member States, regions and others involved in skill upgrading and matching by mobilising existing Community policies (such as the strategic framework for cooperation in education and training) and European funds[6].

1. 2.   The Copenhagen Process – supporting reform of VET

The Copenhagen Process has contributed to increasing the culture of voluntary cooperation in vocational education and training based on common objectives in order to promote mutual trust, transparency and recognition of competences and qualifications. This is a pre-requisite for increasing the mobility of young people and workers and for facilitating access to lifelong learning.

This process calls for a review of the state of play every two years. The Bordeaux Communiqué[7] provides the most updated review of the Copenhagen Process. It attests to its success in developing the tools and instruments which play such an important role in promoting the recognition of knowledge, skills and competence and for the quality of systems. Among the significant contributions identified in the Communiqué are: the common European principles for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning, Europass, the European Qualifications Framework, the European Credit system for VET (ECVET) and the European quality assurance reference framework. The Communiqué draws particular attention to the important role which the working methods (creation of European networks, national consultations, pilot projects and best practice exchanges) have played in promoting awareness among stakeholders and in promoting the use of common tools.

The Communiqué highlights three major areas where work is necessary in order to promote the excellence of quality VET systems namely through developing quality assurance mechanisms by promoting the Recommendation on the establishment of a European quality assurance reference framework, participating in the European network for quality assurance and supporting the implementation of EQF by promoting mutual trust.

The next review of the Copenhagen Process will take place in Bruges, under the Belgian Presidency of the EU, at the end of 2010. The Bruges review will lead to the Bruges Communiqué, to be adopted at the informal meeting of Education Ministers on 7 December 2010. The aim of this review is to set priorities for European cooperation in VET for the next 10 years, up to 2020. In addition, it will define the priority areas which should be tackled in the short term.

The framework for this review will be the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020) as well as the Europe 2020 strategy. These two policy developments will bring guidance to the policy work at the EU level, with obvious implications for vocational education and training at European level.

The Commission will provide a contribution to the debate on the future cooperation in VET in the framework of the Bruges Review by presenting in May 2010 a Commission Communication on the future European cooperation in VET ("A new impetus for European cooperation on Vocational Education and Training").

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[6] This Communication echoes the Recommendation on the establishment of the European quality assurance reference framework particularly in relation to matching training with labour market needs and which is reflected in the list of indicators of annex 2 of the Recommendation in particular in qualitative indicator number 9.

[7] Communiqué of the European Ministers for vocational education and training, the European Social partners and the European Commission, meeting in Bordeaux on 26 November 2008 to review the priorities and strategies of the Copenhagen process.

Furthermore, the Communication will provide a vision of VET policy in Europe up to 2020 embedded in the priorities of the Europe 2020 strategy, the Strategic Framework for European cooperation in Education and Training – ET2020 and the New Skills for New Jobs initiative.

Quality assurance will clearly have an underpinning role to play in all these initiatives.

1. 3.   Importance of high quality VET

High quality VET has a crucial role to play in ensuring countries' capacity to respond to the economic challenges they face. This role is well described in a recent report on the implementation of the Education and Training 2010 work programme[8]. The report stresses that research and innovation need a broad skills base in the population. Excellence, creativity and learning-to-learn skills must be developed in all systems and levels of education and training. It highlights the key role that schools and VET can play in facilitating innovation. High quality VET, for example, can contribute to innovation at the workplace[9].

This report also stresses other key challenges such as the need to continue efforts in European countries to improve the quality and attractiveness of VET which is a key priority of the Copenhagen process[10] and of the recently adopted Europe 2020 strategy. While some countries have established advanced and comprehensive quality assurance systems the report emphasises that much more work needs to be done to develop a culture of quality assurance and development within VET systems.

Despite these advances, VET sometimes suffers from being poorly integrated with the rest of the education system. There is not enough cognisance of the role it can play in contributing to retaining potential drop-outs in education and training where earlier levels of school provide the key competences needed to enter VET. It stresses that there is room for more progress in reducing obstacles to progression between VET and further or higher education[11].

The implementation of the EQF in the Member States, and the development of national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) marks a considerable step forward in terms of supporting mobility of learners and workers and transparency of qualifications. Mutual trust in quality assurance processes is a crucial part of this process. The referencing reporting currently underway in the Member States comprises a part on how the Member States quality assure their Education and Training systems (see criteria 5 and 6 of the 10 referencing criteria)[12].

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[8] 2008 Joint progress report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the "Education & Training 2010 work programme" {SEC(2007) 1484}.
[9] ibid. page 9
[10] Conclusions of the Council on the future priorities for enhanced European cooperation on Vocational Education and Training. Council document 14474/06, 30 October 2006.
[11] 2008 Joint progress report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the "Education & Training 2010 work programme" {SEC (2007) 1484}, page 7.
[12] The EQF Recommendation invites countries to refer their national qualifications levels to the EQF by 2010. To meet this deadline and to ensure that the referencing process is designed in such a way that it can be understood and trusted by stakeholders in all countries involved, the EQF Advisory Group has agreed on a set of criteria and procedures to guide this process (10 criteria/procedures).
See criteria 5 and 6 of the 10 referring criteria:
    5) *The national quality assurance system(s) for education and training refer (s) to the national qualifications*
    framework or system and are consistent with the relevant European principles and guidelines (as indicated in annex
    3 of the Recommendation)
    6) *The referencing process shall include the stated agreement of the relevant quality assurance bodies.*

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1. 4. The European Quality Assurance Reference Framework

The adoption of the Council and Parliament Recommendation on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training creates a new legislative basis for promoting cooperation between EU Member States on issues of quality assurance in VET. It also provides the essential underpinning mechanism for ensuring the successful implementation of EQF and ECVET. The Recommendation calls for Member States to participate fully in a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework Network and to support well functioning quality assurance national reference points in their Member States.

Such a network will provide a basis for a structured and sustainable platform for members to exchange information and experience, to engage themselves in a process of mutual learning and consensus building which will lead to the further development of common principles, reference criteria and indicators as well as tools for quality improvement in VET at national, regional and local levels as appropriate.

The importance of the role of the Network is clearly enunciated in the Recommendation. This network will play a key role in enabling the Member States to meet their responsibilities under the Recommendation. Its working methodology which should build on the principles of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) will enable it to provide support to its Members and the Commission as they work together in reaching an increased level of understanding of the importance of quality assurance in VET and working towards the achievement of common priorities and objectives.

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2. IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATION AND ROLE OF THE NETWORK

The Recommendation establishes the policy context for European cooperation in quality assurance in VET in the coming years. The quality assurance network to be coordinated by the European Commission and bringing together the Member States and the Social Partners has the potential to become the key actor in promoting a culture of quality assurance of VET in Europe and facilitating the networking of key players at European and Member State levels.

2. 1.   Strategic objectives of the Recommendation

The Recommendation on the establishment of a European framework for the quality assurance of VET is situated within an ongoing policy process at European level designed to improve education and training and ensure that Europe becomes a knowledge-based and highly skilled economy capable of responding rapidly and flexibly to the challenges faced by Member States. The continuing improvement of VET systems is necessary so that they can help increase employability and social inclusion and improve access to lifelong learning for all, including disadvantaged people.

The adoption of the Recommendation marks a new phase of the work in quality assurance of VET which will bring together policymaking and policy-implementation expertise and build on the considerable experience of the Member States and the Commission in addressing quality assurance issues within the framework of the follow-up of the Copenhagen Process since 2002[13].

The Reference Framework provides a systemic approach to quality which can be applied at VET-system, VET-provider and qualification-awarding levels. It provides a strong emphasis on monitoring and improving quality by combining internal and external evaluation, review and processes for improvement, supported by measurement and qualitative analysis. The Reference Framework should be a basis for further development through cooperation at European, national, regional and local levels.

In this context, the **strategic objectives** of the Recommendation are to encourage Member States to:

- Further develop the Reference Framework in order to promote and monitor the continuous improvement of their VET systems, promote lifelong learning strategies and the implementation of the EQF.
- Make greater use of the European Quality Charter for Mobility and promote a culture of quality improvement and innovation at all levels and place an increased emphasis on the transition from VET to higher education.
- Strengthen their quality assurance systems at national level and make the best use of the Reference Framework involving the Social Partners, regional and local authorities and other relevant stakeholders as appropriate.
- Use the opportunities for cooperation provided by the Recommendation as a basis for developing common principles, reference criteria, indicators, and other instruments as appropriate to support the development of a culture of quality assurance in VET.

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[13] The first Technical Working Group on Quality Assurance was established by the European Commission in 2002 and ENQA-VET was formally launched at the Quality Forum in Dublin in 2005. Since 2008 ENQA-VET has been funded to implement a programme of activities within the context of the Open Method of Coordination by the Member States and the European Commission. The contribution of ETF and Cedefop has contributed to the generation of an added value knowledge on issues concerning VET, which has supported the European Commission in its work to formulate relevant, up-to-date and informed policy initiatives.

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▪ Establish, where this does not exist, national reference points which will engage with the relative actors in their national contexts in order to ensure the effective implementation of the Recommendation.

2. 2.   Supporting   the implementation of the Recommendation

The strategic objectives of the Recommendation suggest a number of key areas where the support will be necessary if the effective implementation of the Recommendation is to be assured. These are:

1. support the implementation of the Recommendation by facilitating cooperation, strengthening the national reference points and acting as a catalyst for the development of a sense of ownership, appropriate structures, methodologies, and instruments;
2. support quality improvement and assurance in VET within Member States and across systems at a European level in support of the developing EU policy context for VET within the framework of the follow-up of the Copenhagen process and ensure coordination with other European initiatives in the field of education and training, notably EQF and ECVET;
3. support the quality assurance dimension which is an essential underpinning of mobility of citizens for learning and employment and for the successful implementation of policy instruments such as EQF and ECVET;
4. encourage policymakers and VET providers to see quality assurance of VET in a life long learning context and foster a coordinated approach with general, higher and adult education in order to create permeable and flexible education pathways and labour-market relevance, following the priorities of the European 2020 strategy (ET 2020);
5. ensure that the implementation of effective quality assurance measures within VET systems increases the quality of learning in VET and of the recognition of learners' qualifications at the end of each vocational education and training phase whether in formal VET systems, enterprises or informal learning contexts;
6. support the development of effective quality assurance and improvement methodologies within VET systems in order to promote mutual trust and effective partnerships between VET and key stakeholders in an informed manner by relying on the expertise of Cedefop and ETF.

2. 3.   Mandate of the Network

The Network provides a European platform that:

▪ facilitates sustainable cooperation between countries and exchange of information and experience;
▪ promotes a culture of quality improvement;
▪ further develops common principles, reference criteria and indicators, guidelines and tools for quality improvement in VET at national, regional and local level as appropriate, in particular it defines the reference criteria to be used in the progress report to be submitted by the Member States by 18 June 2013.

The Network contributes to policy development in this area through concrete proposals and initiatives as appropriate. It exploits results of the Leonardo da Vinci programme related with quality assurance and promotes contacts with the actors in charge of quality assurance in higher education.

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These activities will enable the Network to play a key role in enabling the Member States to fulfil their commitments in terms of monitoring, steering, evaluation and improvement of actions undertaken in the field of quality assurance of VET systems.

In the achievement of these tasks the Network will also rely on the expertise of Cedefop and ETF.

2. 4. Role of the Network

The role of the Network has the following dimensions which are important in ensuring the effective implementation of the Reference Framework:

   a) Promotion, cooperation, networking

The Network provides a forum for supporting a culture of quality assurance of VET through informing the national reference points, key stakeholders, sectoral representatives at European level. In this role the Network will support the national reference points as nodal points for dissemination of information and awareness rising within their own national and regional contexts as appropriate. Particular attention will be paid to ensuring that new members of the Network are fully supported to understand the significance of the work undertaken in quality assurance of VET within the context of the Copenhagen Process.

The Network will advise on strategic issues arising from the implementation of the Reference Framework and their broader policy implications within the context of the renewed Education Strategy 2020.
It will coordinate with the work undertaken in EQF and ECVET in order to ensure a coordinated approach to supporting the quality assurance dimension of the EQF and ECVET.

The Network will also ensure and foster close cooperation with the other education sectors, notably with higher education.

   b) Development of guidelines and instruments

The Network will develop instruments/guidelines/procedures and reference criteria to support implementation, reviewing and reporting processes. This task will involve fostering:
   -   Support for countries in conjunction with national authorities and the national reference points to develop their implementation approaches
   -   Provision of guidelines for using reporting process as defined in the Recommendation to facilitate change in systems

   c) Support to enhancing a quality assurance culture in the Member States

The work of the Network is aimed at embedding a culture of quality assurance throughout the EU. In order to achieve this goal, the Network will help the national reference points to embed a sense of ownership of a culture of quality assurance among the competent authorities and collect, exchange and review case-studies about state of play of quality assurance in Member States through appropriate stock-taking processes. It will also support and review the use of indicators in VET systems and the links with Standing Group on Indicators and Benchmarks.
By analysing these processes, the Network will be in a position to give informed feedback to systems and advice to Member States, Social Partners, key stakeholders and European Commission.

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d) Ensure coherence with other European processes and projects and raise awareness concerning the work of EQAVET and quality assurance in general

Effective coordination with the quality assurance dimensions of certification and accreditation as well as the projects supported under LEONARDO in the Lifelong Learning Programme will be an important priority for the Network as it supports the development of a culture of quality assurance of VET through the implementation of the Reference Framework.

e) Towards an inclusive approach with stakeholders in order to engage them in the process

The Network will enable relevant stakeholders at the various levels to have timely and easy access to the Network's information, documents and policy content emerging from the different activities and processes. The Network will establish an inclusive approach which will help stakeholders to feel committed to the work of supporting the implementation of the Recommendation. This approach will ensure stakeholders acquire a sense of ownership and of being supported in their efforts to improve the quality of VET.

f) Quality assuring these functions by: ensuring policy relevance and monitoring ongoing progress against objectives using the quality circle which is the underpinning principle of the European quality assurance Reference Framework.

Ongoing review of activities, regular communication and well-functioning collaboration between the key actors involved in supporting the development of national guidelines and the criteria to support the implementation of the Recommendation will be an inherent part of the working methodology.

2. 5. Role of the Network Secretariat

The work of the Network is supported by a Secretariat. Following a call for tender, FETAC (the Further Education Training and Awards Council of Ireland) has been chosen as the Secretariat.

The role of the Secretariat will be fulfilled by offering:

a) dynamic and efficient leadership in the management and administration of the work of the Network and the various meetings and activities designed within the work programme;
b) expert support, advice and input when drafting the documents addressing the needs, topics and issues emerging from the different Network's activities and meetings, and other related issues concerning quality assurance in VET at EU and national levels;
c) support to Member States through the organisation of working groups, seminars, and other initiatives which may be necessary to ensure the effective implementation of the work programme;
d) an efficient and effective communication strategy and dissemination tools which are tailor made for the specific target groups notably through the development of an efficient on-line communication strategy.

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3. PRIORITIES OF THE WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE FOLLOWING YEARS

The Review of the Copenhagen Process, the implementation of the tools EQF and ECVET, the outcomes of the ENQAVET and most of all the adoption of the Recommendation on the establishment of a European quality assurance reference framework for VET provide the basis for identifying the strategic priorities for quality assurance in VET over the coming years. The quality assurance network to be coordinated by the European Commission and bringing together the Member States and the Social Partners has the potential to become the key actor in promoting a culture of quality assurance of VET in Europe and facilitating the networking of key players at European and Member State levels.

3. 1. Strategic priorities for quality assurance at European level for the years 2010-2012

The priorities enunciated in the Bordeaux Communiqué, notably the implementation of the European tools adopted, the outcomes of the last general assembly of the former ENQA-VET project and first and foremost the Recommendation on the establishment of a European quality assurance reference framework for VET enable us to identify the following four strategic priorities for the next years in the field of quality assurance in VET at European level:

- **Effective implementation of the Recommendation**

    The Recommendation proposes a clear methodology for supporting the strengthened development of a culture of quality assurance in VET over the coming years. This methodology will be articulated around the development of national approaches to the use and implementation of the Reference Framework This process will require Member States to devise, not later than 18 June 2011, an approach aimed at improving quality assurance systems at national level, where appropriate, and making best use of the Framework, involving the social partners, regional and local authorities, and all other relevant stakeholders in accordance with national legislation and practice. Through their participation in the Network the Member States will support the development of common principles and reference criteria to enable Member States to report appropriately on the use of the Reference Framework according to timelines determined by the Recommendation. Similarly the national reference points which will be established by each Member State will play a key role in disseminating information and engaging key actors at national level in this process.

- **Coordination between the various European tools and coordination between EQF, ECVET and EQAVET**

    The implementation of EQF is already advanced and the establishment of National Qualifications Frameworks is under way[14]. The implementation of ECVET has already started even though a bit later due to a later adoption. The emphasis put on the learning outcomes approach within ECVET, EQF and the NQFs draws the focus on the certification and qualification awarding process and the necessity to ensure that it is clear, transparent and quality assured[15]. This requires that there is a shared

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[14] For more information on this issue see Cedefop first report in a series of reports to be produced in a regular basis (twice a year) , which provide an overview of the European national qualification framework developments: '*The development of national qualifications frameworks in Europe';* Luxemburg, September 2009. Available from Internet at: http://cedefop.europa.eu/en/files/6104_en.pdf

[15] For more information about this issue and the progress made across EU, visit: Cedefopbriefingnote, December, 2009 at http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/files/9018_en.pdf; Cedefop: *The shift to learning outcomes. Conceptual, political and practical developments in Europe; Luxemburg, 2008. - available at:* http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/publications/12952.aspx and

understanding of the quality assured qualification awarding process. In this context quality assurance of the examinations and qualification awarding processes of learners emerges naturally as another strategic priority which should be addressed.

▪ **Raising the awareness of the European quality assurance Reference Framework** among the stakeholders; developing a communication strategy and a user-friendly and inclusive approach towards the stakeholders

Engagement of key stakeholders (employers, social partners, learners, providers) and other appropriate partners will be an important determinant of success for the Network. Effective communication strategies, using a variety of media, targeted at the needs of specific audiences will play an important role in ensuring the success of this process. The quality assurance national reference points will also play a key role in ensuring the effective dissemination of information and facilitating the engagement of key actors, in particular the social partners, in embedding a culture of quality assurance of VET at national level.

▪ **Indicators for measuring quality**

The list of indicators in annex 2 of the Recommendation is seen as a toolbox to support the improvement of quality assurance of VET in the Member States. Significant work has already been undertaken in advancing the understanding of how these indicators can support policymaking in VET. The challenge now is to identify how Member States can use these indicators to support the development of their national approaches to the implementation of the Recommendation and to situate work on these indicators within the wider context of European work on indicators within the context of the renewed Strategy for Education and Training 2020. One of the current VET indicators could in the future provide a basis for a more general indicator and/or target for VET at European level.

3. 2. Network priorities for 2010-2012

The strategic priorities identified in section 3.1 for quality assurance in VET will have to be defined at the various levels (level of quality assurance national reference points, stakeholders, national authorities etc.) in the Member States.

For the network, in accordance with its mandate presented above, the strategic priorities can be defined as follows:

1. **Support**
   Support the implementation of the Recommendation by facilitating cooperation between Member States and relevant stakeholders, integrating new members fully into the Network, strengthening the national reference points and helping them in the design of their national approach and of the reference criteria for the reporting on the implementation.

2. **Coordination**
   Ensure coordination, in particular coordinated implementation with other tools related to Vocational Education and training notably ECVET and the EQF, while focusing on the quality assurance of the qualification awarding process.

Cedefop:'*The dynamics of qualifications: defining and renewing occupational and educational standards*'; Luxemburg, 2009 - available at http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Information_resources/Bookshop/publication_details.asp?pub_id=556

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3. **Development**

    Working on the development of the indicators and how they can support the development of a culture of quality assurance of VET and a shared understanding of the terms and processes used in the field of quality assurance notably in the qualification awarding process (see also priority 2).

4. **Communication – Awareness raising**

    Acting as a catalyst for the development of a sense of ownership, so as to develop a culture of quality, to be embedded at European level and other, raising also awareness on quality assurance in VET levels and notably on the reference framework, develop sense of ownership develop a coherent and well designed communication strategy accordingly.

These priorities should be seen in the context of Member States reporting deadlines as outlined in the Recommendation which are to:

a) Devise an approach aimed at improving quality assurance systems at national level not later than 24 months after the adoption of the Recommendation
b) Undertake a review of the implementation of the Recommendation on the basis of the reference criteria to be defined in cooperation with the Commission and the Member States

3. 3.   A two-phased approach for the following years

The Recommendation establishes a clear course of action and time line for Member States:

1. **By 18 June 2011**: devise an approach aimed at improving quality assurance systems at national level making best use of the Reference Framework and involving all relevant stakeholders in accordance with national legislation and practice;
2. **By 2013**: undertake a review of the implementation process on the basis of reference criteria to be defined by the Network in cooperation with the Commission and the Member States.

It also recognises the important strategic role the national reference points will have in the successful accomplishment of these two phases.

The activities of the Network, therefore, will be determined by the following two distinct periods, which can be termed as:

- Phase 1, **adapting phase:**

    Supporting the development of national implementation approaches for using the Reference Framework

- Phase 2**, reporting phase**:

    Supporting the preparation of the national reviews of the implementation of the Reference Framework

The role of the national reference points will be of central importance in the development of this approach over the lifetime of the work programme. They will be the major players in ensuring the transfer to experience and dissemination of the results of European cooperation within their national contexts

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Table 1: *Two phased approach and description of the activities*

PHASE	ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION	CHARACTERISTIC
Phase 1 *Adapting phase*	*Supporting the development of national implementation approaches*	*The activities designed to address Phase 1 will develop instruments and tools which support Member States in setting up their approaches for the implementation of the Reference Framework*
Phase 2 *Reporting phase*	*Supporting the preparation of national reviews of the implementation of the Reference Framework*	*The activities designed for this phase will be focused on providing feedback and analysis of approaches to Member States and on preparing their implementation reports, mainly by developing suitable reference criteria and/or a template for the reporting stage*

3. 4. Programme of Activities 2010-2012

The activities proposed in the work programme are planned over a 3 year period and involve key players in the Member States as well as the Social Partners and expert advice provided by ETF and CEDEFOP as well as the EQAVET Secretariat as appropriate. The programme of activities provides more detail in year 1 and confines itself to a more general approach in year 2 and 3 as the particular content will be determined by the ongoing monitoring of the work programme by the Network. Flexibility and responsiveness to the emerging policy requirements will be important in ensuring the relevance and usefulness of each annual work programme.

The programme of activities is articulated around the following main activities (a timeline for the work programme activities is presented in Section 6):

1. Involvement and bringing up to speed new Member States in the Network

Focus: Some Member States were not part of the former ENQA-VET network and special efforts are needed in order to help them to contextualise the process and have access to latest information and developments. This will enable them to effectively participate and contribute fully in Network's activities and outcomes. Their involvement and contribution are a pre-requisite for a solid foundation on which to build a well functioning community of practice.
To address these issues, the following support will be provided:

Action:
- Provide an information 'briefing pack' on what has been achieved in the previous phase for those new members before meetings and events.
- Put in place a 'buddy system' of old and new members during meetings and events - particularly during the first Annual Forum during which an informal briefing meeting with new member might be held.

2. Addressing strategic thematic areas: working groups

Focus: In order to work on areas of strategic importance for the work of the Network, two working groups will be established.

Action:
- Working Group 1 will bring together representatives of the national reference points to work on the development of guidelines to support the development of Member State approaches to implementing the Reference Framework.
- Working Group 2 will focus on how the Recommendation's indicators may be best used in supporting the implementation of the Reference Framework and the monitoring and reporting which countries will be required to undertake.

Each working group will comprise a maximum of 15 participants but provision will be made for substantive on-line communication between meetings to ensure that all Network members are fully informed about and contribute to the work. The mandate of the working groups will be discussed more in depth during the first EQAVET Annual Forum.

3. **Development of a Matrix with a view to developing common principles in the field of the qualification awarding process**

Focus: To ensure the development of a) a shared understanding of the quality assurance concepts and terms in VET, and b) a process of learning and knowing what is happening in each Member State.

Action:
- The working groups' discussions will reach a 'common understanding' of concepts and processes without becoming embroiled in endless discussions about technical definitions. This principle will apply to other activities/events specified within the work programme. Under this principle, the use of well established and official glossaries should be acknowledged, notably Cedefop: 'Terminology of European education and training policy'[16].
- An information gathering process will be undertaken in the form of an exercise or matrix in order to have an overview or snapshot of what is happening in Member States regarding quality assurance in crucial areas of VET systems, in view to reach a common and homogenous understanding of procedures and processes in very diversified systems. The exercise will describe processes and procedures at system level. It is to be underlined that the exercise is not meant to be an assessment exercise but rather a working tool to support Member States and reference points in their attempts to *speak* a common language. The exercise will focus initially on the qualification awarding processes and in particular the certification process.
  This exercise will be complemented by and will build upon the information already accrued at EU level, in particular the study conducted by Cedefop: 'The relationship between quality assurance and VET certification in EU Member States'[17].

4. **On-line community – community of practice**

Focus: Collaboration is central to the operational methodology of the EQAVET Network. A sustainable and collaborative platform is necessary in order to have a well functioning community of practice, and capitalise the results emerging from the various Network's activities and processes.

Action: The website will provide the basis for developing this community of practice and interrelated users (an on-line collaboration platform). It is essential that the Network, through

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[16] CEDEFOP: '*Terminology of European education and training policy*'. Thessalonica, 2009. Available from Internet at http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/publications/13125.aspx

[17] CEDEFOP: '*The relationship between quality assurance and VET certification in EU Member States*'; Luxemburg, 2009. Available from Internet at: http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/publications/5055.aspx
Cedefop is also working on the changing role of qualifications and a study in the field will be shortly published.

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the web, builds a content-credible approach by developing content relevant information and knowledge in an attractive and user-friendly format.

The Network website will become the focal point of provision of information and involvement of members, participants and relevant stakeholders, creating a dynamic content web for members and users; therefore there is a need to:

- Establish a visual, dynamic and user-friendly website with interactive and custom content responding users needs or as a result of their search or request.
- Moderate the site. To ensure the efficient working of the platform the role of moderator is of crucial importance, in particular for building a community of practice. The task of the moderator is to:
    - Inform other Network members and interested parties about the ongoing content relevant outputs of the working groups, other work programme activities and other networks/organisations (in particular EQF and ECVET);
    - Answer members'/users concerns or questions and moderate group discussions.
    - Manage the content emerging from the working groups and Network activities and reactions/feedback from Network members. The moderator will manage the day-to-day content-affairs of the Network as it applies to the stream of members' and users' contributions and interactions. The effectiveness of this management role will directly impact on the quality of the results and their usefulness towards a community of interrelated users. It will also impact on the sense of ownership of the results among the Forum and/or users. The Network's *ad hoc experts* will ensure the role of moderator with the administrative support of the Secretariat.
- Develop an RSS system to distribute content to the Network target audiences[18]. The RSS system will enable the Network to quickly send information and updates to members and other key audiences/stakeholders, engaging them in the process. The RSS system will be the channel used to reach and communicate with members and other users -by automatic subscription (e.g. to the on-line Network).
- Newsletter to be published bi annually in English, French and German with summaries in all 23 network languages.

5. Establishment of an informal network of key stakeholders

The stakeholders having subscribed to the Newsletter and the RSS system put in place will facilitate the emergence of an informal community of practice for quality assurance in VET which will be important in ensuring that the Reference Framework is embedded in VET systems throughout Europe. They will be invited to the final Annual Forum so as to be part of the process.

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[18] The target audiences and their specific communication needs are identified in the EQAVET Network Communication Strategy. The Network's target audience is divided into two groups: **Primary target**: national reference points and policy representatives of the relevant national ministries, social partners and the European Commission, as well as those whose role contributes to supporting research and analysis of VET at a European level. 2) **Secondary target** or general public: every other individual or organisation who has an interest in the quality of VET in Europe. This group can be further subdivided into three groups: *a)* key central actors: such as VET providers, quality assurance managers, learners, teachers, social partners and business chambers; b) those with a vested interest in the content of VET in general and quality assurance in particular, such as ECVET, EQF, Advisory Committee for VET, Director General for VET; c) other organisations or representative bodies etc., such as sectoral representatives and social partners organisation at European and national levels; Education and Training Ministries of Member States and the Economic and Social Committee.

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6. The meetings – a way to keep contact and make the quality assurance in VET community of practice a reality

The work of the Network will be structured around the various meetings: annual forums, working groups, seminars, experts' strategy meetings, steering committee meetings, reference points meetings, seminars etc.

In conjunction with the on-line communication, meetings represent an opportunity for members and key stakeholders to engage in face to face discussions which are an essential contribution to building strong working relationships and qualitative research.

Face to face discussions are a crucial element for the development of mutual trust, transparency and the community of practice for quality assurance in VET.

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4. METHODOLOGY: COLLABORATIVE MODE

*The Network will provide a basis for a structured and sustainable platform for members and national experts to exchange information and experience, to engage themselves in a process of mutual learning and consensus building which will lead to the further development of common principles, reference criteria and indicators as well as tools for quality improvement in VET at national, regional and local levels by, building up a **community of practice**.*

Two components are central for the realisation of this community of practice: a) an effective collaborative structure between the Secretariat, the Commission, the Network, its Steering Committee and Experts; and b) an appropriate dissemination and a clear communication strategy.

4. 1.   Collaborative mode – Network's operational methodology

The Network's focus in the coming years will be to support the Member States and the European Commission in developing tools for improving the quality assurance of VET systems within the policy framework provided by the Recommendation.

The specific activities proposed are aimed at an increasing level of collaboration which will:
- mobilise key specialists and policymakers across Europe;
- involve exchange of experiences and perspective on important issues of shared concern;
- enable participants to exchange expertise, views, discussion example of practices and engage in a process of learning policy;
- ensure and promote confidence in countries' quality assurance procedures, thereby enhancing transparency and mobility.

In this context, the Network will allow members to become part of a **community of practice** for quality assurance in VET, which will lead to higher levels of cooperation and synergy within and across Member States on quality assurance related issues and the implementation of the Reference Framework.

The Network, through its programme of activities and structures, will operate in a collaborative mode, by which common results and solutions are reached among participants. The collaborative mode will create a sustainable platform in which common guidelines and criteria for quality assurance are shared.

4. 2.   Governance structure

An effective collaborative culture involving all of the key actors will be necessary to ensure the fine-tuning of the activities and responsiveness to emerging policy issues which should be addressed in the context of the implementation of the Reference Framework.

The governance structure proposed for the process is guided by the principles of inclusiveness and efficiency, with a view to reflecting the heterogeneity of VET systems, geographical diversity and the need for a broadly-based ownership of its work without forgetting an effective management of resources and inputs.

The figure below provides an overview of the governance structure which will ensure the effective implementation of the work programme.

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Figure 1: *Overview of governance and cooperation structure*
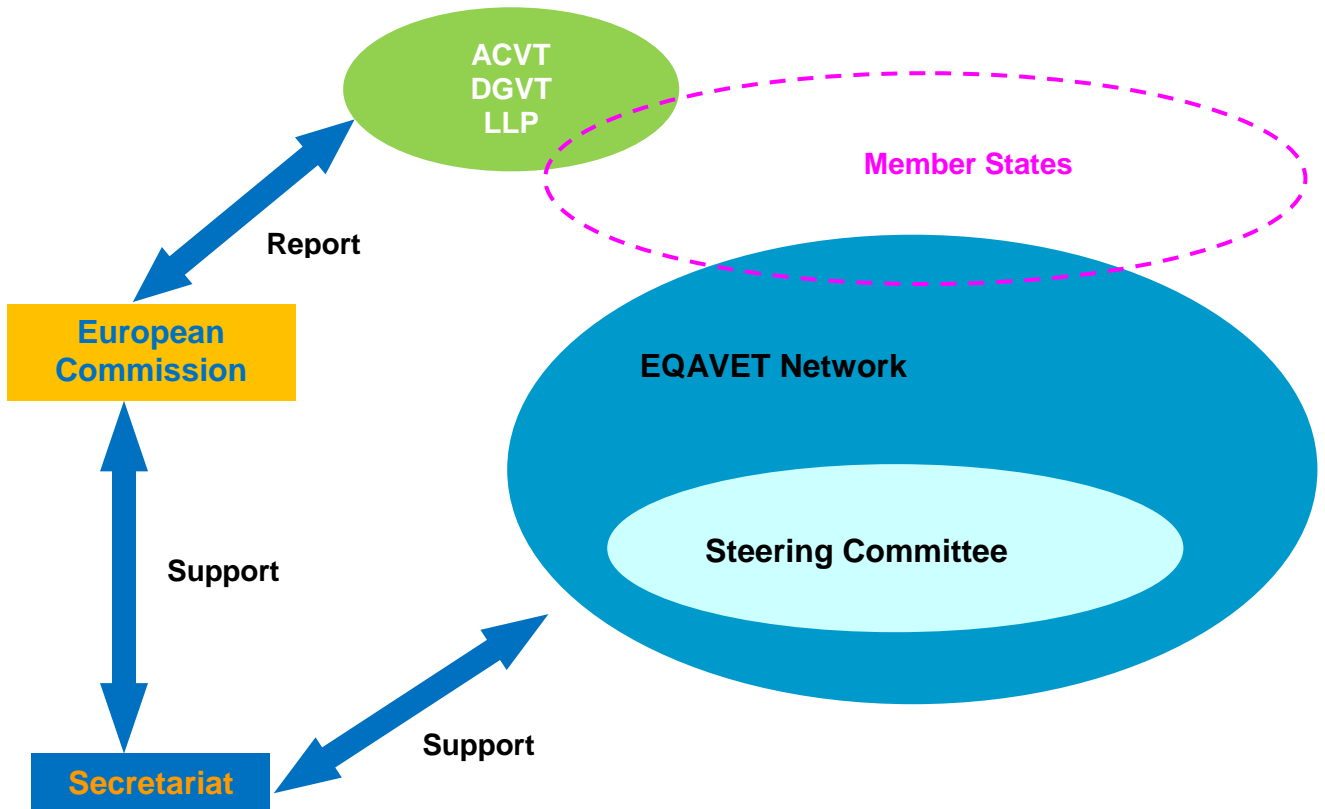
The relation between each participant entity is described below:

Network of Member States, the social partners and the European Commission
The Network contributes to the development of common principles, reference criteria and indicators, guidelines and tools for quality improvement in VET at national, regional and local levels.

It is composed of two representatives per Member State, the social partners at European level and the Commission. Some countries may appoint a third representative to the Network as an observer if it is deemed necessary and subject to the agreement of the steering committee.

The Member State representatives are:
1. one representative appointed by the relevant ministry/ministries responsible for VET quality assurance in the Member State, with a clear mandate;
2. the Quality Assurance National Reference Point.

The responsibilities and/or legal competence of the network members are clearly defined and published by the competent authorities.

The Network's expertise in based on the role the Member State representatives have within the national authorities competent for quality assurance, certifications and qualifications in VET.

The Commission will work in partnership with the Network and will manage and support its work, with the support of the Secretariat.

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The Social Partners are full members of the Network reflecting the role of the world of employment and the labour market in shaping the content of high quality VET.

Cedefop and ETF are co-opted to the Network, in an advisory capacity because of the technical and scientific support they provide.

The Network will ensure a high level of cooperation and appropriate communication with the work undertaken in quality assurance in the LEONARDO DA VINCI Programme and in order to ensure the development of mutual trust in the quality assurance systems which underpin both ECVET and EQF.

The Network will also develop strong links with other key players in the area of quality assurance of VET at an international level (OECD, ILO, COE and other international contexts as appropriate)

Plenary meetings (Annual Forum)

The Network meets once a year in a plenary session but communication between its members will be established on a regular basis using the website based on-line collaborative platform.

The plenary meeting provides the strategic direction for the work of the Network. It provides a forum for discussion and it is committed to a continuing cooperation with key partner organisations dealing with quality assurance in VET.

It is guided by the principles of cooperation and participation, which will create a sense of ownership of the outcomes of the Network and will build motivation for national implementation. It will also create ownership of the outcomes of the Network work programme.

European Commission

The European Commission will chair the Network and foster participation by the Member States and the Social Partners.

It will facilitate the development of guidance material, provide information on quality assurance in VET across member countries, and facilitate cooperation and mutual learning.

It will present a report every 4 years to the European Parliament and the Council on the experience gained and implications for the future, including if necessary a review of the Recommendation. By undertaking an evaluation of the implementation of the Recommendation on the basis of national reports, the Commission will be in a position to revise the process if necessary.

The Commission also will report important outcomes of the Network to the Directors General for Vocational Training (DGVT), the Advisory Committee for Vocational Training (ACVT), the EQF Advisory Group and the Lifelong Learning Programme Committee and other relevant bodies in order to ensure that they contribute to the broader aims of advancing the EU policy agenda for VET.

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee comprises 9 members: 3 members representing the countries from the EU Team-Presidency, 4 elected members, 2 representatives of the Social Partners. The technical advisors, CEDEFOP and ETF may be invited as to meetings as determined by the matters to be discussed. The Steering Group will be chaired by the Commission.

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The Steering Committee offers advice to the Commission and ensures appropriate coordination, strategic development and coherence with work in other relevant policy areas. Its membership is reflecting policy needs and ensures appropriate coordination with other European processes.

Secretariat
The Secretariat organises all meetings of the network and is responsible for ensuring appropriate follow-up.

4. 3.   Dissemination and Communication Strategy

An appropriate dissemination and a clear communication strategy are central components for the success of the Network. Therefore the efficient dissemination of the results of the various working groups, research studies and the policy useful material via the website and other media as necessary will be important in maximising the engagement and involvement of key stakeholders at every level within the Member States and at EU level.

The Network has a dissemination/communication strategy which will be reviewed on an annual basis. It identifies the target audiences and their particular informational needs. The strategy establishes the most appropriate communication channels or the products which will best capture and deliver the information, messages and added value knowledge emerging from the work of the Network as a **community of practice**.

By identifying the target audiences, the products that best match their needs and the mechanisms to provide feedback, the Network will effectively deliver the findings, added value knowledge and/or messages. This process will ensure that:

1. The added value of results becomes sustainable, serve as a model, and their impact in the field of quality assurance in VET is extended at both national and European level; by focusing on 'direct beneficiaries' (i.e. VET providers, quality assurance managers, learners, and teachers) and members.

2. The added value results and the participatory development are better understood, adopted in national projects and adapted to their needs; by tailoring to political decision-makers.

The communication strategy is aimed at gaining visibility in the field of quality assurance, sharing the process results, ensuring ownership of the process and developing exchanges on initiatives carried out with the target groups. The impact of the communication strategy will be measured through the production of relevant/pertinent/appropriate indicators[19].

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[19] The Network Communications Strategy defines 2 types of impact indicators, which track the level of progress on an annual basis. The indicators will enable the network to gather feedback to assess the communication performance and the impact this has had in delivering the objectives. In other words, these indicators are designed to provide a feedback value into the management and decision process and its ability to feed the information back into the decision process and to assess progress against strategic goals and diagnose potential limitations or constrains. These indicators are:
   A) quality indicators for the support of a participation platform: 1) number of meetings with stakeholders; and 2) number of participants involved in the Network activities (working groups, events, seminars and meetings) per country and 3) number of EQAVET participation in events organised by third parties (conferences, forums, salons, agoras, etc.)
   B) quality indicators for the support of a virtual platform: 1) numbers of visitors to the Network website; 2) number of visitors/trainee to the on-line training; 3) number of participation on the Member Area's *Group discussion*; 4) number of posted documents on the Member Area; and 5) number of registrations for the Network's Newsletter

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5. KEY MILESTONES IN 2010 - 2011

MARCH 2010

- **F**inalisation of processes, procedures and methodologies to ensure maximum country involvement in activities:
    - Developing a web-site and on-line collaborative platform;
    - Identifying most effective structures and methodologies for ensuring support to national reference points;
    - Developing strategy for building on the results and output of the previous work (in particular, the findings from thematic groups, studies and peer learning activities undertaken in 2008-2009).
- **D**evelopment of strategic approach to the content of the work programme with the experts and launch of information gathering for preparation of country profile matrix.
- **P**reparation of approach to support the working groups.
- **F**inalisation of first draft of work programme 2010 and communication strategy.

APRIL 2010

- **F**irst plenary meeting and agreement of work programme and working groups mandate.
- **F**irst discussion with Member States on preparing national approaches to implementation and reporting and monitoring requirements.
- **L**aunch of the corporate identity.
- **S**teering Committee established.

MAY 2010

- **L**aunch of newly re-vamped website as an interactive platform for the exchange of views and practices.
- **U**ploading of relevant information from earlier work as a basis for supporting Member States in development of their national approaches.
- **M**embers of the two Working Groups recruited.
- **I**nitiation of cooperation with LdV projects and thematic monitoring project (ensuring that relevant information reaches the network, avoiding duplication of efforts).

JUNE 2010

- **F**irst Steering Committee meeting.
- **F**irst meeting of the Woking Groups: the work on the development of common guidelines, criteria, instruments and tools to support the implementation of the reference framework at national level commences and on using indicators.
- **F**irst Newsletter published.
- **F**irst draft of promotional/information materials to increase awareness and reinforce the role and benefits of the Reference Framework among national key stakeholder (plan for publication September 2010):
    - Poster and brochure: user-friendly presentation of the quality circle and descriptive indicators of the Reference Framework (23 languages)
    - Leaflet: role of the Network and its work programme (3 languages)
- **R**eview months 1-6, to ensure that the activities of the Secretariat and the Network are responding effectively to the broader policy needs: meeting with European Commission.

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JULY 2010

- **U**ploading the results of the Working Groups onto the web, reviewing the main outputs reached at the meetings, informing those who do not participate in the meeting.
- **I**nterim results of information: gathering exercise to provide information about management and implementation of quality assurance in Member States focusing on responsibilities in the area of curricula, recognition, accreditation, assessment and certification.
- **F**ollow up meeting with experts, ensuring that the strategic objectives are being addressed.

AUGUST 2010

- **F**irst draft of countries profile matrix.

SEPTEMBER 2010

- **S**trategic review of progress with the Steering Committee (second meeting) to ensure responsiveness to emerging needs and the capacity to develop tailor-made approaches to issues identified in the Working Groups discussions and groups discussions within the web members area.
- **C**ontinuing work on methodologies for implementing the Reference Framework: second meeting of the Working Groups.
- **F**irst policy briefs published: disseminating the main policy relevant findings of Working Groups to a wider audience of policymakers and practitioners.
- **P**ublication of first draft countries profile matrix and promotional material

OCTOBER 2010

- **E**ffective complementarity established with other relevant policy areas notably EQF and ECVET.
- **R**einforced engagement with key actors in the Member States (focusing on national reference points) to enable policymakers and providers to address specific implementation issues within their own context.
- **F**irst Reflection-Group/ Seminar on QA of certification processes.

NOVEMBER 2010

- **D**evelopment of increased use of the Reference Framework in a manner appropriate to national contexts, capturing their existing best practices: third meeting of the Working Groups.
- **P**lenary meeting of national reference points: reflecting on the working methodologies within the national contexts. Focus on establishing a sense of partnership and collaboration with the European Commission and the Network.
- **S**econd series of policy briefs, disseminating the main policy relevant findings of working groups to a wider audience of policymakers and practitioners.

DECEMBER 2010

- **S**trategic meeting with Experts for the development of a criteria for the delivering of products, ensuring relevance to emerging needs and the capacity to develop tailor-made approaches to implementation.

- **S**econd Reflection-Group/ Seminar on QA of certification processes.

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JANUARY 2011

- **A**greeing on results of first phase of the implementation of the Recommendation: fourth meeting of the Working Groups.
- **P**resentation of draft guidelines to support national use of the reference framework as a result of the Working Groups meetings and the collaborative work in the Members' Area of the website.
- **R**eview of the implementation of the work programme: monitoring meeting and submission of First Interim Report to the Commission.
- **A**ssessment of progress against strategic objectives: review of the Communication Strategy on the basis of the impact indicators.
- **R**eview of the utilisation of the web-site as a tool for interactive and sustainable communication among key stakeholders involved in the process.
- **W**ork plan for possible sectoral information and training seminars to be delivered: expert appointed, participants recruited, dissemination of results established.

FEBRUARY 2011

- **F**urther development of methodologies and approaches to complement implementation of the Reference Framework capturing best practices in Member States to recognise excellent and facilitate improvements.
- **U**pdating results and policies relevant main findings of Working Groups on the web in an attractive manner to reach those who do not attend meetings.

MARCH 2011

- **E**ngagement with industry representatives and Social Partners: possible- first Sectoral Seminar completed.
- **F**ormulation of national work plans for implementation (fifth meeting of the Working Groups):
  - identifying resources in hand and methodologies to consult and engage key stakeholder within the national context;
  - developing information and national dissemination strategies;
  - identifying methods for testing and assessment – pilot projects.
- **S**trengthening engagement with industry representatives and social partners.
- **W**ork plan for Second Annual Forum Meeting to be held in April: logistic and content arrangement delivered.
- **T**hird Reflection-Group/ Seminar on QA of certification processes.

APRIL 2011

- **A**nalysis of emerging results from the Working Groups by the Steering Committee (third meeting): how best to disseminate results.
- **F**irst discussion with Member States on the preparation of the national reviews of the implementation of the reference framework, the reporting phase.
- **S**econd Annual Forum meeting: presentation of Working Groups interim reports and agreement on mandate for the new phase.
- **P**ossible second session of Sectoral Meeting. Results disseminated onto the web.

MAY 2011

- **R**eview progress on implementation of the work programme: follow-up meeting with the Commission.
- **S**trategic delivery of policy relevant findings of possible Sectoral Seminar (session 3) and Working Groups onto the web.

JUNE 2011

- **A**greement on guidelines, instruments and tools to support Member States in setting up their approaches for the implementation of the Reference Framework.
- **F**inalisation of Working Groups reports on supporting national implementation approaches: sixth meeting of the Working Groups.
- **S**trategic assessment of progress of the implementation of the work programme: fifth Steering Committee meeting.
- **P**ossible Sectoral Seminar session 4 and dissemination of results onto the web.
- **N**ewsletter 03 published.
- **W**ork plan for the monitoring/reporting next phase developed: new mandate of the Working Groups orientated to prepare a template/criteria for the reporting stage

JULY 2011

- **P**ublication and effective dissemination of the results of the Working Groups on supporting national implementation approaches of the reference framework to assist Member States to implement their approaches and methodologies.

AUGUST 2011

- **I**mplementation of phase two – the *reporting phase* – starts (appropriate content and logistic arrangements to adequately address the new phase established and delivered).

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6. INDICATIVE TIMELINES

The tables below present an overview of the programme of activities and a timeline for 2010, 2011 and 2012.

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Timeline January 2010 – December 2010

		ACTIVITY for 2010	DELIVERABLE ENVISAGED for 2010	COMMUNICATION DISSEMINATION OUTPUT for 2010
F I R S T P H A S E	January	Establishment of a new Secretariat, introducing QA and effective good practices	Agreement on priorities, objectives and actions Draft doc. on the establishment internal and financial procedures	Development of a Communication Strategy Meeting with web-designer and graphic designer for the development of corporate identity
	February	Follow-up meeting with the Commission	1st draft of **Inception report** Preparation of ToR for research study on Country profile matrix on certification and curricula setting	Establishment of members Database Dummy Network new web-site
	March	Meeting with Experts in order to develop a criteria for their engagement and the delivery of products Kick-off meeting with Experts for the development of a Country profile matrix on certification and curricula setting	1st draft Work Programme, Agenda and background paper for Annual Forum Meeting Finalisation of logistic arrangements for Annual Forum and Steering Committee Meeting Preparation of mandates for working groups	Mailing invitations to Annual Forum Meeting Distribution of documents for the Annual Forum to participants
	April	**1st Annual Forum Meeting** Informal meeting of Steering Committee members	Agreement on Working Groups mandate	Launch new Network web-site and restrictive Members Area for the creation of an interactive communication platform
	May	Follow up meeting with the Commission Establishment of 2 Working Groups	Report of the Annual Forum Meeting Preparation agenda and meeting paper for the 1st formal Steering Committee meeting 1st draft promotional material	Mailing looking for nominations for Working Group participants Mailing invitations to Working Group nominated participants
	June	Steering Committee meeting **1st meeting of the Working Groups** Follow-up meeting with the Commission	Publication of **Newsletter 01**	1st draft for publication of the promotion material: info poster and brochure, leaflet on WP On-line **Newsletter 01** (summary in 23 languages)
	July	Launch of **on-line reporting** based on Working Groups findings	Interim Report of the Country profile matrix Working Groups first report: 1st set of guideline	**On-line reporting** on findings from Working Groups: *session 1*
	August	Follow up meeting with Expert for the development of a Country profile matrix	1st draft Country profile-matrix Preparation agenda and meeting paper for the Steering Committee meeting	First draft Country profile-matrix available on the Member Area
	September	Steering Committee meeting: analysing first results of Working Groups and monitoring Work Programme implementation **2nd meeting of the Working Groups**	Publication of **Policy-briefs** based on Working Group policy relevant findings Publication of matrix on certification and curricula setting Publication of promotional material	Work Programme available on the web Publication of Country profile matrix on the web
	October	1st Reflection-Group/ Seminar on QA of certification processes	Working Groups second report: 2nd set of guidelines	**On-line reporting** on findings from Working Groups: *session 2*
	November	**3rd meeting of the Working Groups** Plenary meeting of Quality Assurance National Reference Points Steering Committee meeting	Publication of **Policy-briefs** based on Working Group policy relevant findings	
	December	Follow up meeting with the Commission Meeting with Experts in order to develop a criteria for their engagement and the delivery of products 2nd Reflection-Group/ Seminar on QA of certification processes	Working Groups Interim report Publication of **Newsletter 02** Finalisation of 1st Interim Report to Commission	A well established Member Area as a platform for interactive exchange of opinions and views On-line **Newsletter 02** (summary in 23 languages)

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Timeline January 2011 – December 2011

		ACTIVITY for 2011	DELIVERABLE ENVISAGED for 2011	COMMUNICATION DISSEMINATION OUTPUT for 2011
FIRST PHASE	January	**4th meeting of the Working Groups** Monitoring meeting with the Commission: to review process and submission of 1st Interim Report to Commission **Work-plan in place for possible- Sectoral Seminar**	Publication of Policy-briefs based on Working Group policy useful findings Review of the Communication Strategy Issues invitations and finalise planning for Sectoral Seminars	Meeting with web-designer for the further development of the web as a tool for interactive communication Mailing invitations and finalise planning for Sectoral Seminars Discussion on on-line Training Seminars
	February		Effective dissemination of promotional material	**On-line reporting** on findings from Working Groups: *session 3*
	March	**5th meeting of the Working Groups** **Possible- Sectoral Seminar** 3rd Reflection-Group/ Seminar on QA of certification processes	Finalisation of logistic arrangements and documents for Annual Forum Meeting Preparation agenda and meeting paper for the Steering Committee meeting	Mailing invitations to Annual Forum Meeting Distribution of documents for the Annual Forum to participants **On-line interviews**/information analysing the main findings of the Sectoral Seminar
	April	**2nd Annual Forum Meeting** Steering Committee meeting Follow up meeting with the Commission **Possible- Sectoral Seminar: session 2**	Working Groups Interim reports to be presented on the Annual Forum Meeting Agreeing of mandate for Working Groups 2012: reporting phase	Follow up report from the Sectoral Seminar on the Members Area **On-line reporting** on findings from Working Groups: *session 4*
	May	**Possible- Sectoral Seminar: session 3** Follow up meeting with the Commission: Interim report	Preparation agenda and meeting paper for the Steering Committee meeting	**On-line reporting** on findings from Working Groups: *session 5* On-line reporting on the findings of the Reflection-Group/ Seminar on QA of certification processes
	June	Steering Committee meeting **6th meeting of the Working Groups** **Possible- Sectoral Seminar: session 4**	Publication of **Newsletter 03**	On-line **Newsletter 03** (summary in 23 languages) Second set of **on-line interviews**/information analysing the main findings of the Sectoral Seminar
	July		Working Groups reports Report on Sectoral Seminar main findings	
	August	Work Plan established for the coming second phase: reporting phase	Publication of **Policy-briefs** based on Working Group findings Preparation agenda and meeting paper for the Steering Committee meeting	
SECOND PHASE	September	Steering Committee meeting: **agreeing of mandate for Working Groups, phase 2** Meeting Working Groups Experts for: presentation of results	First draft report on Sectoral Seminars main findings	Third set of **on-line interviews**/information analysing the main findings of the Sectoral Seminar
	October	4th Reflection-Group/ Seminar on QA of certification processes	Working Groups reports on phase 1	Informing about objectives for the Working Groups phase 2, commencing in Jan. 2012 Mailing to participants information to start the work of Working Groups phase 2
	November	Plenary meeting of Quality Assurance National Reference Points	Publication of Policy-briefs	Publication of useful policy material from the Sectoral Seminar on the web
	December	Follow up meeting with the Commission agreeing of mandate for Working Groups phase 2 Meeting with Experts in order to develop a criteria for their engagement and the delivery of products, phase 2	Working Groups reports Publication of **Newsletter 04**	Further development of the Member Area as a platform of interactive exchange of communication and views On-line **Newsletter 04** (summary in 23 languages)

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Timeline January 2012 – December 2012

	ACTIVITY for 2012	DELIVERABLE ENVISAGED for 2012	COMMUNICATION DISSEMINATION OUTPUT for 2012
January	**Meeting of the Working Groups: reporting phase** Informal review of progress, meeting with the Commission	Review of the Communication Strategy Publication of **Policy-briefs** based on Working Group findings Issues invitations and finalise planning for Research Seminars	Meeting with web-designer for the further development of the web as a tool for interactive exchange of information Mailing invitations and finalise planning for Research Seminars
February	**1**[st] **session of Research Seminar**	Working Groups Interim reports to be presented on the Annual Forum Meeting	**On-line reporting** on findings from Working Groups: reporting phase
March	**Working Groups meeting: reporting phase** Follow up meeting with Working Groups Experts **2**[nd] **session of Research Seminar** 5th Reflection-Group/ Seminar on QA of certification processes	Finalisation of logistic arrangements and documents for the Annual Forum and Steering Committee Meeting	Mailing invitations to Annual Forum Meeting Distribution of documents for the Annual Forum to participants **On-line interviews**/information analysing the main findings of the Research Seminar
April	**3**[rd] **Annual Forum Meeting** Steering Committee meeting Follow up meeting with the Commission **3**[rd] **session of Research Seminar**		Follow up report from the Research Seminar on the Members Area
May	Follow up meeting with the Commission **4**[th] **session of Research Seminar**	Preparation agenda and meeting paper for the Steering Committee meeting	On-line reporting on the findings of the Reflection-Group/ Seminar on QA of certification processes
June	Steering Committee meeting **Final meeting of the Working Groups: reporting phase** **5**[th] **session of Research Seminar**	Publication of **Newsletter 05**	On-line **Newsletter 05** (summary in 23 languages) Second set of **on-line interviews**/information analysing the main findings of the Research Seminar
July		Final working Groups reports Study on Research Seminar: main findings	On-line training on findings from Working Groups final meeting
August	Meeting with Experts of Working Groups to plan delivery of final outcomes	Publication of **Policy-brief** based on Final Working Group reports Preparation agenda and meeting paper for the Steering Committee meeting	
September	Steering Committee meeting on Presentation and agreement on results of the Working Groups and future areas for future work programme	First draft reports Study on Research Seminar main findings	Third set of **on-line interviews**/information analysing the main findings of the Research Seminar
October	Agree report on implementation of work programme and strategy for ensuring future work on monitoring on progress in implementing the EQARF	Approval of the final Working Groups reports	On-line training on the Guidelines based on main findings of the Working Groups
November	Plenary meeting of Quality Assurance National Reference Points Preparation of 1st draft of Final Report for submission to the Commission Monitoring meeting with the Commission to review progress	Publication of **Policy-briefs** based on final Working Groups reports Publication of useful policy material emerging from the Research Seminar	Publication of useful policy material from the Research Seminar on the web
December	Submission of **Final Report to the Commission** Preparation of all files for delivery to the Commission 6th Reflection-Group/ Seminar on QA of certification processes	Finalisation of final financial statement on expenditure accrued by the Secretariat Publication of the Working Groups reports Publication of **Newsletter 06**	Further development of the Member Area as a platform of interactive exchange of communication and views On-line **Newsletter 06** (summary in 23 languages)

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