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European Credit system for
Vocational Education & Training

**We have tried ECVET:
Lessons from the first generation
of ECVET pilot projects**

Synthesis of results
and project portraits

Editorial Jan Truszczyński

Recent economic developments have shown the need for a highly skilled workforce in a global context. As the world of work becomes more and more international, Europe needs education and training systems that fully respond to these challenges. Indeed, one of the central ideas underlying European lifelong learning policy is that international mobility should become a natural part of education and training schemes. This helps learners improve their language skills and develop the "soft skills" which are crucial for a successful first step into the labour market.

The EU Member States are fully committed to helping young people take advantage of the opportunities open to them in terms of learning mobility. Young people participating in Vocational Education and Training schemes are a particular focus of this commitment, and the Member States recently set a target of enabling 6% of all learners in initial VET to have completed a period of VET study abroad by 2020.

To meet this target, the ECVET Recommendation calls upon Member States to implement ECVET in gradual stages, starting in 2012. What still hampers the full potential of learning mobility within the EU are the problems surrounding the recognition of learning periods spent abroad. In order to address these issues, the Commission has developed a wider European toolkit for recognition and transparency of learning abroad, which includes the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), the Europass and the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET (EQAVET).

To achieve successful implementation of ECVET, training providers, companies and VET professionals need practical support in the form of guidelines and supporting tools. With a view to developing and testing concepts and procedures to augment learners' mobility, the European Commission has supported projects to test ways of putting ECVET into practice. It has tested the best ways of describing qualifications in terms of units of "learning outcomes" (to ensure the quality of the VET learning period abroad and greater transparency when choosing a course). It has also been developing ways of validation and transfer of these learning outcomes, as well as proposing methods of assigning ECVET points. Lastly, it has set up templates for cooperation agreements in order to facilitate the establishment of lasting partnerships.

Eleven projects tested ECVET in various economic sectors, including the chemical, aviation and aerospace and tourism industries, and in regional contexts. The projects brought together a wide variety of players. Ministries signed up to the partnerships, together with economic sectoral organisations, Chambers, schools and VET providers. The beneficiaries of these projects were
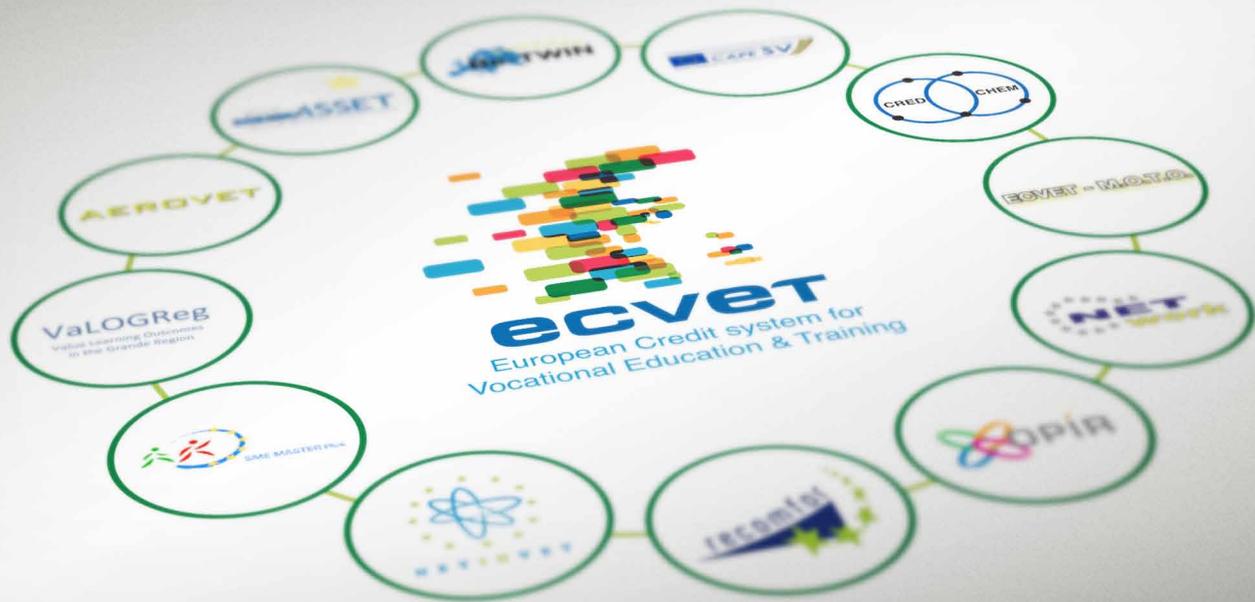
mainly young people in initial vocational education and training, but some projects also involved adult learners.

Today, after three years of work, we are taking stock of the results. This brochure shows the wide range of valuable tools and outcomes developed, all of which are available to be used and adapted to the specific needs of practitioners (http://www.ecvet-projects.eu/). Combining these tools with those provided by the ECVET Users' Group, we now have the toolbox at hand to help put ECVET into practice. We have a clearer view, both of the technical difficulties we face and of the political challenges to be addressed in our efforts to establish a workable, reliable credit system.

Many Member States and social partners already participate actively in the process of implementing ECVET. To take the exercise a step further, stakeholders need to develop a more coherent approach to using the toolbox of European tools.

The challenge ahead for the ECVET projects is to transform their existing partnerships and networking activities into a community of practice. The Commission's proposal for the future Erasmus For All programme can help, and should offer funding to augment the level of participation in learning mobility schemes.

As we look to the next challenge, which will be to disseminate the results of the ECVET projects as widely as possible, I wish to thank the project coordinators and their partners for their impressive work so far. I am confident that they will be able to maintain the momentum for the next steps.

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Synopsis of the results of the 2008 ECVET pilot projects

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1 Introduction

In the period 2008-2011, ten pilot projects and one network project funded by the Lifelong Learning Programme[1] focused on testing ECVET, the European Credit system for Vocational Education & Training. The projects all had as main objectives to implement the technical specifications of ECVET: units of learning outcomes, transfer of units of learning outcomes, ECVET points and partnerships. This consisted of the development and testing of approaches, methods and tools to work with ECVET.

The projects brought together partners from various VET systems with different rules and practices regarding qualifications, specifically the ways they are designed and awarded. In total, organisations from 21 countries took part in this experimentation.

The projects involved organisations that had different stakes in testing and working with ECVET. Many projects involved system level competent authorities at the national or regional level (for example, in Spain), ministries or sectoral organisations and chambers which have competence for designing and awarding qualifications. All projects also involved practitioners by engaging with training institutions which were either project partners or associated with the project. Some projects also involved universities because the qualifications they were working on were part of university education in some partner countries. Finally, some projects involved organisations that work with and advise ministries or sectoral bodies and chambers on their VET policies and practices.

In terms of sectoral focus, the projects also represented a variety of sectors and professions, such as:

- Aircraft maintenance;
- Automobile maintenance;
- Catering, tourism and hospitality;
- Chemistry;
- Crafts sector, more specifically bakery, floristry, woodworking (joinery) or hairdressing;
- International trade;
- Performance arts; or
- Plastics.

Before presenting snapshots of the projects' results in the form of project profiles later in this brochure, this article presents a synthesis of the project results.

> **Note:**
> This article was prepared by the team who followed the work of these 11 projects during the 3 years of the projects' duration and it involved the organisation of seminars (eight in the period 2008-2011), a review of outputs and also participation at selected projects' meetings and events.
> The text of the article presents the point of view of the authors only. Where concrete projects are cited in the text they are cited as examples and the list of projects using a given approach is not meant to be exhaustive.

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1 Information about the call for proposals for these pilot projects can be found here: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/funding/2008/call_ecvet_2008_en.php

2 Testing ECVET – motivation of ECVET pilot projects

The projects had different motivations to engage in working with ECVET. Their motivations are important to understand in order to comprehend why they chose certain approaches rather than others and why they designed their projects and project consortia in the way they did. While they all wanted to use ECVET for the transfer of learning outcomes from one training institution or VET system to another, the more specific contexts varied.

The most common motivation for projects to test ECVET was to improve the transnational mobility of learners in initial VET. For example:

- The M.O.T.O. project aimed to develop tools and procedures based on ECVET that would support specific mobility exchanges. These tools should be used by training centres directly to describe the units of learning outcomes, prepare Learning Agreements, assess learners abroad and validate and, where possible, recognise their achievements upon return;
- The project CREDCHEM aimed to put in place a sustainable network of training centres that would give learners the possibility to achieve clearly specified learning outcomes abroad and to have these integrated into their learning pathway;
- The SME MASTER Plus project saw the testing of ECVET as an opportunity to strengthen mobility in the crafts sector in the longer term. The idea is to first focus on the mobility of people preparing master craftsperson qualifications who in turn will motivate young apprentices and learners to be more mobile. People preparing for master craftsperson qualifications are mainly adults with prior working experience and they require knowing what skills they will achieve when abroad and what the added value of mobility is for their profile.

Some projects also had the ambition to learn from the ECVET testing at system level:

- The French Speaking Community of Belgium, the leading partner in project OPIR, wanted to use the results of ECVET testing to inform the reform of the VET system which aims to improve quality and permeability in the VET sector at national level and is based on the same principles as ECVET.
- The National Association for Training in the Automobile Service sector (ANFA) in France, initiator of the project ASSET, wanted to use the testing to identify conditions under which units of learning outcomes can be transferred from one partner institution to another. ANFA has a long established relationship with the partner institutions in the ASSET project and hopes to take mobility to another level. Upon completion of the project, the association will reflect on whether and how their rules and practices need to be adjusted to make recognised mobility easier.

The project BE-TWIN was somewhat specific as it focused on the use of ECVET in the context of permeability between VET and higher education. It aimed to identify methods to enable recognition from ECVET to ECTS and vice-versa. The project CAPE-SV focused not only on the mobility of young students in initial training, but also aimed to improve professional mobility of workers in the sector of performing arts.

The pilot projects representatives attended a series of joint seminars to discuss ECVET solutions.

③ ECVET technical specifications

3.1 Units of learning outcomes

'Unit of learning outcomes' means a component of a quali-fication, consisting of a coherent set of knowledge, skills and competence, that can be assessed and validated

ECVET Recommendation

The project partners were in different starting situations when it came to this aspect of the ECVET Recommendation:

- In some countries and systems, units of learning outcomes are an integral part of VET qualifications. This is for example the case in Finland, France, Slovenia and Spain – countries which participated in several pilot projects;
- In other countries, VET systems are being reformed to integrate the use of units, for example, in the French Speaking Community of Belgium or Luxembourg;
- Other VET systems, such as the dual system in Germany or VET in Austria, do not design qualifications based on units and do not intend to introduce this principle into qualification design.

Obviously, depending on the system-level conditions, the use of units of learning outcomes as part of ECVET testing differed. However, the projects showed that these system-level features do not make the use of ECVET impossible between, for example, France, which uses units and Germany, which does not. What will differ however, are the possibilities for validation and recognition as described later in this text.

When it comes to the relationship between units that can be achieved through mobility and the national system, the testing projects showed that:

- Where units exist in the home system, it may be possible to achieve a full unit abroad and to gain recognition for it on return. However, the duration of mobility would have to enable this.

For example, in the **M.O.T.O. project**, the Finnish students could have achieved a full unit abroad – in other words – there are no legal or regulatory obstacles that prevent them from doing so. Even from the point of view of pedagogy and the organisation of training by the VET provider, this would have been possible. However, the mobility period during which the testing as part of this project took place was too short.

In the **ECVET ASSET** project, the French leading partner carried out testing using the qualification of the branch organisation (National Association for Training in the Automobile sector). This qualification is currently being modularised. The project results showed that it would be possible to receive assessment for a full unit abroad and to have it validated and recognised in France by the branch organisation.

- When it is not possible to achieve the full unit abroad (due to time constraints or because the required theoretical knowledge is better taught in the students' mother tongue), several project partners enabled students to achieve part of an existing unit in the host institution.

The students from the French Speaking Community of Belgium taking part in the project **OPIR** first learned the required theoretical aspects of a given unit in the home institution in the language they fully master. When abroad, they acquired and practiced the skills and competences concerning the given units. The assessment they received abroad concerned the whole unit and the whole unit was validated on their return.

Note: the VET system of the French Speaking Community of Belgium is currently being reformed and soon it will also be possible to fully recognise such units assessed abroad.

- Many of the projects had project partners from systems where units do not exist as parts of qualifications. These projects and project partners were still able to use the concept of a unit (*set of learning outcomes that can be assessed and validated*) for geographical mobility purposes. They identified 'mobility units', which bring together learning outcomes that are part of the qualification the person is preparing and which the student can achieve abroad. On return, the achievement of these learning outcomes is validated, i.e. the learner does not have to repeat the learning activities and the learning abroad is fully integrated into the pathway. The unit is not 'awarded' to the learner (there is no partial certification or recognition in the form of exemption from a final assessment). The aspects of validation and recognition are discussed in more detail later in this article.

In the project **CREDCHEM** the training centres involved in the testing designed 'mobility units'. These are sets of learning outcomes which they expect the learners to achieve abroad. The learning outcomes in these units form part of the qualifications the learners are preparing. Furthermore, the units are based on coherent sets of learning outcomes – not taught subjects. The use of sets of learning outcomes makes it easier to structure the mobility period and to make the expectations from the mobility period clear for the learner as well as the teaching staff.

One project, **VaLOGReg**, used yet another approach. The project started from the observation that even though there is an important overlap between qualifications of the countries/regions involved in the experimentation in terms of learning outcomes (90% of learning outcomes in these qualifications converge), the way in which the learning is organised and the learning outcomes are achieved in the training pathway differs greatly from one country/region to another. Therefore, the project puts emphasis on 1) the identification, 2) description, 3) assessment of learning outcomes and 4) the acceptance of assessment by foreign partner institutions in the context of transnational mobility. Whether and how these learning outcomes are grouped into units, is according to this project, a matter for the respective VET systems.

ECVET pilot projects also needed to decide on how to group learning outcomes to create units. Overall there is a clear tendency to use occupational activities, working tasks or related concepts that are linked to the exercise of a given profession in the workplace as a basis for identifying units, rather than the qualification standard or the curriculum. Since different qualifications systems use different vocabulary and approaches to designing and describing their qualifications, this approach makes it easier to understand other qualifications and to identify commonalities among the systems. The ECVET pilot projects used various methods for identifying the work tasks and they also differ in how the units designed are related to the whole qualifications.

- Some projects developed units of learning outcomes as reference descriptions for whole qualifications:

For example, in the **SME MASTER Plus** project, learning outcomes matrices were developed for the qualifications of the master craftsperson, which lists all the learning outcomes in a structured format. A unit comprises different competences necessary to carry out core tasks in the master craftsperson's activity field, which covers both the 'commerce and business' and the trade-specific 'expert or technical' part. For each matrix, units of learning outcomes were defined which could be identified in all project partner countries as well as country-specific units. The learning outcomes of each unit are presented in the form of successive steps to facilitate the identification of the 'competence level' of learners.

- Others developed 'mobility units' that are linked to parts of a qualification:

For example, the **Aerovet** project used the Typical Professional Tasks (TPTs) of the aircraft maintenance and production profession that had been identified in a previous project through workshops with professionals. Based on the comparison between the TPTs and the qualification requirements in the partner countries, they realised that the overlap between the qualification (or curriculum) and the profession and its tasks varies greatly. Furthermore, the TPTs are likely to be too large to be achieved during a mobility period and the knowledge, skills and competences corresponding to these TPTs are acquired progressively and often during several different learning activities over the whole duration of the learning pathway. Therefore, the project partners decided to design mobility units that would be smaller than the TPTs. By carrying out a learning station analysis, the project partners were able to break the TPTs into smaller parts, which remain coherent and meaningful from the point of view of the workplace process.

The ECVET pilot projects also differ in how they formulate learning outcomes that are grouped in a unit. For example, in the learning outcomes matrices developed by the SME MASTER Plus project, learning outcomes are formulated in a holistic manner, whereas in other projects, such as the RECOMFOR project, units are described in terms of knowledge, skills and competence.

3.2 Assessment

'Assessment of learning outcomes' means methods and processes used to establish the extent to which a learner has in fact attained particular knowledge, skills and competence

In principle, credit (assessed learning outcomes) transfer in ECVET is based on the fact that one institution accepts the assessment of learning outcomes and its results made by another institution.

The experience of ECVET pilot projects shows that, depending on the approach taken by the partner institutions, the implications of carrying out assessment abroad for learners will vary. In some examples assessment during mobility can serve as a basis for the validation and recognition of units of learning outcomes when learners' credit is being transferred and accumulated. In these cases, the unit (part of unit) of learning outcomes achieved abroad is not assessed again in the home institution (see also the section on validation and recognition). In other cases, the assessment has a formative role, the assessment makes learners' progress during mobility visible. The content of a mobility period is clarified and learners as well as their teachers or trainers have a good understanding of what the person achieved abroad. In this sense, assessment can be considered as giving additional value to mobility. It also fosters mutual trust between the institutions participating in an international mobility partnership and supports quality assurance.

Due to the important role of assessment, all projects discussed or worked on assessment methods and procedures to be used in the framework of geographical mobility of learners:

- In one project (ECVET ASSET – see below), the project partners developed and described a common assessment method for each mobility unit identified;
- In another project (OPIR – see also below), the project partners left the choice of assessment methods for each training centre to define, however, they used the same assessment criteria and assessment grids to guide and document assessment;
- Also in other projects, the choice of assessment methods was left for the training centres to decide. The assessment was not necessarily guided by common agreed assessment criteria and indicators, but was based on the learning outcomes descriptions. The project partners were provided with templates to record the assessment in a transparent manner.

In the **ECVET ASSET project**, four mobility units were developed. These units were used by all four project partners. To support the assessment of these units common to all the project partners, a short description of the assessment situation was developed (the situation was the same in all the training centres), together with a common set of assessment criteria and a grid for assessors to record the outcomes of the assessment.

The **OPIR project** has decided not to develop common assessment methods, but to ensure that everyone had the same understanding of the level expected from learners to make sure they have acquired the learning outcomes. Therefore, for each unit of learning outcomes described, assessment criteria and indicators have been also described. In this way, even though each partner institution used a different assessment method, all students were assessed against the same criteria. Using these tools, the assessors had to define whether the performance of the learner during the assessment complied with the related indictor(s).

In the **CREDCHEM project**, a pool of 'competence-oriented assessment tasks' related to the work tasks identified as basis for designing units of learning outcomes was developed. During the mobility period, for each unit, one exemplary assessment task was selected for assessing whether learners have acquired the learning outcomes comprised in the unit.

The **VaLOGReg project** has developed a common template/grid for assessment (including indicators for assessing the performance of learners) which was given to the host institutions to avoid using disparate instruments. This common instrument was complemented by specifications and detailed decisions concerning the assessment of a certain individual mobile learner, which were laid down in Learning Agreements.

The approach of the **SME MASTER Plus project** differs from those above since the partners decided not to standardise aspects of the assessment process. The assessment methods, principles and criteria usually used in the host institution will also be used in the context of ECVET-based mobility and will not be altered for the mobile learners. However, the project emphasised that the assessment procedures should be made transparent and that partner institutions' agreements relating to assessment should be laid down in writing (in the Memorandum of Understanding or in the Learning Agreement).

Several projects used occupational activities or work processes as the basis for the definition of units of learning outcomes and organised mobility exchanges as internships. Therefore, the assessment methods and procedures they used also focused on mastering certain work tasks in the workplace and the levels of performance are related to the levels of performance expected in the workplace.

For example, in the **CREDCHEM project**, 'competence-oriented assessment tasks' are defined to distinguish three competence levels (competence steps) which express learners' performance during the assessment. These competence levels are clearly related to the autonomy and proficiency in carrying out the task. They are as follows:
– Competence level 1: 'Carrying out actions according to work instruction' – for example: formulation of the work assignment (time and expectations, test procedure);
– Competence level 2: 'Problem-oriented implementation of tasks' – for example: looking for typical problems;
– Competence level 3: 'Optimising of methods/procedures' – for example: Which procedure is useful in which conditions? Teamwork is required.

The **AEROVET project** has devised a scale according to which the trainers/assessors are expected to assess each mobility unit (based on 'typical professional tasks'). This scale is based on different levels of mastering the knowledge, skills and competence related to the unit. For each of the mobility units, the assessors will note whether the learner has:
– supported a skilled worker in performing the task (lowest level);
– performed the task underpinning the unit under instruction;
– performed the task underpinning the unit under surveillance; or
– performed the task underpinning the unit independently (highest level).

Assessment is often a sensitive topic and it is important to ensure that learners are being assessed fairly and against the same standards (not higher or lower) as if they were assessed in the home institution. Therefore, the ECVET pilot projects have discussed and developed procedures for establishing mutual trust in the assessment that takes place abroad:

- In some projects it was seen as crucial that representatives from sending and hosting institutions visit each other beforehand and get familiar with the learning and assessment conditions that the partner institutions offer (e.g. in the CREDCHEM project).

- Several ECVET pilot projects have decided that in the first set of mobility exchanges learners' assessment will be attended by a teacher from the home institution (e.g. this took place as part of mobility exchange of Finnish learners in Iceland within the M.O.T.O. project).
- In some cases the quality standards for the mobility periods that also addressed assessment, were developed jointly by the partners (e.g. by the RECOMFOR project).

3.3 Validation and recognition

'Validation of learning outcomes' means the process of confirming that certain assessed learning outcomes achieved by a learner correspond to specific outcomes which may be required for a unit or a qualification.
'Recognition of learning outcomes' means the process of attesting officially achieved learning outcomes through the awarding of units or qualifications.

ECVET Recommendation

The projects explored the possibilities and procedures for validating and recognising (units of) learning outcomes achieved abroad. Their experiences clearly show that there is a different scope for validation and recognition depending on the rules in the home VET system. In particular this depends on whether the home system enables:

- VET providers to recognise (units of) learning outcomes assessed abroad; or
- progressive accumulation of learning outcomes.

In some systems recognition, as understood in the ECVET context, seems to clash with existing regulations and the accumulation of learning outcomes (structured into units) is not possible. For example, this is the case in those systems where the award of a qualification is based on a final (holistic) exam and it is not possible to grant exemption for parts of this final exam based on the recognition of learning outcomes achieved abroad. In these cases, recognition does not take the form of an award of a unit or exemption from an assessment. Teachers and trainers are able to validate and recognise the progress learners' make while abroad. The mobility can also be fully integrated into the training pathway. It can be given clear learning objectives against which learners are assessed and teachers and trainers in the home institution can use the results of the assessment as the basis for further developing the training pathway of the individual. In this manner the (unit of) learning outcomes achieved abroad is also recognised.

3.4 Documentation

Projects have developed and tested templates for ECVET-related documents, such as Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), Learning Agreements (LA), and Transcripts of Records. These documents are important elements for establishing mutual trust. These templates can either be used by other institutions as they are or they can be adapted to other contexts. Some key issues related to these documents are presented below.

> *A MoU is an agreement between competent institutions which sets the framework for credit transfer. It formalises the ECVET partnership by stating the mutual acceptance of the status and procedures of competent institutions involved. It also establishes partnership's procedures for co-operation.*
>
> ECVET Questions & Answers

It is important to address who needs to be involved in the development of the MoU and who needs to sign it. The ECVET projects represent a mixture of situations depending on their contexts (for example, in some countries there is a rather centralised approach and in others the responsibilities are more de-centralised) and the nature of the competent institutions involved. Some examples include:

- Several pilot projects included ministries as national level competent institutions. All these projects recognised that it would not be sustainable to expect MoUs to be signed at the level of ministries. The Italian partners in the M.O.T.O. project involved regions in the signing of MoUs. In the OPIR project the ministry developed the MoU, but in the future this role will be delegated to providers.
- The competent institutions for master craftsperson qualifications are usually (national or regional) chambers. Thus, they need to be involved in developing the MoU. For example, in the testing phase of SME MASTER Plus, the partnership agreement was signed between the French Chamber of Skilled Crafts of Ille-et-Vilaine and the Slovenian Chamber of Skilled Crafts.
- In some countries training providers are considered to be competent institutions and can therefore conclude a MoU. For example, in the M.O.T.O. project, MoUs were concluded between training providers in Finland and Iceland.

> *A Learning Agreement is an individualised document which sets out the conditions for a specific mobility period. It specifies, for a particular learner, which learning outcomes and units should be achieved together with the associated ECVET points.*
> *The Learning Agreement also lays down that, if the learner achieves the expected learning outcomes and these are positively assessed by the 'hosting' institution, the 'home' institution will validate and recognise them as part of the requirements for a qualification. Therefore the Learning Agreement constitutes a commitment to the learner that his/her achievement, if in line with the expectations, will be recognised.*
>
> ECVET Questions & Answers

> *The personal transcript is a record of learning achievements. It contains information on learners' assessed learning outcomes, units and ECVET points awarded. It also specifies the identity of the learner and the competent institution(s) that assessed, validated and recognised learners' credit.*
>
> ECVET Questions & Answers

- Some projects decided to combine the Learning Agreement and the Transcript of Records in order to reduce the number of documents (e.g. SME MASTER Plus). In some cases the EUROPASS mobility is used for recording the learning periods abroad as well as the learning outcomes achieved (e.g. in the CREDCHEM project).

The project **CAPE-SV** worked on the conditions for recognition of mobility not only when it comes to students in full-time training but also mobility of professionals. In particular the project was concerned with the mobility of professionals in the sector of performing arts. The project reflected on the different types of evidence that learners could provide to prove the achievement of specific learning outcomes independent of how the knowledge, skills and competence was acquired. This evidence could take the form of portfolios containing concepts of performance shows, lighting or design, references. It reflects the needs and practices in the sector.

3.5 ECVET points

> *'ECVET points' means a numerical representation of the overall weight of learning outcomes in a qualification and of the relative weight of units in relation to the qualification.*
>

The ECVET pilot projects have discussed and partly tested the use of ECVET points in geographical mobility. Several projects recognised and even emphasised the limitations of the use of this quantitative measure which was seen as having little added value compared to the use of units of learning outcomes which are at the core of ECVET.

Overall, it can be said that many projects believe that ECVET is possible without points and that points have little value in particular in those VET systems which do not use them. In general all projects emphasise the need to communicate that in ECVET, transfer is about learning outcomes (grouped in units) and not about points.

However, in systems where credit points are used at national level, for example in Finland, clear willingness to use the points and their added value within the national system is perceived. Obviously, ECVET points are only meaningful if they are allocated to all parts of a qualification and if learners or other actors can use the points to easily identify the part of qualification that has already been achieved.

While the necessity of ECVET points, stating the relative value of learning outcomes in relation to the entire qualification was questioned in several cases, some projects worked on methodologies for allocating ECVET points to units.

The project partners in the project **ECVET ASSET** used the ECVET Convention that one year of formal full time training is equivalent to 60 ECVET points in the following manner:

– The project partners counted the total number of training hours (including on-the-job training) to achieve the full qualifications in each of the partner institutions (this varied between the partner systems). In some of the partner countries the qualification is prepared through two years full time training, in others through three years full time training (in the context of initial VET).
– This total number of hours was allocated either 120 or 180 ECVET points, depending on the duration of the standard full time training.
– Then each project partner estimated the number of training hours required for each of the four units identified.
– The ECVET points allocated to each unit differed from one partner institution to another. The number of ECVET points allocated to each unit is proportionate to the share of training time required to achieve a given unit compared to the total number of training hours required to achieve the qualification. For example the unit 'wheel alignment' would be allocated 2 ECVET points in Finland and Romania, 3 ECVET points in Hungary and 8 in France.

However, the core element of transfer in this project were not the credit points but the units of learning outcomes.

The approaches developed by the **OPIR** partners with regard to the ECVET point differ and can be presented as follows:
– The OPIR partner from Belgium decided to allocate ECVET points to units of learning outcomes according to the relative weight/percentage of the activity within a job profile. In that regard, representatives of the two sectors were consulted
– The OPIR partner from Andalusia decided to allocate ECVET points to units of learning outcomes according to the duration of the learning process to acquire the unit of learning outcomes;
– The OPIR partner from Cataluña opted for mixing these two approaches and allocating ECVET points to units of learning outcomes according both to the duration and the relative weight of the activity within the job profile.

Each partner allocated points to the national qualification, according to the logic of the system. The project does not favour one approach over another.

❹ What was the main added value observed?

The organisations involved in the pilot projects had different expectations from testing ECVET depending on their roles in the process and their responsibilities in the governance and delivery of VET. It is not possible to summarise here all the results and how they enabled to improve existing processes and practices. Furthermore, it is too early to see whether these pilot projects will have more sustainable results and impacts. However, some examples of concrete improvements can already be noted.

4.1 Giving clear learning objectives to mobility periods

Most pilot projects would agree that the main added value of ECVET comes from the fact that it gives greater clarity to the learning aspects of mobility periods. Where ECVET is used as part of a structured exchange of learners between partner institutions, it is a useful tool to develop an agreement between partner institutions over what a learner should achieve while abroad.

The definition of (units of) learning outcomes for mobility periods and their recording in a Learning Agreement support the learner as well as the host institution. The learner is informed of what s/he is expected to achieve while abroad. Thus they can see how mobility contributes to their learning. They can also be made responsible for making sure that while abroad they are actually learning what they are expected to learn.

The host organisation, be it a training centre or a company, receives clear information on what the learner is expected to know and be able to do on their return to their home country. At the same time the host organisation is free to decide how the learning will be organised.

Projects' feedback shows that this principle is in general well received by teachers and trainers as well as heads of training institutions. All projects that tested ECVET during real student mobility used Learning Agreements for this purpose.

In the **M.O.T.O.** project, the learning outcomes to achieve abroad were systematically discussed with the students. In the exchange between Iceland and Finland, the Learning Agreements were also discussed between the host training firm and the host training centre. The host training centre was in charge of making sure that the training firm had a good understanding of what the learner needed to learn while in the work placement. Learners were also involved in the assessment process through a self-assessment discussion between the teacher from the host training institution and the tutor from the training firm.

4.2 Integrating mobility into training pathways

This aspect of ECVET added value is very closely linked to the above. On the one hand, the Learning Agreement sheds light on what learners are expected to acquire abroad. On the other hand, the assessment abroad and the fact that its result is recorded in a transcript, makes it possible for learners to seamlessly build on what they learn while abroad. Teachers and trainers in the host institution receive reliable information on what the learner has mastered during his/her stay in the host institution and they can consequently plan learning activities which build on their newly acquired knowledge and skills. Thus, the mobility period becomes integrated into the training pathway.

The use of learning outcomes and their assessment also support the quality assurance of this process. For example, if a learner fails to reach the expected learning outcomes it is easier to identify why. The home and the host organisation can more easily organise a discussion on aspects such as: were the learning activities provided abroad adequate? Were the learning outcomes specified and set at the appropriate level for the given learner? Did the assessor abroad understand correctly the level of performance expected?

4.3 Supporting individualised approaches

As a result of the above, the use of ECVET supports pedagogies that enable flexibility in how learning is organised and adjusted to learners' progression and achievements. At the same time such flexibility is partly a requirement for these benefits of ECVET to come true. While learners are abroad, other students from the same cohort in the home institution continue their learning (be it in a school-based or a work-based context). If on return, the learners are expected to have learnt exactly the same thing as if they had stayed in the home institution without any acknowledgement of the difference, they will have little motivation to go abroad. The recognition they receive upon return does not have to be in the form of certification of units (if that is not possible in the home system) or exemption from assessment. From a pedagogical point of view, other forms of recognition by the teacher/ trainer that acknowledge the progress made by the learner, are likely to be encouraging.

4.4 Putting emphasis on learning outcomes rather than the curriculum and focusing on similarities and valorising differences

ECVET enables the comparison of qualifications and learners' achievements. While curricula from different countries differ greatly, the expected outcomes are frequently highly comparable. In fact, all the projects identified transferable elements that can be achieved during learners' mobility.

While most of the projects focused their work on identifying similarities between qualifications and supporting the transfer of learning outcomes that are convergent to those one would have achieved at home, a few examples also enabled the valorisation of differences. For example, the SME MASTER Plus project recognised that in certain cases future master crafts persons want to go abroad to learn about specific aspects that are new compared to the standard practice in their craft in their country or region. For example, bakers, who were one of the professions the project addressed, were interested in learning about other ways of preparing bread and dough.

When analysing qualifications from the four neighbouring regions taking part in the project **VaLOGReg**, the experts identified that 90% of learning outcomes expected were convergent, while the training pathways were organised very differently. In one country a given set of learning outcomes was acquired through one specific learning situation and not repeated afterwards in the curriculum. In contrast, in other systems the basic aspects of knowledge, skills and competence concerned were acquired first and then developed towards more proficiency later in the pathway.

Similarly, projects partners in the project **OPIR** noted that there were high levels of convergence between qualifications when comparing learning outcomes. That is why the project recommended that those carrying out such comparisons of qualifications first focus on identifying what key activities the qualifications prepare for and then identifying the comparability of learning outcomes rather than starting with doing comparisons of the curricula.

The emphasis on learning outcomes was also appreciated by projects which were focusing on the use of ECVET in a lifelong learning perspective. Learning outcomes were at the core of the approach developed by the project Be-Twin to enable transition between VET and higher education and vice-versa using ECVET and ECTS.

The **Be-TWIN** project developed a matrix that can be used as a double-entry table presenting units of learning outcomes (and corresponding ECVET points) as well as the learning activities (and corresponding ECTS points). Thus, it can be made visible which learning activity contributes to which unit. It is up to the training providers to use either the ECTS or the ECVET system to present their programmes/qualifications more transparently but it became quite clear for the project partners that learning outcomes are the common interface between the two systems and that they can be used as translation device between VET and HE.

4.5 Strengthening trust

Through their engagement in these pilot projects, training providers and also competent authorities at national as well as sectoral level engaged in an in-depth discussion about qualifications, learning outcomes and their assessment. Through these exchanges they improved each-others' understanding of foreign VET systems and overcame a number of barriers.

One of the practitioners (head of a training centre) at the **Recomfor** final conference stated that for him, the main added value of using ECVET, in particular in the framework of a network as the one set up by Recomfor (Netinvet), was that: *I no longer have to send my teachers abroad with the mobile students because I have trust that they will be properly taken care of.* This is on one hand, an obvious saving for the home training institution as they do not have to hire temporary teaching staff and on the other hand, a demonstration of trust. The training centre knows that the learners are not only taken care of in terms of practical support but also that they follow a specific learning plan and that on their return they will have acquired new knowledge, skills and competence that can be valorised by the home institution.

The partners in the **CAPE-SV** project came from different horizons. All of them train learners in the field of performing arts, but all in very different contexts: one was a university, another one an institute of a major opera venue, a third one a higher education college and others were training centres governed by a ministry of culture and social partners in the field. Despite these contextual differences, and also differences in the types and content of qualifications, the partner institutions managed to find common language and to identify conditions under which they can recognise learning outcomes that would be achieved in one of the partner institutions.

⑤ Conclusions and lessons learnt

Beyond the conclusions and recommendations of each specific project, the following overall conclusions and lessons learnt can be formulated as a result of these three years of ECVET experimentation:

- ECVET is a tool to reach more tangible goals and its use and implementation is not an objective in its own rights. That is why there is no 'one-way' of using the principles and technical specifications at the core of this instrument. While partnerships can learn from each other and many methods, tools and templates developed can be reused. It is important that new partnerships understand the purpose of these tools and methods and adapt these to their own objectives if required.

- There is no harm in developing different approaches as long as the principles of learning outcomes, transparency, documentation and mutual recognition, including assessment and validation, are respected. One could ask whether there will be multiple ECVET systems in the future which would not be able to communicate. The pilot projects show that if these principles are respected, very different VET systems (e.g. using units, not using units) can communicate and transfer what a learner has achieved abroad.

- It cannot be denied that using ECVET in geographical mobility is in the beginning connected with certain additional efforts for the organisations involved and they probably need to receive support and guidance in this initial phase. However, the experience already shows that these efforts pay off and become a lot easier as the mobility exchanges continue and trainers and teachers get familiar with the tools and concepts. Nevertheless, as several pilot projects underlined, mainstreaming recognised mobility using ECVET will require a different preparation and support than what most training centres were used to, until now. Support to accompany this change at provider level will be necessary. Creating networks for ECVET-based mobility exchanges might help to reduce these necessary efforts and to simplify the process of ECVET-related documentation.

- The full added value of ECVET will become apparent in particular for learners who will take part in longer-term mobility. Several weeks is the minimum duration for learners to acquire a coherent set of learning outcomes that can be assessed and validated. For very short exchanges of a few days (which also have an added value for learners) it is probably at this stage too much hassle for relatively little added value. However, three weeks is a period during which a learner can acquire if not a full unit at least part of a unit.

- The experience from the ECVET pilot projects shows that not all ECVET principles could be implemented in practice in all VET systems. There are aspects of ECVET that are difficult to apply in certain contexts and some were even contested. For example, recognition does not always result in exemption from assessments – in particular in systems where the award of a qualification is based on a single complex final assessment. The added value of ECVET points was questioned by the majority of project partners from systems that do not use ECVET points. These issues depend highly on the national and systemic context. Therefore, they should be discussed according to the VET-system in place – in order to ensure that 'lessons learnt' are put into perspective and the respective context of the key messages conveyed is clear. But also in these cases, other key elements of ECVET were found helpful to improve the quality of mobility projects and ECVET has proven in practice that it is a valuable tool.

- ECVET progressive implementation takes place in parallel to other processes that reinforce the use of ECVET: development of qualifications frameworks, support of individualised pathways or the recognition of non-formal and informal learning. These reforms and developments of VET are also based on the use of learning outcomes and their assessment. As the concepts at the heart of ECVET are becoming better known and understood, the use of ECVET will become easier and the initial stages of partnership development less lengthy.

AEROVET

Transnational units of learning outcomes and a qualitative performance-oriented assessment method – results of the **AEROVET** project

Basic information

Lead partner: University of Bremen, Germany.

Active partner countries: France, Germany (lead), Spain, United Kingdom.[1]

Qualifications and sectors involved: Qualifications in the aeronautic sector, especially aircraft construction and maintenance professionals, with a focus on electronics and mechanics technicians. Aeronautic products for a single airplane are produced in different countries across Europe, but have to meet the same quality criteria.

Testing: AEROVET tested the methods and products during mobility exchanges of learners between the Airbus plants in Hamburg and Toulouse. In January 2012 the heads of VET at Airbus considered the piloting to be successful and widened the approach to all mobilities including the plants in Bremen, Broughton, Stade and Nantes. The duration of mobility is between one and three months.

Project website: www.pilot-aero.net

1 Introduction

The AEROVET project builds on the outcomes of the AERONET pilot project which looked at qualifications and work tasks in four partner countries in the aeronautic sector (France, Germany, Spain and the UK). As part of AERONET, an inventory of 'Typical Professional Tasks' common to the work of all aircraft construction professionals across Europe was identified. Combining the work processes in different plants, the project partners found a set of very clear 'work steps' which are repeated in workplaces in almost all plants.

Based on this inventory of Typical Professional Tasks (TPTs), AEROVET tested the potential of ECVET as a suitable framework to students' options of acquiring some of these units in another country; getting them recognised in their home country and training institution upon return.

Twenty-two transnational units of learning outcomes based on TPTs have been developed, including between 5 and 15 'mobility units' connected to each unit – covering mainly learning outcomes of aircraft construction and maintenance staff (electronics and mechanics technicians). A qualitative performance-oriented method for the assessment of the learning outcomes acquired in the host country has been developed and tested throughout the mobility phases.

In parallel to the project, a restructuring of training regulations for professions in the aeronautics sector in Germany was requested. The occupational profiles of the professions in the projects' focus were newly described. Since the social partners regarded the work of the project as a good basis to structure the content of the training, the method chosen by AEROVET was referred to as good practice in the restructuring note. It was stated that the competence areas described by the projects and the allocated competences can contribute to the transparency of training content and thus fulfil the requirements to acquire learning outcomes abroad and grant recognition of the respective content.[2]

2 Main strengths

The main strengths of this project in terms of testing ECVET can be summarised as follows:

- The 'mobility units' developed are clearly related to the work process (Typical Professional Tasks), which is a strength for the possibilities of transfer as well as the possibilities of training and assessing abroad – as confirmed by the social partners responsible for training regulations.
- Teachers and training centres have been involved closely in the development process.
- The project developed a qualitative method of assessment with a simple and user-friendly tool for learners' assessment using levels of performance that has great potential for transferability;.
- The approach to describing 'competence areas' was well received by the social partners in Germany and it became part of the new framework for training regulations for professions in the aeronautics sector.

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1 Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung (DE), Centre d'études et de recherches sur les qualifications (FR), Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (UK); Universitat Rovira i virgili (ES), University of Warwick, (UK).

2 Paper as distributed at final conference of German led ECVET pilot projects, 16 January 2012 in Berlin.

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3 Focus:
The AEROVET method for describing and assessing learning outcomes

The AEROVET method for describing and assessing learning outcomes in view of mobility can be synthesised as follows:

- In workshops, experienced workers from all countries identified and validated learning outcomes based on working tasks requirements. These constitute the core profile of vocational tasks.
- A work process analysis identified on which level these learning outcome requirements take place in the partner's facilities.
- The developed units are based on transnational (FR, UK, ES, DE) 'Typical Professional Tasks' and cover the minimum requirements of the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA)-certified modules. They are also regarded as an efficient means to structure the content of a training pathway.
- The project described 'competence areas' as a coherent set of knowledge, skills and competences. These three elements should be recognisable in the description of the learning outcomes.
- Some of the units of learning outcomes are identically applied in every given learning venue (school, VET-centre or work-based learning), but some parts are only learnable by work-based learning.
- Since the units of learning outcomes might be too comprehensive for mobility periods, additional mobility units have been developed and allocated to the units.

- *Before mobility,* the trainer and trainees agreed on the learning units that should be in the focus of the mobility phase.
- The units proved to be easy to handle and practicable *during mobility.*
- *After mobility,* the completed matrixes display which units the learners have worked on and with which result. The development of the competence of apprentices or trainees is individually assessed against the learning outcomes requirements.
- Learners are assessed on a performance oriented competence scale:
  - The learner has supported the execution of the task;
  - The learner has executed the task under instruction;
  - The learner has executed the task under surveillance;
  - The learner has executed the task independently.

4 References

- AEROVET project outputs: www.pilot-aero.net
- Saniter, Andreas: AEROVET: Innere Flexibilität der Ausbildungsberufe anstelle fragmentierter Modularisierung. In: Eberhard, Christiane (Hrsg.): Mit ECVET zu besserer Mobilität? Von der Europäischen Empfehlung zur Erprobung in der Praxis. Ergebnisse aus den ECVET-Pilotprojekten SME Master Plus, AEROVET, CREDCHEM und VaLOGReg (2009-2012). Reihe Wissenschaftliche Diskussionspapiere, Heft 132. Bonn: Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung, 20-29. URL: http://www.ecvet-projects.eu/Documents/WDP_ECVET.pdf

ECVET ASSET
Building a brighter future

Recognised mobility for learners in the field of automobile maintenance – results of the **ASSET** project

Basic information

Lead partner: Chamber of Crafts of the region Isere, the Training Centre of the Trades and Craft industry (EFMA) and the Association for Training in the Automobile Services Sector (ANFA) – France

Active partner countries: Hungary, Finland, Romania[1]

Qualifications and sectors worked with: Automobile service sector, car maintenance and specifically car electrician – electro-technics technician.

Testing: The project tested the tools developed through four mobility exchanges between French and Romanian training centres (both ways) and between training centres in Hungary and Finland (also both ways). The exchanges lasted two weeks and in total 60 learners participated.

Project website: www.assetecvet.eu

1 Introduction

The project ECVET ASSET aimed at testing ECVET on a sector qualification. The goal was to test the feasibility of using ECVET for mobility and transfer of learning outcomes between different systems. The main aim was to design a process of transfer of units of learning outcomes that would operate between the partner institutions who are all long term partners already used to exchanging mobile students.

The methods developed by the project ASSET for the design of units of learning outcomes and tools (Memorandum of Understanding, assessment grid, Learning Agreement, etc.) were developed by the training centres themselves and they also applied and tested them. This ensures that the tools and methods are accepted by those who will ultimately use them. The (national or sectoral level) competent authorities supported the project and in some partner countries, depending on the system level rules, had an important role in enabling the validation and recognition of what mobile students learnt abroad. For example, the French association for training in the automobile sector (ANFA) followed the testing work of this project very closely to identify how ECVET fits with its rules on qualification design and award and what adapta-

tions would be needed to facilitate the use of ECVET for students' mobility.

The project tested ECVET on qualifications in the field of car maintenance. The initial assumption of the project was that the cars, tools and equipment as well as processes are highly comparable, if not the same, across the partner countries, and hence it should be relatively easy to identify transferable units of learning outcomes. The project findings confirmed this.

The first step was to identify common key activities and related competences using the job profile for car maintenance in the partner countries. Several highly comparable units, which could be achieved by learners during a mobility period were identified and tested. All mobile learners prepared one of the units abroad and this was assessed in the partner training institution. However, the conditions in which these units could be validated and recognised varied from one partner system to another, depending on the regulations in place.

2 Main strengths

The project had a number of strong elements which could be transferred to other mobility experiences:

- The method used to identify comparable units of learning outcomes was based on the main car systems and the operations/tasks that one needs to master in order to repair/maintain these systems. This approach is particularly suitable for qualifications in the field of car maintenance. It is very similar to the approach used by other pilot projects which was based on key activities. This approach makes it easy to identify comparable elements between qualifications systems of different countries. It also makes the units easily understood by teachers, trainers and students.
- A clear method to describe learning outcomes of each unit in a manner understandable to the different partners was developed. Based on the generic statement of competence linked with one key activity (e.g. *diagnose and repair a vehicle stability management system*), the skills and knowledge necessary to carry out this activity (autonomously and respecting health and safety rules) were described. The pre-requisites for achieving this unit in the framework of a mobility experience with a limited

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[1] In each partner country the project brought together training centres as well as competent authorities. The full list of project partners can be found here: http://www.assetecvet.eu/partners

duration were also specified. Using this approach, the project developed a rather simple two-page template to describe each unit[2].

- Use of criteria to identify units 'open to mobility' – this means units that can be achieved abroad and for which it is possible to give learners recognition. The first criterion is *convergence* and it refers to the correspondence of content of the unit (learning outcomes) between qualifications chosen for testing by all four partner institutions. The second criterion is *dimension*. It means that the content of the unit has to be feasible to be achieved during a mobility experience of two to three weeks. The last criterion is *chronology* meaning that the unit is logically integrated into the learning pathway of a learner.

- The project paid particular attention to learners' assessment in order to enable validation and recognition. For each mobility unit, the conditions of assessment (duration, task and material), assessment criteria, as well as a grid to be used by assessors were developed. This enabled the competent authorities to trust the assessment carried out abroad.

- The approach was tested through real mobility of learners and resulted in genuine validation and recognition where this was possible in the framework of existing rules.

2 Focus:
Quality assured validation and recognition

The main objective of the project ASSET was to use ECVET for implementing mobility that is integrated into learners' training pathways and is recognised[3]. The integration of mobility into learners' pathways is enabled by the design of units which are based on key activities. The units can be prepared in different contexts and using different learning approaches. For each unit the pre-requisites – only applicable to the use of the unit for mobility experience – were also described. This is seen by ASSET as an important element of quality assurance. Students who do not master the pre-requisites will find it difficult to master the knowledge, skills and competence of a given unit in the framework of a mobility experience with a limited duration. They would be likely to fail the unit which would go against the above mentioned idea of integrated and recognised mobility.

The project also developed tools that enable quality assured validation of each unit. In order to ensure that the descriptions of learning outcomes are interpreted in a homogeneous manner between the different persons assessing learners in the partner training centres, common assessment criteria were drafted. For example, for the learning outcome *Identify with precision the symptoms of the malfunctioning* (of the injection and ignition system of petrol engines) four assessment criteria were defined: *identify the parameters of the vehicle, choose the appropriate diagnostic tool, use the diagnostic tool, and identify the malfunction[4]*. By observing a learner's performance, assessors apply the criteria and note how the learner performs, using marks for each criterion, in a common grid. Provided that the learner receives at least 60% of the total score, her/his achievement of the unit is validated. During the testing period all assessments carried out complied with this procedure.

In certain partner institutions it was possible to continue until full recognition of the unit was achieved abroad. This depended on the rules in the qualification system rather than the willingness of partner institutions or the quality of mobility. For example, all French students who went to Romania passed the unit concerned. The positive result of the assessment and validation was recorded in their learners' record and will be taken into account for the award of their qualification. This was possible because the units were equivalent to the units that are part of the qualification the learners are preparing, because they were assessed in a quality assured manner and because the competent authority enabled such validation and recognition for periods of mobility. Note that the latter was done provisionally to enable the testing of ECVET. After the testing, the competent authority will take stock of the lessons learnt and reflect on the current procedures for validation and recognition to facilitate use of ECVET for mobility.

4 References

- Unit descriptions: http://www.assetecvet.eu/documents
- Results of mobility testing: http://www.assetecvet.eu/images/ecvet_test_analysis.pdf
- Project newsletters: http://www.assetecvet.eu/newsletter

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2   See examples here: http://ecvet-projects.eu/ToolBox/ToolBoxList.aspx?id=14&type=1
3   See the 5th Issue of the ECVET ASSET Newsletter: http://www.assetecvet.eu/images/Documents/newsletter_5.pdf.pdf

4   See the Assessment guidelines for Unit 2 http://www.assetecvet.eu/documents

Be-TWIN

Testing a joint ECVET–ECTS implementation – results of the Be-TWIN project

Basic information

Lead partner: CCIP, Chambre de commerce et d'industrie de Paris (France)

Active partner countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, France (lead), Greece, Italy, Poland, United Kingdom. [1]

Qualifications and sectors participating: The Be-TWIN partnership developed three case studies with training programmes at different EQF levels (4, 5 and 6) in the fields of Plastics Industry, Hospitality Management, and Training of Trainers.

Testing: Testing was carried out in all three case studies: geographical mobility (case study 1: Plastics Industry – FR/DE), geographical and vertical mobility (case study 2: Hospitality Management – UK/FR), vertical mobility (case study 3: Training of Trainers – IT/FR). In total, 24 learners participated in geographical mobility: 12 apprentices (19 to 26 years) moved from France to Germany between November and December 2010 and 12 apprentices (17 to 21 years) moved from Germany to France between March to April 2011.

Project website: www.betwin-project.eu; Be-TWIN at the ECVET pilot projects website: www.ecvet-projects.eu/Projects/ProjectDetail.aspx?id=12

1 Introduction

The overall objective of the Be-TWIN project was to explore the links and relations between ECVET and ECTS and to develop an effective methodological approach and innovative translation tools aimed at facilitating a common implementation of ECTS and ECVET. The goal was not to revise the existing credit systems or the methodology they are based on, but to facilitate the compatibility and comparability between ECVET and ECTS and to find solutions about how to coordinate them in order to:

- favour the vertical (from VET to HE and vice versa) and horizontal (i.e. recognition between countries) mobility of learners and workers across Europe as well as their employability;
- foster common approaches to education and training in Europe linking the benefits of both systems and enhancing mutual understanding.

2 Main strengths

The main strengths of this project can be summarised as follows:

- The project developed and tested a methodology for a common implementation of ECVET and ECTS in order to overcome barriers that are caused by the separate development and implementation of these two credit systems.
- The approach designed to facilitate the compatibility and comparability of ECVET and ECTS appears solid and is indeed based on good understanding of the two credit systems and the principles they embed.
- The testing showed the feasibility of using the methodology in different fields and contexts. It was tested through three case studies, i.e. the Be-TWIN methodology was applied to existing training programmes at different EQF levels (4, 5 and 6) in the field of Plastics Industry, Hospitality Management and Training of Trainers in the context of geographical as well as vertical mobility.
- The Be-TWIN project brought together representatives from different sectors/segments of the qualifications system: VET and HE. This is a prerequisite for enhancing mutual trust and permeability between VET and HE.
- The Be-TWIN methodology can also be used for other purposes. For example, it could support the visualisation of the relationship between learning activities and learning outcomes of VET programmes and thus facilitate the 'translation' of VET programmes structured in a traditional way (subject-based, describing learning activities) into learning outcomes descriptions.

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1 Partners: DEKRA akademie GMBH (DE), Ekonometpika (GR), Ente nazionale acli istruzione professionale (IT), European Marketing Confederation (BE), Fédération de la plasturgie (FR), Fondazione Giacomo Rumor Centro Produttivita Veneto (IT), Lifelong Learning Network Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent, Shropshire,Telford and Wrekin (UK), Network of Universities from the Capitals of Europe (UNICA) (BE), Rectorat de Paris -Délégation Académique à la Formation professionnelle initiale et continue (FR), Rusenski Universitet 'Angel Kanchev' (BE), Stratford-upon-Avon College (UK), Ufficio Scolastico Provinciale di Venezia (IT), Zaklad Doskonalenia Zawodowego, Kielce, Centrum Ksztalcenia Zawodoweg, Radom (PL).

Be-TWIN final conference December 2012 in Paris

3 Focus:
Be-TWIN methodology –
a tool facilitating ECVET and ECTS articulation

At the core of the Be-TWIN methodology is a matrix, which can be used from different entry points and is compatible with the specificities of HE and VET. It allows training providers to use either the ECTS or the ECVET system to present their training offer more transparently. As a common interface, it emphasises learning outcomes: they have been identified as the only possible translation device between the two credit systems, since they form the driving force behind contemporary HE reforms and constitute the very core of the VET philosophy. However, the workload and the relative importance of the units of learning outcomes within the qualification are also taken into account.

The following steps need to be taken for completing the table:

- The learning outcomes of a qualification (grouped into units – possibly related to a professional standard) are listed in the left column of the table (vertical axis).
- The corresponding learning activities (courses, internships, theses, practical experimentations, on-the-job training, etc. – as described in the curriculum) are recorded in the first row of the table (horizontal axis).
- In a next step, crosses are entered in the table indicating which learning activities contribute to which learning outcomes.
- Finally, credit points are allocated to either the units of learning outcomes (ECVET points – in the column on the right side of the table) or the learning activities (ECTS points – in the row on the bottom of the table) or to both (ECVET and ECTS).

4 References

- Methodological Guide: 'ECVET-ECTS: Building bridges and overcoming differences'. Available at: http://www.betwin-project.eu/wp-content/MR_Content/Toolbox/Be-TWIN_Methodological_Guide_July2010.pdf
- Operational testing – final report (case studies, forthcoming)
- Be-TWIN Tool-KIT Bridging ECVET and ECTS. A guide for pedagogical staff. Available at: http://www.betwin-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/EN_BeTWIN-Toolkit.pdf

Enhancing mobility between learners in the performing arts sector in Europe – results of the **CAPE-SV project**

Basic information

Project promotor: Centre de Formation Professionnelle aux Techniques du Spectacle/ Vocational Training Centre for Performing Arts Techniques (CFPTS), France.
Active partners (countries): France (lead), Czech Republic, Spain, Italy, United Kingdom.[1]
Qualifications and sectors addressed: Administrative and technical staff in the performing arts sector.
Project website: www.cfpts.fr/capesv

1 Introduction

CAPE-SV aimed at creating the conditions and developing tools to foster and facilitate geographical and professional mobility in the sector of performing arts – focusing on specific professional profiles (stage lighting technicians, managers, designers and production managers). One specificity of this project compared to some other ECVET pilot projects is that the project partners involved (performing arts colleges and training providers) have in most cases themselves the full competence to validate and recognise credit from abroad. Therefore, the institutional landscape for using ECVET in this project was simpler than in some of the other projects.

During the course of the project, the partners identified common competences across occupations in the sector; agreed on common procedures for recognition, accumulation and transfer; and formalised these procedures.

In the starting phase, the project developed a tool that allowed for the description of the respective qualifications in every partner country in a transparent manner using learning outcomes and assessable professional achievements. Following this, a common approach to understanding, recognition and transfer was developed.

Beyond this, the partners established a solid basis for a sustainable partnership that will allow them to continue their cooperation in concrete future mobility and exchange programs.

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[1]   DAMU (Divadelni Fakulta Akademie Muzickych v Praze), CZ; Institut del Teatre de la Deputacio de Barcelona, ES; STAFF (Spectacle et Technique Association Française de Formation), FR; ISTS (Institut Supérieur des Techniques du Spectacle), FR; Fondazione Accademia d'Arti e Mestieri dello Spettacolo Teatro alla Scala, IT; Rose Bruford College, UK.

2 Main strengths

- The project developed a common approach to enhance the transparency of qualifications between the partner institutions. It enabled the conceptualisation of the processes for recognition and transfer of units of learning outcomes between the partner institutions.
- The project developed a common method of defining units of learning outcomes which is based on the phases of a work process in the field of performing arts. Each unit focuses on specific professional achievements. This approach to defining units is compatible with all learning pathways (VET, higher education or learning on the job) that can lead to the selected profiles.
- Practitioners were intensively involved in assessing the feasibility of the tools, adding to their user friendliness.
- The project reflected on the different types of evidence that learners could provide to prove the achievement of specific learning outcomes independent of how the knowledge, skills and competence was acquired. This evidence could take the form of portfolios containing concepts of performance shows, lighting or design, references. It reflects the needs and practices in the sector.
- The partners are planning to continue their work and set up two mobility programs to implement the transnational agreements and procedures for validation that have been developed.

3 Focus:
Sustainability and long-term cooperation between partner institutions

The primary concern of CAPE-SV was to create tools to facilitate geographical and professional mobility of technical and production staff in the performing arts sector and thus help to foster the conditions that would make enhanced mobility possible within the sector. Therefore, the project decided it would rather start with developing tools to make the content of current qualifications and existing units in the partner institutions more transparent rather than developing new (common) units.

The project team first identified the chronological phases related to work processes common to various occupations in the field. Common competences across occupations in the sector were

As a result of CAPE-SV, the partners signed a Memorandum of Understanding, stating the conditions for long-term cooperation.

identified and common procedures for recognition, accumulation and transfer were agreed and formalised. Learning outcomes were grouped according to stages of the production process in the performing arts industry: planning, designing, implementing, and evaluating. In a next step, it was systematically described which learning outcomes can be assessed by which partner; in other words, which learning outcomes are currently part of the existing qualification pathway.

Following this step, transnational agreements between the partners were drafted, formalising the recognition process. These agreements applied to two units of learning outcomes: 'production of transmission documents for a show' in the lighting sector, and 'time management and work planning' in the fields of technical and administrative supervision practised in the theatre industry.

Finally, all partners signed a Memorandum of Understanding stating the conditions for long-term cooperation and the future organisation of mobility projects. The partners have the intention to concretely test the transfer and recognition of the described units of learning outcomes. Therefore, two mobility programmes will be set up and implemented throughout the next three years, for either students or adults. During these programs, the partners will also discuss the idea of a common module that can be assessed by each partner. Moreover, they will cooperate on the development of a common qualification, including the specific features of each organisation's training courses.

In the same context, the partners will explore the option of developing a distance learning program with a mobility phase permanently integrated as an inherent part of the program. To facilitate the cooperation and exchange between learners, an online platform allowing them to work on shared projects or workshops will be set up.

In the long term, the partnership set up in the context of ECVET can be a first step towards a transnational association or network for the development of joint solutions for professional training in the live performing arts sector.

4 References

- Article in ECVET-Magazine Issue No. 6, http://www.ecvet-projects.eu/Documents/Bulletins/ECVET_Mag_06_Final_EN.pdf
- Final project report (forthcoming)
- Results of the project as presented at the final dissemination event on December 9 in Prague
- The CAPE-SV methodological guide in English can be consulted on the ECVET-pilot projects website: http://ecvet-projects.eu/Documents/CAPE-SV-final_EN%20methodological%20guide.pdf
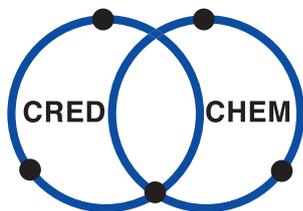
An international mobility network for the chemical industry – results of the **CREDCHEM** project

Basic information

Lead partner: Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung (BIBB) (Germany).

Active partner countries: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany (lead), Italy, Slovakia.[1]

Qualifications and sectors worked with: The work of CREDCHEM focused on qualifications for laboratory professionals in the chemical sector ('chemiebezogene Facharbeit').

Testing: The CREDCHEM project involved 12 pilot schools and providers. Mobility exchanges were carried out in 2011 among six of the institutions. The tools developed were tested during mobility exchanges of 56 learners in 14 mobility measures.

Project website: www.credchem.eu; CREDCHEM at the ECVET pilot projects website: http://www.ecvet-projects.eu/Projects/ProjectDetail.aspx?id=15

1 Introduction

The main objective of the CREDCHEM project was to develop and test tools and procedures supporting the integration of recognised mobility periods into the formal training programmes in the chemical sector. The CREDCHEM mobility network was initiated ('CREDCHEM-Mobilitätsverbund') for developing and providing units of learning outcomes specifically for their use abroad (mobility units). Learners are able to acquire these units independently of the learning venue, i.e. in all countries involved in the network and not just in the home country. Professional work tasks were taken as the basis for the design of units of learning outcomes. To ensure the quality of the internships abroad, the project aimed at developing sector specific tools and standards for mobility and using CREDCHEM as a 'quality label' for the implementation of mobility measures in the chemical industry.

2 Main strengths

The main strengths of this project in terms of testing ECVET can be summarised as follows:

- The project was successful in initiating a mobility network: the 'CREDCHEM Network' has already been officially established at SBG Dresden (DE). Thus, the units as well as the mobility platform will be available for other interested providers. Institutions which are not members of the CREDCHEM partnership (from HU, LV, PL) have already joined the network.
- CREDCHEM-boards (involving competent bodies, such as ministries and social partners) were set up at the national level to ensure sustainability of the results. Thus, relevant stakeholders were involved and in some of the partner countries CREDCHEM has become a reference point in the implementation of national ECVET strategies.
- The methodology to identify units of learning outcomes based on professional work tasks is solid and theoretically underpinned.
- The CREDCHEM units of learning outcomes describe the requirements the skilled worker needs to meet in a laboratory. Young people are required to master these requirements in whatever system they are trained in. Therefore these units can be included in qualifications from different countries and independently of how they are structured in the national context.
- The tools and methods were developed in close cooperation with teachers/trainers. Thus, the development of practical, demand-oriented and user-friendly tools and procedures was ensured.
- Most of the units are based on different levels of competence. This was done in order to make the mobility phases fit into the national training programmes in a way that neither too much or too little is requested from the mobile learners. At the same time the differentiation enables a learner to achieve a unit on a higher level than at home and to obtain an 'additional qualification'. This can be a motivation for both learners and enterprises to support mobility within the network.

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1   Istituto Tecnico per Attività Sociali 'Pietro Scalcerle' (IT), Národní ústav odborného vzdělávání (NUOV) (CZ), Natzionalna agentzia za profesionalno obrazovanie i obuchenie (NAVET) (BG), Sächsische Bildungsgesellschaft für Umweltschutz und Chemieberufe Dresden mBH (SBG) (DE), Štátny Inštitút Odborného Vzdelávania (SIOV) (SK), Technische Universität Dresden (DE).

▣ Focus:
Quality-driven approach to assessment

The CREDCHEM approach to assessment is based on the idea that competences which represent relevant learning outcomes can be verified through specific work tasks. Thus, the project partners (teachers/trainers) agreed upon a common pool of 'competence-oriented assessment tasks' related to the work tasks and to each competence level of the unit. Additionally, an assessment sheet was developed for evaluating the technical competences as well as more generic competences (such as problem solving, communicating, working in teams).

In order to ensure mutual trust and quality in the assessment process and for the development of common standards, it was seen as crucial that representatives from sending and hosting institutions visited each other beforehand. Thus, from each country partner institution representatives (teachers and trainers – 'tandem approach') visited the learning venues in the other countries previous to the learner's mobility to observe and discuss the realisation of a unit of learning outcomes with their colleagues.

The assessment of mobile learners was carried out by teachers and/or technical staff who were able to understand the technicality of the work tasks covered by the units of learning outcomes. The learning periods abroad as well as the learning outcomes achieved were recorded in the EUROPASS Mobility. This approach allows mobile learners to provide evidence of the acquisition of the unit and facilitates the integration of the mobility phase into the training programme.

▣ References

- Eberhardt, Christiane & Schlegel, Beatrice (2011): Nutzt ECVET beim Aufbau eines europäischen Mobilitätsverbunds? Das Beispiel CREDCHEM. In: Eberhard, Christiane (Hrsg.): Mit ECVET zu besserer Mobilität? Von der Europäischen Empfehlung zur Erprobung in der Praxis. Ergebnisse aus den ECVET-Pilotprojekten SME Master Plus, AEROVET, CREDCHEM und VaLO-GReg (2009-2012). Reihe Wissenschaftliche Diskussionspapiere, Heft 132. Bonn: Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung, 30-41. URL: http://www.ecvet-projects.eu/Documents/WDP_ECVET.pdf
- Eberhardt, Christiane (2011): CREDCHEM – Entwicklung und Erprobung eines Credit-Systems zur Verbesserung der Mobilität im Chemiesektor. In: bwp@ Spezial 5 – Hochschultage Berufliche Bildung 2011, Fachtagung 07, hrsg. v. NIETHAMMER, M./ WENTZEL, M., 1-7. Online: http://www.bwpat.de/ht2011/ft07/eberhardt_ft07-ht2011.pdf (26-09-2011), English version available at: http://www.credchem.eu

ECVET - M.O.T.O.

A Model of Transparency of Learning Outcome Units – results of the **M.O.T.O. project**

Basic information

Lead partner: Ministero dell' Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca (MIUR) (Italy) and Instituto per lo Sviluppo della Formazione professionale dei Lavoratori (ISFOL) (Italy).

Active partner countries: Austria, Finland, Iceland, Italy (lead).[1]

Qualifications and sectors involved: The project partners worked on qualifications that concerned the tourism and catering sector (AT: Certificate of Apprenticeship ´Cook´; FI: Further Qualification in Travel Services – Travel Counsellor, Vocational Qualification in Hotel and Restaurant Services – Cook, Vocational Qualification in Hotel and Restaurant Services – Waiter/Waitress, Vocational Qualification in the Tourism Industry – Tourism Activities Organiser; IS: Certificate of Apprenticeship – Chef, Waiter; Diploma in Tourism Studies – Travel Consultant; and IT: Vocational Qualification in Catering – Cook, Vocational Diploma in Hotel and Restaurant Services).

Testing: Two series of mobility exchanges of about three weeks each were organised. One mobility exchange took place between Italy and Austria (both ways), another one between Finland and Iceland (both ways). In total, 17 learners and five teachers/trainers went abroad (additionally, six preparatory and follow-up visits of teachers were organised).

Project website: http://ecvet-moto.isfol.it; M.O.T.O. at the ECVET pilot projects' website: http://www.ecvet-projects.eu/Projects/ProjectDetail.aspx?id=11

1 Introduction

The M.O.T.O. (Model of Transferability of Learning Outcome Units) project developed tools for supporting work placements abroad in the tourism and catering sector. Due to differences in the VET systems of the partner countries and the focus on internships, partners decided not to develop common units. The most important issue was to transparently describe the learning outcomes that were expected to be acquired by the mobile learner abroad and to communicate this to the receiving company. Mobility projects (between Italy and Austria as well as between Finland and Iceland) involving VET providers, companies, students and apprentices from the partner countries were carried out to ensure the usability of the tools and approaches. The M.O.T.O. Model, which is the final publication of the project, is structured according to the different phases of an international VET placement (before, during, and after mobility) and presents the approaches taken by the mobility partners, the tools used, their experiences and lessons learned as well as recommendations for future mobility exchanges.

2 Main strengths

The main strengths of this project in terms of testing ECVET can be summarised as follows:

- The tools developed and tested in the M.O.T.O. project allowed for flexible approaches for using ECVET principles that fit the context of the partner institutions. Hence, the focus was on identifying relevant learning outcomes for enhancing the quality of work placements abroad instead of describing whole qualifications in terms of units of learning outcomes or developing units common to all partners.
- The tools for supporting ECVET-based mobility (for example, Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) and Learning Agreements (LAs)) were jointly developed with practitioners, tested in real mobility projects and revised based on feedback from participating teachers or trainers and learners.
- All partners found an appropriate way for validation and recognition of learning outcomes acquired in work placements abroad based on their national or regional regulations. For example, the Finnish way of validating and recognising the learning outcomes, as tested in the M.O.T.O. project, can be considered as fully compatible with all ECVET principles.
- The M.O.T.O. partnership developed tables presenting – in a concise way – core information on the issues that need to be taken into account in ECVET-based mobility projects; as well as tables with experiences from the testing partnerships and containing information on lessons learned (cf. description below).

M.O.T.O. worked on a range of qualifications from the tourism and catering sector.

3 Focus:
Guidelines, experiences and recommendations for implementing ECVET-based mobility

The M.O.T.O. partnership developed concise overviews that can be used as guidelines by other VET institutions for ensuring the quality of ECVET-based mobility phases:[2]

- *General planning table*: This table provides an overview of the different phases of an international VET placement, the ECVET-related issues (before mobility: establishment of partnerships and design of mobility period; during mobility: learning and assessment abroad; after mobility: validation and recognition). The information provided focuses on the aims (what?) and activities (how?), the actors involved (who?) and the tools used (documentation – such as templates for analysing qualifications, MoU, LA, assessment grids, and personal transcript of records).
- *Experiences:* Two tables present the information described above for the testing of partnerships between Austrian and Italian partners and Finnish and Icelandic partners; a third table focuses on the mobility phase of a Finnish student. The similarities and differences in the approaches taken (for example, what are the competent institutions that need to be involved or what does recognition mean in the specific context) are clearly visible and can support other VET institutions from these countries in reflecting on issues that need to be taken into account or activities that need to be carried out.
- *Lessons learned*: An additional table, structured in the same way, gives an overview of the lessons learned in the M.O.T.O. project and in particular in the mobility exchanges. For example, the experience from the M.O.T.O. project clearly shows that transparent learning outcomes that are meaningful for those involved are crucial to ensure the quality of the VET placement abroad and to establish mutual trust (whereas credit points seem to be less relevant for some of the partner countries). They also play an important role in those cases where recognition can only be related to the time spent abroad and not to

(parts of) units; this kind of recognition would probably not be possible if the quality of the VET placement was not ensured by focusing on transparently described learning outcomes in all phases of the mobility process.

4 References

- Final publication: 'M.O.T.O. Model: Model of Transferability of Learning Outcome units among different ECVET systems'. Available at: http://www.ecvet-projects.eu/Documents/MOTO_model_final.pdf

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2   These tables are included in the final publication of the M.O.T.O. project.

ECVET system for No borders in tourism' hospitality European Training and WORK – results of the **N.E.T.WORK** project

Basic information

Lead partner: Centro Italiano di Studi superiori sul turismo e sulla Promozione Turistica (CST), Italy.

Active partner countries: France, Italy (lead), Portugal, Slovenia,[1]

Qualifications and sectors worked with: Tourism sector – qualification of receptionists.

Testing: The tools developed were tested by VET teachers and through a questionnaire with students. The teachers were asked to compare the competence descriptions developed by the project with the content of training delivered in training centres. On the whole, five institutions were involved in the experimentation (two vocational training agencies, one public and one private VET-provider and one private higher education institution).

Project website: www.ecvet-network.eu

1 Introduction

The N.E.T.WORK project chose to work on qualifications in the tourism sector which has a long tradition of transnational training and staff mobility. Its main objectives were to use ECVET to develop a common framework of macro-competences for a specific training pathway in the partner countries – an important precondition to enhance the mobility of students. In that context, the project worked on the qualification of receptionists.

The project first analysed the existing qualifications and training pathways for receptionists in the four partner countries (FR, IT, PT, SI). It aimed at defining common macro-units of learning outcomes (or reference units). These units had to be applicable to all the qualifications in the systems of countries concerned. In other words, the content of these units should combine competences that can be identified in the qualifications of the partner systems, without actually requiring the partner countries to modify their existing qualifications. The units should also be assessable in each system.

After defining common macro-competences based on an analysis of the profession and related work activities, the partners developed five macro-units of learning outcomes. Each partner organisation then compared to what extent the units identified were in concordance with the national, or, in the case of Italy, regional qualifications. Afterwards, the correspondence between these macro-level units and training activities delivered in training centres was tested by VET teachers. The teachers received a questionnaire, based on the competence units, in which they had to indicate whether they prepare students for the given competence in the training programme they deliver and if so, where these activities can be found in the curriculum. Through this experimentation, the partners had the chance to explore to what extent the students actually acquire the identified common skills, knowledge and competence in their respective training paths.

2 Main strengths

- The learning outcomes defined are based on the analysis of professional activities of receptionists. The learning outcomes descriptions distinguish between knowledge, skills and competences and are described in sufficient detail to enable transnational comparison.

- The project partners agreed on the assigning of credit points to each unit. This was based on assigning a weighting (in form of percentages) to each unit of learning outcomes.

- The experimentation was perceived by most of the VET professionals involved as an opportunity to better understand ongoing innovation in their VET systems.

- The participating countries had the opportunity to use the experimentation results at VET system level. The Portuguese and Slovenian partners in particular perceived the experimentation as an opportunity to evaluate aspects of on-going system innovations; e.g. test aspects of their National Qualification Frameworks and qualifications standards in the framework.

- The experimentation has demonstrated enough consistency between the qualifications for receptionists to establish transition pathways between different training programmes and different national contexts.

1 Association France-Europa, FR; Center Republike Slovenije za poklicno izobraževanje, SI, Consultis – Consultoria empresarial, unipessoal, Lda, PT ; Federazione delle Associazioni Italiane Alberghi e Turismo, IT ; Provincia di Perugia, IT, Sviluppo & Competenze, SV&CO S.r.l, IT.

Students of the School of Tourism and Hospitality in Maribor used the experimentation chart developed by the project N.E.T.WORK as a self-assessment tool.

3 Focus:
N.E.T.WORK experimentation plan and guidelines

Common matrix for learning outcomes
To be able to compare learning outcomes between the partner countries, the partners first developed a matrix to define learning outcomes of their national/regional qualifications. Four matrixes emerged, which were used to identify commonalities. This initial comparison showed a high level of convergence. On this basis, a common framework of macro-competences was developed.

Common framework of macro-competences
The partners then compared the design and organisation of the specific training connected to the training profile of a receptionist in each country. Training profiles were chosen that are equivalent both in terms of formal EQF level (level IV-V) and in the number of months of instruction/training (12-15 months). On this basis, a common shared framework of macro-competences was constructed, selecting five elements common to all profiles.

KSC Framework
Each macro-competence was described in terms of knowledge, skills and competences.

Outline of the units and comparative chart of the learning outcomes
A comparative chart giving an overview on the concordance of the units with the chosen training pathway in the respective countries was prepared.

Grid for verification of the training contents of the pathway according to the ECVET system
All training centres participating in the experimentation received a grid to verify if the training programme on offer enables students to achieve the defined learning outcomes (macro-competences). Based on the competence units an assessment chart was designed. The training centres involved used this to further test the feasibility and validity of the competence macro-units. For example in Slovenia, the training centre involved asked students to use the chart as a self-assessment tool and to report whether they master the described knowledge, skills and competence. On the whole, 271 students in the four countries were reached by this aspect of experimentation.

Verification and evaluation method grid
All partners were provided with an explanation of the verification and evaluation methods. To monitor and analyse the experimentation results, qualitative and quantitative data were collected; summary reports were prepared by each responsible partner. On this basis, a comparative analysis was conducted to compare quantitative and qualitative aspects.

4 References:

- ECVET system for European hospitality – No borders in tourism hospitality European Training and Work (N.E.T.WORK); Article about the Network project in ECVET Magazine No. 6 (November 2011)
- URL: http://www.ecvet-projects.eu/Documents/Bulletins/ECVET_Mag_06_Final_EN.pdf
- N.E.T.WORK Experimentation results and impact analysis: Final Evaluation Report (forthcoming)
- N.E.T.WORK Project Products (forthcoming)
- N.E.T.WORK Final Report (forthcoming)

Manual for describing learning outcomes in view of ECVET mobility – the results of the **OPIR** project

Basic information

Lead partner: Ministry of education of the French Speaking Community of Belgium.

Active partner countries: Belgium-fr (lead), France, Spain, Romania, Italy.[1]

Qualifications and sectors involved: The project partners worked on qualifications that concerned the trades of hairdresser and car mechanic. The qualification levels differed across the partner countries but the core nature of the professions was the same[2].

Testing: The project tested the methods and products during mobility exchanges of learners. Sixty-two learners took part; 21 training centres participated and the duration of mobility varied between two and three weeks. Most mobility experiences were carried out in groups and in training centres; however, several consisted of individual placements in companies.

Project website: www.freref.eu/opir/

1 Introduction

Besides the general objective to test ECVET, common to all the pilot projects, the project OPIR aimed to develop feasible, user-friendly and cost-effective methods and guidelines for future users of ECVET, i.e. training centres and learners. The main project partners were competent authorities in the national contexts[3]. The training centres were associated partners testing the tools developed by these institutions. The project partners were clear on the fact that they did not wish to implement common units or harmonised qualifications, but they wanted to support mobility and enable credit recognition using the existing qualifications (and units) and in the framework of existing rules.

It is also important to highlight that the leading project partner, from the French Speaking Community of Belgium, is engaged in a reform of VET qualifications which involves the use of units. From the beginning of the project, the lead organisation envisaged to use the methods and approaches designed by OPIR to inform the implementation of this reform.

2 Main strengths

The main strengths of this project in terms of testing ECVET can be summarised as follows:

- Clear and detailed description of a method to identify units of learning outcomes comparable between different partner institutions and describing them in terms of learning outcomes in view of mobility (see below).
- Detailed reflection on the role of assessment in ECVET mobility and the use of assessment criteria and indicators to support the assessment abroad, its quality assurance and ultimately also the credit transfer and recognition. The project described the assessment criteria and indicators for several units and also developed grids to be used by assessors during learners' assessment.
- The project collected and analysed the experience of training centres in working with the methods and tools developed. A critical analysis identifying strengths and gaps of the approach developed was conducted and it provides a useful reflection on the tools. Overall this evaluation was very positive though points for further improvement were highlighted.

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1   Partners: Conseil Régional Rhône Alpes (FR) ; Rectorat de l'académie de Grenoble (FR) Generalitat De Catalunya – Departament d'Educació (ES), Centrul National De Dezvoltare A Invatamantului Profesional Si Tehnic (RO), Consejería de Educación de la Junta de Andalucia Dirección General de Formación Profesional y Educación Permanente (ES), Consejería de Empleo, Servicio Andaluz de Empleo. Dirección General de Formación para el Empleo (ES), FREREF – Fondation des Régions Européennes pour la Recherche en Education et en Formation (BE), CEFASS – Centro Europeo di Formazione per Affari Sociali e Sanità pubblica (IT), Silent partner: Conférence intercantonale de l'instruction publique de la Suisse romande et du Tessin – CIIP (CH),Observer : Foundation for the Development of the Education System (PL)

2   For the list of qualifications tackled in the work of this project in all the active partner countries see the document Tableau recapitulatif des certifications prises en compte par le consortium: http://www.freref.eu/opir/docs/fr/Opir---Prod-8.pdf

3   competent for design or award of qualifications or recognition of units of learning outcomes

In the project OPIR, Belgian hairdresser students had the chance to participate in a mobility exchange project with a Romanian VET-school.

3 Focus:
Method for describing learning outcomes

The OPIR method for describing learning outcomes in view of mobility can be synthesised as follows:

1) Project partners use it as the basis for the existing occupational profiles[4] that concern the qualification mobile learners are prepared for;

2) By comparing the key activities of the professions for which the partner qualifications prepare (for example, using a simple grid with key activities and 'yes' or 'no' indications), they identify which key activities are common to those partner institutions that wish to exchange learners;

3) Identifying key activities that a learner holding a given qualification should be capable to perform is the basis for describing learning outcomes. The description of a key activity begins with a verb and links to an observable and measurable process (e.g. communicate with the client: welcome, leave the client, etc.);

4) The project partners choose the key activity(ies) that are feasibly mastered through a learning period abroad consisting of a given duration (with possibly some pre-requisites to be mastered before);

5) Only such key activity(ies) are described in terms of unit(s) of learning outcomes. One key activity can be the basis for one or several units depending on the complexity;

6) The project partners describe the knowledge, skills and competences that are needed to master this key activity at the appropriate level of autonomy;

7) The skills are described first and then the required knowledge and the competences are inferred. The information on knowledge should not be too detailed. The objective is not to specify all the knowledge but only the amount that enables two training centres to have a common understanding of what is required. Competence refers to the level of autonomy and responsibility with which the person carries out the key activity. When the competences are defined the whole set is reviewed for coherence;

8) For each competence, the partners agree to a set of assessment criteria (e.g. adapted choice of haircut to be realised) and indicators (e.g. the steps required to identify the characteristics of hair are carried out) that enable the assessment of learners;

9) The result is reviewed by practitioners and their feedback is taken into account.

The evaluation through mobility showed that:
- All training centres used the learning outcomes defined in this manner to develop learning agreements;
- Teachers understood the table with learning outcomes correctly though some issues around terminology surfaced (these could in general be tackled through a discussion between home and host institution before the mobility takes place).

When using this approach it is useful to bear in mind that it is particularly suitable when:
- In the partner countries occupational profiles exist and the qualifications concerned clearly relate to these profiles. The approach assumes the existence of such a direct link in order for the learning outcomes that are described based on key activities to be transferred and recognised in view of the qualification; and
- The partner institutions wish to carry out mobility which will concern the same units between institution A and B. Otherwise[5], the process describing learning outcomes based on key activities remains relevant, but it is not required to identify commonalities between the two partner systems and qualifications.

4 References

OPIR project outputs (in French):
- Produit n°1 – Manuel d'instruction pour la présentation des certifications en acquis d'apprentissage
- Produit n°4 – Relevé synthétique des différents parcours d'apprentissage
- Produit n°7 – Manuel d'instruction pour la conception d'unités d'acquis d'apprentissage
- Outils pratiques interrégionaux pour ECVET – Rapport final

Available on the OPIR website:
http://www.freref.eu/opir/index.php

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4   documents that describe the activities of a qualified professional

5   If the units that learners from institution A are preparing are different to units that learners from institution B are preparing.

Sustainable network of training centres using ECVET for mobility – from Recomfor to NETINVET

Basic information

Lead partner: French confederation of wholesale and international trade (CGI).

Active partner countries: Belgium-fr, France (lead), Czech Republic, Spain, Greece, Italy, The Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia.[1]

Qualifications and sectors involved: International trade assistant (import-export) – depending upon the qualification system in the partner country, this is at levels equivalent to EQF 4 or 5.

Testing: The objective of this project was to develop trust between competent authorities in the partner countries as well as creating a sustainable network of training centres which would use ECVET and the common-reference units for mobility. In the period 2010-2011, over 150 learners took part in mobility exchanges facilitated through this network.

Project website: www.netinvet.eu

1 Introduction

NETINVET – a self-funded network of more than 40 training centres (as of early 2012) – is a result of two previous ECVET projects. The project Cominter developed a common reference framework of units of learning outcomes that are comparable across the partner countries[2]. The project identified the key qualifications activities for which the international trade assistants prepare and they are described in terms of learning outcomes, grouped into units. Competent authorities, which were partners in the Cominter project, defined how these reference units relate to their existing national/ sectoral qualifications. The reference units are shared by the training centres in the network and they are used to structure and recognise learners' mobility when the training centres opt for organising recognised mobility (see below).

Based on the common profiles developed by Cominter, the Recomfor project created the conditions for the establishment of a sustainable network of training centres. It designed the operational principles of such a network, developed the required tools and designed quality charters to be respected by participating training centres and businesses. In this context ECVET is a tool and good quality mobility is the main objective.

The NETINVET network was formally set up at the closing conference of Recomfor. At the core of this network is the idea of mutual trust between training centres which was created thanks to:

- The use of common reference units that can be understood in each of the partner countries;
- Adherence to common quality assurance principles linked to the organisation of mobility[3];
- The communication platform (an interactive protected website through which the members communicate).

Each training centre member of the network contributes financially in the form of a membership fee[4]. The leading body – the French Confederation of Business-to-Business Trade (CGI) – makes a substantial contribution to the running of the network and the development and maintenance of shared services (such as the website or the annual forum).

The mobility organised in the framework of NETINVET can take place in the training centres or in the form of traineeships in enterprises. Each training centre is required to have a network of associated enterprises willing to host students from abroad. When foreign learners are in enterprises, the host training centres are responsible for monitoring that the conditions of their traineeship are respected.

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1   Partner organisations: CIEP (France) – AGEFA PME (France) – CEF-Conseil de l'Education et de la Formation (Belgium) – NUOV (Czech Republic) – Generalitat de Catalunya (Spain) – OEEK (Greece – USP Venezia (Italy) – CPV (Italy) – KC Handel (Netherlands) – IBS / Albeda College (Netherlands) – CECOA (Portugal) – CCP (Portugal) – NCTVET (Romania) – CCIB (Romania) – CPI (Slovenia) – CPU (Slovenia) – NUOV (Czech Republic).

2   See the Cominter Presentation of the « import export sales assistant » common certification: http://ecvet-projects.eu/Documents/cominter%20presentation%20of%20the%20qualification%20import%20and%20expert%20sales%20assistant.pdf

3   See the quality charters: http://www.netinvet.eu/demarche-qualite

4   The amount varies from one country to another.

▣ Main strengths

A key strength of this network is the fact that it managed to bring together a relatively large number of training centres in a short period of time and that it gained the support (including financial) of business representatives.

The approach behind this initiative has the following assets:

- Cooperation and mutual trust have been developed at two levels: between competent authorities at national/sector and or regional level and between training providers. The competent authorities developed the reference units and qualification profiles and they ensure that these are in line with the national qualifications standards. This is a precondition to enable the recognition of units of learning outcomes. The training centres have access to a large network of partner organisations and they can trust that all network members have a common understanding of the profession for which they are preparing. The network members should also have the required competences.
- The common reference units are structured around key activities and described with a level of detail that is sufficient to make them concrete and understandable to teaching staff and learners in different countries, but at the same time the formulations leave enough space for adaptation to different national realities.
- The quality assurance charters require the members of the network to make transparent information on assessment and to have quality assurance processes in place.

▣ Focus: Sustainable network using ECVET

As said above, the main objective of the NETINVET network is to facilitate mobility. International experience is considered as a must for people to work in the field of import-export. The idea is to give member organisations access to a broad network of training institutions which prepare learners for the profession of international trade assistant. In this context ECVET is a tool, not a requirement. The network accepts the idea that using ECVET is a progressive process which requires a high level of trust. It is important for training centres to first know each other – possibly through short mobility experiences – before engaging in organising recognised mobility. Therefore, not all the mobility taking place in the framework of

NETINVET is recognised mobility around defined units of learning outcomes using learning agreements. However, some of the training institutions members of NETINVET already use these units to support the mobility of their students. As the network develops further and is strengthened it is expected that more and more members will opt for this option.

During the launching conference of NETINVET (closing conference of Recomfor), the following arguments in favour of the ECVET approach in NETINVET were cited by practitioners[5]:

- Clarity of what a learner has learnt abroad as well as a record on learners' performance make the contribution of mobility to learners' development visible, including for employers;
- Improved quality of mobility exchanges: the approach enables the development of longer mobility periods with clearly defined outcomes; or
- There is no need for an accompanying person for mobile learners: thanks to the common understanding of the reference units and the trust between training centres, there is no longer the need to systematically send out teachers/trainers accompanying the group of learners abroad.

▣ References

Information on NETINVET is available on the public part of the network website: http://www.netinvet.eu/

In particular the:
- Professional profile of international trade assistant
- The units of learning outcomes
- The charter for training centres and hosting companies
- Report from the final conference of Recomfor

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5   See the report from the Recomfor final conference http://www.netinvet.eu/docs/Minutes_Paris-28_03_2011(1).pdf

SME MASTER Plus

An ECVET Toolbox for the training of master craftspersons – results of the SME-Master Plus project

Basic information

Lead partner: Zentralverband des Deutschen Handwerks (ZDH) (Germany).

Active partner countries: Austria, Germany (lead), France, Norway, Slovenia.[1]

Qualifications and sectors involved: The project partners worked on master craftsperson qualifications that concerned the following crafts sectors: bakery, floristry, hairdressing and woodworking (joinery).

Testing: The project tested the tools developed during mobility exchanges of 13 master craftsperson trainees. Mobility projects were organised for 11 learners in the sectors of bakery and floristry between Germany, France and Slovenia in 2011 and additionally, 2 mobility exchanges will be organised in 2012 between France and Norway.

Project website: www.sme-master.eu

1 Introduction

The SME MASTER Plus project piloted ECVET's application within the framework of training for master craftspersons. The main goals were to support 'Europeanisation' of these qualifications by enhancing the mobility of master craftspersons to also achieve a positive long-term effect on the mobility rate in IVET. Furthermore, the project aimed at implementing an international network of master craftsperson training providers. The partnership developed ECVET-toolboxes (including learning outcomes matrices, templates for Memoranda of Understanding and Learning Agreements [including the personal transcript template], and checklists for each step of the mobility process), tested the feasibility of these toolboxes in real mobility exchanges and adjusted them on the basis of the feedback gained by the sending/receiving organisations and the participants.

2 Main strengths

- The project partners have successfully established mutual trust amongst each other by developing and applying instruments based on ECVET-principles. They have agreed that they were able to accept differences in the detail of knowledge, skills and competence among countries as long as broadly speaking the learning outcomes remained comparable.
- The project addressed adults in continuing training (master craftsperson trainees) and thus the lifelong learning aspect was emphasised.
- The method of describing the learning outcomes in a matrix has been used on several qualifications. It is simple and gives a broad picture of the learning outcomes related to a specific qualification (cf. description below).
- The project partners decided to lay down their agreements relating to assessment in writing in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), but not to implement a standardised procedure for the assessment of learning outcomes achieved abroad. However, they identified a range of assessment methods that would be considered as acceptable by the partners. This approach allows the host institutions to apply their commonly used procedures without altering it for a mobile learner.
- Even though not all ECVET principles could be implemented in practice (for example, recognising units of learning outcomes achieved abroad and consequently providing exemptions from parts of the final examination was not possible), the project partners adopted flexible approaches for using the key elements of ECVET to improve the quality of mobility projects (for example, recognising periods of learning abroad and learning contents based on transparent descriptions and agreements).

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1   Assemblée Permanente des Chambres des Métiers (APCM) (FR), Institut für Bildungs-
forschung der Wirtschaft (ibw) (AT), Mesterbrevneminda (NO), Obrtno- podjetniška zbornica
Slovenije (SI), Fédération Nationale de la Coiffure Française (FR).

SME Master Plus worked on master crafts persons qualifications and thus emphasised the lifelong learning aspect.

3 Focus:
Learning outcomes matrix as the key transparency tool for mobility

Although the structure of the master craftsperson training programmes in the partner countries is different, the job specification of master craftsperson is very similar. Therefore – to overcome system specificities – learning outcomes matrixes focussing on the work processes were developed. Such a matrix displays all learning outcomes acquired upon receiving the master craftsperson qualification, grouped into units, and the ECVET credit points.

- *Units*: In the SME MASTER Plus project, a unit comprises different competences necessary to carry out core tasks in the master craftsperson's activity field, which covers both the part 'commerce and business' and the trade-specific 'expert or technical part'. Depending on the qualification, between 10 and 18 units were identified. For the master baker qualification, for example, 11 units of learning outcomes were defined, which could be identified in all project partner countries. Every country was additionally given the possibility to formulate country-specific units.
- *Learning outcomes*: The SME MASTER Plus project decided to describe learning outcomes in a holistic manner instead of subdividing the descriptions into knowledge, skills and competence. This holistic approach largely meets the principle of professional competence and capacity. To additionally visualise the learner's competence development, learning outcomes were presented in the form of the successive steps of learning outcomes. The progressive representation of learning outcomes is thus the dynamic element of the learning outcomes matrix and serves the purpose of enhancing the learner's mobility. This provides a learner who wishes to continue, with an already started master craftsperson training abroad, with the opportunity to visualise his or her personal 'competence level'. This way, unnecessary redundancies can be avoided and it can help ensure that the training abroad can build on this individual competence level.

4 References

- SME MASTER Plus – Testing the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) in the context of the Master Craftsperson Qualification – Guidelines.
- Born, Volker & Sperle, Christian (2011): Möglichkeiten und Grenzen einer Anwendung von ECVET im Rahmen der Meisterqualifikation im Handwerk: Ergebnisse des europäischen Pilotprojekts SME MASTER Plus – In: Eberhard, Christiane (Hrsg.): Mit ECVET zu besserer Mobilität? Von der Europäischen Empfehlung zur Erprobung in der Praxis. Ergebnisse aus den ECVET-Pilotprojekten SME MASTER Plus, AEROVET, CRED-CHEM und VaLOGReg (2009-2012). Reihe Wissenschaftliche Diskussionspapiere, Heft 132. Bonn: Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung, 7-19. URL: http://www.ecvet-projects.eu/Documents/WDP_ECVET.pdf
- Sperle, Christian, Förderung transnationaler Mobilität im Rahmen der Meisterausbildung, Zwischenergebnisse des europäischen ECVET-Pilotprojekts SME MASTER Plus, in: bwp – Zeitschrift Berufsbildung in Wissenschaft und Praxis, 4/2011.

VaLOGReg
Value Learning Outcomes in the Grande Region

Value Learning Outcomes in the Grande Region – results of the **VaLOGReg project**

Basic information

Lead Partner: Lycée Technique d'Esch-sur-Alzette, Luxembourg; Ministère de l'Education nationale et de la formation professionnelle, Luxembourg;

Active partner countries: Belgium-fr, Luxembourg (lead), Germany, France;[1]

Qualifications and sectors addressed: Electronics in energy and building technology, car mechanics;

Project website:
http://www.lte.lu/index.php?view=article&id=255

1 Introduction

The project VaLOGReg took place in the context of the so-called 'Grande Région', a territory at the junction of Belgium, France, Germany and Luxembourg which covers the regions of Saar (DE), Lorraine (FR), Luxembourg (LU), Rheinland-Pfalz (DE) and Wallonie (BE). The 'Grande-Région' is characterised by a highly mobile cross-border working population and transnational enterprises. Around 180.000 people cross the border daily in order to work in another region. Many enterprises settled in this area are active in the entire Grande Région, not just in one of the countries. Many students and workers cross the borders for learning purposes. Consequently, the labour market is regarded as transnational.

However, the currently existing cross-border agreements on the recognition of learning outcomes were regarded as insufficient. Although several countries (DE, LU) have embedded the possibility for learners to spend periods of training abroad in their training regulations, the transparency of qualifications and conditions for transfer and recognition are not clear. Hence, the aim of the project was to improve the framework conditions for cross border learning mobility, enhance the possibility to recognise learning outcomes and develop mutual trust and understanding between the different actors of vocational training in the five regions involved.

2 Main strengths

- The project sees the implementation of ECVET as a chance for countries to implement the policy goals they have set for themselves – transnational mobility of learners in some of the partner countries, lifelong learning in others.
- The project acknowledged that ECVET can only be implemented according to the specific framework conditions and cultural traditions of the national/regional VET-system.
- The approach developed allows the involvement of a large number of international stakeholders with divergent interests and policy goals.
- All competent institutions involved in VaLOGReg accept the principle of transferring learning outcomes.
- Each competent institution involved agreed to recognise the assessment process of competent institutions in the partner countries – provided that the learning outcomes achieved abroad are compatible with the qualification for which the learner is seeking recognition.

3 Focus:

A flexible process of comparing and recognising learning outcomes respecting the particularities of different VET-systems

The VaLOGReg project did not want to develop common units of learning outcomes. VaLOGReg aimed at developing a method that will enable to identify the compatibility of learning outcomes as a precondition for validation and recognition. Experts from all the partner VET systems analysed curricula and training regulations of the selected qualifications and found that despite the different approaches and VET-systems, the learning outcomes were 90% congruent. Differences have been found for example in the organisation of the training programme and learning activities but not when it comes to learning outcomes. For example, while in Germany, given learning outcomes are acquired in a unique learning situation, the same learning outcomes are built and extended progressively during the whole training period in Luxembourg.[2] Therefore, though the qualifications are highly comparable, the learning outcomes are not grouped into units (where these are

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1 Institut wallon de formation en alternance et des indépendantes et petites et moyennes entreprises, BE-fr; Ministère de l'Enseignement obligatoire, Communauté française de Belgique BE-fr ; Ministerium für Bildung, Saarland (DE) (); Ministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft, Jugend und Kultur, Rheinland-Pfalz (DE)); Groupement d'intérêt public Formation tout au long de la vie, Lorraine (FR).

2 VALUE THE LEARNING OUTCOMES IN THE 'GRANDE REGION', VaLOGReg; http://www.lte. lu/images/stories/VaLOGReg/llp_public_part_progress%20report_2008_en%20aout10.pdf

used to structure qualifications) in the same manner. The grouping of learning outcomes follows the specific curricula of each region.

Based on these findings, the partners decided that they would aim for a flexible process of transfer and recognition, accepting the differences and particularities between countries based on an assessment of the compatibility of learning outcomes and mutual trust between competent institutions. Through acknowledging this, the decision was made to focus on the transfer of learning outcomes rather than on defining units.

According to VaLOGReg, the first step to implementing ECVET in the Grande Region is not the building of units, but the facilitation of transparency, recognition and validation of learning outcomes. The common units will then be built, if the partners wish to do so. VaLOGReg therefore envisages recognition to happen in the following way: once it has been agreed among the national competent institutions that learning outcomes in the qualifications can be regarded as compatible, a learner can be assessed in the host country. He or she then receives a transcript of records which notes the learning outcomes achieved. These learning outcomes can then be validated and recognised in the home country and can be accumulated with a view to achieve the qualification.

In order to support the intended recognition, it is important to develop mutual trust and understanding between the different actors of vocational training in the five regions involved. This allows each competent institution to recognise the assessment process of competent institutions in the partner countries if the learning outcomes are compatible. Framework agreements between countries are envisaged based on the following conditions:

- Each VET system accepts the principle of transfer and accumulation;

- Experts have identified the level of compatibility between learning outcomes of given qualifications and helped to make qualifications more transparent;
- Each VET system agrees that the LO obtained by a learner during a mobility period are recognised as a part of his learning pathway.

To encourage countries to move on with the process of recognising the compatibility of learning outcomes between qualifications, VaLOGReg proposed to continue the dialogue in a High Level Expert Group with representatives from each country in the region.

4 References

- VaLOGReg Newsletters 1 – 3; URL: http://www.lte.lu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=255&Itemid=160
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- Please also consult the VaLOGReg Flyer on the ECEVT pilot projects website: http://www.ecvet-projects.eu, under: Projects

Notes

For more information about the ECVET pilot projects:
http://www.ecvet-projects.eu
This brochure can also be downloaded from the website.

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