European Network for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training

WORK PROGRAMME 2008 – 2009

www.enqavet.eu
The European Network for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (ENQA-VET) was established by the European Commission in October 2005 to support the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration. The main purpose of the Network is to create a structured and sustainable platform for member countries to exchange information and experience, learn from each other and build consensus on quality assurance issues in vocational education and training (VET). The ENQA-VET Work Programme, working on the principles of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) within the Lisbon and Copenhagen processes, provides support to member countries to work together towards the achievement of common priorities and objectives. This is achieved by establishing best practice, common principles and guidelines and using indicators to evaluate activities and monitor progress.

**KEY OBJECTIVES**

The five key objectives of ENQA-VET are to:

- Contribute to European policy developments and reviews regarding quality assurance;
- Support the introduction and implementation of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQARF);
- Build sustainable European cooperation and exchange of good practice in quality assurance in VET - within and among all EU Member States/ between VET and higher education and between VET organisations and other key stakeholders;
- Promote the effective use of communications, to increase awareness and understanding of quality assurance, the Network and its activities;
- Meet the expectations of Member States and participating countries, the European Commission, the social partners and agencies and other stakeholders.

**REINFORCING A CULTURE OF QUALITY ASSURANCE**

The work programme 2008-2009 is designed to contribute to the development of a culture of quality assurance in VET through a process of intensive cooperation between Member States and the Social Partners, in a range of policy and content areas.

The work programme supports the quality assurance dimension of European policymaking in VET. The work programme includes:

**WORK PROGRAMME**

- **THEMATIC GROUPS**: Bring together Member States and the Social Partners to prepare policy-useful material in areas of strategic importance
- **PEER LEARNING ACTIVITIES**: Designed to enhance cooperation between Member States and support reflection on policy implementation
- **EUROPEAN CONFERENCES**: Which disseminate good practice in the development of a culture of quality assurance in VET
- **RESEARCH STUDIES**: On areas of major interest in terms of developing a culture of quality assurance of VET
**THEMATIC GROUPS**

The thematic groups are a major pillar of ENQA-VET's work. They contribute to policy development and the achievement of the Network's strategic objectives, through the production of a range of material which will contribute to evidence-based policymaking, within Member States and at EU level.

The groups build on the previous work undertaken as part of the Network and provide the backbone to ENQA-VET’s current work. Each group has a specific mandate consistent with the strategic objectives of ENQA-VET and brings together experts from the Member States and the Social Partners.

Current thematic groups address the following topics: **Making VET more attractive**, **Quality Indicators**, **Guidelines for supporting quality in VET systems** and **Peer Review**.

| **Making VET more attractive** | The role of this thematic group is to support ENQA-VET in its reflection on the role of quality assurance in making VET more attractive. It is working on development of concrete suggestions which will support policy implementation within national and/or regional systems as appropriate. The group's deliverables are to provide:  
• *Medium term analysis of successful measures* which are needed to ensure that VET is seen as an attractive option for learners and  
• *Longer term stock-taking report* to contribute to policy development at European and Member State levels. |
| **Host country: Malta** |
| **Quality Indicators** | The mandate of this thematic group on indicators is to support the work of ENQA-VET in its reflection on the choice and use of indicators, to measure progress in relation to the implementation of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework. In particular the group's work will focus on the indicators proposed in the European Commission's "Proposal for a Recommendation on the Establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework" published in April 2008. The deliverables for this group are:  
• A reflection on the feasibility of the indicators proposed in the European Commission proposal  
• A reflection on the use of indicators to measure progress in quality assurance of VET and in particular an examination of the feasibility of the longer standing VET related indicators developed by the Standing Group on Indicators. |
| **Host country: Czech Republic** |
| **Guidelines for supporting quality in VET systems** | This thematic group is examining the use of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQARF) and the experience of Member States in using the framework. The group will look at how policy is turned into practice with a particular focus on supporting systems and key factors in developing a culture of quality assurance.  
Agreed deliverables for the group are:  
• Discussion papers and monographs on various issues relating to the practical implementation of the EQARF;  
• Presentations of practices which support the use of EQARF in a variety of VET contexts in Europe and  
• Guidelines which will facilitate the use of EQARF in Member States contexts. |
| **Host country: Netherlands** |
| **Peer Review** | This group will prepare a strategic vision of how to most appropriately support quality assurance in VET through sustainable European cooperation and exchange of good practice. The group will produce proposals for developing a system of European peer review in VET.  
Specific deliverables for this group are:  
• Prepare a proposal for a process and structure for peer reviews at a European level;  
• Prepare a strategy for the further development of the European peer review procedure and mutual learning from European peer review in higher education. |
| **Host country: Austria** |
PEER LEARNING ACTIVITIES

The Network will organize eight peer learning activities in 2008-2009. They will explore quality assurance issues in the following key areas:

- **Work based Learning:** Copenhagen/ Malmö, 1-3 Oct 2008
- **The role of European Social Partners on Quality Development in VET:** Berlin, 7-9 Oct 2008
- **Recognition of Prior Learning:** Malta, 17-20 Nov 2008
- **Assessment:** Helsinki, 24-27 Nov 2008
- **Impact of the Common Quality Assurance Framework:** Malta, 25-28 May 2009
- **Evaluation:** Germany, 30 March-1 April, 2009
- **Accreditation:** Italy, 27-29 April, 2009
- **Teacher Training:** Spain, date to be agreed

Peer learning activities provide a unique context for reflection among policymakers and practitioners. Participants have an opportunity to share views on interesting examples of policy practice and to reflect on how policies are developed and implemented within their own systems. This process, which is an integral part of the Open Method of Coordination, within the Lisbon process, enables those working at the interface of policy development and implementation to identify what makes policies successful. At a broader level they are an important tool in developing a culture of quality assurance in VET with a view to increasing its attractiveness in a lifelong learning context.

Each peer learning activity will produce a report which will be useful for disseminating results and capturing the importance of the peer learning activity in a wider European quality assurance context. These reports will contribute to the Network’s report “Learning from Peer Learning: Evaluation Report” which will be produced as part of the work programme.

EUROPEAN CONFERENCES

Two European conferences in relation to quality assurance are an integral part of the work programme. These conferences are designed to promote a culture of quality assurance and continuous improvement of VET across the European Union and other participating countries. They will focus on capacity building within systems and providers and contribute towards achievement of the wider policy goals of improving the status and attractiveness of VET.

**2008 CONFERENCE**
“Work Based Learning – meeting the demands of the labour market and lifelong learning”
Wiesbaden, 11-12 December 2008

The aim of the 2008 conference was to develop common criteria for presenting national quality assurance systems in the field of work based learning (promoting mutual confidence) and to identify further options for European cooperation (including determining the needs for further research).

The conference also considered how quality assurance in work based learning can contribute to implementing the EQARF whilst taking into account the diversity of European vocational training systems.

**2009 CONFERENCE**
“Making VET more attractive”
Sweden 2009

Increasing the attractiveness and status of VET is a key priority for policymakers if European education and training systems are to contribute to raising skills levels in line with the requirements of making Europe a world reference for the quality of its education and training systems.

This conference will explore some of the issues identified above as well as providing a context for disseminating the results of the TG on Making VET more attractive to a wider audience. It is also linked to the programme of the Swedish presidency of the EU.
RESEARCH STUDIES

Two research studies on quality assurance in VET have been commissioned as part of the work programme. Each study will focus on the quality assurance aspect of the topics identified below and will be directly linked to other ENQA-VET activities such as peer learning activities, thematic groups and conferences.

**STUDY 1: Quality assurance systems in work based learning and assessment in European VET**

A strong quality assurance process to underpin work based learning and assessment has the potential to contribute to the overall quality assurance of VET. Irrespective of the context (such as company training, sector-based trade body etc) and the particular arrangements for delivering the training, making consistent, reliable and valid judgments when individuals are assessed is an important aspect of the design and implementation of a VET quality assurance system. The development of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework may well have supported and enhanced existing arrangements in quality assuring the assessment systems used in work based learning. This study seeks to identify the extent to which this has happened and includes consideration of how quality assurance systems for assessing work based learning affect training providers (VET institutions) and company trainers at a local, national and European level. The range of interventions that are used to support quality assurance in assessment will be collated and analysed. The study will draw conclusions in relation to the range of methods used to assure quality in assessment in work based learning and comment on how these systems impact on each of the key groups involved in VET.

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**STUDY 2: The set of Indicators in the proposed European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET**

A key part of the European Commission’s Proposal on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET, is the set of indicators used to measure success and to provide a benchmark for comparisons. As the proposal makes clear “measuring quality and its components on all levels is a major challenge in quality management. The EQARF proposes a first common set of indicators to measure and assess the quality of VET. They can also be used as ‘spot lights’ to draw attention to the VET process at national level, and as a basis for exchanges of experiences and good practices.”

This study, along with the work from the Thematic Group on Indicators and the work undertaken by CEDEFOP, in earlier work programmes, will help ENQA-VET evaluate the likely effectiveness and the ease of implementation of these proposed ten indicators. The findings of this study will provide sufficient information for ENQA-VET to be confident about how the proposed indicators in the EQARF can be used to support and comment on the effectiveness of quality assurance systems; and to support the work of the European Commission in the implementation of EQARF Recommendations.

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