



Developing the adult learning sector

Quality in the Adult Learning Sector (Lot 1)

Final report (Open Call for tender EAC/26/2011)

This study has been financed by DG EAC.

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Foreword

Panteia is pleased to present the final report of the study on quality in adult learning, assigned by the European Commission, DG Education and Culture (Open Call for tender EAC/26/2011).

This study has been carried out by Panteia in partnership with Dieter Dohmen, Kim Faurschou, Barry Hake, Helen Keogh, Christian Kloyber, Balazs Nemeth, and George Zarifis. Overall, the research team's opinion is that this study has triggered an intensive and stimulating professional debate, and we are confident that the results of the study could play an important role in structuring future debates and in the development of policies for improving the quality of adult learning. This study would not have been possible without the cooperation of numerous stakeholders in the field of adult learning. Therefore, the research team would like to thank all the respondents around Europe for their willingness to cooperate in this study.

This report has the following structure. First, in chapter 1 and 2, the background and demarcation of the study is discussed. Subsequently, chapter 3 provides an overview of quality systems in the different countries. Then, chapter 4 addresses concrete examples of processes and mechanisms for quality assurance systems, accompanied by an analysis of the bodies responsible for supervising, managing, implementing and supporting these processes. Chapter 5 will go in depth into quality criteria and indicators deployed in quality assurance. Based on the previous chapters, chapter 6 presents issues and challenges that are specific to adult learning in relation to quality assurance, and links these to a range of good practices as identified during the study, including accreditation systems, seals, quality labels and prizes and examines the pros and cons of extending such measures more widely across Europe. Hereafter, chapter 7 describes the main difference and common characteristics of quality assurance systems in non-formal adult learning compared to VET and HE. Based on chapters 3-7, a set of conclusions and recommendations is provided in chapter 8.

This report includes four annexes, consisting of a long list of 43 cases, overview tables of quality policies in different European countries, further details of the methodology, and a list of sources. A separate volume to this report includes detailed descriptions of 15 case studies and country factsheets as drawn up in the context of this study.

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Abbreviations

Country codes

AT	Austria	IE	Ireland
BE	Belgium	IS	Iceland
BG	Bulgaria	IT	Italy
CH	Switzerland	LT	Lithuania
CY	Cyprus	LU	Luxembourg
CZ	Czech Republic	LV	Latvia
DE	Germany	MT	Malta
DK	Denmark	NL	Netherlands
EE	Estonia	NO	Norway
EL	Greece	PL	Poland
ES	Spain	PT	Portugal
EU	European Union	RO	Romania
FI	Finland	SE	Sweden
FR	France	SI	Slovenia
FYROM	Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia	SK	Slovakia
HR (Croatia)	Croatia	TK	Turkey
HU	Hungary	UK	United Kingdom

Abbreviations

ACE	Adult and continuing educational centres in Denmark
ACL	Adult and community learning
AdA	Ausbildung der Ausbilder/innen
AES	Adult Education Survey
AFNOR	Association française de normalisation
AIF	Associazione Italiana Formatori
AL	Adult learning
AMU	labour market training in Denmark
APL	Accreditation of prior learning
BRUK	Bedömning, Reflektion, Utveckling, Kvalitet (Assessment, Reflection, Development, Quality) (Sweden)
CAS	Common Awards System
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
CET	Continuing Education and Training
CIF	new Common Inspection Framework
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CPD	Continuing professional development
CQAF	Common Quality Assurance Framework
CQAF	Common Quality Assurance Framework
CTP	Permanent Territorial Centers

CVET	Continuous VET
DES	Directorate for Educational Services in Malta
DfES	Department for Education and Skills (UK)
DLLL	Directorate for Lifelong Learning in Malta
DQSE	Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education in Malta
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
ECVET	European Credit for VET
EFQM	European Foundation for Quality Management
ENQA	the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
EOPP	National Organisation for the Accreditation of Qualifications in Greece
ELGPN	European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network
EQAVET/EQARF	European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ESF	European Social Fund
ESG	European Standards and Guidelines in Higher Education
ESIB	European Students' Union
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
ET2020	Education and training 2020
EUA	Association of European institutions of higher education
EURASHE	European Association of Institutions in Higher Education
FEC	Further education college
FETAC	Further Education and Training Awards Council
HETAC	Higher Education and Training Awards Council
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HQAAA	Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency
HR	Human Resource
HRDA	Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
IUQB	Irish Universities Quality Board
IVET	Initial VET
LLC	Lifelong Learning Centre
LLL	Lifelong learning
LLP	lifelong learning programme
LO	Learning Outcomes
LQW	Lernerorientierte Qualitätstestierung in der Weiterbildung
MEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports CZ
MNE	Ministry of National Education Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs in Greece
MQC	Malta Qualifications Council
MQF	Malta Qualifications Framework
MS	Member State
NCHE	National Commission for Higher Education in Malta
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications
NQAI	National Qualifications Authority of Ireland
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NRTO	Platform of Accredited Private Educational Institutions in the Netherlands
NVAL	Non vocational adult learning

OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OMC	Open Method of Coordination
OQEA	Offering Quality Education to Adults
PIAAC	Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PR	Personal Relations
QA	Quality Assurance
QALLL	Quality Assurance in Lifelong Learning
QEF	Quality Effectiveness Framework
QMS	Quality Management System
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SAR	Self-assessment report
SERV	Sociaal-Economische Raad van Vlaanderen
SVEB	Swiss Federation for Adult Learning
UPTER	Università Popolare della Terza Età di Roma
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VEU	Continuing adult education in Denmark
VTs	Vocational Training Structures
WBA	Weiterbildungsakademie; the Academy of Continuing Education

Executive summary

A) Brief overview of the study

The results of this study should support the European Commission by **contributing to a knowledge base**, which will inform a number of future activities to be undertaken in the framework of European Cooperation on Adult Learning Policy. According to the terms of reference, the specific objective of this study is to “map and to analyse the scope, content and implementation of quality approaches, standards and other relevant recent developments such as the development and implementation of accreditation systems and institutions, in the adult learning sector”.

The study should mainly focus on **mapping interesting practices throughout Europe** and secondly on providing ingredients for the development of a **framework for quality assurance in adult learning**, in which quality assurance systems in other education sectors need to be taken into account. Recommendations on how to proceed in developing the framework (in terms of time lines, consultations, additional studies etc.) should be provided within the study.

In order to achieve the above-mentioned research objectives, the following **research methods** were implemented: 1) Conducting desk research on EU documents, EU projects, and academic literature addressing quality approaches in adult learning. 2) Drawing up 32 country fact sheets based on desk research and interviews on the national level. 3) Conducting 15 case studies on interesting quality systems and approaches. 4) Organising a testing seminar with external stakeholders for discussing and validating the outcomes of the study. 5) Organising meetings with the Thematic Working Group on Quality in Adult Learning to discuss the progress of the study and receive feedback on the research.

This Executive summary subsequently presents: B) Key findings of the study; C) Conclusions; D) Specific recommendations for European countries improving their quality systems; and E) Recommendations on the development of a European level quality framework.

B) Key findings of the study

The study resulted in the following key findings:

1 In reviewing the **quality assurance systems in place**, this study identified three groups of countries:

- (1) countries that have elaborated quality systems in place on macro level for adult learning, formal as well non-formal learning often determined in a specific strand (such as AT, BE, CH, DK, EE, FI, HU, IE, LU, LV, NO, SE). Most of these countries are also the better performing countries in terms of participation in adult learning and have higher educational attainment levels (with the exception of BE, HU, and IE).
- (2) countries that have fragmented quality systems on macro level for non-formal adult learning, while having quality systems in place for formal adult learning (such as DE, EL, ES, CZ, IS, MT, NL, PL, PT, SI, UK);
- (3) countries with no or limited quality systems in place on macro level for non-formal learning, while having quality systems in place for formal adult learning

(such as BG, CY, FR, HR, IT, LT, RO, SK, TK). Overall these countries are generally lacking quality systems for the non-formal part of adult learning and, at the same time, show a relatively low performance on the ET2020 benchmarks.

- 2 **Overarching quality systems intersecting different sub-sectors are rarely seen.** Some concrete examples are the Ö-Cert (Austria) and EduQua (Switzerland) labels that can be used in all sub-domains of adult learning. In Greece a strategic framework was developed for quality in the whole lifelong learning sector but has not yet been implemented.
- 3 Type and intensity of quality systems in place **differ between formal and non-formal adult learning.** With regard to system level quality assurance, the differences between higher education (HE), vocational education and training (VET) and non-vocational adult learning are less related to the fact that the provision is intended for adults, but more to the fact that the HE and VET provide state-regulated qualifications, falling under the National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF). This often demands that all awards included in the NQF are quality assured, and a key objective of these frameworks is to promote and maintain standards. The non-formal sectors are less regulated through the government and more often grass-root, bottom-up approaches are applied to work on quality assurance (such as codes of conducts and development of sectoral quality labels).
- 4 Given the fact that the formal sectors are more regulated than the non-formal sector, also **monitoring of the sector differs.** The formal sectors are generally more uniform in their objectives, type of organisation, target groups, and societal results, where the HE sector is even more uniformly organised than the VET sector. The content of the quality assurance systems in place, especially those in relation to organisational requirements, however, do not differ in a great extent between the HE, VET and non-formal adult learning sector. Generally no specific reference is made to specific characters of adult learning within the quality systems in place for formal HE and VET.
- 5 In most countries there is a consensus that **quality assurance systems should be developed** for the adult learning sector, and especially the non-formal sector. Most countries are currently developing or revising their legislative framework for adult learning, putting more focus on quality assurance mechanisms. In the last few years, most countries produced white papers, communications, policy proposals and lifelong learning strategies in which they emphasise the importance of quality assurance. Nevertheless, the main challenge is to implement these strategies. Experience shows that it takes a long time to build consensus on the idea and content of quality systems.
- 6 Quality assurance systems have **multiple objectives.** The quality assurance systems studied are developed for different purposes. The objectives the quality assurance systems mostly focus on are setting minimum requirements, transparency, and accountability.
- 7 Quality assurance systems in non-formal adult learning include a **sequence of procedural steps** for providers being quality assured. The quality assurance systems studied, generally follow the same procedural steps including: application by the provider, including endorsement of adult learning principles; assessment by the responsible body, validation by the responsible body, and finally monitoring, follow-up activities

both by the provider and the responsible body. Most quality assurance systems include self-evaluation procedures at provider level. The emphasis is on the application by the provider.

- 8 There is a **diversity of responsible bodies**. Most responsible bodies are public bodies (either involved solely in quality assurance or with additional responsibilities). For some sectoral initiatives, the responsible bodies are private organisations, also involved in other activities.
- 9 The quality assurance systems studied have **common descriptors**. Four broad categories of quality descriptors can be identified: organisational issues; quality of the didactics and the learning process; quality of staff; and quality of measuring results. Only two of the quality assurance systems studied, do not include all four categories.
- 10 System, or sector level **monitoring systems** including an adult learning-tailored set of indicators are scarce (acknowledging the specific goals of adult learning, the wide diversity of providers, learning environments, and socio economic actors involved, but also endorsing some basic principles on adult learning as identified in the literature, such as that adult learning should be tailor made, learner centred, and attuned to specific learning needs of the adult learner, and should be offered in a flexible manner).
- 11 This study identified **challenges for improving the quality in adult learning**. The main challenges concern the lack of overarching quality assurance systems in the adult learning sector, and especially for the non-formal part of adult learning. These challenges were subsequently linked to relevant examples of practices over Europe that could be seen as solutions or at least models of inspirations for policy makers.
- 12 **Success factors of quality assurance systems' implementation can be identified**. Success factors are factors that were identified as being a condition under which a well functioning quality assurance system was/is implemented. The following generic factors of success of quality assurance systems' implementation are identified: 1) The focus of the quality assurance system is on the learner/consumer; 2) The quality assurance system is transparent for all stakeholders; 3) The quality assurance system is organisationally strongly backed (the responsible authorising body possesses authority in the sector); 4) the quality assurance system has commitment of management and the employees within the provider; 5) The quality assurance system should be affordable in relation to the volume of adult learning provision and the context it takes place; 6) The quality assurance system should be relevant for the given context (no one-size fits all) or sufficiently broad to embed different form of adult learning provision; 7) The development/ acceptance of quality assurance systems takes a certain period of time.
- 13 The **European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET (EQAVET) and Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)** quality reference frameworks are applicable to the situation of the adult learning sector, acknowledging that the adult learning sector is less uniform in terms of objectives, organisation, target groups, and societal results (especially for the non-formal part of adult learning). Most cases studied are based on the same philosophy (quality cycle) and similar descriptors are in place.

C) Conclusions

Based on the key findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

- 1 In most countries, **quality assurance systems, especially for the non-formal adult learning sector can be improved**. On the other hand, the study identified a high number of interesting practices which can serve as inspiration for improving and setting of quality assurance systems.
- 2 There is a strong **need for more (comparable) information on adult learning provision**, especially for the non-formal part of adult learning. It is important to provide relevant statistics in order to prove the results of adult learning in social and economic terms based on cost-benefit models.
- 3 The results of the study provide arguments for **the development of a reference framework for quality in adult learning at the European level** to serve as reference that Member States could use to develop standards for the whole sector. This reference framework could be used by national, regional, sectoral and institutional organisations in developing quality policies. It is important to differentiate in the framework between the different adult learning domains (e.g. higher education, vocational education, second chance and liberal education) and types of provision (formal and non-formal).
- 4 Furthermore, there is a plea for an **integrated approach for quality in lifelong learning**. There are some strong arguments to link up with the quality framework already developed for the VET sector (EQAVET), and make this adult learning proof instead of developing a separate framework. The following arguments can be summed up: Firstly, this study provides strong evidence that EQAVET (such as the quality model, building blocks and indicative descriptors set) is applicable to adult learning provision. EQAVET needs slight modification to adopt it to the adult learning sector. Secondly, having different quality frameworks in place could lead to confusion amongst stakeholders (“again another framework”), especially in case a provider provides services in the vocational as well as the non vocational domain at the same time. Finally, aligning with EQAVET leads to economies of scale making use of the existing platforms of national reference points, EQAVET network, the products and tools that has been developed, and the experience of the European Commission guiding this process. This will finally lead to a future quality assurance framework for lifelong learning, being an inspirational model for all actors involved in lifelong learning, including adult learning.
- 5 Due to the similarities we propose therefore to **take the quality model of EQAVET as reference point for adult learning** and add adult learning specific characteristics to it. Broadening the scope of EQAVET to adult learning could at the same time be a first step finally leading to a **future quality assurance framework for lifelong learning**, being an inspirational model for all educational sectors (also including HE and general education).

D) Specific recommendations for European countries improving their quality systems

Based on the key findings and conclusions, the following recommendations can be mentioned that will help to improve the quality in adult learning in the countries. These recommendations are related to the system challenges which are identified:

- 1 For countries facing a lack of an overarching framework for adult learning, it is recommended **to develop an overarching system which sets minimum requirements for providers to get validated** (applies mostly to NL, BG, CZ, CY, HR, PL, BE (Flanders), BE (Wallonia), LU, MT, TK). As inspiration, the following systems can be further examined: meta-frameworks such as Ö-Cert (AT) or overarching frameworks such as EduQua (CH) and the FETAC framework (IE).
- 2 For countries facing a lack of a system / framework / regulation for assuring quality in the non-formal part of adult learning, there are **three potential responses**, dependent on what countries feel best suitable for them (applies mostly to DK, EE, NL, NO, ES, IS, BG, CZ, CY, BE (Wallonia), FR, IT, MT):
 - Develop a quality assurance system for non-formal adult learning, with setting minimum quality requirements. Inspirational models for this concern firstly, systems organised by public bodies, such as EduQua (CH) Greta-plus (FR); Quality label (LU); and secondly, they concern systems organised by private bodies, such as the Hamburg model (DE); the quality seal for folk universities (NL) and the code of conduct for Dutch private providers (NL).
 - Stimulating quality developments without setting minimum quality requirements. As inspiration one could have a look at existing quality prizes in Germany, Sweden and Finland.
 - Providing additional support structures. The Quality guidelines/manual developed in Sweden (BRUK); the staff development programmes developed in Norway and Malta; the Slovenian initiative 'Offering Quality Education to Adults' and the Czech 'Concept' project, could serve as inspiration.
- 3 For countries facing a lack of attention for adult learning specific elements in quality systems / regulation for formal education, it is recommended **to increase attention to adult learning elements in formal education** (applies mostly to NL, BG, CZ, CY, HR, HU, PL, RO, LU). This includes changing policy and legal frameworks related to the educational sectors in question and engaging the stakeholders to change the regulations as they are, in order to increase the attention to adult learning specific elements in the quality assurance systems. Inspiring examples in this respect related to VET can be found in UK (Wales), namely the ESTYN inspectorate, in Ireland, the FETAC framework; and in France, the Greta-plus quality label. Related to general education, the system which is particularly interesting to look at is the quality assurance structures in basic skills in Malta.
- 4 For countries facing a lack of (specific) legal requirements for adult learning staff or lacking initial training and continuing professional development, it is recommended **to set staff requirements at national level and develop opportunities for initial and further training of teachers in adult learning** (applies to most countries). Actions in this field should take into account the recommendations related to the study on key competences of adult learning professionals. Inspiring examples of frameworks where

explicit attention is given to requirements set for adult learning staff can be found in Malta, namely in the quality assurance structures in basic skills.

- 5 For countries facing a lack of system / regulation for assuring quality of APL provision and guidance, there are two potential responses, dependent on what countries would like to focus on (in relation to APL, this applies mostly to DK, EE, UK, ES, BG, CY, PL, BE (Walloon), EL, LU, MT, TK; in relation to guidance, this applies mostly to EE, UK, ES, DE, PL, BE (Walloon), EL, MT). Firstly, **set minimum quality requirements for APL providers**. Inspiring examples can be found in the Netherlands, Quality Code APL; and Portugal, quality charter New Opportunity Centres; secondly, **set minimum quality requirements for guidance providers**. An inspiring example can be found in Denmark: quality in guidance.
- 6 For countries facing a lack of monitoring data in the AL sector (provision of AL and effects), it is recommended **to establish sector-level indicators for monitoring the sector** (applies mostly to DK, EE, NL, NO, ES, IS, BG, CY, DE, HR, HU, LT, LV, RO, EL, IE, MT, PT, TK). These indicators should be tailored to the specific objectives of the adult learning system in the country. Although not yet implemented, the Greek "Quality - Always - Everywhere framework" provides an inspiring example to develop indicator sets to monitor the sector.

E) Recommendations on the development of a European level quality framework

Based on the key findings and the conclusions, the following recommendations are provided related to the development of a European level quality framework:

- 1 This study recommends **broadening the EQAVET framework to the field of adult learning**. This framework could improve the availability of comparable information on adult learning in particular, as countries are asked to take the framework as reference for setting up/ further develop their quality systems.
- 2 It is recommended that new framework **is flexible and respect principles of adult learning**. A cross-national quality framework should be flexible, open and transparent to all stakeholders in the adult learning sector; it should comprise both a technical and political approach while developing it; and it should take into account the particularities of the adult learning sector (serving different goals, provided by a wide diversity of providers, taking place in different learning environments, and the involvement of wide variety of social and economic actors); and endorse the basic principles related to quality adult learning (that adult learning provision should be tailor-made, learner-centred and attuned to the specific learning needs of the adult learner, and should be offered in a flexible manner in terms of duration, time, and place). Most importantly, however, for working towards a European level framework, it is essential that it is developed on the basis of, or in accordance with national quality frameworks for adult learning and existing practices in place. Finally, the development of a European level framework should respect the principle of subsidiarity.
- 3 With regard the adjustment of the EQAVET recommendation, it is recommended that the **list of indicators is extended with more adult learning relevant indicators**, i.e.: the Adult education survey, the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies

(PIAAC), and the Eurostat social inclusion statistics (Living conditions and social protection). In addition, newly compiled indicators could be used at country level such as developed in the Greek $\pi 3$ framework. Furthermore, with regard system level indicative descriptors, the more procedural system level indicative descriptors can be applied in adult learning as well. Finally, the quality assurance systems studied to a large extent fit the indicative descriptors at providers level; however, there could be more focus on the learning environment of adults, including the quality of didactics and the infrastructure (according to the principles mentioned here before).

- 4 It is recommended that the implementation strategy takes into account the following steps:
 - **Step 1)** In order to expand the scope of the EQAVET recommendation of 2009, a **legal document should preferably be drawn up** as a basis for renewing this recommendation (this would create the foundation to jointly work on renewing the recommendation). This legal document should not immediately propose what the renewed framework will look like, but will set the agenda and a time-plan for arriving at a renewed framework to be accepted by the European Council and the European Parliament.
 - **Step 2)** When a legal basis is created, all relevant stakeholders can start working on **shaping the quality framework** on the basis of EQAVET. However, this has to be coordinated by the European Commission. Furthermore, at EU level, but more importantly, at national level, consultations should start to get stakeholders involved in the process of renewing the EQAVET framework.
 - **Step 3)** The consultation provides insights with regards to what is socially and politically feasible at country level to include in a quality framework for lifelong learning. This should however, be technically backed up with **pilot studies, cross-country comparisons, sectoral studies** on whether the framework leads to results.
 - **Step 4)** In addition, there should also be a **balance between the national and European developments**: there should be a constructive interchange of experiences between the national and the European levels.
 - **Step 5)** The legal document on which the whole process should include an **agenda and a time plan for the process**. The final product should also have a clear profile. It should be clear for all stakeholders: What is the aim of the framework? Why is it needed? How should it be used? To whom does it apply? Who is responsible?
- 5 Concerning the **time plan to unroll the strategy** to develop and implement a renewed EQAVET framework, broadened to lifelong learning, it is expected that when there is a legal document to work on the revision (step 1), implementing the subsequent steps (2-5), will take approximately 2 years. For the further development and implementation at provider level, given experiences with other frameworks, another 5-7 years might be required.
- 6 The broadening of the EQAVET framework also calls for the need to **change the name** of the framework. This name should be better adapted to the new users and audience, without losing the brand that has been carefully developed over the last years.

1 Policy background: the need for quality adult learning provision

This chapter sets the scene for the report by describing the need for **improving adult learning systems** in Section 1.1. Section 1.2 describes **EU policies addressing quality in adult learning**, while Section 1.3 further explores **quality initiatives that have been taken place on European level in other educational sectors**. Subsequently, Section 1.4 discusses the **main arguments for investing** in quality of learning. Finally, section 1.5 describes the **aims and goals of the study**.

1.1 The need for improving adult learning systems: the challenges Europe faces

Before addressing the topic of quality in adult learning, this section first shortly address the importance of investing in adult learning systems, in order to contextualise the debate on quality in adult learning. Research confirms the importance of investing in adult learning¹. Public and private benefits include greater employability, increased productivity and better-quality employment, reduced expenditure in areas such as unemployment benefits, welfare payments and early-retirement pensions, but also increased social returns in terms of improved civic participation, better health, lower incidence of criminality, and greater individual well-being and fulfilment. Research on older adults indicates that those who engage in learning are healthier, with a consequent reduction in health-care costs.²

As a result, adult learning could play an important role in addressing some important challenges Europe faces, including³:

- Rapidly accelerating skills redundancy, while more jobs are in need of high skills;
- The high number of low-skilled workers in Europe⁴;
- The high level of early school leaving, while a high number of adults have reading and writing problems, underlining the need for second chance opportunities;
- Growing challenges of an ageing population and migration;
- High incidence of poverty and social exclusion;

¹ OECD (2005), Promoting Adult Learning.

² See for instance: Alisa Cunningham (no date), The Broader Societal Benefits of Higher Education: <http://jcu.edu/academic/planassess/planning/files/Planning%20articles/Broader%20Social%20Benefits.pdf>, Healthy Aging in Canada: A New Vision, A Vital Investment From Evidence to Action A Background Paper Prepared for the Federal, Provincial and Territorial Committee of Officials (Seniors), September 2006.

³ See for instance, Speech of Alan Smith at the Grundtvig Dissemination Conference, Brussels, 26 January 2010: <http://ec.europa.eu/education/grundtvig/doc/conf10/smith.pdf>.

⁴ Commission document (2011) Commission staff working paper: Action Plan on Adult Learning: Achievements and results 2008-2010 SEC(2011) 271 final. Currently, in Europe there are 76 million adults (25-64 year olds) who are low-skilled. Given the current turbulent times after the financial crisis, these low-skilled are more affected than high-skilled and unemployment levels amongst the low-skilled workers has risen significantly in the last years towards more than 16 per cent in 2010: comment: should be more now, please check.

- Widely varying participation rates in lifelong learning across the EU and target groups;
- The need for active engagement of citizens with Europe.

The presented list of challenges shows clearly that action is needed now to tackle the challenges of the future. It is necessary for all – low-skilled, high-skilled, employed and unemployed, young and old – to keep competences up to date, through investing in training and learning across the entire life-span.¹ According to the European Commission, people should have the possibilities and abilities for further education and training, to re-qualify themselves for new jobs², learn to deal with new, green and sustainable technologies³, get acquainted with societal values and increase their general quality of life. Hence, following this line of reasoning, there is a need to build educational systems and structures which are compatible with the idea of learning throughout life.⁴

Although the important role of adult learning for making the knowledge-based economy and society a reality is increasingly recognised, implementation of successful policies lags behind. Most education and training systems are still largely focused on the education and training of young people and limited progress has been made in changing systems to reflect the need for lifelong learning throughout the life course and in particular in adult learning.⁵ This entails creating learning environments better suited for adults to learn, courses that are tailor-made and take into account the prior experiences of adults and their specific characteristics. Hence, it involves establishing quality adult learning systems.

One of the main challenges is to increase and widen the participation of adults in lifelong learning. A recent study of the European Commission indicates that countries can deploy a wide range of mobilisation strategies to raise levels of participation (e.g., providing guidance and counselling, flexible learning trajectories, quality management, outreach strategies, accreditation of prior learning, and financial instruments)⁶. Quality of adult learning provision, the topic under investigation in this report, is clearly mentioned as one of the mobilisation strategies to increase and widen participation in adult

¹ See: Commission of the European Communities (2007), Action Plan on Adult Learning, COM(2007) 558 final: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/adult/com558_en.pdf

² See the European Commission New Skills for New Jobs initiative: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=568>

³ Employment Committee (2010), Towards a greener labour market – The employment dimension of tackling environmental challenges Final report endorsed by EMCO on 10 November 2010; <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=370&langId=en&featuresId=130&furtherFeatures=yes>; Cedefop (2010), skills for green jobs: European synthesis report: http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/3057_en.pdf.

⁴ European Commission (2000), A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning, Brussels, 30.10.2000, SEC(2000) 1832, Field, John, (2006), Lifelong learning and the new educational order.

⁵ Field, John, (2006), Lifelong learning and the new educational order.

⁶ Broek, S.D., Buiskool, B.J. (2012), Mapping and comparing mobilisation strategies throughout Europe: Towards making lifelong learning a reality, in: JACE 2012, Volume 18, Number 1.

learning, but also to tackle the above-mentioned problems such as reducing drop-out rates and providing relevant and effective learning¹.

1.2 European policies addressing quality of adult learning

The Europe 2020 strategy (EU2020), and more specifically the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET2020), addresses objectives for further developing adult learning systems across Europe². The EU2020 strategy emphasised **smart growth** - developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation – together with **sustainable and inclusive growth** - as one of its three mutually reinforcing priorities that will help the EU to come out stronger from the crisis³. The place education and training is given clearly demonstrates that this policy area is considered highly important in the EU, continuing the direction taken in the Lisbon Strategy. ET2020 sets four strategic objectives for education and training policies: Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality; Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training; Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship; and enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training⁴. These strategic objectives are translated into five benchmarks of which two are of particular relevance for the field of adult learning, namely the 15 per cent benchmark of adults participating in lifelong learning and the 40 per cent share of 30-34 year olds with tertiary level educational attainment⁵. Quality adult learning provision could help reaching these targets.

At European level, the emphasis on improving the quality of adult learning pre-dates the strategic agendas EU2020 and ET2020. From 2000 onwards, a number of adult learning specific EU-policy documents have been drafted starting with the Memorandum on lifelong learning from 2000⁶, the Action Plan on Adult Learning from 2007⁷, the 2008 Council conclusions⁸, and finally, the renewed European agenda for Adult Learning published in December 2011⁹. All these documents addressed the importance of the quality of the learning experience and outcome, by improving quality of provision, by investing in staff and learning methodologies in formal as well as non- formal learning environments, but

¹ The state of play of financing adult learning is assessed in another study of the Commission. Open Call for tender EAC/26/2011. DEVELOPING THE ADULT LEARNING SECTOR. Lot 2: Financing the Adult Learning Sector

² The Council of the European Union (2009), Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020), Official Journal C 119 , 28/05/2009 P. 0002 – 0010: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:119:0002:01:EN:HTML>

³ EU2020: http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/index_en.htm

⁴ ET2020: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc1120_en.htm

⁵ A third benchmark, reducing early school leaving is indirectly relevant, since adult learning provision could play a role addressing this target group to gain a qualification after interruption of their school career.

⁶ European Commission (2000), A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning, Brussels, 30.10.2000, SEC(2000) 1832

⁷ European Commission (2007), Communication: Action Plan on Adult learning, It is always a good time to learn, Brussels, 27.9.2007 COM(2007) 558 final.

⁸ OJ C140/10, Council conclusions of 22 May 2008 on adult learning (2008/C 140/09).

⁹ OJ C 372/01, Council Resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning 20 December 2012

also in guidance and counselling. Quality assurance mechanisms play an important role in realising these goals.

The most recent document, the **Renewed Agenda for Adult Learning 2012-2014**, sets out priorities for action in the period 2012 – 2014, including actions with regard to improving the quality and efficiency of education and training. The title of priority area 2 puts together ‘quality’ and ‘efficiency’ (“Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training”). Member States should:

- develop quality assurance systems for providers;
- improve the quality of staff;
- look into the issue of viable and transparent financing of learning;
- develop systems so that learning provision better reflects labour market needs and, finally,
- intensify cooperation amongst different stakeholders.

This policy attention at EU level to quality issues in adult learning should not be seen in isolation and need to be assessed in a broader framework of European initiatives in other educational sectors, subject of the following section.

1.3 Developments of quality initiatives in other educational fields

Since adult learning crosses sectoral boundaries, it is therefore important to take into account of quality initiatives taking place in other sectors, since these are affecting adult learning provision in some particular cases¹.

At European level major steps have been taken in recent years to establish quality standards and guidelines in other sectors, such as within higher education and vocational education and training. In addition, developments have been initiated in relation to quality in school education. Those initiatives are briefly described below²:

- The **European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET (EQAVET)** was approved by the European Parliament and the Council in 2009³. EQAVET provides a Europe-wide system to help Member States and stakeholders to document, develop, monitor, evaluate, and improve the effectiveness of their vocational education and training (VET) provision and quality management practices.⁴ The EQAVET framework

¹ See Field, J. (2006) *Lifelong learning and the new educational order*, Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books. Research voor Beleid (2011), *Impact of ongoing reforms in education and training on the Adult Learning sector (2nd phase)*, Zoetermeer: Research voor Beleid; Dellen, T. van, Kamp, M. van der (2008) ‘Work domains and competences of the European adult and continuing educator’, S. Lattke & E. Nuissl (eds), *Qualifying Adult Learning Professionals in Europe*, Bielefeld: W. Bertelsmann Verlag.

² A more elaborated description of these initiatives is provided in Chapter 7.

³ OJ C 155/1 8.7.2009, Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (Text with EEA relevance) (2009/C 155/01).

⁴ The EQAVET/EQARF builds on the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), the European Credit for VET (ECVET) system and previous European quality assurance systems (such as the Common Quality Assurance Framework – CQAF).

consists of a quality circle consisting of four parts: (1) planning, (2) implementation, (3) evaluation and (4) review. Furthermore, it contains ten guidelines for working on quality, such as rules concerning who offers VET provision; roles and responsibilities for different parts of the VET system; information and data required for monitoring; the role of a communication strategy; piloting initiatives and value success; using feedback to improve VET; providing clarity on funding; ensuring quality assurance covers all aspects of VET provision; and, finally, rules ensuring that VET is founded on a strong involvement of external and internal partners and relevant stakeholders.

- In its **Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area**¹, the ENQA, in cooperation with EUA, EURASHE and ESIB² and endorsed by the ministers of education of the Bologna declaration³, makes a distinction between (1) internal quality assurance within HEIs, (2) the external quality assurance of higher education and (3) the quality assurance of external quality assurance agencies.
- In 2000, indicators for measuring quality **of school education** were developed⁴. The indicators can be used to identify issues which should be examined in greater detail, and they give Member States the opportunity to learn from one another by comparing the results achieved. Indicators on attainment include issues such as progress in mathematic skills, reading competences, ICT. Indicators on success and transition include, school drop-out rates, completion of upper secondary education. Indicators on monitoring of education include evaluation and steering of school education. Finally, indicators on resources and structures include indicators such as participation in pre-primary education.

In comparing quality assurance in VET, HE and school education, it can be noticed that because of the fact that they only serve as orientation/reference, all three initiatives include a large amount of freedom in determining how quality is measured. For example, it is recommended that existing initiatives should not be replaced, but that the guidelines for both VET and HE should improve existing practices.⁵

In addition to the quality frameworks as developed for HE and VET, an even more important development in recent years is the implementation of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and subsequent National Qualifications Frameworks in the

¹ ENQA (2009), *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*, Helsinki: ENQA.

² ENQA: the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education; EUA: Association of European institutions of higher education; EURASHE: European Association of Institutions in Higher Education; and ESIB: European Students' Union.

³ See European Ministers of Education meeting in Bergen in May 2005.

⁴ European Commission (2000), *European Report of May 2000 on the Quality of School Education: Sixteen Quality Indicators*. Report based on the work of the Working Committee on Quality Indicators.

⁵ Since the development of the indicators to monitor school quality in 2000, not much has happened, hence, we refer only to the recent developments related to VET and HE.

Member States¹. Qualifications can be regarded as ‘currency’ in which people, institutions, employers should have trust. Given this conception of qualification, the institutions offering qualifications, diplomas, or certificates (either through initial education or validation of non-formal and informal learning) should be trustworthy and hence have mechanisms in place for quality assurance. This is true for all institutions where learning takes place, whether provision is provided for young people or adults.

At last, special reference should be made to European initiatives in the **field guidance and counselling** as this field is closely related to adult learning, and more specifically to the priorities identified in the Council resolution on better integrating lifelong guidance into lifelong learning strategies. This resolution included four priority areas, of which one was devoted to establishing quality assurance mechanism². The European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN) has worked on this topic since then³.

1.4 The quest to improve the quality of education and training

Improving the quality of education and training is a common objective of governments, providers, and practitioners in many countries. Literature provides a number of reasons for assuring and improving quality of education and training⁴:

- Quality provision creates **trust in the educational system**, and more specifically trust in qualifications, diplomas, and certificates provided by learning institutes. This also counts for non formal and informal learning, stimulated by the increasing role of accreditation of prior learning in Member State policies.
- The **consumer perspective and learner satisfaction** becomes an increasingly important factor in the field of education and training, since learners are highly conscious about their rights and getting value for money and are demanding a learning experience of sufficient quality.⁵
- Quality provision is often taken up in educational acts as a **legal right for citizens** and should therefore be stimulated as such.

¹ European Parliament and the European Council (2008), OJ C111/1 6.5.2008, Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (Text with EEA relevance) (2008/C 111/01))

² Council of the European Union (2008). Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council of 21 November 2008 on better integrating lifelong guidance into lifelong learning strategies. *Official Journal of the European Union*, C 319, 13.12.2008, p. 4-7. Available from Internet: <http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:319:0004:0007:EN:PDF> [cited 15.12.2010].

³ <https://ktl.jyu.fi/ktl/elgpn>

⁴ Commonwealth of learning (2007), Quality Assurance in higher education, an introduction. Vancouver. Canada

⁵ Further developed in: Marijk C. Van Der Wende & Don F. Westerheijden (2010), International Aspects of Quality Assurance with a Special Focus on European Higher Education. In: Quality in Higher Education. Research voor Beleid and PLATO (2005), Developing local learning centres and learning partnerships as part of Member States' targets for reaching the Lisbon goals in the field of education and training: A study of the current situation, Leiden.

- The pursuit of **accountability for funding parties**. Every institute is accountable to its stakeholders in terms of funds (public or private) used on it.
- Quality of the provision is increasingly seen as **marketing tool for learning providers** to show their credibility, prestige and status, and visibility of the provider to attract learners.
- **Quest for excellence**, while contributing to the development of learners, economy and society at large, learning providers should also demonstrate the drive to develop themselves continually, just like staff working for learning organisation.
- Research evidence shows that those schools that are well managed, or, in other words, have strong leadership, show **better results in comparative studies** than those who do not. In particular, it is concluded that the role of teachers is the deciding factor for ensuring quality learning and that setting requirement / standards has impact¹.

Reading policy documents, as produced by EU institutions and literature, there is a general consensus that investing in quality education is paying off. Nevertheless, the empirical evidence underlying this argument needs further exploration, especially in the context of adult learning, just as the cost and benefit of quality assurance systems².

1.5 Aims and objectives of the study

Given this background and the work done at European level, the results of the study should support the European Commission by contributing to a knowledge base, which will inform a number of future activities to be undertaken in the framework of European Cooperation on Adult Learning Policy³.

The specific objective of this study is to:

¹ Further developed in: OECD (2008). Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) TALIS, and OECD (2012), Education at a Glance 2012: OECD Indicators. Schuller, Tom, David Watson (2009), Learning through Life, Inquiry into the Future for Lifelong Learning, Summary. the Study on European Terminology in Adult Learning identified four sub-fields of quality in adult learning, namely, validation of learning; accreditation and evaluation of provision; professional development of teachers and trainers; and innovative pedagogy. NRDC (2010), Study on European Terminology in Adult Learning for a common language and common understanding and monitoring of the sector

² To date there are relatively few studies addressing the costs and benefits of quality assurance measures, especially not in the field of adult learning. It has been argued that testing the effects of quality assurance instruments, is empirically difficult. One of the main problems, it has been said, is finding good proxies for quality, in order to examine the effects on service quality. There is a vast economic literature on the need for regulating a sector and setting standards, such as accreditation, licensing (and the role of qualifications), conduct regulation, rules on ownership and form of business, and recommended or fixed prices. See: Svorny, S. (2000), 'Licensing, Market Entry Regulation', in Bouckaert, B. and G. De Geest (eds), *Encyclopedia of Law and Economics, Volume III: The Regulation of Contracts*, Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, MA, USA: Edward Elgar, pp. 296-328. Bruno S. Frey (2006). *Evaluating - Eine Neue Krankheit CREMA; Behavioural Science; Economics*. June 2006

³ Terms of Reference: Open Call for tender EAC/26/2011. DEVELOPING THE ADULT LEARNING SECTOR. Lot 1: Quality in the Adult Learning Sector

“Map and to analyse the scope, content and implementation of quality approaches, standards and other relevant recent developments such as the development and implementation of accreditation systems and institutions, in the adult learning sector”.

According to the Terms of Reference, the study should finally lead towards a:

1. Set of conclusions and recommendations based on the methodological best practice identified;
2. Proposal for a quality reference framework for formal and non-formal adult learning.

The study should mainly focus on mapping interesting practices throughout Europe and, secondly, should also reflect on quality assurance systems implemented in other education sectors (ESG and EQAVET/EQARF). This study provides **‘ingredients’** for the development of a framework for Quality in Adult Learning. Recommendations on how to proceed in developing the framework (in terms of time lines, consultations, additional studies etc.) should be provided within the study.

2 The study: research topics, concepts, and methodology used

This chapter discusses the **research topics** in Section 2.1. Subsequently, Section 2.2 discusses some **concepts** underlying this study such as **definitions** of adult learning, understanding of the concept of quality, what makes adult learning distinctive, quality instruments in place, and conditions for developing and assuring quality adult learning. These concepts will feed a **further demarcation** of the study and geographical coverage in Section 2.3. In Section 2.4 the **methodology** is presented, while Section 2.5 provides further details on the **structure** of the report.

2.1 Research topics

The following table provides an overview of the envisaged results of the study as stated in the terms of reference¹.

Table 1: Research topics

a) Mapping and analysis of recent developments in European countries with regard to quality approaches in the field of Adult Learning

- A mapping of national / regional policies, frameworks / legislation, etc. with regard to quality approaches, standards and other relevant developments in the field of Adult Learning;
- An examination of the issues and challenges which are specific to the adult learning sector in relation to assuring quality of its providers and provision;
- An analysis of differences and common characteristics in the non-vocational adult learning sector compared with the development of quality assurance systems in VET and Higher Education;
- An analysis of the processes and mechanisms for quality assurance, accompanied by an analysis of the bodies responsible for supervising, managing, implementing and supporting these processes and mechanisms at national / regional level (including systems and bodies responsible for the accreditation of providers) in order to support quality measures at provider level;
- A mapping and documentation of what constitutes quality criteria / indicators, quality management approaches and effective techniques for monitoring / evaluation of quality in relation to adult learning. The analysis should be not only descriptive but also identify the specific characteristics, strengths, weaknesses and results;
- A detailed description, drawn from a range of countries, of at least 15 instances of good practices and approaches, some at national / regional level (legislation,

¹ Terms of Reference: Open Call for tender EAC/26/2011. Developing the adult learning sector. Lot 1: Quality in the Adult Learning Sector

awards etc.) and others at provider level, based on a set of quality criteria including aspects such as content, price and feed-back from adult learners. These descriptions can take the form of case studies, but also describe generally applied teaching and learning methods;

- A description and analysis of successful seals of excellence, quality labels, prizes and awards at national and regional level;

An examination of the pros and cons of extending such quality assurance mechanisms more widely across the adult learning sector in Europe.

b) Conclusions and recommendations on quality assurance in the field of adult learning

- A set of conclusions and recommendations based on the methodological best practice identified in the analyses under point (a) above;
- A detailed draft for a quality reference framework for formal and non-formal adult learning, including:
 - guiding principles, descriptors and indicators;
 - commonalities and differences between quality assurance methods suitable for adult learning and those relating to other education sectors (schools, higher education, VET);
 - an indication of how the quality assurance model proposed for adult learning could find its place within an overarching framework for quality assurance in education and training systems as a whole; making particular reference to EQAVET framework developed for vocational education and training;
 - a strategy for involvement and consultation of the main stakeholders involved (Member States, providers, social partners, users, relevant NGOs and experts, etc.).

2.2 Introducing some key concepts guiding this study

Before going into the research topics in the following chapters, it is important to introduce some key concepts that formed the point of departure for the drafting of this report. This includes; a definition of adult learning; inventory of concepts associated to quality; a section on key characteristics of adult learning; definition of quality instruments; the conditions for developing quality system in adult learning.

2.2.1 Definitions of adult learning

Before discussing quality systems, one should know to what sector these systems apply. Therefore a clear definition of adult learning is needed. First of all, **definitions of adult learning** vary. A commonly used definition in European documents is that adult learning includes all forms of learning undertaken by adults after having left initial education and

training, however far this process may have gone (e.g. including tertiary education)¹. The study on European Terminology in Adult Learning emphasised that this also includes university-level or higher education undertaken after a break (other than for deferred entry) since leaving initial education and training.² This definition is still very broad and further demarcation is needed, given the variety of practices that fall under this definition, meeting an ever larger variety of the learning needs of different groups in society, provided in a wide range of institutions with different goals³. Not only the goals of the educational programme differ, but also the forms of learning show diversity in the sector, ranging from formal learning, non-formal learning and informal learning⁴. More important than providing a fixed and strict definition of adult learning, is knowing in what kind of different domains adult learning takes place. In order to further demarcate the adult learning sector, several attempts have been made to cluster the adult learning sector in different domains⁵. One of the latest attempts includes a categorisation entailing four broad categories, clustered around the aim and target groups of adult learning.

- Adult learning as **provider of basic skills** for obtaining necessary skills and competences to participate in society (social inclusion);
- Adult learning as a driver for obtaining the necessary **skills and competences for employability**;
- Adult learning as a condition for **innovation and competitiveness in a knowledge economy**, for developing competences serving a high level value in the value chain;
- Adult learning for the learning society for obtaining skills and competences in **areas of personal interest**, but also for citizenship and civil society.

Each category can be described in terms of its main objectives, structures, target groups, stakeholders, finance-structures, governance, policies and arguments in its favour, including quality assurance systems in place⁶. This study takes the definition of the European Commission, as described above, as starting point, to be maximum inclusive identifying interesting practices across the whole spectrum of adult learning. However, it focuses on the formal and non formal part of adult learning in the different sub domains of adult learning as sketched above.

¹ European Commission (2006), Communication from the Commission on adult learning: it is never too late to learn, COM (2006).

² NRDC (2010), Study on European Terminology in Adult Learning for a common language and common understanding and monitoring of the sector.

³ Buiskool, Bert-Jan, Jaap van Lakerveld, Frowine de Oudendammer, Erik Kats, Hemmo Smit, Simon Broek (2008), Adult Learning Professions in Europe (Research voor Beleid/PLATO).

⁴ Cedefop (2008), Terminology of European education and training policy.

⁵ Vanwing, T. (2006): Niet formeel, wel professioneel. Brussel. Dellen, Van & Van Der Kamp (2008) Work domains and competences of the European adult and continuing educator, in: S. Lattke & E. Nuissl (Ed) Qualifying Adult Learning Professionals in Europe (Bielefeld, W Bertelsmann).

⁶ Broek, S.D., Buiskool, B.J. (2012), Mapping and comparing mobilisation strategies throughout Europe: Towards making lifelong learning a reality, in: JACE 2012, Volume 18, Number 1.

2.2.2 Understanding the concept quality

Literature identifies two approaches to quality thinking¹.

- The **economic approach** that is largely concerned with efficiency and effectiveness, and the achievement of learning outcomes at reasonable costs. The economist view of education uses quantitative outputs as the measure of quality, for example enrolment ratios and retention ratios, rates of return on investment in education in terms of earnings and cognitive achievement as measured in national or international tests, like PIAAC and PISA².
- The **humanist/progressive approach** that is characterised by a broader concern for the development of the learner, human development and/or social change. This approach tends to place more emphasis on the learning process. Hence, characteristics such as learner-centred pedagogies, democratic schools and inclusion are included in notions of quality education.

Both perspectives are taken into account in this study, since these are strongly inter-linked, answering not only the question of whether education and training works, identifying and estimating effects, but also looking at the black box of the learning process³. In addition to these two approaches literature (such as Confintea IV⁴) makes recurring reference to various components of educational quality that form a useful analytical framework for this study. These components are:

- **Equity** - equitable access to and participation in education and training
- **Relevance** - provision must represent an effective route to and support, persistence in adult learning to the achievement of individual and societal goals
- **Effectiveness** - means end relationships in terms of educational outcomes for learners. Completion rates and achievement levels are hard indicators of effectiveness
- **Efficiency** - level and distribution of resources and the economical investment of resources to achieve specified aim under given condition: ratio of cost to benefits.
- **Sustainability** - results of learning should be sustainable in the long term and should not harm the environment or society at large.

¹ Based on a Review of the 'international' literature on the concept of quality in education in 2006 by Angeline Barrett, Rita Chawla-Duggan, John Lowe, Jutta Nikel, Eugenia Ukpo

² Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies, and: Programme for International Student Assessment

³ Only focusing on the economic approach falls short because it only looks at two aspects: the programme itself and different outcomes. But as Ray Pawson and Nick Tilley (1997) have rightly pointed out, this approach offers an incomplete picture.

⁴ Inspired by the Four key principles of quality in Adult Learning that were developed by UNESCO in the framework of the CONFITEA VI. UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (2009), Global Report on Adult Learning. Hamburg: UIL.

These components are often in conflict with each other so that actions to improve one may have negative effects on another. In particular, attempts to increase the equity of a system may be in conflict with concerns over efficiency. Some analyses of quality treat equality as a distinct issue and suggest that there are inherent contradictions in attempting to address both quality and equality¹.

To sum up, quality adult learning means that it is accessible, relevant, effective, efficient and sustainable. Structures and processes should be in place in order to assure that these criteria are met.

2.2.3 Key characteristics of adult learning

After having a notion of the concept quality, one should apply this concept on adult learning. A legitimate question is what makes adult learning different to other educational sectors. There is a vast corpus of (academic) literature on the subject. This literature focuses mostly on the characteristics of the adult learner, the way the provision is provided, by whom, and the competences of the adult learning professionals involved. The main differences are shortly summarised below:

- Regarding the characteristics of the learner, adults have a more **diverse background** in terms of competences, expectations, emotional development, experience, prejudices, and needs. In general, as group, adult learners are more heterogeneous than pupils and students in initial education.
- Adults more often learn in **non-formal and informal learning environments**². For instance, in the case of learning on the work floor, learning can be considered as work-based learning (learning by doing).
- Due to these different learning environments, adult learning is also provided by **different type of providers** ranging from enterprises, community centres, libraries, NGO's, study circles, to traditional schools and learning institutes.
- With regard to the type of learning taking place, in contrast to young learners, the emphasis for adult learners is on **'engaged' learning**, instead of traditional learning³.
- With regard to the competences of **adult learning staff (including teachers, managers, supporting staff and more)** involved, there is a large degree of overlap between initial education and adult learning, however, there are also differences, related to

¹ Welch, Anthony R (Ed) Third World Education: Quality and Equality. 2000, New York, Garland. Broek, S.D., Buiskool, B.J. (2013), Quality in Adult Learning: EU policies and shifting paradigms? in: George K. Zarifis & Maria Gravani (2013), Challenging the 'European Area of Lifelong Learning' A Critical Response, Springer, forthcoming.

² Field, J. (2006). Lifelong Learning and the New Educational Order, Trentham Press, 2000, pp. 181. Second fully revised edition 2006, 204 pp. Japanese edition 2004.

³ Dwyer, D. (1994). Apple classrooms of tomorrow: What we've learned. Educational Leadership, 51 (7), 4-10: <http://www2.ed.gov/pubs/SER/Diversity/sec-i4.html>

the characteristics of the learners (dealing with heterogeneity) and the way adult learning is provided in terms of didactics and methods, mostly affecting adult educators. Nevertheless, due to the specificity of the institutional context adult learning takes place (less institutionalised and often dependent on project funding) requires specific competences for persons managing the learning provider¹.

- The provision should be offered in a **flexible manner** in terms of duration, time, and place, so learners could combine their learning activities with their tight working schedule and family life².

Summarising, based on literature, quality adult learning is described as being motivational for the learners, the learning environment is rich and reflective, and the provision is tailor-made, learner-centred and attuned to the specific learning needs of the adult learners³. Furthermore, provision respects the background of the adult learner and the knowledge and experience of the adult learner are used as resource in the learning process. In addition, the provision is offered in a flexible manner in terms of duration, time, and place. Finally, the learning is both relevant for the adult learner and – potentially – other stakeholders (e.g. employers, societal organisations).⁴ These elements, found in literature, could function as a starting point for developing key quality principles and a future definition of quality in adult learning.

2.2.4 Quality assurance systems

In literature and policy documents different terms are used for (public) interventions assuring quality of learning provision, such as quality frameworks, quality policies, quality systems, quality approaches, quality instruments, quality methodologies and many more. Often different names are given for the same thing.

Starting point for this study is a broad definition of quality assurance, namely a recognisable repertoire of policies, procedures, rules, criteria, tools, verification instruments,

¹ An overview of paradigm changes in adult learning teaching methods is also given in the OECD report *Beyond Rhetoric: Adult Learning Policies and Practices* (2003), (EAEA, 2006; European Commission, 2005). Billington, Dorothy D. (2000), *Seven characteristics of highly effective adult learning programmes*, in: *New Horizons for Learning*, Seattle. Birkenholz, Robert J. (1999), *Effective Adult Learning*. Danville, Illinois: Interstate Publishers, Inc. Research voor Beleid (2010), *Key Competences for Adult Learning Professionals*, Zoetermeer: Research voor Beleid.

² Broek, S.D., Buiskool, B.J. (2012), *Mapping and comparing mobilisation strategies throughout Europe: Towards making lifelong learning a reality*, in: *JACE* 2012, Volume 18, Number 1

³ Buiskool et al (2005). *Local learning centres and learning partnerships in Europe*. Leiden

⁴ Literature list on this issue: Buiskool, B., Broek, S. D., van Lakerveld, J. (2009), *Educators at Work in two Sectors of Adult and Vocational Education: an overview of two European Research projects*, in: *European Journal of Education*, vol. 44, No. 2, 2009. Buiskool, B.J., Broek S.D. (2011), *Identifying a common set of key competences for Adult Learning staff: an inventory of European practices*, in *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education*, Volume 17, Number 1, 2011, 40-62. Research voor Beleid and PLATO (2005), *Developing local learning centres and learning partnerships as part of Member States' targets for reaching the Lisbon goals in the field of education and training: A study of the current situation*, Leiden: Research voor Beleid/PLATO. Research voor Beleid/PLATO, (2008), *Adult Learning professionals in Europe (ALPINE)*, Leiden: Research voor Beleid/PLATO. Research voor Beleid (2010), *Key Competences for Adult Learning Professionals*, Zoetermeer: Research voor Beleid.

and mechanisms that together have the purpose of ensuring and enhancing the quality of any learning institute¹. This repertoire include initiatives to be deployed on system (such as accreditation) as well as on providers (such as self evaluation) level. Applying this definition has pros and cons. The advantage of using such a broad definition is the inclusion of a wide variety of types of quality initiatives developed across Europe that could form as inspiration for future policy making after studying these initiatives in-depth. The disadvantage is that by including a diversity of practices, there is no clear unit of analysis, comparing similar quality practices like quality prizes or accreditation systems in different context. Since this study should mainly focus on mapping interesting practices throughout Europe, we decided to keep our approach open, not to exclude practices beforehand.

Nevertheless, to structure this broad working definition, we make a further distinction between three levels: frameworks, systems, and instruments in place, each level becoming more concrete and closer to the implementation of quality procedures at providers level.

- **Quality framework** is defined as an overarching reference for recommended quality concepts, models, criteria and indicators that can be included in the quality systems (this framework could be embedded in legislation, but also in policy documents or agreements between stakeholders).
- **Quality systems** are subsequently defined as concrete systems that are implemented on national, regional or sectoral level, such as accreditation systems or quality labels for which individual providers need to apply for or get awarded. Also here, quality criteria and indicators are in place, as well as procedures. In addition, providers have their own quality assurance systems in place (falling under an accreditation system, quality label or on own initiative) including processes and procedures on organisational level to assure quality. Each system has its own structures, processes and outcome (on system as well as providers level).
- Subsequently, we have **quality instruments** that are implemented on system as well as on providers level, including self-evaluation and external evaluation. Self-evaluation, or self-assessment, includes processes or methodologies that are carried out on providers' level to evaluate its performance or position in relation to their services and wider environment. Self-evaluation also applies to professionals themselves. External evaluations are carried out by external experts (inspectors, evaluators, or peers) and often take place in the context of accreditation or inspection.

¹ Faurschou, K. (2002). Quality management approaches for vocational education and training. Cedefop (ed.): European Forum on Quality in VET.

This study focuses on quality systems, such as accreditation systems and quality labels, in place on national / regional / sectoral level and their criteria, indicators and procedures, and instruments in place. Nevertheless, in case where relevant, we discuss the frameworks in place in which these systems are developed and implemented and how these affect quality systems on providers' level.

2.3 Demarcation of the study (thematic and geographic scope)

Backed up by the concepts discussed in the previous section, we are able to better demarcate the study, in terms of:

- **Thematic scope:** as stated in the previous section, this study departs from a broad definition of adult learning, including all forms of learning in which adults takes place, as well as for quality systems, in order to gather a maximum variety of initiatives across Europe. This, however, makes it difficult to compare countries on all specific quality systems in place for each sub domain of adult learning, actually coming up with “thousands” of systems in place, also taking into account all the initiatives initiated and implemented at regional or local level, going beyond the scope of this study. Therefore we decided to collect different manifestations of quality systems in adult learning over Europe that shows their representativeness in diversity of practices. Nevertheless, even then, some further demarcations are needed. Although trying to include a maximum of practices, this study focuses to a greater extent on the quality systems in place in the non-formal part of adult learning, and that is publicly funded. Nevertheless where interesting practices appear in formal learning, that make specific reference to adult learning, or in the privately financed part of adult learning, these are taken into account in the analysis, knowing that private practices are less documented and more widely spread across countries. This study will not elaborately assess requirements and continuing professional development policies in place for adult learning staff, since this has already extensively done in the context of two previous studies on adult learning staff¹. The result of these studies will, however, be fully integrated in the outcome of this study. Nevertheless, where staff issues are included in the quality systems studied, these are taken into account. Also for quality of guidance and counselling provision we base on the work already done by the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN) and Cedefop producing reports on this matter contributing to the specific priority on quality assurance mechanisms as

¹ Buiskool, Bert-Jan, Jaap van Lakerveld, Frowine de Oudendammer, Erik Kats. Hemmo Smit, Simon Broek (2008), Adult Learning Professions in Europe (Research voor Beleid). Buiskool, B.J. and S.D. Broek (Research voor Beleid) (2010), Key competences of adult learning professionals, Zoetermeer, 2010

identified in the Council resolution on better integrating lifelong guidance into lifelong learning strategies¹

- **Geographical scope:** According to the Terms of Reference, this study should cover a representative range of the 27 European Union Member States, the EFTA countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland) and the accession candidate countries (Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro). Knowing that the adult learning sector covers almost all sub-domains of the education system and the study should represent the wide diversity of systems in Europe, we collected basic information on quality frameworks and systems in place in 32 countries², with the goal of providing an overview on diversity of systems, while zooming in on 15 countries, having interesting quality systems in place, forming the backbone of this study (including AT, CH, CZ, DE, DK, EL, FR, IT, IE, MT, NL, NO, SE, SI, and the UK (Wales)). Having more in-depth information on the context, background, implementation, and results of a selected number of practices over Europe allows us to draw lessons and to provide relevant input for any future quality reference framework. The methodology is further described in the next section.

2.4 Methodology

The study started in January 2012 and was finalised in April 2013. The work was carried out by Panteia in collaboration with experts in the field of adult learning. In order to answer the above-mentioned research questions, the following research methods were implemented:

- **Desk research** on EU documents, EU projects, and academic literature addressing quality approaches in adult learning.
- Drawing up **32 country fact sheets** based on desk research and interviews on national level. Questions were answered on policy and legal frameworks in place for assuring and developing quality in adult learning, main challenges for adult learning system, differences in quality approaches between HE, VET and non-vocational adult learning, quality approaches (policies, procedures, rules, criteria, tools and verification instruments and mechanisms used), actors involved and an inventory of possible interesting practices for more in-depth study.
- Drawing up **15 case studies** – forming the backbone of this study - on interesting quality systems (based on a long list of 43 cases identified in the country fact sheets).

¹ Council of the European Union (2008b). Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council of 21 November 2008 on better integrating lifelong guidance into lifelong learning strategies. *Official Journal of the European Union*, C 319, 13.12.2008, p. 4-7. Available from Internet: <http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:319:0004:0007:EN:PDF> [cited 15.12.2010].

² EU27 + NO, IS, TK, CH, HR

The case studies were selected by the research team based on several criteria like policy relevance, diversity of practices, geographical spread, availability of information and evaluations, proven outcomes. In addition, the Thematic Working Group on Quality in Adult Learning was consulted in the final selection of the 15 cases on the basis of its work on accreditation of providers, staff quality, and indicators.

- **Two meetings** of the research team to discuss research instruments and preliminary outcomes. During these meetings we discussed the research approach, selection of case studies, preliminary outcomes, and some first answers to the research questions feeding into the final report.
- **Testing seminar** with external stakeholders for discussing and validating the outcomes of the study. The preliminary results of the research were discussed during a one-day seminar in Brussels with approximately 30 participants, including members of the Thematic Working Group on Quality in Adult Learning, adult learning experts, representatives of the European Commission, and the members of the core research team.
- Meetings with **the Thematic Working Group on Quality in Adult Learning**¹ to discuss the progress of the study and receive feedback on the research results (intermediary outcomes, but also the selection of interesting practices).

All these research steps are brought together in the final analysis and have resulted in the main body of this report. A more elaborated overview of the methodology can be found in Annex 3.

2.5 Structure of the report

In the following chapters of the report, we follow the structure of the research questions as set out in Section 2.1.

- **Chapter 3** provides an overview of **quality systems** in the different European countries.

¹ Thematic Working Group on Quality in Adult Learning: This group takes its mandate from the recurring priority given to improving quality and efficiency of education in the renewed European Agenda for Adult Learning adopted by the Education Council in November 2011 which builds on past work undertaken by the European Commission, in particular on the Communication on Adult Learning in October 2006, and the subsequent Action Plan on Adult Learning 2008-2010 that was endorsed by national education ministers in May 2008. The group is tasked with developing a quality framework which will inform and guide both Member States and individual providers on the provision of high quality adult learning. The Group aims to explore synergies and strengthen the policy links/interface between EU policy development on quality in VET, higher education and adult learning (see: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/exchange/quality_en.pdf). A member of the research team has the role of observer in the group. The group acted as sounding board during the study.

- **Chapter 4** addresses concrete examples of **processes and mechanisms** for quality assurance systems, accompanied by an analysis of the **bodies responsible** for supervising, managing, implementing and supporting these processes.
- **Chapter 5** will go in depth into **quality criteria, descriptors and indicators** deployed in quality systems.
- **Chapter 6** presents **issues and challenges** that are specific to adult learning in relation to quality assurance, and links these to a range of **good practices** as identified during the study, including accreditation systems, seals, quality labels and prizes and examines the **pros and cons of extending such measures** more widely across Europe.
- **Chapter 7** describes the main **difference and common characteristics** of quality assurance systems in non-formal adult learning compared to VET, general education and HE.
- **Chapter 8**, based on chapters 3-7, provides a set of **conclusions** including input for a possible **quality reference framework** for adult learning.

This report includes four Annexes, consisting of a long list of 43 cases, overview tables of quality policies in different European countries, further details of the methodology, and a list of sources.

A separate volume to this report includes detailed descriptions of 15 case studies and country factsheets as drawn in the context of this study.

3 Mapping of policies and quality system

This chapter provides an overview of national / regional policies, frameworks / legislation with regard to quality approaches, standards and other relevant developments in the field of adult learning.

To begin with, Section 3.1 discusses and assesses how countries perform on the two benchmarks as identified in ET2020 and shortly discusses the **policies, structure and provision in place**. Subsequently, Section 3.2, provides an **overview of quality systems** in place in the different sub domains of adult learning. Finally, Section 3.4 will look at some **recent developments** further developing quality policies.

This chapter will not discuss individual quality systems (their structures, processes, indicators) in any depth as they will be addressed in the remaining chapters of the report (see chapter 4, 5 and 6).

3.1 Developments in adult learning in the different countries

Before focusing on the overview of concrete quality systems in the field of adult learning, this section will set the scene by describing the state of play in the different European countries in relation to the ET2020 benchmarks, the barriers countries face in achieving these targets, and how adult learning is governed in the different countries. The goal of this section is not to provide a detailed overview, but just to describe the diversity of challenges countries face reaching these targets and providing examples of diversity of systems and provision in place.

3.1.1 ET2020 benchmarks: participation and attainment.

Chapter 1 already discussed the main European challenges and the ET2020 benchmarks relevant for adult learning. One of the key questions to be answered, while assessing the different strategies and policies applied at national level, is whether the policies can be considered effective and whether they contribute to the achievement of these national or EU policy targets. More specifically, the question relates to how national policies, and more specific the quality systems in place, contribute to participation in adult learning (population aged 25-64 participating in formal or non-formal learning) and increasing the share of 30-34 years old with tertiary educational attainment¹. Based on these benchmarks four groups of countries can be identified²:

¹ ET 2020: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc1120_en.htm. Another indicator which is left out of the analysis is the benchmark on early leavers from education and training.

² Eurostat 2012 figures on Tertiary educational attainment by sex, age group 30-34 combined with Eurostat 2011 figures on participation in education and training by sex and age groups - % (source: labour force survey).

	Above EU average participation	Below EU average participation
Above EU average score on tertiary educational attainment level	1) Countries that have an above EU average participation rate as well as an above EU average score on tertiary educational attainment level for 30-34 years old (such as CH, DK, EE, ES, FI, IS, LU, NL, NO, SE, SI, and the UK). This group contains a lot of the Nordic countries.	2) Countries that have an above EU average participation rate but a below EU average score on tertiary educational attainment level for 30-34 years old (such as AT, CZ, PT).
Below EU average score on tertiary educational attainment level	3) Countries that have a below EU average participation rate but an above EU average score on tertiary educational attainment level for 30-34 years old (such as BE, CY, FR, IE, LV, LI, and PL). This group includes a lot of the New Member States.	4) Countries that have a below EU average participation rate as well as a below EU average score on tertiary educational attainment level for 30-34 years old (BG, DE, EL, FYROM, HR, HU, IT, MT, RO, SK, TK). The countries in this group can be mainly found in the southern part of Europe.

What can be concluded from the statistical data on participation of adults in education and training is that ET2020 benchmarks are not reached yet and that there are big disparities between the countries, both with regard to participation in adult learning and educational attainment. Nevertheless, 13 countries already reached the benchmark 15 per cent participation in adult learning, where some countries are even overperforming with more than 20 per cent participation (CH, DK, FI, IS, NL, NO, SI, and SE). Information not captured in these statistics, however, are imbalances in participation rates amongst specific target groups. Statistics on participation, across Europe report that several target groups are underperforming on the above-mentioned targets, namely the low qualified, older age groups, and migrants, indicating that the policy focus should not only be on increasing, but also on widening participation.

Although these figures provide rich comparative information on countries' performance, as proxies for assessing the effectiveness of adult learning systems, the figures do not provide explanations for why the figures are as they are. Therefore we need a deeper insight in the country backgrounds against which policies and measures are implemented to increase participation and alleviate the barriers adult learners face. A recent study of the European Commission concludes that countries with low participation figures generally experience severe barriers to increasing the participation of adults in

learning (e.g. BG, HR, CY, CZ, EL, HU, IT, LV, LT, MT, PL, RO, SK, ES and TK)¹. These countries are characterised by the fact that extensive programmes need to be developed to overcome these barriers. Severe barriers can be of different nature and include barriers such as the lack of effective structures for adult learning, lack of finances to boost participation, a large share of illiterate people, or the lack of a learning culture. Another group of countries face medium barriers (like AT, BE, EE, FR, DE, IS, IE, LT, PT, SI, NL and UK) that can be overcome by targeted programmes. Often, there is a well developed infrastructure for adult learning in these countries, but for certain parts of the sector, there is a lack of policy attention. Medium barriers in these countries range from certain target groups that are at risk of exclusion to the challenge of combining learning, work and family-duties. A last group comprises countries that face only minor barriers to increasing participation, mainly in the Nordic countries (such as DK, FI, NO, LU and SE). Of course, improvements can be made, but in general adults can access education fairly easily. Barriers mentioned include, for instance, costs for individuals.

3.1.2 Governance structures

The barriers indicated above should be tackled with appropriate structures, policies, and finances in the field of adult learning, including quality systems. The evidence of these contributions to the achievement of EU policy targets remains relatively scarce and impedes country to country policy learning². Moreover, it is not always easy to establish a clear link, since many strategies display a large variety of instruments that are not directly aimed at increasing participation, such as initiatives in the field of quality improvement, resulting in problems defining comparable results and impact indicators.

The governance structure of adult education depends on many factors, including historical developments and the structure of the educational landscape in a country. Some countries have a more **centralised** governance structure regarding education, such as France, while others, such as Sweden and Czech Republic can be characterised as having a more **decentralised** governance structure. Many other countries, such as the UK, present **mixed-models** in governance structures, combining both centralised and decentralised tendencies.³ In countries that have a centralised structure often the Ministry of Education plays a co-ordinating role and has under its responsibility determined the strategy (see for instance CZ, DK and FI). In most countries, however, two Ministries are

¹ Broek, S.D. and Buiskool, B.J. B. Hake (2011). Assessment of the impact of ongoing reforms in education and training on adult learning sector. A study assigned by the European Commission.

² PPMI (2010), A study on the assessment of the impact of ongoing reforms on education and training on the adult learning sector. Often the comparative data on policy and governance in education and training is scarce and therefore opportunities for EU-level comparative analysis are limited. Besides, the situation varies greatly from country to country, thus timing and the nature of reforms vary to a great extent. Moreover, the impacts of these reforms are often under researched and if this is the case employ a variety of methodological approaches and the quality of their delivery differs. Besides, it is hardly possible to identify the impact, and causality, of these reforms / practices on national statistics on adult learning participation, since the initiative always capture a small part of all activities within the adult learning sector.

³ Daun, Holger (2004), Privatisation, decentralisation and governance in education in Czech Republic, France, Germany and Sweden, in: International Review of Education, Vol. 50, No. 3/4 (July 2004), pp.325-346.

the most important for developing adult learning policies: Ministries of Education and Ministries of Employment and Social Affairs (for instance in the NL, MT, TK and DK).¹

In some countries, policy-making and the implementation of lifelong learning strategies is supported by a **co-ordinating body** (for instance in FI, ES, NL, although in the Netherlands this body was recently abolished). While in many countries the main responsibility for developing policies for adult learning lies at national level, responsibilities have often been decentralised to regional and local governmental levels (as is the case in AT, DK, EE, FR, IT, NL, NO and SE).

Generally, the way countries govern their quality systems is very much attuned and in line with their governance structure. Sectoral fragmentation could hamper developing overarching quality systems for adult learning, an issue that will be further explored in the following chapter.

3.1.3 Provision of adult learning

Besides different governance models, countries differ **by providers of adult learning**. Having some sight on by who adult learning is provided is needed for determining the context in which quality systems are implemented.

There are many types of providers². According to the Adult Education Survey (AES)³, employers are the leading providers of non-formal education and training (38 per cent), while non-formal education and training institutions are ranked second (17 per cent).⁴ Of course country differences are visible. For instance, in relation to *formal providers*, there are big differences between the Member States, as is the case in the Netherlands, where almost 40 per cent of the respondents indicated that their non-formal adult education and training was provided through formal institutions⁵, while in France, only 2 per cent of the respondents indicated the same. With regard to the provision of non-

¹ Other Ministries involved can include Ministries of Science and Research (for instance in AT and DK), and Ministries of Agriculture (also in AT). Other ministries are mentioned as well, for instance in Belgium (Flanders), where the Ministry of Culture is responsible for all socio-cultural adult education.

² The Adult Education Survey, made use of the following classification of providers of non-formal adult education and training activities: employer, non-formal education and training institutions, formal education institution, commercial institution where education and training is not the main activity (e.g. equipment suppliers), employers' organisations, chambers of commerce, trade unions, non-profit associations (e.g. cultural society, political party), individuals (e.g. students giving private lessons), non commercial institution where education & training (ET) is not the main activity (e.g. libraries, museums, etc.).

³ The Adult Education Survey (AES) is part of the EU Statistics on lifelong learning. The surveys have been carried out by 29 countries in the EU, EFTA and candidate countries between 2005 and 2008. The AES is a pilot exercise, which for the first time proposed a common EU framework including a standard questionnaire, tools and quality reporting. The reference year is set at 2007. The survey covers participation in education and lifelong learning activities (formal, non-formal and informal learning). All definitions apply to all persons aged 25-64, living in private households. See:

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/microdata/adult_education_survey

⁴ See for an elaborated discussion on local learning centres the study from the European Commission: Research voor Beleid and PLATO (2005), Developing local learning centres and learning partnerships as part of Member States' targets for reaching the Lisbon goals in the field of education and training.

⁵ There is a discrepancy between national data and the Adult Education Survey since on national level it is estimated that 80% of adult learning is provided by private companies, while 40% of the respondents of the AES indicate that non-formal adult learning is provided through formal institutions.

formal adult learning by *non-formal institutions*, mainly the new Member States report higher percentages. For example, 34 per cent of respondents in Estonia indicate that non-formal institutions are adult learning providers. The figures for Poland and Slovenia are 50 per cent and 45 per cent, respectively. On the other hand, countries like Belgium, the United Kingdom and Italy present rates lower than 10 per cent.

Non-formal adult learning providers comprise a wide variety of organisations and institutions. The private sector is extensive in some countries (e.g. LU, NL, UK, DE, BE (Flanders)). This is also the situation in the new Member States where from the 1990s the adult learning market was left completely open to private providers. Many small training companies emerged, scattering the offer of provision and diffusing responsibilities. This process can also be seen in Western European countries. In the Netherlands, for instance, it is estimated that 80-90 per cent of adult learning takes place in the private sector. Other countries indicate that the number of private providers is low and that almost all adult learning is provided by publicly funded schools and institutions (for instance in Iceland). Although some European-wide studies have been carried out, there is little information on this market, the volume and composition of providers, the content of the training provided and the number of people being trained.¹ There is a plethora of other associations, organisations, NGOs, and research institutions active in the adult learning sector. Some of them fall under the responsibility of the government and have the task of developing and supporting the adult learning sector. Examples can be found in Austria, Romania, Estonia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, and Greece.

Based on these figures, we conclude that most non-formal adult learning takes place outside formal education, and a legitimate question is whether this learning provision is sufficiently quality assured. The following section will further discuss these issues providing an overview of quality systems found in the different countries.

3.2 A wide palette of quality assurance systems: a mapping

Assessing quality systems in place, it is important to take into account that these are reflecting the different governance structures and provision of adult learning in place as described in the previous section. This section provides a mapping of national quality systems and other relevant developments in the field of adult Learning, starting with providing a summarising table of quality systems in Europe (see table 2 below).

In table 3 it has been indicated whether quality systems – on macro level - were found in a particular country for formal adult learning (and more specific HE, VET, and second chance) and non formal learning (and more specific VET, basic skills, and liberal learning). Subsequently, a cross (X) has been put in the table in case there is evidence that a

¹ See: Institut Technik+Bildung, University of Bremen (2008), Eurotrainer, Making lifelong learning possible: A study of the situation and qualification of trainers in Europe. See also: NIACE (2006), contract number DG EAC 21/05, Final Report for the Study on Adult Education Providers.

quality system is in place for that particular sub domain (having some form of policies, procedures, rules, criteria, tools, and verification instruments implemented that have the purpose of ensuring and enhancing the quality provided by any adult learning provider)¹.

In order to identify possible connections with participation rates in lifelong learning and educational attainment rates, the countries have been clustered according to the four categories of countries already discussed in Section 3.1.3 based on the two ET2020 benchmarks. This clustering enables us to identify patterns and to provide answers to questions such as whether countries with quality systems in place are also the best performing countries on these relevant ET2020 benchmarks

¹ It is acknowledged here that in providing generalisations of national systems and a mapping of how countries differ in the systems and approaches for assuring quality in adult learning, the table does not always do full justice to the actual situation in specific countries. For example, the fact that we spotted a quality system for a specific domain, does not necessarily mean that it is applicable to this whole domain. It is also acknowledged that the boundaries between formal and non-formal provision is blurry, especially since one and the same provider could provide formal as well as non-formal learning, as well as in different sub domains. This counts as well for the distinction between second chance education and basic skills provision. In some countries (such as IE, NL, MT, and the UK) basic skills learning is part of second chance provision and can lead to a qualification at the lowest level or a “pre” level of the NQF.

Table 2: Overview of quality systems on macro level related to adult learning, covering formal and non-formal learning

Learning formal and non-formal learning									
		Formal			Non-formal (publicly financed)				Overall assessment on the existing of quality systems assuring quality in non formal publicly funded adult learning (-,-+.+)
		H E	V E T	Se co nd ch an ce	V E T	Ba sic ski lls	Ot her (lib era l)	Specific quality systems in place for adult and interesting practices	
High performing countries (LLL participation and educational attainment)	CH	X	X	X	X	X	X	(1) eduQua label constitutes the framework in which quality of adult learning in Switzerland is assured; (2) Train the Trainer (AdA) as a 3-level core concept of staff quality	(+)
	DK	X	X	X	X	X	X	(1) The Act on The Danish Evaluation Institute evaluates all levels of education including all types of adult education that get public funding.	(+)
	EE	X	X	X	X	O	O	(1) Private training providers must be licensed according to the Private School Act	(+)
	ES	X	X	X	O	O	O	Not available. A proposal of experts exists to coordinate and assure that quality of delivery but it was still not put into consideration, see: http://comunidad-escolar.cnice.mec.es/901/info1.html	(-/+)
	FI	X	X	X	X	X	X	(1) the Liberal Adult Education Act (632/1998) mentions the possibility to get support to quality development. (2) The Decree on the Finnish National Board of Education (805/2008) stipulates that the FNBE is responsible for the evaluation of educational outcomes in education from pre-primary to adult education.	(+)
	IS	X	X	X	O	O	O	(1) the Adult Education Act (2010) includes articles on accreditation and certification, evaluation and quality control, funding, information provision and the recognition of prior learning. This Act does not apply to non formal learning and education that is based on legislation for upper secondary or higher education.	(-/+)
	LU	X	X	X	X	X	X	(1) The Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training has developed a quality label for non-formal continuing education (since 2000)	(+)
	NL	X	X	X	O	O	O	(1) code of conduct private training institutes; (2) quality seal for folk universities; (3) Quality code for APL centres including accreditation	(-/+)
	NO	X	X	X	X	X	X	(1) VOX accredits adult education associations and online schools under the new Act for adult education, introduced in 2010	(+)
	SE	X	X	X	X	X	X	(1) The Swedish National Council for Adult Education (Folkbildningsrådet) is responsible for the	

Medium performing countries 1 (high participation and low educational attainment)								distribution of the state grants and for developing and monitoring the activities within the popular and liberal adult education; (2) BRUK, a system for support on the quality work for all types of adult education	
	SI	X	X	X	O	O	O	(1) The Adult Education Act set no obligations for quality assurance. (2) THE GREEN OQEA LOGO aims to motivate and reward educational organisations and experts who care about how they do their work and are prepared to constantly learn, test new findings, systematically assess the effects of their work and implement measures to develop quality.	(-/+)
	UK	X	X	X	O	X	X	ESTYN Inspection of Adult Community Learning (ACL) in Wales	(+)
Medium performing countries II (low LLL participation and high educational attainment)	AT	X	X	X	X	X	X	(1) Ö-Cert provides registration as one of the Quality Providers of Adult Education in Austria; (2) Academy of Continuing Education (wba)	(+)
	CZ	X	X	X	X	O	O	(1) Under the "Concept" programme the government is developing a five-star rating system for educational institutions that provide professional retraining courses.	(-/+)
	PT	X	X	X	O	O	O	(1) Quality Charter of the New Opportunities Centres (NCOs), ANQ (2007) - designed to frame the quality approaches of E&T providers within the New Opportunities Initiative, including a set of reference indicators and benchmarks (3) Ministerial order 851/2010 (6 September) on certification of VET providers	(-/+)
Medium performing countries II (low LLL participation and high educational attainment)	BE	X	X	X	X	O	X	(1) The Support Centre for Non-formal Adult Education (SoCius) also supports quality assurance within the sector. Organisations which are subsidised under the decree concerning socio-cultural adult work are expected to take the principles of integrated quality assurance into consideration. BE (Wallon): (1) The Higher Council for social advancement education developed a guide to quality management (Guide Qualité pour l'Enseignement de Promotion sociale) to promote the integration of a quality in all educational institutions for social promotion.	(+)
	CY	X	X	X	X	O	O	There is no quality framework (legislation / accreditation for formal adult education / second chance, and for the non formal part of AL except that of VET)	(-)
	FR	X	X	X	O	O	O	(1) Quality label as Greta Plus (public adult learning including second chance and VET) and (2) Lycee der Metiers (vocational secondary school) serves as measure to boost quality. (3)The label Lycée des Metiers ("Vocational Secondary School") For the non formal learning, only label regarding the quality of language education	(-)

	IE	X	X	X	O	X	X	(1) The Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) & the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) were established in 2001 under the 1999 legislation. FETAC, HETAC & IUQB & their quality assurances roles have been subsumed into the recently (2012) established Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). (2) The voluntary NALA Evolving Quality Framework (2005) for improving and monitoring the quality of adult basic education (ABE)	(+)
	LT	X	X	X	O	O	O	(1) legal persons and natural persons which are not registered in the Educational Institution Register, need a licence from the local municipalities according to the local regulation	(-)
	LV	X	X	X	X	X	O	(1) Education Law determines that all educational institutions, except those which implement only interest related education programmes have to be accredited. Private enterprises who are not in the State Education Register and individuals must receive the local municipalities' licence for implementing the adult non-formal education programmes	(+)
	PL	X	X	X	O	O	O	(1) Institutions and centres of continuing education which provide non-formal education can obtain accreditation. However, the accreditation introduced in 2003 is voluntary, therefore the out-of-school establishments providing education in compliance with the principles of free business activity are able to avoid any quality related supervision.	(-/+)
	BG	X	X	X	O	O	O	Not available	(-)
Low performing countries (LLL participation and educational attainment)	DE	X	X	X	X	O	O	Non available at federal level. The responsibility for non-vocational CET does lies with the states. These regulate the quality requirements in the CET and training leave laws. In almost all states CET and adult education laws exist in with the support requirements such as public offer, professional leadership, economic efficiency etc. are defined. There are special quality-related regulations exist in the following states: Bremen, Mecklenburg West Pomerania, Lower Saxony, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland, Schleswig-Holstein and Thuringia.	(-/+)
	EL	X	X	X	X	O	O	(1) a new initiative called 'Π ³ framework' (National Quality Assurance Framework for Lifelong Learning) is proposed. The Π ³ framework recommends the incorporation of quality system in the LLL, including quality indicators and quality principles	(-/+)
	HR	X	X	X	O	O	O	(1) Adult Education Act in 2007 set standards for professional monitoring and setting standards for adult education institutions regarding the	(-)

							form, content and implementation of formal adult education programmes, necessary qualifications for teaching staff in formal adult education, necessary conditions regarding premises and other material conditions.	
	HU	X	X	X	X	X	(1) Act on Adult Education (CI/2001), modified in 2004, which regulates non-formal adult education and training. According to the law, there is a national system of accreditation of adult education and training, currently under legal reconstruction as part of the act on adult education and training.	(+)
	IT	X	X	X	O	O	(1) Various providers of non-formal adult learning, such as UPTER (Folk university Rome), have developed an own self-evaluation system.	(-)
	MT	X	X	X	O	O	A small number of non-governmental AL providers are subsidised by DLL and, therefore, come under DLL QA measures.	(-/ +)
	RO	X	X	X	X	O	Not available	(-)
	MT	X	X	X	O	X	A small number of non-governmental AL providers are subsidised by DLL and, therefore, come under DLL QA measures.	(-/ +)
	SK	X	X	X	O	O	Not available	(-)
	TK	X	O	X	O	O	There is no quality framework (legislation / accreditation for formal adult education / second chance, and for the non formal part of AL)	(-)

When looking at the quality approaches identified in table 2 above, we see that quality systems are well covered in formal HE, VET and general education in all countries. With regard the non-formal adult learning sector there is more diversification. We can identify three groups of countries on the basis of the quality frameworks in formal and non-formal adult education:

- (1) Countries that have elaborated quality systems in place on macro level for adult learning, formal as well non-formal learning often determined in a specific strand (such as **AT, BE, CH, DK, EE, FI, HU, IE, LU, LV, NO, SE**). Most of these countries are also the better performing countries in terms of participation in adult learning and have a higher educational attainment. Exception to this rule are BE, HU, and IE.
- (2) Countries that have some fragmented quality systems on macro level for non-formal adult learning, while having quality systems in place for formal adult learning (such as **DE, EL, ES, CZ, IS, MT, NL, PL, PT, SI, UK**)
- (3) Countries with no or limited quality systems in place on macro level for non-formal learning, while having quality systems in place for formal adult learning (such as **BG, CY, FR, HR, IT, LT, RO, SK, TK**). Overall these countries are general lacking quality systems for the non-formal part of adult learning. These countries are at the same time also the countries that have a relatively low performance on the ET2020 benchmarks.

This information gives an indication that countries having well developed quality systems in place, most of the time also score higher on the ET2020 benchmarks. Although it goes too far to speak about a positive correlation, since participation in lifelong learning is also determined by other factors such as availability of financing, adult learning provision, and the existence of a learning culture, it is safe to say that in well developed adult learning systems, that score high on the E&T2020 benchmarks, more often quality systems are in place.

Each sub domain will be further discussed in the sub sections below, without attempting to describe each system identified in too much detail (such as procedures, responsible bodies, criteria, indicators, and principles in place). This will be done in the remaining chapters discussing more in-depth the interesting systems found across Europe.

3.2.1 Quality systems in formal adult education

Although different definitions exist for the concept of formal learning, this study considers formal adult learning as structured activities leading to diplomas and certificates equivalent to those which may be obtained in the school, VET, or higher education systems. Although these learning activities are the central focus of this section, it is important to recognise that the term ‘formal adult education’ can include a wider range of learning activities provided by public as well as private providers, but can both be publicly as privately financed.

In all countries studied, the public provision of adult learning is for a large part integrated within the public system of initial education that is opening up for adult learners. In these cases – including basic, secondary, and tertiary education – the same quality approaches and standards are implemented as for initial education. The general principles of quality standards and control for providers (including teaching staff) and provision are set out in the education law and field laws for each type of education, having the same standards for accreditation, self-evaluation, and external evaluation. Other countries have education and training provision for adults that parallels the structure of the public system, such as private training institutions providing formal qualifications. The general rule is that in these countries the same regulatory framework applies to these adult learning providers as for public institutions providing primary, secondary and higher education and vocational training, when they issue the same types of state-regulated qualifications. Since most countries have segmented policies for quality assurance in formal education, each sub-sector is discussed separately below.

- In all countries studied, a legal framework and accreditation system is in place for **higher education institutions** offering programmes leading to a formal qualification. Since HE providers are in general autonomous in their quality policies, specific characteristics of quality policies at providers’ level are still quite diverse and therefore also the specific attention paid to adult learning. The level of autonomy of institutions is often higher in the Anglo-Saxon countries in comparison with the more centralised European and Nordic countries. Many other examples of differences between the countries could be provided from the countries studied. However, despite the dif-

ferences, countries share commonalities in their quality assurance framework for HE provision, most of the time strongly influenced by the European Standard and Guidelines for quality in HE¹, having specific legislation in place, setting up of quality bodies, accreditation procedures for providers and / or programmes, obligations with regard to setting up quality plans, self-evaluation, and external evaluation. In all countries, quality assurance organisations are in place. Nevertheless, what is striking is that no specific conditional requirements are formulated for the provision of adult learning in the assessment frameworks for the higher education accreditation system. Hence, it is up to the institutions or departments themselves to make specific reference to adult learning in their quality plans.²

- Quality systems for **(C)VET provision**, leading to a formal qualification, are in all countries subject to supervision and accreditation, whether it is provided by public or private providers. Nevertheless, just like the situation of higher education, but also second chance education (described hereafter), often no specific reference is made to adult learning provision. For instance in Spain, the rules concerning the general organisation of vocational training indicate that vocational training for adults (including CVET) must have the same characteristics and follow similar guidelines as mainstream vocational training. Another example of such an integrated framework can be found in Lithuania, where the law shapes provision for quality assurance by setting the principles for VET quality assurance, and these principles also apply to VET provision for adults. In the Dutch Adult and Vocational Education Act adult learning is not addressed specifically, however the quality criteria are formulated in such a (flexible) way that providers can make reference to adult learners themselves. Nevertheless there are some clear examples of separate quality systems for formal VET. Iceland, serves as example that provides accreditation for adult education and training providers, as described in Adult Education Act of 2010. The accreditation is among else based on the existence of a quality control system focused on adult education. A further example is the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) in Ireland being the single national awarding body for the non-tertiary further education and training sector in Ireland³. In order to ensure confidence in its awards, FETAC established a comprehensive strategy to assure the quality of the programmes leading to its awards. Some countries also set standards for public employment services. In Germany, for example, by law, not only employment agencies, but also external certification bodies are responsible for quality control of measures and their providers. The details of the implementation are settled in an implementation regulation. In ad-

¹ ENQA (2009), Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, Helsinki: ENQA.

² Annex 2 includes a table with more details of quality systems and responsible bodies identified per country for the higher education sector.

³ Note: FETAC has recently merged into QQI

dition to this national regulation, individual states (Länder) also have agreed on quality regulations in their range of actions.¹

- In all countries, quality systems for formal **second chance education** are similar to those of formal secondary education, since most second chance provision is delivered by the same provider targeting adult learners as well. As a result, the legislative and policy framework and instruments like accreditation, external evaluation, and self-evaluation, are also applicable to this type of adult learning provision, and hardly any examples can be detected in which specific quality criteria are formulated for adult learning. A concrete example in this respect is the Netherlands in which for the examination of VAVO (second chance provision for adults) the same rules are applicable as for regular secondary education, which are provided in the Law on Secondary Education and the frameworks of the Inspectorate of Education. Here again, no specific reference is made to adult learners. An interesting case where specific requirements are set for secondary education providers offering adult learning is Austria. Institutions that want to take part in the “Initiative Erwachsenenbildung 2012 – 2014”, providing basic skills have to apply for an accreditation, which consists of several rounds of quality procedures including continuous external monitoring and evaluation. The objective of the initiative is to enable adults who lack basic skills or never graduated from a lower secondary school to continue and finish their education. Austrian institutions wishing to take part in the initiative have to apply for an accreditation and provide evidence on three quality criteria.

Overviewing the quality systems studied at national level, one can conclude that quality is generally assured in formal adult learning, although falling under different sector-based regimes. Despite these different regimes, they tend to share some basic quality instruments and quality philosophy, including a requirement for a quality system at providers' level, the application of self-evaluation, requirements regarding the transparency and openness of the systems and some form of external evaluation. Providers in most cases have freedom to decide and construct this quality system (ISO, EQM, EFQM, etc.), although examples can be found of specially developed quality seals / labels for adult learning such as eduQua (CH) and Greta Plus (FR). Similar quality philosophies can be found, such as the use of the concept of a quality circle (plan, do, check, and act) commonly used in different fields of education. Assessing the listed quality assurance systems for the formal adult education, the majority of them have no specific principles, criteria or indicators that refer to adult learning or adults. Hence, it is up to the institutions or departments themselves to make specific reference to adult learning in their quality plans.

¹ Annex 2 includes a table with more details of quality systems and responsible bodies identified per country for the VET sector.

3.2.2 Quality systems in non-formal adult learning

With reference to non-formal adult learning, i.e. learning not leading directly to a formal qualification (often related to acquiring basis skills, but including liberal adult education), it is common to find that no state-level quality policies or frameworks are in place and that more often than not, the quality framework depends on bottom-up initiatives by the sector or providers themselves. Quality assurance systems for this were however reported in AT, CH, DK, EE, FI, NO, CZ, DE, HU, LV, BE, IE, LV, mostly related to non-formal VET and basic skills education.

Without going into detail describing every system, some examples that represent this diversity are provided below.¹

- In HU and NO models were identified where non formal adult learning providers are accredited by government law. In **Hungary** there is a national system of accreditation of adult education and training, regulated by the Hungarian Act on Adult Education, with specific reference to among else andragogical requirements. Every institution / organisation providing non-formal adult learning, must register its activities in the local labour/ employment office administered by the County Government Office. In **Norway**, VOX accredits adult education associations and online schools under the new Act for adult education, introduced in 2010, to regulate organised learning activities outside the formal sector.
- In AT, CH, FR, NL, and IE **quality seals and labels were identified**, specifically developed for adult learning provision. This is the case in **Austria that requires a registration** to become one of the quality providers of adult learning (Ö-cert). Another example is provided by the EduQua label in **Switzerland** that constitutes the framework within which the quality of adult learning in Switzerland is assured. Some labels are developed by the government to stimulate quality provision, such as the French label, Greta-plus, that has been introduced by the **French government** with the goals to create uniformed standards for all educational institutions involved with professional education for adults. There are also examples of initiatives by sectors themselves to develop a quality seal, such as the Folk universities in the **Netherlands**, which developed a code of conduct/quality, seal for folk universities in 2007. Another example is the voluntary Aontas² / Women's Community Education Quality Assurance Framework in **Ireland** that was developed by Aontas, the National Adult Learning Association, in partnership with seven women's community education groups and networks throughout Ireland. What is common in all the labels is that these are voluntary labels

¹ Annex 2 includes a table with more details of quality systems and responsible bodies identified per country for the non-formal adult learning sector.

² AONTAS is the National Adult Learning Organisation. The name AONTAS is an acronym in the Irish language; Aos Oideachais Náisiúnta Trí Aontú Saorálach, meaning 'national adult education through voluntary unification'. The word AONTAS itself is also the Irish word for 'unity' or 'union', so the intention of the founders was that AONTAS would be identified by its inclusiveness (<http://www.aontas.com/about/whoweare.html>)

and do not provide legal rights, but have a strong marketing value or satisfy requirements for getting public funding.

- In SE and BE non formal adult learning providers **are inspected and reviewed (without accreditation)**. In **Sweden**, the Swedish National Council for Adult Education is responsible for the distribution of the state grants and for developing and monitoring the activities within the popular and liberal adult education. The state defines the purpose of governmental grants while objectives are set independently by the liberal education providers. The state exercises control by means of reviews, assessments and development efforts carried out by the national inspectorate agency. Another example is **Belgium (Flanders)**, where organisations that are subsidised under the decree on socio-cultural adult work are expected to take the principles of integrated quality assurance into consideration in the course of their activities and to ensure professionalisation and professionalism. The manner in which this is done forms part of the evaluation of their activities by the administration (by the Agency socio-cultural work for Youths and Adults). SoCiuS, the Support Centre for Non-formal Adult Education supports organisations in their quality assurance within the sector.
- In DK and SE **quality requirements are implicitly stated in regulating frameworks**. The **Danish** Act on peoples' enlightenment (folkeoplysning¹), including day folk high schools and the university extension. Although the section on university extension activities does not mention quality directly, it sets the rules, and defines the structures for the educational activities, together with a description of the conditions for receiving public support. Where public money is involved most of the time governments are still setting quality standards for quality, as in the case in **Sweden** where in all education, except for liberal adult education, as discussed above, goals/learning outcomes and regulations are defined by the state and fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Research.
- In LT quality requirements are closely linked to what has been requested in the formal domain of adult learning. More liberal requirements regarding to the provision of non-formal adult education have been set in the education law. Educational institutions are entitled to implement non-formal adult education programmes without obtaining a licence, but other legal persons and natural persons which are not registered in the Educational Institution Register, need a licence from the local municipalities according to the local regulation. Another exception to this rule is when providers wish to make use of tax incentives, such as in the case tax is only deductible for training when the training institute satisfies certain quality criteria.

¹ The term *folkeoplysning* is difficult to translate into English because no corresponding concept exists in English-speaking countries. The most frequently used translations are 'liberal adult education' or 'popular adult education'

Apart from the initiatives described above which provide a snapshot of national practices, there is still a broad range of provision of non-formal adult learning that is not covered by any quality system. This mostly concerns for adult learning provision which does not receive public funding and does *not* lead to an accredited / state-regulated qualification. This is the domain of NGOs and the private sector and the needs of employers and individual learners. In these cases, quality approaches are most of the time developed to ensure that learning provision meets the needs of the learner, for purposes of transparency, to ensure consumer protection, and also as marketing tool. This often involves individual providers applying some form of quality assurance model like, ISO, EQM, TQM, and EFQM. With regard to privately- funded adult education, there are certain base-line regulations, such as **consumer protection schemes**. Consumer satisfaction is an important driver for quality assurance in this sub-domain, since the laws of the market mean that providers are directly punished when clients are dissatisfied with the learning provision (bad publicity, complaints etc.).

3.3 Recent policy developments addressing quality in adult learning

In most countries, quality is a relatively new issue in education that did not appear on the political agenda until the late 1980s. At that time, quality policies were often related to formal initial education. During the last decade, quality policies are also entering the field of adult learning. Especially in the new Member States quality policies are emerging, often as a consequence of the implementation of European instruments like European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and EQAVET, or financial programmes as European Social Fund (ESF) and the lifelong learning programme (LLP).

In the last few years, many countries produced white papers, communications, policy proposal and more often in the context of the development of lifelong learning strategies in which they emphasise the importance of quality assurance (such as AT, CY, CZ, EE, IS, LV, SK, FI, EL, IT, UK, ES, LT, SI, CH, LU)¹. These generally include an update or revision of adult education, and addressing quality issues more dominant in the regulation, or strategic papers addressing the important of further developing quality assurance systems including accreditation, and self and external evaluation.

Other countries are still in the phase of developing their lifelong learning strategies such as Malta. A top-down approach to the development of such a strategy in Malta was at-

¹ like AT adopting a common LLL:202; CY adopting national reform programme; CZ having the 2007 strategy for lifelong learning; Estonia having the lifelong learning strategies for 2007-2013 and the development plan for adult education 2009-2013; LV with Guidelines for lifelong learning policy for 2007- 2013" and relevant implementation programmes; SK having the lifelong learning strategy 2011; FI with the Quality Management Recommendation for Vocational Education and Training; EL with the national strategy for Lifelong Learning (LLL). A new initiative called 'Π³ framework' (National Quality Assurance Framework for Lifelong Learning); IT with the National Plan for Quality Assurance of VET of 2012, UK (Wales) with the 2008 document called Skills that work for Wales signalled the introduction of a new Quality and effectiveness framework for the skills sector in 2009; ES published a proposal to renew the system of adult learning in 2011 (El Aprendizaje Permanente en Espana); LT with their National Education Strategy 2003-2012; SI that included some concrete recommendations in their 2009-2011 White paper on the further development of quality procedures in the field of adult learning, updating the Adult Education Act that was established in 1991; In CH people voted in 2006 to include a "National Law of Adult Education" to their Constitution; In LU the government is in the process of designing a coherent quality assurance system and is currently in the process of establishing a quality label for CVET in consultation with the social partners (based on the 2008 law).

tempted but did not work. A proper consultation process on the lifelong learning strategy is required. A Ministerial Steering Group is currently working on developing a strategy. A Green Paper on lifelong learning has already been published. It is considered 'early days to get co-ordination (on quality assurance) at a national level' in Malta.

3.4 Conclusions

As a review of this chapter, the following conclusions can be drawn.

- First of all, many countries still report low participation figures and are not achieving the ET2020 target yet. Many countries still need to open up their educational systems to adult learning, providing access and flexible provision.
- In reviewing the quality assurance systems in place, this study identified three groups of countries: (1) a group have elaborated quality systems in place on macro level for adult learning, (2) a group of countries that have some fragmented quality systems for non-formal adult learning on macro level; and (3) a group of countries with no or limited quality systems in place for non-formal learning on macro level.
- Nevertheless, overarching quality system crossing different sub-sectors are hardly evident. Some concrete examples are Ö-Cert and EduQua, having labels that could be used in all sub-domains of adult learning.
- With regard to system level quality assurance, the differences between HE, VET and non- vocational adult learning are less related to the fact that the provision is intended for adults, but more to the fact that the HE and VET provide state-regulated qualifications. The non-formal sectors are less regulated through the government and more often grass-root; bottom-up approaches are applied to work on quality assurance (such as codes of conducts and development of sectoral quality labels).
- A high number of countries are currently developing or revising their legislative framework for adult learning and the general trend is that they are putting more emphasis on quality assurance mechanisms.

4 Quality assurance systems: processes, mechanisms and bodies responsible

This chapter provides an analysis of the processes and mechanisms in quality assurance systems accompanied by an analysis of the bodies responsible for supervising, managing, implementing and supporting these processes and mechanisms at national / regional level (including systems and bodies responsible for the accreditation of providers) in order to support quality measures at provider level. Hence, the focus is on quality assurance systems at system level in order to accredit or monitor the quality of providers.

In Section 4.1 an introduction will be provided of **the empirical information on procedures and mechanisms** applied in quality assurance systems. Section 4.2 will continue with presenting the **focus of the quality assurance systems. The approach of quality assurance systems: processes and mechanisms** will be discussed in Section 4.3 and after this; Section 4.4 is devoted to a **discussion on bodies responsible**. Section 4.5 goes into the question of **costs involved** and finally, Section 4.6 provides the **conclusions** of this chapter.

4.1 Introduction empirical information on procedures and mechanisms in quality assurance systems

The mapping of quality assurance policies in chapter 3 revealed a wide diversity of accreditation systems for providers focussing on VET, HE, general education, and non-formal adult learning. This chapter will focus primarily on quality assurance in non-formal adult learning, but it will also take into account quality assurance in other educational sectors as well when they explicitly refer to adult learning. The selection of accreditation systems is enriched with quality assurance systems which are not considered as accreditation systems, such as quality labels and quality seals. As a broad term to cover accreditation and quality labels, the term 'quality assurance systems' is used, these systems share the following common characteristics:

- The quality assurance systems are macro level systems , i.e. the procedures and regulations apply to a group of adult learning providers (cross-provider instruments);
- The quality assurance system includes a clearly stated set of minimum quality requirements for providers;
- The system includes specific procedures for being validated. The quality assurance systems include an external assessment, either on-site, or other;
- The holders of the certificate/quality label/accreditation obtain specific rights that others do not have (i.e. eligible to funding, carrying a logo, being registered etc.)

On the basis of these demarcation rules, quality assurance systems were selected to be included in the analysis. The quality assurance systems include:

- Inspectorates/ accreditation systems (UK, MT, IE, EL, NL);
- Quality labels/seals (AT, CH, DE, LU, NL, FR, SI).

Quality prizes are not included in this analysis as these quality assurance systems do not strictly comply with the demarcation rules as set out above. These quality improvement instruments do not depart from a set of minimum quality criteria, but assess which provider is the best one.¹

The following quality assurance systems will be analysed in this chapter. For each quality assurance system, a short description is provided, together with a description of the scope of the system and what kind of quality assurance system it is (inspectorate, accreditation, quality label).

Table 2: Introduction quality assurance systems

Name and short description ²
Austria: Ö-CERT * Description: Ö-CERT (at-cert) is an overall framework of quality ("umbrella label"). Ö-CERT is an instrument for transparency of the use of QMS (quality management systems) and serves at the same time as a quality standard for granting funds and awards; Furthermore, Ö-CERT constitutes an instrument of professionalisation. Scope: Ö-Cert is attuned to adult education providers and is developed and recognized nationwide in Austria. Type: Quality label
Switzerland: eduQua * Description: eduQua is the first and only Swiss quality label geared towards adult continuing education. Scope: The eduQua certification is open to those institutions active in continuing adult education, including those involved in the "re-education" of the unemployed, the so-called labour market relations. eduQua is also intended for state subsidized continuing education institutions (public and private providers), labour market relations providers; providers of modules; and any institution offering continuing education that would like to be recognised as a quality institution. Type: Quality label
Germany: Quality association CET Hamburg * Description: Continuing education and training establishments are obliged to meet quality standards through their membership in the association and receive a quality seal after the examination of an evaluation team.

¹ There is clearly a diversity in approaches of quality prizes and awards. There are approaches that focus on organisational quality from a top-down perspective such as in Sweden and Finland. For instance, in Sweden, the Quality Prize targets all kinds of Swedish schools including the municipal adult education. The Prize can function as a motivation and inspiration in the work on quality in all schools including adult education. In Finland, there is a quality prize specifically for civic institutes (SE: kvalitetspriser för medborgarinstitut). The purpose of the Quality price is to support and inspire the "medborgarinstitut" to further development of their activities and their quality. On the other hand, there are consumer-driven approaches which focus on the educational offer. This is the case in the German example of the quality assessments of Stiftung Warentest.

² Of the quality assurance systems with an asterix (*), case study descriptions are included in the annex of the report. In addition to the mentioned quality assurance systems, the study also drafting case study reports on other interesting practices which are not further discussed in this report as the focus is more on quality assurance systems (i.e. model for teacher training; organisational reforms in guidance).

Name and short description ²
Scope: The model is practiced as an intra-industrial mutual control device for the promotion of quality assurance as well as participant and consumer protection within the Hamburg region. Type: Quality label
Greece: Π^3 framework (National Quality Assurance Framework for Lifelong Learning) * Description: Π^3 sets a framework of priorities and principles on quality assurance in non-formal lifelong learning. It further provides to all relevant structures a tool for organising and delivering the evaluation of learning outcomes for those participating in any of the programmes provided. Scope: the Π^3 framework of priorities and principles on quality assurance applies to non-formal lifelong learning. This covers all forms of educational and learning provision for people over 16 years old and includes initial VET, all apprenticeship schemes, continuing VET, second chance education and all liberal and/or popular adult education programmes. Type: Accreditation/monitoring system
France: Label Greta-Plus * Description: The Greta-Plus label is a tool to boost the quality of the continuing vocational education and training provided in the <i>Gretas (groups of adult learning providers)</i>. It allows the state to promote a coherent set of quality standards in this sector, without having to interfere too much in the <i>Gretas</i> own policies. Scope: The quality label Greta-plus is designed at the national level and implemented at the provider level. The label can only be acquired by a <i>Greta</i> or part of a <i>Greta</i>, noting that <i>Greta</i> are structures that group together local public educational establishments such as the <i>lycées and colleges</i>. Type: Quality label
Ireland: Quality Assurance System for further education and training (QQI, former FETAC¹) * Description: The system involves the coordinated application of three separate functions: agreement of a quality assurance (QA) system with a provider of programmes leading to a FETAC award; validation of programmes submitted by a provider; and monitoring and evaluation of a provider's learning programmes and quality assurance system. Scope: The FETAC quality system concerns non-tertiary further education and training provision in Ireland. It focuses on programmes leading to a qualification included in the National Framework of Qualifications. Type: Accreditation
Luxembourg: Label de Qualité Description: The label can be obtained voluntarily by non-formal continuing education providers, but is coupled to state subsidies, which makes it attractive for municipalities and associations to obtain the label; hence it has a high degree of coverage. The label can also be used to attract new participants. Scope: The label relates purely to the non-formal sector and is used only by municipalities and non-profit associations. Type: Quality label
Malta: Quality Assurance Structures in the provision of basic literacy, numeracy and computer awareness*

1 On 6 November 2012, FETAC completed its amalgamation with HETAC, NQAI and IUQB and a new integrated agency, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), was established. FETAC, HETAC and the NQAI are now dissolved. The new agency will continue to provide continuity of service as it evolves: <http://www.fetac.ie/fetac/aboutfetac/aboutfetac.htm>. In this report we continue to use the name of FETAC to point to the quality assurance system for further education in Ireland as the underlying case study was conducted before the amalgamation.

Name and short description ²
Description: The Directorate for Lifelong Learning (DLLL) quality assurance framework for evening courses covers hiring staff and the provision of ongoing CPD; curriculum / materials development; learner assessment; and monitoring and evaluation. Scope: the quality assurance requirements concern all adult education courses leading to a qualification on the MQF (Maltese Qualifications Framework) awarded by the Malta Qualifications Council (MQC). Type: Accreditation
The Netherlands: NRTO Code of Conduct
Description: NRTO members, the representative organisation of private training institutes, sign the Code of Conduct for Training and Education and are also obliged to use the Terms and Conditions as drawn up by the NRTO and the consumer organisation, “Consumentenbond”. Scope: All privately funded provision. All types of adult learning can be included Type: Quality label
The Netherlands: Folk universities quality seal
Description: The non-formal, non-vocational sector (folk universities) has developed a quality seal for Folk universities maintaining certain quality procedures. Scope: non-formal adult learning Type: Quality label
The Netherlands: Quality code APL¹ *
Description: The Quality code APL is a framework for accreditation and standardisation for APL procedures in the Netherlands. The Quality Code APL is focused on the quality of APL provision, providing guidance and an experience certificate to learner that could be used in working life and learning. Scope: The quality code concerns the quality of providers offering APL trajectories. Type: Accreditation
Slovenia: Quality label Offering Quality Education for Adults – OQEA /Green quality logo *
Description: The OQEA (Offering Quality Education to Adults) and related Green Quality Logo, is a continuous improvement model for providers focussing on self-evaluation, assessment, and guidance. The logo indicates that the provider complies with the improvement model. Scope: The OQEA model has been designed and prepared to be used in different adult education organisations, like adult education centres, private education and voluntary organisations, secondary and post-secondary education organisations, VET institutions, etc. It covers around one-third of publicly accredited programmes of adult education. Type: Quality label
United Kingdom: ESTYN Inspection of Adult Community Learning (ACL) in Wales *
Description: The overall objective is to ensure the ongoing quality of ACL in Wales through inspection of providers on a cyclical basis. Scope: Adult Community Learning (ACL) is defined as: flexible part-time and full-time formal and non-formal/non-accredited learning opportunities for adults, delivered at a range of times in community venues to meet local needs. ACL caters mainly for adults aged 19+. Type: Inspectorate

¹ In Portugal a similar quality charter for APL is developed. The Quality Charter of the New Opportunities Centres (NOCs) is designed to frame the quality approaches of E&T providers within the New Opportunities Initiative. The charter is organized under the following headings: mission, guiding principles, requirements and the dimensions of the development processes including a set of reference indicators and benchmarks (Omes, Maria do Carmo; Simões, Francisca (2007), Carta de Qualidade dos Centros Novas Oportunidades).

4.2 Focus of the quality assurance systems

This section discusses the objectives of quality assurance systems introduced and described in Section 4.1. The aims expressed by the quality assurance systems are largely uniform. They are established to increase **transparency** in the sector, **guarantee a minimum of quality** and to **protect consumers**. Often, the quality assurance system is linked to some kind of public interest; this can mean, for example, being eligible **for public funding** (local, regional, national or European), or being authorised to issue formal qualifications. Other objectives are developing quality culture in the sector; monitoring of the sector/inform policy makers; and reduced administrative burdens.

Table 3 provides a concise overview of the main objectives of establishing the quality assurance systems presented in Table 2 above, while some further examples are provided further below.

Table 3: Overview objectives of QA systems studied

Objectives of the QA systems/ reasons for establishment	AT	CH	DE	EL	FR	IE	LU	MT	NL1*	NL2**	NL3***	SI	UK
Transparency	X	X	X			X	X	X					X
Developing quality culture in the sector			X		X		X	X		X		X	
Monitoring of the sector/inform policy makers			X	X			X						X
Consumer protection						X			X	X		X	X
Accountability of public funding		X				X	X	X	X		X		X
Reduced administrative burdens	X	X											
Guaranteeing a minimum level of quality	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Assuring quality of formal qualifications						X		X					

*NRTO code of conduct/ ** Quality seal Dutch folk universities / *** Quality code APL

With regard to **transparency**, the Austrian Ö-Cert explicitly states that one of the objectives was to increase transparency for customers/learners and for public authorities. The quality certificate of Ö-Cert makes it possible for the customers and public authority to see who's a quality provider.

Developing a quality culture is regarded one of the most important objectives of the Slovenian OQAE initiative. The attached Green quality logo aims to motivate and reward educational organisations and adult learning experts who care about how they do their work and are prepared to constantly learn, test new findings, systematically assess the effects of their work and implement measures to develop quality. The Green quality logo signals that work of individual staff within the organisation is becoming valuable and is critically important to enable the services of the organisation to be delivered to adult learners. This system represents cooperation as the basis of quality development rather than competition. The objective of developing a quality culture is recognised in other initiatives as well, such as in the Dutch quality seal for folk universities and the Luxembourg's quality label for non-formal continuing education.

In Luxembourg, the quality label was established to ensure that a minimum set of quality standards is guaranteed in the difficult-to-regulate non-formal continuing education sector. It also allows the government to gather data and publish statistics on non-formal continuing education. Hence, the quality label supports the **monitoring of the sector**. Amongst the key objectives of the UK (Wales) Inspectorate for Adult Community Learning, it is stated that the inspectorate should inform the development of national policy by the Welsh Assembly Government; and to promote the **spread of best practice** in the delivery of ACL.

Consumer protection is an important objective of quality assurance systems. One of the four objectives of the quality assurance association in Hamburg (DE) is as follows: “to protect participants from inappropriate contract conditions”. The Dutch NRTTO code of conduct states that “the information which is provided to potential consumers orally or in writing will be truthful and accurate at all times.” The code primarily aims to protect the consumers since they should benefit from quality provision. Considerable emphasis is placed upon the complaints procedure which needs to be put in place.

In relation to **accountability of public funding**, the Swiss eduQua certification proves to be an advantage when dealing with the authorities: in increasingly more cantons the certification is a requirement for public funding. The Swiss Conference of the Cantonal Educating Directors recommends that the cantons check “the quality of the providers in the education sector in all of Switzerland based on the same criteria and make national subsidies dependent on a proof of quality (eduQua)”. The UK (Wales) Inspectorate is by law required to report on whether the financial resources made available to those providing education and training are managed efficiently and used to provide value for money. In the Netherlands, in order to be eligible for VAT reduction in providing education to adults, the Dutch private providers need to be registered in the CRKBO-register.¹ The principles and requirements are in line with the code of conduct developed by NRTTO. Therefore, complying with the code of conduct of the NRTTO enables providers to make use of the rules on VAT reduction.

Both the Austrian Ö-Cert and the Swiss EduQua quality assurance systems indicate that the certificate **reduces administrative burdens**. Previously, before these certificates were established, there was a multitude of quality labels, systems and seals. Each region had its own label or requirements and in addition private quality labels were also used. This made it difficult for Austrian and Swiss governments to assess the quality of the providers when they applied for public funding. The establishment of a single quality label therefore, creates uniformity, both in quality assurance, as in managing the sector.

Guaranteeing a minimum level of quality is the purpose of many (all the selected) quality assurance systems, with the exception of the Greek example. An illustrative example of how this is the UK (Wales) inspectorate on Adult Community Learning (ACL). The ESTYN inspectorate aims at maintaining and improving the quality of ACL, through na-

¹ Central Register for Short Vocational Education: Centraal Register Kort Beroepsonderwijs (CRKBO): <http://www.crkbo.nl/Default.aspx>

tional, sectoral, provider and learning on-site level inspections. Others indicate that providers need to comply with basic quality principles

In relation to assuring the **quality of formal qualifications**, the Irish FETAC quality assurance system is a good example. In order to ensure confidence in its awards (ranging from level 1 to 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications), the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) has established a comprehensive strategy to assure the quality of the programmes leading to its awards. It assessed the quality and consistency of the awards from setting to setting, course to course, learner to learner, level to level and year to year. Malta also provides a good example in this regard since the quality assurance requirements are focused on adult education courses leading to a qualification on the MQF (Maltese Qualifications Framework) awarded by the Malta Qualifications Council (MQC).

The **lack of clear objectives** in a quality assurance system can hamper its implementation as is illustrated by the French Greta-Plus label. Even though the label is not a prerequisite for carrying out their functions, GREtas are encouraged by the central government to apply for this label as a means of global quality assurance.¹ In November 2012, only 37 GREtas out of 220 GREtas (spread out over 30 académies) had a Greta-plus label. In terms of direct labour market relevance, the Greta-plus label seems of limited value². If local businesses, the largest client of GREtas do not attach any value to this label, there seems little incentive for GRETA to pursue the label. It may even be considered a deliberate choice by the educational establishment not to request a Greta-plus label, since this may increase undesired involvement of the central government in this relatively decentralised category of the education system. Without the quality-label, local business may be better able to influence the education at the group of local educational establishments.

4.3 Approach of quality assurance systems: processes and mechanisms

Quality assurance systems have different working procedures in place to assure the quality of the providers, however there are steps that are common in all, or most practices. Table 4 maps the use of different steps in the quality assurance systems studied, thereafter, examples of procedures are presented to illustrate how procedures have been operationalised in practice.

In general, a distinction is made between preparation, assessment, approval, and monitoring activities. Table 4 provides an overview of whether these steps are included in the procedures of the QA systems in question.

1 Circulaire 2009-107 du 17-8-2009 MEN – DGESCO A2-4

2 See CEDEFOP – Assuring quality in Vocational education and Training (http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/3061_en.pdf)

Table 4: Overview procedural steps in quality assurance systems studied

Procedural steps to get quality assured	AT	CH	DE ¹	EL ²	FR	IE	LU	MT	NL1*	NL2**	NL3***	SI	UK
A) Preparation by provider													
Filling in application form /submitting a request to be quality assured (e.g. conducting self-evaluation)	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	
B) Assessment (external evaluation) by responsible body													
Control self-report	X	X	X		X	X	X			X	X	X	X
On-site checks		X	X		X						X		
Expert involvement	X		X		X								
Inspection					X								X
Process of programme validation					X	X		X					
C) Approval by responsible body													
Registration as quality provider	X	X	X			X	X	X		X	X	X	
Judgment/recommendations					X			X			X		X
Validation of programmes						X		X					
D) Monitoring/follow-up by responsible body/provider													
Reporting / monitoring	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X			X	
Renewal of the procedure		X	X		X	X	X			X	X	X	
Follow-up activities					X	X							X

*NRTO code of conduct/ ** Quality seal Dutch folk universities/ *** Quality code APL

As can be seen, most quality assurance systems focus on all four broad categories of procedural steps (preparation, assessment, approval and monitoring/follow-up). Exceptions to this are the Greek monitoring system and the Dutch NRTO code of conduct. Both systems are focused primarily on monitoring the sector and the quality developments taking place in the sector. Furthermore, the UK (Wales) inspectorate lacks a clearly defined preparation phase: the inspection is mandatory and hence, there is no application process in place.

With regard to procedures, the situation is also different in Malta, where the focus of the quality assurance system is on the quality of courses linked to the lower levels of the National Qualifications Framework (MQF level 1). The Directorate for Lifelong Learning (DLLL) is the responsible agency to guarantee the quality. In ensuring that the learning outcomes of the courses are at the standards required, the DLLL focuses on examining the course descriptions and learning outcomes; periodically conducts visits by subject coordinators and invest in the continuous professional development of staff. Hence, the Maltese quality assurance system, despite involving accreditation and validation, fo-

¹ Hamburg region

² The Greek monitoring system is not yet implemented and therefore is it not possible to report on the procedures. The system will receive more attention in Chapter 7 on indicators.

cuses more on programme-level accreditation and quality of staff and it therefore, follows different procedures to the other initiatives studied.

Here below, illustrations of the different procedural steps are provided from the QA systems studied.

A) Preparation by the provider

Providers need to **prepare** their application; this can be via filling in an application form, conducting self-evaluations, self-reports. This is the case in most systems studied, however, the way the preparation is organised, differs. For instance in Hamburg, the starting point of the application for membership is the obligation to adhere to the 37 quality standards by the applying establishment. The providers need to conduct a self-report on the items included as quality standards. In Austria, for obtaining the Ö-Cert, the provider has to fulfil basic requirements. The criteria to be accepted as a provider of adult education (definition of adult education) include basic requirements in general; concerning the organisation of the provider; concerning the offers of the provider; concerning principles of ethics and democracy, and finally; concerning quality assurance.

In Ireland, the FETAC quality system (now taken over by QQI) involved FETAC reaching agreement with a provider on the basis of policies and procedures in relation to nine core areas of quality as follows: communications; equality; staff recruitment and development; access, transfer and progression; programme development, delivery and review; fair and consistent assessment of learner; protection for learners; sub-contracting / procuring programme delivery. Self-evaluation is a critical element of a provider's quality assurance processes. All programmes delivered by a provider must be self-evaluated within a five-year period. The provider appoints an internal person to co-ordinate / conduct the self-evaluation. Feedback from key stakeholders is a required element of self-evaluation. A person independent of the provider and programme delivery and capable of comparing the quality of programmes with that of similar programmes elsewhere is appointed by the provider to the role of external evaluator. The products of the self-evaluation process must include a report and a programme improvement plan.

To obtain the eduQua certificate, adult learning providers need to put together a dossier following the guidelines expressed in a manual. This dossier must be submitted to the certifying body. The manual distinguishes four preparatory steps: Registration at the certifying body; selection of an offer / a programme; compiling the dossier; and handing in the dossier. The Dutch Council for Training and Education (NRTO: Nederlandse Raad voor Training en Opleiding) developed a Code of Conduct for the members (i.e. the providers). Any agency aspiring to become a member of the NRTO needs to sign the code of conduct. The NRTO application procedure is not intensive. However, other examples show a different picture. For instance applying for the French Greta-Plus label is considered as an intensive process. Before applying for a Greta-plus label at the Ministry of Education, the group of educational institutions must show that it has worked in line with the quality requirements of the norm associated with Greta-plus for at least one year. To do so, it must be internally audited by the Académie, the local education

council, before submitting its request with the Ministry. Based on this internal audit, the chairman of the Académie (*le recteur*) has to approve the GRETA decision to pursue the Greta-Plus label. Secondly, the GRETA is required to prove to be financially capable of ensuring quality provision for its clients. These requirements must be met by all educational establishments that form the GRETA, in order to apply for Greta-plus.

The application procedure for obtaining the Slovenian Green Quality logo is somewhat different to the other quality assurance systems studied. First of all, all organisations participating in the OQAE project receive the right to carry the logo. If they would like to continue carrying this logo after the quality project is completed, they need to file an application in which the organisation indicates that it complies to a set of five criteria (namely, uses the quality indicators developed; has a quality plan; a quality team; indicates annual and medium-term plans related to quality; and systematically conducts activities to improve the quality).

In general, the preparation phase includes proving by the provider that the institute complies with some set of minimum quality standards.

B) Assessment by the responsible body

In all the practices studied, the **assessment** is carried out by the responsible bodies. This can be done by different methods: validating the application form, on-site visits, expert consultation, etc.

In Austria, the Ö-cert can be characterised as a light-touch assessment, as the assessment relies for the larger part on confirmation of existing quality certificates. The assessment takes place in two steps; first, the provider must have one of the valid Quality Management Systems or Quality Assurance Procedures – according to the Ö-Cert-List, which itemize nine accepted Quality Management Systems and Quality Assurance Procedures. The most important selection criterion is the existence of external audits. Secondly, the Ö-CERT agency and the group of experts control the application by means of going through a checklist.

In the Hamburg region in Germany, the assessment takes place in three steps: firstly, the management of the association carries out a first formal examination (in some cases, in consultation with the responsible validation board or even external expertise), that, for example, ensures if the applicant even represents an establishment for continuing education and training, if the establishment is based within the state of Hamburg or if a continuous offer can be assumed. Secondly, after the formal examination, the management may, if necessary, consult the applying establishment on quality assurance issues. The applicant receives the checklist and is requested to send it back signed. Thirdly, the management carries out a first assessment on the basis of the filled-out check list and visits of the establishment. The visit is thereby undertaken by the managing director and an auditor of the responsible committee. In this context, discrepancies in answers of the checklist and further remaining questions are clarified by inspection (e.g. of event lists, training contracts), by plausible explanation or concrete viewing (e.g.

by visitation). The management of the association takes minutes of the visit and prepares a recommendation for the validation committee and/or the managing director.

F: In France, when all the application criteria for the Greta-plus label are met, a team of auditors will be appointed by the Committee for labelling (*Comité National de Labellisation*). This team will review the aforementioned criteria by documents that the GRETA sends at its request. The auditors will also organise site-visits to check the accuracy of the previous audits and documents. After this visit, the audit team draws up a report for the Committee for labelling. In this report an action plan has to be included, so that the Committee and the GRETA are both informed how to further improve or maintain quality standards. The Committee on Labelling provides a recommendation for the Ministry on the basis of these audit results. After completion of the report, the Committee will recommend the Minister of Education whether or not to grant the label.

In Ireland, the focus of the assessment was on both provider management and processes, and the programmes to be delivered. The provider needed to meet the minimum requirements regarding the policies and procedures in relation to the nine core areas of quality described above in order to be registered as a provider of programmes leading to a FETAC (now QQI) award. In addition, to be able to deliver a programme leading to a FETAC award the programme needed to be validated by FETAC to ensure that it could provide a learner with the opportunity to achieve a specified award.

According to the UK (Wales) ESTYN inspectorate framework, the inspectors need to report on a number of key questions (criteria), such as: How good are outcomes? How good is provision? How good are leadership and management? On the basis of a detailed checklist and accompanying instructions, the inspector will provide a judgment on the quality of the Adult Community Learning provider and he/she will provide recommendations for improvement. The ESTYN framework does not involve a preparatory part, but the inspectors base their assessment on their own analysis.

Each Dutch NRTO member is assessed by the NRTO Committee on Quality. An evaluation is made of the degree of compliance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct. The Committee on Quality also investigates any indications of poor quality which they are aware of. The NRTO carries out examinations reactively, which means that it will examine a case on request by a third party; such a request may also be a complaint or observation which calls into question the quality of a NRTO member. The working method may differ depending on whether it is a complaint from a consumer, a NRTO colleague or a third party. The ultimate sanction for a member remaining in default is expulsion from the NRTO including publication of this expulsion on the website.

The eduQua assessment procedure includes an on-site audit, following an evaluation of the dossier.

C) Approval by the responsible body

After successfully completing the assessment, the responsible bodies **approve the application**. This gives the right to provide adult learning services and make use of the quality label.

In the German Hamburg region this means that on the basis of the assessment, the responsible validation committee votes on the application. It discusses the application, postpones the application, in some cases, involves external experts or directly informs the Executive Board of its vote. In principle, the Executive Board only has four possibilities: 1) unconditional admission; 2) admission under certain conditions; 3) admission only after fulfilment of certain conditions and; 4) rejection. In the case of an admission the establishment may use the certification seal of the Weiterbildung Hamburg e.V. (e.g. for advertising purposes, in event announcements). In Austria, upon completing the assessment, the provider is registered as one of the Quality Providers of Adult Education in Austria and receives the Ö-Cert.

In Ireland, the programmes can be offered upon validation. The outcome can be deemed to be: a) effective; b) effective with minor areas for improvement; c) moderately effective with significant areas for improvement; d) not effective with essential remedial actions. In the case of d) certification is withdrawn until a satisfactory standard is reached through an action plan. The report on each provider is published. The agreement of a provider's quality assurance procedures will be reviewed within a maximum period of five years. The effectiveness of those procedures, as measured through self-evaluation and FETAC monitoring, will be examined during this review.

In the case of the UK (Wales) ESTYN inspectorate, the conclusion of the assessment is not so much that the provider is registered as a quality provider, but rather that a verdict is given on the provider's performance and recommendations may be provided which the ACL provider needs to take into account to improve the quality of the institution.

In the Swiss eduQua quality assurance system, the auditor will draw up a report on the basis of the assessment (on-site visit, examination of the dossier). The audit report describes the result of the certification procedure. It is based on the six eduQua-quality criteria and takes both the examined content of the institution and the chosen offers and programmes in consideration. The report covers two subject areas: firstly, the decision (unconditional certification; certification under certain conditions that are clearly stipulated; no certification due to major flaws that are clearly stipulated); secondly, remarks about the examined subjects and suggestions for improvement. In case the certification body decides not to hand out a certificate the institution can make an appeal. The instance of appeal can be found in the certificating body's regulation.

In France, the Committee for labelling draws up a report for the Ministry including its recommendation with regard to approving the provider. The Committee has four options: a) grant the label for 3 years; b) deny the label; c) demand additional information; and finally, d) demand another audit.

The Dutch APL providers with good evaluation reports are registered in the National Register for accredited APL procedures. These APL providers are called 'registered providers'.

To conclude, the assessment decisions of responsible bodies are more varied than a judgement of 'approved' or 'not approved'. Judgements of the performance of a provider frequently includes scales of merit and may include conditional approval and rec-

ommendations with a specific indication of the areas for improvement that it will need to be addressed in follow-up actions.

D) Monitoring/follow-up by the responsible body/ provider

In some of the quality assurance systems, **time-to-time monitoring** of the quality of the providers is included; or the accreditation is valid for a certain period of time. This monitoring can be via delivering yearly reports, filling in checklists, on-site visits, or renewal of the procedure. In Wales (UK), emphasis is given to follow-up activities. Depending on the balance of strengths and areas for development in a provider and its capacity to deliver improvements in standards and quality, there are various levels of follow-up activity, as follows:

- Post-16 link inspector monitoring visit where a small number of key questions or quality indicators are judged to be adequate, a post-16 link inspector will monitor these specific areas to ensure improvement is made.
- Estyn team monitoring visit - this type of follow-up happens when at least one of the overall judgements is adequate, but is not causing concern to the extent that a re-inspection is required.
- Re-inspection - normally, when at least one of the overall judgements for a provider is unsatisfactory, Estyn will carry out a re-inspection.
- A provider which is judged to have excellent practice in a particular area of work is invited to write a case study of sector-leading practice for publication on Estyn's website.

Providers provide feedback on their experience of the inspection by completing a post-inspection questionnaire, one part to be completed at the end of the inspection week and the second part to be completed when the report is published.

Concerning renewal procedures, usually the procedures have to be repeated after 3 to 5 years. In Hamburg, after three years the application for the certification seal needs to be renewed and an examination follows after the same procedure. In Ireland, the effectiveness of a provider's programmes and services is monitored and a 5-year review of a provider's quality assurance agreement and registration takes place. The eduQua (CH) certification process includes yearly intermediate audits and after three years a certification process ends automatically, therefore the institution must undergo a renewal every three years. When issued by the Minister of Education, the Greta-plus label is valid for three years. It is however required that the GRETA undertakes an internal audit report every year to monitor implementation of the quality objectives. The Dutch quality seal for folk universities is valid for four years. After this period, the procedure for acknowledgement initiates again. The NRTO carries out an annual survey of all members on the degree of compliance to varying aspects of the code. In Luxembourg, the approval is valid for two years. In France, as mentioned earlier, the label is granted for 3 years. Also for the Dutch Quality code for APL providers, the validation remains valid for 3 years.

In Ireland FETAC recognised providers' quality assurance as the main engine of quality improvement and monitored its effectiveness in maintaining and improving the quality of programmes. FETAC's monitoring policy aimed to ensure the credibility of FETAC awards, thereby ensuring the integrity of the awarding process. These processes will continue under the QQI.

4.4 Responsible bodies

The studied quality assurance systems are implemented by different types of responsible bodies. There are differences with regard to legal status (public/private); and focus (strict quality assurance, or other functions). The table below situates the responsible bodies encountered in the quality assurance system studied. After presenting the table, further in-depth information is provided on the responsible bodies.

Table 5: Mapping responsible bodies

		Legal status	
		Public body (publicly governed)	Private/sectoral body
Focus	Strictly QA	Ö-Cert office (AT); EduQua agency (CH); Greta-plus (Committee for labelling) (FR); ESTYN (UK (Wales))	-
	Other functions (e.g. advise, information, consultancy)	SIAE (SI); Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training (represented by the department of adult training; SFA) (LU); Directorate of Lifelong Learning (DLL), of the Ministry of Education and Employment (MT); Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (NL); QQI (former FETAC) (IE)	Quality association CET Hamburg (DE); NRTO (NL); BNVO (NL)

Public bodies strictly focused on quality assurance

The Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture developed the Ö-CERT - in cooperation with leading Austrian experts, representatives of the nine Austrian provinces and providers of Adult education). Ö-Cert is operated by the Ö-Cert office (Geschäftsstelle), which is a cooperation between the Federal Ministry and the nine provinces. The Ö-Cert office is responsible for all activities related to the certification.

A similar structure can be found in Switzerland, where the EduQua agency coordinates all quality assurance activities. The following organisations are members of eduQua's expert group and represent the Swiss stakeholders: Staatssekretariat für Wirtschaft (seco) / State Secretariat for Economic Affairs; Schweizerische Berufsbildungsämter-Konferenz (SBBK); Verband schweizerischer Arbeitsämter (VSAA); Schweizerische Konferenz der Kantonalen Erziehungsdirektoren; Schweizerischer Verband für Weiterbildung (SVEB) / Swiss Federation for Adult Learning.

In the UK (Wales), the responsible body for the Welsh framework is Estyn. Estyn is the office of Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales. Estyn is independent from, but funded by, the Welsh Assembly Government. The purpose of Estyn is to inspect quality and standards of education and training in Wales.

In France, the responsible body for awarding the Greta-plus label is the *Comité National de Labellisation*. This national committee consists of members appointed by the ministry of Education. The committee is chaired by the vice-director of vocational education at the Ministry of Education and consists of representatives of the ministry and several external members. This committee meets twice a year and has the authority to change the quality criteria required by a Greta-plus label.

Public bodies involved in other activities than quality assurance

The Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (Andragoški center Republike Slovenije) is the main national institution for research and development, quality and education, guidance and validation, and promotional and informative activities in the field of adult education. Within the OQAE project, the institute provides advice, organises workshops and further supports providers in improving their quality systems. Similar institutes can be found in other countries.

The Maltese Directorate of Lifelong Learning (DLL), of the Ministry of Education and Employment has a quality assurance role in relation to the adult learning courses it funds. Besides this role, the Directorate is in general responsible for the adult learning courses provided on the Islands.

With regard the Dutch Quality code for APL providers, from 2006, the APL providers had to apply for accreditation and were evaluated by Dutch review and assessment boards (Visiterende en Beoordelende Instanties), the VBIs. The standard used is the national quality code for APL. In early 2010 the Minister of Education took control of the execution of 'the Quality Code APL'. This followed a critical evaluation by the Inspectorate of Education of the quality of the accredited APL providers. In this evaluation the quality of the 113 accredited APL providers both on the levels of VET as well as of HE was regarded as insufficient. It is intended that during a period of three years the bottlenecks in the process should be overcome. It is expected that in the future this responsibility will be taken over by an intermediate organisation or a conglomerate of such organisations.

In Ireland, the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC)¹ was established in 2001 under the 1999 legislation. Its remit was to become the single national awarding body for the non-tertiary further education and training sector in Ireland. In addition to unifying the awarding function of the sector, this role involves the determination of standards, promotion of awards and monitoring the quality of programmes and assessment. FETAC made awards from Levels 1 – 6 on the National Framework of Qualifica-

¹ www.fetac.ie; On 6 November 2012, FETAC completed its amalgamation with HETAC, NQAI and IUQB and a new integrated agency, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), was established. FETAC, HETAC and the NQAI are now dissolved. The new agency will continue to provide continuity of service as it evolves: <http://www.fetac.ie/fetac/aboutfetac/aboutfetac.htm>

tions Ireland (NFQ) in a vast range of education and training fields covered in provision such as school education, basic skills education, second-chance education and training, adult education, community-based learning, VET, workplace learning and early-school leaver provision¹. By the end of 2011, FETAC had made awards to almost 1.2 million people aged 15+ on programmes (full- and part-time) offered by diverse providers ranging from individual commercial training providers and small community groups to large publicly-funded national organisations operating in a range of different contexts. In order to ensure confidence in its awards, FETAC had established a comprehensive strategy to assure the quality of the programmes leading to its awards with the ultimate aim of ensuring the integrity of the awards and of the overall National Framework of Qualifications. The functions of FETAC were taken over by Quality and Qualifications Ireland in late 2012.

Private bodies involved in other activities than quality assurance

Other organisational forms have been selected when the adult learning concerns provision not in receipt of public funds. The German Weiterbildung Hamburg association is an association which has close links with stakeholder organisations such as trade unions. The association conducts a number of other activities besides quality assurance, such as providing information on continuing education possibilities, consumer/participant protection and consultancy. The Dutch BNVO (Bond van Nederlandse Volksuniversiteiten/ Association of Dutch folk universities) is an association of non-profit folk universities. It facilitates the cooperation between approximately 85 folk universities in the Netherlands. The Dutch Council for Training and Education (NRTO: Nederlandse Raad voor Training en Opleiding) is the umbrella trade association of all private training and education agencies in The Netherlands. The NRTO promotes the interests of private providers of training and education. The NRTO stimulates accredited and recognized high-quality, flexible and diverse education and training courses based on equal and open competition with other providers.

Private bodies strictly focused on quality assurance

No private bodies have been found that are strictly focussed on quality assurance, except for the general organisational quality assurance institutes responsible for instance for ISO. As we saw, often these private bodies are involved in a number of other activities such as information provision, promotion of the sector, consultancy etc.

4.5 Costs for getting accredited/certified

For some of the quality systems, costs are calculated by the quality assured providers. This involves mostly the use of the quality assurance systems logo for marketing reasons. For instance, the total costs of the certification for the eduQua label are 2,400

¹ Agriculture, science, computing; arts, craft and media; business and administration; construction and built environment; core skill, language and general studies; education, health and welfare; engineering / manufacturing; services; tourism, hospitality and sport as categorised by ISCED and FETAC systems: see http://www.fetac.ie/fetac/documents/FETAC_Awards_Report_14_jun_12.pdf

Euro (3,050 CHF). Of this total price, 300 CHF (240 Euro) is used to finance the eduQua office. The fee for the Ö-Cert quality label is 100 Euro. Applying and receiving the Ö-Cert is free, however, using the certificate and the logo comes with the price of 100 Euro. Other quality assurance systems do not come with costs. For getting registered and accredited in the Irish FETAC system or going through the Welsh ESTYN inspection, no direct costs are involved although staff costs arise in relation to the implementation of quality measures in an institution. Complying with the code of conduct of the Dutch NRTTO does not cost money. However, to be member of the NRTTO, providers need to pay a contribution. This contribution is approximately a thousand Euro per million Euro turnover. The Slovenian case received some criticism that the process is quite burdensome and brings with it administrative costs.

No information was available on the administrative costs – in terms of human resources and other costs - of providers to apply and keep the accreditation or certification, and more specifically the cost of running quality procedures as such. During this study only some normative judgment were gathered that some system are resource intensive or not. The systems can be classified as being resource extensive and resource intensive for providers:¹

- Extensive systems are: Quality seal folk universities (NL); Quality label non-formal providers (LU); Private provider code of conduct, NRTTO (NL); Ö-Cert (AT); Hamburg quality label (DE); Quality code for APL providers (NL).
- Intensive systems are: ESTYN inspectorate (UK (Wales)); QQI (FETAC) accreditation system (IE); OQAE (SI); EduQua (CH); Greta-plus (FR); DLLL (MT).

The administrative burden sometimes hold back providers from applying for an accreditation or quality label, such as was explicitly mentioned by providers in the context of the quality label Greta-plus. Also the Dutch NRTTO was developing and promoting a specific ISO-certificate amongst its members (privately provided education and training). Due to a lack of interest of the members of the NRTTO to actually use the ISO certificate, this process has been put on-hold. The reasons for this was that the fear that the introduction of the ISO certificate would lead to a high administrative burden.

Cost of systems should also be seen in relation to the benefits. In theory, quality systems should lead to rationalising processes in the organisation, leading to quality improvement, better performance, and in the end increased learner satisfaction, higher success rate and better learning outcomes. During the case studies, limited evidence was provided by stakeholders about the benefits of quality assurance, mainly indicating that it helped to rationalise processes and stimulate debates on issues related to quality; to contribute to developing a more professional administration and education support structures; and to create new routines and systems for handling data and information on educational performance and quality. Limited evidence was provided on better performance, increasing learner satisfaction and better outcomes such as reducing drop out rate and increasing learning outcomes. This outcome is not surprising since it has

¹ Note: the Greek EL Π3 framework is not yet implemented

been argued that testing the effects of quality assurance instruments, is empirically difficult.¹

4.6 Conclusions

In this chapter we discussed the focus of the quality assurance systems; the approach of quality assurance systems: processes and mechanisms; the bodies responsible and finally the costs involved for getting quality assured. Based on this chapter the following conclusions can be drawn:

- The quality assurance systems focus on different objectives. The most important objectives of quality assurance systems were firstly, setting minimum quality requirements for providers; secondly, improving the transparency of the adult learning sector; and thirdly, assuring accountability of public funding.
- Furthermore, most of quality assurance systems studied include a sequence of procedural steps for being quality assured. These steps include application by the provider; assessment by the responsible body, validation by the responsible body, and finally monitoring, follow-up activities both by the provider and the responsible body. Most quality assurance systems include self-evaluation procedures at provider level.
- Moreover, it is clear that the responsible body can be a public, or a private organisation, solely focussed on quality assurance, or not. Most responsible bodies are public bodies (either involved solely in quality assurance or not). For some more sectoral initiatives, the responsible bodies are private organisations, also involved in other activities.
- Indirect costs, e.g. working on the application or self-evaluation, are more important than the direct costs for getting quality assured.

¹ Svorný, S. (2000), 'Licensing, Market Entry Regulation', in Bouckaert, B. and G. De Geest (eds), *Encyclopedia of Law and Economics, Volume III: The Regulation of Contracts*, Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, MA, USA: Edward Elgar, pp. 296-328.

5 Mapping and documentation of what constitutes quality criteria, descriptors and system level indicators

This chapter provides a mapping and documentation of what constitutes quality criteria / indicators, quality management approaches and effective techniques for monitoring / evaluation of quality in relation to adult learning. This Chapter starts with an introduction of **the empirical information on quality criteria used** in quality assurance systems (Section 5.1). After this, we will discuss the quality assurance systems thematically. Section 5.2 concerns **quality of the organisation**; Section 5.3 deals with **quality of didactics and the learning process**; Section 5.4 discusses **quality of staff**; and Section 5.5 is devoted to **measuring results**. After this, we take a short side-step to present an **example of a sector-level monitoring system** (Excursion) and hereafter, **principles underlying quality approaches** in adult learning are discussed (Section 5.6). This Chapter is complemented with Section 5.7; **conclusions**.

5.1 Introduction: empirical information on quality criteria used in quality assurance systems

To identify quality areas and indicators, we will take the quality assurance systems identified and discussed in Chapter 4 as point of departure. In addition, although such examples are scarce, an example is provided of system level indicators to monitor the adult learning sector as a whole.

The quality assurance systems included in the analysis differ with regard to the issues they focus upon. Some focus more on input-output issues for accountability purposes, while others try to get into the black-box and determine the quality of processes within providers. In this section, the issues, or quality areas the QA system focus upon are discussed and the focus of QA systems is further explored. We start by an overview of the themes that are covered by the quality assurance systems studied. After presenting the table, illustrative examples are presented.

In Table 6 four broad categories of quality areas are distinguished: firstly, 'organisational issues', focussing on quality assurance of the organisational aspects of providers. Secondly, 'didactics and the learning process', monitoring the way providers organise the delivery of adult learning. Thirdly, 'staff', dealing with setting requirements for employees of the adult learning providers. Fourthly, 'quality of results', identifying whether outcomes are measured.

Table 6: Overview quality areas covered by the quality assurance systems studied

Issues:	AT	CH	DE	EL	FR	IE	LU	MT	NL1*	NL2**	NL3***	SI	UK
Quality of the organisation													
Mission statement of provider	X	X	X									X	X
Organisational structure/management	X	X	X		X	X	X		X			X	X
Administration	X	X	X		X	X	X					X	
Finance	X	X	X		X	X	X					X	X
Establishment of a quality plan	X	X	X	X	X	X		X			X	X	X
Physical infrastructure/equipment (building, class-room, computers, etc.)	X	X	X	X	X				X	X			
Anticipation to new developments					X								
Quality of didactics and the learning process													
Communication (Internet, folders, PR)	X	X	X			X			X				
Education and training methods and didactics	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X
Learner rights and needs / complaints procedures	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X		X	X
Procedures assessing LO and civil effect of learning/quality of exams		X	X			X	X	X	X			X	X
Information and advice for learners/ guidance and counselling					X	X	X		X	X			X
Quality of staff													
Adult learning staff (competences, training, qualifications)	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X
Support/guidance for staff, volunteers						X		X	X	X			
Recruitment policies						X		X	X				
Quality of the results													
Measuring results of the adult learning offered/ Evaluation of education /training programme	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X
Measuring/monitoring quality developments	X	X	X	X	X	X		X				X	X

*NRTO code of conduct/ ** Quality seal Dutch folk universities /*** Quality code APL

This table and the division between quality areas may not always do justice to how providers' quality assurance systems themselves identify key quality areas and indicators. They sometimes use other terms, include other categories and have different content. For example, organisational issues may include HR and recruitment procedures, which in other cases are included under staff quality.

5.2 Quality of the organisation

Most quality assurance systems focus on the **organisational issues**. Is the mission of the institute well described? Is the organisation well-structured to work towards the stated mission? A striking example is found in the 'seven core elements of quality' set out in the Ö-Cert:

- Mission statement of the organisation/ guiding principles (description of criteria of the guiding principles and goals of the provider)
- Offer (programme) of the organisation (provider) (description of the target groups, needs and interests, general information and data of the target groups and educational sector, information management, diversity and gender issues)
- Management of the provider organisation (quality profile)
- Quality of staff (quality profile)
- Management of quality development and culture of feedback (error management), definition of quality
- Quality of the infrastructure (resources), best conditions for the learner (clients)
- Quality of public relations and feedback culture (outreach work)

The focus in these core elements is on organisational issues in quality assurance. This related to the fact that Ö-Cert is a meta-framework, leaving room for providers to use their own procedures to assure the quality of the provision.

The Swiss eduQwa quality label devotes one out of six quality criteria to organisational aspects: Awareness for quality development and quality assurance is at hand. In relation to this criterion, the following indicators are set: the use of a systematic tool to develop quality, with feedback to all involved parties; methodical, multiple internal and/or external evaluations about the functioning of the institution; the presence of a continuous process of evaluation of the further education activities, transparent structure and functions, regular events about didactical-methodical and/ adult educational themes among educators, cooperation with other educational institutions, the willingness to work together with qualified external professionals.

The UK (Wales) Estyn quality framework for inspection devotes one of the three parts of the inspection to leadership and management issues. The following quality indicators are defined in order to arrive at judgements of the quality of leadership and management:

Estyn quality indicators on leadership and management

Quality Indicator 3.1 Leadership

Aspect 3.1.1 strategic direction and the impact of leadership

Aspect 3.1.2 governors or other supervisory boards

Aspect 3.1.3 meeting national and local priorities

Quality Indicator 3.2 Improving quality

Aspect 3.2.1 self-evaluation, including listening to learners and others

Aspect 3.2.2 planning and securing improvement

Aspect 3.2.3 involvement in networks of professional practice

Quality Indicator 3.3 Partnership working

Aspect 3.3.1 strategic partnerships

Aspect 3.3.2 joint planning, resourcing and quality assurance

Quality Indicator 3.4 Resource management.

Aspect 3.4.1 management of staff and resources

The French Greta-plus quality label identifies the following quality criteria related to organisational issues:

- Equipment, support and tools: Every enrolled individual is provided with suitable materials and updated resources, and the GRETA also takes care of the comfort of the individual.
- Administrative and financial follow up, traceability: The administrative and financial tasks related to the educational program are taken care of in time and in a transparent way.
- Organisational management: The management is required to define and work on the policies of the organization, while also working on its implementation. Policies are subject to internal evaluation and are adjusted if necessary.
- Anticipation and innovation to new developments: The organisation ensures attention to social-economic developments and seeks to innovate, while cultivating its know-how.

In general, quality assurance systems demand that organisations are run professionally. Their requirements are in line with general organisational models and quality assurance principles, such as ISO; EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management) Excellence Model; Investors in People and other. Also, the distinction with providers in other educational sectors is not so large: VET and HE providers need to comply with similar requirements to be run professionally.

Particularly interesting is that almost all QA systems require the providers to have a quality plan or procedures in place to self-evaluate the quality of the provider

5.3 Quality of didactics and the learning process

The key issue in relation to the quality of didactics and the learning process is the way the educational offer is attuned to the needs and demands of adult learners. In most quality assurance systems studied, this dimension is addressed in some way, being more pronounced in some more than others. In the French Greta-plus quality label the emphasis is on the quality of the learning taking place. There is a genuine learner-centeredness in the quality label. This is expressed in the following quality criteria:

- Information / Advice to clients / beneficiaries: The GRETA has to offer its clients and beneficiaries individualised information and advice and facilitate access to information.
- Individualised planning according to clients' demands: a tailor-made response is given by the GRETA following a request, based on an analysis of the clients' demands. If necessary, the GRETA offers personalised services such as the validation of acquired experiences and the recognition of the most suitable certificates.
- Tailor-made services to individual clients: All services are written down in a contract, to be signed with each client. Once enrolled, a mentor will be assigned for the duration of the training. During the course the programme is adjusted as necessary in terms of methods, assistance, tools and work schedules. Everyone will receive an individual assessment.

The Quality seal used by the Dutch folk universities puts people, participants, teachers, staff and volunteers first. The educational offer should be of high quality, the resources, learning material and other facilities should be in place, but more importantly, the learning environment should be safe for learners, teachers, staff and volunteers.

The Swiss eduQua quality label devotes four out of six key criteria for quality to the educational provision of the institute and having the learner at the centre of the development and provision of courses:

- Criterion 1: Provision that satisfies the needs and the wishes of the customer and society
- Criterion 2: Lasting learning effect for the participants
- Criterion 3: A transparent representation of the provision and the pedagogical concept
- Criterion 4: A customer-oriented, economical, efficient and effective provision of services

In the Netherlands, the NRTO code of conduct puts considerable emphasis on trustworthy advertising of courses and hence on providing information to potential adult learners. Concerning recruitment campaigns and recruitment material the following advertising code for courses is observed: “Advertising (publicity) of courses should reflect truthfully the institution offering the course, the auspices under which the course is offered, and the course itself. The advertising must not include any suggestion of results that cannot be accomplished reasonably and of “grades” that have not been recognised or licensed. In addition to this, NRTO members respect one another as colleagues and refrain from negative and competitive communication and publicity.” One of the reasons for this emphasis is that the private training sector is large and needs to compete with the state-funded provision. There is some tendency to slightly misuse names of formal qualifications to market qualifications which are not formally recognised. The NRTO, as sector organisation, takes action against these practices.

5.4 Quality of staff

Quality of staff is a recurrent issue in almost all quality assurance systems. This involves the setting of minimum qualifications or competence levels and offering possibilities for the professional development of staff members. Quality criteria for staff are not only put in place for teaching staff, but affects other staff members as well, such as guidance staff, organisational staff (i.e. management, secretariat, support staff) and even volunteers and freelance staff. However, in this section, the focus is on quality of facilitators (i.e. of the teaching staff).¹

¹ For a more elaborated discussion on quality of adult learning professionals see: Buiskool, Bert-Jan, Jaap van Lakerveld, Frowine de Oudendammer, Erik Kats, Hemmo Smit, Simon Broek; Buiskool, B.J., Broek S.D. (2011), Identifying a common set of key competences for Adult Learning staff: an inventory of European practices, in *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education*, Volume 17, Number 1, 2011, 40-62. (2008), *Adult Learning Professions in Europe* (Research voor Beleid); Buiskool, B.J. and S.D. Broek (Research voor Beleid) (2010), *Key competences of adult learning professionals*, Zoeter-meer, 2010

The French Greta-plus label emphasises the importance of human resources and it demands that the GRETA “offers its services through qualified and competent staff”. The Dutch NRTD code of conduct states that the provider should ensure that “All teachers must be experts in their subjects.” The Swiss EduQua quality label includes a criterion (number 5) which states that the provider should have “committed pedagogical personnel (“educators”), who are methodically and professionally up to date”. This is further operationalised by demanding that the educators have the professional qualification as well as practical experience in the area the educator is working in. Furthermore, there should be educators with methodical-didactical qualifications and experience in adult education. In addition, they should undertake regular professional and pedagogic further education activities. The outcomes of having quality staff is that participants are satisfied and that the offers are organised in an appropriate way for the target group identified.

An interesting staff-related initiative linked with the Austrian Ö-Cert is the Weiterbildungs Akademie (WBA). Where the Ö-Cert focuses on the provider-level quality, WBA provides a framework to improve the staff quality in adult learning.

One of the most important requirements in the quality assurance system in Malta is the quality of staff. Staff is a key determinant of the quality of adult education provision. Qualification standards / requirements and continuing professional obligations for adult learning staff are set by the DLLL in relation to the courses it funds.

5.5 Measuring results

One way of measuring results is to see whether the quality assured providers comply with the criteria and indicators set in the quality assurance system. As indicated in Chapter 4, approval and follow-up (monitoring) activities are present in most, if not all quality assurance systems. In many cases, the quality assurance systems demand from the providers that they themselves can provide some key data on the outcomes of their activities.

For example, the Swiss eduQua model includes one criterion on the learning success (learning outcome). As the DLLL in Malta is striving to develop and implement a quality assurance system for the courses it offers, it is also developing indicators. It is currently building structures to gather evidence on quality. Current indicators / descriptors include:

- the number of adults attending the courses;
- the number who succeed in gaining a qualification;
- learning outcomes achieved;
- feedback from students;
- involvement of social partners in the development of courses.

Many of these are very close to the indicators identified by EQAVET, but their reporting for QA purposes still needs to be developed by DLLL.

Other quality assurance systems have similar indicators, for instance the Irish system and the UK (Wales) system report on the numbers of adults and success rate by courses and examinations. The quality label in Luxembourg which has as one of its aims to make the sector more transparent and to provide a better overview of the sector for policy-makers includes indicators which can monitor the general performance of the non-formal provision. It enables the government to gather data and publish statistics on non-formal continuing education. However, the information which providers need to deliver in order to receive the quality label includes mostly qualitative indicators, such as: is there an evaluation conducted annually? Are there certification criteria for staff members?

Excursion: sector level monitoring system for quality of lifelong learning in Greece (under construction)

The study found scarce evidence of existing sector level monitoring systems focusing on non-formal adult learning. On the basis of the described and analysed quality assurance systems, overviews can be provided (e.g. number of accredited providers) per quality assurance system; however, only one system was found which tries to develop a monitoring system on the basis of specific lifelong learning-relevant quality principles. In this short 'excursion' we provide further details on this monitoring system. The box provides a detailed description of this Greek example.¹

Π3 sets a framework of priorities and principles on quality assurance in non-formal lifelong learning. This covers all forms of educational and learning provision for people over 16 years old and includes initial VET, all apprenticeship schemes, continuing VET, second chance education and all liberal and/or popular adult education programmes. It further provides to all relevant structures a tool for organising and delivering the evaluation of learning outcomes for those participating in any of the programmes provided. This is essentially delivered on the grounds that firstly, π^3 defines quality by setting a number of principles and criteria in all three dimensions of education and learning, namely inputs, processes and outputs, and secondly, π^3 provides a large number of measurable quantitative and qualitative indicators for the evaluating the degree implementation of quality assurance principles by all relevant providers.

The approach is firmly elaborated by a number identified "quality principles" that operate more as imperatives or even better as given facts that rationalise the framework itself in this case. These principles are the following: LLL is attractive (1); LLL is effective (2); LLL is relevant to the needs of the labour market (3); LLL is sustainable and promotes social cohesion (4); LLL promotes creativity and innovation (5); LLL uses resources of high standards (6); LLL is provided with social responsibility (7); and finally, LLL exploits networking and cooperation (8).

The degree to which lifelong learning institutions incorporate the aforementioned principles in their systems and operational procedures is evaluated, at a top level via a set of fifteen measurable qualitative and quantitative key indicators, presented in the table below:

#	Indicator	Calculation	Quality Principle
1	Degree of attraction of adult learners in LLL programmes	<i>Number of applications submitted by adult learners (≥ 16 years old) to participate in LLL programmes</i>	1

¹ More details on this Greek example can be found in the annex: case study report.

2	Degree of satisfaction of the recipients of LLL services compared to their expectations	<i>Average score to the respective question to the recipients of LLL services</i>	1
3	Recognition of qualifications of the adult learners from the labour market	<i>Average score to the respective question to the employers</i>	1
4	Degree of certification of qualifications acquired through LLL programmes	<i>Percentage of adult learners who successfully completed the certification procedure</i>	2
5	Degree of use of the qualifications acquired through LLL programmes	<i>Average score to the respective question to the employed adult learners</i>	2
6	Degree of alignment of VET Programmes to the corresponding professions	<i>Ratio of VET programmes that are based upon a certified professional profile against the total number of VET programmes</i>	3
7	Degree of participation of unemployed people to LLL programmes	<i>Ratio of unemployed people participating in LLL programmes against the total number of people participating in the programmes</i>	3
8	Degree of participation to more than one LLL programmes	<i>Ratio of adult learners that have participated in more than one LLL programme against the total number of adult learners</i>	4
9	Degree of use of Consultancy and Career orientation services	<i>Percentage of adult learners that have successfully participated in a LLL programme and have used consultancy and career orientation services, against the total number of the adult learners who have successfully participated in a LLL programme</i>	4
10	Degree of use of innovative teaching methods that promote creativity and autonomous learning in the LLL programmes	<i>Number of innovative teaching interventions that promote creativity and autonomous learning during the delivery of LLL programmes</i>	5
11	Degree of participants' satisfaction from the LLL service providers	<i>Average score to the respective question to the participants of each programme</i>	6
12	Knowledge update of the trainers	<i>Percentage of training hours for knowledge update vs. the total number of trainers</i>	6
13	Degree of participation to LLL programmes of socially vulnerable groups	<i>Percentage of people belonging to socially vulnerable groups who participate in LLL programmes, against the total number of participants</i>	7
14	Incorporation of quality systems in the LLL and accreditation service providers	<i>Ratio of LLL and accreditation service providers with a quality system against the total number of certified service providers</i>	7
15	Degree of participation to networks (national and international)	<i>Number of collaborations (networks, work groups, participation in projects, etc.)</i>	8

The role of these indicators is multiple and involves the description of the situation at any given time; the quantification of all qualitative objectives that are put in place; the provision of constant information flow on how the objectives are fulfilled; and finally, it provides an indication of the factors involved in fulfilling the objectives. The key indicators can and should be enhanced, analysed and further developed by the organisations involved in terms of their content and the Ministry of Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs has developed a "toolbox" of forty seven additional indicators to support this effort.

This example, although it has not as yet been implemented, could provide a model and a possible incentive and, even, inspiration for policy-makers / institutions seeking to develop sector level monitoring systems.

5.6 Principles underlying quality approaches in adult learning

In this chapter, we saw how quality assurance systems related to adult learning focus on particular quality areas and set indicators to measure quality developments. We also examined an example of a system-level monitoring approach. One issue has not fully been touched upon however, namely, the principles which underlie the quality assurance systems in adult learning. In the majority of the examples examined above the underlying principles are often implicitly assumed rather than being explicitly stated or they are included as descriptions of the mission and objectives of the responsible bodies. However there are examples among the systems described above of where the underlying principles are made clearly explicit.

One of the more elaborated descriptions of the underlying principles of adult learning can be found in the Ö-Cert quality label in Austria. The basic principles and paradigm of the concept “adult education” includes a life-stage orientation to foster political participation (citizenship), social participation, professional orientation, related to one’s own biography; education is more than the application of tools and skill-orientation, adult education means more than “qualification” or “training”. Furthermore, lifelong learning embraces all formats for learning (formal, non-formal, informal), the diverse places where learning takes place, and all ages. Learning comprehends all target-oriented activities to improve knowledge and knowing, skills and competences, insights e.g. In addition, adult education (adult learning and continuing education are used here as synonyms) is defined as all formats and forms of learning of the adult population in the context of professional and vocational, non-vocational and general education, citizenship education and community education, culture and the arts, privately, in public institutions or in economic context; conducted by teachers or self-directed. Adult education activities follow a political strategy and social responsibility and are structured by organizations on a legal and financial basis.

The Greek π^3 approach is firmly elaborated by a number of identified “quality principles” that operate more as imperatives that rationalize the framework itself in this case. These principles are the following¹: 1) LLL is attractive; 2) LLL is effective; 3) LLL is relevant to the needs of the labour market; 4) LLL is sustainable and promotes social cohesion; 5) LLL promotes creativity and innovation; 6) LLL uses resources of high standards; 7) LLL is provided with social responsibility, and 8) LLL exploits networking and cooperation.

5.7 Conclusions

This Chapter looked at the quality areas and descriptors the quality assurance systems focus on. In addition, system level indicators have been discussed in the cases where they are encountered. On the basis of the material studied, the following is concluded:

¹ Available in the π^3 - The National Quality Assurance Framework for Lifelong Learning – Executive Summary (in English).

- The quality assurance systems mostly cover all four broad categories of quality descriptors: organisational issues; quality of the didactics and the learning process; quality of staff; and quality of measuring results.
- Quality descriptors related to organisational issues include often the requirement of having a quality plan in place. In addition, having a clear view on the organisational structure and financial systems is included as important organisational aspects of quality assurance.
- Quality descriptors related to the didactics used and the learning process, often having detailed descriptions of the education and training provided and the required didactics used for deliverance. In addition, complaints procedures and stated learners' rights are considered pivotal in quality adult learning provision.
- Quality descriptors related to staff quality includes in most quality assurance systems setting requirements for staff members in terms of competences, prior training and qualifications.
- Quality descriptors related to measuring results deal both with measuring the outcomes of the education and training provided, and the follow-up on quality developments in the institute.
- With regard to the quality descriptors and indicators of the quality assurance systems, one can differentiate between quality assurance systems having a focus on procedural aspects on quality assurance, such as organisational issues (whether there is a quality plan for instance); quality assurance systems focussing on content of provision, such as didactical aspects (is the provision tailor made?); and quality assurance systems which have a holistic perspective and cover both procedural and content aspects of quality.
- System, or sector level monitoring systems including adult learning tailored sets of indicators are scarce.

6 Linking challenges with good practices

This chapter further discuss some **specific challenges for quality in adult learning** found in the country analysis (section 6.1), and match these **with concrete good practices** found in this study (case studies), presented a models for inspiration / solution in section 6.2. In addition, **strengths and weaknesses and success factors** are identified in section 6.3, which need to be taken into account when extending these quality systems more widely.

6.1 Challenges and issues related to quality in adult learning

This section discusses the main issues and challenges identified in the study that are specific to assuring the quality of providers and provision in adult learning. Challenges can be identified in relation to different aspects: firstly, the context in which adult learning takes place (Section 6.1.1); secondly, the system-level quality assurance in place (Section 6.1.2); thirdly, the situation of provider and staff quality assurance and (Section 6.1.3); finally, the contribution of quality adult learning to the EU-wide objective of increasing and widening participation in adult learning (Section 6.1.4).

6.1.1 The context in which adult learning takes place

“Quality” in general terms covers almost every aspect of adult learning, ranging from policy and legal frameworks in place, financing models, cooperation between actors, providers, provision of adult learning, staff, curriculum and infrastructure, all of which have a role to play in a well-functioning adult learning system and which contribute to increasing participation and effective learning outcomes. In general terms, there are challenges for adult learning throughout Europe in all these areas, but this report focuses only on those that have most direct bearing on the existence or not of quality systems and their successful implementation or not. The most salient contextual challenges relating to adult learning identified in the study are:

- Several European countries (mainly in BE, BG, CY, CZ, BE, IE, IT, LU, MT, NL, PL, RO, SK, ES) are **lacking an overarching legal framework** in the field of adult learning. In addition, the lack of an overarching lifelong learning strategy (such as in NL, NO, UK, PL, BE (Flanders), BE (Walloon), IT, MT, PT, TK ES, FR, HR, IT, LT, MT, RO) is impeding the development and implementation of overarching quality systems for the adult learning sector. In many countries the development of quality systems covers a wide range of field laws covering each educational sector. This diversity of regimes impedes the development of an overarching strategy and standardisation.
- Many countries (mainly EE, SE, CZ, CY, HR, HU, LT, LV, PL, RO, IT) report on a **lack of cooperation between stakeholders** (e.g. Ministries, social partner, and learning providers). Since adult learning has a wide diversity of stakeholders, mostly depending on the goal and type of learning (basic skills, labour market, innovation, self-development), it is a challenge to develop integrated strategies and to create clear

ownership among stakeholders. This can result in the situation that there is no single (state) organisation that takes responsibility (such as in CZ). Moreover, cooperation between regional and national stakeholders is challenging (see for instance IT). On the other hand, positive examples can also be seen, where the government stresses that adult education and training is a shared responsibility of individuals and the social partners (DK and until recently, NL¹).

- In many countries the current **economic crisis impedes further development of quality systems** and the implementation of more developed lifelong learning strategies in general (mainly in the countries EE, ES, IS, CY, HR, HU, LT, LV, PL, RO, EL, IE, MT, PT). In addition, decreasing budgets for adult learning increases the attention to the accountability of (public) spending, with a consequent shift in the balance between key principles of quality such as equity, effectiveness and efficiency. Reducing budgets also undermines the status and the working conditions of the staff in the field of adult learning, which on the medium term may affect the quality of provision.

Taking these challenges together, they paint a picture in many countries of adult learning as being diverse and fragmented and lacking the necessary frameworks, infrastructure, funding and co-operation for systematic quality assurance of the spectrum of adult learning, especially non-formal adult learning.

6.1.2 Quality assurance instruments / regulation on system level

Challenges also exist in relation to actual quality development and quality assurance measures (where they exist). Reviewing developments in the different countries, the following challenges can be identified concerning system level quality assurance instruments.

- In all countries there is a **wide diversity of quality assurance systems** and procedures, often falling under different field laws of the governments leading to a fragmentation of quality approaches and lack of comparability. The challenge is to achieve an integrated quality framework (these were specially absent in NL, BG, CZ, CY, HR, PL, BE (Flanders), BE (Walloon), LU, MT, TK; while positive examples were provided in AT, CH, SI, UK, EL. Although there are positive examples, still in these countries the heterogeneity of quality assurance systems is mentioned as a challenge).²
- All countries have quality systems in place for HE, VET and secondary schools. In most cases the quality frameworks in place have the same principles for initial as well as continuous learning. The key question in this respect is to what extent **quality proce-**

¹ The project unit Learning and Working, which coordinated adult learning policies in the Netherlands, was abolished in 2011.

² Where a common framework has been developed, such as in Sweden, it was acknowledged, that the heterogeneity of adult learning made it difficult to develop a commonly accepted and useful quality tool. In fact, it took years to develop the first version of a quality assurance and development tool for providers (BRUK: stands in Swedish for Bedömning, Reflektion, Utveckling, Kvalitet (Assessment, Reflection, Development, Quality)), that was both useful and acceptable for the whole formal adult learning sector.

dures take into account of basic principles for adult learning as identified earlier in this report (Section 2.2.3). Especially for NL, BG, CZ, CY, HR, HU, PL, RO, LU this challenge was reported and to a minor extent for CH, EE, FI, SI, UK, and PT.

- While quality assurance system are in place for formal adult learning (as indicated, often falling under the same legal act or system as for initial education), this is not the case for the **non-formal part of adult learning**, and more specifically where it is privately funded (by individuals, companies or charity organisations). Quality systems are especially lacking in DK, EE, NL, NO, ES, IS, BG, CZ, CY, BE (Walloon), FR, IT, MT. When it concerns non-publicly financed adult learning, providing learning not leading to a formal, state-regulated qualification, it is mostly up to the sector, provider, or client to define the standards.
- In general, the occupational field of **adult learning staff (predominantly adult learning teaching professionals)** is subject to ‘light touch’ regulation in terms of, for example, entry and continuing professional development requirements. In many countries and settings, no specific qualifications are required for becoming an adult educator, not to mention other positions such as manager, guidance counsellor, supporting staff etc. However, considerable differences can be detected between the formal and non-formal part of adult learning in this regard. Requirements for adult learning staff are more formalised in formal adult education which usually take place in initial education, VET or HE institutions. Staff requirements for the non-formal sector are less developed, and need further attention in several countries (like such as in NL, ES, CY, DE, IE, MT, TK, AT, DK, FI, NL, NO, SE, UK, IS, CZ, DE, HR, LT, LV, PL, BE (Walloon), EL, FR, IE, IT, PT). Nevertheless, some countries have interesting practices in place (like AT, CH, MT, EE).
- Although many countries are addressing accreditation of prior learning to assure permeability and progression through the education system, most countries do not have quality systems in place for assuring the quality of **accreditation of prior learning** (this was considered a major challenge in DK, EE, UK, ES, BG, CY, PL, BE (Walloon), EL, LU, MT, TK) . A similar issue is the provision of **guidance and counselling** for which quality assurance is considered a major challenge in a number of countries (such as EE, UK, ES, DE, PL, BE (Walloon), EL, MT).
- In most countries (such as in DK, EE, NL, NO, ES, IS, BG, CY, DE, HR, HU, LT, LV, RO, EL, IE, MT, PT, TK) **there is very limited (monitoring) information** available on the provision, learning outcomes and quality standards in place in non-formal of adult learning. Many countries still do not have a standardised national information database to present a clear picture on the direct and indirect economic and other benefits of adult learning and training programmes. This is a drawback in terms of quality development and quality assurance. Especially information is lacking on learning taking place outside the formal system. A substantial part of adult learning is provided by private providers or the company the person works for and this part of the adult

learning sector is poorly monitored, although initiatives exist but often on ad hoc basis¹.

- As already indicated in chapter 3, many strategies, white papers and policy documents on quality assurance have been produced in the last few years by different countries. But the challenge **is to implement the strategies**. Experience of developing an overarching quality system in different countries, tells us that it takes a long time to come to an understanding of quality in adult learning and to build **a consensus** around the idea of quality assurance system (this was considered to be the case in AT, DK, EE, NL, NO, ES, CY, DE, HR, HU, LT, LV, PL, RO, BE (Flanders), BE (Walloon), EL, FR, IE, IT, LU, MT, PT, TK) .
- The development and **implementation of national qualifications frameworks** and the associated focus on learning outcomes in describing qualifications are playing a part in the ‘quality’ issue in adult learning in many countries. This arises from the need to quality assure qualifications awarded on the framework and to ensure the integrity of the national qualification framework itself. This is leading to steps to accredit providers of programmes leading to such qualifications and to the external validation of the programmes in questions (IE, MT for example). This applies equally to all providers alike, both publicly- and privately-funded.

To summarise, looking at developments in different countries one can conclude that the main criterion is whether there is a quality system in place for a specific domain of adult learning.

6.1.3 Quality assurance within providers and staff development

Assessing the main challenges and issues at provider level, the following points can be made:

- Besides the challenge of providers not having a quality system, some challenges are identified for providers that have a quality system in place, such as the **formal attitude towards the quality assurance systems** (e.g. compliance with minimum requirements set rather than seeking to excel in their adult learning provision). Moreover, external evaluation and self-evaluation are mainly impacting on structural, organisational, and managerial processes rather than on teachers, learners and the learning process. This raises the question of whether quality processes focus on the right set of activities.
- A similar issue raised is the **lack of a quality culture within providers**, meaning that the provider have an intrinsic attitude to continuously improve and develop the quality, and the fact that the outcomes of the quality assurance systems are not used very

¹ For example in the Netherlands, in the last years some studies has been carried out to gain a better sight on adult learning providers, and more specifically what is delivered out side the public financed system (such a recent study assigned by “NRTO” and “Stichting lezen en schrijven”)

often for improving standards and procedures, and where this is actually happening, providers are often reactive instead of proactive. This of course hampers the effectiveness and efficiency of the quality assurance system. Furthermore, providers often lack human resources qualified to develop and implement quality assurance systems.

- Although countries differ in the requirements set for adult learning staff at provider level, additional requirements can be set (AT, DK, FI, SI, UK, ES, DE, BE (Flanders), BE (Walloon), EL, PT have clear set of requirements for staff in formal adult learning) . As indicated, in the formal part of adult learning quality standards are in most cases aligned with those of the professionals working in primary, secondary and tertiary education, without paying specific attention to pedagogical / andragogical skills. For the non-formal sector it is often up to the sector and provider to decide.¹

When it comes to quality assuring adult learning, especially non-formal adult learning, the inventory of system and provider level challenges identifies many weaknesses and gaps at both levels in many countries. However, direct evidence is missing as to whether quality is absent where no frameworks exist. This is of course possible to understand, since there is often no monitoring data available for these sectors to support such a judgement.²

6.1.4 Impact on increasing and widening participation

Challenges exist in relation to participation rates in lifelong learning and many countries are a long way off the ET2020 target of 15 per cent participation (see also chapter 3). Many countries also experience low participation rates by some specific target groups, such as older people, migrants, and low-skilled persons and they still need to open up their educational systems to adult learning (main challenges were identified in BG, CZ, HR, HU, PL, RO, BE (Walloon), EL, IT, and TK). Reviewing the challenges, one could conclude that the countries that score lowest in the participation figures also face the most severe challenges developing quality systems.

¹ Often subject knowledge and practical experience are leading criteria while recruiting staff. A recent study shows that continuous professional development and external evaluation play only a relatively small role in quality enhancement policies within adult learning providers. See: Buiskool, Bert-Jan, Jaap van Lakerveld, Frowine de Oudendammer, Erik Kats. Hemmo Smit, Simon Broek (2008), *Adult Learning Professions in Europe* (Research voor Beleid)

² Interestingly, the only concrete examples provided in the study arose in the UK and Ireland where quality assurance mechanisms are in fact, in place in adult learning. A report published in the UK on Further Education Colleges and Adult Community Providers indicated that too many providers inspected in 2011 achieved a grade of 'satisfactory' and too few achieved 'good' or 'outstanding' (Ofsted (2011), *The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2010/11*). In Ireland questions raised (in 2010) in relation to the integrity of a small number of the then FETAC qualifications and the robustness of the providers' quality assurance monitoring procedures led to concerns among stakeholders about what had been characterised as 'light-touch regulation' on the part of FETAC. The resultant perceived threat to the integrity and value of the then FETAC awards was discussed in a Sub-committee of the national Parliament before which FETAC was called to testify. Closer monitoring at all levels was put in place as a result.

6.2 What system is appropriate to addressing which challenge at system level?

Chapter 4 and 5 described a high number of system-level quality assurance systems. Each system has its own rationale, structure, objectives, processes in place and sets of indicators. Hence, each system is attuned to a specific situation and intends to address a particular challenge. It can be clearly concluded that there is no one-size fits all and that each situation calls for a specific quality assurance approach. The quality assurance systems can therefore be regarded as a source of motivation and information for extending quality assurance in adult learning in Europe: the variety of contexts in Europe is equalled by the diversity of systems identified. Since in the previous section, system-level challenges have been identified, in this section, we seek to link these challenges to the quality assurance systems identified and described. The key question is therefore: what quality assurance system is most appropriate to address which challenges at system level?

The following table summarises the key challenges at system level (column 1); indicates in what direction a solution can be found (column 2); provides an interesting practice related to this solution (column 3) and finally indicates to which countries this solution can apply (column 4).

Table 7: Key challenges, responses and practices

Key challenge	Response to the challenge	Relevant quality assurance system ¹	Countries to which this challenge applies
1) Lack of overarching QA system / regulation for assuring quality in the whole adult learning sector (national level)	Develop an overarching system with minimum requirements	Meta-frameworks: AT (Ö-Cert)* Overarching frameworks: CH: EduQua*; IE FETAC framework*	Major: NL, BG, CZ, CY, HR, PL, BE (Flanders), BE (Walloon), LU, MT, TK Minor: DK, EE, FI, NO, SE, ES, IS, DE, HU, LT, LV, RO, FR, IE, IT, PT
2) Lack of system / framework / regulation for assuring quality in the non-formal part of adult learning	Develop a quality assurance system for non-formal adult learning, with setting minimum quality requirements	Systems organised by public bodies: CH: EduQua*; FR: Greta-plus*; LU: Quality label Systems organised by private bodies: DE: Hamburg model*; NL: quality seal folk universities; NL: NRTO code of conduct	Major: DK, EE, NL, NO, ES, IS, BG, CZ, CY, BE (Walloon), FR, IT, MT Minor: FI, SE, SI, UK, DE, HR, LT, LV RO, IE, LU, PT, TK
	Stimulating quality developments without	Quality prizes: DE Stif-tungswarenpreis, SE, FI	

¹ The asterix (*) indicates that on these particular practices detailed descriptions are included in the annex of the report (case study reports).

	setting minimum quality requirements		
	Providing additional support structures	Quality guide-lines/manual: SE (BRUK)*; Staff development programme: NO*, MT*; SI: Offering Quality Education to Adults*; CZ: Concept project*	
3) Lack of attention to adult learning specific elements in quality systems / regulation for formal education	Increase attention to adult learning elements in formal education	VET: UK (Wales): ESTYN inspectorate*; IE: FETAC framework*; FR: Greta-plus* General education: MT: QA Structures in basic skills*	Major: NL, BG, CZ, CY, HR, HU, PL, RO, LU Minor: AT, DK, NO, SE, ES, IS, DE, LT, LV, BE (Flanders), BE (Walloon), EL, FR, IE, IT, MT, TK
4) Lack of (specific) legal requirements for adult learning staff/ Lacking initial training and continuing professional development	Set staff requirements at national level	MT: QA Structures in basic skills* AT: Wba; CH: Train the Trainer (AdA)	Requirements (formal): Major: CY Minor: CH, EE, NL, NO, SE, IS, BG, CZ, HR, HU, LT, LV, RO, IE, MT, TK Requirements (non-formal): Major: NL, ES, CY, DE, IE, MT, TK Minor: AT, CH, DK, EE, FI, NO, SE, UK, IS, BG, CZ, HR, HU, LT, LV, RO, BE (Flanders), BE (Walloon), EL, PT Initial training (formal): Major: TK Minor: AT, DK, NL, NO, SI, ES, IS, BG, CZ, CY, HR, HU, LT, LV, RO, EL, FR, IE, MT Initial training (non-formal): Major: AT, NL, CY, HR, HU, LT, LV, RO, EL, IE, MT, TK Minor: CH, DK, EE, FI, NO, SE, SI, UK, ES, IS, BG, CZ, DE, BE (Flanders), PT
5) Lack of system / regulation for assuring quality of APL provision and guidance	Set minimum quality requirements for APL providers	NL: Quality Code APL*; PT: quality charter New Opportunity Centres (closed in 01-2013)	Major: DK, EE, UK, ES, BG, CY, PL, BE (Walloon), EL, LU, MT, TK Minor: AT, CH, FI, SE, SI, IS, DE, HR, HU, LT, LV, RO, IE
	Set minimum quality requirements for guidance providers	DK: quality in guidance*	Major: EE, UK, ES, DE, PL, BE (Walloon), EL, MT Minor: AT, CH, FI, NL, NO, SE, SI, IS, BG, CY, HR, HU, LT, LV, RO, FR, IE, LU, PT, TK
6) Lack of monitor-	Establish sector-level	EL: Quality 2 Always 2	Major: DK, EE, NL, NO, ES, IS, BG, CY,

ing data in the AL sector (provision of AL and effects)	indicators for monitoring	Everywhere*	DE, HR, HU, LT, LV, RO, EL, IE, MT, PT, TK Minor: AT, FI, SE, SI, UK, CZ, PL, BE (Flanders), BE (Walloon), FR, IT, LU

6.3 Extending quality assurance mechanisms more widely: pros and cons

In the previous section, we linked challenges and quality assurance systems. This provides a perspective as to which systems can be used to address which national challenges related to quality in adult learning. In this section, we continue this route and provide information about extending quality assurance mechanisms more widely. In section 6.3.1 the strengths, weaknesses are assessed, in section 6.3.2 more general factors of successful implementation of quality assurance systems are identified.

6.3.1 Strengths and weaknesses of quality assurance systems

As indicated, there is diversity in approaches to facilitate the quality assurance of providers dependent on the intensity of the quality assurance procedure. The ESTYN framework in the UK (Wales) is a rather top-down approach, while on the other hand the Luxembourg's Quality Label, Ö-Cert and EduQua are characterised as bottom-up approaches. The Ö-Cert, in addition, is considered a meta-framework building on the existence of other quality assurance systems. Each quality assurance system is developed within its own context, having different aims and hence, different approaches. Here below, for each of the quality assurance systems studied the main strengths and weaknesses are mentioned; in addition, for three of the most interesting systems, the pros and cons for extending these quality assurance systems more widely are identified after presenting the strengths and weaknesses

Table 8: Strengths and weaknesses of quality assurance systems studied

QA system	Strengths/ Weaknesses
AT Ö-CERT (AT-CERT)	(+) Widely used; low resource intensity; Concept of LLL as basis for QA (-) Builds on other QA systems, hence less specific AL
CH eduQua	(+) Widely used; Nation-wide acceptance, strong AL focus (specifically AL), responsibility at provider level (-) Intensive workload of the certification process
DE Quality association CET Hamburg	(+) Widely used; affordable; low-threshold, consumer oriented, high marketing value (-) Low intensity in follow-up
EL J3 framework	(+) Only overarching framework identified focussing on non-formal lifelong learning (-) Not implemented yet, hence effect is unknown

FR Label Greta-Plus	(+) Adult learner focus; nation-wide system (-) High administrative costs, low added value for providers
IE Quality Assurance System for further education and training (QQI, former FETAC)	(+) Overarching framework; trust in qualifications; broad stakeholder involvement and consensus; lengthy development period (-) One system for a heterogeneous sector; resource intensive in a period of budgetary constraints; dissolution of FETAC and establishment of QQI could give rise to transition challenges for providers and practitioners and a certain amount of 'innovation fatigue'
LU Label de Qualité	(+) Specific label for non-formal adult education; widely used; low resource intensity (-) -
MT Quality Assurance Structures in the provision of basic literacy, numeracy and computer awareness	(+) Overarching framework, very content-related (quality of staff); directly linked to NFQ; strong link to EU-wide developments (-) Framework is designed for the particular situation of Malta where the DLLL is responsible for the provision and hiring of staff
NL Code of Conduct private providers (NRTO)	(+) Widely used, negotiated with relevant stakeholders, linked to eligibility for VAT redemption, low resource intensity (-) high process focus, low intensity of follow-up activities and rules concerning non-compliance
NL Folk universities quality seal	(+) Developed by the sector itself; low resource intensity (-) Not widely used, low marketing value
NL Quality code for APL providers	(+) Strong commitment from the sector (the development was initiatives by the sector) (-) lack of regulation on who accredits the APL providers
SI Quality label Offering Quality Education for Adults – OQEA /Green quality logo	(+) Strong support model from the responsible body; high involvement of providers in the development; high level of mutual learning (-) high resource intensity, bureaucracy
UK ESTYN Inspection of Adult Community Learning (ACL) in Wales	(+) strong communication with stakeholders; strong support from the responsible body; (mandatory); transparency at all stages of the process; strong focus on quality development; nation-wide coverage (-) high resource intensity

6.3.2 Success factors

Given the strengths and weaknesses, success factors of the quality assurance systems are identified. Success factors are factors that were identified as being a condition under which a good-working quality assurance system was/is implemented. These success

factors can be taken into account in determining new initiatives or in transferring initiatives developed elsewhere into new contexts. The following factors of success are identified:

- The focus of the quality assurance system is on the learner/consumer;
- The quality assurance system is transparent for all stakeholder;
- The quality assurance system is organisationally strongly backed;
 - The responsibility body possess authority in the sector;
 - The quality assurance system has commitment within the provider of the management and the employees;
- The quality assurance system should be affordable given the adult learning provision and the context;
- The quality assurance system should be relevant for the given context (no one-size fits all);
- The development/ acceptance of quality assurance systems takes a certain period of time.

Here below, these factors of success are described in more detail.

An issue particularly emphasised in almost all quality assurance systems, **is the focus of the initiative on the learner, or consumer**. This is mentioned explicitly for instance, in the German initiative in the Hamburg region, but also in the Swiss EduQua framework. In fact, concerning the eduQua model, the learner-centeredness is considered an advantage in comparison to the Austrian Ö-Cert model. This learner-centeredness is operationalised in different ways. This learner-centeredness can as well be explained as taking into account explicitly the fact that adults (can) learn in a different way as younger people and might need different tools, didactics, structures, learning material, and more flexibly ways of delivery. This success factor can be found in all cases studied. The Austrian Ö-cert clearly takes the concept of lifelong learning as starting point in the development of the quality model. As basic principle it include life stage orientation to foster political participation (citizenship), social participation, professional orientation, related to ones own biography; education is more than the application of tools and skill orientation, adult education means more than “qualification” or “training”.

Quality assurance systems should be **transparent** for all stakeholders. The rules and procedures should be clear and understandable for all. This explains the success of the longstanding **Swiss** and **German** quality initiatives.

Another factor, which is often mentioned as a determinant of success is a stable and **strong organisational backing of the initiative/instrument**. This can be operationalised at different levels. For instance the development of the Irish model consisted of extensive consultation and involvement of stakeholder, including providers, representative bodies, and learners. This was critical in getting ‘buy-in’ to the FETAC qualifications and quality system. Related to the strong organisational backing of the quality assurance system is the fact that successful systems are organized by responsible bodies closely

linked to the adult learning sector. This is the case in all systems related to the non-state funded provision (DE, NL), but also in systems where the responsible bodies is as well the sector organisation, providing advice, information, and funds courses (SI, MT, IE, LU, UK). The responsible body should possess authority in the sector.

Strong organisational backing does not only concern support from policy makers and other stakeholders, but even more of own management and personnel. With regard to quality assurance, it is important to **have commitment within the provider from management and employees**. This is the starting point of the **Slovenian** quality model. The management and staff of the organisation are directly involved in the process of quality assessment and development. All employees are allowed to decide upon how and according to what dimensions they use self-evaluation results.

Furthermore, the quality assurance systems have to be **affordable** for adult learning providers, both in terms of budget and time spend on assuring the quality, or monitoring the quality. Here there is a difference between the formal education systems leading to formal qualifications and the non-formal systems not leading to formal qualifications. In general, if formal qualifications are at stake, the quality assurance initiatives tend to be more severe in terms of costs and time allocation (for instance inspectorates). In the non-formal system one sees more often less restrictive quality assurance systems such as quality labels.

The quality model should be flexible. Each quality approach is attuned to the **specific adult learning context**. In a way, the context, aim, organisation, structure and type or learners determine the scope, size, strength, and complexity of the quality approach chosen. Asking therefore for an all-encompassing, overarching quality framework runs into serious difficulties and the challenge is to make it as flexible and open as possible, so that the diversity in adult learning sectors can be accommodated and respected. **There is no one-size-fits-all**. Even in national approaches, such as in Switzerland and Austria, the frameworks (especially the Austrian one) leaves a lot of freedom to individual providers in relation to their choice of quality assurance approach / system. In addition, as mentioned, the history and maturity of a quality approach, and hence the state of development of the adult learning domain in which the quality approach is implemented is an indication for the potential complexity of the approach. Well-developed sectors, closely related to formal education, reveal stricter quality models (including external inspectorates, for instance), than less developed adult learning sectors (see for instance the examples of well-established systems in UK (Wales), and Ireland).

Finally, as a factor of success, the **long incubation time, or period of existence** can be mentioned. This is the case in German Hamburg quality seal and the Swiss eduQua quality assurance system as well (both more than 20 years of experience). The Austrian quality assurance system clearly lacks this period of time to receive acceptance within the field, however is getting there. This success factor entails that quality approaches in general have a long development period before they really start to make a difference. Quality has everything to do with trust. Providers, policy makers, learners, stakeholders, employers need time to understand an approach, see the benefits of an approach and finally trust the quality approach. This trust therefore, is not established directly at the

moment of initiating a quality approach, but it has to grow over the years, calling for the sustainable involvement of all relevant stakeholders.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter has identified system and provider level challenges to quality in adult learning and related them to relevant examples of practices throughout Europe that could offer solutions or at least sources of inspirations for policy-makers.

The main challenges concern the fragmented approach towards quality assurance and hence the lack of overarching QA systems in the adult learning sector, and especially for the non-formal part of adult learning. Fragmentation does not necessarily lead to a lack of quality as such, but makes it difficult to stimulate quality development and quality improvement in the sector. Motivating models in this respect include Ö-cert (AT), EduQua (CH), and the FETAC framework (IE), Greta-plus (FR), Quality label (LU) or systems organized by private bodies like the Hamburg Model (DE), quality seal folk universities or code of conduct private providers (NL). Models for stimulating quality development without setting minimum requirements are consumer-oriented quality prizes (DE) or other quality prizes as identified in Sweden and Finland.

Another challenge is the lack of attention to adult learning specific elements in quality systems for formal (adult) learning for which inspiring models can be found in the ESTYN inspectorate, FETAC framework, and Greta-plus for VET and for basic education in Malta.

Further challenges relate to the lack of requirements in relation to adult learning staff; lack of quality systems and standards for guidance and APL provision, and the lack of monitoring data. Some challenges are more striking for some countries rather than others, but in all countries these apply to some extent.

7 Differences and common characteristics between VET, HE and adult learning

This chapter provides an overview of differences and common characteristics in the non-formal adult learning sector compared with the development of quality assurance systems in VET and Higher Education. In this Chapter, Section 7.1 provides an **introduction of difference and common characteristics**; Section 7.2 provides a **comparison of quality assurance on providers level between educational sectors**. Section 7.3 discusses the **comparison of system level quality assurance between educational sectors**. After this, Section 7.4 concerns a **comparison of quality in adult learning with existing European frameworks**. This Chapter will conclude Section 7.5; **conclusions**.

7.1 Introducing differences and common characteristics

Chapter 2 and 3 already elaborated on the overlap between sectors and how adult learning is provided in all three sectors. Given the overviews provided in Chapter 3, 4 and 5, some differences and common characteristics can be found on quality assurance systems in HE, VET, general education and the non-formal adult learning part. Differences and common characteristics are identified at three levels: firstly, the provider level, secondly, the system level, and thirdly, the European level developments that have been taken place. Table 9 summarises the differences and common characteristics, followed by a discussion afterwards.

Table 9: Overview of differences and common characteristics

Issues:	HE	General education	VET	Non-formal
Provider level Quality assurance				
Provider level quality assurance system	In place, left to the autonomy of the HEIs	In place, demanded in system-level inspectorates	In place, but large differences between providers	Not well developed
Staff quality	Requirement based on educational attainment levels	Requirements based on qualifications	Requirements based on subject knowledge/skills, sometimes no didactical qualifications	Requirements based on a variety of factors. Often less attention to didactical qualifications.
System level Quality assurance				
Regulation	Highly regulated	Highly regulated	Regulated, but less unified	Less or not regulated
System level QA	In place	In place	In place	Often lacking
Measuring outcomes/ monitoring systems	In place, clear sets of indicators	In place, clear sets of indicators	In place, clear sets of indicators	No uniform set of indicators
European level developments				
European frameworks	ESG	Quality in school education: sixteen quality indicators	EQAVET	None

7.2 Comparison of quality assurance systems on providers level between educational sectors

The way providers organise their internal quality procedures depends on two related issues, namely the governance structure in the sector and secondly, the funding principles underlying the provider. The governance structure is related to the afore-mentioned level of regulation of the sector and the funding is related to the principle that ‘the one who pays, determines the level of quality assurance in place’.

Providers in the formal sector, although they often have an autonomous status, are highly regulated by the state, in case they are providing formal qualifications. This often goes with a specific request to have **internal quality procedures to be in place**. Since the non formal sector is less regulated, internal procedures are less forthcoming. This does not necessarily mean that quality procedures are lacking on providers level, as

there can be other driving forces to stimulate providers to set up quality assurance procedures, such as specific requirements for receiving (mostly public) funding.

The non-formal sector is financed by different stakeholders. Funding comes from governments, employers, participants, and other organisations/institutions. As the funders often set the conditions under which the programmes are provided, there can be emphasis on different internal quality issues. Funding parties have different reasons for doing that:

- **Accountability:** this can be both towards public and private funding schemes. Those who pay for the programmes delivered want to sure that their money is well spent and that they receive value for money.
- **Consumer protection:** when learners have to pay for the courses, they are considered consumers/clients and as consumers quality procedures need to be in place so that their consumers' rights are respected
- **Transparency:** those who pay for the courses (public authorities, private funders, learners) can demand transparency and comparability of the educational offer provided so that they are able to base their choice for the provider that meets their demands best; hence they can demand similar quality standards and quality procedures for providers of comparable programmes.

With regard to staff requirements, a similar picture emerges as it depends on the same principles (governance structure and funding): in the formal sector, more often **requirements are set for staff members** (most of the time this is limited to teaching staff).

7.3 Comparison of quality assurance systems between educational sectors on system level

With regard to system level quality assurance, the differences between HE, VET and non-formal adult education are less related to the fact that the provision is intended for adults, but more to the fact that the **HE, general education and VET provide state-regulated qualifications**. The National Qualifications Frameworks often require that all awards included in the NQF are quality assured, and a key objective of these frameworks is to promote and maintain standards. The development of EQF is therefore a stimulating force encouraging Member States to further develop quality standards for educational programmes which lead to a formal qualification.

Therefore, the quality assurance for education programmes leading to formal qualifications (HE and VET) is well regulated and quality assured. Often, the requirements are stated in the education laws and accreditation bodies and inspectorates control the quality of the institutions. Both provider level and programme level inspections/ assessments are conducted. However, a specific focus on adult learners is frequently missing. The non-formal sectors are less regulated through the government and more often **grass-root, bottom-up approaches are applied** to work on quality assurance (such as codes of conducts and development of sectoral quality labels). On the other hand, as has been mentioned earlier the development of NQFs and learning trajectory independ-

ent assessments of peoples competences (attention to informal and non-formal learning) call for increasing emphasis on quality assurance of the non-formal programmes which can, by means of validation, lead to recognised qualifications.

Given the fact that the formal sectors are more regulated than the non-formal sector, **monitoring of the sector** also **differs**. The formal sectors are generally more uniform in their objectives, type of organisation, target groups, and societal results, where the HE sector is even more uniformly organised than the VET sector. For the formal sector, in general, clear sets of indicators and objectives are developed. For instance, number of students, drop-out rates, stakeholder involvement, labour market relevance of programmes, etc. The non-formal sector portrays, as we saw, a more diverse landscape, comprising organisations with different objectives, different modes of delivery, different funding mechanisms, diversified backgrounds of participants and target groups, types of outcomes and results. As a consequence, monitoring on a clear set of indicators becomes more difficult.

As a common characteristic in quality assurance systems between the HE, VET and non-formal adult learning sector, **the procedural focus of quality assurance systems** can be mentioned. The organisational issues quality assurance systems pay attention to in general are therefore similar (mission statement of provider, organisational structure/management, administration, finance, establishment of a quality plan, physical infrastructure/ equipment (building, classroom, computers, etc.), anticipation to new developments, etc.). This is confirmed by the fact that providers from the three different sectors use the same organisational quality labels, such as ISO.

In addition, the procedures applied in quality assurance do not diverge largely across sectors. They all involve application, assessment, validation and monitoring/renewal. However, in VET and HE, more emphasize is given to the quality of programme than in the non-formal sector that focus more on organisational issues. This, again, has everything to do with the fact that the programmes lead to a formal, state-regulated qualification.

7.4 Comparison quality in adult learning with existing European frameworks

As already indicated in the introductory chapter, in the VET and HE sector there have been developments at European level during more than a decade to establish quality reference frameworks. The developments related to general education are at a standstill after the publication of the set of indicators in 2000. In section 7.4.1-7.4.3 we discuss the principles behind the EQAVET framework, the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, and indicators in school education to learn from these initiatives for future developments of a European quality reference framework for non-formal adult learning. After we have discussed these European frameworks we identify what may be relevant for the adult learning sector (in section 7.4.4).

7.4.1 EQAVET

The **European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET (EQAVET)** was approved by the European Parliament and the Council in 2009¹. EQAVET provides a European wide system to help Member States and stakeholders to document, develop, monitor, evaluate and improve the effectiveness of their vocational education and training (VET) provision and quality management practices. The EQAVET builds on the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), the European Credit for VET (ECVET) system and previous European quality assurance systems (such as the Common Quality Assurance Framework – CQAF). The aim of EQAVET is to be a reference instrument, to help Member States to promote and monitor continuous improvement of their VET systems based on common European references. The framework should contribute to quality improvement in VET and to increased transparency of, and consistency in, VET policy developments between Member States, thereby promoting mutual trust, mobility of workers and learners, and lifelong learning.² According to the Recommendation, it “should be applied at the VET-system, VET-provider and qualification-awarding levels. It provides a systemic approach to quality, covering and interrelating the relevant levels and actors. The framework should give strong emphasis to monitoring and improving quality by combining internal and external evaluation, review and processes for improvement, supported by measurement and qualitative analysis. The framework should be a basis for further development through cooperation at European, national, regional and local levels.”³

The EQAVET framework is based on a quality circle consisting of four steps: (1) planning, (2) implementation, (3) evaluation and (4) review. The EQAVET framework promotes quality assurance at VET system level and VET provider level. Concerning system level quality assurance/development the following indicative descriptors are suggested for each of the four steps in the quality circle:

System level indicative descriptors EQAVET⁴

■ **Planning:**

- Goals/objectives of VET are described for the medium and long term, and linked to European goals.
- The relevant stakeholders participate in setting VET goals and objectives at the different levels.
- Targets are established and monitored through specific indicators (success criteria).
- Mechanisms and procedures have been established to identify training needs.
- An information policy has been devised to ensure optimum disclosure of quality results / outcomes subject to national / regional data protection requirements.
- Standards and guidelines for recognition, validation and certification of competences of individuals have been defined.

¹ OJ C 155/1 8.7.2009, Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (Text with EEA relevance) (2009/C 155/01).

² OJ C 155/1 8.7.2009, Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (Text with EEA relevance) (2009/C 155/01).

³ OJ C 155/1 8.7.2009, Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (Text with EEA relevance) (2009/C 155/01).

⁴ <http://www.eqavet.eu/qa/gns/home.aspx>

■ **Implementation:**

- Implementation plans are established in cooperation with social partners, VET providers and other relevant stakeholders at the different levels
- Implementation plans include consideration of the resources required, the capacity of the users and the tools and guidelines needed for support
- Guidelines and standards have been devised for implementation at different levels
- Implementation plans include specific support towards the training of teachers and trainers
- VET providers' responsibilities in the implementation process are explicitly described and made transparent
- A national and/or regional quality assurance framework has been devised and includes guidelines and quality standards at VET-provider level to promote continuous improvement and self-regulation

■ **Evaluation:**

- A methodology for evaluation has been devised, covering internal and external evaluation
- Stakeholder involvement in the monitoring and evaluation process is agreed and clearly described
- The national/regional standards and processes for improving and assuring quality are relevant and proportionate to the needs of the sector
- Systems are subject to self-evaluation, internal and external review, as appropriate
- Early warning systems are implemented
- Performance indicators are applied
- Relevant, regular and coherent data collection takes place, in order to measure success and identify areas for improvement. Appropriate data collection methodologies have been devised, e.g. questionnaires and indicators/metrics

■ **Review:**

- Procedures, mechanisms and instruments for undertaking reviews are defined at all levels
- Processes are regularly reviewed and action plans for change devised. Systems are adjusted accordingly
- Information on the outcomes of evaluation is made publicly available

The following indicators at system level are proposed:

- **Overarching Indicators for Quality Assurance**
 - Indicator 1. Relevance of quality assurance systems for VET providers
 - Indicator 2. Investment in training of teachers and trainers
- **Indicators supporting quality objectives for VET policies**
 - Indicator 3. Participation rate in VET programmes
 - Indicator 4. Completion rate in VET programmes
 - Indicator 5. Placement rate in VET programmes
 - Indicator 6. Utilisation of acquired skills at the workplace
- **Context information**
 - Indicator 7. Unemployment rate
 - Indicator 8. Prevalence of vulnerable groups
 - Indicator 9. Mechanisms to identify training needs in the labour market
 - Indicator 10. Schemes used to promote better access to VET

Example of an indicator: No 1: Relevance of quality assurance systems for VET providers:

- (a) share of VET providers applying internal quality assurance systems defined by law/at own initiative

- (b) share of accredited VET providers

The EQAVET framework identified indicative descriptors at providers' level as well (see box).¹

Providers' level indicative descriptors EQAVET

■ Planning:

- European, national and regional VET policy goals/objectives are reflected in the local targets set by the VET providers
- Explicit goals/objectives and targets are set and monitored
- Ongoing consultation with relevant stakeholders takes place to identify specific local/ individual needs
- Responsibilities in quality management and development have been explicitly allocated
- There is an early involvement of staff in planning, including with regard to quality development
- Providers plan cooperative initiatives with other VET providers
- The relevant stakeholders participate in the process of analysing local needs
- VET providers have an explicit and transparent quality assurance system in place

■ Implementation:

- Resources are appropriately internally aligned/ assigned with a view to achieving the targets set in the implementation plans
- Relevant and inclusive partnerships are explicitly supported to implement the actions planned
- The strategic plan for staff competence development specifies the need for training for teachers and trainers
- Staff undertake regular training and develop cooperation with relevant external stakeholders to support capacity building and quality improvement, and to enhance performance

■ Evaluation:

- Self-assessment/self-evaluation is periodically carried out under national and regional regulations/frameworks or at the initiative of VET providers
- Evaluation and review covers pr
- Processes and results/outcomes of education including the assessment of learner satisfaction as well as staff performance and satisfaction
- Evaluation and review includes adequate and effective mechanisms to involve internal and external stakeholders
- Early warning systems are implemented

■ Review:

- Learners' feedback is gathered on their individual learning experience and on the learning and teaching environment. Together with teachers' feedback this is used to inform further actions
- Information on the outcomes of the review is widely and publicly available
- Procedures on feedback and review are part of a strategic learning process in the organisation
- Results/outcomes of the evaluation process are discussed with relevant stakeholders and appropriate action plans are put in place

The EQAVET model is further operationalised in ten building blocks (see Table 10).²

Table 10: Building blocks of EQAVET

¹ <http://www.eqavet.eu/qc/tns/building-your-system/introduction.aspx>

² <http://www.eqavet.eu/qa/tns/building-blocks/introduction.aspx>

Building blocks (BB)	Description
1. Set clear rules for deciding who offers VET provision	Member States manage the supply of high quality training by having clear systems to decide which organisations can offer courses and/or qualifications.
2. Recognise and build on existing internal arrangements	The EQARF recommendation can be supported through the use of existing provider-based systems and VET quality assurance arrangements.
3. Set clear roles and responsibilities for different parts of the VET system	At both provider and system level (either nationally or regionally) it is important to be clear about what each organisation is expected to do.
4. Identify what information and data should be collected and used in VET system	There is extensive data on vocational training, the challenge is to identify and use a relevant core set of data consistently – with a focus on providers, inspectors, evaluators and government using the same definitions of the indicators and measures.
5. Define and implement a communications strategy	Whilst mainly relevant at the system level, there are clear needs for up-to-date, consistent and accurate information on the quality assurance process to be shared and understood.
6. Pilot initiatives and value success	Quality assurance can be achieved through recognising effective practice. Staged approaches which include pilot programmes, awards and funding can all play a part in recognising successful quality assurance systems.
7. Use feedback to improve VET	VET has to both meet employers' and learners' needs. Key to any quality assurance system is the way feedback is used to improve the national or regional system, and training providers systematically collect and use the experiences and feedback from learners and employers to modify and improve their provision.
8. Provide clarity over funding	Public and private sector funds are not limitless. The link between high quality provision and funding provides both an incentive as well as an accountability measure for quality assurance arrangements.
9. Ensure quality assurance covers all aspects of VET provision	Quality assurance covers both the content of training and the administrative and staff arrangements which support teaching and learning. The EQARF should be seen as all encompassing.
10. Ensure VET is founded on a strong involvement of external and internal partners and relevant stakeholders	VET is based on effective partnerships. These exist between government, social partners and national stakeholders; employers and training providers; and learners and society. They create the foundation stone of the VET system which gives it strength, relevance and acceptability.

7.4.2 European Standards and Guidelines (HE)

The **Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area¹**, drawn up by the ENQA in cooperation with EUA, EURASHE and ESIB and endorsed by the ministers of education of the Bologna signatory² forms the response to the twin mandates given to ENQA in the Berlin communiqué of September 2003 to develop 'an agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines on quality assurance' and 'to explore ways of ensuring an adequate peer review system for quality assurance and/or accreditation agencies or bodies'. The purposes of the standards and guidelines are:

¹ ENQA (2009), *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*, Helsinki: ENQA.

² See European Ministers of Education meeting in Bergen in May 2005.

- to improve the education available to students in higher education institutions in the EHEA;
- to assist higher education institutions in managing and enhancing their quality and, thereby, to help to justify their institutional autonomy;
- to form a background for quality assurance agencies in their work;
- to make external quality assurance more transparent and simpler to understand for everybody involved.

According to the ESG report, the “standards and guidelines for internal and external quality assurance, [...], have been developed for the use of higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies working in the EHEA, covering key areas relating to quality and standards. The purpose of these standards and guidelines is to provide a source of assistance and guidance to both higher education institutions in developing their own quality assurance systems and agencies undertaking external quality assurance, as well as to contribute to a common frame of reference, which can be used by institutions and agencies alike. It is not the intention that these standards and guidelines should dictate practice or be interpreted as prescriptive or unchangeable.”¹ The standards and guidelines are based on a number of basic principles about quality assurance, both internal in and external to higher education in the EHEA. These include:

- providers of higher education have the primary responsibility for the quality of their provision and its assurance;
- the interests of society in the quality and standards of higher education need to be safeguarded;
- the quality of academic programmes need to be developed and improved for students and other beneficiaries of higher education across the EHEA;
- there need to be efficient and effective organisational structures within which those academic programmes can be provided and supported;
- transparency and the use of external expertise in quality assurance processes are important;
- there should be encouragement of a culture of quality within higher education institutions;
- processes should be developed through which higher education institutions can demonstrate their accountability, including accountability for the investment of public and private money;
- quality assurance for accountability purposes is fully compatible with quality assurance for enhancement purposes;

¹ ENQA (2009), Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, Helsinki: ENQA, p. 15.

- institutions should be able to demonstrate their quality at home and internationally;
- processes used should not stifle diversity and innovation.

Hence the ESG report makes a distinction between (1) internal quality assurance within HEI, (2) the external quality assurance of higher education and (3) finally the quality assurance of external quality assurance agencies. For each, the headings are mentioned of the standards and guidelines and one detailed example is presented.

Internal quality guidelines include:

- 1.1) Policy and procedures for quality assurance;
- 1.2) Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards;
- 1.3) Assessment of students;
- 1.4) Quality assurance of teaching staff;
- 1.5) Learning resources and student support;
- 1.6) Information systems and
- 1.7) Public information

Example: 1.3 Assessment of students

STANDARD: Students should be assessed using published criteria, regulations and procedures which are applied consistently.

GUIDELINES: The assessment of students is one of the most important elements of higher education. The outcomes of assessment have a profound effect on students' future careers. It is therefore important that assessment is carried out professionally at all times and that it takes into account the extensive knowledge which exists about testing and examination processes. Assessment also provides valuable information for institutions about the effectiveness of teaching and learners' support. Student assessment procedures are expected to:

- be designed to measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes and other programme objectives;
- be appropriate for their purpose, whether diagnostic, formative or summative;
- have clear and published criteria for marking;
- be undertaken by people who understand the role of assessment in the progression of students towards the achievement of the knowledge and skills associated with their intended qualification;
- where possible, not rely on the judgements of single examiners;
- take account of all the possible consequences of examination regulations;
- have clear regulations covering student absence, illness and other mitigating circumstances;
- ensure that assessments are conducted securely in accordance with the institution's stated procedures;
- be subject to administrative verification checks to ensure the accuracy of the procedures.

In addition, students should be clearly informed about the assessment strategy being used for their programme, what examinations or other assessment methods they will be subject to, what will be expected of them, and the criteria that will be applied to the assessment of their performance.

The **external quality assurance** emphasises:

- 2.1) The use of internal quality assurance procedures
- 2.2) Development of external quality assurance processes
- 2.3) Criteria for decisions
- 2.4) Processes fit for purpose
- 2.5) Reporting
- 2.6) Follow-up procedures
- 2.7) Periodic reviews
- 2.8) System-wide analyses

Example: 2.2 Development of external quality assurance processes

STANDARD: The aims and objectives of quality assurance processes should be determined before the processes themselves are developed, by all those responsible (including higher education institutions) and should be published with a description of the procedures to be used.

GUIDELINES: In order to ensure clarity of purpose and transparency of procedures, external quality assurance methods should be designed and developed through a process involving key stakeholders, including higher education institutions. The procedures that are finally agreed should be published and should contain explicit statements of the aims and objectives of the processes as well as a description of the procedures to be used. As external quality assurance makes demands on the institutions involved, a preliminary impact assessment should be undertaken to ensure that the procedures to be adopted are appropriate and do not interfere more than necessary with the normal work of higher education institutions.

Furthermore, **external quality assurance agencies** are expected to develop ideas on the following topics:

- 3.1 Use of external quality assurance procedures for higher education
- 3.2 Official status
- 3.3 Activities
- 3.4 Resources
- 3.5 Mission statement
- 3.6 Independence
- 3.7 External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the agencies
- 3.8 Accountability procedures

Example: 3.7 External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the agencies

STANDARD: The processes, criteria and procedures used by agencies should be pre-defined and publicly available. These processes will normally be expected to include:

- a self-assessment or equivalent procedure by the subject of the quality assurance process;
- an external assessment by a group of experts, including, as appropriate, (a) student member(s), and site visits as decided by the agency;
- publication of a report, including any decisions, recommendations or other formal outcomes;
- a follow-up procedure to review actions taken by the subject of the quality assurance process in

the light of any recommendations contained in the report.

Guidelines: Agencies may develop and use other processes and procedures for particular purposes. Agencies should pay careful attention to their declared principles at all times, and ensure both that their requirements and processes are managed professionally and that their conclusions and decisions are reached in a consistent manner, even though the decisions are formed by groups of different people. Agencies that make formal quality assurance decisions or conclusions which have formal consequences should have an appeals procedure. The nature and form of the appeals procedure should be determined in the light of the constitution of each agency.

7.4.3 Quality in school education: sixteen quality indicators

At the conference held in Prague in June 1998, the Education Ministers of the European Union and the candidate countries proposed setting up a working group made up of national experts, with the aim of identifying a series of indicators or benchmarks to facilitate the evaluation of education systems at national level. The report was drawn up by experts from the Education Ministries of the 26 countries that took part in the Working Committee on Quality Indicators and was submitted to the Education Ministers of the European Union and the candidate countries at a meeting held in Bucharest in June 2000¹. The 16 indicators on quality of school education provide a complementary set of information, which begins to paint a picture of quality in European schools. The 16 indicators are shown in the table below:

Table 11: Areas and indicators school education

AREA	INDICATOR
Attainment	1. Mathematics 2. Reading 3. Science 4. Information and communication technologies (ICT) 5. Foreign languages 6. Learning to learn 7. Civics
Success and transition	8. Drop out 9. Completion of upper secondary education 10. Participation in tertiary education
Monitoring of school education	11. Evaluation and steering of school education 12. Parental participation
Resources and Structures	13. Education and training of teachers 14. Participation in pre-primary education 15. Number of students per computer 16. Educational expenditure per student

¹ The working committee includes experts selected by the Ministers of Education of the following countries: Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Finland, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Cyprus, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, and Slovenia.

As is presented, four areas are identified:¹

- **1. Attainment.** In this area are seven indicators of attainment which are seen as critical for all European countries in the present and for the future. In some fields — ‘mathematics’, ‘reading’, ‘science’ — data already exist. To some degree this reflects the relative ease of measurement in these curricular areas. At the other end of the spectrum ‘learning to learn’ is an indicator covering a much less easily measurable set of skills but nonetheless critical for an unpredictable social and economic future where no comparable data is presently available. In between are subjects such as ‘civics’, for which little data as yet exists, and ‘foreign languages’, which has also still to be developed. ‘Information and communication technology’ (ICT) is also included in this attainment set because, although little good data currently exists, it will be a key indicator in years to come. All of these areas of attainment remain important goals for the future.
- **2. Success and transition.** Into this area fall three indicators of highly significant policy relevance. They are closely inter-related — ‘drop-out rate from school’, ‘completion of upper secondary education’ and ‘participation in tertiary education’.
- **3. Monitoring of school education.** Two indicators currently fall into this area. These are ‘evaluation and steering of school education’ and ‘parental participation’. Both are concerned with stakeholder participation where heads of schools, teachers, students and parents are key stakeholders, consumers of information and active players in school improvement.
- **4. Resources and structures.** This category includes four indicators, each concerned with key aspects of infrastructure which underpin school performance and pupil success. These are ‘educational expenditure per student’, ‘education and training of teachers’, ‘participation rates in pre-primary education’ and ‘number of students per computer’.

Each indicator is further operationalised and existing data sources, such as Eurostat and Eurydice, are used to provide country comparisons in the report. The focus of the indicator-set is in the first place a system-perspective.

7.4.4 What could the adult learning sector learn from other sector frameworks?

The EQAVET framework and adult learning

In general, the EQAVET **framework** is relevant to adult learning. However, there are several elements, where the adult learning sector strongly diverges from VET systems (although CVET is part of the field of adult learning). This concerns the following:

¹ See: EUROPEAN COMMISSION Directorate-General for Education and Culture (2000) EUROPEAN REPORT ON THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL EDUCATION SIXTEEN QUALITY INDICATORS, Report based on the work of the Working Committee on Quality Indicator, p. 7.

- The adult learning sector is less uniform, and less regulated than the VET sector. Also, there are less courses leading to formal qualifications. Finally, the adult learning sector includes many non-state supported providers operating on the education market. This means that at national level it might not be feasible to have clear systems to decide who can offer what kind of course.
- Concerning information and the use of information on the adult learning sector, there is less formal information available on non-vocational needs and it is not widely used. Further work to make the adult learning sector more responsive to stakeholders' needs might be required.
- Feedback from participants and feedback-loops involving stakeholders are both for VET and adult learning important ways to improve the quality. For adult learning this is even more the case than for VET, as adults often learn for their own sake, follow their own learning trajectories, (partially) pay for the courses themselves and an one-size-fits-all approach is less acceptable to them. Therefore, the 'consumer' perspective may be more applicable to adult learning than it is to VET.

Overlapping issues between VET and adult learning:

- Making use of existing internal quality frameworks and models. This applies both for the VET sector and the adult learning sector.
- Communication and transparency is key in quality assurance. This is recognised both in the VET sector and the adult learning sector.
- Mutual learning, knowledge exchange and piloting interesting and promising practices is an important way of developing a quality culture both in VET and adult learning.
- Both in VET and adult learning, the relationship between financial resources and quality should be clear. High quality requires financial resources.
- Quality frameworks that cover both the content of the learning/training and the administrative structures to support the learning can be seen in both VET and adult learning.
- Stakeholder involvement is essential for both VET and adult learning so as to have the provision close to labour market and societal needs. Although, certain parts of the adult learning sector have less institutionalised stakeholder involvement (non-formal, non-vocational, liberal education), this does not mean that these sectors should not be aware of their surroundings in terms of the principal stakeholders, benefiting/supporting organisations, participants.

The **system level indicative descriptors**, with a more procedural nature, are relevant to adult learning. For instance, involving stakeholders in developing VET/ lifelong learning programmes and policies; developing implementation plans, which include considerations of the resources required, the capacity of the users and the tools and guidelines

needed for support; devising a methodology for evaluation, covering internal and external evaluation; and defining procedures, mechanisms and instruments for undertaking reviews at all levels. Whether the **EQAVET system indicators** are applicable to all adult learning sectors in the Member States is questionable as it refers to a different governance model. The VET sector is *more* uniform in terms of structure, content, level, target groups and policy aims as the broader adult learning sector. The EQAVET indicators are mainly attuned to VET and might be relevant to CVET as well, but they cannot be used for the entire adult learning sector. As the previous chapters indicated scarce evidence of the existence of system level indicators to monitor the quality in adult learning, there is only limited information on relevant additional indicators which could be added to the EQAVET list of system indicators to cover adult learning. On the other hand, the Greece π^3 framework, developed on the basis of the EQAVET recommendation, includes valuable suggestions on how to operationalise indicators for monitoring lifelong learning in general. These include for instance:

Degree of attraction of adult learners in LLL programmes	<i>Number of applications submitted by adult learners (≥ 16 years old) to participate in LLL programmes</i>
Degree of certification of qualifications acquired through LLL programmes	<i>Percentage of adult learners who successfully completed the certification procedure</i>
Degree of participation of unemployed people to LLL programmes	<i>Ratio of unemployed people participating in LLL programmes against the total number of people participating in the programmes</i>
Knowledge update of the trainers	<i>Percentage of training hours for knowledge update vs. the total number of trainers</i>

In addition, the indicators could take into account the Lisbon and EU2020 benchmarks on participation in lifelong learning, educational attainment and, as contextual indicator, the level of early school leaving. Furthermore, other statistics could be involved as well, such as the Adult education survey, the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), and the Eurostat social inclusion statistics (Living conditions and social protection).

The EQAVET **indicative descriptors at providers' level** are generally applicable to adult learning providers. Although the learning environment might be different, the procedures and structures needed to guarantee that the learning environment is of high quality are generally the same and focus on transparency in the objectives and strategy of the organisation, the quality of support structures, clear communication, quality of staff, involvement of stakeholders, feedback loops to continuously improve the quality. The EQAVET framework describes what should be included in quality plans, how these plans should be implemented, evaluated, and reviewed. As we saw in Chapter 5, the studied examples of quality assurance systems, mostly took the above-mentioned issues into account. They focus on setting requirements related to the quality of the organisation; the quality of didactics and the learning process; the quality of staff; the quality of the results. Often these quality frameworks require an internal quality model, including setting objectives, implementation plans, monitoring results etc. which fits well with the general philosophy behind the EQAVET framework. For instance, the 'seven core ele-

ments of quality' set out in the Ö-Cert reflect what is included in the EQAVET indicative descriptors at providers' level (see box):

- Mission statement of the organisation/ guiding principles (description of criteria of the guiding principles and goals of the provider)
- Offer (programme) of the organisation (provider) (description of the target groups, needs and interests, general information and data of the target groups and educational sector, information management, diversity and gender issues)
- Management of the provider organisation (quality profile)
- Quality of staff (quality profile)
- Management of quality development and culture of feedback (error management), definition of quality
- Quality of the infrastructure (resources), best conditions for the learner (clients)
- Quality of public relations and feedback culture (outreach work)

The studied examples of quality assurance systems could use the EQAVET framework quite easily and reference their own practice to the provider level indicative descriptors set. The table below provides a preliminary assessment on how the studied practices would fit the EQAVET plan, do, act, and review cycle. It is assessed whether the indicative descriptors are closely related to what is included as quality areas in the systems studied.

Table 12: Comparison EQAVET indicative descriptors and the quality areas in systems studied (Chapter 4 and 5).

Providers' level indicative descriptors EQAVET ¹	Examples	Assessment
Planning:		
European, national and regional VET policy goals/objectives are reflected in the local targets set by the VET providers		The mission statement can explicitly mention the position of the institute in relation to higher-level goals/objectives
Explicit goals/objectives and targets are set and monitored	AT, CH, DE, EL, FR, IE, MT, SI, UK	Quality assurance systems generally ask providers to set explicit goals.
Ongoing consultation with relevant stakeholders takes place to identify specific local/ individual needs	MT, EL	This depends very much on the type of adult learning and is more developed in the more vocational oriented sub-sectors
Responsibilities in quality management and development have been explicitly allocated	AT, CH, DE, EL, FR, IE, MT, NL3***, SI, UK	This is often included in the requirements for being quality assured.
There is an early involvement of staff in planning, including with regard to quality development		This could implicitly be the case in many of the examples encountered
Providers plan cooperative initiatives with other VET providers		This appears to be less developed
The relevant stakeholders participate in the process of analysing local needs		This depends very much on the type of adult learning and is more developed in the more

¹ NB: where reference is made to 'VET' instead 'adult learning' is used.

VET providers have an explicit and transparent quality assurance system in place	AT, CH, DE, EL, FR, IE, MT, NL3***, SI, UK	vocational oriented sub-sectors This is often included in the requirements for being quality assured.
Implementation:		
Resources are appropriately internally aligned/assigned with a view to achieving the targets set in the implementation plans	AT, CH, DE, FR, IE, LU, MT, NL3***, SI, UK	This is often included in the requirements for being quality assured.
Relevant and inclusive partnerships are explicitly supported to implement the actions planned		This appears to be less developed
The strategic plan for staff competence development specifies the need for training for teachers and trainers	AT, CH, DE, EL, FR, IE, MT, NL1*, NL3***, SI, UK	Staff competence is one of the more important aspect of quality assurance in AL and hence is covered by most quality assurance systems
Staff undertake regular training and develop co-operation with relevant external stakeholders to support capacity building and quality improvement, and to enhance performance	AT, CH, DE, EL, FR, IE, MT, NL1*, NL3***, SI, UK	Staff competence is one of the more important aspect of quality assurance in AL and hence is covered by most quality assurance systems
Evaluation:		
Self-assessment/self-evaluation is periodically carried out under national and regional regulations/frameworks or at the initiative of VET providers	AT, CH, DE, FR, IE, LU, MT, NL1*, NL3***, SI, UK	In most systems, providers' self-evaluation is included in the assessment procedure
Evaluation and review covers processes and results/outcomes of education including the assessment of learner satisfaction as well as staff performance and satisfaction	AT, CH, DE, EL, FR, IE, LU, MT, NL1*, SI, UK	Receiving feedback from learners is considered one of the more important quality checks in the quality assurance systems studied
Evaluation and review includes adequate and effective mechanisms to involve internal and external stakeholders	AT, CH, DE, FR, IE, LU, NL2**, NL3***, SI, UK	The control of self-evaluation reports by external evaluators is included in the assessment procedures
Early warning systems are implemented		This appears to be less developed
Review:		
Learners' feedback is gathered on their individual learning experience and on the learning and teaching environment. Together with teachers' feedback this is used to inform further actions	AT, CH, DE, FR, IE, MT, NL1*, NL2**, SI, UK	Receiving feedback from learners is considered one of the more important quality checks in the quality assurance systems studied
Information on the outcomes of the review is widely and publicly available	UK	This is less developed in the practices studied
Procedures on feedback and review are part of a strategic learning process in the organisation		This is less developed in the practices studied
Results/outcomes of the evaluation process are discussed with relevant stakeholders and appropriate action plans are put in place		This is less developed in the practices studied

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From the table it can be concluded that the indicative descriptors of EQAVET at providers' level to a large extent overlap with the quality areas found in the quality assurance systems studied:

- The indicative descriptors related to 'planning' overlap on the issues of setting objectives; consultation with stakeholders; allocation of responsibilities for quality assurance; having a transparent quality assurance system in place. In many quality assur-

ance systems, these quality areas concern mandatory requirements for being quality assured as a provider. Descriptors which are less covered by the quality assurance systems studied concern the relationship with European, national and regional (VET) policies; involvement of staff in planning; cooperation with other providers; involvement of stakeholders in analysing local needs. In general, these descriptors refer to the broader environment in which provision is provided and in some cases these are less relevant for particular domains of adult learning. For instance, private providers might see less of an advantage in cooperating with other providers, or, for providers focussing on personal development of participants; it might be less necessary to link with European, national and regional policies.

- The indicative descriptors related to **‘implementation’** overlap to an even larger extent. The allocation of resources in order to achieve targets set is considered an important condition for a quality provider. In addition, staff competences are an important element of quality at provider level and is hence covered by most (if not all) quality assurance systems studied (the extent to which criteria and requirements are set differ, however not the fact that staff quality is considered important). This is expressed as well in the finding that quality assurance systems require staff to continuously update their competences in order to enhance performance. The indicative descriptors on relevant and inclusive partnerships is not emphasised in the quality assurance systems studied.
- The indicative descriptors related to **‘evaluation’** also show an extensive overlap with quality areas identified in the quality assurance systems studied. Provider level self-evaluation and assessment are considered essential in most quality assurance systems; retrieving feedback from the learners in order to improve the provision is key as a quality check (in fact, as in many countries adult learning providers operate at a open training ‘market’, ‘client-satisfaction’ is an important element in the business). Finally, as the self-evaluations are often a first step in becoming quality assured these reports of these self-evaluations are critically examined by the responsible bodies. Early warning systems are not as such mentioned in the quality assurance systems studied.
- The indicative descriptors related to **‘review’** are in general less pronounced in the quality assurance systems studied. Only, the already discussed ‘receiving feedback from learners and teachers’ is included as important quality assurance procedure. The other descriptors (making available information on outcomes of reviews, having feedback as part of the strategic learning process of the organisation, discussing outcomes of reviews with relevant stakeholders and develop appropriate action plans) are less developed in the quality assurance systems studied.

On the other hand, there are some elements to which the EQAVET indicative descriptors pay less attention than the quality assurance systems studied. These quality areas concern more the didactical aspects of the delivery (using the right set of methods, making

the education programme tailored to the audience, etc.) and the general infrastructure of the provider. Some of the quality assurance systems indicate that the providers need to have a fit-for-purpose infrastructure, both in terms of building/equipment and support structures (administrative support, accessibility of information).

The differences between the indicative descriptors and the quality areas of the quality assurance systems studied relate to differences between the sub-sectors in general as indicated earlier in this section.

It can be concluded, that in general the framework (indicative descriptors and building blocks) of EQAVET applies to adult learning as well, albeit some slight amendments should be made, having to do with the characteristics of the governance models applicable to adult learning and the characteristics of adult learners and adult learning in general. However, as a general framework, EQAVET clearly has relevance and can be applied for adult learning as in practice the quality assurance systems studied already to a large extent point to similar indicative descriptors in relation to quality.

The ESG framework and adult learning

The internal quality guidelines within the ESG framework differ in focus in relation to the EQAVET descriptors. Where EQAVET is structured as a quality circle, the ESG is focussed on guidelines how to organise the quality assurance. With regard to these internal quality guidelines (policy and procedures for quality assurance; approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards; assessment of students; quality assurance of teaching staff; learning resources and student support; information systems and; public information) there is clearly an overlap in relation to the cases studied in the context of this study. Also in these quality assurance systems reference is made to rationalising the objectives and aims (AT, CH, DE, EL, FR, IE, MT, SI, UK) ; internal procedures to quality assure programmes and courses (AT, CH, DE, EL, FR, IE, LU, MT, NL1*, SI, UK); quality assurance of teaching staff (AT, CH, DE, EL, FR, IE, MT, NL1*, NL3***, SI, UK); quality of the learning resources (AT, CH, DE, EL, FR, IE, MT, NL2**, SI, UK); information systems and transparency and communication (AT, CH, DE, FR, IE, NL1*, NL2**, UK). Hence, the guidelines given in the ESG are applicable to adult learning providers as well. See for instance, the guideline concerning quality of staff is applicable to providers of adult learning as well (see box).¹

Quality assurance of teaching staff

STANDARD:

Institutions should have ways of satisfying themselves that staff involved with the teaching of students are qualified and competent to do so. They should be available to those undertaking external reviews, and commented upon in reports.

GUIDELINES:

Teachers are the single most important learning resource available to most students. It is important that those who teach have a full knowledge and understanding of the subject they are teaching, have the necessary skills and experience to transmit their knowledge and understanding effectively to students in a range of teaching contexts, and can access feedback on their

¹ ENQA (2009), Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, Helsinki: ENQA.

own performance. Institutions should ensure that their staff recruitment and appointment procedures include a means of making certain that all new staff have at least the minimum necessary level of competence. Teaching staff should be given opportunities to develop and extend their teaching capacity and should be encouraged to value their skills. Institutions should provide poor teachers with opportunities to improve their skills to an acceptable level and should have the means to remove them from their teaching duties if they continue to be demonstrably ineffective.

Concerning **the external quality assurance guidelines**, these could be a bit too restrictive for adult learning provision. They can be applicable to specific sub-sectors of adult learning, but cannot be applied to the wide variety of adult learning sub-sectors as there might be too burdensome for some sub-sectors. In general, when adult learning provides formal qualifications, more restricted and externally quality assured procedures can be put in place, similar to the higher education standards and guidelines.

An interesting element in the ESG is the quality assurance of quality assurance bodies. This is in fact more a meta-framework of quality assurance. This assures that accreditation organisations conduct the accreditation with a certain level of quality. For the adult learning sector, embracing a meta-framework perspective could provide a way of addressing the diversity of the sector: each sub-sector could have its own system; however, they would need to comply with uniform rules on how a quality assurance agency is organised.

The quality indicators in school education and adult learning

The quality indicators in school education are intended to describe a highly institutionalised sector, with clear education pathways, clear profiles of the pupils and clear objectives. This is reflected in the indicators set, which include content-related indicators, indicators on success and transition, indicators on monitoring of school education, and finally, indicators on resources and structures. The adult learning sector is less institutionalised, less clear in terms of education pathways of learners; less clear is the profile of the learners (prior experiences, age) and less clear in terms of objectives set. For this reason, the indicator set for school education is in general less relevant for the adult learning sector.

7.5 Conclusion

In this Chapter the characteristics of quality assurance in the non-formal adult learning sector is compared with the development of quality assurance systems in VET, HE, and general education. On the basis of this Chapter the following conclusions can be drawn:

- Quality assurance in adult learning on providers level is less developed compared to VET, General education and higher education. When it concerns setting requirements for staff, in general a larger variety of types of requirements are used (qualifications, subject knowledge, age, etc.) in adult learning.

- At system level, compared with the VET, general education and higher education, the adult learning sector is less regulated, often lacking a system level quality assurance system and has no uniform set of indicators to monitor progress.
- At European level, the HE and VET sector have already years of experience in developing a European framework for quality. When looking at which elements are relevant to adult learning the following can be concluded:
 - In general, the EQAVET is relevant to adult learning. Issues that require more attention concern the fact that the adult learning sector is less uniform; the stakeholder's needs are less pronounced; the feedback from learners should receive more attention.
 - Whether the **EQAVET system indicators** are applicable to all adult learning sectors in the Member States is questionable as it refers to a different governance model. The quantifiable indicative indicators are too much focussed on VET. Other relevant indicators that need to be taken into account to make the EQAVET list of indicators more applicable to monitor the quality in adult learning are the Adult Education Survey, the OECD Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), and the Eurostat social inclusion statistics (Living conditions and social protection). In addition, newly compiled indicators could be used at country level such as developed in the Greek π^3 framework. The more procedural **system level indicative descriptors** can be applied to adult learning as well.
 - The **EQAVET indicative descriptors** at providers' level are generally applicable to adult learning providers. The Plan, Do, Act, Evaluate quality cycle works for adult learning as well. In general, the quality assurance systems studied to a large extent fit the indicative descriptors at providers level; however, there could be more focus on the learning environment of adults.
 - With regard the ESG, the provider level guidelines are clearly relevant for the adult learning sector; the guidelines for external evaluation might however be too restrictive. The meta-level evaluation of accreditation bodies is an interesting way of dealing with diversity of systems.
 - When comparing both EQAVET and ESG on their applicability in the adult learning sector, the EQAVET framework is better suited to be applied to the wide variety of adult learning domains.
 - The indicators for quality in school education describe a sector which is very different from the adult learning sector and hence this framework is less relevant to draw lessons from.

8 Conclusions and input for reference framework

Conclusions and recommendations are derived from the findings in the content chapters. Moreover, we involved in our considerations the groups of experts, consisting of our network of correspondents; a number of additional experts; and the members of the Thematic Working Group on Quality in Adult Learning during an interview and seminar organised in the context of this project. These sources provided the information, review and feedback to formulate and prioritise our recommendations.

The recommendations apply to many stakeholders, all playing a role in policy-making and consecutive development and implementation processes. These stakeholders include politicians, ministries, policy-makers, public agencies and public providers, regional and local authorities, social partners, NGOs and churches, but also staff and adult learners themselves.

This chapter starts by defining the most important conclusions that can be drawn from the findings in the individual chapters (Section 8.1)¹. Hereafter, specific recommendations for European countries to improve their quality systems (Section 8.2)²; and finally recommendations are provided related to the development of a European quality framework (Section 8.3).

8.1 Conclusions

(1) The main challenges in the countries studied

The findings of the study provide an argument that in most countries, **quality assurance systems, especially for the non-formal adult learning sector can be further developed**. Three arguments feed this conclusion. First of all overarching quality systems crossing different sub-sectors are hardly evident in the studied countries (with the exception of Ö-Cert and EduQua having labels that could be used in all sub-domains of adult learning). Besides, quality systems for the formal part of adult learning leading to state recognised qualifications are generally in place, often strongly interlinked to the standards set for formal education, but often, no specific reference is made to the group of adult learners. Finally, assessing quality systems existing in the non formal part of adult learning we can conclude that in many countries quality systems are still lacking or are only implemented for a very specific segment in the field of adult learning (see for a detailed overview chapter 3).

The countries that lack or are having limited number of quality systems in place **face at the same time the most severe challenges**. Besides of the lack of quality systems, some

¹ For an overview of the key findings we refer to the concluding sections of each chapter.

² It should be noticed that political decisions are made at central, regional or local level and sometimes at different levels concurrently, with many countries showing a high degree of decentralisation. However, not all policy implications apply equally to all countries included in this study. In some cases these policy direction are already in place, while for others they may have less relevance because of different learning cultures, government structures and regulations. Besides, interesting initiatives from one country cannot automatically be replicated in another country.

countries report on highly fragmented systems (sometimes leading to the situation that one provider is falling under different regimes). In these countries standards or requirements for assuring the quality of adult learning staff, but also guidance and APL provision, are also often lacking. At the same time these countries generally also score low on the ET2020 benchmarks that are particularly relevant for adult learning, such as participation in LLL and educational attainment level of adults.

For the countries that face the most severe challenges **the study identified a high number of interesting practices** which can serve as inspiration for improving and setting of quality assurance systems in the different countries including their success and fail factors (see the findings of chapter 6 but also the recommendations on country level in Section 8.2).

A key challenge that addresses all countries is that there is **very limited (monitoring) information available on system level** on the provision, learning outcomes and quality standards in place, specifically for the non-formal part of adult learning. Due to the lack of this (comparable) information there is limited insight in the results of adult learning in social and economic terms, based on cost-benefit analysis. This also counts for the cost and benefits of quality assurance instruments, if they are in place.

(2) The need for European quality reference framework in adult learning

The conclusions above provide an **argument for the development of a reference framework for quality in adult learning** at the European level to serve as reference that Member States could use to develop standards for the whole sector (in case systems are lacking or highly fragmented). This reference framework could be used by national, regional, sectoral and institutional organisations in developing quality policies. It is important to differentiate in the framework between the different adult learning domains (e.g. higher education, vocational education, second chance and liberal education) and types of provision (formal and non-formal).

(3) Interlinking with other European Quality Frameworks

There is a **plea for an integrated approach for quality linking up with other European quality frameworks already developed in the last decade**. There are some strong arguments to link up with the quality framework already developed for the VET sector (EQAVET) and make this framework adult learning proof, instead of developing a separate framework. The following arguments can be summed up:

- Chapter 7 provides strong evidence that EQAVET (such as the quality model, building blocks and indicative descriptors set) is also applicable to adult learning provision. EQAVET needs slight modification to adopt it to the adult learning sector;
- Having different quality frameworks in place could lead to confusion amongst stakeholders (“again another framework”), especially in case a provider provides services in the vocational as well the non vocational domain (theoretically falling under two quality frameworks).
- Aligning with EQAVET leads to economies of scale making use of the existing platforms of national reference points, EQAVET network, the products and tools that has

been developed, and the experience of the European Commission guiding this process.

The findings of the study provide an argumentation **to enlarge the EQAVET quality model by including adult learning stakeholders**. Further elaborating on the first argument above, the cases studied in the framework of this study show that quality systems for adult learning, despite of the different regimes, all share some basic principles very much aligned with what has been developed in the context of EQAVET. This counts as well for the building blocks and indicative descriptors as defined by EQAVET that can be adapted to adult learning.

- First of all **similar quality philosophies** can be found in the adult learning sector, very much aligned with what has been developed in the context of EQAVET, such as the use of the concept of quality circle (plan, do, check, and act) commonly used in different fields of education.
- Secondly, quality systems also adapt **similar procedures**, such that a quality system is required on providers' level, the application of self-evaluation and requirements regarding transparency and openness of the systems, and some form of external evaluation (see chapter 4). Providers in most cases have the freedom to decide and construct this quality system (by using different labels such as ISO, EQM, EFQM, etc.), although examples can be found of special developed quality seals / labels for adult learning (such as eduQua (CH) and Greta plus (FR)).
- Thirdly, **similar descriptors and indicators** have been identified in the case studies as has been developed by EQAVET (as well as for the ESG in HE, and the indicators for general education), mainly on providers level. Most of the time they address organisational issues; quality of the didactics and the learning process; quality of staff; and quality of measuring results (see chapter 5). The main exception is that the VET (and more specifically the HE and the general education sector) is more uniform, so the indicators are more linked to the specificity of each subsector. The indicators on system level show more variety. In case EQAVET will be broadened to the field of adult learning, these indicators should be further broadened to the specific characters of the adult learning sector (in terms of goals, governance models, finance, stakeholders involved, types of provision, learners, and learning outcomes).

Due to these similarities we propose therefore to **take the quality model of EQAVET as reference point for adult learning** and add adult learning specific characteristics to it. The question how to do this will be further discussed in Section 8.3.

Broadening the scope of EQAVET to adult learning could at the same time be a first step finally leading to a **future quality assurance framework for lifelong learning**, being an inspirational model for all educational sectors (also including HE and general education).

The following sections will further discuss what can be recommended based on these conclusions, on national as well as on European level.

8.2 Specific recommendations for European countries improving their quality systems

Based on the conclusions above, the following recommendations can be made that will help to improve the quality in adult learning in European countries. These recommendations are related to the system challenges which are identified in chapter 6 and inter-linked with concrete cases studied that serve as inspiration for countries to further develop their systems (see also chapter 3, 4 and 5 for a systematic analysis of cases studied, and the independent case studies as provided in the Annex).

For countries facing a lack of an overarching quality framework for adult learning, it is recommended **to develop an overarching system which sets minimum requirements for providers to get validated** (applies mostly to NL, BG, CZ, CY, HR, PL, BE (Flanders), BE (Wallonia), LU, MT, TK). As inspiration, the following systems can be further examined: meta-frameworks such as in Ö-Cert (AT) or overarching frameworks such as EduQua (CH), and the FETAC framework (IE).

For countries facing a lack of a system / framework / regulation for assuring quality in the non-formal part of adult learning, there are **three potential responses**, dependent on what countries feel best suitable for them (applies mostly to DK, EE, NL, NO, ES, IS, BG, CZ, CY, BE (Wallonia), FR, IT, MT):

- **Develop a quality assurance system for non-formal adult learning, with setting minimum quality requirements.** Inspirational models for this concern firstly, systems organised by public bodies, such as EduQua (CH) Greta-plus (FR); Quality label (LU); and secondly, they concern systems organised by private bodies, such as the Hamburg model (DE); the quality seal for folk universities (NL) and the code of conduct for Dutch private providers (NL).
- **Stimulating quality developments without setting minimum quality requirements.** As inspiration one could have a look at existing quality prizes in Germany, Sweden and Finland.
- **Providing additional support structures.** The Quality guidelines/manual developed in Sweden (BRUK); the staff development programmes developed in Norway and Malta; the Slovenian initiative 'Offering Quality Education to Adults' and the Czech 'Concept' project, could serve as inspiration.

For countries facing a lack of attention for adult learning specific elements in their quality systems / regulation for formal education, it is recommended **to increase attention to adult learning elements in formal education** (applies mostly to NL, BG, CZ, CY, HR, HU, PL, RO, LU). This includes changing policy and legal frameworks related to the educational sectors in question and engaging the stakeholders to change the regulations as they are, in order to increase the attention to adult learning specific elements in the quality assurance systems. Inspiring examples related to VET can be found in UK (Wales), namely the ESTYN inspectorate, in Ireland, the FETAC framework; and in France, the Greta-plus quality label. Related to general education, the system which is

particularly interesting to look at is the quality assurance structures in basic skills in Malta.

For countries facing a lack of (specific) legal requirements for adult learning staff/ Lack of initial training and continuing professional development, it is recommended **to set staff requirements at national level and develop opportunities for initial and further training of teachers in adult learning** (applies to most countries). Actions in this field should take into account the recommendations related to the study on key competences of adult learning professionals. Inspiring examples of frameworks where explicit attention is given to requirements set for adult learning staff can be found in Malta, namely in the quality assurance structures in basic skills.

For countries facing a lack of system / regulation for assuring quality of APL provision and guidance, there are two potential responses, dependent on what countries would like to focus on (in relation to APL, this applies mostly to DK, EE, UK, ES, BG, CY, PL, BE (Walloon), EL, LU, MT, TK; in relation to guidance, this applies mostly to EE, UK, ES, DE, PL, BE (Walloon), EL, MT). Firstly, **set minimum quality requirements for APL providers**. Inspiring examples can be found in the Netherlands, Quality Code APL; and Portugal, quality charter New Opportunity Centres; and secondly, **set minimum quality requirements for guidance providers**. An inspiring example can be found in Denmark: quality in guidance.

For countries facing a lack of monitoring data in the AL sector (provision of AL and effects), it is recommended **to establish sector-level indicators for monitoring the sector** (applies mostly to DK, EE, NL, NO, ES, IS, BG, CY, DE, HR, HU, LT, LV, RO, EL, IE, MT, PT, TK). These indicators should be tailored to the specific objectives of the adult learning system in the country. Although not yet implemented, the Greek "Quality - Always - Everywhere framework" provides an inspiring example to develop indicator sets to monitor the sector.

8.3 Recommendations on the development of a European level quality framework

On the basis of the key findings presented in the chapters, and the conclusions drawn from them, the following is recommended in relation to the development of a European level quality framework.

This study recommends **elaborating the EQAVET framework** to the field of adult learning. This broadening of the framework could also mean making a first step to the development of a future European Quality Assurance Framework for Lifelong Learning (also embracing HE and general education). Such a framework could improve the availability of comparable information on lifelong learning and adult learning in particular, as countries are asked to take the framework as reference for setting up or further develop their quality systems.

It is recommended that an elaborated **EQAVET framework is flexible and respect principles of adult learning**. A cross-national quality framework should be flexible, open and transparent to all stakeholders in the adult learning sector; it should comprise both a

technical and political approach while developing it; and it should take into account the particularities of the adult learning sector (serving different goals, provided by a wide diversity of providers, taking place in different learning environments, and the involvement of wide variety of social and economic actors); and endorse the basic principles related to quality adult learning (that adult learning provision should be tailor-made, learner-centred and attuned to the specific learning needs of the adult learner, and should be offered in a flexible manner in terms of duration, time, and place). Most importantly, however, for working towards a European level framework, it is essential that it is developed on the basis of, or in accordance with national quality frameworks for adult learning and existing practices in place. Finally, the development of a European level framework should respect the principle of subsidiarity.

With regard the adjustment of the EQAVET recommendation, it is recommended that **the list of indicators is extended with more adult learning relevant indicators**, i.e.: the Adult Education Survey, the OECD Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), and the Eurostat social inclusion statistics (Living conditions and social protection). In addition, newly compiled indicators could be used at country level such as developed in the Greek π^3 framework. Furthermore, with regard system level indicative descriptors, the more procedural system level indicative descriptors can be applied in adult learning as well. Finally, the quality assurance systems studied to a large extent fit the indicative descriptors at providers level; however, there could be more focus on the learning environment of adults (according to the principles mentioned here before such as the offer of flexible learning trajectories).

This calls for an implementation strategy along the steps as discussed below:

- **Step 1) The transition should be conducted preferably on a legal basis:** In order to expand the scope of the EQAVET recommendation of 2009, a legal document should be drawn up to base the work on renewing this recommendation (this would create the foundation to jointly work on renewing the recommendation). The results of this report, the current evaluation of EQAVET, and the result of the work done by the Thematic Working Group on Quality in adult learning, provides the opportunity to create momentum for agreeing on a legal document to broaden the EQAVET framework and make some first steps to a lifelong learning framework. This legal document should not immediately propose what the renewed framework will look like, but will set the agenda and a time-plan for arriving at a renewed framework to be accepted by the European Council and the European Parliament.
- **Step 2) The transition should involve a broad group of EU and national stakeholders:** When a legal basis is created, all relevant stakeholders can start working on shaping the framework on the basis of EQAVET. However, this has to be coordinated by the European Commission. It is therefore recommended to extend the EQAVET working group and the national reference points for VET to include adult learning stakeholders as well, mainly representing the provision of basic skills and liberal adult learning. The current Thematic Working Group on Quality in adult learning – or its follow up - could either be a sub-group of the EQAVET working group, or could be organ-

ised in parallel, but in close cooperation with the EQAVET group, to promote quality in adult learning. Furthermore, at EU level, but more importantly at national level, consultations should start to get stakeholders involved in the process of renewing the EQAVET framework. Questions that should receive attention in the consultation should be: 1) To what type of provision should the framework of quality apply? How can different objectives of adult learning be included in one single framework? Is there need to establish a quality label related to the framework? The consultation should involve VET providers, HE providers, Non-formal adult learning providers, Secondary education schools involved in basic skills and second-chance education, social partners, private training providers, public employment services, local, regional and national governments, associations of providers, quality assurance agencies in all sectors.

- **Step 3) The transition should be both a social-political and a technical-scientific process:** The consultation provides insight in what is socially and politically feasible at country level to include in a quality framework for lifelong learning. This should however, be technically backed up with pilot studies, cross-country comparisons, sectoral studies on whether the framework leads to results. For this purpose the renewed lifelong learning programme (Erasmus for All) could play an important role. The results of these technical projects should again feed the consultation and provide an evidence base and additional learning material to further develop the framework.
- **Step 4) The transition should stem from the interchange of EU and MS-level developments:** In addition to the balance between the social-political and the technical process, there should as well be a balance between the national and European developments. There should be a constructive interchange of experiences between the national and the European level. This can be fostered by linking the framework to other, more advanced European/national developments such as the European Qualifications Framework/ National Qualifications Framework.
- **Step 5) The transition should have clear objectives, both related to the transition itself and the objectives of the final product:** As mentioned, the legal document on which the whole process should be build, should include an agenda and a time plan for the process. Hence, the common objectives on which the adult learning community is working should be clear. The final product should have a clear profile as well. It should be clear for all stakeholders: What is the aim of the framework? Why is it needed? How should it be used? To whom does it apply? Who is responsible?

The time plan to unroll the strategy to develop and implement a renewed EQAVET framework, broadened to the field of adult learning, should take into account the fact that the subject currently has momentum (as explained earlier, given for instance the EQAVET evaluation). Therefore, first (preparatory) actions should be taken, to set the first steps and maintain this momentum. It is expected that when there is a legal document to work on the revision (step 1), implementing the subsequent steps (2-5), will

take approximately 2 years. For the further development and implementation at provider level, given experiences with other frameworks, another 5-7 years might be required.

The broadening of the EQAVET framework also calls for the need to change the name of the framework. This name should be better adapted to the new users and audience, without losing the brand that has been carefully developed over the last years. This name should preferably refer to the concepts of lifelong learning, quality assurance, framework, and that it is European.

Annex 1: Long list of 43 case studies

#	C	Name and short description
1	AT	Ö-CERT (AT-CERT) (an overall framework of quality for adult education in Austria). For transparency, simplified administration and to promote an overall strategy of quality, the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture developed the Ö-CERT (AT-Cert) - in cooperation with leading Austrian experts, representatives of the nine Austrian provinces and providers of Adult education. Ö-CERT is implemented at macro-level (policy) and the target is to assure the quality of providers all over Austria. Ö-CERT is focussed by the Austrian Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture to assure and to improve the quality of structures of Adult Learning (Adult Education). The aim of Ö-CERT is: ■ Transparency for customers/learners and for public authorities: At first glance the customers and public authority see, who's a quality provider - because of the rating Ö-Cert (AT-Cert). ■ Simplified administration (one certificate will be enough. It's not necessary anymore to pass and pay for the admission to nine Austrian provinces Quality Assurance Procedures. Ö-Cert (AT-Cert) is accepted all over Austria. ■ Quality improvement for adult education: Providers without any quality efforts till now should be motivated to acquire one quality certificate.
2	BG	Applying quality assurance in a Bulgarian teacher training context. The scope is local in terms of its focus (Foreign Language Teachers – FLTs) and as it introduces a quality assurance tool called 'Pedagogical Portfolio for Foreign Language Teacher Trainees', but it is addressed nationally. The Pedagogical Portfolio for Foreign Language Teacher Trainees was designed and developed by a team of FLT experts at the Department of Applied Linguistics (now Department of Foreign Languages and Literature) of the New Bulgarian University (NBU), Sofia, Bulgaria, to facilitate the education of pre-service FL teacher trainees enrolled in the BA and MA teacher training programmes. It was officially published in 2004 but the material in the portfolio had been previously piloted and refined over a period of more than eight years. Its main purpose is to assure and improve the quality of the training offered. The tool can be implemented at micro level only.
3	CH	EduQua: The eduQua certification process certifies adult continuing education institutions. EduQua defines six criteria, which are key to the quality of an institution: (1) the course offer, (2) communication with clients, (3) value performance, (4) staff - the educators, (5) learning success, and (6) quality assurance and development. eduQua stimulates quality development; through the preparation for a certification, the on-site audit, certification report, yearly intermediate audits, and with the renewal of the certification every three years. (Compare the descriptions above e.g. Certificates SVEB 1, 2, 3 = criteria 4 (staff/ educators). eduQua is the first Swiss quality label for adult continuing education. The quality label provides certified institutions with a considerable advantage in the eyes of their clients. The quality management also supports an improvement through the certification process. The certification proves to be an advantage when dealing with the authorities: in increasingly more cantons, the certification is a requirement for public funding. The Swiss Conference of the Cantonal Educating Directors recommends that the cantons check "the quality of the providers in the education sector in all of Switzerland based on the same criteria and make national subsidies dependent on a proof of quality (eduQua)". eduQua is made up of over 1000 schools, institutions and academies of the non-formal sector of AL
4	CH	Train the Trainer (AdA) as a 3-level core concept of staff quality. ■ Level 1: The SVEB-Certificate was introduced in 1995 (AdA-module level 1) ■ Level 2: The Federal Certificate of Competence for adult education instructors was introduced in 2000 (AdA-module level 2) ■ Quality label for providers: In 2000, the quality label for training providers "eduQua" was introduced (detail information can be found here at http://www.eduqua.ch) ■ Level 3: The federal diploma "Advanced Federal Diploma in Training Management and Human Resources Management" was introduced in 2006 (AdA-module level 3)
5	CY	Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Cyprus The role of the Council of Educational Evaluation-Accreditation (C.E.E.A) of Private Institutions of Higher Education. The first attempt to regulate the evaluation process of Private Tertiary Education in Cyprus was initiated in 1987 with the establishment of the law for tertiary education institutions (N1/87). The Department of Higher and Tertiary Education, which is part of the Ministry of Education and Culture, undertook the task of creating an institutional framework for the educational evaluation - accreditation of programmes of study. The process of programmatic evaluation began

#	C	Name and short description
		in 1992, when the Ministry of Education and Culture accepted the first applications from Private Institutions of Tertiary Education (PITE) for the evaluation of their programs. The competent authority in the Republic of Cyprus for carrying out programmatic evaluation and accreditation of the Private Institutions of Higher Education is the Council of Educational Evaluation–Accreditation (C.E.E.A).
6	CZ	Continuing Education Concept (Koncept Dalšího Vzdělávání) project To implement the general directives given in the 2007 Lifelong Learning Strategy for the Czech Republic, the Continuing Education Concept has been initiated in 2009. The concept focuses at (1) the recognition of further education, (2) stimulation of the demand for further education for individuals and businesses; (3) alignment of educational provisions with labour market needs; and (4) promotion of continuing education, the quality of continuing education, and information and advisory systems. The quality section of Concept focuses on the creation of tools for quality self-assessment and quality evaluation for educational institutions; the creation of tools for the qualification of adult education teachers; and the analysis of activities necessary to ensure the quality of verification and recognition of continuing education. In addition Concept aims to develop a monitoring system for further education (part of “Support of further education”). Concept exists out of two phases: (1) analysis and the development of a further education system; (2) a pilot verification and subsequently implementation.
7	DE	Quality association CET Hamburg (Qualitätsverbund Weiterbildung Hamburg e.V.) The Hamburg model (see KRÜGER 1999) belongs to the quality associations that were founded in a relatively early phase of the discussion on quality. Due to this pioneering role it has attracted a relatively high share of attention. On national level, it arouses a high level of interest and is rudimentarily replicated in some regions [most recently in Hessen in form of the CET association Hessen (Weiterbildung Hessen e.V.) and in North Rhine Westphalia in form of the association for seals of approval]. The model is practiced as a voluntary self-controlling device to promote quality assurance and the protection of participants. The provider Quality Association CET Hamburg sets obligatory quality standards. Training providers are obligated to develop these quality standards and receive a quality or approval seal after the inspection. This inspection of member organisations concerning their adherence to quality standards is repeated every three years. In this network of associations, about 200 Hamburg CET providers are represented. Their aim is to create consumer-oriented market transparency based on a CET information system [Weiterbildungsinformationssystem (WISY)] with currently more than 10,000 events of approximately 500 providers in the region and a quality seal which underlies the implementation of quality concepts since 1993. Currently, this quality seal exists for approximately 18 % of all public available CET offers in Hamburg. Quality standards are set by a pluralistically composed Advisory Board, the quality seal can only be granted via membership in the association. The applicant providers obligate themselves to obey the set quality standards; the association is responsible for auditing the quality standards and undertakes consultation and qualification offers. Quality standards are monitored by review committees via check lists. The association also functions as a consumer protection body with intense work in public relations. Follow-up assessments occur every three years, in the meantime appeals boards exist (see the Quality Association CET Hamburg’s website).
8	DK	The Danish Evaluation Institute EVA is an independent state institution established under the Ministry of Education in 1999. The institute succeeded the Evaluation Centre which existed from 1992-1999. The focus of their activities is on all levels of education including all types of adult education that get public funding. They have carried out evaluations of e.g. preparatory adult education, adult vocational training programmes, and the diploma degree system which is continuing professional education at bachelor level. Research and evaluations are carried out on their own initiative as well as on request from ministries, local authorities and educational institutions among others. Their tasks within the area divide into two main tracks. EVA carry out initial accreditation assessments of short-cycle and medium-cycle further continuing professional education. In the assessment EVA focus on quality and relevance in relation to demands of the labour market. EVA also carry out evaluations and surveys of how the different aspects of the area function, e.g. preparatory adult education and basic adult education – a parallel to respectively lower and upper secondary education in the mainstream education system. Within further adult education where accreditation is a main task, our focus is on assuring quality, relevance, transparency and flexibility between the different levels, e.g. diploma and master levels.
9	DK	Adult and continuing educational centres In 2011, cooperation in the 13 ACE centres, which were established in 2010 with the purpose of strengthening motivation and enabling ACE, especially for people with or without vocational training, is being consolidated and developed. The ACE centres offer a flexible, well-organised and efficient education, which benefits both workplaces and workers. The centres work to develop the cooperation between education institutions, users and organisations, as well as stra-

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		tegic cooperation with regional growth forums, job centres and employment agencies. By contacting an ACE centre, companies and citizens can get all the advice they need from one single source. The tasks of the ACE centres include carrying out comprehensive and goal-oriented outreach guidance and counselling activities covering all the education options offered at ACEs, clarifying competence development needs for companies and employees, and coordinating general education and vocational training efforts. The work carried out by the ACE centres builds on the experiences from 22 advice centres, which were discontinued and evaluated in 2009. Source: Adult Education in Denmark (2011)
10	EE	Quality in Estonian non-formal education (The Estonian Non-formal Adult Education Association (ENAEA). The ENAEA started a project to determine what should be the basis for evaluating the quality of an education centre? Their starting point is the level of satisfaction of the learner, educator, financial supporter, employer, the local community as well of the whole society. ENAEA have investigated whether the education offered by their education centre reaches the expectations of these interest groups. ENAEA did not try to find out which education centres teach more comprehensively and which ones superficially – ENAEA based their research completely on the content levels of the different interest groups. Besides evaluating the quality of the teaching of single disciplines it is important not to forget to question whether non-formal education as a whole is meeting the needs and expectations of the Estonian society. At first a pilot project was launched for four educational centres, after that all the remaining centres got evaluated. The adequacy of self-evaluation was then evaluated by outside experts. The outside evaluation by experts started in 2006. An expert (usually a director or a teacher of a non-formal education centre or someone actively participating in the field) was also creating the evaluation model. Conclusions to these evaluations were published in December 2006. As to the results we can say that learners, educators, employers, local self-governments as well as other collaboration partners are in general satisfied with our education centres.
11	EL	Quality assurance and quality management in Greek Higher education: the case of HQAA and MODIP. The relevant Law (3374/2005) demanded from each tertiary education institution in Greece to set up a “Quality Assurance Unit”, with the responsibility to coordinate internal evaluations implemented by each one of the educational units of an institution every two years. Additionally, this Law demanded from the institutions to implement external evaluation conducted by a “Committee of External Evaluation”, with experts drawn from a special register developed by HQAA.
12	EL	‘Π^3 framework’ (National Quality Assurance Framework for Lifelong Learning). ‘Π^3 framework’ is a new initiative that is still under consideration by the Ministry of National Education. ‘Π^3 framework’ recommends the incorporation of quality systems in the LLL and accreditation service providers as an indicator whereas it sets a ratio of LLL and accreditation service providers with a quality system against the total number of certified service providers. ‘Π^3 framework’ foresees the degree to which LLL institutions incorporate the aforementioned principles in their systems and operational procedures is evaluated, at a top level via a set of fifteen (15) measurable qualitative and quantitative indicators.
13	ES	Quality assurance in distance education: Aula Mentor Aula Mentor” (Classroom Mentor) is a open and free training system via the Internet promoted by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport of Spain through the General Office of Lifelong Learning. Target group is the Spanish speaking adult population (over 16 years). “Aula Mentor” is actively involved through agreements of cooperation with a large set of autonomous communities, local and regional authorities and public entities dependent on territorial local authorities. Upon entering into such an agreement with the Ministry, the sponsoring institution agrees to provide and maintain the necessary hardware, including Internet connections, and the selection and payment of technical staff to maintain the machinery and address any technical problems encountered while the machines are in use. The National Centre for Education Information and Communication, for its part, agrees to train this technical administrator; select, train and monitor the performance of the “mentors” (discussed ahead); create and update course materials; organize and evaluate all courses; and maintain the program’s server. In terms of costs and financing, the program more than pays for itself. Sponsoring organizations provide the space, and enrolment fees cover the cost of maintenance, including of technical support staff. Every student has his or her own online “mentor”. He/she is responsible for keeping him or her on track and monitoring and evaluating progress made on all course work. Recruited, trained and selected by the (Spanish) Ministry of Education, the mentors are the key component of the program. They are responsible for ensuring that learning objectives are met online.
14	FI	Quality prizes within adult learning In Finland there are national quality prizes since 2001 over the following sectors: (1) adult education centres (Med-

#	C	Name and short description
		borgarinstitut) (ex from 2007); (2) VET (Yrkesutbildning) (ex from 2006, 2007); and (3) Läroavtalsutbildare (ex from 2007, 2008). The prices are given on provider level and have each year separate themes. The special theme for the year 2007 quality price was the language education at the (medborgarinstitutens) together with a strengthening of the teachers competences. The purpose of the Quality price within VET is to support and to motivate the providers of education and educational organisations to a continuous assessment and development of the quality together with their fundamental tasks. The purpose of the Quality price is to support and inspire the "medborgarinstitut" to further development of their activities and their quality. The Quality price supports and inspires the "medborgarinstitut" local and regional tasks and their influence on the society and their general context. The purpose includes the development of good practice for the fundamental for learning Internally in the organizations and the quality price shall make VET more known and attractive. The purpose of the quality price for "läroavtalsutbildare" are to encourage employers to use and develop the "läroavtalsutbildningen" and to find the best methods and spread these to other employer-organisations as examples of best practice for "ordnat läroavtalsverksamhet". The enterprises will be analysed according to The assessment criteria used in the European model for quality: (EFQM). It is also the purpose of the price to give more focus to the "läroavtal"
15	FI	Quality projects in VET The state funding reserved for the internationalisation of vocational education and training in 2011 is 1.000.000 euro which is 200.000 more than in the previous year. When the funds are granted, priority is given to projects the following development areas: ■ Developing key skills and competences for the changing labour market ■ Developing international cooperation in quality assurance ■ Strengthening the international dimension as part of the organisation's strategy and developing the institutions' international activities ■ Developing mobility activities and quality of these ■ Piloting ECVET (FINECVET)
16	FI	OSAAVA programme A new fixed-term national OSAAVA programme has been operational since 2010. The programme supports the obligation of education providers to ensure the continuing education of their education personnel and to ensure staff opportunities to improve their professional competence. The Ministry of Education and Culture has allocated extra funding to ensure the continuing professional development for education personnel. The programme is foreseen to continue until 2016.
17	FI	Adult Learners Week Since 1998, Finland has organised an Adult Learners' Week every autumn. This event aims to motivate adults to learn by raising the public profile of teachers, organisations and students in adult education.
18	FR	Label Greta-Plus Before 2001 a number of different quality standards were used by the <i>Greta</i>. This made it difficult to compare the quality of services provided by different <i>Greta</i>. Since 2001 these different labels have been replaced by a single reference label, which covers the same demands as made by the previously existing labels. This Greta-Plus label is related to a common reference framework which contains identical demands for all <i>Gretas</i>. In 2009 a new reference norm was developed in cooperation with the French Association for Standardization (<i>Association française de normalisation: AF-NOR</i>) and linked to the Greta-Plus label. This reference on good practice (<i>Référentiel de bonnes pratiques</i>) is referred to as BP X50-762 and is intended to strengthen the legitimacy of the <i>Greta</i> system. The new reference norm contains twenty-six commitments which are categorised under seven key demands: (1) responsibilities and organisation, (2) definition of strategies and putting in place a policy on further development, (3) development of products, (4) the realisation of tailor-made service, (5) mobilisation of the necessary means, (6) quality evaluation, (7) management of documentation and information.
19	HR	Croatia Adult Learning - CARDS 2004 (2007-2009) Croatia – Technical assistance under the EU-funded CARDS programme. Croatia received support and technical assistance to improve the quality of adult education. The project started in September 2007 and finished in April 2009. The scope is national. This project connects policy-led implementation through the involvement of providers towards the quality development of local learning environment and the provision of adult education services.
20	HU	New Hungary Development Plan – Social Renewal Operative Programme (ÚMFT TÁMOP) 2.2.1-08/1-2008-0002 macro-project.

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		The scope of the initiative is to help the development and progress of a quality-centred VET and adult education by modernising quality assurance, monitoring of career, development of professional examination, and, on the other hand, emphasizing the development of contents of education/training (assessment and measuring, curriculum development); the project has got a significant HR-component (in-service training of and language teaching for VET teachers) and the preparations for SMEs willing to provide apprenticeship for VET students. The project has covered a reasonable development of certain tools to help raising attention to VET and other adult education programmes. The coordinator of the Programme is the National Institute for Vocational and Adult Education
21	IE	Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) Quality Assurance System. FETAC is the awarding body for non-tertiary further education and training (FET) certified at Levels 1 – 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). FETAC has an integrated Quality Assurance system that covers all levels of the FET learning process at micro, meso and macro levels. FETAC makes awards to learners completing a broad range of programmes offered by a variety of VET providers, and has developed a comprehensive strategy to quality assure the programmes leading to its awards. This strategy involves a number of co-ordinated separate functions, including agreeing quality assurance; formal accreditation of the provider; programme validation; assessment verification; and continuous monitoring of quality standards. In March 2006, FETAC adopted and published its policies on ‘Quality Assuring, Assessment, Validation and Monitoring of Programmes’ for providers who wish to become recognised by them.
22	IS	European Quality Mark (EQM). The EQM is a transparent assessment process where the learning provider gets the opportunity to review own processes by using a set of indicators that are based on commonly agreed standards. It helps organizations to identify, what they do well and what is missing from their quality system. The transparency of the self-assessment form gives the provider the opportunity to make an action plan for improvement and actually implement good quality practice before asking for the external evaluation of the practice. The EQM is the product of the Recall project. It is now being implemented here in Iceland by the Education and Training Service Centre (Fraedslumidstod atvinnulifsins).
23	IT	Quality Charter for education services of the Folk university of Rome (Università Popolare di Roma: UPTER) This concerns a meso level approach to ensure the quality and transparency of the provision offered at the popular folk university. The principle underlying the quality of the provision are the following: ■ The customer orientation; ■ The mutually beneficial relationships with suppliers; ■ The involvement of human resources; ■ The process approach; ■ The system approach; ■ Continuous improvement; ■ The approach to decisions based on facts.
24	LT	MATHEMATICS IN ACTION/MIA The aim of the practice is to support teachers in adult education in order to improve the quality of learning and teaching of mathematics in adult education. The needs of adult learners without a secondary education are also addressed by widening learning opportunities for them. The project Mathematics in Action (MiA), has succeeded in overcoming problems faced by adults in acquiring mathematical skills in out-of-school situations. Ways of teaching and coaching adults in real-life learning situations and providing evidence of the effectiveness of the teaching and coaching methods were developed. A handbook developed through the MiA investigations was published, presenting examples of good practice and theoretical ideas about doing and learning mathematics in actual real life situations,.
25	LU	Label de Qualité (established by a regulation of March 2000) The quality label was initiated to ensure a minimum set of quality standards being guaranteed in the difficult-to-regulate non-formal continuing education sector. It also allows the government to gather data and publish statistics on non-formal continuing education. The label can be obtained voluntarily but is coupled to state subsidies, which makes it attractive for municipalities and associations to obtain the label; hence it has a high degree of coverage. The label can also be used to attract new participants. The label exists of five sets of criteria. The exact criteria have been modified a couple of times since
26	MT	Quality Assurance Structures in the provision of basic literacy, numeracy and computer awareness in the evening courses offered by the Directorate for Lifelong Learning (DLL). The Directorate for Lifelong Learning (DLL) within the Ministry of Education and Employment is currently working to develop its Quality Assurance processes for the evening courses which it offers to adult learners. Courses are provided

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		in a wide range of subject areas (see www.eveningcourses.gov.mt) and the DLL wishes to provide successful learners with an accredited qualification at Level 1 on the Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF).
27	NL	Quality code APL (Kwaliteitscode EVC). The quality code concerns the quality of providers offering APL trajectories. The Quality code API is a framework for accreditation and standardisation for APL-procedures in the Netherlands. The code particularly focuses on the quality of APL procedures. It states that for instance responsibilities should be clearly identified, information should be transparent, the APL certificates need to include certain information and quality assurance procedures should be in place to be able to improve the procedures on an ongoing basis.
28	NL	Code of Conduct private providers The NRTO developed a Code of Conduct for the members (i.e. the providers). Which includes rules concerning: Information; Guidance for teaching staff; Work processes; Learning material; Guidance and counselling; Education and exams; Facilities; Recruitment; Complaints procedures; Registration; Transparency. In order to be eligible for VAT reduction in providing education to adults, the private providers need to be registered in the CRKBO-register. The principles and requirements are in line with the code of conduct developed by NRTO.
29	NL	Quality seal Folk universities A code of conduct/quality seal for folk universities has recently (2007) been developed and some providers have been awarded the quality seal. This bottom-up framework focuses on: Quality of education offer; Quality of care for teachers, staff and volunteers; Quality of care for participants; Quality of resources (learning material, other facilities).
30	NO	Model for teacher training – continuing education There are approx. 3000 teachers in the field of teaching Norwegian as a Second Language to adult immigrants. Vox, as a national agency responsible for curriculum, language tests and a variety of continuing education provides nationwide courses. This include a 2-day courses in all the counties and a 1-day courses on different topics, of which the counties may choose according to local needs and priorities. Approx. 2000 – 2500 teachers and leaders participate annually in 2- day courses. The courses are based on the national curriculum and a plan for Quality (a national scheme).
31	PT	System of Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences –RVCC- (2001) The RVCC system is an initiative launched in 2001 at national level. It is organized to cover two dimensions of Adult Learning: the academic dimension and the VET dimension. It is integrated in the National Qualifications System. The RVCC was first launched in 2001 within PRODEP (a EU funded programme on Education). The initiative is implemented at two levels: ■ Macro level- the policy was conceptualized as a way to reduce the deficit of academic and professional qualifications of the Portuguese population by reinforcing the lifelong learning principle. It is currently implemented at policy level by the National Agency for Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training. ■ Meso level- implementation at this level is operated by the New Opportunities Centres (around 400) that cover the whole country. The NOCs implement the system following a 6 -step procedure.
32	RO	CALISIS: QMS System specially designed for the Romanian CVT providers The CALISIS model maintains the existing levels (NQA, LACs, providers), but requires the implementation of internal quality management/assessment systems at all levels. The CALISIS ESF HRD project developed a QAS which will be implemented within all 3 specific CVT levels: ■ level 1:CVT providers ■ level 2:Counties’ authorization commissions ■ level 3:National Qualifications authority It is related to EQARF.
33	SE	Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education It show how the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education has managed to work with quality both internal and at provider level. It shows how a broad group of stakeholders can be involved and together create results. It shows how adult students (average age around 30?) can get specific educations without national curricula. How it is possible to keep a high level of quality at provider level, when the providers only might have the education for a shorter period
34	SE	BRUK, a system for support on the quality work for all types of adult education Support tools of many kinds are available on the homepage of the Agency, including BRUKFPT (an instrument with assessment, reflection, development and quality) for assessing quality in a local organization. It was produced by the school authorities in 2001 with an enlarged and improved version in 2008. This tool for assessing quality is an aid to all

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		school organisers in their own processes of describing objectives and assignments, of follow-ups and evaluations of activities, of making analyses and judging the development and results of efforts. BRUK is based on the national steering documents – the Education Act, regulations and curricula. The BRUK-model work with the following dimensions in order to structure the thinking: Process: ■ what are we working with? ■ how do we organize the work? Full-filling objectives ■ what will our work result in? Background factors ■ what are the preconditions? The BRUK-tool works with indicators, criteria and assessments and judgments.
35	SE	Swedish National Council of Adult Associations (Folkbildningsrådet). There exist a Quality Prize targeted all kinds of Swedish schools including the municipal adult education. The Prize are grounded in the School Act from 2010, where a requirement are that all schools shall work systematically with quality and that the work shall be documented. The Prize can function as a motivation and inspiration in the work on quality in all schools including adult education.
36	SI	Model for self evaluation offering quality education for adults – OQEAS The model for self-evaluation was developed by Slovenian Institute for Adult Education within the project offering quality education to adults. The initiative has been set at country level, but it has so far targeted the quality development of adult education centres, secondary schools and private educational institutions. This interesting practice is related to a new policy-orientation, however, it has been focusing mainly on providers and professionals at meso level so as to raise the quality of the learning environment with effective quality management procedures.
37	TK	Quality Indicators in Life Long Learning Activities: METU Continuous Education Center (CEC) The Continuous Education Centre (CEC) at METU offers education to public and private institutions as well as individuals who are looking to improve themselves in their professions and make a career change. The CEC reports indicate that there is an increase in specialized seminars and as well as public conferences last year. Specifically the growing demand for public conferences (61%) might be an indication of the increasing need by the public to learn from the university's knowledge and experience. At the same time this might be an indication of the university's changing mission to share the knowledge and expertise produced with larger community. Some of the seminars included recruitment of new personnel; climate change and adaptation; health-based knowledge systems; training the trainer, effective teaching, human resources management and measurement and evaluation. Public conferences focused on more general issues like family and marriage therapy, communication skills and computer education. Continuing education centers of the universities in Turkey assume an important responsibility for lifelong education of adults in various sectors of the society. The CEC at METU was the first center established for this purpose, and over the years it has assumed a leading role in providing specialized knowledge and skills to industrial sectors as well as more general education for larger public audience.
38	TK	Project for Modernization of Vocational Education and Training in Turkey (MVET) The aim of the project, which started in July 2003 for a period of 42 months, is to support endeavours for promoting the quality of vocational course teachers training and to sustain harmony to the developments in European Union. Within this framework, the following objectives are determined; (a) determine competency of teachers for vocational courses, (b) develop five sets of pre-service and three sets of in-service modular training curriculums based on such competencies, (c) develop a collective quality assurance framework conforming to the conditions set forth by ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education), (d) determine policies and strategies for development of institutional capacity and human resources. Some of the project activities and outcomes are as follow: ▣ Field competencies of teachers for vocational courses in nine priority given fields (computer, electricity and electronics, automotive, clothing, accommodation management, construction, installation-natural gas, child development and pedagogy) were determined.

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		▣ Modular curricula based on the determined competencies were developed. ▣ Studies on Quality Assurance System for vocational-technical faculties based on European Network System related to Higher Education Quality Assurance were completed. ▣ Seminars named Basic Skills and Student Centered Education were delivered to the teaching staff of vocational-technical faculties taking place in the project in Konya, Sakarya, Elazig, İstanbul and Ankara in order to have the previously developed curricula implemented in the direction of student centered education. ▣ A "White Paper" including vocational and technical education related policy recommendations was prepared. ▣ In-service trainings were provided to 93 vocational course teachers, 715 teaching staff of different faculties, 90 representatives of social partners.
39	TK	Total Quality Management Project (TQM) Within the Ministry of National Education (MONE) (Central and Provincial Organization), Total Quality Management Implementing Regulations that was issued in the 1999 dated and 2506 numbered journal called "Tebliğler Dergisi" started the studies on "quality in education" This study is followed by studies on MONE Provincial Organization TQM Implementation Project, Award Guidelines in MONE TQM Practices and "Quality in Education" Award Manual. TQM practices in MONE proceed with the Xself evaluation studies based on "Excellence Model" which was developed by Turkish Society for Quality (KaDer) and the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM).
40	TK	Project for Developing Human Resources via Vocational Education (İKMEP) This project aims at strengthening of human resource development by modernizing and enhancing the quality of vocational education by means of a lifelong learning approach with provision of employment oriented association among vocational higher and secondary education institutions and labour market; has a duration 2-years; and has a budget of € 15.4 million.
41	TK	Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim Merkezleri (METEM) These are the Training Centers that are opened in line with principle of plural programs and single management for decreasing cost of education, preventing waste of resources and improving quality of education and implement programs that result in secondary education diploma, certificate and proficiency paper in areas of vocational and technical training.
42	TK	Project for Follow-up Study of Graduates of Vocational and Technical Secondary Education Institutions This project which started in 63 pilot schools in 24 provinces in 2007 aimed at following up graduates of vocational and technical secondary schools by using current information technologies, determining the level of realization of the objectives of the education provided in those schools, evaluating the updated version of their curricula. The project will cover all over the country in 2008. The project aims to achieve the followings: ▣ Employment status of the graduates of vocational-technical secondary education schools starting from 2001-2003 will be determined. ▣ Graduates will be followed-up systematically and the system will be institutionalized. ▣ The data gathered will be weak aspects of vocational education system will be revealed. ▣ Links between education and employment will be strengthened by determining appropriateness of the vocational-technical education to the demands of workforce market. ▣ Curricula of the vocational-technical education will be improved. ▣ Performance -based evaluation will be able to be carried out in vocational-technical education.
43	UK	ESTYN (Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales) Inspection of Adult Community Learning (ACL) in WALES. Inspection of education and training at all levels has a long history in the UK. The Learning and Skills Act (2000) requires ESTYN to carry out inspections of publicly-funded providers of ACL. The purpose of inspection is to identify good features and shortcomings so that education and training providers can improve the quality of education they offer and raise the standards achieved by their learners Guidance for inspectors and colleges on the evaluation requirements has been recently updated as 'Guidance for the inspection of further education institutions from September 2010' (ESTYN 2011). The 'Common Inspection Framework from 2010' (Estyn, 2011) (CIF) is used for all inspections. A key change under CIF 2010 is a greater emphasis on how well providers are delivering skills-based learning and self-evaluation. NOTE: There are currently 16 adult and community learning partnerships in Wales providing learning opportunities for the 16+ population on Wales. These partnerships involve a range of providers within local authority areas that include

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		further education colleges, the local authority, Welsh language centres, the Workers' Educational Association, the County Voluntary Council and local voluntary organisations. The range of courses available to adults differs between providers but includes courses in information and communication technology, art and design, adult basic education, Welsh for adults and personal development courses.

Annex 2: Overview quality policies, legislation, systems

Higher Education		
1	AT	A new Federal Act for Quality Assurance in Higher Education sets a common frame for quality assurance in all sectors of higher education in Austria (public universities, universities of applied sciences, private universities). Part of the new law is the establishment of the trans-sectorial “Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria” by the 1st of March 2012. The new agency will unify the functions of AQA, FH Council and Accreditation Council for the private universities. AQA will operate until 2013 and progressively integrate its activities into the new agency.
2	BE	<u>Flanders</u> Higher Education has a clear legal framework (visitations may lead to accreditation of programs by NVAO). The courses are accredited by the NVAO kept in Higher Education Register (NL: Hogeronderwijsregister (2)). The Flemish administration must ensure that the provision is in accordance with this register. In Flanders only (ex officio) recorded institutions must and can offer accredited courses leading to awarded diplomas - as Bachelor, Master and Doctor. And since 2009 the NVAO concerns also HBO5, higher vocational education. <u>Wallonia</u> The agency for accreditation of HE in French Belgium is AEQES, which is part of the EU agency (ENQA). The Agency is responsible for assessing the quality of higher education and working for its continuous improvement. The agency receives money from the EU (European social funds). The recognition of competences is based on a dossier, with is examined by a jury. The first evaluation of the HE system is recently made, there are plans for a transformation. HE is thinking about introducing a test instead of only an administrative procedure.
3	BG	At a national level the two most important laws that have a relevance to quality are those on the Bulgarian higher education; the Higher Education Act (1995) and the Amendment to the Higher Education Act (1999). These two sets of legislation legalized previous reform efforts initiated by higher education institutions since 1990. At national level – the external quality evaluation and control is performed by the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency (NEAA), which is an independent body of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria. The NEAA’s criteria and recommendations are to a great extent in compliance with the Standards and Recommendations for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, elaborated by ENQA.
4	CH	The Swiss Centre of Accreditation and Quality Assurance in HE (OAQ) develops guidelines and quality standards, conducts accreditation and evaluation procedures and has an international commitment. It acknowledges the autonomy of the universities, perceives its role as an external partner for quality assurance and development and provides a range of supporting services.
5	CY	In Cyprus, the Council of Ministers, has initiated legislation for the establishment of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Education (CAQAA) as the competent authority to assure the quality of higher education offered in the Republic of Cyprus in any form. This is currently the only legislative act on quality approaches.

6	CZ	the Act on Higher Education Institutions (111/2006). These acts set out a qualification system for formal education (which is open to adults) and stipulate the role of the Czech School Inspectorate. In addition, The quality of higher education is evaluated by the Accreditation Commission of the Czech Republic, which belongs to the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports”
7	DE	The Law establishing the foundation " <i>Foundation for the Accreditation of Study Programmes in Germany</i> " from 15 February 2005 serves as the legal basis for the activity of the Accreditation Council. The law sets up a legal framework for the binding definition of tasks, responsibilities and authorities of the central players in the accreditation system, i.e. the Accreditation Council and the currently six licensed accreditation agencies
8	DK	With the 2007 Accreditation Act, accreditation became the key method for external quality assurance in Denmark within higher education. ACE Denmark is the accreditation operator for bachelor, master's and professional master's programmes.
9	EE	Estonian Higher Education Quality Agency - EKKA continues the work of the Estonian Higher Education Accreditation Centre and the Estonian Higher Education Quality Assessment Council that operated from 1997 to 2008. EKKA was established on January 1, 2009. In Estonia, pursuant to the Universities Act, the Institutions of Professional Higher Education Act, and the Private Schools Act, a new national system of quality assurance of higher education will be implemented as of 1 January 2010.
10	EL	The Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency (HQAA) prescribes the establishment of Quality Management Units (MODIP) in each higher education institution, setting a framework for quality assurance in higher education. Among HQAA's main responsibilities are the formulation of quality standards, quality control methodologies and criteria, and promotion and coordination of external and internal quality control mechanisms in tertiary education institutions. The basic criteria for quality evaluation defined by Law (3374/2005) are centered on four basic quality themes: a) curricula, b) teaching, c) research and d) other services. Additionally, this Law demands for each institute an external evaluation conducted by a "Committee of External Evaluation", with experts drawn from a special register developed by HQAA".
11	ES	Quality assurance systems applies in Spain to the HE and professional education system: The National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation of Spain, ANECA, is a Foundation whose aim is to provide external quality assurance for the Spanish Higher Education System. ANECA has developed several evaluation Programmes in order to perform its activities (evaluation, certification and accreditation), with the purpose of integrating the Spanish system into the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Royal Decree 1892/2008 which focuses on access to higher education for people aged 25 years or more as well as those aged 40 years or more, including the recognition of professional or working experience;
12	FI	Universities are governed by the Universities Act (558/2009) and the Universities Decree (115/1998) while Polytechnics are governed by the Polytechnics Act (351/2003) and the Polytechnics Decree (352/2003). Universities, polytechnics and institutions providing liberal adult education have the freedom, within the framework of the legislation, to autonomously decide the manner of organising adult education. The performance of universities and polytechnics is regularly evaluated by the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINHEEC). Institutions providing liberal adult education are evaluated by the Education Evaluation Council.
13	FR	Quality in adult learning is partially covered by the legal framework regulating the quality of initial (primary, secondary, tertiary, higher) education. The quality of VET

		and higher education is to a large degree guaranteed by the state since it either directly manages the relevant institutions or exercises oversight on these institutions. At the national level France has two inspection authorities who fall directly under the minister of National Education and the Minister of Higher Education and Research. The General Inspection for National Education (<i>Inspection générale de l'éducation nationale</i> : IGEN) and the the General Inspection for the Administration of National Education and Research (<i>Inspection générale de l'administration de l'éducation nationale et de la recherche</i> : IGAENR) monitors, studies, and evaluates the functioning and efficiency of the educational system. The jurisdiction of IGEN and IGAENR is limited to institutions for national and higher education under the responsibility of the two ministries (colleges, lycées, institutes of higher education). In addition to these authorities, an autonomous administrative authority for the evaluation of research and higher education has been created in 2007. This Agency for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (<i>Agence d'évaluation de la recherche et de l'enseignement supérieur</i> : AERES) evaluates institutes for higher education and their educational programmes and diplomas, and validates these institutions' procedures for the evaluation of staff.
14	HR	Quality assurance in higher education and in science is regulated by the 2009 Act on Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Science. Internal quality assurance is provided by the institutions' internal QA systems in the form of internal checks. Study programmes delivered at public universities are self-accredited by university senates, while programmes delivered by private higher education institutions, polytechnics or schools of professional higher education are accredited by the Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE). ASHE is an independent public body responsible for external quality assurance in Croatia and implements regular audits, evaluations, accreditation of some professional, study programmes and re-accreditations of all higher education institutions.
15	HU	Higher education itself is not regulated by the Act on Adult Education. On the other hand, higher education is the field where accreditation was set up very early at the beginning of 1993 when the Hungarian Accreditation Commission was established. According to the 69/2006. Government Statutory Rule on Higher Education accreditation, this organisation regulates institutional and programme accreditations in higher education in Hungary.
16	IE	For training at Levels 7 – 10 the QA system for the IoTs (HETAC, system; HEA system) or the universities' QA systems (internal; IUQB; HEA system) apply. The principal legislation underpinning quality assurance (QA) in Irish further education and training and in higher education and training outside of the universities where adult engage in learning is the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999 and the Universities Act 1997. The Universities Act, 1997, specifically requires each university "to establish procedures for quality assurance and to carry out evaluations, and review the effectiveness of its QA procedures". In 2002, the seven Irish universities established the Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB), which has delegated authority to organise periodic reviews of the effectiveness of the QA procedures in place in universities. The Higher Education Authority (HEA), which has a statutory role under the Act to assist the universities achieve their objectives, also has an overarching role with regard to reviewing quality assurance procedures within the third-level sector. The Irish Higher Education Quality Network, which comprises the main organisations with a role or interest in quality assurance in higher and education and training in Ireland, was established in October 2003. The National Qualifications Authority Ireland (NQAI), the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) were established in 2001 under the 1999 legislation. FETAC's and HETAC's main functions are to make awards, to determine and monitor standards for awards and to recognise awards on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ); to agree and review providers' quality assurance arrangements delivering programmes leading to these awards; to validate programmes of education and training leading to these awards; to ensure fair and consistent assessment of learners by providers. HETAC must agree their QA procedures with the NQAI, and are subject to quality assurance arrange-

		ments, which include regular evaluation by national and international experts and evaluation by learners of their VET programmes and ancillary services. The effectiveness of the NQAI itself was reviewed in 2007.
17	IS	The legal framework covering higher education in Iceland is the Higher Education Institution Act no. 63/2006. This act applies to educational institutions providing higher education leading to a degree and which have been accredited by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.
18	IT	Within general education, VET and the university sectors there are accreditation systems in place. In fact, with the national plan, there is a general accreditation system for all education provision. This system is built upon the EQAVET system and takes into account the facilities, skills of the trainers, financial aspects, placement rate, etc. within institutes. Each education sector has its own agency for quality assurance, guidance and support. For the Universities it is ANVUR. The VET sector has ISFOL and in the Adult Education sector (CTP and evening schools) INDIRE/ANSAS provides quality support. INVALSI monitors the primary and secondary education sector. The non-formal sector does not have a quality assurance institute.
19	LT	The Law on Science and Study (Mokslo ir studijų įstatymas, 2009) establishes science and study quality assurance principles, the award and recognition of higher education qualification and science degrees, science and study institutional management, activity organisation and monitoring, science and study financing. According to the law, there are two types of tertiary education institutions: universities (universitetas) and colleges (kolegija).
20	LU	Quality in higher education is guaranteed by the Ministry of Higher Education and Research (<i>Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieure et de la Recherche</i>), which ensures through internal and external evaluations the quality of (both initial and continued) higher education.
21	LV	In adult formal education – basic (general/VET), secondary (general/VET) and tertiary education (general/VET) – operating the same quality approaches and standards as common education. The general principals of quality standards and control for providers (including teaching staff) and provision are set in the Education law and field laws.
22	MT	The legislation establishing the Malta Qualifications Council covers QA in the context of the NQF awards and the courses leading to such awards. b) To further develop the Government's strategic objectives for higher and tertiary education the 2006? Education Act established the National Commission for Higher Education (NHCE) which is responsible among other responsibilities for preparing key performance indicators and benchmarking the sector against international developments. In 2009, the "Further and Higher Education Strategy 2020" outlined 12 priority areas of action and identified 3 areas of policy development as an immediate priority. The priority directly related to quality was: 'The development of a new Licensing, Quality Assurance and Accreditation framework (for further and higher education including the establishment of a competent authority (Quality Assurance Agency) to carry out such functions and resource allocation for improvement of current internal quality assurance systems in place across various state institutions. Quality organisations are the national Commission on Higher Education, academic Programmes Quality & Resources Unit of UofM, and MCAST - foreign awarding bodies - BTEC (EDEXCEL) and City & Guilds & Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft
23	NL	Quality in higher education is subject to the responsibility of the institutions and the programmes are accredited according to the accreditation framework governed by the NVAO (Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders). There is however no explicitly mentioning of adult learning in the Assessment frameworks for

		the higher education accreditation system.
24	NO	The Act relating to Universities and University Colleges (hereafter the Higher Education Act) applies to all higher education, both state and private. The work done by NOKUT on inspection of the educational quality in Higher Education are grounded in the regulation "Forskrift om tilsyn med utdanningskvaliteten i høyere utdanning (tilsynsforskriften)" from January 27. 2011.
25	PL	The Minister of Science and Higher Education grants accreditation to private HEIs. For HE the central institution is PKA (Państwowa Komisja Akredytacyjna). The primary responsibilities of PKA are among else quality assessment of education in a given field of study, including teacher training
26	PT	A3es - Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education, is responsible for evaluation and accreditation of courses of study in Portugal.
27	RO	The Law on Quality Assurance, passed in 2005 regulates quality assurance at all levels and sub-systems and the quality assurance institutions (National Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, National Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education). Nevertheless, it has only been applied for initial education and training and for higher education, the adult training part being covered separately by distinct methodologies and provisions on the authorisation/accreditation of training providers. The MoERYS-Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport is responsible for VET system, initial and continuing (excepting the apprenticeship on the job). The MoERYS has 3 subordinated institutions dealing with quality assurance aspects: (1) ARACIP (Pre-university Education); (2)ARACIS (University Education); and (3) NQA (CVT).
28	SE	The Higher Education Act contains provisions about the higher education institutions that are accountable to the government, local authorities or county councils. These provisions are often supplemented by the regulations in the Higher Education Ordinance. Swedish National Agency for Higher Education) to review the quality of higher education. This work includes evaluating subject areas (main fields of study) and study programmes; and Granting degree awarding powers
29	SI	The Higher Education Act (Articles: 51e): In line with the article 51e of Higher Education Act, the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (NAKVIS) was established by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia. The Agency commenced its operations on 1 March 2010 after, on 28 February 2010 when the Council for Higher Education of the Republic of Slovenia had ceased to work. On the other hand, there are no specific quality approaches for higher adult education, hence quality assurance of adult education is included within the quality frameworks used by the faculties.
30	SK	In higher education a government related body, an Accreditation commission (AK), is responsible for accrediting of all three cycles of higher education. AK cooperates with international institutions such as The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) or The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE).
31	TK	Regulation for Academic Evaluation and Quality Improvement in Higher Education Institutions regulates activities regarding evaluation of education, instruction and research activities as well as administrative services of higher education institutions, improving quality of them, verifying and recognizing quality level of them by means of independent "external auditing " process. The Turkish National Agency for Higher Education will be responsible for implementing these evaluations and reviews, and these should take place every fourth year, instead of every six years as has been the case earlier. In accordance with the regulations Higher Education Academic Evalua-

		tion and Quality Improvement Committee (YODEK) entered upon its duty Guide for Academic Evaluation and Quality Improvement in Higher Education Institutions that was accomplished by YODEK in May 2006
32	UK	Separate legislation for each of the 4 nations, Northern Ireland; England; Wales; Scotland: a) Legislation for the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) with UK-wide remit; b) Legislation in all 4 countries on HEIs in relation to their autonomous status and their responsibility for self-evaluation.

VET		
1	AT	The Austrian Reference Point for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (ARQA-VET), was established October 1st, 2007. It serves to cross-link stakeholders of Vocational Education and Training in Austria and to play an active role to promote European networking.
2	BE	<u>Flanders</u> VET has a legal framework HBO5 and education inspectorate in formal adult education. The AKOV, Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Training is responsible for the quality of pathways to evidence of professional qualifications in education, training, education and APL programs. The Inspectorate is an independent service with a view to carrying out its tasks by the Flemish Government is made available to the agency AKOV. In the future, some tasks are performed for other policy than the Education and Training policy - particularly for training - by a single cell within the agency independently and with knowledge of the policy area organizes its work VDAB and Syntra (non-formal VET) have their own quality systems, growth towards integrated quality framework for courses leading to recognized qualifications. Quality control within VDAB vocational education is organised by VDAB itself. VDAB can offer their own courses according to their own criteria, with their own quality systems. VDAB has a solid quality EFQM model and ISO-certified. If an accreditation is approved, there follows a second set of criteria. This is less strictly to the education itself, there is only looked at the professional components of the program. SYNTRA Flanders also looks after the quality of apprenticeships and entrepreneurial training itself. Apprenticeship counsellors and apprenticeship advisors will be called on to check the quality of apprenticeships. Aside from that, a self-evaluation tool will be used. The self-evaluations are assessed by a quality-assessment agency. (1). Also client questionnaire are set in to evaluate the offered quality of the program. To the extent that in the policy fields of sport and culture non-formal VET is offered leading to recognized professional qualifications, this will be integrated quality framework also apply to the policy fields of sport and culture. <u>Wallonia</u> There exists no specific accreditation system for VET. Although VET is not part the AEQES, when checking the quality of a curricula they try to include all comparable education, under which VET. Progressively, the AEQES have to take VET into account and come to more cooperation. On the short term is no prospect of developing a separate or broader quality system for VET.

3	BG	In terms of VET there are two authorities that apply their own approaches to quality assurance. In December 2009, the Minister of labour and social policy approved by an order a mechanism for quality assurance and control of adult education organized by the National Employment Agency. Since the beginning of 2010 a Quality Assurance Mechanism and Control for initial VET has been applied by the National Employment Agency (NAE). NAE in order to provide high quality and efficiency of the proposed training of adults in centres of its own authority applies a Method for Assessment of the Proposals for Vocational Guidance and Training of Adults when choosing the training institution. Similarly vocational training in Continuing Vocational Training Centres (CVTs) is monitored by the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET). NAVET is the institution, which licenses all CVTs, keeps a register of CVTs and exercises consistent control. NAVET also applies certain tools and mechanisms for monitoring & evaluating learning programmes and learners' achievements.
4	CH	Special interest for the AL sector was the Vocational Education Law/ Vocational Education Degree): Q-Actors in VET: The Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology (OPET).
5	CY	The main policies in the field of VET, as outlined in the NRP, include the Upgrading vocational education and training, by improving the quality and attractiveness of the education and training systems, establishing mechanisms of lifelong guidance and validation of acquired skills, providing alternative pathways to young persons and upgrading the Apprenticeship System and facilitating the transfer of students between general education and VET. Other current national policy debates and/or issues, which have direct or indirect effects on VET, include the establishment of a System for the Assessment and Certification of training providers, which is considered of vital importance for the adaptation of the training system to the current needs of the labour and training markets and it is expected to contribute to the improvement of quality and effectiveness of the training provision in Cyprus. The introduction of a System for Assessment and Certification of Training Providers will be soon launched by the Human Resource Development Authority (HRDA) At the non-university level of education public educational institutions are accountable to the respective Ministries which are responsible for ensuring that quality standards are retained. Private non-university level institutions are inspected by the officers of the Department of Tertiary Education of the Ministry of Education and Culture. In addition, their programmes of study are liable to accreditation by the <i>Council for Assessment and Accreditation</i> (SEKAP), an independent body entitled with the accreditation of the programmes of study of the private non-university level institutions of higher education.
6	CZ	<i>Education Act (561/2004) the Education Act stipulates that all schools providing vocational education and training (both IVET and CVET) have to engage in regular self-evaluation.</i> On basis of the Act on verification and recognition of further education results (179/2006) a National Register of Vocational Qualifications has been established. Finally, the Employment Act (435/2004) regulates the state's employment policy, which includes the funding of accredited educational institutions through the labour offices. The Ministry of Education Youth and Sports is responsible for the accreditation of professional retraining courses who are eligible for funding from the national government. To be accredited an institution has to provide a course or courses that are deemed of importance by the ministry, and has to conform to the criteria set by the ministry. The accredited institutions and courses are collected in a national database which can be visited at www.dak.msmt.cz

		Examinations for retraining courses are undertaken by 518 “authorized persons” who are authorized to examine for 2260 qualifications; an average of about four qualifications per individual. Examination is obligatory in formal education and for retraining courses that have been financed by the state through the labour offices. Between January 2008 and April 2012 38.280 examinations have taken place.
7	DE	The Law establishing the foundation " <i>Foundation for the Accreditation of Study Programmes in Germany</i> " from 15 February 2005 serves as the legal basis for the activity of the Accreditation
8	DK	The Act on Adult Vocational Training Programmes (AMU) is stated that the continuing training and education committees have to continuously analyse the need for new competencies on the labour market and for developing relevant new joint competence descriptions and adult vocational training programmes. The Act on Adult Vocational Training was revised in 2009 and the new centres of adult vocational training were introduced. Some of the key tasks of the centres are adult guidance, counselling of companies, and coordinating and developing the provision of adult education and training offers. The Act (Chapter 8) focus on registers and quality assurance.
9	EE	The non-formal CVET is under the responsibility of training institutions and providers. Private training providers must be licensed by the Ministry of Education and Research according to the Private School Act (only training at licensed providers is tax deductible). A training licence is valid for three to five years. New principles and criteria for issuing training licences are being prepared. The licences will be replaced by the right to register the curriculum at the Estonian Education Information System (EHIS), an online database of the whole educational system in Estonia. Quality issues are gaining more attention as the provision of adult training increases. Raising awareness of participants and employers has had a positive impact on training quality.
10	EL	Law 3191/2003 stipulates the establishment of the National System for Linking Vocational Education and Training with Employment (ESSEEKA). OEEK the Organization for Vocational Education and Training under which operates all IVET in the country through IEKs (Institutes for Vocational Training) is responsible for applying the policies, however the quality parameter is not very visible at a national level but only during the periods of National Examinations for IVET Accreditation where an external examination board is responsible for the whole accreditation process. At <u>sectoral level</u> policies largely refer to quality approaches in CVET as these are implemented by the National Accreditation Centre (EKEPIS) [that is very recently in 21 November 2011, merged with two other organizations into a single entity, and created EOPPEP, the National Organisation for Accreditation of Qualifications & Vocational Guidance, under the supervision of the Minister of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs. EKEPIS operates varied quality measurement instruments such as the Trainers Registry. EKEPIS operates its own framework for accrediting both CVET structures but also CVET trainers and supporting staff. This framework prescribes the development of a registry for trainers as well as a set of infrastructural guidelines for CVET centres that could be accredited by EKEPIS.
11	ES	Royal Decree 1538/2008 which is devoted to the general organisation of vocational training, indicating that vocational training for adults must have the same characteristics and follow similar guidelines as mainstream vocational training.
12	FI	The Vocational Education and Training Act (630/1998), effective as from the beginning of 1999, governs the organisation of curriculum-based upper secondary vocational education and training for both young and adult students. (Eurypedia). Quality is mentioned directly in the Act (Lagen (630/1998) and in the regulations

förordningen (811/1998). The Vocational Adult Education Act (631/1998) stipulates about the upper secondary vocational qualifications, further vocational qualifications and specialist vocational qualifications taken as competence tests irrespective of the method of acquiring the vocational skills, as well as for the preparatory training for these tests. In 2006, changes were made to this Act in regard to preparatory training for competence-based qualification, individual plans of students, completing qualifications and contracts for arranging competence tests. (Eurypedia) Quality is mentioned directly in the Act (Lagen (631/1998) and in the regulations förordningen (812/1998)).

Legislation on vocational education and training and vocational adult education and training gives the education providers extensive discretion on matters pertaining to the organisation of education and use of financing allocated to education as well as quality assurance. The aim of national steering on vocational education and training is to set objectives on vocational education and training and on its quality as well as to ensure that they are attained. The key steering mechanisms in quality assurance include legislation governing the activities and funding, the authorisation of providers of vocational education and training, the degree structure and core curricula, the principles for financing the activities, performance-based funding and the qualifications requirements of teaching personnel. Additional steering mechanisms include the education and research development plan confirmed by the Government, the Budget and development and information steering by the educational authorities.

The provision of vocational education and training requires authorisation by the Ministry of Education to provide vocational upper secondary education and training or vocational continuing education. The authorisation is granted on application by the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education may grant the authorisation to provide education to a municipality, federation of municipalities, a registered organisation or foundation or an unincorporated state enterprise. Education can also be provided in a state educational institution. The authorisation requires that the education is necessary and that the applicant possesses the professional and economic prerequisites to provide the education in an appropriate manner. The authorisation permit to provide vocational upper secondary education and training lays down provisions on the level of education, fields of education, qualifications, teaching language, municipalities in which the education can be provided, the number of students, special educational tasks, form of provision of the education and other matters pertaining to the provision of education. The authorisation permit to provide vocational continuing education lays down provisions on the educational tasks, including provisions on the teaching language, fields of education, the number of student years of education leading to competence-based qualifications and other vocational continuing education and the number of apprenticeship agreements, as well as on special educational tasks and working life development and service tasks and other matters pertaining to the provision of educations and qualifications. The Ministry of Education may change the authorisation, even without an application, if the education offered significantly differs from the educational needs. The Ministry of Education can also revoke the authorisation if the education does not fulfil the requirements set for the granting of the authorisation or the education is otherwise provided contrary to the law or the provisions pursuant to it.

The Quality Management Recommendation for Vocational Education and Training was adopted in 2008 by the Ministry of Education to support and encourage VET providers to pursue excellence when improving the quality of their operations. The recommendation is based on the Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF) in vocational education and training.

An electronic student feedback system was introduced in 2008 in order to monitor and evaluate the system of competence based qualifications.

13	FR	Quality in adult learning is partially covered by the legal framework regulating the quality of initial (primary, secondary, tertiary, higher) education. A National Commission on Professional Certification establishes certification requirements and evaluation methods for each certificate that has been registered in the National Inventory of Professional Certifications. Regular degrees are issued and controlled by the state. The General Inspection for National Education (IGEN) and The General Inspection for the Administration of National Education and Research (IGAENR) evaluate the national educational system, institutions, and personnel. External evaluation in the institutes for initial (primary, secondary, tertiary, higher) education is performed by IGEN, IGAENR, and AERES. SAIA evaluates the quality of alternating training in each <i>académie</i>. The <i>Offices Pôle Emploi</i> evaluate the training programmes that they finance and, in particular, AFPA training. Sectoral agencies such as the National Observatory on Farming Education monitor the quality of (continuing) vocational education and training in their respective sector. Formal education and training for adults is provided in the <i>Gretas</i>, the vocational secondary schools, the institutes of higher education, the AFPA centres, the CFAs and the CFPPAs. All these organizations fall under the direct responsibility or oversight of either the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Higher Education and Research, the Ministry of Agriculture, or the Ministry of Employment. They have to track and evaluate their programmes and are submitted to evaluations by the Ministry. The <i>Greta</i>, vocational secondary schools, and CFAs fall directly under their respective ministries and are inspected by agencies operated jointly by the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Higher Education and Research (IGEN and IGAENR). The label Lycée des Metiers (“Vocational Secondary School”) has been created in 2001 by the Ministry of National Education and is offered to vocational and polyvalent schools for secondary education who combine the vocational and technological tracks. Its creation was driven by four objectives: (1) to promote the attractiveness of the vocational route, (2) to push the regional networks of VET providers towards quality, (3) to reinforce synergies between the vocational and technological routes of training, and (4) to restructure regional training provisions to make them more consistent. The label is seen as an important approach to create a dynamic towards quality and excellence in VET and to promote accountability against common criteria for quality.. The label can not be obtained by regular or technical schools for secondary education (Lycées d’enseignement général et technologique), unless they sign a partnership with a vocational high school. The initial number of criteria for accreditation was four and has been increased to nine in 2005. The key demands of the label are that the Lycée has to offer a coherent range of vocational training around a consistent group of jobs and to develop narrow relationships with local and regional employers. While the Lycées des Metiers have a lot to do with initial vocational education and training, they are also relevant from the perspective of continuing VET, since one of the demands is that the school provides vocational education to a variety of target groups including adults. The label Lycée des Metiers is attributed by the rector of an <i>académie</i> (region) by means of a regional committee in charge of labelling. The label is valid for a period of five years. At this moment about 800 Lycées have been awarded the label.
14	HR	Formal adult education enables adults to gather a school certificate in case they had had now chance to do so in school-age period of their lives. This second chance is a way that can only be attained in formal system of adult education through elementary and secondary schools for adults. This formal adult education is the part of the system of public education, which is currently regulated by the CXC/2011. - Act on Public Education.
15	HU	Vocational education and training has got two levels, one is the VET in formal education, which is organised in vocational schools and vocational secondary-schools (and at universities in the case of post-secondary VET). That form of VET is allowed to issue a Vocational Certificate for pupils referring to vocations registered into the

		National Vocational Registry/OKJ. In formal education, the accomplishment of such studies is free and has got no cost. VET in formal education is regulated by the CLXXXVII Act on Vocational Education and Training. Whilst VET in schools are part of the formal education system, quality assurance is achieved through accreditation procedures and regulations. VET outside the school system/formal education is organised as a part of adult education and training, which may lead to a VET certificate, listed in the National Vocational Registry/OKJ, or to a non state-recognised CVET training. In the case of vocational certificates, which are recognised by the state, quality assurance is provided by the official Vocational and Examination Requirements and are issued by the Minister, being responsible for VET, in a statutory rule. The Vocational and Examination Requirements are set and publicly issued in a legal document that clearly defines the tasks of the vocation in use, the conditions of enrolment into the VET programme, the contents of modules of the concrete programme (with task and competence profiles), the requirements of examination and the minimal tools as conditions of the VET process. Since this regulation is set in law, it is compulsory for each and every VET institutions and organisations to fulfil its points and regulations. namely, this prove that wherever a student participate a concrete registered vocational training programme, he/she will obtain the same competences, therefore, certificates issued in that vocation all around the country will have equal value and recognition.
16	IE	Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999. The National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), set up under the Qualifications Act, requires that all awards included in the National Framework of Qualifications are quality assured, and a key objective of the NFQ is to promote and maintain standards. Therefore, where NVAE providers offer courses leading to awards on the NQF they are obliged to meet all the quality requirements set down by FETAC (non-tertiary FET and VT providers). Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) was established in 2001 under the 1999 legislation. FETAC's main function is to make awards, to determine and monitor standards for awards and to recognise awards on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ); to agree and review providers' quality assurance arrangements delivering programmes leading to these awards; to validate programmes of education and training leading to these awards; to ensure fair and consistent assessment of learners by providers. FETAC must agree their QA procedures with the National Qualifications Authority Ireland (NQAI), and are subject to quality assurance arrangements, which include regular evaluation by national and international experts and evaluation by learners of their VET programmes and ancillary services. The effectiveness of the NQAI itself was reviewed in 2007.
17	IS	As all education and training in Iceland, continuous vocational education is open to all and therefore special provisions for people over a certain age are not necessary. The Adult Education Act was passed by parliament in the spring of 2010. According to the second article of the Act, among its main objectives are to create the necessary scope and solutions to meet the demands of industry for increased knowledge and competences of employees. In Iceland the accreditation of education and training providers does not make a difference between public and private institutions: both are subject to the Adult Education Act of March 2010. The Adult Education Act states that education and training providers should make an effort to ensure that courses are compatible with other studies, and that studies can be evaluated and validated in order to receive credits within the formal education system. Curricula or course descriptions must be certified by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture or by a body assigned the task by the Minister. This certification confirms that the course fulfils the format and quality requirements set by the Ministry. Financial accounts must be signed by a chartered accountant and be made accessible to the National Audit Office. Accreditations may be revoked if an education or training

		provider no longer fulfils the conditions of the Adult Education Act. Accreditation of education and training providers The Minister of Education, Science and Culture, or a body assigned the task by the Minister, provides accreditation to adult education and training providers.
18	IT	It should be noted that parts of the education sector (predominantly the VET sector) are the responsibility of the Regions, not of the National Ministries. Recent developments in the field of VET is the National Plan for Quality Assurance of VET. This Plan, complying with the request of the EQAVET Recommendation, should undergo a further consultation with social partners as well as representatives of providers. Also second chance education, provided by the CTP (Permanent Territorial Centers), is included in this national plan. The plan follows the general Plan, do, check, act cycle and is built upon existing practices. Already before the National Plan on Quality Assurance, there were a number of policies in place concerning quality assurance, both at national and regional level. Also a number of institutes have been established to monitor and improve the quality of VET in Italy. Institutes that focus on education governed by the Ministry of education, university and research (Ministero dell'Istruzione, Università e Ricerca). In general, the initiatives on quality assurance and reforms within the education sectors are related to European developments and initiatives (for instance, Bologna process, EQF and EQAVET/EQARF). In addition, the European Social Fund plays an important role in financing vocational education. Also, at regional level there are policies in place. Within the VET sector, the regions have their own evaluation system (finance; impact; intercultural activities; social integration; etc.) such as; Emilia Romagna, Piemonte; Toscana, Veneto; Lombardia; Umbria; Marche; such practices are less diffused in the South. Due to the Reform of the Title V of the Constitution (transfer of the central responsibility in the training system to the Regions and Provinces), the state cannot interfere with the local authorities). Within general education, VET and the university sectors there are accreditation systems in place. In fact, with the national plan, there is a general accreditation system for all education provision. This system is built upon the EQAVET system and takes into account the facilities, skills of the trainers, financial aspects, placement rate, etc. within institutes. Each education sector has its own agency for quality assurance, guidance and support. For the Universities it is ANVUR. The VET sector has ISFOL and in the Adult Education sector (CTP and evening schools) INDIRE/ANSAS provides quality support. INVALSI monitors the primary and secondary education sector. The non-formal sector does not have a quality assurance institute.
19	LT	The Law on Vocational Education and Training (1997, new edition 2007) sets out the structure and management of the VET system, design, management and award of qualifications, organisation and management of VET as well as VET funding. Based on this Law, the VET system in Lithuania covers initial VET, continuing VET, and vocational guidance. VET may be provided in parallel with general lower or upper secondary education. The Law shapes provisions for quality assurance by setting the principles for VET quality assurance. New impulse for the development of VET system was given after adopting the new edition of Law on VET in 2007. It sets principles for the VET system management and quality assurance, defines national qualifications framework, introduces apprenticeship and creates legal preconditions to bridge IVET and CVET.

		On 24 November 2008, the Minister of Education and Science approved the Concept for Quality Assurance in Formal Education. The purpose of the Concept is to provide a conceptual framework for political and social arrangements regarding the understanding of education quality and methods for quality assurance in formal education, as well as to create preconditions for harmonisation of the quality assurance policy in education. The Qualifications and VET Development Centre (Kvalifikacijų ir profesinio mokymo plėtros centras, QVETDC (until January 2010 - Methodological Centre for VET) under the MES perform functions of Qualifications Management Institution as established in new edition of Law on VET (2007) including organisation of VET and qualifications standards development, research of qualifications demand and qualifications formation. It also develops VET quality and performs functions of Quality Assurance National Reference Point for VET and EQF National Coordination Point.
20	LU	The <i>Loi portant réforme de la formation professionnelle</i> of December 19th 2008 (art. 43) describes which institutions can provide vocational training. It also stipulates that private institutions who wish to perform activities in the field of vocational training have to receive authorisation and have to conform to article L. 542.8 of the Labour Code as modified in March 2012. The 2008 law (art. 44) also establishes a quality label for organisations or individuals who are engaged in continued vocational education and training. The law was partially modified by the law of March 28th 2012. The government has implemented the quality label for non-formal education since 2000 and is currently in the process of establishing a quality label for CVET in consultation with the social partners (and based on the 2008 law). The Department for Vocational Training (<i>Service de formation professionnelle</i>) is responsible for the quality of CVET. The quality of formal continuing education (excluding higher education) is guaranteed by MEN. Secondary and technical secondary schools, the schools of second chance, the labour college, CNFPC, and INL fall under the direct responsibility of the ministry. These institutions have obtained prior approval from MEN to engage in adult education, in line with the laws of December 2008 and March 2012. The SFP is responsible for the quality of CVET. People who teach classes for adults in these institutions have to conform to nearly the same standards as their counterparts in initial education (law of July 1991). Since the law of November 2011 new teaching staff has to follow a traineeship followed by a final exam and are given the title “adult trainer” (<i>formateur d’adultes</i>).
21	LV	In recent years vocational education prestige, quality and social dialogue have become a great policy priority, therefore, in 2009 the concept “Raising attractiveness of vocational education and involvement of social partners within vocational education quality assurance” (<i>Profesionālās izglītības pievilcības paaugstināšana un sociālo partneru līdzdalība profesionālās izglītības kvalitātes nodrošināšanā</i>) developed by the MoES was approved. The Concept aims at outlining solutions for key challenges in vocational education policy and reaching agreement between state and social partners regarding most appropriate solutions for the problems. Precondition of the entering vocational further education programmes are resaved vocational education or professional activity. Providers must be accredited education institution who implements licensed education programme. Programmes must be developed according to the Standards of the Professions. The Education Law determines that all educational institutions, except those which implement only interest-related education programmes (realisation of the individual educational needs and desires of a person regardless of age and previously acquired education), have to be accredited. Accreditation is carried out within five years starting with the first day of activity by the education institution. Besides, each education or study programme (a school or a higher education institution develops one or more education programmes) have to be accredited as well. It must be done within two years from the day of the programme's start, and not less than once in six years. . In September 2010, new CoM Regulations “Procedure of accrediting general and vocational education programmes, education establishments and examination

		centres” (were adopted, uniting the accreditation of both general and vocational education accreditation systems. These Regulations stipulate a uniform accreditation procedure, clearly define quality requirements in general and vocational education (the EQF levels 1-4). State agency “State Service of Education Quality” (under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and Science) is responsible for the quality control of formal education provision and provider as well as for vocational development education programmes and further vocational development education programmes and providers, also agency have a mandate to react on complains irrespectively of education programmes types.
22	MT	All adult education courses leading to a qualification on the NQF awarded by the Malta Qualifications Council (MQC) come under the QA arrangements of that body. The MQC which has a role in quality assurance of courses/qualifications. MQC established the criteria for NQF levels (including HE). Once the provider, including private institutions, has accreditation a double protocol is applied, namely, validate the course AND level rate it. Then a provider is recognised as a provider of that course which is approved. An EQA-VET project is under development but in general, QA in VET is not yet part of a coherent framework. VET courses which are part of DLL-funded provision are also covered by DLL’s QA system. The system covers hiring staff and the provision of ongoing CPD, monitoring and evaluation; learner assessment; curriculum and materials development. Courses provided by non-governmental providers subsidised by DLL also come under these arrangements.
23	NL	Quality in adult and vocational education is subject to the Adult and Vocational Education Act (WEB: Wet educatie en beroepsonderwijs). The institutions offering adult and vocational education under this act are supervised by the Inspectorate (Inspectie van het Onderwijs; Ministry of Education, Culture and Science). The Accreditation framework for adult and vocational education (Toetsingskader bve) includes two levels of inspection: Level 1: Institute analysis every three years (based on desk research (yearly reports, results other signals); site visits (study a sample of educational programmes offered, study on quality assurance systems). The results of the analysis will be discussed with the Board. Every year a quick scan takes place on the basis of desk research. Level 2: In case the discussion with the Board given an indication of serious risks, inspection at level 2 will take place. This involves a study on the quality and a study on quality improvement. The accreditation frameworks identified seven quality areas, each having their own specific indicators (Educational process, examination and certification, results, quality assurance, compliance with legal requirements, quality of teachers/staff, and financial continuity The quality in this area is the responsibility of the providers themselves. There are no strict legal requirements towards programmes <i>not</i> leading to an accredited degree. In case the private providers offer accredited degrees (e.g. Bachelor, master, VET diplomas), the programmes and the provider is subject to supervision and accreditation. The Dutch referencing report states that “Private education providers accredited by the Education Minister comply with the quality rules and requirements of funded institutions. In addition, professional and industry sectoral associations have formulated their own quality codes. NRTTO members, the representative organisations of private training institutes, sign the Code of Conduct for Training and Education and are also obliged to use the Terms and Conditions as drawn up by the NRTTO and the consumer organisation, “Consumentenbond”.
24	NO	The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training is responsible for the development of subject curricula and development, supervision and quality control of primary, lower secondary and upper secondary general and vocational education and training. Norway enjoys a high degree of decentralisation, and in Knowledge Promotion reform of 2006, the central government delegated more responsibility to the local level. The 429 municipalities own and run the public primary and lower secondary schools, while the 19 counties are responsible for all aspects of public upper secondary general education and VET, including apprenticeship training. Municipali-

		ties and counties receive financial support from the central government. Adult Education Act (Lov om voksenoppl�ring) regulates different types of adult training not covered by the Education Act. Education and training for adults is provided by a variety of public and private institutions. Among the most important are private adult learning study associations (studieforbund) that offer primary and secondary education, but also IVET and CVET. Labour market training, work-based training and distance education. Quality is not mentioned directly in the law and in the regulations, but the many topics presented can be seen as a kind of quality standards and criteria for good quality. The Act relating to Post-secondary Vocational Education and Training (Lov om fagskoler 2003, latest amendment 2010) regulates public and private post-secondary vocational education and training at ISCED 4 level, with courses and programmes of 6 months' to 2 years' duration. Education and training under this law is not part of higher education. The main purposes of the Act relating to post-secondary vocational education and training is to ensure and promote quality provision, and to ensure student rights. The amendments to the law in December 2010 relate to the introduction of a national qualifications framework, to the recognition of prior learning and to the use of credits. The Act (LOV 2003-06-20 nr 56: Lov om fagskoleutdanning (fagskoleloven) mention directly the roles of NOKUT in relation to securing the quality of these educations and their institutions. NOKUT was established in 2003 as part of the Quality Reform legislation on higher education. NOKUT's areas of responsibility and operational mechanisms are regulated by the Act Relating to Universities and Colleges, the Act Relating to Tertiary Vocational Education and the associated Regulations issued by the Ministry of Education and Research. NOKUT's professional independence means that its accreditation and recognition decisions cannot be overruled by the Ministry. The National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (Nasjonalt organ for kvalitet i utdanningen — NOKUT) is responsible for the accreditation of both higher education and post-secondary vocational education and training
25	PL	For VET no central institution for accreditation exists, this might come in the future, but is not decided yet. For VET a proposal is under construction, with 10 quality standards. The regulation of the Minister of National Education of 7th October 2009 on pedagogical supervision, which is presently in force sets requirements for primary schools, lower and upper-secondary schools, art schools, continuing and practical education establishments and professional development centres in the following areas: (1) The effectiveness of school in students' performance and in providing care; (2) The processes taking place in a school; (3) Functioning of a school/ centre in the local community; and (4) Managing a school/ centre. External evaluation of the above mentioned areas is regularly conducted. It is the basis for assigning scores on the scale where the best performance in fulfilling requirements is marked A and the lowest E. That methodology influences the quality assurance in the Polish education system. The same regulation obliges the head of school/ centre to conduct internal evaluation and using its results to improve school functioning. The internal evaluation is a tool to gather information on the quality of a school work, the assessment of effectiveness and helps in planning future actions. The internal evaluation allows the headmaster of school to find out what are the school deficits and to plan how to develop the school. Institutions and centres of continuing education which provide non-formal education can obtain accreditation which confirms that they meet specific requirements and assure quality of education. However, the accreditation introduced in 2003 is voluntary; therefore the out-of-school establishments providing education in compli-

		ance with the principles of free business activity are able to avoid any quality related supervision. Most institutions dealing with non-formal education have quality assurance by means of a ISO-certificate.
26	PT	With regard to quality assurance, the National Qualification and Vocational Education Agency (NQVEA) plays an important role for the non-higher education qualifications (VET). It is the responsibility of the National Qualification and Vocational Education Agency (NQVEA) to manage the network of New Opportunities centres, the design and updating of the National Qualifications Catalogue (NQC), the organisation and rationalisation of training provision available in dual certification courses, as well as the supervision and support of information activities and guidance for qualification and employment.
27	RO	The orientation of the Romanian system of adult learning and education, towards quality is strongly related to vocational education and training, and to labour market training programmes. The MoERYS-Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport is responsible for VET system, initial and continuing (excepting the apprenticeship on the job).The MoERYS has 3 subordinated institutions dealing with quality assurance aspects: ARACIP (Pre-university Education); ARACIS (University Education); NQA (CVT). For the authorisation of the formal CVT providers, there are county's authorisation commissions (LACs) at county level consisting of 5 members, local representatives of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection; Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport; National Agency for Employment; Trade Union and Employers' Organisations. The authorisation is granted by the LAC based on the evaluation reports prepared by two specialists/evaluators in the field of the training programme. The Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport through the National Authority for Qualifications is responsible for quality assurance within the nationally regulated CVT system (formal, non-formal and informal). The mutual recognition of the certificates is a reality only between the formal and the non-formal/informal branches of the nationally regulated CVT system. The main principles implemented are: Quality assurance, Access, Decentralization, and Social partnership.
28	SE	In order to secure quality in post-secondary education and training the Government has introduced a common framework of Higher Vocational Education as of 1 July 2009, the National Coordination Point for EQF. Quality and national equivalence will be guaranteed through uniform quality criteria and quality indicators for different forms of post secondary vocational education and training outside higher education. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate's (Skolinspektionen) follow-up of the quality of work-based learning in upper secondary school the Government is discussing a series of measures aiming at further improving the quality of work-based learning as well as apprenticeship training. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate has supervisory responsibility for pre-schooling, school-age child care, schooling and adult education. This means that the Agency checks that the municipalities or the independent schools comply with the legislation and other provisions applicable to their activities. The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education makes tenders for new advanced VET educations lasting in average around 2 years.

29	SI	The Vocational Educational Act¹ (Articles: 15, 16, 17.). The provider of secondary vocational education and training (young and adults), has to implement the internal quality system. It has to have a quality commission, and carried out self-evaluation in accordance with the quality circle (plan, do, check, act.). The School council following the proposal of the principal or headmistress (hereinafter referred to as principal), appoint a committee for quality, white a main task to monitor and assure the quality of the educational process. The quality commission is composed of the President and members: school representatives and representatives of employers, representatives of parents of students. The Commission consists of Chairman and at least five members. The School publishes an annual report of the work of the quality commission on its website. The post-secondary Vocational Educational Act (Articles 15) indicate that the post-secondary school has to have the quality commission. The task of the commission is to carry out self-evaluation and to cooperate in the external evaluation and accreditation procedures. In the field of post-secondary education the external evaluation and accreditation procedures are carried out by the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for higher education (NAKVIS).
30	SK	The secondary IVET system is dominantly based on a traditional quality assurance mechanism – responsibility for quality assigned by law to respective players (e.g. director of school, establisher, Ministry of Education) and the supervision by the State School Inspection. It must be stressed that no national quality assurance programmes have been elaborated yet and no quality assurance mechanisms based on specific European tools (CQAF, EQARF) were made obligatory. Nevertheless, the non-existence of national quality management system was expressed a weak point and the introduction of such systems in all segments of VET, regional schooling, higher education and CVET/LLL was indicated an explicit goal to be achieved within the activities of the 2007-2013 ESF Operational Programme Education.
31	TK	Quality standards for VET providers in Turkey do exist. VET policy is conducted at a national level; however, a national approach for quality assurance is yet to be developed. No national Reference Point is identified or established in Turkey as yet. However, EQAVET liaises with MONE on the quality assurance issues in VET. According to Besim Durgun (a visiting scholar in BIBB) great progress has been made during the last two decades in the Turkish VET system in terms of outcome-based education and training. Qualifications development has a built-in quality assurance mechanism: from skills needs analysis, occupational standards, training standards/qualifications, to assessment and certification based on unitized/modularized qualifications. Bearing in mind that international and bilateral projects play a key role in order to promoting quality assurance in VET, the Turkish government has launched international project together with, for example, France, Germany, and Japan in different vocational schools. In general, these international and bilateral projects aim at developing curricula, training technical and vocational teachers home and abroad, renewing machines and equipment, and finding

¹ Vocational Education Act: http://zakonodaja.gov.si/rpsi/r02/predpis_ZAKO982.html

		out additional resources outside the regular budget.
32	UK	Separate legislation for each of the 4 nations, Northern Ireland; England; Wales; Scotland. Legislation covers: a) Credit and Qualifications frameworks in each country b) Inspectorates in each country, e.g. The Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989. In the UK VET quality assurance systems are in place and compatible with the EQAVET Recommendation. The UK is implementing this through the EQAVET network and working groups. Vocational Higher Education, whether undertaken in universities, other HE or FE institutions, is generally the responsibility of the HE funding and quality agencies. Where VET courses lead to qualifications on the national credit and qualifications framework (one in each of the 4 nations) the QA requirements related to those qualifications apply. When VET is delivered by Further Education Colleges they are autonomous, independent bodies with responsibility for QA of their provision. They are required to engage in self-evaluation and it is carried out within a context of quality frameworks and self-evaluation tools supplied by external QA bodies. The resulting self-evaluation reports contribute to and form a basis for external evaluation carried out by: National inspectorates (in each nation); Funding bodies; The relevant Departments of Education. Publicly funded VET learning providers are required to keep records of all learners, including demographic data, the course(s) which each learner is taking and data on completion (whether the learner completes the course) and achievement (whether the learner gains the target qualification). Some of this data is collected primarily as the basis for the calculation of funding, but it is also used to monitor the quality of provision and to form the basis of “league tables” in which the success rates of individual providers can be compared. There is also a small proportion of the funding which is dependent on the learner having completed the course and achieved the target qualification. The Inspectorate (in each of the four nations) is responsible for inspecting and reporting periodically on the quality of teaching, learning and management of individual colleges, private training providers and other learning providers. The reports of the Inspectorate are used to monitor the quality of provision, to provide ‘benchmarks’ against which providers can judge their own performance (by enabling comparisons with other providers of similar size and student characteristics), to ensure that action is taken where providers are failing and to provide examples of good practice. The Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) was formed to accelerate quality improvement, increase participation and raise standards and achievement in the learning and skills sector in England. ‘Skills that Work for Wales’ (2008) signaled the introduction of a new Quality and Effectiveness Framework (QEF) for the skills sector in 2009 to enable the Welsh Government to monitor learning providers’ performance, ensure that public funding is used effectively and that there are possibilities to intervene if necessary. The framework places increased emphasis on providers themselves taking responsibility to work together to drive up quality and share good practice, through initiatives such as benchmarking and peer review. The Welsh Government carries out regular reviews of providers’ performance and monitors their progress, but against a more streamlined set of performance indicators with the main focus being on learner outcomes and provider responsiveness. Providers with a good track record of delivering high quality learning undergo ‘lighter touch’ assessments.

Non formal adult learning		
1	AT	(1) Ö-Cert provides registration as one of the Quality Providers of Adult Education in Austria. For transparency, simplified administration and to promote an overall strategy of quality, the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture developed the Ö-CERT (AT-Cert) - in cooperation with leading Austrian experts, representatives of the nine Austrian provinces and providers of Adult education. Ö-CERT is implemented at macro-level (policy) and the target is to assure the quality of providers all over Austria. Ö-CERT is focussed by the Austrian Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture to assure and to improve the quality of structures of Adult Learning (Adult Education). (2) Academy of Continuing Education (wba) is a system for the qualification and recognition/accreditation of adult educators. www.wba.or.at/. Founded in 2007 the Academy of Continuing Education has a new approach to recognising acquired competences of adult educators in that it acknowledges previously acquired qualifications and offers guidance as far as the acquisition of missing skills is regarded. (3) Another interesting case is Austria, where institutions that want to take part in the “Initiative Erwachsenenbildung 2012 – 2014”, providing basic skills, have to apply for an accreditation which consists of several rounds of quality procedures including continuous external evaluation and monitoring.
2	BE	Flanders: (1) The Support Centre for Non-formal Adult Education (SoCius) also supports quality assurance within the sector. Organisations which are subsidised under the decree concerning socio-cultural adult work are expected to take the principles of integrated quality assurance into consideration. Walloon: (1) The Higher Council for social advancement education developed a guide to quality management (Guide Qualité pour l'Enseignement de Promotion sociale) to promote the integration of a quality in all educational institutions for social promotion.
3	BG	Not available
4	CH	(1) eduQua label constitutes the framework in which quality of adult learning in Switzerland is assured; eduQua is the first Swiss quality label for adult continuing education. The quality label provides certified institutions with a considerable advantage in the eyes of their clients. The quality management also supports an improvement through the certification process. (2) Train the Trainer (AdA) as a 3-level core concept of staff quality. ■ Level 1: The SVEB-Certificate was introduced in 1995 (AdA-module level 1)

		■ Level 2: The Federal Certificate of Competence for adult education instructors was introduced in 2000 (AdA-module level 2) ■ Level 3: The federal diploma "Advanced Federal Diploma in Training Management and Human Resources Management" was introduced in 2006 (AdA-module level 3)
5	CY	(1) There is no quality framework (legislation / accreditation for formal adult education / second chance, and for the non formal part of AL except that of VET).
6	CZ	(1) Under the "Concept" programme the government is developing a five-star rating system for educational institutions that provide professional retraining courses.
7	DE	(1) Non available at federal level. The responsibility for non-vocational CET does lies with the states. These regulate the quality requirements in the CET and training leave laws. In almost all states CET and adult education laws exist in with the support requirements such as public offer, professional leadership, economic efficiency etc. are defined. There are special quality-related regulations exist in the following states: Bremen, Mecklenburg West Pomerania, Lower Saxony, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland, Schleswig-Holstein and Thuringia.
8	DK	(1) The Act on The Danish Evaluation Institute evaluate all levels of education including all types of adult education that get public funding. (2) The Act for general adult education concludes that the institution establish a system for quality development and assessment of the results in relation to the education and teaching. (§ 21.) and in § 22 that the minister of Education can by the suppliers of education in relation to this Act require all necessary information to use for inspection and the preparation of statistics, including individual competence assessment as mentioned in §13 Stk. 2. The minister of Education can define regulations about electronic communication between the institution and The Ministry, including form and format and about the use of digital signature when the informations are delivered. The Minister can further make demands to control and security measures.
9	EE	(1) Private training providers must be licensed according to the Private School Act
10	EL	(1) a new initiative called 'T3 framework' (National Quality Assurance Framework for Lifelong Learning) is proposed. De T3 framework recommends the incorporation of quality system in the LLL, including quality indicators and quality principles
11	ES	(1) Not available. A proposal of experts exists to coordinate and assure quality of delivery but it was still not put into consideration.
12	FI	(1) the Liberal Adult Education Act (632/1998) mention the possibility to get support to quality development. (2) The Decree on the Finnish National Board of Education (805/2008) stipulates that the FNBE is responsible for the evaluation of educational outcomes in education from pre-primary to adult education.

13	FR	No formal policy concerning the quality of non-formal education and training exists, except for a label regarding the quality of language education. Several labels have been developed by non governmental organisations and are used in the private sector as well as the public sector. (1) Quality label as Greta Plus (public adult learning including second chance and VET) and (2) Lycee der Metiers (vocational secondary school) serves as measure to boost quality. (3) The label Lycée des Metiers (“Vocational Secondary School”) For the non formal learning, only label regarding the quality of language education
14	HR	(1) Adult Education Act in 2007 set standards for professional monitoring and setting standards for adult education institutions regarding the form, content and implementation of formal adult education programmes, necessary qualifications for teaching staff in formal adult education, necessary conditions regarding premises and other material conditions.
15	HU	(1) Act on Adult Education (CI/2001), modified in 2004, which regulates non-formal adult education and training. According to the law, there is a national system of accreditation of adult education and training, currently under legal re-construction as part of the act on adult education and training.
16	IE	(1) The Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) & the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) were established in 2001 under the 1999 legislation. FETAC, HETAC & IUQB & their quality assurances roles have been subsumed into the recently (2012) established Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). (2) The voluntary NALA Evolving Quality Framework (2005) for improving and monitoring the quality of adult basic education (ABE)
17	IS	(1) the Adult Education Act (2010) includes articles on accreditation and certification, evaluation and quality control, funding, information provision and the recognition of prior learning. This Act does not apply to non formal learning and education that is based on legislation for upper secondary or higher education.
18	IT	(1) Various providers of non-formal adult learning, such as UPTER (Folk university Rome), have developed an own self-evaluation system. (2) The most important recent development in this regard is the National Plan for Quality Assurance of VET (Piano nazionale per la garanzia di qualità dei sistema di istruzione e formazione professionale)¹. In March 2012 the National Plan for Quality Assurance of VET was endorsed at institutional level (Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Education and Regions). This Plan, complying with the request of the EQAVET Recommendation, should undergo a fur-

¹ Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, Ministero dell’istruzione dell’università e della ricerca, Regioni e Province autonome, Coordinamento Regionale, (2012), Piano nazionale per la garanzia di qualità dei sistema di istruzione e formazione professionale.

		ther consultation with social partners as well as representatives of providers. Also second chance education, provided by the CTP (Permanent Territorial Centers), is included in this national plan.
19	LT	Not available
20	LU	(1) The regulation of March 2000 establishes a quality framework and a quality label (label de qualité) for non formal education provided by the municipalities and non-profit associations. Quality in the non-vocational education and training sector is assured to a limited degree by the quality label of March 2000, which is used by nearly all municipalities and institutions because it is coupled to government financial support. This quality label is detailed below.
21	LV	(1) Education Law determines that all educational institutions, except those which implement only interest related education programmes have to be accredited. Private enterprises who are not in the State Education Register and individuals must receive the local municipalities' licence for implementing the adult non-formal education programmes
22	MT	A small number of non-governmental AL providers are subsidised by DLL and, therefore, come under DLL QA measures. In the DLL, the Education Officers (inspectorate) for Lifelong Learning & a number of co-ordinators are responsible for QA in publicly-funded adult learning (16+ second- chance schools.) in lifelong learning centres; day classes for adults; outreach programmes of municipalities/local government schools; centres for performing arts; basic skills; ICT courses. Second-chance schools for adults come under the MQC regulations. However, the process is not standardized – each institution has its own take on the issue in agreement with the MQC. The emergence of convergence is in the process.
23	NL	(1) code of conduct private training institutes; (2) quality seal for folk universities; (3) Quality code for APL centres including accreditation
24	NO	(1) VOX accredits adult education associations and online schools under the new Act for adult education, introduced in 2010
25	PL	(1) Institutions and centres of continuing education which provide non-formal education can obtain accreditation. However, the accreditation introduced in 2003 is voluntary; therefore the out-of-school establishments providing education in compliance with the principles of free business activity are able to avoid any quality related supervision.
26	PT	(1) Quality Charter of the New Opportunities Centres (NCOs), ANQ (2007) - designed to frame the quality approaches of E&T providers within the New Opportunities Initiative, including a set of reference indicators and benchmarks. (2) and Ministerial order 851/2010 (6 September) on certification of

		VET providers
27	RO	Not available
28	SE	(1) The Swedish National Council for Adult Education (Folkbildningsrådet) is responsible for the distribution of the state grants and for developing and monitoring the activities within the popular and liberal adult education; (2) BRUK, a system for support on the quality work for all types of adult education
29	SI	(1) The Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training has developed a quality label for non-formal continuing education (since 2000)
30	SK	Not available.
31	TK	Not available
32	UK	Each country has own specific systems, an example is: ESTYN Inspection of Adult Community Learning (ACL) in Wales.

Annex 3: Further details methodology

Work plan

Short introduction work plan

The following table provides a summary of the work plan of the entire study, divided in three different phases. Each phase builds on the previous one.

Table 0.1 Methodology overview

Phase / time plan	Activities	Results
Inception phase: desk research and fine-tuning methodology (within 1 month)	■ Kick-off meeting ■ Drawing up inception report ■ Inception report meeting (combined with briefing meeting experts interim phase)	■ Mutual understanding of the assignment ■ Inception report
Interim phase: stocktaking on country level (within 6 month)	Preparation	
	■ Developing data collection formats ■ Briefing meeting research team to discuss the findings of the inception phase, instruct the experts in their data collection task	■ Data collection formats ■ Common understanding amongst experts
	Country fact sheets	
	■ Completing country fact sheets (desk research + interviews)	■ First country fact sheets
	Preliminary analysis and interim report	
3 Final phase: Assessment: case studies, seminar, analysis and reporting (within 12 months)	■ Preliminary analysis ■ List of case studies ■ Interim report ■ Meeting Commission	■ Country fact sheets ■ List of case studies ■ Interim report ■ Minutes Commission meeting
	Case studies	
	■ Conducting 15 studies of selected cases	■ 15 in-depth case study reports
	Internal meeting research team	
	■ Discussing 15 case studies ■ Cross country analysis ■ Cross case analysis ■ Quality determinants AI / ingredients	■ Briefing document workshop / seminar

	reference framework	
	■ Preparation seminar / workshop	
	Analysis and draft final report	
	■ Integrated analysis ■ Reporting ■ Meeting Commission	■ Draft final reporting ■ Final agenda / briefing document workshop / seminar in Brussels ■ Minutes Commission meeting
	Seminar / workshop in Brussels	
	■ Seminar/workshop 30 participants: Testing the draft reference framework, discussing findings to arrive at conclusions and recommendations	■ Testing overall outcomes, trends and recommendations with experts and stakeholders ■ Minutes with outcomes seminar / workshop
	■ Final analysis and final report	
	■ Final analysis and reporting	■ Final report

Country studies

The ToR indicates that this study should cover a representative range of EU MS, EFTA countries and accession candidate countries. On request of the Commission, we decided to include information of all countries falling within the scope of the study, resulting in 32 country fact sheets:

- the 27 European Union Member States
- 3 EFTA countries (Iceland, Norway, and Switzerland)
- 2 accession candidate countries (Croatia and Turkey).

The aim of the country fact sheet was to gather information on country level concerning key data to provide a general picture of quality measures in adult learning in the countries studied. Taking into account the resources and the goals of this study, this country fact sheet did not include a full assessment of quality in adult learning in the countries. The aim of this fact sheet was therefore to identify the most important and relevant quality measures, and as result the researchers where obliged to make choices concerning what types of measures taken in the diverse field of adult learning. During the research process, however, there are a number of checks and balances to ensure that indeed the most important and relevant quality measures are described (e.g. interviews, consultation of key stakeholders). With this approach we assure that we include maximum variety of practice around Europe in the study.

The country fact sheets addressed the following questions:

- 1) What are the national / regional policies, frameworks / legislation, etc. with regard to quality approaches, standards and other relevant developments in the field of Adult Learning?
- 2) What are the issues and challenges which are specific to the adult learning sector in relation to assuring quality of its providers and provision?
- 3) What are differences and common characteristics in the non-vocational adult learning sector compared with the development of quality assurance systems in VET and Higher Education?
- 4) Are there processes and mechanisms for quality assurance? If yes, what is their scope and what is their approach?
- 5) Who are the bodies responsible for supervising, managing, implementing and supporting these processes and mechanisms at national / regional level (including systems and bodies responsible for the accreditation of providers) in order to support quality measures at provider level?
- 6) Are there interesting practices with regard to quality in the adult learning sector? If yes, please describe.

The fact sheets were drawn up by the core research team studying literature and policy documents and having an interview with at least one key stakeholder (identified in consultation with the Commission). The fact sheets were sent by the research team to responsible policy makers in the MS for commenting. Also, during the interviews as conducted by the research team, the fact sheets were discussed. Afterwards, the summarised versions of the country fact sheets are included in the annex of the final report.

Case studies on interesting practices

Key to finding ingredients for the development of a draft quality reference framework is analysing what quality assurance practices already exist in the Member States. In order to conduct these in-depth case studies, three research steps were foreseen:

- **Step 1: Selecting the cases for in-depth study**, ensuring a balanced selection with a maximal learning effect.
- **Step 2: Conducting the in-depth case studies**, obtaining new in-sights and in-depth understanding of the functioning of quality assurance measures in Europe.
- **Step 3: Analysing the case studies**, comparing the case studies and identify key trends

In the remaining of this section these research steps are discussed in more detail.

Step 1: Selecting the cases for in-depth study

The country factsheets contain examples of interesting practices (adding up to long list of 43 potential cases for in-depth study). Each interesting practice is linked to a particular quality level and a particular quality area. For each combination of quality level and quality area an interesting practice is selected for in-depth analysis. In addition, some atypical interesting practices which could be difficult to place in the framework due to their potential innovative character are selected as well. In making the selection of cases, the following criteria are taken into consideration:

- Whether it addresses a certain learning need as identified in the preliminary analysis;
- Whether it is balanced geographically
- Whether it is balanced amongst sub sectors of AL (basic skills, VET, HE, and liberal AL)
- Whether it is balanced amongst formal and non-formal learning
- Whether it is balanced amongst private or public provision of AL
- Whether it is balanced amongst QA instruments (macro, meso and micro level).

Moreover, some criteria can be mentioned related to the practice as such:

- Whether the conditions under which the interesting practice operates are specified;
- Whether the processes and procedures that are followed are carefully registered;
- Whether the success is proven;
- Whether evaluation reports/studies exist, and finally;
- The cases should respect a geographical spread across Europe

The experts drawing up the country fact sheets identified practices which to a large extent fulfil these conditions. The long list of cases was discussed during the TWG on quality, resulting in an overview of their preferences of cases. These preferences were subsequently assessed by the core research team whether they satisfy the above mentioned criteria.

Seminar

The seminar took place Wednesday 10th October in Brussels. Here below the agenda is provided.

Agenda testing seminar study quality in AL, Wednesday 10th October, Brussels			
	Chairman: Barry Hake Participants: EC officials (AL, VET and HE units) (6), Members TWG (25), Research team (7); selection of case study representatives / experts (5). Location: Place de Madou, Brussels Date: Wednesday 10 th October		
8.45 – 9.15	Registration and coffee		
9.15 – 9.30	Opening of the expert meeting (Barry Hake) ▪ The aims and goals of the seminar ▪ Presenting the agenda of the seminar ▪ Sharing experiences and expectations		
9.30 – 10.00	Presentation by Panteia (Simon Broek & Bert-Jan Buiskool) ▪ Update of research activities ▪ Presentation of the cross country analysis ▪ Presentation of cross case analysis		
10.00 – 11.15	Workshop 1 A Presenting 2 interesting quality approaches and discussion in sub-groups on lessons to learn	Work shop 1B Presenting 2 interesting quality approaches and discussion in sub-groups on lessons to learn	Work shop 1C Presenting 2 interesting quality approaches and discussion in sub-groups on lessons to learn

	Facilitator, presenters, reporter	Facilitator, presenters, reporter	Facilitator, presenters, reporter
11.15 - 11.30	Coffee break		
11.30 - 12.15	Reporting on outcomes of workshops and discussion		
12.15 – 13.00	Lunch		
13.00 - 13.30	Presentation on the building blocks of a quality reference framework (Simon Broek & Bert-Jan Buiskool) • What are determinants of (good) quality in AL (micro learning environment)? • What are the framework conditions to make this possible (on staff, providers and system level)? • What are indicators that measure these quality aspects? • What quality (Assurance) instruments are working for what learning context (formal / non-formal), provision (public and private) and level (macro, meso, micro)? • What are the main challenges and issues? • How to link up with established frameworks (such as EQAVET and ESG HE)?		
13.30 - 14.30	Workshop 2A Reflection and discussion in subgroups Facilitator and reporter	Work shop 2B Reflection and discussion in subgroups Facilitator and reporter	Work shop 2C Reflection and discussion in subgroups Facilitator and reporter
14.30 - 14.45	Coffee break		
14.45 – 15.15	Reporting on outcomes of workshops and discussion		
15.15- 15.30	Presentation on how to implement a quality reference framework: policy options (Simon Broek & Bert-Jan Buiskool)		
15.30 - 16.00	Plenary discussion on policy options: ▪ Objectives ▪ OMC Instruments ▪ Monitoring ▪ Role of stakeholders		
16.00 – 16.10	Concluding remarks and closing (Barry Hake)		

The following outcomes/feedback was reported on the seminar:

The case studies raised interesting issues for the work of the TWG including the fact that, ideally, quality assurance should be less about jumping over hurdles and more about a provider's mission and values and the actual quality of teaching and learning. Workshop participants believed that there is a need to achieve a balance in quality assurance approaches between a bottom-up and a top-down system and between national, regional and local levels. The role of enabling framework conditions such as legis-

lation, national policies, national institutions and approaches at macro, meso and micro levels in quality assurance approaches was emphasised. The role of legislation that enforces a need was recognised as a very strong motivator and as giving legitimacy to quality assurance approaches.

The potential of well-structured, unifying, multi-level and multi-functional approaches to quality assurance was underlined and the importance of appropriate indicators, including output indicators for the education and training sector in question was highlighted. The role of governments as owners / partners in developmental models of quality assurance was emphasised. The importance of providing guidelines and tools for providers was discussed as was the role of provider self-evaluation as a core element of quality assurance. The need to create a quality culture as part of the leadership of adult learning organisations was underscored. Without such a culture, quality assurance approaches may simply mean that only minimum requirements are met. The extent to which quality assurance can be a continuous improvement model in an organisation was raised.

Quality assurance needs to go beyond the classroom door to assure the quality of teaching and learning. Adult learning staff, including managers, administrators, counsellors, validation personnel as well as teachers / tutors, needs to be up-skilled. Such staff should form part of a cascade model for the development of good teaching and learning practice. The valuable role of inspection in quality assurance / control was raised.

The critical importance of placing the learner at the centre of quality approaches was underlined and it was considered that quality approaches that are not learner-centred are not always positive.

The role of qualitative as well as quantitative evidence and the research methods employed was highlighted and it was agreed that both are required to influence the whole range of stakeholders. Finally, there was a concern that because quality assurance systems cannot capture everything what is omitted may be considered less important and therefore get little attention.

In the afternoon session potential building blocks for a quality framework arising from the research were presented to the plenary group (See Annex 11) and discussed in small groups.

Feedback on the building blocks for a quality framework

The feedback from the workshops on the building blocks for a quality framework raised the issue of how far a quality framework should go. Should a framework be specific or work at a higher level of abstraction? The question of whether it was possible to develop a framework for all of adult learning was raised. It was agreed that the context section of a framework should contextualise the model proposed and spell out the diversity of the sector and the learners. It was emphasised that the goals and objectives of the adult learning in question are behind a quality framework and should be made explicit in a framework which essentially projects an ideal scenario.

Relevance is frequently a debated issue and conflicts of interest arise. This would need to be clearly expressed in any preamble.

The use of levels in the framework was discussed. It was stated that there is much good quality at micro level in spite of rather than with the support of, me-so and macro levels. The gaps in support pinpoint responsibilities at these levels. It was concluded that using levels is a helpful approach.

Ideally, quality assurance should start at the micro level and the logic of a framework is that the levels are interlinked. The micro level states what is required for quality, the meso level ensures quality at the micro level and the macro level ensures quality at the meso level – a bottom-up approach. However, quality assurance can also be looked at from the opposite direction, namely, the outcomes required at macro level could be identified and then what needs to be done at meso and micro levels to ensure those outcomes are achieved could be identified – a top-down approach.

In general the learner appears to be missing from the proposed building blocks. In addition, learner selection and assignment to courses are missing at meso level.

Overall, it was concluded that the proposed building blocks were very useful for the TWG's work.

Implementing a quality reference framework: policy options

The final session of the day focussed on implementing a quality reference framework (See Annex 12). The discussion that followed the presentation pointed to challenges in implementing a quality reference framework.

The issue of whether the implementation of the quality framework was a technical process only or a more political process was raised. It was pointed out that while the OMC is a starting point for the development of the quality framework, the implementation of the framework will take place outside the OMC and the TWG itself. The question of how stakeholders who are not included in the development of the framework could be encouraged to get involved in its implementation was raised.

It was concluded that the next steps in bringing about the implementation of whatever is developed by the TWG will need to be addressed.

Participants in addition to the members of the Thematic Working group on Quality.

Name	Country	Organisation	Responsible for a case study
Kim Faurschou	DK	indep. Consultant	Yes
Helen Keogh	IE	indep. Consultant	Yes
Dieter Dohmen	DE	FiBS	Yes
George Zarifis	EL	Aristoteles University Thessaloniki	Yes
Christian Kloyber	AT	bifeb	Yes
Balazs Nemeth	HU	University of Pécs	Yes
Barry Hake	NL	Eurolearn	

Bert-Jan Buiskool	NL	Panteia	Yes
Simon Broek	NL	Panteia	Yes
Ms. Ruth Jermann	CH	SVEB	
Ms. Tanja Mozina	SI	ACS	
Ms Finola Butler	IE	Further Education Support Service	
Mr Ion Hohan	RO	indep. Consultant	
Ms Susanne Lattke	DE	DIE	
Ms Rachael Bubalo	UK (Wales)	ESTYN	
Mr Jan Sild	CZ	HOPE E.S.	Yes

Annex 4: List of sources

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Annex 5: Case study reports (separate document)

Annex 6: Country factsheets (separate document)

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Developing the adult learning sector

Quality in the Adult Learning Sector (Lot 1) ANNEX report (annex 5 and 6)

Annex final report (Open Call for tender EAC/26/2011)

This study has been financed by DG EAC.

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Foreword

Panteia is pleased to present the final report of the study on quality in adult learning, assigned by the European Commission, DG Education and Culture (Open Call for tender EAC/26/2011). Already many studies have been conducted and also, many developments have taken place throughout Europe in recent years related to the issue of quality in adult learning. However, the results of these studies and developments have not yet effectively been brought together to provide a common knowledge base, to monitor the quality of the sector and to develop a draft quality reference framework. This is exactly what this current study is aiming at, namely improving the available knowledge on "Quality in the Adult Learning Sector". The study is mainly focused on mapping interesting practices throughout Europe and providing 'ingredients' for the development of a framework for Quality in Adult Learning.

This study has been carried out by Panteia in partnership with Dieter Döhmen, Kim Faurischou, Barry Hake, Helen Keogh, Christian Kloyber, Balazs Nemeth, and George Zarifis. Overall, the research team's opinion is that this study has triggered an intensive and stimulating professional debate, and we are confident that the results of the study could play an important role in structuring future debates and in the development of policies for improving the quality of adult learning. This study would not have been possible without the cooperation of numerous stakeholders in the field of adult learning. Therefore, the research team would like to thank all the respondents around Europe for their willingness to cooperate in this study.

This volume contains the annex 5 and 6 of the analytical report, including the case study reports and the country factsheets.

Simon Broek and Bert-Jan Buiskool

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Abbreviations

Country codes

AT	Austria	IS	Iceland
BE	Belgium	IT	Italy
BG	Bulgaria	LT	Lithuania
CH	Switzerland	LU	Luxembourg
CY	Cyprus	LV	Latvia
CZ	Czech Republic	MT	Malta
DE	Germany	NL	Netherlands
DK	Denmark	NO	Norway
EE	Estonia	PL	Poland
EL	Greece	PT	Portugal
ES	Spain	RO	Romania
EU	European Union	SE	Sweden
FI	Finland	SI	Slovenia
FR	France	SK	Slovakia
HR (Croatia)	Croatia	TK	Turkey
HU	Hungary	UK	United Kingdom
IE	Ireland		

Abbreviations

ACE	Adult and continuing educational centres in Denmark
ACL	Adult and community learning
AdA	Ausbildung der Ausbilder/innen
AES	Adult Education Survey
AFNOR	Association française de normalisation
AIF	Associazione Italiana Formatori
AL	Adult learning
AMU	labour market training in Denmark
APL	Accreditation of prior learning
BRUK	Bedömning, Reflektion, Utveckling, Kvalitet (Assessment, Reflection, Development, Quality) (Sweden)
CAS	Common Awards System
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
CET	Continuing Education and Training
CIF	new Common Inspection Framework
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CPD	Continuing professional development
CQAF	Common Quality Assurance Framework

CQAF	Common Quality Assurance Framework
CTP	Permanent Territorial Centers
CVET	Continuous VET
DES	Directorate for Educational Services in Malta
DfES	Department for Education and Skills (UK)
DLLL	Directorate for Lifelong Learning in Malta
DQSE	Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education in Malta
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
ECVET	European Credit for VET
EFQM	European Foundation for Quality Management
ENQA	the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
EOPP	National Organisation for the Accreditation of Qualifications in Greece
EQAVET	European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ESF	European Social Fund
ESG	European Standards and Guidelines
ESIB	European Students' Union
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
ET 2020	Education and training 2020
EUA	Association of European institutions of higher education
EURASHE	European Association of Institutions in Higher Education
FEC	Further education college
FETAC	Further Education and Training Awards Council
HETAC	Higher Education and Training Awards Council
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HQAAA	Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency
HR	Human Resource
HRDA	Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
IUQB	Irish Universities Quality Board
IVET	Initial VET
LLC	Lifelong Learning Centre
LLL	Lifelong learning
LLP	lifelong learning programme
LO	Learning Outcomes
LQW	Lernerorientierte Qualitätstestierung in der Weiterbildung
MEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports CZ
MNE	Ministry of National Education Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs in Greece
MQC	Malta Qualifications Council
MQF	Malta Qualifications Framework

MS	Member State
NCHE	National Commission for Higher Education in Malta
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications
NQAI	National Qualifications Authority of Ireland
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NRTO	Platform of Accredited Private Educational Institutions in the Netherlands
NVAL	Non vocational adult learning
OMC	Open Method of Coordination
OQEA	Offering Quality Education to Adults
PIAAC	Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PR	Personal Relations
QA	Quality Assurance
QALLL	Quality Assurance in Lifelong Learning
QEF	Quality Effectiveness Framework
QMS	Quality Management System
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SAR	Self-assessment report
SERV	Sociaal-Economische Raad van Vlaanderen
SVEB	Swiss Federation for Adult Learning
UPTER	Università Popolare della Terza Età di Roma
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VEU	Continuing adult education in Denmark
VTS	Vocational Training Structures
WBA	Weiterbildungsakademie; the Academy of Continuing Education

Annex 5 (Part A): Case study reports



1 Austria: Ö-CERT (at-cert)

Name expert: Christian Kloyber

Introduction: Description of the quality measure: introduction and short summary

Ö-CERT (at-cert) is an overall framework of quality (“umbrella label”) for adult education providers developed and recognized national wide in Austria. It was developed and is implemented (Austrian Federal Ministry of Education and the 9 provinces/ *Länder*) in cooperation with the most important stakeholders of adult education institutions (e.g. the Conference of Adult Education Organisations).

The implementation proceeds at macro-level (national and regional policy) and the main objective is to assure and to develop quality of provision of adult learning in Austria. Ö-CERT is an instrument for transparency of the use of QMS (quality management systems) and serves at the same time as a quality standard for granting funds and awards; not to forget that Ö-CERT constitutes an instrument of professionalization.

The aim of Ö-CERT is **transparency for customers/learners and for public authorities**:

At first glance the customers and public authority see, who’s a quality provider. Simplified administration (one certificate will be enough. It’s not necessary anymore to pass and pay for the admission to nine Austrian provinces Quality Assurance Procedures. Ö-Cert (AT-Cert) is accepted all over Austria. **Concordance** with other measures of staff development and program quality an overall strategy was designed, and Ö-CERT supports these initiatives: WBA, *Weiterbildungsakademie* (quality of staff) and program quality (basic skills/ literacy/ access to complete secondary level for early school-leavers, adults and migrants not having completed obligatory education) with the Initiative Adult Education of the Federal Ministry of Education and the 9 *Länder* as well as *Grundtvig* (National Agency Austria).

Part 1: Problem definition

Since the 1990s the issue of quality, the quality of adult education, has found a wide range of discussion and reflection. This process was more target oriented in the field of vocational education and training, even more oriented to procedures of the organization of the teaching (in schools) and finally directed with scepticism by experts and stakeholders of non-vocational (general) adult education.

Adult education in Austria is characterized by a low level of legal framework, little professional regulations but of a great diversity of stakeholders and stakes. No wonder that the concept of quality originated different interpretations and connotations in the binning of the discussion and the process of negotiation between all stakeholders of adult education, from the individual expert to the big organizations dominating the market of continuing education. A common denominator could easily be found in the importance of (institutional) autonomy and the economic value of the market. The easiest way to tackle the challenge establishing a framework of quality was to look for the easiest way and the cheapest solution. To ignore the importance of quality was not longer possible, in the early years of the 1990s it was visible, that market orientation

meant to participate in the competition. Finally, the concept of quality had and has an important, indeed an outstanding relevance for institutions and all providers of adult learning.

Quality (in the meaning of controlling), quality in the dimension of assurance and quality as an impulse for development and innovation was for a long period not really recognized by the Ministry of Education (sector adult education); it seemed that the concept of quality was in the dominion (domain) of the Ministry of Economy.

Another problem arose discussing the importance of quality in the field of education, especially of adult education. Is it possible to determine “quality” for each subject (the individual learner, teacher, adult educator) the same way? The learning is directly not visible in the very moment of the process of teaching and learning, and each individual acts differently in time and social space. The learning outcome is sometimes or very often not directly related to the learning process, and even more distant from curriculum, program and the setting of the learning. The question arose, how is quality to be seen from the side of the learners (the demand, need and interest), and how compatible are these concepts (and visions) with the market of quality concepts from the provider (the wide range from “marketing” to “public relations”).

Learning and controlling (the fear to fail examinations) constitutes a dilemma of dichotomy – another question entered the scenario: is “quality” a “wolf in sheep’s clothing” (quality control, controlling)? Is it a new and hidden way to control and to examine?

Quickly the promoters and the participants of the discussion learnt the lesson: to deal with concepts of quality in adult education means to assure transparency.

The last 15 years – and as a result of the discussion and the characteristics of the sector (adult education in Austria) – more and more organizations and institutions decided to adopt a quality management system. The most common are: EN ISO 9001, EduQwa (in the early beginning of the Swiss Quality Label experts of eduQwa and the Swiss Adult Education presented this concept in various seminars and workshops too in Austria), EFQM and LQW (a clever and commercially successful adaption of a mix of tools from responsive evaluation, organisational development and quality management, “Learner-Oriented Quality Certification for Further Education Organizations by Art-Set Trademark and with the support of the ESF, European Social Fund).

A parallel development starting in the late 1990s created several Quality Labels in the domain of the *Länder* (4 of the 9 Austrian provinces). After 1998 the Austrian states (*Länder*) Upper Austria (Oberösterreich, Quality Label EBQ), Lower Austria (Niederösterreich, Quality Label CERT-NÖ), Salzburg (Quality Label S-QS) and Vienna (Wien, Quality Label, wien-cert) created their own system of quality assurance. To be accepted for individual funding (concept of an individual learning account “Bildungskonto”) the providers of adult education have to apply for the regional quality label. Consequently some of the *Länder* created its own quality control or adopted one existing. Leading in 2010 to the theoretical situation, that it would have been necessary that a possible provider (institution) of adult learning should apply for 9 different Quality Labels and pay for it 9 fees valid for approx. 3 years.

Finally, the Federal Ministry of Education in coordination with all 9 Austrian provinces (the 9 regional governments) agreed in creating an “umbrella label”, including and giving validity to different and existing quality management labels and systems, the Ö-CERT system.

Part 2: Approach

The development of Ö-Cert as *the* Austrian quality-“umbrella label” was initiated with the expertise of researchers (Schlögl/Gruber 2003; Gruber/Schlögl et al. 2007; Gruber/Schlögl 2007). Project experiences and results of evaluations considering the situation of professionalization and quality management as well the situation of the public funding made it clear that a common and Austrian wide model of quality (assurance and development) had to be established. Transparency of the model and a high acceptance are of central importance. The project of creating an acceptable quality label started in 2008, finally all important stakeholders shared the same commitment: the representatives of all nine Austrian provinces (*Länder*), experts and researchers as well as the Austrian Ministry of Education (BMUKK) and representatives of the Austrian conference of Adult Education Institutions. The Federal Ministry of Education assumed the responsibility for the project and the financing of the team of researchers, practitioners, and stakeholders of adult education. The leading team was the head of the Austrian Institute for Research on Vocational Training (*öibf*), Peter Schlögl and the head of the department of Adult Education of the University of Klagenfurt, Elke Gruber. In seven meetings of all relevant Austrian stakeholders of adult education institutions followed by 2 expert’s workshops from October 2008 until May 2009 the concept was elaborated and presented for discussion and an Austrian wide consultation process during the summer of 2009 until autumn 2010; finally in the accepted concept was presented in October of 2010.

Initial situation

In Austria adult education is driven mainly by collective provision’. That means through institutions run by various interest groups (employer and labour associations, churches, political parties, etc.), and traditional providers reaping a large part of the market share. These are generally ‘non-profit’ organisations. Mixed financing structures vary from institution to institution. More recently, a large number of new private sector financed providers have also emerged. These are generally very small establishments (often one person enterprises). *At first glance, a large proportion of the students would seem to be individual ‘customers’ who access adult learning through market channels (like course catalogues, etc.) and pay for their courses. On more close inspection, however, there are some complex support mechanisms that complicate this assessment.* (Lassnig, 2011) That leads to a central problem to be resolved by the research team developing the Ö-CERT model: the definition of adult education in Austria, or in other word, who is a provider of adult education and who is not. Depending on the definition used (from the extensive to the more intensive one) in 2007 about 1.800 to 3.000 providers (institutions and organizations) were identified (Gruber/ Brünner/ Huss 2009). The results of a previous research project (PERLS) could be used to work on the concept and definition of “adult education in Austria”, followed by an Austrian wide discussion of the use of con-

cepts as “education”, “life long learning”, “adult learning (formal, non-formal, informal)”, “continuing education (further education)”, “non-vocational”/ “vocational-education”, “self-directed learning”...

A next step identified the diverse situation of the use of quality management systems, accreditation and certifications concepts in use, evaluations and self-evaluations, quality seals e.g.

As mentioned before the Austrian provinces (*Länder*) created their own system of quality assurance and development. It was obvious for everybody involved in the process that this situation was no more tolerable. The decision to create the umbrella label Ö-CERT was taken. And the situation given that the main responsibility of the quality concept lays in the hands of each institution of adult education respecting their autonomy as a high value, made it clearer, how the umbrella label“ could work: the mechanism of external quality assurance consists mainly to check and to document how each member of the community of institutions (providers) of adult education perform their quality management process transparently and reliable. Ö-CERT has to be a quality framework and not a new standardised Austrian wide quality management system (as for example the Swiss EduQua system). The Ö-CERT mechanism of quality assurance had to respect the heterogeneous situation, the diversity of quality systems in use and the differences how quality was and is interpreted in the field of Austrian adult education. This would rise the awareness of responsibility of each stakeholder: the provider of adult learning, the public and non-public funding of adult education as well as the individual adult person looking for an acceptable offer depending on lifelong guidance or needs and interest assessment.

Core elements of the quality framework Ö-CERT

- Accepted as a transparent tool based on comprehensible criteria for funding (public and non-public funding), for the target groups (learners) and all organizations of adult education who recognize measures of quality all over Austria
- Safeguard the principle of autonomy of the institutions of adult education in Austria; quality measures should support the organization
- Principle of efficient and simple administration of quality (quality management)
- Transparent and open (accessible) list of all quality providers constitutes a acceptable basis for funding and support as well as awarding
- International (European) acceptance (EQARF as reference)
- Open for innovation an new models of quality development (adult learning, lifelong learning e.g.) and flexible for adaptations
- Ö-CERT is not a new management system of quality management (QMS) but a system of recognition and certification of quality in adult education (without own audits).
- Ö-CERT has *no* intention to intervene or adapt existing QMS
- Ö-CERT will *not* support any protective measures (protection on the institutions an organizations involved historically and politically in Austrians educational system)
- Ö-CERT supports other instruments of quality development (e.g. AMS, job centres)

Proposed structure of the quality frame Ö-CERT

1 Identification as a provider of adult education:

The provider has to fulfil basic requirements. The criteria is to be accepted as a provider of adult education (definition of adult education):

- General basic requirements
- Basic requirements concerning the organization of the provider
- Basic requirements concerning the offers of the provider
- Basic requirements concerning principles of ethics and democracy
- Basic requirements concerning quality assurance

2 Confirmation of quality certificates:

The provider must have one of the valid Quality Management Systems or Quality Assurance Procedures – according to the Ö-Cert-List, which itemize nine accepted QMS and Quality Assurance Procedures. The most important selection criterion is the existence of external audits.

3 Control (checklist) of applications by the Ö-CERT agency and by the accreditation group of experts.

4 Registration as one of the Quality Providers of Adult Education in Austria and receipt of Ö-Cert (actual fee: 100,00 EUR)

Basic principles of Ö-CERT

Basic principles and paradigm of the concept “adult education” (definition)

- Life stage orientation to foster political participation (citizenship), social participation, professional orientation, related to ones own biography; education is more than the application of tools and skill orientation, adult education means more than “qualification” or “training”.
- Lifelong learning embraces all formats for learning (formal, non-formal, informal), the diverse places where learning takes place, and all ages. Learning comprehends all target oriented activities to improve knowledge and knowing, skills and competences, insights e.g.
- Adult education (adult learning and continuing education are here used as synonyms) is defined as all formats and forms of learning of the adult population in the context of profession and vocation, non-vocational and general education, citizenship education and community education, culture and the arts, privately, in public institutions or in economic context; conducted by teachers or self-directed. Adult education activities follow a political strategy and social responsibility and are structured by organizations on a legal and financial fundament.
- Providers of adult education are all organisations, associations, enterprises, institutions, coordinated networks and cooperation offering adult learning (as described above).

Basic principles of organisation

- The organisation applying Ö-CERT must provide minimum one offer of adult learning in Austria (regularly, planned, systematically developed and realized, publicly communicated and transparent).
- Adult education is a core task.
- The institution applying must present an experience of minimum 3 years in the Austria market of adult education

- The director of the organization or minimum one person of the academic or pedagogical (andragogical) staff must present a profound professional knowledge and experience (minimum 2 years).
- The agenda of the organisation must be accessible by the public (principle of transparency of rules and procedures).

Ethical and democratic principles

- The organisation accepts the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- The organisation is convicted to democracy

Basic prerequisites of the offer (provision of adult education)

- The offer (program) is in principle open for all target groups of adult learning and/or target oriented groups
- Recognition of prior learning activities (formal and non-formal education as well as informal learning)
- Training for product specific placement (product training) or to canvass members are explicitly excluded to apply for the Ö-CERT label
- Sport and leisure offers are excluded
- Religious activities (statements of faith) are not taken into consideration
- [...]

Seven core elements of quality

- Mission statement of the organization/ guiding principles (description of criteria of the guiding principles and goals of the provider)
- Offer (program) of the organisation (provider) (description of the target groups, needs and interests, general information and data of the target groups and educational sector, information management, diversity and gender issues)
- Management of the provider organisation (quality profile)
- Quality of staff (quality profile)
- Management of quality development and culture of feedback (error management), definition of quality
- Quality of the infrastructure (resources), best conditions for the learner (clients)
- Quality of public relations and feedback culture (outreach work)

Part 3: Contextual factors that influence the quality measure

The model of Ö-CERT was developed comparing with all existing QMS systems (school, higher education, vocational education and training), systems applied in Austria (federal republic and *Länder*) as well as those in Europe (especially in Germany: *Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung* and Switzerland: *SVEB*); the Austrian quality agencies (AQA, QUALITY AUSTRIA) were consulted concerning QMS with external audits. A previous study on quality (INSI-QUEB) conducted by Gruber/ Schlögl (2007) was re-evaluated. Factors of success of QMS accepted by Ö-CERT

- Legal framework of QMS and independent external audit

- The independent external audit includes also an audit on-site
- Usability all over the adult education sector (VET and NON-VET)
- Validity of the certification (time frame maximum 4 years)
- Clear and transparent procedure of controlling and extension
- Concept of quality and data protection (of persons and participants: data privacy)
- QMS includes dimensions of development (not only controlling or assurance): development of the organisation and staff¹

Factors of limitation

The different systems of quality management used by Austrian providers of adult learning, the complex and heterogeneous field of stakeholders, the lack of a clear legislation of adult education in Austria, the influences of diverse political actors and structures (national, regional, social partners, influences of political parties e.g.), a low profile of the profession (adult educators) in comparison with the school sector and higher education, the missing „culture of evaluation and self-evaluation“ e.g. shows that the **contradictions in the institutional structures** and policies still inhibit both the development of a lifelong learning strategy as well as the professional development of adult educators. The competence development and quality assurance approaches adopted in Europe contributed only very modestly to the development of adult education in Austria. With the adopted new National Strategy LLL: 2020 (act signed by 4 ministries: education, science, social affairs, economic affairs) in July 2011 a perspective has been opened or widened; the recent development of WBA (*Weiterbildungsakademie*) with the goal of the professionalization of staff (personnel of adult education), quality of the providers (Ö-CERT) and free access to basic education (*Initiative Erwachsenenbildung*) gives an optimistic outlook for the future.

Part 4: Outcomes and results

Ö-CERT was officially acknowledged and the treaty based on Article 15a B-VG of the Austrian Constitution (*Bundesverfassung*) was signed by all 9 *Länder* and the Federal Ministry of Education, the Arts and Culture and became effective with the 1st of March, 2012. Starting in December 2011 and under the administrative roof of the Federal Institute for Adult Education (bifeb) the Ö-CERT-Office opened and the LOGO was registered. **The Ö-CERT office** (<http://oe-cert.at>) started successfully (2011). The first 6 months more than 100 providers of adult learning received the label having completed the process of accreditation. A first step towards transparency for customers/learners and for public authorities has been achieved. “One certificate will be enough.” It is commonly accepted that a quality improvement for adult education is an important outcome. It has been observed that providers without any quality efforts until now are mo-

¹ QMS approved by Ö-CERT – context QMS in use since the 1990s and later: ÖNORM EN ISO ff.EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management): „committed to“, „recognised for excellence“ LQW (Learner-Oriented Quality Certification for Further Education Organizations by Art-Set Trademark) QVB (used in Austrian job centres and ESF funded) EduQua (the Swiss quality label) OÖ-EBQ (Quality Label of Upper Austria; adult learning VET and NON-VET) CERT-NÖ (Quality Label of Lower Austria and conducted by the Danube-University-Krems, adult learning VET and NON-VET) S-QS (Quality Label of Salzburg, adult learning VET and NON-VET) Wien-cert (Quality Label of Vienna, adult learning VET and NON-VET)

tivated to acquire one quality certificate (ISO and LQW are top ranked). Until June 2012, the external board of experts (Ö-CERT) met several times to study the admission documents of institutions that provided the necessary documentation fulfilling the criteria of admission¹.

Acceptance of the Ö-Cert criteria in the *Grundtvig* context:

QALLL (Quality Assurance in Life Long Learning with a Focus on Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education) adapted Ö-Cert criteria for the *Grundtvig* programme recently (2012), responsible is the Austrian National Agency for Lifelong Learning.

Problems detected the first 6 months...

The protocol of the external board of Ö-CERT resumes following incoherencies and problems in the process of admission:

- **Missing clear definition of the core task of the organisation** applying for Ö-CERT: adult education in distinction to several institutions who offer therapy, esoteric courses.
- **General doubts if QMS is appropriate** mainly for the main target group: the learner themselves. This critic arose in relation to a report and study of the German *Stiftung Warentest* published in 2008 (<http://www.bmbf.de/12926.php>).
- **Closer update between Ö-CERT and WBA** (*Weiterbildungsakademie*) with the goal to revise the concepts of staff quality of the accepted QMS and the curriculum of the WBA.

Part 5: Reflection on success and fail factors

The introduction of Ö-CERT with the goal to create transparent and effective recognition of the diverse QMS used in the adult learning sector in Austria was prepared carefully prepared.

Factors of success are (including the risk of failure):

- Careful preparation involving all stakeholder
- Scientific bases and research conducted by experts with acknowledged reputation
- International dimension: in time contact and discussion with good practice of QMS of adult learning
- Revision with experts of other sectors (VET, HE, school)
- Close contact with quality agencies (national and international);²
- Revision of the legal frameworks (national and international);
- Independent external audit must include audits on-site

¹ Criteria of admission: Identification as a provider of adult education. The provider has to fulfil basic requirements (= criteria, if it is a provider of adult education); Confirmation of the quality certification (certificate); Control by Ö-CERT agency and expert panel (accreditation group); Basic requirements concerning the organisation of the provider; Basic requirements concerning the offers of the provider; Basic requirements concerning principles of ethics and democracy; Basic requirements concerning quality assurance.

² Inconsistency and different quality of the audit reports has been detected during the revision process conducted by the external experts panel of Ö-CERT; feedback and evaluation of these reports could be a solution.

- Usability all over the adult education sector (VET and NON-VET)
- Clear and transparent procedure of controlling and extension
- Concept of quality and data protection (of persons and participants: data privacy)
- Revision of all dimensions of development (not only controlling or assurance)
- Development the organisation and staff (personnel) is a central issue
- Accepted as a transparent tool based on comprehensible criteria for funding (public and non-public funding), for the target groups (learners) and all organisations of adult education who recognize measures of quality all over Austria
- Safeguard the principle of autonomy of the institutions; quality measures should support the organisation
- Principle of efficient and simple administration of quality (quality management)
- Transparent and open (accessible) list of all quality providers constitutes a acceptable basis for funding and support as well as awarding
- International (European) acceptance (EQARF as reference)
- Open for innovation an new models of quality development (adult learning, lifelong learning e.g.) and flexible for adaptations

Possibility of transferability

Ö-CERT (AT-CERT) is an effective, relatively simple and not to expensive model of introducing an transparent tool of quality in diverse contexts of the adult learning sector, flexible enough and respecting the “market” of QMS. It is a top down procedure with the advantage to respect the autonomy of decisions and use of different QMS systems using the concept of an “umbrella label” and at the same time not to compete with the introduction of a new QMS.

Critic in general

The application of Quality Management Systems in the adult learning sector are identified by some critical experts as tools of neoliberal strategies; education is more complex than “education & training”, “learning outcomes”. These portray only one dimension in the complexity of the teaching and learning continuum. Lifelong learning proclaims “learner centeredness”, however, still QMS puts the organisation (institution) in the middle of attention (assurance and development), the programme and the learners are marginal. Evaluation (in the sense of responsive evaluation) could be an adequate instrument (procedure) involving all stakeholders pro actively (teacher, managers, learners e.g.) in the process to development the sector. (Compare with the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, <http://www.jcsee.org/>)

Part 6: Conclusions

The Austrian adult learning sector (adult education) received in the last years an initial push towards a efficient and professional nationwide coherent system with the creation of an instrument to develop (recognize) the quality of staff (certification of the adult educators) with the WBA (*Weiterbildungsakademie*) model introducing too concepts to validate informal learning (competences); a second important step was successfully done with the “umbrella quality label”. Ö-CERT for the first time in Austria creates a common roof of quality for the providers of adult learning. It was necessary to re-

evaluate the sector and the definition of “adult education” in the Austrian context and in concordance with important European partners (Germany and Switzerland). The third important step related closely to the Ö-CERT was the decision of the Ministry of Education and with all nine partners of the Federal Republic (*Länder*) to give free access to basic education for adults (literacy level, obligatory level and vocational secondary level) under the label of “Initiative Erwachsenenbildung” (initiative adult learning). Ö-CERT is obligatory for all providers accepted to receive funding by the “Initiative Erwachsenenbildung”.



2 Switzerland: eduQua

Name expert: Christian Kloyber

Introduction: Description of the quality measure: introduction and short summary

Teacher trainings for adult education instructors are not regulated by Switzerland. Consequently, many course instructors have traditionally been working on an honorary or a part-time basis but have not been trained professionally. This situation has been in a process of change in the last 20 years. Nowadays, people who work in further education must increasingly demonstrate their methodical and didactic qualifications. In addition to general educational skills specialized teaching skills need to be included in the qualifications. To resolve this problem a step-by-step development on quality was created: In 1995, the SVEB-Certificate was introduced (represents the AdA-module level 1 today), this was the first step towards the professionalization of the pedagogical personnel. Five years later, in 2000, the Federal Certificate of Competence for adult education instructors was added (today AdA-module level 2). And the same year milestone of the principle goals of SVEB - the quality label for training providers “eduQua” was introduced: The Swiss quality certificate for continuing education institutions.

eduQua is the first and only Swiss quality label geared towards adult continuing education. The quality label provides certified institutions with a considerable advantage in the eyes of their clients. Not only does it come with a positive image, but the quality management also sees a strong improvement through the certification’s execution.

Additionally, the certification proves to be an advantage when dealing with the authorities: in increasingly more cantons, the certification is a requirement for public funding. The Swiss Conference of the Cantonal Educating Directors recommends that the cantons check “the quality of the providers in the education sector in all of Switzerland based on the same criteria and make national subsidies dependent on a proof of quality (eduQua)”.

According to the eduQua-policy, the certification is open to those institutions active in continuing adult education, including those involved in the “re-education” of the unemployed, the so-called labour market relations. eduQua is also intended for:

- State subsidized continuing education institutions (public and private providers)
- Labour market relations providers
- Providers of modules
- Any institution offering continuing education that would like to be improved upon and identified as a quality institution

Adult education institutions, which would like to apply for the eduQua label, must prove that they fulfil eduQua minimum standards. A dossier must be put together following the given guidelines, which must be submitted to the certifying body. An on-site audit will be conducted, following an evaluation of the dossier. If the set criteria are fulfilled, the eduQua label is awarded.

Autonomous decision of the provider of adult learning: With the eduQua label, an institution certifies itself, not individual courses. This means that the eduQua label does not stand for individual courses being advertised, only for the institution as a whole and their concept based on 6 minimal standards of quality.

Part 1: Problem definition

Adult education in Switzerland is heterogeneously structured and (still) weakly regulated by law. In 2004 a federal law on vocational education included a chapter on VET (vocational continuing education). Missing is a comprehensive regulation that would allow the continuing education sector to be developed and supported as part of the national educational system. Political demands have been raised and since 1968 claimed by SVEB. And this persistence has paid off, on May 21, 2006 the nation voted yes to the new constitution on education. The Swiss people issued a mandate to the federal government to regulate for the first time by law the whole sector of adult continuing education as a whole. The relevant article reads: *“The federal government issues principle rules on continuing education. It can promote the development of the continuing education sector. The federal government issues principle rules on continuing education. It can promote the development of the continuing education sector. The law determines the areas and criteria. [...]”* Based on these principals Switzerland will adopt its first federal law on continuing education within the next few years. However, it has not been decided yet what specific form the law will have: whether it will be a new and comprehensive basic law or whether it will only be an extension of existing special laws. The main stakeholder of adult education in Switzerland is the Swiss Federation for Adult Learning (SVEB). It acts as the umbrella organisation of adult education and Lifelong Learning. SVEB is a non-governmental organisation, which represents nationwide private and state institutions, associations, and representatives responsible for adult education on a cantonal level, institutions, in-house training departments and personnel managers. It also extends its reach to individuals who are active in adult education (lifelong learning). SVEB promotes cooperation among adult learning institutions, raises public awareness for lifelong learning and supports its members in their activities. In Switzerland, over two million people participate in adult education programs every year. On the one hand, SVEB helps people using adult learning facilities by continuously supporting new and innovative projects in the field of adult learning and by ensuring a high quality standard. SVEB also aims to inspire people to accept lifelong learning as a way to promote personal and social betterment by enabling them to choose from the wide range of educational opportunities to discover their capabilities and to use them to their best advantage. SVEB has a longstanding commitment for improving and sustaining a high level of educational standard. It supports institutions, communities and its cantons to create optimal conditions to reach high quality adult education nationwide. The core activities are: Education policy, development and innovation as well as service (administration and marketing) for its members but equally for interested organizations, professionals and learning institutions.

Quality of Professionalization – eduQua the Swiss label

Teacher trainings for adult education instructors are not regulated by the state. Consequently, many course instructors have traditionally been working on an honorary or a part-time basis but have not been trained professionally. This situation has been in a process of change in the last 20 years. Nowadays, people who work in further education must increasingly demonstrate their methodical and didactic qualifications. In addition to general educational skills specialized teaching skills need to be included in the qualifications. To resolve this problem a step-by-step development on quality was created: In 1995, the SVEB-Certificate was introduced (represents the AdA-module level 1 today), this was the first step towards the professionalization of the pedagogical personnel. Five years later, in 2000, the Federal Certificate of Competence for adult education instructors was added (today AdA-module level 2). And the same year milestone of the principle goals of SVEB - the quality label for training providers "eduQua" was introduced: The Swiss quality certificate for continuing education institutions. It represents an important step towards the recognition of the adult education sector.

In 2012, about 1,000 institutions (providers of adult learning) have passed certification. This certification is conducted by 7 agencies (eduQua agencies). With the exception of the Canton Appenzell-Innerrhoden the certified providers of adult learning are distributed all over Switzerland. **EduQua** is in many cases a *prerequisite for funding* from the cantons. A legal bases for quality assurance is prepared actually and 2015/16 the legislation on quality of the adult learning sector should be possible.

Additional facts on eduQua

The initiative of the foundation of eduQua came from the cantons (Swiss Professional Education Departments-Conference) as well as from the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs, the Swiss Association of Employment Departments, the Swiss Association of Employment Departments and last but not least from the SVEB to coordinate the issue of subsidies of the sector transparently and based on quality standards.

Part 2: Approach

The certification process of eduQua addresses "adult continuing education institutions" and defines six criteria as a must for the recognition of quality of a provider of adult learning:

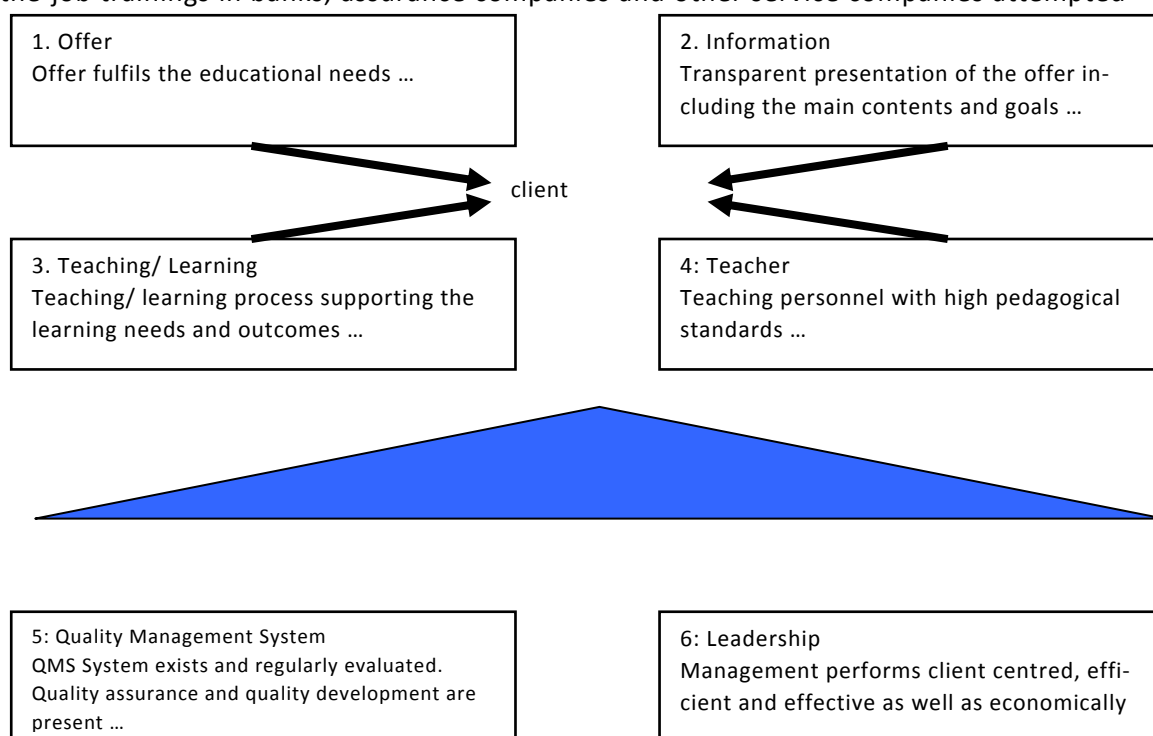
- the course offer,
- the quality of communication with the target groups (clients and learners),
- the value of performance,
- the quality of the pedagogical personnel (staff quality),
- the learning success (learning outcome) and
- the procedure of quality assurance and development itself.

The criteria determine which minimal standards must be fulfilled in order to distinguish an institution with the eduQua label. The standards are listed in the manual (actual version 2004 a new manual 2011/2012 is in preparation). The certification process includes on-site-audits, certification reports, yearly intermediate audits; this stimulates the goal of quality development. Strictly after three years a certification process ends automati-

cally, therefore the institution must undergo a renewal every three years. An important issue of eduQua is its dedication to transparency and objectivity *independent certification authorities* in all regions of Switzerland check the adherence to the minimal standards.

Close up: 6 Criteria and standards of eduQua

The Swiss quality label for providers of adult learning focuses especially needs and contentment of clients. 4 from 6 criteria share this goal; 2 criteria address leadership and direction and quality management of the organisation of adult education [*Graphic taken from the eduQua Manual, Information about the procedure for the certification*]. They constitute the core elements of the overall success of the Swiss label in the last 12 years. The providers of adult learning in Switzerland have accepted the procedure and the clients as well as the participants of adult learning have a great awareness of the benefits. This awareness of the importance to receive the eduQua label and to undergo the process of quality was in the last time so successful, that also departments of on-the-job trainings in banks, assurance companies and other service companies attempted



for the label. Here below, a more detailed representation is provided of the content and the approach:

6 eduQua criteria – mapping of 22 standards

Each eduQua standard is related to a theme and describes a previously determined quality level (criterion), in total, 22 standards are oriented towards factors of effort. These factors of effort are oriented how the institution of adult learning reach and assure their goal [resume based on the manual, version in preparation]:

■ Criterion 1: Offer that satisfy the needs and the wishes of the customer and of our society

Indicators: Periodical observation of the market, Reflection about the educational

needs in the educational concepts, use of appropriate tools to define the needs of the customer, congruence between the offers and the need of the customer, customer satisfaction proven by periodical surveys, reasons for dropping out of offers, educational concepts that take the level and the previous experiences of the participants in account and provide the possibility of dividing the further education activities into modules.

■ **Criterion 2: Lasting learning effect for the participants**

Indicators: A clear definition of the objectives of the entire set of offers and programmes, a distinct transfer-orientation which can be found in the learning objectives, the contents and the used methods, individual learning activities and exercises are offered and used, an evaluation of the offer after its conclusion (by participants or the client), analysis of learning-effects control and measures afterwards taken, feedback how many participants found a job in their primary field.

■ **Criterion 3: A transparent representation of the offers and the pedagogical concept**

Indicators: Clear, complete and convincing information material; positive feedback from interested persons, few further inquiries, the formulation of the pedagogical concept.

■ **Criterion 4: A customer-oriented, economical, efficient and effective provision of services**

Indicators: a careful selection procedure that guarantees homogenous groups, a participant coaching appropriate to the target group, the objectives and the pedagogical proceedings, a good price-performance ratio, with process that are in line with market requirements, smooth and efficient administration formalities, a congruence of the target group and the participants.

■ **Criterion 5: Committed pedagogical personnel (“educators”), who are methodically and professionally up to date**

Indicators: The professional qualification as well as practical experience in the area the educator is working in; educators with methodical-didactical qualifications and experience in adult education, regular professional and pedagogic further education activities, participants who are satisfied, offers that are organised in appropriate for adult education or target group way.

■ **Criterion 6: Awareness for quality development and quality assurance is at hand**

Indicators: The use of a systematic tool to develop quality, with feedback to all involved parties; methodical, multiple internal and/or external evaluations about the functioning of the institution; the presence of a continuous process of evaluation of the further education activities, transparent structure and functions, regular events about didactical-methodical and/ adult educational themes among educators, cooperation with other educational institutions, the willingness to work together with qualified external professionals.

From other concepts of QMS applied in the adult learning sector (as for instance the ÖCERT in Austria) the eduQa label comprises several dimensions: It is a quality management system itself, developed upon the key factor concerning quality, namely, the quality of staff. At the same time it is the umbrella label covering Switzerland and highly accepted in the neighbouring countries of the European Union (e.g. Austria). In addition, the label reflects the cultural, socio-economical and educational context of the Swiss Federation. The SVEB, responsible for the label is a main actor responsible nationwide and it is backed by political and economical actors (State Secretariat for Economic Af-

fairs, Swiss Professional Education Departments-Conference, Swiss Association of Employment Departments, Swiss Association of Employment Departments). Last but not least, the eduQua is evaluated regularly and several research projects had and have a critical eye on the process and success.

Whether the model is easily transferable to become a European quality frame, it has to be underlined that the particular situation of Switzerland makes it very difficult to look after a “copy” of eduQua. Nevertheless, the content of the process reflects – much more than e.g. the Austrian model – the core elements of adult learning (the learner – the professional of the learning process – the institution; in this order). It has to be kept in mind however, that the initial process of eduQua started 20 years ago and hence, the situation of the market and of Europe as a scenario of Lifelong Learning today is quite different. Finally, the role or “quality” has changed.

Part 3: Contextual factors that influence the quality measure

The principal factors of success, as described earlier, are the following

- **A well organised and principle-based main actor representing the adult learning sector.** SVEB is a non-governmental organisation representing nationwide private and state institutions, associations, and representatives responsible for adult education on a cantonal level, institutions, in-house training departments and personnel managers. The organisation promotes cooperation among adult learning institutions, raises public awareness for lifelong learning and supports its members in their activities and continuously supports new and innovative projects in the field of adult learning and supports the sector by ensuring high quality standards.
- **A clear vision and a transparent concept:** VET and Higher Education is not issue of eduQua; the main goal was from the beginning to constitute a label of quality of methodology and didactics of adult learning (how a teaching/ learning process is conducted). This focus on methodology and andragogy is important to be understood by the auditor of the certification process as well as by the “consumer”.
- **Open for all providers of adult learning:** According to the eduQua-policy, the certification is open to those institutions active in continuing adult education, including those involved in the re-education of the unemployed, the so-called labour market relations. eduQua is also intended for other provision such as: State subsidised continuing education institutions (public and private providers); labour market relations providers; providers of modules; any institution offering continuing education that would like to be improved upon and identified as a quality institution.
- **Autonomous decision:** “With the eduQua label, an institution certifies itself, not individual courses. This means that the eduQua label does not stand for individual courses being advertised, only for the institution as a whole. For the use of the label, please adhere to the following conditions: The eduQua label can be used with or without the trilingual text; the certified institution is required to report any changes that may take place in its staff, management, name change, or merger to the certifying authority [...]” (compare with the eduQua-Manual)
- **Broad support:** The umbrella label and the QMS (process and rules) are broadly supported from policy, administration, economy and the educational sector.
- **A transparent and terminated process:** “three years validity” and a continuous observation. If essential changes happened to the institution, the eduQua-Minimum-

Standards still have to be achieved and in the meantime possibly given recommendations have to be fulfilled and hence the institution still actively practices the development of quality.

- **No equivalence** (this is a central difference to the Austrian concept of Ö-CERT): Institutions, which already obtained and implemented other adequate QMS, are not automatically able to receive the eduQua-Certificate.

Independent certification authorities officially accredited by the Swiss Accreditation Office (one of the seven certifying authorities may be chosen as a contact point and contractual partner for the eduQua certification):

- Institut für Qualitätsmanagement und angewandte Betriebswirtschaft (St. Gallen)
- Pro Cert (Bern)
- Pro Formations (Genève 4)
- Servizio di certificazione di enti di formazione continua.
Dipartimento dell'educazione, della cultura e dello sport – DECS (Breganzona)
- International Certification Services AG (Zürich)
- Vereinigung für Qualitäts- und Management-Systeme (Zollikofen)
- Swiss Technical Services Ag (Wallisellen)

The consultation with experts gave no evidence of any limiting factors of eduQua.

Part 4: Outcomes and results

From the initial phase, the quality efforts on adult learning (as described above) were well conducted. The main factors of good practice were identified in the high “quality” of dedicated pedagogical personnel, the awareness of needs, wishes and interests of the “client” and the provider quality (factors of good organisation and administration). The best evidence for its success of eduQua concerns the fact that it already has over 20 years of experience and development and 12 years of presence in the market as the umbrella label. In 2012, over 1,000 providers received the label.

The total costs of the certification (eduQua label) is about 2.400,00 EUR [3.050,00 CHF]; 300,00 CHF [about 240,00 EUR] of the total cost is used to finance the eduQua office. Reports, surveys and particular evaluations are part of the system and one of the key elements of transparency and development (goal setting and revision). Evaluation and self-evaluation are intrinsic part of all processes.¹

The following organisational levels are applied to maintain the quality of eduQua system and the quality of the Swiss adult learning system as a whole:

- **First level: revision level (revision group) “Begleitgruppe” representing the most important stakeholder of the Swiss field of adult education.** The revision group is re-

¹ Newly certified institutions are regularly asked about their satisfaction with their chosen eduQua certifying authority. Most institutions looked at the certification process as something positive. Similarly, the classification in the minimal standard was thought to have been set at a good level. Three fourths of all responding institutions were of the opinion that the certification is a rather feasible process.

sponsible for the definition of concepts and the development of quality policies and supervision of the eduQua system.

- **Second level: eduQua office.** The first level group delegates core activities of eduQua to the office, such as managing a central register, maintaining a website and intranet, public relations and transparent information policy, evaluation and controlling on a systematic basis, management of knowledge and experiences with stakeholders in the process and outside, networking, cooperation with consumer organisations
- **Additional second level: The Swiss Accreditation Service** examines and accredits conformity assessment bodies (laboratories, inspection bodies, and certification bodies) according to international standards. eduQua conformity to ISO/IEC 17021. On the same level, the providers of eduQua are included: The Swiss Federation for Adult Learning (SVEB) and State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO)
- **Third level: Certification agencies,** which are independent certification authorities officially accredited by the Swiss Accreditation Office. In total, seven certificating authorities are accredited in conformity of the standard of ISO/IEC 17021).

In addition, the main target group and important partners in the eduQua-network are included to improve the eduQua model, which are the providers of adult learning.

eduQua: requirement for subsidies

It is in the domain of the cantons to decide whether the institutions are required to have an eduQua label before receiving subsidies. The cantons where the label is a requirement are the following: Aargau, Bern, Basel-Stadt (labour market measures), Geneva, Lucerne, Ticino, Waadt, Wallis, Zug and Zurich. The Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education advises the cantons to check “quality of the providers within the education area in whole Switzerland in the future according to the same criteria and to make national subsidies dependent on a proof of quality (eduQua)”.

Tools for transparency: the eduQua checklist for clients

The eduQua model includes as well a questionnaire/checklist for clients designed to help to find the correct courses/offers in concordance with the criteria and standards:

- Does the course or seminar correspond to the needs of the client
- Is something being learned?
- Is the brochure informative and clear?
- Am I being advised correctly, is the price for the course/seminar justifiable?
- Are the educators dedicated and up-to-date?
- Does the institution practice quality assurance?

Before the Course

- Was the course advertisement clear and concise? For example, were the goals defined and the terms and conditions stated?
- If I need advice, can I get it?
- Will I receive a certificate of completion? Is it recognized nationally as well as internationally? Is this important for me?
- How much does this continuing education cost? Is the teaching material included in the cost?

During the Course

- Do the contents of the course compare with what was advertised in the course description?
- Are the course contents and materials up-to-date and make it easy to learn?
- Are the teachers up-to-date in their respective subjects?
- Are the teachers motivated and do they respond well to students' needs?
- Is the course instruction geared towards adults?
- Are there plenty of self-learning and opportunities to practice what is learned?
- Is it possible to express my opinion during the course, specifically course content, methodology, and course progression?
- Is there a final evaluation, which takes both course content and administration into consideration?

After Course Completion

- Is it possible to apply what I learned both professionally and personally?
- In my opinion, was the course cost effective?

The checklist shows clearly, that quality criteria are relevant in the *andragogical* context of the sector, reflecting theory and praxis in a continuum of discussion and development. Its structure is coherent to the principles of the quality process of the Swiss label (7 criteria and 22 standards).

Part 5: Reflection on success and fail factors

The performance of the qualification process, which guides the eduQua label, is highly relevant for all providers, consumers (client and learner) of the adult learning sector as well as for the overall landscape of education in Switzerland. Effectiveness and efficiency has been proved in the last 12 years of practice and supported by research and evaluation. Institutions and individuals (learners and educators) identify themselves with the quality procedure and the assurance of outcome. The eduQua system is an overall successful quality process and profoundly adequate to the principles of adult learning. The relatively long tradition (20 years) and experience in the market as a complete label (since 2000) completes the success in the Swiss context.

As a success factor one could mention that **the quality criteria reflect the *andragogical* context of the sector**, reflecting theory and praxis in a continuum of discussion and development. This is guaranteed by the professionalism of the main actor in the field of adult education, the Swiss Association for Adult Learning (SVEB). These criteria are relevant for all educational sectors.

Another factor of success is (compare with the concept of OMC and its limitations), that **the responsibility of a quality process for adult learning must be held by the highest authority and it is focused on a nationwide basis**. Core tasks have been identified by the eduQua process:

- Defining and developing the (current) policy (LLL strategy) in the domain of quality in adult education
- Supervision (evaluation and decision taking) of the certification system

- Clear definition of (SMART: specific, measurable, acceptable, realistic and terminated) minimal standards
- Transparent and comparable (market) costs of a certification
- Terminated (clearly fixed) validity of a certificate (e.g. 3 years)
- Clear catalogue defining the requirements for the enrolled auditors (agencies)
- Managing a central register
- Maintaining a website and intranet
- Public relations and transparent information policy
- Evaluation
- An impartial and independent judgement of dossiers
- A guaranteed confidential treatment of dossiers and data

A third factor of success is that the **main actor is the provider**. All experiences and the knowledge management (important for the development and change management) of the institution are in the hand of the institution and are included in a “dossier”. The certification process requires that the provider of adult learning compile his dossier. The institution and a representative offer are documented according to examination points set by eduQwa. This is operationalised in a clear and transparent procedure:

- Registration at the certification body
- Selection of an offer/ a programme
- Compiling a dossier
- Handing in the dossier
- Examination of the dossier by the auditor
- Audit on location
- Intermediate audits
- Audit report and decision

Fourthly, the success depends on the **comprehension of quality as specific, coherent, the learner in the middle, focus on the provider organisation**: “The eduQwa-certification procedure examines and assesses the quality of the provider of adult learning and one selected offer. The reason why only one offer is examined in detail is simple: an institution with high quality awareness is assumed to produce high-quality services or “products”. Assessment and examination of an institution and its “products” is not the only objective. Through the certification procedure, the annual check-up audits, the recertification procedure (after 3 years), the institutions are regularly given impulses to reflect on their understanding and outcomes of the quality concept.” (Manual, 2004: 12) With this procedure the institution of adult education initiates a quality cycle: Planning & developing offers => Realization of the offers => Assessing the realization of offers => Reflecting upon offer.

Based on the latest evaluation and internal discussion of the eduQwa experts two new issues will be added:

- Infrastructure of the provider (adequate infrastructure for adult learning)
- Focus on the management (leadership, direction)

Part 6: Conclusions

The eduQua system is an overall successful quality process and profoundly adequate to the principles of adult learning. The relatively long tradition (20 years) and experience in the market as a complete label (since 2000) completes the success in the Swiss context.

The quality criteria are relevant in the *andragogical* context of the sector, reflecting theory and praxis in a continuum of discussion and development. This is guaranteed by the professionalism of the main actor in the field of adult education, the Swiss Association for Adult Learning (SVEB).

These criteria are defined especially for the sector but are relevant for all educational sectors. Another success factor is, that VET and Higher Education are not issue of eduQua; to focus on a clear and specific target group is part of the successful implementation. The main goal was from the beginning to constitute a label of quality of methodology and didactics of adult learning (how a teaching/ learning process is conducted. This focus on methodology and *andragogy* is important to be understood by the auditor of the certification process as well as by the “consumer”.

The quality criteria are specifically relevant for adult learning:

- Offer that satisfy the needs and the wishes of the customer and of our society
- Lasting learning effect for the participants
- A transparent representation of the offers and the pedagogical concept
- A customer-oriented, economical, efficient and effective provision of services
- Committed pedagogical personnel (“educators”), who are methodically and professionally up to date
- Awareness for quality development and quality assurance is at hand

The question arises what the main challenges for a possible framework on quality of adult learning at European level could be. For this, it is worth trying to reflect on the matrix of 6 criteria, 22 standards and the regulatory circuit(s) for the levels: Institutions of adult learning, the offer for adult learning, the performance of teaching/learning. Another question to focus on, is the administration and relevance how to conduct a certification process (or acknowledgment of certifications, e.g. Austrian example) at European level (Open Method of Coordination, OMC).

3 Czech Republic: Continuing Education Concept project

Name expert: Jan ŠILD

Introduction: Description of the quality measure: introduction and short summary

The Continuing Education Concept (“Concept”) was initiated by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports (MEYS) in 2009 in order to implement the 2007 Strategy for Lifelong Learning in the Czech Republic¹. Concept operates at the policy (macro) level and concentrates to the adult learning (further education). Concept is a large project divided to 6 sections/activities. The quality section of Concept focuses on the creation of tools for quality self-assessment and quality evaluation of educational institutions; the creation of tools for the qualification of adult education teachers/trainers/lectors; and the analysis of activities necessary to ensure the quality of verification and recognition of continuing education. Hence, it mainly focuses on the quality assurance of structures and processes in adult learning.

At this moment, a five-star rating system for providers of adult education is being developed within the framework of Concept project. The system should rate pedagogical staff, course content, services (e.g. ICT), management, and other factors. Currently, the related focus group representing various educational institutions is debating the criteria for achieving specific rating levels of the “star” system.

The MEYS is the main stakeholder in the field of adult (and further) education. Concept project target groups are all potential participants in further education, so the population aged around 25-64 years and educational institutions providing further education together with teachers/lectors/trainers.

Quality assurance and development in education (specifically in further education and adult learning) has not been systematically approached since 1989 in the Czech Republic. Currently, Concept project is implemented in the period of continuing economic crisis when the public budgets are restricted. Nevertheless, the ESF funding still provides a large financing for further education including retraining. The number of educational institutions operating on the market is very high. For instance, about 1,500 institutions operate in the field of vocational training alone (some of them were ESF initiated). In this context, the Concept project is considered to be the system-tool, which should help to increase the quality of further education sector and to provide a more systematic approach to quality assurance and development in the further education sector in the Czech Republic.

The system ESF projects in the Czech Republic are usually implemented by the relevant sector ministries. Due to the political, legal, budget and organisation difficulties system

¹ Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (2007), The Strategy of Lifelong Learning in the Czech Republic: http://www.msmt.cz/uploads/Zalezitosti_EU/strategie_2007_EN_web_jednostrany.pdf

project are often delayed – the Concept project was prepared in 2009 but started in 2011.

Part 1: Problem definition

There was not an immediate cause for developing a quality measure system. It was a long-lasting process. More concentrated efforts and activities to increase the quality of further education using some quality measure can be dated to the year 2006/2007 when the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs realised the project 'Quality in vocational education training' (Kvalita v dalším profesním vzdělávání)¹ financed from ESF. The area of vocational education was transferred to the competence of the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports in 2007, and a new project has been launched to support the quality of continuing/further education. The Concept was prepared in 2009 in order to implement the 2007 Strategy for Lifelong Learning in the Czech Republic.² Nevertheless, the project started its activities in 2011, so there are only few tangible results of the project by the end of 2012.

According to the Labour Force Survey, only 6 % of 25-64 years old population participated in lifelong learning in The Czech Republic in 2010. The target set up in the strategy Education and training 2020 (ET 2020) is to reach at least 15 % in 2020 Europe-wide. The quality section of Concept, as the whole Concept project, should help to orient the population towards lifelong learning and further education; increase its quality and then to increase the participation rate as well. Increasing quality is hence seen as an important step to increase participation rates.

Any specific and widely used quality measurement of further education courses or institution/agencies as well as the certification of the institutions in the AL do not exist in the Czech Republic until now. Strangely enough, this problem of fragmentation has increased with a large ESF budget allocated to the further education sector in the last years. The reason is that the additional ESF financing has resulted in significant *increase* of number of training agencies, however not necessary resulting in an increase of the quality of the adult learning provision. The difficult assessment of the quality of training courses (together with the pressure related to public budget savings), has created the pressure to contracting authorities to give priority to the price instead of the quality offered. Reputable and first-rate training agencies are giving priority to the quality of their courses and trainers have to offer higher price in tenders due to "the cost for the quality". Moreover, as the profession of lector/trainer is freely licensed (no concession is needed), and there does not exist any accreditation process for both staff and providers, there are few barriers to enter the sector of the AL. The professional development of trainers does not have any specific rules or any formalised system. All in all, ESF did not developed a quality culture in the further education delivery in Czech Republic.

¹ <http://portal.mpsv.cz/sz/politikazamest/esf/projekty/kvalita>

² Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (2007), The Strategy of Lifelong Learning in the Czech Republic: http://www.msmt.cz/uploads/Zalezitosti_EU/strategie_2007_EN_web_jednostrany.pdf

Those factors increased the necessity of developing an instrument which is able to measure the quality of further education and training and which will be comprehensible for the public at the same time. Educational institutions and training agencies themselves would like to have some tool/quality measure which could be used as a promotion and marketing tool and help them to differentiate themselves on the education market.

Part 2: Approach

Concept is a large and complex project focusing on further education in the Czech Republic. The quality section of Concept focuses both on education institutions and learning professionals. The Concept project is preparing the system of monitoring of further education and creation of information and consultation tools/points/centres for the public. The objective of Concept is to stimulate the demand for training as well. Finally, it should be mentioned that Concept focuses on stimulation of training demand specifically in the sector of small and medium size enterprises.

The system of quality assurance should fulfil the following main requirements, the system should be:

- Easy and comprehensible for the target group, so for educational institutions, learning professional and contracting authorities;
- Suitable/usable for marketing purposes of educational institutions;
- With national validity;
- Economical with minimal public expenses needed;
- Long-term and sustainable (sustainability without public financing);
- Widely accepted and used; and
- Compatible to the National system of qualification and the Czech law No. 179/2006, regulating the recognition of qualifications.

Improving the quality of adult learning professionals

As for the profession of teachers, lectors and coaches, there does not exist any specific qualification in the Czech education system (or any widely recognised criteria of evaluation of their quality), adult learning professionals use various certificates proving they have attended specified courses (for example courses of andragogy). Several big learning institutions use internal system of development of trainers/lectors/teachers with the aim to maintain and increase the quality of services provided.

The Concept project has created the draft proposal of a qualification type for the profession of lector/ trainer in further education, which allows its integration under the National system of qualifications. The draft proposal for the position of lector/ trainer includes the standards for this profession. The draft proposal of evaluation criteria corresponding to requirements for this profession, together with the method for their evaluation is defined as well. The advantage of this approach is that the qualification of lector/trainer can be obtained by any interested person who passes specific exams. Then, any natural or legal person which fulfils the requirements defined by law can be

certified by the authorised authority. The Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports is proposed to be the authorised certifying institution.

The main requirements for the profession of lector/trainer in adult learning in Czech Republic include a combination of knowledge, skills and abilities:

- Design/develop curriculum and structure of educational programme on the basis of objectives defined; including necessary competencies;
- Translate the content into detailed time frame script (minutes level); including didactical methods and didactical tools;
- Assess the entrance competencies of learners;
- Use an interactive approach, problem scenarios and concrete examples based on practise;
- Prepare, manage and evaluate model situations and working methods with learning group;
- Prepare and give tasks for individuals and group as well; and,
- Evaluate effectiveness of training and learning process and fulfilment of objectives defined

The standards proposed are translated into specific criteria and the methods of evaluation are specified. The criteria should be assessed mostly through the practical demonstration and few of them through oral exam. Two first groups of criteria will be examined strictly by a written exam.

Improving the quality of educational institutions

At the same time the objective and task of Concept is to **create a rating system measuring and certifying the quality of educational institutions**. In this case, creation of tools for quality assessment and quality evaluation for educational institutions has to be defined as well.

The draft proposal is based on a rating of educational institutions, which is developed into the 4 main quality criteria. The quality of educational institutions should be of 5 levels and should use the “star” system when five stars would be the maximum. Thus, the proposed system is similar to “stars” used in hotel industry. This quality measure/quality label should be used for:

- Development of education institutions (using structured criteria);
- Assessment of the quality of educational institution;
- Self-promotion of educational institution on the basis of quality label obtained (as marketing tool);
- Orientation of educational institutions customers on the market of further education; and,
- Use the rating for tendering (minimum standards required)

The first criterion assesses the quality of trainers/lectors who cooperate with the specific educational institution. In general, it is based on the percentage of lectors/trainers with qualification proved (for example studies of andragogy completed, professional courses, certification under the regime of the law No. 179/2006), support of the institu-

tion for its lectors/trainers, learning techniques used (for example interactivity, cases studies, practical demonstrations).

The second criterion is based on the measurement of effectiveness of the educational process (for example analysis of the training needs, adaptation of courses to the client's needs, evaluation of learning objectives fulfilment and the methods used, possibilities of distance learning facilities, etc.).

The third criterion assesses the quality of material, technical and didactic background the institution provides (for example equipment of classrooms, software, quality of the own training materials, etc.).

The last criterion focuses on approach to clients, mainly on flexibility of institution and comfort provided (for existence of own web, contact personnel, alternation of lectors/trainers, time flexibility and flexibility of courses implementing, possibilities of training in foreign languages, etc.).

It is necessary to emphasize that even one star should be regarded as a label/assurance of quality of an educational institution.

The key element of the system of rating is the method how the rating will be carried out and how the certification/label will be awarded. The draft proposal uses the combination of three quality evaluation methods:

- Self-evaluation on the basis of questionnaire which the institution fills in (describes its situation and processes of education);
- Assessment by customers (verification of (some) statements from questionnaire on the random basis);
- External assessment by an external evaluator who verifies the whole questionnaire.

The level of awarded rating of the educational institution should correspond to the level in which the institution has achieved all required standards. The draft proposal is now tested/piloted through workshops with training institutions.

The validity of the certificate should be 3 years, the price of the certificate is now being discussed, but it is supposed that the certificate has to be affordable for small institutions as well.

The system of quality measuring is supposed to be used only in the sector of further education.

The proposed approach has not been used in the sector of education in the Czech Republic yet as it exists still as a draft proposal. Nevertheless, the system is similar to the "star" system used in hotel sector.

The system of rating is now being piloted, and hence, probably some adaptations and adjustments will be made with regard to the criteria, definitions, and conditions. The implementation has not been launched due to the Concept project schedule delay.

With regard to quality of staff, as has been mentioned, there is no specific formal qualification required for the AL trainers (compared to the standards and qualifications ap-

plied in the initial education system. As the AL is treated to be very heterogenic in terms of supply as well as the demand, it is difficult to define the common quality criteria.

As the system proposed by Concept is not implemented yet, it is difficult to identify relevant barriers of the implementation.

Part 3: Contextual factors that influence the quality measure

The system proposed by Concept project has not been implemented yet. The pilot phase can bring preliminary findings but the pilot phase has not been fully implemented so far.

Part 4: Outcomes and results

Due to the Concept project schedule delay the following outcomes have been reached:

- draft proposals of type profession of lector/trainer with its standards, draft of the evaluation criteria and methods,
- draft proposal of “5 stars rating” of the educational institutions has been prepared.

Both are discussed with stakeholders and tested in pilot groups. The possible legislative provisions of the educational institutions rating should to be discussed at the level of the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports.

Due to the current progress of the Concept project, there are no effects which can be assigned to the system of quality measurement. Nevertheless, it can be mentioned that the project Concept successfully involved the key actors in the process, including, for instance, main training agencies and their associations, National training fund, and National education institute.

Part 5: Reflection on success and fail factors

Given the (contextual) problems mentioned here before, the quality measure system which is being created is certainly relevant with regards to the needs and problems to be solved. It is not possible to assess the effectiveness of the system as it is under the process of creation and the details of the system have not been published yet. For example, the detailed methodology of self-evaluation questionnaire for educational institutions as well as the method of verification of the applications would be crucial to the effectiveness assessment. The assessment of the efficiency of the system would not be possible before 2014.

As the system is not functioning yet, it is only possible to suppose that the factors which can influence its success. These include the consensus of key stakeholders on its design and conditions, sufficient testing of the system with educational institutions, large marketing and publicity of the system so the target group and potential beneficiaries will know the system. Moreover, the participation of the best education institutions and training agencies in the system would be crucial. The best (first rate) institutions which will ask for the rating can serve as a good example and inspiration for the other actors.

Besides the development of the system, the implementation-phase of the system will be crucial as well. The system has to obtain credibility through, among others, the choice of

authorised certifying body, which will assure the rating process. It is necessary that this institution is credible and reliable in the field of further education.

The low price of the certification could be ambivalent as it allows to submit an application by any educational institution but at the same time it could lead to the low-quality (or only formal) certification process.

As regards to the quality of adult learning professionals, the submission of the profession under the National qualification system will be crucial.

What can be highlighted in particular with regard to lessons learned, is the wide spectrum of key actors which are participating in the preparation of the system, the design of the system, its marketing potential, and potential to facilitate the tenders on the field of further education courses.

Part 6: Conclusions

In the Czech sector of the adult learning there is no specific formal qualification required for the AL trainers (compared to the standards and qualifications applied in the initial education system). Moreover, in the Czech Republic there is no systematic approach to the certification of the educational programmes and institutions in further education. It is a big challenge for the Concept project which is expected to bring system approach to the quality assessment of the institutions and to the standards of trainers and lecturers in further education. Compared to the other segments of the education the further education and adult learning has been neglected in the past years, the crucial initiative has been the ESF financing of the system project Concept (although the schedule of the project is delayed).

As no formal system of quality assessment in AL has been implemented in The Czech Republic so far, the framework for quality is rather an opportunity to adopt measures functioning in the other EU countries. Concept project cannot offer any long-term experience with the quality assessment but as the system is developed at the moment, the Czech Republic can be a suitable location for pilot activities of the framework implementation.

4 Germany: “Hamburger model”

Name expert: Dieter Dohmen

Introduction: Description of the quality measure: introduction and short summary

The Hamburger model counts among the quality alliances, which were founded in a relatively early phase of the quality discussion (Gnahs 1998, p. 172ff.). On the basis of this pioneering role, it has received a comparatively high level of attention. It arouses great interest on national level and its principle is copied in multiple regions (for example, in Hesse by the *Weiterbildung Hessen e.V.* [Continuing Education and Training in Hesse] and in Northrhine-Westphalia (NRW) by the *Gütersiegelverbund NRW* [Alliance of Quality Seals NRW] as well as in Mecklenburg West-Pomerania and Cologne).

The model is practiced as an intra-industrial mutual control device for the promotion of quality assurance as well as participant and consumer protection. The provider *Weiterbildung Hamburg e.V.* [Continuing Education and Training in Hamburg] sets obligatory quality standards. Continuing education and training establishments are obliged to meet quality standards through their membership in the association and receive a quality seal after the examination of an evaluation team. Every three years this examination of the member organisation concerning its compliance with quality standards is repeated.

Quality standards are passed by an advisory board pluralistic in composition. The association assumes the responsibility for the control of quality standards as well as consultancy and qualification tasks. Furthermore, it also functions as a consumer protection body with an intense amount of public relations work.

The advantages of this solution lie in the wide acceptance it receives from the establishments, its promotion of the quality discussion, its supply of consulting resources and the activation of participant protection. Disadvantages result mainly from the construction of the model, which is designed as a consensus model, and thus considers the needs of “laggards”. It should also be mentioned that during its initial phase the model especially suffered from the fact that its regulations were unknown to the Hamburger population.

Part 1: Problem definition

The starting point for the Hamburger model was the intention of the Hamburger Senate to introduce and pass a law for the protection of continuing education and training in the early 1990s. This provided providers and institutions with an impetus ranging from own activities to the development of an own quality concept. In doing so, these could build on an already established cooperation structure, which existed in form of the association *Weiterbildungsinformation Hamburg* [Information on Continuing Education and Training in Hamburg] and which operated a database on continuing education and training in order to improve market transparency.

In 1993, the already existing association was enhanced with the work area „quality assurance/participant protection“. In 1994, the local consultation centres for continuing education and training were also incorporated in the association, so that the associa-

tion, which was now functioning under the name *Weiterbildung Hamburg e.V.* operated in three fields of work. In the articles of the association valid then, four task areas are explicitly described:

- "1. to offer and spread information and consultation concerning all areas of continuing education and training with the aim to create more transparency on offers of continuing education and training for all people interested in continuing education and training,
- 2. to promote continuing education and training in Hamburg,
- 3. to promote and assure the quality of continuing education and training and
- 4. to protect participants from inappropriate contract conditions."

This description of tasks portrays that the association felt especially obliged to protect participants (Ehmann 1992).

Part 2: Approach

The basic structure of the association is orientated along the law on associations. The articles state that at least two members of the Executive Board are foreseen to come from the area of continuing education and training and at least one member of the Executive Board from a provider of general or political continuing education and training.

The Advisory Board, in which practically all actors important for continuous education and training in the region are represented (amongst others, the *Behörde für Schule und Berufsbildung der Hansestadt Hamburg* [Association for School and Vocational Training of Hamburg], *Landeszentrale für politische Bildung* [Centre for Political Education of the State of Hamburg], *Handelskammer* [Chamber of Commerce], *Handwerkskammer* [Chamber of Handicraft], *Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund* [German Labour Union Association] and the labour union ver.di) plays a central role in the structure of the association.

The described structures also represent the framework for quality assurance according to the Hamburger model. Additionally, three valuation boards exist: one each for vocational, linguistic as well as general and political continuing education and training. These valuation boards had developed quality standards for their respective areas, which were discussed in the Advisory Board. A list of 37 quality standards resulted from this discussion process, to which member institutions must commit. This list comprises five blocks of criteria:

- Criteria for material equipment and staff (e.g. Standard 2: "Only (full- and part-time) staff with expertise acquired through their vocational education and training or their professional experience is employed in the pedagogic field of the education institution." or Standard 8: "Locations for learning and socialising as well as sanitary facilities adhere to legal requirements.")
- Teaching-related criteria (e.g. Standard 18: "Learning and success is regularly monitored and tailored to adults. If examinations are planned, possibilities for repetitions are provided to the extent permissible.")
- Participant-related criteria (e.g. Standard 23: "Before each event, the participant is named a responsible contact person, who is available for the discussion of course-related problems, criticism and complaints to a reasonable extent.

- General conditions for participation (e.g. Standard 27: "In the case of withdrawal from the contract within reasonable time limits, at least 6 weeks before the start of the event, the education institution may only charge a handling fee. In the case of a later withdrawal, the education institution may demand compensation, if no replacement participant is available.")
- Special quality standards for qualification-driven events (e.g. Standard 35: "The teaching staff draws the attention of the participants to learning and performance deficits in a timely manner and suggests connected learning aids.").

The valuation boards developed elaborate checklists for their respective areas of responsibility for the further conceptualisation of these quality standards. The applying institution has to provide detailed information on 30 pages concerning the four basic modules (organisation-related standards, customer orientation, personnel standards, education offer) and in some cases, up to five additional modules (individuals and processes, IT-trainings, media-enhanced self-learning, general and political continuing education and training as well as linguistic continuing education and training).

The admission to the association *Weiterbildung Hamburg* and the connected justification to use a certification seal occurs in accordance with a compulsory procedure. The starting point is the application for membership and the obligation to adhere to the 37 quality standards by the applying establishment.

The management of the association carries out a first formal examination (in some cases, in consultation with the responsible validation board or even external expertise), that for example ensures if the applicant even represents an establishment for continuing education and training, if the establishment is based within the state of Hamburg or if a continuous offer can be assumed.

After the formal examination, the management may, if necessary, consult the applying establishment on quality assurance issues. The applicant receives the checklist and is requested to send it back signed.

The management carries out a first assessment on the basis of the filled-out check list and visits the establishment. The visit is hereby undertaken by the managing director and an auditor of the responsible committee. In this context, discrepancies in answers of the checklist and further remaining questions are clarified by inspection (e.g. of event lists, training contracts), by plausible explanation or concrete viewing (e.g. by visitation). The management of the association takes minutes of the visit and prepares a recommendation for the validation committee and/or the managing director.

On this basis, the responsible validation committee discusses the application, postpones the application and in some cases involves external experts or directly informs the Executive Board of its vote. In principle, the Executive Board only has four possibilities:

- unconditional admission,
- admission under certain conditions,
- admission only after fulfillment of certain conditions and
- rejection.

In the case of an admission the establishment may use the certification seal of the *Weiterbildung Hamburg e.V.* (e.g. for advertising purposes, in event announcements). After three years the application for the certification seal needs to be renewed and an examination follows after the same procedure.

Part 3: Contextual factors that influence the quality measure

The Hamburger model emerged in a time period characterised by an intense quality discussion in Germany. This framework condition benefited its implementation and its success to an equal extent as the nationwide interest in its solution. Even twenty years later, it is still on the market and is currently enjoying a great popularity, as expressed by the applications for new intakes. What are the framework conditions, which make this permanent success possible?

On the one hand, its acceptance by all central actors of the Hamburg scene of continuing education and training, which support this quality concept in numerous ways (e.g. through membership in the Advisory Board) is a key factor. These central actors include the city of Hamburg (and the administration of the state of Hamburg), chambers and the employment agency. This acceptance creates a kind of „suction effect“ on suppliers („We need to get involved!“) and a confidence bonus among consumers – people interested in continuing education and training.

On the other hand, the success of the model is fuelled by its familiarity: It can only produce the desired impacts in the area of “consumer protection” if those affected know which quality standards are guaranteed. This publicity can be established through advertisement and campaigns, yet also through corresponding indications of suppliers in advertising materials and programmes as well as through posters in the respective establishment and/or through corresponding indications on the home page.

Until 2008 the organisation of the areas “quality assurance”, “data base for education and training” and “consultation” was connected under the umbrella of *Weiterbildung Hamburg e.V.*; these units were abolished due to financial reasons. Since then, the *Weiterbildung Hamburg e.V.* implements quality assurance solely on the basis of contributions by member organisations, while both the other areas are managed separately and through public funding. Nevertheless, this organisational separation did not have a negative influence on the cooperation of all three areas amongst each other.

Clearly, the Hamburger model benefits all actors: It provides public authorities with security for funding decisions, stimulates further development of content and organisation and it can be used as a marketing instrument, providing people interested in continuing education and training with decision support and security. Additionally, external pressure, from the state, from funding bodies and customers, which demand exactly such a system as a precondition for support, recognition or commissioning, is crucial for the maintenance and further development of a quality concept.

Part 4: Outcomes and results

Towards the end of November 1995 151 establishments for continuing education and training were members of *Weiterbildung Hamburg e.V.* Of these 151 members, 134 ad-

ministered the certification seal – some of these only after fulfilling certain conditions –, 17 establishments were preliminary members and the 16 others were applicants in the entry examination procedure. The vast majority of members belonged to the area “vocational training” (71 %), 17% to the area of general and political education and training and 12 % to the area of linguistic continuing education and training (Weiterbildung Hamburg e.V. 1995, p. 11f.).

In 1996, the association consisted of 174 members, with a market share of around 75 % of the Hamburger course offer (Weiterbildung Hamburg e.V. 1997, p. 23). Today around 200 establishments are members of the *Weiterbildung Hamburg e.V.* These numbers portray that the certification seal and the quality standards connected with it shape the Hamburger market for continuing education and training. This effect is stronger, the more the Hamburger population is informed about the certification seal and independently urges for compliance with it.

The work of the association is directed in two strategic directions – one at its member organisations, one at actual and potential participants.

A central task of provider-work is the consultation of applicants in quality issues: Around 30% of applicants make use of the offer of a prior or accompanying consultation (Weiterbildung Hamburg e.V. 1995, p. 11). Additionally, certification seal holders receive further individual consultation or are kept informed on the most recent stance of the quality discussion via information events (on topics such as data protection, occupational safety and health care in educational institutions, general terms and conditions for training providers) – overall, topics which refer to particular quality standards.

Participant-related activities were intensified in early 1995 by conducting participant protection advertisement in means of public transport in Hamburg. This is one of the reasons why *Weiterbildung Hamburg e.V.* receives multiple requests and complaints of participants in the mean time. In 1995, 25 complaints were received, the majority of which could not be jointly agreed upon by the issuer of the complaint and the member organisation (ebd., p. 13).

32 participant complaints in total were registered and specified in the complaint statistics for the time period 1993-95. The most commonly affected quality standard is Nr. 21, which states information concerning which the participant should be informed before the event or conclusion of the contract (17 cases). Afterwards, Nr. 13 follows (Consideration of the current labour market situation and guarantee of practical relevance) with 8 cases and Nr. 4 (professional and pedagogic competence of full- and part-time workers) with 6 cases (Weiterbildung Hamburg e.V. 1995, p. 13). Currently, the number of complaints is rather lower. Most of the problems are already solved previously, perhaps also because member organisations are reluctant to become involved in official complaint procedures.

Consequently, these complaints have led to very different results, which reach from the finding that no violation of quality standards occurred to the threat of withdrawing the certification seal of the affected establishment in case of repetition. In any case, it is considered important, that an authority pursues the complaints and in doing so puts pressure on the quality of the member organisations. This pressure supplements the

pressure which is already exerted by the adjustment pressures generated by quality standards.

Additional pressure is exercised via participant-related measures: The *Weiterbildung Hamburg e.V.* developed a check list that uses targeted questions to provoke people interested in continuing education and training to reflect and probably make better decisions. Questions, for example, include:

- In what way does your personal and professional future benefit from this course?
- Is success monitored in this course? Does the possibility exist to repeat examinations?
- Are permanent contact persons and consultation hours provided for your questions?
- Is exact information provided concerning the duration of the course, its contents and goals?
- Is the protection of your personal data ensured?

Thus, those responsible consider their model as a successful attempt to combat generally preventive quality problems. At the same time, efforts are being made to increase the quality consciousness of member organisations (e.g. through consultation and information) and to complete and expand the model through further development and specification of check lists and quality standards.

As part of an evaluation of the *Weiterbildung Hamburg e.V.* in 1996, member organisations could make their assessments of the certification seal known. It is apparent, that the external effect is assessed to be higher than the internal effect: 80% of the establishments consider "PR, image and prestige for the quality of educational work" to have "rather" or "strongly" benefited, while only 50 % of these state this for quality consciousness within their organisation (Faulstich/Grünhagen 1997, p. 57-58).

In a new study of the *Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung* [Federal Institute for Vocational Training] 18 quality concepts common in Germany are evaluated and compared on the basis of 17 evaluation criteria (for example qualification of the staff, relevance for the labour market, documentation) (Autsch/Schute 2011). The Hamburger model is included and meets nearly all criteria, at least at the basic level. It also meets the legal minimum requirements, which implies that learning providers certified in this way are „eligible to receive funding through the *Bildungsprämie* [education voucher] “ (ebd. p. 4).

The fact that the Hamburger model has found many mimics, for example the association *Weiterbildung Hessen* in Hesse, can surely also be seen as a success factor. *Weiterbildung Hessen* awards a qualification seal guarantying a certain quality standard after an entry examination and a self-obligation. In addition to valuation activities, the association promotes quality development in continuing education and training in Hesse through public relations work, advanced training and networking (www.weiterbildunghessen.de).

In Northrhine-Westphalia the quality concept of the association *Gütesiegelverbund NRW* represents the system of reference for recognition after the Law for Continuing Education and Training and the Law for Continuing Education and Training and Law of Employees. The quality management system of the *Gütesiegelverbund NRW* is a procedure

developed particularly for establishments of continuing education and training which – in terms of both content and form – builds on a row of concepts with a similar alignment, thus upon the Hamburger model, yet also on LQW and similar establishment-related procedures (www.guetesiegelverbund.de).

In Cologne, the *Qualitätsgemeinschaft Berufliche Weiterbildung Region Köln* [Quality Community for Vocational Education and Training Region Cologne] exists, which addresses four central question types in smaller and larger working groups: Quality assurance, public relations work, continuing education and training fairs, continuing education and training policy. Members oblige to “secure, continuously develop and support quality and transparency in continuing education and training.” This approach is seen as a permanent foundation for a trustworthy and reliable relationship between people interested and participating in continuing education and training and member organisations (www.weiterbildung-koeln.de).

The *Zentralverband Aus- und Weiterbildung* [Central Organisation for Initial and Continuing Education and Training] in Mecklenburg West-Pomerania uses a quality concept, which is clearly inspired by the Hamburger model. The support and protection of the quality of continuing education and training as well as the protection of participants from unreasonable contract conditions belong to its statutory obligations. A particularity is an honour codex, which all members oblige to meet (www.zaw-mv.de).

Part 5: Reflection on success and fail factors

Alliances of quality seals such as the one in Hamburg have a multitude of advantages in comparison to the other existing quality concepts:

- They are **low-threshold**. Such concepts are especially interesting for smaller establishments, because the effort these require is manageable. This also highlights the fact, that in this year this is the first QM-qualification for 16 of 18 new entries in *Weiterbildung Hamburg e.V.*
- They are **affordable**. The effort concerning time and cost is usually considerably below the certification costs based on the commonly used model.
- They are **consumer-oriented**. People interested in continuing education and training are at the centre of quality efforts, not the establishment and the interest of financing authorities behind it. The consumer receives clear and understandable quality signals, is supported by his or her participation decision via checklists and has usually can contact a complaint office if the training event does not meet requirements.
- They encourage **network formation**. The mutual control of potential contestants on the market and the resulting collegial consultation improves the cooperation of establishments amongst one another and, in doing so, provides the foundation for synergy effects.

The fears of many entry candidates that disadvantages could follow from the evaluation of contestants proved to be an obstacle. A further hindrance was that in many support contexts it is typical to rather rely on establishment-centred models of the ISO 9000 design.

Part 6: Conclusions

Models for quality seals such as the one in Hamburg portray that an alternative to the wide-spread certification/accreditation of establishments exists which demands less effort and additionally opens up new perspectives (orientation on participants, consumer protection). The question which direction is more successful concerning the quality of the actual continuing education and training cannot be conclusively answered, as is also indicated by the following investigations:

Stiftung Warentest [Consumer Protection Organisation] (2008) elaborates: “Although QMS¹ are frequently used in vocational education and training in the meantime, whether or not these will succeed when put into practice is a different question.” And a few paragraphs further: “A closer examination of the use of a system allows one to draw several conclusions, yet does not guarantee good-quality continuing education and training.” (Stiftung Warentest 2008, p. 2)

The statements become more specific two years later within the framework of a panel of experts for the discussion of results of the project “Influence and effects of quality management systems and evaluation on the quality of vocational and corporate training – Analysis and Optimisation”², funded by the *BMBF* [German Ministry for Education and Research]. After the analysis and comparative evaluation of 43 educational tests from the time period the following is noted: “The analysis did not find a relationship between the use of a QM system and the quality of educational events.” (Qualitätsgesellschaft Bildung und Beratung 2010, p. 6; please also compare the summarising report Töpper 2012)

This finding raises the question of a cost-benefit-analysis, similar to the one conducted by the renowned Swiss economist Bruno. S. Frey (2006) in his essay “Evaluitis – a new illness”. He clarifies that not every evaluation *per se* is sensible, yet that a strict assessment of the trade off between costs and benefits of such efforts is always necessary. Further, evaluations have side effects, e.g. by sending out signals via evaluation criteria, which is important or seen as important and thus directs resources and initiates shifts between the functional division of labour.

In strict economic terms, evaluation criteria are only sensible, if revenue (e.g. in form of e.g. higher turnover, cost savings, efficiency increases or customer loyalty) exceeds efforts e.g. connected with deployment, consultation and certification.

Frey further elaborates that the evaluation spiral has the tendency to turn faster and faster once boosted: “The institutions and people which conduct the evaluation have a direct interest for their income and career. They are thus keen to extend the evaluation to additional fields, to intensify it and conduct it in increasingly short intervals.” (Frey 2006, p. 8)

¹ Quality management systems

² The project was implemented jointly by the *Qualitätsgesellschaft Bildung und Beratung* [Quality Organisation for Education and Consultation], Kalman Consult und Gideon GmbH and was scientifically accompanied by the *Technische Universität Braunschweig* [Technical University Brunswick] (Prof. Dr. Stefanie Hartz). The round of experts took place on October 18th, 2010 in Brunswick.

Ultimately, it concerns whether QM will become an end in itself or if it – following its own logic – puts itself to the test. The following questions thus remain: Are quality criteria the ones professionally and contextually offered or are they only in use, because it is more easy to measure these? Do QM efforts actually lead to improvements in task completion? To what extent does the main business suffer under quality activities? What effects do the permanent obligations to provide documentation and proof have on the motivation of those affected?

Peter Faulstich (p. 158) already had a concise answer on the lastly stated question in 1999: “The changing trends of just-in-time, total-quality-management, lean production, business-reengineering, out-sourcing and in-sourcing have often led to the fact, that only an exhausted workforce remains, which is deprived of exactly the motivation and even creativity demanded from it.” In order to avoid this exhaustive heteronomy, the author demands a “discursive quality concept” (p. 169), which involves the different participants and their varying interests. Such an approach has even already been tested in Hamburg in form of a flexible quality development within the scope of the BMBF project “Learning regions – Promotion of networks” (Kaßbaum 2006).

Beyond this rather sceptical view on evidence on the effectiveness of QM, one can definitely also find criteria for the evaluation of quality concepts in the literature (Gnahs 2011, p. 81ff.). Ten criteria which may be used to assess the suitability of quality concepts are listed below.

Criterion 1: Perception of quality: This criterion aims to determine what exactly is perceived as quality within the respective quality concept. For example, is quality a formal category or do customers define it? Lastly, it is of interest whether a professional self-conception is part of the quality term.

Criterion 2: Subject area of the quality concept: Quality concepts can cover all areas of continuing education and training (*Total Quality Management*), yet they may also be limited to a subarea (e.g. event quality). Depending on the extent to which the establishment wishes to stimulate the quality development process, it is decisive to know, how large the scope of the quality concept is.

Criterion 3: Analysis of strengths and weaknesses: It is of interest whether the quality concept fosters an “honest evaluation of the situation”, indicating strengths as well as weaknesses of the establishment. The establishment for continuing education and training must also review if the contemplated quality concepts are suited to stimulate reflection and to launch innovative processes.

Criterion 4: Relation to development: This criterion aims to determine to which extent the quality concept relies on a continuous development process or rather on a short-term effort to achieve an intermediate goal. Is quality development a permanent task, which constructively incorporates the results of the previous period in the planning and design of the present or is the quality concept organised “project-like”?

Criterion 5: Participation: Quality concepts differ in the extent to which they involve participants of the continuing education and training process in the development work. One should thus ask if full- and part-time employees, and remaining business partners

are involved and if these can and should provide constructive input for the development of the establishment?

Criterion 6: External perception: Quality development is mainly pursued to improve offered continuing education and training events and consultancy services. They are meant to benefit participants and guidance-seekers and to represent a real presence for the demanded fees. It should thus be asked, if the respective quality concept allows external parties to comprehend and recognise the efforts of the establishments.

Criterion 7: Manageability: The introduction of a quality concept is an effort for the establishment. Firstly, strains on employees for conceptual work, yet also material and operating expenses as well as possible costs for external consultants and inspection or certification processes may arise. Thus, one should clarify if the conceivable effort will actually be invested and if sufficient financial resources and staff exist to stand the foreseeable development process. A realistic consideration of the feasibility is already desirable solely on the ground that the abort of such a process is more harmful than not initiating it in the first place.

Criterion 8: Compatibility: Many establishments for continuing education and training are confronted with quality demands of external parties in the framework of their work. Especially the quality demands of the *Bundesagentur für Arbeit* [Federal Employment Agency of Germany], which is an important sponsor of many establishments for continuing education and training, should be mentioned at this point. Furthermore, the demands of regional laws (of the *Länder*) and other funding structures. It is very helpful for the establishment for continuing education and training if its own quality concept is as compatible with these external demands as possible, to avoid duplication of work and inconsistencies.

Criterion 9: Support: Some quality concepts are designed in such a way that they can only be managed with external support. Others are less demanding in this respect and allow the establishment for continuing education and training to follow a largely self-managed process. In such a case, one can rely on corresponding written documents, disks, and networks for exchanging experience. The ability to rely on external support is especially helpful when the quality development process – irrespective of the reasons – ceases to progress.

Criterion 10: Previous achievements: In practice, most of the establishments for continuing education and training have adopted measures relevant for quality, which can be used as a basis for future ones. It is highly unlikely that an establishment start from scratch. It is thus helpful to rely on quality concept, which can integrate as many of these previous achievements as possible. This reduces the effort and increases the acceptance among employees and participants.

Measured against these criteria, the Hamburger model can be classified to be extremely far-reaching. To which extent this affects the quality of the final product remains a yet to be clarified empirical question.

5 Denmark: Quality Assurance within guidance and counselling

Name expert: Kim Faurschou

Introduction: Description of the quality measure: introduction and short summary

The Danish government initiated a new National institutional and governance structure within formal Adult and continuing education (ACE) and labour market training. The main focus of this quality measure was on adult education providers and promoting co-operation between them to enhance the quality of guidance provided for enterprises and their employees.

Structural and content changes are part of a continuous development process in the adult and continuing education (ACE) sector in Denmark. One specific development included responding to the need to update and qualify the workforce for a knowledge-based, flexible, and innovative economy. In addition to this, development also aims to promote sustainable and coherent ways of living among citizens for a better society. Various political initiatives were taken to develop ACE to achieve these aims.

This quality initiative started with first mapping the educational activities within continuing adult education (VEU) and within labour market training (AMU) which were carried out in 2006 and 2008 respectively. The conclusions of these two exercises were very clear and presented the following challenges for the adult educational systems:

- There was a need to strengthen the motivation to participate in adult and continuing education, especially among skilled and un-skilled adults;
- Small and medium sized enterprises had limited knowledge of the labour market courses and thus made limited use of the system; and
- Educational institutions needed to make it a strategic priority of their educational offers to promote participation in adult learning by contacting small and medium sized enterprises.

As in the case of other EU Member States, the economic enterprise has also had an impact on the Danish economy during the last years, resulting in an increase in unemployment with all the consequences that this brings to society.

The overall objective of the quality measure within guidance and counselling was to raise the quality in the supply of adult and continuing education in Denmark. A part of the political argumentation for the establishment of the ACE centres was a wish to create more flexible and effective educational possibilities in the provision of training in basic skills educations and labour market training. Politically, there was the wish to move from a existing “first come - first served” business-model, where the users primarily got offers from the institution they were in contact with, to a “rational” business-model, where the user is guided to the institution which can best provide training tailored to their demands.

Part 1: Problem definition

In 2007, the government and the social partners agreed to “identify and assess the possibilities for renewing the governance and conditions for the supply of labour market training (AMU), potentially through the establishment of competence-centres. The objective was to concentrate the provision for the vocational adult and continuing education on fewer and stronger educational institutions and to get greater focus and effect of the activities.” (Institutionsstyrelsen 2009).

The solutions proposed were further discussed among all key actors in 2008, and this resulted in a new Act (Lov nr. 1100 ad 30.11.2009) which established the objectives and structure for the new Adult and continuing educational centres ACE (in Danish: VEU). The objective of an ACE was to improve the quality and effect of the basic vocational and general adult and continuing educational activities provided. An ACE was to strive to achieve these goals and objectives through:

1. Creating a better overview for the users of the educational offers, through guidance services about how and where they can get their educational needs catering for;
2. Contributing to coordinate their contacts with enterprises to market their educational institutions’ guidance services for enterprises and their employees;
3. Identifying the need for, and coordinating and start analysing the quality of their educational activities.

The educational activities within continuing adult education (VEU) and within labour market training (AMU) were mapped and evaluated in 2006 and 2008. The conclusions were very clear and presented in a number of challenges for these educational systems:

- There were a need to strengthen the motivation for participating in adult and continuing education, especially among skilled and un-skilled.
- The small and medium sized enterprises had a limited knowledge of the labour market courses and had a limited use of the system.
- There was a need for the educational institutions to make a strategic priority of the educational offers and the contacts to the small and medium sized enterprises.

These objectives were expected to be achieved by introducing a new structure within adult education and labour market training for the provision of guidance services. The vision of the Ministry was that the ACE Centres were to function “as one-stop shop” instead of having institutions competing against each other, but to instead to focus on their own interests. This required that all institutions cooperate and joint solutions were high on the agenda.

Part 2: Approach

The Adult and Continuing Educational centres (ACE centres) today offer a flexible, well-organised, and efficient education, which is of benefit to both workplaces as well as to workers. The centres work to increase cooperation between education institutions, users and organisations, as well as build strategic cooperation with regional growth forums, job centres, and employment agencies. By contacting an ACE centre, companies and citizens can get all the advice they need from one single source. The tasks of the ACE centres include carrying out comprehensive and goal-oriented outreach guidance and counselling services covering all the education options offered at ACEs, clarifying

competence development needs for companies and employees, and coordinating general education and vocational training efforts. The work carried out by these new ACE centres builds on the experiences from 22 advice centres, which were evaluated and then discontinued in 2009. The ACE centres aim to integrate the work of many institutions and provide:

- An overview of the supply of educational activities from all institutions;
- Broad information about the possibilities for education and training during visits to the enterprises;
- Reference to other institutions if they are better tailored to solve the training needs of the enterprises and employees.

The QA approach for the better provision of guidance services used included a complex mixture of structures and systems such as:

- Setting up new types of institutions,
- Implementing new governance methods,
- Developing support material and
- Following closely the institutions' activities in relation to the goals and objectives.

This package of activities was not always presented as a quality approach, but presented mainly as tools to tackle and solve a number of existing structural and practical challenges.

The core elements/instruments of the QA approach were the following: 1) Governance and the organisation of the ACE Centres; 2) Setting strategic goals; 3) Development contracts; and 4) Reporting. Here below these four elements will be discussed in more detail.

1) Governance and the organisation of the ACE Centres

First, the introduction of the 13 ACE Centres covering all regions of Denmark, was a key part of the structural quality approach. The Centres fall under the responsibility of the Ministry for Children and Education. They consist of a host-institution placed in an organisation offering labour market training and a number of partner-institutions, covering all suppliers of labour market training courses and adult education within a given area. Each ACE Centre has its own board, composed of persons from the host- and partner-institutions' boards. The board establishes a central council that advises the board. The centres are relatively loosely integrated institutions, and the Centre managers have no formal managerial competence in relation to the consultants that are employed at the partner institutions.

The Council for Adult and Continuing Education was established in 2009 to support the ACE centres. The function of the Council is to give advice to the Minister of Education on topics and issues which are of importance to the adult and continuing education sector. In May 2010, the council issued a booklet "Strategiske fokusområder" (Strategic Focus Areas), which included a forecast predicting that Denmark would, within a few years, face a shortage of qualified workers (having the relevant competences needed by the labour market) with simultaneous redundancies among unqualified workers. In 2011, the Council has carried out a follow-up exercise of this work, including a focus on digitalisation of the adult and continuing education area, its connections to the economic

and employment policies, and steering and increasing the supply of AMU training. The Council focuses on being proactive and provides guidance and counselling to the Ministry about future needs. The council publishes every year their proposals for strategic focus areas and raise a number of key questions.

2) The strategic goals

The Ministry for Children and Education has identified five strategic goals for the activities in the ACE Centres. The fulfilment of the strategic goals is secured directly through two-year development contracts between the Ministry and the ACE Centres. The five key strategic goals are:

- Stronger and coordinated guidance to enterprises and employees with a special focus on employed persons unfamiliar with education and on small and medium sized enterprises;
- Enhanced cooperation between the fundamental/basic adult educations and the vocational and labour market educations;
- Better adaption of the educational activities to the users and labour markets needs for adult and continuing education;
- Stronger interaction between the adult and continuing education and the regional business and employment development; and
- Effective ACE Centres that secure a common solution in relation to solving the tasks and cooperation between the institutions in relation to ACE.

3) Development contracts

The strategic goals presented are the focal point in the ACE Centres development contracts and constitute the formal frame for the practical work and are seen as the main governance activity between the Ministry and the centre. The strategic goals are operationalised in result objectives and indicators – to be achieved within certain milestones – and are included in the development contracts. According to the contracts, the ACE Centres are not obliged to work towards all the objectives and goals in cooperation. In practice, is it possible for the partner institutions to work relatively independent from each other.

4) Reporting

All ACE Centres have development contracts with the Ministry, and the boards of the Centres shall report to the Ministry on a yearly basis. The reports are drawn up making use of a predefined template and they are discussed in a meeting with the Ministry, the board of the ACE centre and the ACE Centre. Detailed templates for each of the five focus areas (key strategic objectives) are developed. Here below, as illustration, is the template for the guidance activities presented.

Illustration: Strategic objective 1: Stronger and coordinated guidance to enterprises and employees with a special focus on employed persons unfamiliar with education and on small and medium sized enterprises.

Result goal 1:

New users are secured a coordinated cross-institutional guidance about basic and vocational/labour oriented adult and continuing education

Expected results in relation to the indicators in the contract: ■ 1. The establishment of a visible and coordinated entrance for new users to guidance and counselling services about ACE. ■ 2. The establishment of a coordinated marketing and proactive counselling approach ■ 3. Agreements about identification of needs with X small and medium sized enterprises. (X is the number of enterprises proposed by the ACE Centre.) ■ 4. Agreements about upskilling of qualifications of employees in X small and medium sized enterprises. (X are proposed by the ACE Centre.) ■ 5. X persons who have taken a basic skills test (FVU-test). (X is the number proposed by the ACE Centre.) ■ 6. X persons who participate in a basic skills education (FVU-education). (X is the number proposed by the ACE Centre.)
Results 2010 <i>To be filled in</i>
Strategy and action plan <i>To be filled in</i>
Result judgement. What went well? <i>To be filled in</i>
Result on enhancement and other comments. What can be done better? <i>To be filled in</i>

This is repeated for each result goal identified and for each strategic objective.

In addition, the institutions have local action plans that are internal documents and which are not presented to the Ministry. The action plans are considered as a tool to secure the implementation of the development contract.

The new institutional level, the new structure and especially the steering through development contracts, together with close follow-up procedures are seen as a tool for overcoming the challenges in the former more separated system for adult learning and for labour market training. Consolidation of institutions and structures is also being implemented in other education sectors in Denmark.

Indicators and descriptors

There exist both national defined goals and individual ACE Centres' goals which provide information about how the strategic goals are to be reached. A number of indicators were drawn up which are linked to the fulfilment of the national goals, these being:

1. The establishment of a visible and coordinated entrance for new users to guidance and counselling about ACE;
2. The establishment of a coordinated marketing and proactive counselling;
3. Agreements about identification of needs with X small and medium sized enterprises. (X are proposed by the ACE Centre.)
4. Agreements about up-qualification of employees in X small and medium sized enterprises. (X is proposed by the ACE Centre.)

5. X persons who have taken a basic skills test (FVU-test). (X is proposed by the ACE Centre.)
6. X persons who participate in a basic skills education (FVU-education). (X is proposed by the ACE Centre.)

Adjustments and evaluations

The quality approach has been evaluated and adjusted over the years. The tasks of the ACE centres also include carrying out comprehensive and goal-oriented outreach guidance and counselling activities covering all the education options offered at ACEs, clarifying competence development needs for companies and employees, and coordinating general education and vocational training efforts. The work carried out by the ACE centres builds on the experiences from 22 advice centres, which were discontinued and evaluated in 2009.

The development contracts for 2012-2013 continue within the same strategic priorities as in the first contract periods, but with new result objectives and indicators.

The development contracts and the clearly defined objectives on cooperation with enterprises and employees are made especially for the adult learning sector. But the thinking behind this quality approach is also reflected in other levels of the educational system and public administration in Denmark.

Barriers in the implementation

The evaluation (2012) of the first two years of the ACE Centres showed that there are room for improvement within a number of areas. The main issues are listed here below:

- Not all of the consultants in the Centres believe that these new centres are the right framework for solving the tasks they are expected to tackle.
- In some centres directors encounter problems to get support to market the ACE Centres as one single entrance to adult and continuing education
- Other centres have difficulties in defining why the individual institution should use time and resources in cooperation with other similar institutions;
- The centres have general problems at strategic level with the coordination of the educational supply in their regions and in securing a certain degree of specialisation of knowledge and competences

Governance aspects are a main barrier to effective implementation. The ACE Centres are managing to accomplish a number of complex tasks, but suffer from a weak governance structure and mandate. In the current set up the individual institutions' autonomy is kept, which brought about a number of limitations in working towards activities that go beyond the single institutions own interests.

Part 3: Contextual factors that influence the quality measure

The evaluations show that a number of factors influence the quality measure. These include:

- The Act which provides legislation;
- The geographical distribution of the Centres;
- The profiles of the persons in the centre councils;

- The decisions about host-institutions;
- The cooperation between the institutions;
- The development contracts;
- The work and working methods within the organisations in order to reach the objectives; and
- The support materials developed by the Ministry.

The evaluations indicate that a number of factors influence the success of the quality measure. These include:

- The support to the Act behind the establishment of the 13 ACE Centres;
- The high degree of consensus regarding the geographical distribution of the 13 ACE Centres;
- The discussions about the profiles of the members in the centre council – ranging from a strategic focus to an operational and tactical focus;
- The cooperation between the institutions supported by motivated consultants and clear goals and strategies expressed in the development contracts;
- The development contracts content, methodology and the high degree of acceptance within the institutions;
- The work and working methods within the organisations in order to reach the objectives includes a wide range of activities e.g. information, trials on small scale, sectoral focus, use of best practices, internal competence development, innovation, formal for a for cooperation and structures for the meetings.
- Ministerial support materials such as common templates for the work on action plans and development contracts, and all the supporting the cooperation across the institutions;
- The staff's identification with the ACE Centre's mission;
- The perception of the other institutions as partners; and
- The management's priority for the work to be achieved and for the cooperation needed.

A number of factors limit the Centres' impact. According to the evaluations, the success of the quality measure was limited by the following aspects:

- Disagreement about the host-institution which was a challenge in some institutions;
- Establishing cooperation within and between organisations, especially as different cultures create challenges in relation to communication and common goals and actions;
- The limited availability of economic resources (this was only mentioned by few host-institutions);
- The interaction between general and vocational education and training due to differences in support structures and amounts within each sector;
- The lack of representatives from employers in the centre council;
- Logistical matters as differences in communication systems, databases, etc.; and
- The combined offer of basic skills education together with labour market training.

Part 4: Outcomes and results

The actors and institutions within the adult educational system agree that the selected quality measure improves quality and secures better and coordinated guidance of enterprises and employees.

The institutions focus on four different activities in order to fulfil their development contracts within guidance and cooperation:

- We have to know more/competence development on several levels;
- We must be more visible/common marketing campaigns;
- We have to coordinate the activities; and
- We must try new ways and methods.

All the other focus areas are developed through similar activities.

The evaluation (2012) of the first two years of the ACE Centres shows that they together have achieved a number of important results:

- They have achieved agreements about identification of needs with 16.186 small and medium sized enterprises. (Goal 13,526);
- They have made agreements about top-up qualification of employees in 4.696 small and medium sized enterprises (Goal 3,002);
- They have raised the knowledge about labour market training (AMU) and basic skills training (FVU) in the small and medium sized enterprises;
- They have succeeded in raising the number of participants who have got their basic skills assessed to 77,424. (Goal 50,695);
- They have succeeded in raising the number of participants who took part in basic skills education to 46,582. (Goal 45,436);
- They are known by 55 % of the enterprises, independent of whether they have been in contact with a centre or not; and
- 86 % of the enterprises that have been in contact with the centres stated that they have got a better overview of the educational possibilities for both skilled and unskilled employees in the enterprise.

The institutions have after the first years of implementation, developed even further and are making further progress within a number of areas, these being:

- The development of tools to achieve the required tasks and reach the objectives set;
- Internal cooperation within the Centre;
- Creation of a common identity;
- External communication methods with enterprises and employees; and
- Educational goals.

All together, these activities support both the quality development of the Centres as well as the activities content and contributions of that they make to education and training.

Part 5: Reflection on success and fail factors

A number of lessons can be learnt from this Danish case. First of all, motivation is considered essential in order to get all the different institutions to cooperate and to work

towards the same common goals and objectives. The institutions need to agree on and share both the same goals and means, even if there are different economical consequences on the institutions.

Organisational and governance structures can be transferred to other situations – at least principally. The solution with the development contracts with the ACE Centres works and can be transferred directly to other contexts. Had the structural changes been mainly grounded in the Danish administrative structure and geography it will be less transferable. However, the principles used to ensure geographical coverage of the ACE Centres and coordination approach between numbers of institutions within adult education are still transferable to other contexts.

The Danish Evaluation Centre (EVA) has followed the process from the start and made to evaluations to ensure quality. This process led to the publication of the following documents:

- Experiences from the establishment of the ACE Centres (2010) presented in a report with 48 pages.
- Assessment of governance structure, cooperation, and results (2012) presented in a report with 137 pages.

The evaluations were very comprehensive and had the following objectives:

- To describe the start and organisation of the reform as seen from a number of key actors' perspective;
- To map possibilities and barriers in the ACE Centres work as they are now; and
- To identify different approaches to solve the targets set in the Centres' development contracts.

The key challenge remains that of motivating and developing a structure for cooperation between all the involved institutions, so that they act and function as one unit with focus on the enterprises and employees needs and not on their own individual agendas, needs, and power struggles.

The development of a better coordination and cooperation approach requires a number of decisions to be taken in relation to the governance structure and to the activities that the centres need to focus on. The evaluation (2012) presents in its conclusion three different scenarios for the ACE Centres, depending on which goals and objectives they are expected to achieve:

Scenario A - The minimum model: The idea here is to limit and focus the task to what is possible within the existing loose governance structure.

Scenario B - A development model: The centres can be upgraded so they can fulfil even more complex tasks. The upgrading can either be implemented by enhancing the portfolio of tasks, increase the economic incentives to solve the tasks or to strengthen the decision-making in the secretariat and by employing the corps of consultants directly in the Centre instead of in the individual institutions.

Scenario C - The reform model: An alternative to upgrading the existing ACE Centres influence and power is to create a completely new and independent institution based on the existing institutions. The new institution shall be independent and work with its own budget and staff.

Part 6: Conclusions

The successful activities were mainly achieved through the combination of a new Act, acceptance of the new geographical structure and the governance structure setup including the decision on making development contracts with all the individual institutions.

Adult education covers a number of different educational activities delivered by a number of different institutions. The creation of a governance and organisational structure is one way of securing a coordinated supply of the different educational activities within adult learning. This type of organisational coordination of the supply in order to secure the guidance of enterprises and employees is especially important within adult education.

Most other educational sectors have relatively homogeneous groups of learners, where the adult educational sector is extremely broad and heterogeneous. However, most of the teaching and learning principles, educational questions and basic principles are relatively similar in all kinds of learning.

A combination of quality tools are needed in order to achieve success:

- The support to the Act behind the establishment of the 13 ACE Centres;
- The high degree of consensus regarding the geographical distribution of the 13 ACE Centres;
- The discussions about the profiles of the members in the centre council – ranging from a strategic focus to an operational and tactical focus;
- Cooperation between the institutions was supported by motivated consultants and clear goals and strategies expressed in the development contracts;
- The development contracts content, methodology and the high degree of acceptance within the institutions;
- The work and working methods within the organisations in order to reach the objectives includes a wide range of activities e.g. information, trials in small scale, sectoral focus, use of best practice, internal competence development, innovation, formal for a for cooperation and structures for the meetings;
- Ministerial support materials like common templates for the work on action plans and development contracts, all supporting the cooperation across the institutions;
- The staff's identification with the ACE Centre;
- The perception of the other institutions as partners;
- The managements priority of the work and cooperation;

The main factors not functioning are:

- Too many different types of educational activities;
- Too many different cultures of working in the educational institutions;
- Logistical problems like differences in communication systems, databases etc.

This case shows that governance and organisational structure support quality of adult learning through a focus on guidance of enterprises and employees. The development contracts make a difference and motivate the institutions to deliver high quality adult

learning. Coordination among institutions supports the principle of giving the users of the adult educational system e.g. enterprises and individuals one single entrance to adult education, and by that the offers for training that they demand and need is provided by more than what one single institution can provide.

6 Greece: Quality Always Everywhere (Ποιότητα Πάντα Παντού)

Name expert: George K. Zarifis

Introduction: Description of the quality measure: introduction and short summary

π^3 sets a framework of priorities and principles on quality assurance in non-formal life-long learning. This covers all forms of educational and learning provision for people over 16 years old and includes initial VET, all apprenticeship schemes, continuing VET, second chance education and all liberal and/or popular adult education programmes. It further provides to all relevant structures a tool for organizing and delivering the evaluation of learning outcomes for those participating in any of the programmes provided. This is essentially delivered on the grounds that π^3 :

- defines quality by setting a number of principles and criteria in all three dimensions of education and learning, namely inputs, processes and outputs, and
- provides a large number of measurable quantitative and qualitative indicators for the evaluating the degree implementation of quality assurance principles by all relevant providers.

According to the European Union's strategy "Europe 2020", education and training play a significant role towards a smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth. In addition, a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training has been established which sets clear strategic objectives regarding Lifelong Learning, aiming at ensuring:

- the personal, social and professional fulfilment of all citizens;
- sustainable economic prosperity and employability, whilst promoting democratic values, social cohesion, active citizenship, and intercultural dialogue.

Especially for Vocational Education and Training (VET), a Recommendation of the European Parliament and Council has been developed, which establishes a new reference tool, the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework, to help Member States and participating countries develop, improve, guide, and assess the quality of their own vocational education and training systems. The recommendation establishes a framework, which comprises a quality assurance and improvement cycle (planning, implementation, evaluation/assessment and review/revision) based on a selection of quality criteria, descriptors and indicators, applicable to quality management at both VET system and VET provider levels. Currently, at national level, quality improvement and quality assurance are fundamental concepts of the recent national strategy for Lifelong Learning (LLL), according to the respective legislation, mainly Law 3879/2010, where assessment and quality improvement are clearly linked to all the dimensions of training (inputs, procedures and outputs/outcomes) and all organisations involved (be it LLL service providers or policy makers). Furthermore, the National Programme for Lifelong Learning puts emphasis on quality, since the Ministry Of Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs has incorporated the notion "Quality Everywhere" as a strategic objective in its planning for the forthcoming 3-year period. The Ministry, aiming at effectively coordinating the role of

all organisations towards the improvement of quality and the alignment with the national policy and the European strategy, has also developed a framework for the improvement of Lifelong Learning, the π^3 framework, which sets the principles for quality improvement and provides all organisations involved with a tool for planning, delivering and assessing their results in all the area of Lifelong Learning.

The implementation of π^3 applies to all the organisations involved in the non-formal education system (basic skills, initial VET, continuing VET, second chance and liberal) and are supervised either by the Ministry of Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs or by other Ministries (largely at macro and meso levels and less so at micro level).

Part 1: Problem definition

π^3 was introduced as an integrated quality assurance initiative for all non-formal education provision that is supervised either by the Ministry of National Education Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs (MNE) or by other Ministries¹. Most of non-formal learning in Greece is provided by structures that are either state dependent or externally funded (either through private funding or as in most cases through European funding programmes). High drop-out rates and low participation in non-formal education and lifelong learning (LL) in Greece which is estimated approx. 2,8%, along with many other structural shifts in the LL national strategy that started in 2010 with the new law on LL (Law 3879/2010), involved transferring all responsibilities to the MNE along with the establishment of the National Organisation for the Accreditation of Qualifications (EOPP), and generated a debate on the issue of quality that concluded with the introduction the Hellenic Qualifications Framework (HQF) and that of π^3 in July 2011. Until that time, there was no specific quality oriented systematic effort in the area of lifelong learning at a national level in Greece. With the exception of the Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency (HQAAA²) that is credited with the task of quality assurance in universities and higher education institutions, there is no other initiative in the national LL strategy that integrates the quality dimension. The factors that lead the previous government to introduce π^3 are the following:

- The expansion of LL providers that until that recently were not monitored by any legal authority.
- The need to make the participants part of the LL strategy as they are the beneficiaries of LL provision and therefore entitled to a high quality end product.
- The conscious decision on behalf of LL providers that quality assurance is a comparative advantage in the LL “market”.
- The need to legitimize learning provision in terms of educational processes and effectiveness in a time of financial hardship in particular.

In the 66 pages³ of the document that introduces the integrated framework on quality assurance in non-formal LL and the principles on which quality assurance in LL needs to be

¹ See: π^3 - The National Quality Assurance Framework for Lifelong Learning. Available only in Greek at: <http://www.gsae.edu.gr/images/stories/plaisio.pdf>

² <http://www.adip.gr/index.php?lang=en>

³ <http://www.adip.gr/index.php?lang=en>

based, there are three elements on which enormous gravity is laid: Inputs, processes and outputs. This quasi economic approach also reveals the character of the π^3 initiative which addresses certain measures to resolve the following problems:

- 1. Quality of educational and training provision (structures, learning materials, programmes and teaching/training staff).
- 2. Quality of non-formal educational procedures, didactic methods and their application in practice.
- 3. Quality of learning outputs and results in relation to the knowledge, skills and competences acquired at the end of the learning process.

The π^3 initiative literally means quality always and everywhere and responds to the clause on quality assurance in article 19 of the Law 3879/2010 on LL that takes in the establishment of a system for continuing education and evaluation of all educational staff in non-formal education and second chance education, as well as a monitoring and evaluation system of all programmes operated under the aegis of the National Network for LL.

Part 2: Approach

The approach used to address (and solve) the problem (which is both a quantitative and qualitative) is largely quantitative and is based on some core as the framework suggests elements (in the text they appear as “fundamental quality principles for LL”) for quality assurance as these appear in a number of documents. More specifically the framework took into account a number of definitions on quality¹, the strategic plan for European Cooperation (EU 2020), a report from the Finnish National Board of Education (2008), Quality Management recommendation for Vocational Education and Training², the EFQM, Excellence Model (2010), and the Bruges Communiqué on enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training³. The approach is firmly elaborated by a number identified “quality principles” that operate more as imperatives or even better as given facts that rationalize the framework itself in this case. These principles are the following⁴:

- LLL is attractive
- LLL is effective
- LLL is relevant to the needs of the labour market
- LLL is sustainable and promotes social cohesion
- LLL promotes creativity and innovation
- LLL uses resources of high standards
- LLL is provided with social responsibility

¹ However these definitions are not mentioned or referenced in the framework, neither an integrated definition nor interpretation of those definitions is apparent anywhere in the framework text.

² The report is available at: <http://www.slideshare.net/Victoria71/quality-management-recommendation-for-vocational-education>

³ Available for downloading at: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/vocational/bruges_en.pdf

⁴ Available in the π^3 - The National Quality Assurance Framework for Lifelong Learning – Executive Summary (in English).

■ LLL exploits networking and cooperation

Although the choice of language used (in Greek) to express the essence of the aforementioned principles is not entirely the product of deep or critical thinking, the principles are elaborate based on the triptych: inputs, processes, outputs. More specifically for each principle each of the three elements is granted an explanatory context:

Lifelong Learning...	INPUTS	PROCESSES	OUTPUTS
...is attractive	Incentives are provided to high level trainers for participating Curricula are based on standards (educational, occupational, evaluation) Interest for participating in LLL programmes is high	Trainers apply methods that are consistent with the principles of adult education	Learning outcomes meet the expectations of the participants Acquired knowledge, skills and qualifications enhance the image of the graduate Consultation and vocational orientation meet the needs of various groups
...is effective	The development of the curricula, which are divided into modules, takes into account the different needs of the trainees	Trainers use various and contemporary training methods depending upon the training programme and the trainees involved Methods, techniques and resources of consultation and vocational orientation comply with international standards	Learning outcomes are achieved The acquired knowledge, skills and qualifications are recognized and are included in the National Qualifications Framework The acquired knowledge, skills and qualifications ensure the permanence and / or (re)integration in the national and EU labour market
...is relevant to the needs of the labor market	Professional profiles are based on the actual content of the professions Curricula of LLL programmes are based on professional profiles Curricula of LLL programmes include apprenticeship in the business environment The interest of the unemployed to participate in LLL programmes is high	Apprenticeship in the business environment (where applicable) is consistent with the training content Training methods put emphasis on the connection of theory and practice	Acquired knowledge, skills and qualifications are relevant to the actual needs of the respective job Acquired knowledge, skills and qualifications help find a profession relevant to the interests and qualifications of the graduate
...is sustainable and promotes social cohesion	Planning of LLL is based on the constant identification of the needs of the trainees and the labour market	Tuition fees ensure a break even operation of LLL service providers Various funding sources are utilised for the implementation of LLL activities	Acquired knowledge, skills and qualifications give access to a variety of learning paths Consultation and vocational orientation services address the needs of LLL graduates Acquired knowledge, skills and qualifications contribute to the promotion of active citizenship
...promotes creativity and innovation	LLL programmes provided are innovative and based on early identification of the labour market needs LLL programmes promote creativity and innovation Consultation and vocational orientation are based on innovative methods	Innovative teaching methods are applied in LLL programmes	Innovative methods are used for the certification of acquired qualifications
...uses resources of high standards	Trainers have relevant and adequate qualifications Infrastructures are contemporary and meet quality standards Trainers take part regularly in training of trainers	ICT is utilised for the provision of LLL	Certification bodies employ examiners with high qualifications, who are evaluated periodically Certification bodies are audited periodically by national bodies

	(ToT) learning activities Consultation and vocational orientation staff have the possess the required qualifications and they are constantly trying to improve		
...is provided with social responsibility	Vulnerable groups are motivated to participate in LLL programmes LLL programmes specifically designed for the needs of socially vulnerable groups are available Building infrastructure meet accessibility standards	LLL providers utilise all funding instruments in order to deliver LLL programmes specifically designed to address the needs of vulnerable groups LLL provision is consistent with national and international standards Consultation and vocational orientation services are accessible to vulnerable groups	Qualifications certification methods and procedures are accessible to all Certification of qualifications is provided in a transparent, objective and reliable way that complies with national and international standards
...exploits networking and cooperation	LLL providers develop local and regional networks and participate in international partnerships	Networking of consultation and vocational orientation institution with other stakeholders is regularly monitored and assessed	Certification bodies actively participate in European and international networks for the exchange of know-how

The degree to which LL institutions incorporate the aforementioned principles in their systems and operational procedures is evaluated, at a top level via a set of fifteen (15) measurable qualitative and quantitative key indicators¹, presented in the table below:

#	Indicator	Calculation	Quality Principle
1	Degree of attraction of adult learners in LLL programmes	<i>Number of applications submitted by adult learners (≥16 years old) to participate in LLL programmes</i>	1
2	Degree of satisfaction of the recipients of LLL services compared to their expectations	<i>Average score to the respective question to the recipients of LLL services</i>	1
3	Recognition of qualifications of the adult learners from the labour market	<i>Average score to the respective question to the employers</i>	1
4	Degree of certification of qualifications acquired through LLL programmes	<i>Percentage of adult learners who successfully completed the certification procedure</i>	2
5	Degree of use of the qualifications acquired through LLL programmes	<i>Average score to the respective question to the employed adult learners</i>	2
6	Degree of alignment of VET Programmes to the corresponding professions	<i>Ratio of VET programmes that are based upon a certified professional profile against the total number of VET programmes</i>	3
7	Degree of participation of unemployed people to LLL programmes	<i>Ratio of unemployed people participating in LLL programmes against the total number of people participating in the programmes</i>	3
8	Degree of participation to more than one LLL programmes	<i>Ratio of adult learners that have participated in more than one LLL programme against the total number of adult learners</i>	4
9	Degree of use of Consultancy and Career orientation services	<i>Percentage of adult learners that have successfully participated in a LLL programme and have used consultancy and career orientation services, against the total number of the adult learners who have successfully participated in a LLL programme</i>	4

¹ These key indicators were produced based on the European Parliament and Council Directive 2009/C 155/01 on the creation of a European framework for quality assurance in VET, a study report issued by the Labour Institute (INE) of the General Association of Trade Unions (GSEE) and comments and proposals issued by relevant LL providers (p. 28 of the n³ framework).

10	Degree of use of innovative teaching methods that promote creativity and autonomous learning in the LLL programmes	<i>Number of innovative teaching interventions that promote creativity and autonomous learning during the delivery of LLL programmes</i>	5
11	Degree of participants' satisfaction from the LLL service providers	<i>Average score to the respective question to the participants of each programme</i>	6
12	Knowledge update of the trainers	<i>Percentage of training hours for knowledge update vs. the total number of trainers</i>	6
13	Degree of participation to LLL programmes of socially vulnerable groups	<i>Percentage of people belonging to socially vulnerable groups who participate in LLL programmes, against the total number of participants</i>	7
14	Incorporation of quality systems in the LLL and accreditation service providers	<i>Ratio of LLL and accreditation service providers with a quality system against the total number of certified service providers</i>	7
15	Degree of participation to networks (national and international)	<i>Number of collaborations (networks, work groups, participation in projects, etc.)</i>	8

The role of these indicators is multiple and involves:

- Description of the situation at any given time.
- Quantification of all qualitative objectives that are put in place.
- Constant information flow on how the objectives are fulfilled.
- Indication of the factors involved in fulfilling the objectives.

The key indicators can and should be enhanced, analysed and further developed by the organisations involved in terms of their content and the Ministry of Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs has developed a “toolbox” of forty seven (47) additional indicators to support this effort. Continuous improvement of Lifelong Learning requires the integration and alignment of all systems and operational procedures of LLL bodies with the eight quality principles (see above), which is achieved via the implementation of a sequence of five steps, the LL quality cycle.

The LL Quality Cycle is based on the EQAVET Quality Cycle, except that the step “Evaluation” of the EQAVET Quality Cycle has been further analysed to “Measurement” and “Evaluation” in order to emphasise the need for an assessment based on measurable (qualitative and quantitative) data. The LL Quality Cycle is the tool that continuously helps LL institutions to self-assess their systems and operational procedures and improve their alignment to the eight quality principles of Lifelong Learning and, subsequently, to the π^3 framework. This means that all organizations that adopt the π^3 framework periodically use the LLL quality cycle in order to evaluate the degree of incorporation of each one of the eight quality principles into their operation and, therefore, to plan the necessary improvements. The maturity of the organizations in the use of the LL quality cycle and in the incorporation of the quality principles may be rated on a scale from 0 to 5 per quality step, leading to an overall score, that can be used as a benchmark (for each organisation or even among organizations) for monitoring improvement. This approach has never been used anywhere yet neither are there indications of adaptation or adjustment during its pilot implementation. According to the framework's time-plan a pilot implementation of π^3 was supposed to be completed on 27/1/2012 by all participating LL structures. The adjustment phase along with the publi-

cation of an implementation guide was to be completed in 30/3/2012, followed by the development of a π^3 accreditation mechanism to all LL structures by 1/6/2012. However, there are no published information or indications of how the pilot implementation phase was developed and what are its results to this point.

Part 3: Contextual factors that influence the quality measure

π^3 is a quality assurance framework for all non-formal adult education and learning including all forms of VET (initial, apprenticeship and continuing) and all social groups that are benefited by the structures that provide it. The conditions under which π^3 was developed however are not socio-economic as the framework is not based on any relevant research findings. They are largely political and highly influenced by EU policy documents and directives. This is mainly an attempt to develop a framework that corresponds to the written word as this appears in official EU documents. Its implementation however cannot be assessed as yet neither is it possible to assume the factors strengthening or hindering the implementation of the framework. There is a large variety of providers that have different priorities, provide different programmes and are addressed to different social and/or professional groups. Therefore, a holistic approach to quality that is more or less introduced with π^3 needs to be thoroughly examined. Furthermore and as LL provision is shrinking due to underfunding or change of priorities it will be even more difficult to see how π^3 will progress.

Part 4: Outcomes and results

There is no indication of whether or how the implementation of π^3 improves (or not) the quality in adult learning.

Part 5: Reflection on success and fail factors

It is certainly difficult if not impossible to proceed to a full appreciation of the π^3 framework without the results of the pilot implementation. However and based on the framework itself as it appears in the Greek text, what needs to be stressed is the devotion to the letter of the official legal documents coming from the EU as well as the national Law 3879/2010 on lifelong learning. The π^3 framework matches all legal requirements as they appear in national LL strategy but it misses certain aspects of its added value due to lack of information on its pilot implementation. Therefore the framework scores highly in relevance but there is no score in terms of its effectiveness or efficiency. Another important aspect that relates to those of effectiveness and efficiency is the degree of transferability to other learning or educational situations. As it has been noted earlier it is very difficult to assess transferability of the whole framework as it is, since it is quasi economic led and oriented due to its tri-elemental nature: input-processes-output. This simplistic approach weeds out many aspects of the learning process that relate to readiness, personal intention to participate, the role of the self in appreciating what is a learning outcome and how it can be appreciated, the difficulty in defining quality in different learning environments, and of course some reference to the socio-economic agenda that has been prioritized in the country (severe cuts in educational provision, low salaries, diminishing infrastructure, the interplay between the public and the private sectors). It is on these grounds that a realistic approach to the π^3 framework

is needed, an approach that goes beyond the mere idea of matching quality assurance as part of educational and learning practice to official documents and laws. This will require research at meso and especially at micro levels as well as critically readdressing those issues that brought LL to the forefront.

Part 6: Conclusions

The quality criteria used in π^3 are all relevant to non-formal adult education and learning, but they are not at all relevant to any other quality assurance measures and especially those applied in HE. This is because the quality assurance criteria used in HE are developed using a different pattern and have a totally different departure point. Furthermore HE quality assurance criteria also include many pedagogical elements (pedagogical interaction, mentoring, communicative techniques, innovative didactic and teaching, laboratories, etc.) that are not included in the π^3 framework. Last but not least, all quality criteria proposed in the π^3 framework are quantifiable or measurable whereas quality assurance criteria used in HE are more qualitative and include internal as well as external evaluation procedures. This essentially asks for a more careful approach of the criteria proposed in π^3 framework as their focus is on the measured and quantifiable appreciation of the learning outcomes based on the input and the processes. Even in the case where some qualitative criteria appear in the grid, even those need to be quantified according to the framework.



7 France: Label GretaPlus

Name expert: Gert-Jan Lindeboom

Introduction: Description of the quality measure: introduction and short summary

In a region, coordinated by the academies, local educational establishments that provide training to adults work together in local educational groups called *groupes d'établissements* (GRETAs). In 2001, a quality label was introduced to simplify and harmonize quality criteria and to improve its accessibility for stakeholders on the one side and to take the changes as proposed by ISO and its French equivalent AFNOR into account on the other side. This label, termed GRETA-plus, introduced a common quality reference framework for all educational institutions involved with professional education for adults and primarily concentrates on whether training programmes and institutions in the GRETA offer personalized services. At this moment (December 2012), 37 out of 220 GRETAs throughout France have acquired this label. This relatively low participation underlines both the voluntary character and the specific requirements of this quality label.

Part 1: Problem definition

In France, professional education is decentralized and organized at the level of the geographical regions. This includes all types of professional education; both formal education leading to a qualification and non-formal types of vocational educational training (VET). All types of professional education are coordinated by 30 local *académies*, where representatives of the regional government meet with representatives of educational establishments and employers and employees. These *académies* are effectively local education councils that aim to coordinate educational programs to the local economic and social needs.¹

In a region, coordinated by the academies, local educational establishments that provide training to adults work together in local educational groups called *groupes d'établissements* (GRETAs). These groups are generally quite diverse, and often consist of (junior) high schools and vocational education schools. Even though these individual establishments may also provide 'regular' education for students, they cooperate in the provision of professional education for adults in the framework of the GRETA. In total, there are currently 220 GRETAs in France that aim to provide education to working professionals on a wide number of professional areas. The education programs range from formal types of professional education to smaller training courses and are established in

¹ Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale, Direction générale de l'enseignement scolaire (2010), *La formation professionnelle des adultes en France Rôle et actions du ministère de l'Éducation nationale*. (http://cache.media.eduscol.education.fr/file/Formation_continue_adultes/74/1/formation_pro_en_france_fevrier_2010_139741.pdf)

accordance with the regional governments and representatives of local employers and employees.

Under this decentralized system no uniform system of quality standards existed across the académies before 2001. For professional education several labels existed: CPEN (Centre permanent de l'éducation nationale), ELEN (Espace langues de l'éducation nationale), DPFI (dispositif permanent de formation individualisé) and SRIF (système de réponse individualisée de formation). These labels used to be awarded by the Ministry and served as a tool for ensuring quality. Often however, institutions remained rigid in terms of their response to individual demands of their clients. Starting in the 90s, a number of GRETAs started to follow the standards of the international ISO quality norms, either voluntarily or because their clients started demanding these standards.

Even though the introduction of ISO standards encouraged some GRETAs to concentrate more on the quality of their organization, these had little impact on the overall quality of professional education. By 2000, the national Education department aimed to introduce the standards as promoted by ISO norms in one clear national norm, specifically for the professional education sector, to be awarded by the Ministry. The reasons for this introduction were to simplify and harmonize quality criteria and to improve its accessibility for stakeholders on the one side and to take the changes as proposed by ISO and its French equivalent AFNOR into account on the other side. This label, termed GRETA-plus, introduced a common quality reference framework for all educational institutions involved with professional education for adults and would have to ensure better fit with the demands of local businesses and job-seekers. One of the main criteria of GRETA-plus is for education establishments to provide tailor-made training instead of fixed and more rigid education programmes and the publication of a clear standard description of services. As such, this quality label mainly ensures education programmes that are organized at the level of the individual learner.

In 2009 the reference norm for the GRETA-plus label was updated in cooperation with the French Association for Standardization (Association française de normalization – ANFOR). This norm further aims to prescribe the notion of tailor-made education programs and general standards of 'customer' service. This reference on good practice (Référentiel de bonnes pratiques) is referred to as BP X50-762 and is intended to further strengthen the legitimacy of the GRETA-system. Compared to the previous norms, this newer norm seeks to modernize professional education and should also be easier to consult for the public.

Part 2: Approach

Greta-plus is a voluntarily label that must be specifically requested by the GRETAs from the *Comité National de Labellisation*. This national committee consists of members appointed by the ministry of Education. The committee is chaired by the vice-director of professional education at the Ministry of Education and consists of representatives of the ministry and several external members. This committee meets twice a year and has the authority to change the quality criteria required by a GRETA-plus label. Based on an investigation, as detailed below, the committee formulates a recommendation for the

minister about awarding the label to particular institution. The list of GRETA-s that have been awarded with a GRETA-plus label is officially published by the Ministry of Education.

Even though the label is not a prerequisite for executing its functions, GRETA-s are encouraged by the central government to apply for this label as a means of global quality assurance.¹ GRETA-s can choose to apply the label for its entire group of educational establishments or also for a particular training program. The quality control concerns all types of activities of the GRETA; educational programs, results, evaluations, how students are accompanied during the course, how they are prepared for tests and how the GRETA functions in accompanying students into their professional environment. On all these areas, the committee will review the requesting educational establishments on a good practice framework that was developed in cooperation with the French standardization organization (AFNOR).

The GRETA-plus label requires groups of educational institutions to fulfill several quality criteria mostly focusing on its attention for client demands and organizational quality. More specifically it has to follow criteria on²:

- Information / Advice to clients / beneficiaries: The GRETA has to offer its clients and beneficiaries individualized information and advice and facilitate access to information.
- Individualized planning according to clients demands: A tailor-made response is given by the GRETA following a request, based on an analysis of the clients' demands. If necessary, the GRETA offers personalized services such as the validation of acquired experiences and the recognition of the most suitable certificates.
- Tailor-made services to individual clients: All services are written down in a contract, to be signed with each client. Once enrolled a mentor will be assigned for the duration of the training. During the course the program is adjusted as necessary in terms of methods, assistance, tools and work schedules. Everyone will receive an individual assessment.
- Human Resources: The GRETA offers its services through qualified and competent staff.
- Equipment, support and tools: Every enrolled individual is provided with suitable materials and updated resources, and the GRETA also takes care of the comfort of the individual.
- Administrative and financial follow up, traceability: The administrative and financial tasks related to the educational program are taken care of in time and in a transparent way.
- Evaluation of the training program: The GRETA also evaluates its services and results with the aim to improve its standards.
- Organizational management: The management is required to define and work on the policies of the organization, while also working on its implementation. Policies are subject to internal evaluation and are adjusted if necessary.

¹ Circulaire 2009-107 du 17-8-2009 MEN – DGESCO A2-4

² <https://eduscol.education.fr/cid46988/label-gretaplus.html>

- Anticipation and innovation to new developments: The organization ensures attention to social-economic developments and seeks to innovate, while cultivating its know-how.

Before applying for a GRETA-plus label at the ministry of Education, the group of educational institutions must show that it has worked in line with the quality requirements of the norm associated with GRETA-plus for at least a year. To do so, it must be internally audited by the académie, the local education council, before submitting its request with the Ministry. Based on this internal audit, the chairman of the académie (*le recteur*) has to approve the GRETA decision to pursue the GRETA-Plus label. Secondly, the GRETA is required to prove to be financially capable of ensuring quality provision for its clients. These requirements must be met by all educational establishments that form the GRETA, in order to apply for GRETA-plus¹.

When all the above criteria are met a team of auditors will be appointed by the Committee for labeling. This team will review the aforementioned criteria by documents that the GRETA sends at its request. The auditors will also organize site-visits to check the accuracy of the previous audits and documents. After this visit, the audit team draws up a report for the Committee for labeling. In this report an action plan has to be included, so that the Committee and the GRETA are both informed how to further improve or maintain quality standards. The Committee on Labeling provides a recommendation for the Ministry on the basis of these audit results. After completion of the report, the Committee will recommend the Minister of Education whether or not to grant the label. In this recommendation to the Minister it has 4 options:

- Grant the label for 3 years;
- Deny the label;
- Demand additional information;
- Demand another audit.

When issued by the Minister of Education, the GRETA-plus label is valid for three years. It is however required that the GRETA undertakes an internal audit report every year to monitor implementation of the quality objectives.

Part 3: Contextual factors that influence the quality measure

Primarily, the quality measure GRETA-plus is influenced by the need for individualized education programmes for adults. With an increasing accessibility of adult learning, for instance through distance learning available via the internet, an increasing demand for individualized tailor-made education programmes has reinforced the call for a measure that indicates to what extent an education indeed offers individualized programmes, instead of rigid standardized education.

¹ Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale, Direction générale de l'enseignement scolaire A8 (2003), *Cahier des charges des audits*.
(http://media.eduscol.education.fr/file/Formation_continue_adultes/99/5/procedure2003_115995.pdf)

Part 4: Outcomes and results

In November 2012 only 37 GRETA-s out of 220 GRETA-s (spread out over 30 académies) have a GRETA – plus label. Through this GRETA-plus label, trainees are assured of a personalized approach to their professional training. This is however quite a low number, if the quality label is to be of any significance. However, the geographical distribution of GRETA-s with a quality label is relatively even throughout the country.

Part 5: Reflection on success and fail factors

In terms of direct labour market relevance, the GRETA-plus label seems of limited value¹. If local businesses, the largest client of GRETA-s do not attach any value to this label, there seems little incentive for GRETA to pursue the label. It may even be considered a deliberate choice by the educational establishment not to request a GRETA-plus label, since this may increase undesired involvement of the central government in this relatively decentralized category of the education system. Without the quality-label, local business may be better able to influence the education at the group of local educational establishments.

On the other hand, the GRETA-plus label can have added value for organizations that seek education programmes at GRETA-s elsewhere in the country, outside their direct region. In this context, the acquisition of a GRETA-plus label may draw in additional clients and students, as it provides a way to distinguish itself from other GRETA-s in the region. Indeed, this corresponds to the claim of the national ‘labeling committee’ that the label gives an incentive to become more client-oriented and market-driven in their approach towards vocational education and training.

Part 6: Conclusions

The following conclusions can be drawn on the basis of the case study:

- The quality label GRETA-plus was introduced to ensure a personalized approach to adult education programmes and increase the flexibility of the organization. It mainly requires institutions to meet criteria on the services to individuals, and does not set specific requirements for the content of programmes.
- For some GRETA-s the introduction of this label simply meant the formalization of existing practices, while for others this specific label was not directly relevant. Due to the voluntary nature of the label, these institutions did not have to revise their programmes and services.
- A relatively small number of GRETA-s have applied for the label; this may be attributed to relatively much administrative work for audits and general relevance for education programmes. Some types of programmes education can more easily be offered in an individualised setting than others.

¹ See CEDEFOP – Assuring quality in Vocational education and Training (http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/3061_en.pdf)

8 Ireland: FETAC Quality Assurance System

Name expert: Helen Keogh

Introduction: Description of the quality measure: introduction and short summary

The principal legislation underpinning quality assurance (QA) in non-tertiary further education and training in Ireland is the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999. The Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC)¹ was established in 2001 under the 1999 legislation. Its remit was to become the single national awarding body for the non-tertiary further education and training sector in Ireland. In addition to unifying the awarding function of the sector, this role involves the determination of standards, promotion of awards and monitoring the quality of programmes and assessment. FETAC makes awards from Levels 1 – 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications Ireland (NFQ) in a vast range of education and training fields covered in provision such as school education, basic skills education, second-chance education and training, adult education, community-based learning, VET, workplace learning and early-school leaver provision².

By the end of 2011, FETAC had made awards to almost 1.2 million people aged 15+ on programmes (full- and part-time) offered by diverse providers ranging from individual commercial training providers and small community groups to large publicly-funded national organisations operating in a range of different contexts. Learning outcomes leading to a FETAC award may be achieved through formal, non-formal and / or informal learning but the assessment and application for an award is always processed through a provider which is registered and has a quality assurance agreement with FETAC.

In order to ensure confidence in its awards, FETAC has established a comprehensive strategy to assure the quality of the programmes leading to its awards. The strategy involves the coordinated application of three separate functions: a) agreement of a quality assurance (QA) system with a provider of programmes leading to a FETAC award; b) validation of programmes submitted by a provider; c) monitoring and evaluation of a provider's learning programmes and quality assurance system. The FETAC QA system operates at various levels as follows:

Macro – FETAC develops and publishes / implements:

- standards for awards;
- a QA policy applying to providers wishing to offer courses leading to FETAC awards;
- provider registration;
- validation of courses leading to FETAC awards;

¹ www.fetac.ie

² Agriculture, science, computing; arts, craft and media; business and administration; construction and built environment; core skill, language and general studies; education, health and welfare; engineering / manufacturing; services; tourism, hospitality and sport as categorised by ISCED and FETAC systems: see http://www.fetac.ie/fetac/documents/FETAC_Awards_Report_14_jun_12.pdf

- certification of learning outcomes on the verified results of assessment;
- monitoring of provider QA procedures and programmes.

Meso – providers who wish to offer FETAC certification must: a) have a QA agreement with FETAC before they can offer FETAC courses, assessment or certification; b) be registered with FETAC; c) ensure that programmes leading to a FETAC certification are formally validated under the QA agreements.

Micro – QA requirements at classroom / learning environment and learning programme levels are covered by: a) the provider QA agreement with FETAC on 9 core areas; b) the registration of the provider; and c) the validation of learning programmes.

Overall objective of the quality measure

The overall objective of FETAC quality assurance system is to ensure the transparency of FETAC qualifications (Levels 1- 6 on the NFQ), and the quality and consistency of the awards from setting to setting, course to course, learner to learner, level to level and year to year.

Part 1: Problem definition

The immediate reason for the development of the QA system arose from FETAC's statutory obligation under the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999 to guarantee the standards of the awards made by FETAC at Levels 1 – 6 of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) Ireland. This was to ensure a 'zone of mutual trust' and transparency among users of the qualifications in Ireland and abroad, including learners, employers and education and training institutions.

In addition, assurance of the quality of FETAC awards was based on good governance principles for FETAC and providers.

Qualification end-users are stakeholders in the quality of qualifications. An education and training provider offering access / progression on the basis of qualifications and an employer offering a job require qualifications to be trustworthy and a genuine reflection of the applicant's competences. The guaranteed validity and reliability of qualifications is also in a consumer's interest in that it promotes transparency and accountability on the part of providers and enables the consumer to trust the currency of the qualification.

By the mid-1990s non-tertiary further education and training qualifications in Ireland were 'diffuse and incoherent' and many qualifications came from awarding bodies outside the country. Meanwhile, the national objective of building a lifelong learning society was creating a strong demand for a more coherent, transparent and articulated system of qualifications¹. The establishment in 2001 of the new qualifications infrastructure comprising the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) and two awarding Councils – the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) and the Higher

¹ NQAI (National Qualifications Authority of Ireland) (2003) *The Role of National Qualifications Systems in Promoting Lifelong Learning: Country Background Report: Ireland*, Dublin: author and OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development).

Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) – operating under the statutory remit of the National Qualifications (Education and Training) Act, 1999 was a response to this demand. Following extensive consultation, the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) was launched in 2003 with a key objective of promoting and maintaining standards. The integrity of the entire NFQ awards system depends on transparency, consistency, standards and quality.

FETAC took over the administration and awarding of awards from a range of training and awarding bodies in Ireland, which had previously made awards through diverse qualifications systems and arrangements. The approaches to quality assurance and award-making used by those bodies varied considerably, with some focusing on assuring the inputs to programmes and while others measured the outputs of assessments. Three of the former awarding bodies had also been programme providers and thus had the opportunity to directly quality assure programme development and delivery. Since it was not a provider, such opportunity was not to be available to FETAC. In the future, the roles of provider and awarding body would be distinct and complementary.

Part 2: Approach

The national systems developed by the former qualifications awarding bodies (in the 1990s and earlier) to ensure and monitor the quality of programme provision and assessment provided many examples of good practice which informed FETAC's quality assurance policies and procedures. In 2001, FETAC adopted all of the processes and procedures of the former awarding bodies for the duration of a transition phase (2001 - 2005). In developing its own policies and procedures FETAC recognised the importance of retaining the best of national practice and consulted extensively with stakeholders. This facilitated the development of quality policies and procedures, which are credible and relevant.

Following extensive consultation with the sector, FETAC agreed a range of policies relating to a Quality Framework for Providers and a new Common Awards System between 2004 and 2008. Implementation of the Quality Framework commenced in 2005 with FETAC agreeing providers' quality assurance procedures. This was followed in 2007 by the introduction of programme validation, in 2008 by monitoring and evaluating the quality of programmes and in 2010 by FETAC commencing the 5-year review of providers' quality assurance agreements.

Between 2005 and 2010, FETAC put in place a range of policies and guidelines for providers relating to quality assurance, as required by its legislative functions as set out in the Qualifications Act (Education and Training), 1999. The totality of the policies, comprise a Quality Framework for providers. The framework is a comprehensive and progressive strategy and approach to developing, maintaining, and enhancing quality within the further education and training sector. It includes a number of inter-related policies and procedures.

The Framework is an integrated quality cycle and has 4 main strands:

- i. a **provider registration** process based on providers meeting minimum criteria, including: 1) arrangements for fair and consistent assessment of learners and; 2) arrangements for the recognition of prior learner for the purpose of making awards
- ii. a process for the **validation of programmes** prior to delivery, including: 1) arrangements for the protection of learners in the event of a commercial or profit-making provider ceasing to trade and ; 2) arrangements for providers on an ongoing basis to self-evaluate their programmes
- iii. a process for monitoring the effectiveness of a provider's programmes and services
- iv. a process for a 5-year review of a provider's quality assurance agreement and registration.

In effect, FETAC put in place a multi-level system of quality assurance, at macro, meso and micro levels. The architecture of the overall approach seeks to structure the QA approach from the initial point where the standards for awards are developed by FETAC right through to the granting of an award to the learner; and the monitoring and evaluation of the provider's overall QA approach.

A number of principles underpin FETAC's policies and procedures for provider quality assurance, namely: **improvement** based on regular monitoring; **transparency** – making explicit that which has been previously understood and possibly misunderstood; **consistency** - a key element from the consumer's perspective; **contextuality** – the recognition that QA is context dependent giving rise to variety in procedure and content depending on provider mission and context; **provider responsibility** for developing procedures for quality assurance which will foster a locally-driven continuous improvement approach rather than one focused on external audit¹.

Stages in the quality assurance system under the Quality Framework

1. A provider seeking to offer FETAC awards is required to agree a **quality assurance system** with FETAC which must be aligned to accord with the Common Framework for Quality Assurance as set out by FETAC. It must show that it has the capacity to deliver programmes which ensure the integrity of the award standard and the capacity to monitor, evaluate and improve, on an ongoing basis, the quality of programmes and services it offers to learners. FETAC reaches agreement with a provider on the basis of policies and procedures presented to them in relation to nine core areas of quality as follows:

- B1 Communications
- B2 Equality
- B3 Staff Recruitment and Development
- B4 Access, Transfer and Progression
- B5 Programme Development, Delivery and Review
- B6 Fair and Consistent Assessment of Learner
- B7 Protection for Learners

¹ FETAC (no date) *Quality Assurance in Further Education and Training. Policy and Guidelines for Providers. V1.3:* http://www.fetac.ie/fetac/documents/Policy_and_Guidelines_on_Provider_QA_v1.3.pdf

- B8 Sub-contracting / Procuring Programme Delivery
- B9 Self-Evaluation of Programmes and Services.

A provider's QA system must make clear: its mission and policies; the procedures designed to implement the policies; its internal monitoring system; a self-evaluation system; and procedures for making any improvements identified as necessary by the self-evaluation.

2. A provider seeking **registration** with FETAC applies to do so by presenting its quality assurance system for agreement. An application for registration must present a number of supporting documents including: an organisation chart showing the parts of the organisation adopting the QA system; copies of all 9 policies and procedures; a three-year business plan to include objectives, plans for programmes, targets and resources; summary profiles of trainers / tutors; a copy of *Information for Learners* regarding fee refunds and visa requirements (if appropriate); and tax / financial records.

FETAC evaluates each application against clear and objective criteria which place emphasis on the aspects of quality assurance which conform to the principles of improvement and provider responsibility, i.e. internal monitoring, self-evaluation of programmes and improvement mechanisms. At the end of 2011 the total number of FETAC registered providers was 1,026.

3. Validation is defined in the 1999 Act as “the process by which an awarding body shall satisfy itself that a learner may attain knowledge, skill or competence for the purpose of an award made by the awarding body.” Validation is the process by which FETAC evaluates a programme submitted by a registered provider before it is delivered, to ensure that it can provide a learner with the opportunity to achieve a specified award. A programme is defined as a learning package which has the capacity to enable the learner to reach the published standards of knowledge, skill and competence of the award(s). In practice, there are several types of programmes with related validation procedures.

In 2008 FETAC launched the Common Awards System (CAS) which replaced the disparate systems in place when FETAC was established. This is now the single way of developing programmes across the further education and training sector. Since January 2008 all new FETAC programmes have been developed through the CAS and have been validated by FETAC under the provider's QA system. Up to 2011 programmes from previous awarding bodies were registered with rather than validated by FETAC as they would already have had approval from those bodies. In 2010 there were 8,000 programmes registered in this way with FETAC. By 2011, all programmes from former awarding bodies had 'migrated' to the CAS.

Standards for awards are statements of standards of knowledge, skill and competence to be achieved by the learner which are expressed as learning outcomes and communicated by way of **award specifications**. FETAC's process for **developing standards for awards** in the CAS is participatory and enables the active contribution of stakeholders from relevant industry and service sectors. The Standards Advisory Board and the first standards development group were established in 2007.

While FETAC is responsible for setting standards for the awards, the provider is responsible for the **design of the programme**. A range of programmes may lead to the same award. Programmes may vary in content and delivery methodology but they must enable the learner to achieve the standard of learning outcomes specified in the award. The **programme descriptor** is a single document that describes all information pertaining to a programme, including programme modules, module outcomes and assessment processes. A quality-assured programme is characterised by a systematic approach, regular measurement of learner satisfaction and a focus on improvement.

There are five key stages in the validation process, i.e. submission, evaluation, decision, appeal and review. FETAC may review the validation of a programme at any time but, in practice, review of validation will be conducted through ongoing monitoring activity. In general programme information submitted to FETAC for validation is evaluated for: **consistency** with the award being sought; **coherence** in respect of its stated objectives, content, learner profile and assessment activities; **capacity** of the provider to deliver the programme to the proposed level; **compliance** with the 1999 Act; the programme's **potential** to enable the learner to meet the standards of knowledge, skill and competence for the award based on the specified learner profile and award standards.

4. Responsibility for the assessment of learners lies with providers and FETAC is responsible for **ensuring that providers develop and implement assessment procedures** in a fair and consistent way (quality core area B6). The award qualification system has five stages: assessment; authentication process (internal and external verification of results); result approval (Results Panel); appeal process (if necessary); and request to FETAC for certification. As part of their QA agreements all registered providers are required to have in place robust quality assurance procedures to oversee, verify and authenticate their assessment procedures.

5. Self-evaluation (quality core area B9) is a critical element of a provider's quality assurance processes. All programmes being delivered by a provider must be self-evaluated within a five-year period. The provider appoints an internal person to co-ordinate / conduct the self-evaluation. Feedback from key stakeholders is a required element of self-evaluation. A person independent of the provider and programme delivery and capable of comparing the quality of programmes with that of similar programmes elsewhere is appointed by the provider to the role of external evaluator. The products of the self-evaluation process must include a report and a programme improvement plan.

6. As an integral part of its quality assurance system, FETAC undertakes external monitoring and evaluation against previously set criteria. FETAC recognises providers' quality assurance as the main engine of quality improvement and monitors its effectiveness in maintaining and improving the quality of programmes. FETAC's monitoring policy aims to ensure the credibility of FETAC awards through the monitoring of providers and their validated programmes, thereby ensuring the integrity of the awarding process. The monitoring process aims to assure FETAC, its stakeholders and learners of the overall quality of provision in the sector and to ensure effective implementation by providers of their quality assurance agreements.

Monitoring is a multi-faceted system of gathering information on a provider's programmes, services and the quality assurance systems which support them. The outcome can be deemed to be: a) effective; b) effective with minor areas for improvement; c) moderately effective with significant areas for improvement; d) not effective with essential remedial actions. In the case of d) certification is withdrawn until a satisfactory standard is reached through an action plan. The report on each provider is published. The agreement of a provider's quality assurance procedures will be reviewed within a maximum period of five years. The effectiveness of those procedures, as measured through self-evaluation and FETAC monitoring, will be examined during this review.

In 2010, FETAC commenced the process of 5-year reviews of providers' quality assurance agreements. Monitoring continued during 2011 with good practice seminars, desk monitoring and targeted risk-based site visits. Monitoring the effectiveness of the assessment system started in 2012.

As will be obvious, over the past decade FETAC has undertaken a vast programme of work in providing quality assured awards from Levels 1 – 6 on the NFQ. FETAC's work has been complicated by the need to bring on board ('migrate') the awards of the former awarding bodies to the Common Awards System (CAS). Furthermore, FETAC's QA system had to be developed and implemented in the context of the diverse quality assurance systems of the former awarding bodies still in place in providers after the establishment of FETAC in 2001.

Moreover, all of these developments have taken place in a context of increasing demand for FETAC certification and shrinking resources at a time of stringent national and institutional budgetary constraints. By the end of 2011, FETAC had made awards to 1.2 million people and by 2012 it had registered close to 1000 providers of programmes leading to a FETAC award. Moreover, national budgetary constraints have also hit publicly-funded providers who have been obliged to cut back on staffing with consequent greater workloads for existing staff, including in relation to FETAC quality assurance requirements.

In addition, there are further changes ahead, with a number of multi-level institutional reforms and initiatives underway. The [Qualifications and Quality Assurance Bill](#) published in July 2011 provides for the amalgamation of FETAC with the National Qualifications of Ireland (NQAI), the Higher Education and Awards Council (HETAC) and the IUQB (Irish Universities Quality Board) into a new agency, [Qualifications and Quality Ireland \(QQI\)](#). FETAC as an organisation will be dissolved on the establishment of QQI. The Bill has completed its passage through the Houses of the Oireachtas and awaits signature into law by the President. The QQI will formulate national policy on quality assurance and enhancement in education and training and co-operate with relevant international bodies on qualifications and quality assurance. The practical details of the transition to a single body are not yet available.

In July 2011, the Government announced its intention to establish a new authority, SOLAS, to coordinate and fund further education and training. SOLAS will have strategic responsibility for all non-tertiary further education and training in Ireland. The nationwide network of Vocational Education Committees and FÁS training centres are being rationalised into

16 new Local Education and Training Boards. Ultimately, it is these boards that will then be responsible for the delivery of publicly-funded further education and training at a local level. These changes are likely to have implications for the structures and provision of further education and training in the longer term.

Part 3: Contextual factors that influence the quality measure

Conditions which have influenced the quality measures

The NQAI and FETAC looked to other countries when establishing measures and means to ensure the quality of qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), including the UK, especially Scotland, Australia and South Africa. The welcome afforded the NQF by the majority of education and training stakeholders in Ireland was enormous. The contribution of the NQF to the development of transparency, co-ordination, coherence and cohesion across the entire spectrum of qualifications has been noteworthy.

There was / is a clear recognition among stakeholders of the need to ensure the credibility of FETAC awards. The trust placed in the long-established national Leaving Certificate examination awarded at the completion of upper secondary education was a benchmark for learners and providers, especially those providing education and training for adult returners seeking to gain qualifications equivalent to the Leaving Certificate, albeit through another qualifications system. The credibility of FETAC awards was also an issue in the case of adults with no qualifications seeking FETAC qualifications at the lower levels of the NQF.

Additionally, providers who had been offering well-established qualifications from awarding bodies in other countries were very conscious of the issue of the currency – at home and abroad - of the new qualifications. The launch of the EQF contributed to their concerns.

Furthermore, the fact that many providers of non-tertiary further education and training had quality assurance measures in place in the previous decade either as part of governance arrangements or as part of assuring the quality of their own or externally-awarded qualifications meant that they were familiar with the advantages of QA systems. On the other hand, the 'green-field' situation in terms of formal quality assurance and quality systems in some further education providers and programmes rendered such providers open to structured quality assurance measures in a context of growing accountability at all levels or, conversely, resistant to the level of upskilling and work involved in putting in place quality assurance measures.

Since 2008, as has been said, the many developments in FETAC quality arrangements and the implementation of quality assurance requirements at publicly-funded provider level have taken place in an environment of severe budgetary constraints which have impacted on staffing and workloads at all levels.

The following factors have contributed to the success of the quality measure:

- The readiness of Ireland for a National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) after long and careful lead-in work to ensure the 'buy-in' of all stakeholders and general agreement on the placement of existing awards on the framework;
- The desire on the part of education and training stakeholders to establish 'a zone of mutual trust' whereby qualifications on the NFQ would be trusted by end-users and the acute consciousness that the currency of NFQ qualifications, at home and abroad, is dependent on the integrity of the overall qualifications system and of each qualification;
- The long-held respect for and trust in, the school system national qualifications (Junior and Leaving Certificates), administered for decades by the Department of Education and since 2003 by the State Examinations Commission (SEC) giving rise to a clear understanding of the importance of the validity and reliability of qualifications at any level;
- Significant experience gained during the 1990s when the former award bodies built up their policies and procedures for quality assurance;
- Extensive consultation with stakeholders, including providers, representative bodies, learners, which was critical in getting 'buy-in' to the FETAC QA system;
- Systematic development and piloting of FETAC QA policies and policy guidelines;
- On-going training on the requirements of the QA system for providers and practitioners; provision of wide-ranging explanatory and support materials, including guidelines, policies, procedures;
- Development of the QA system as it evolved and the number of providers increased, by, for example, the mechanism of shared programmes which may be used by more than one provider; programme approval agreements for mainly large providers (PAA) and express validation for a range of awards, e.g. minor awards and specific awards;
- Continued support from the Further Education Support Service (FESS) for self-evaluation of programmes and services through the development of online resources for Department of Education and Skills-funded providers;
- Growing emphasis on quality in education and training at national and European levels;
- Experience gained by FETAC through providing the Secretariat for EQA-VET.

Factors which limit the success of the quality measure

- The diversity of providers - statutory, community and commercial - with diverse histories, structures, governance, aims, learners, resources, staffing, monitoring and evaluation arrangements seeking FETAC awards and implementing FETAC's QA system challenge FETAC to monitor and evaluate compliance;
- Diverse initial and continuing professional development arrangements and requirements for staff across non-tertiary education and training leads to issues of capacity among some providers;
- QA may not always be explicit at the level of individual institutions within a large provider when the QA agreement with FETAC is an overarching one for that provider;
- The major work of transition from the systems used by the former awarding bodies as well as the work involved in drawing up new QA policies and procedures have made huge demands on FETAC personnel. Similarly, providers have been stretched to meet

FETAC requirements to ensure the award of quality assured qualifications to their learners;

- Undoubtedly, the FETAC QA system is resource intensive at every level and the current economic downturn is presenting further challenges. FETAC and publicly-funded providers have experienced staff cuts as a result of budgetary constraints. For example, in 2010 the contracts of FETAC external monitors were not renewed. Accordingly, a new methodology was devised to ensure FETAC continued to monitor registered providers. Three mandatory good practice seminars were held for private providers in 2010 as the first part of this new methodology;
- Recent questions (in 2010) in relation to the integrity of a small number of FETAC qualifications and the robustness of the providers' QA monitoring procedures have led to concerns among stakeholders about what has been characterised as 'light-touch regulation' on the part of FETAC¹. The resultant perceived threat to the integrity and value of FETAC awards was discussed in a Sub-committee of the national Parliament before which FETAC was called to testify. Closer monitoring is now in place in FETAC and the major provider involved².

The imminent dissolution of FETAC and the establishment of the new agency, [the Qualifications and Quality Ireland \(QQI\)](#) are likely to cause disruption among non-tertiary further education and training stakeholders. QQI is expected to formulate national policy to achieve the continued enhancement of quality assurance systems across education and training. In order to prepare for the transition of functions to the new agency FETAC Provider Registration has closed and a number of other services have been suspended. Unsurprisingly, these developments have discommoded some providers. There is also a risk of 'innovation fatigue' as providers embark on yet more changes to meet the requirements of QQI, especially in times of budgetary constraints and staff cutbacks.

Part 4: Outcomes and results

In introducing its QA policy for providers in 2005 FETAC stated, 'The implementation of the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999 has provided an opportunity to all involved in further education and training in Ireland to recognise and improve the quality of service offered to learners'³. Direct evidence in the form of hard data to prove whether or not the quality measure has improved the quality of adult learning is scarce on the ground. However, it is possible to infer improvement from many sources if one takes the FETAC QA system to be an intrinsic part of FETAC awards on the NFQ. For example, there is various evidence of the impact of the FETAC QA system on the quality of adult learning in relation to the quality criteria equity, relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency.

To date, FETAC's monitoring of providers' QA systems indicates that significant progress is being made in quality approaches in the further education and training sector. In

¹ Irish Congress of Trade Unions (2011) *A New Skills Policy for a New Economy*:. <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/ewco/2011/06/IE1106059I.htm>

² Oireachtas Joint Committee on Education and Skills, 27 January 2011: <http://debates.oireachtas.ie/EDJ/2011/01/27/printall.asp>

³ FETAC (no date) *Provider Quality Assurance: Policy*: http://www.fetac.ie/fetac/documents/Provider_Quality_Assurance_Policy.PDF

2009, some 20% of providers were monitored, including through 100 site visits, Some 68% of providers were found to be in the top Categories 1 and 2; 28% in Category 3; and short of 5% in Category 4. In 2010 16% of providers were monitored but, due to staff cutbacks, only some 20 site visits took place and a new kind of monitoring - procedural monitoring - was introduced¹. The outcome of FETAC's monitoring activities for 2010 demonstrates that over 70% of providers are fully compliant with FETAC requirements, 21% need to make significant improvement, 5% of providers (7) were found to be ineffective at the time of monitoring. Six of the seven have since implemented immediate corrective actions and are now complying with requirements, one has ceased trading².

FETAC QA procedures have put a focus on whether a provider's staff has sufficient experience and expertise to fulfil designated roles. Meeting FETAC's QA requirements has, undoubtedly, raised the competence levels of further education and training staff, on-the-job and / or through FETAC briefing and training. As staff is a key determinant of quality in education and training³, such up-skilling leads to the conclusion that there will be an impact on adult learning.

Part 5: Reflection on success and fail factors /Conclusions

The FETAC QA system is a dramatic example of overarching multi-level quality assurance measure which applies to the vast majority of providers of all forms of non-tertiary further education and training in a country - publicly-funded, community-based and private for-profit providers - leading to a FETAC award (qualification or partial qualification) at Levels 1 – 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

FETAC QA measures have systematised approaches to QA in the non-tertiary further education and training sector in Ireland for the first time. They have acted as a horizontal measure to create a degree of coherence among very diverse providers and they have contributed to raising the standard and quality of further education and training provision.

The means adopted by FETAC in its QA measure have been comprehensive and have addressed all elements of an awards system from provider policies, procedures, processes and practices in relation to a wide range of critical 'quality generating / improving' areas to external monitoring and evaluation of these measures. The centrality of resources – human and financial – to full effectiveness of such an endeavour is underscored by the FETAC experience.

¹ FETAC (2010) *Annual Monitoring Report 2009* 4 *Executive Summary*
http://www.fetac.ie/fetac/documents/Fetac_Monitoring_Report_2009.pdf

² FETAC (2011) *Report on Providers' Activities 2010*
http://www.fetac.ie/fetac/documents/Rpt_on_Providers_Activities_2010.pdf

³ European Commission (2007) Action Plan on adult learning *It is always a good time to learn*: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2007:0558:FIN:EN:PDF>



9 Italy: Upter Quality Charter for education services

Name expert: Simon Broek

Introduction: Description of the quality measure: introduction and short summary

Quality Charter¹ for education services of the People University of Rome (Università Popolare di Roma: UPTER)² is a local, institutional initiative to ensure the quality of the organisation in general of UPTER and to increase the transparency in the quality assurance and development system. It concerns a broad range of quality areas, including the quality at:

- A) Strategic level:** Quality at strategic level consists foremost in clearly specifying the mission of the institute and the principles guiding the way the institute conducts its activities.
- B) Organisational level:** At an organisational level it is necessary to clearly identify who are the main stakeholders and what kind of services the provider offers. As UPTER offers both individual courses, courses for companies and courses funded by public funds, this entails that there are a number of principles that should underlie the organisational structure.
- C) Operational level:** The first two levels provide so to speak the basic hygiene of the organisation. On an operational level, standards are developed and indicators are set. The main areas are identified according to the needs and expectations of the participants / beneficiaries: 1) Design and planning of the main activities; 2) Identification of training needs; 3) Designing intervention; 4) Obtaining resources (internal and external); 5) Improvement and / or redesign; 6) Provision of the service; 7) Controlling the flow of information;
- D) Consumer protection level:** At this level, procedures are identified how to deal with feedback from participants and beneficiaries. Feedback can involve evaluation data on the courses, but also complaints. Procedures are established how complaints should be handled and how the situation resulting in the complaint should be avoided in the future.

The core section of the Quality Charter is the operational level in which the staff competence are described and in which an elaborated table of quality indicators and standards is presented.

The Quality Charter first of all, provides a rationalisation of the already existing practices.

The adult learning specific elements can be found in the profile of the facilitators. The facilitators first of all, need to be able to communicate and collaborate with the participants in order to motivate and stimulate the learners.

The Quality Charter is not restrictive and it is applicable to the wide diversity of courses provided by UPTER. For courses leading to a 'formal' qualification, i.e. a certification in

¹ <http://www.upter.it/documents/cartaqualitaupter.pdf>

² www.upter.it/

which the competences are stated, other quality standards apply as for non-formal qualifications i.e. qualifications in which only the participation of the learner is stated.

Part 1: Problem definition

The direct reason why the Quality Charter was developed was the directive of the Lazio Regional government to set rules and requirements for education and training providers.¹ As education and training in Italy is predominantly the responsibility of the Regions, there are large variations of requirements set for providers offering formal, non-formal and informal learning. In some Regions, the focus is on the facilities (building, classroom, ICT infrastructure), in others, the focus is on didactics. The Lazio Region chooses a mixed model in which a variety of quality aspects plays a role.

This Directive by the Regional government explains the requirements concerning quality training providers need to show when they are applying for governmental support or ESF funding. The target group of the directive concerning the accreditation procedure are public or private entities, irrespective of their legal status, which have among their aims and institutional purposes expressly stated, training and / or education, and which have at least one office located in the Lazio region and finally, who wish to organize and deliver training and / or guidance, financed by public resources allocated to it explicitly (Article 3).

As UPTER (Università Popolare della Terza Età di Roma)² provides education and training both open to a broader public, for instance requested by external stakeholders such as employers ("Formazione "non a bando"), and to a specific audience, by means of a public tender procedure ("Formazione "a bando" (superiore e continua)"), UPTER needs to provide evidence that procedures are in place to guarantee the quality of provision.

Before elaborating on the quality charter, first a short description is provided concerning UPTER. UPTER is a People University establishing in 1987. In the past twenty years the institute grew rapidly from 400 participants in the initial years to currently 30,000 participants. UPTER employs approximately 600 teachers/trainers and offers around 2,500 courses a year, ranging from language courses, to dancing courses, history of art to cooking lessons.³ A number of courses lead to a certification stating the competence levels, other courses lead to a diploma stating only the participation in the course.

UPTER provides education and training to a broad range of adult learners including the unemployed, employed, disadvantaged groups (such as migrants, women in unemployment). Predominantly, public funds are used for projects targeting these specific groups.

The costs for a course range from 90 Euro (for 12 lessons) to 160 Euro (for 22 lessons) for instance in architecture and 310 Euro for becoming a teacher of Italian for foreigners

¹ REGIONE LAZIO, Assessorato all'Istruzione, Diritto allo Studio e Formazione, Direzione regionale Formazione Professionale, FSE e altri interventi cofinanziati: ACCREDITAMENTO DEI SOGGETTI CHE EROGANO ATTIVITA' DI FORMAZIONE E DI ORIENTAMENTO NELLA REGIONE LAZIO, Direttiva.

² <http://www.upter.it/>

³

http://www.upter.it/index.php?option=com_k2&view=itemlist&layout=category&task=category&id=49&style=style5&Itemid=57

(level 2) for 6 lessons.¹ In addition to the course-fee, participants pay a yearly subscription fee of around 30 Euro, which is as well a discount card for a number of services in the Lazio region.

Part 2: Approach

As has been indicated, in order to apply for public funds and State recognition as a training provider, institutions need to establish a quality framework. For this reason, and in addition to clarify the quality standards internally, a Quality Charter (Carta della Qualità) was developed. This document aims to clarify and communicate to the participants and beneficiaries, the activities that UPTER as a training provider conducts to guarantee the quality and transparency of the training services offered. The quality chapter contains four levels where quality is subject to processes, procedures and structures:

- Strategic level: concerning the policy towards quality;
- Organisational level: preparation and delivery of the offer;
- Operational level: concerning objectives and specific standards;
- Consumer protection level: guarantee of participants and beneficiaries feedback and complaints are taken seriously.

The Quality Charter can be regarded as a rationalisation of what activities were already common practice concerning quality assurance in UPTER. Here below the main issues for each level are identified:

A) Strategic level

Quality at strategic level consists foremost in clearly specifying the mission of the institute and the principles guiding the way the institute conducts its activities. According to the Quality Charter, "UPTER aims to accompany the processes of education and training of individuals and companies in a context in which knowledge and information are increasingly becoming indispensable tools for personal and professional growth. The mission of UPTER is focused on contributing to establishing a culture of learning throughout life (lifelong learning), allowing participants to acquire personal and professional skills to realise their full rights of citizenship and employment. In pursuit of its mission, "Quality" acts as a cornerstone, designed and operated on the basis of principles such as:

- The orientation of the learner (user);
- Alignment of the provision and mutual exchange with beneficiaries/stakeholders;
- The involvement of human resources;
- The process approach;
- The system approach;
- Continuous improvement;
- The approach to decisions based on facts.

To establish a culture of quality in UPTER at a strategic level, UPTER applies a quality management system (UNI EN ISO 9001:2000), which includes for instance a detailed and systematic planning of activities and guidelines on how to administer, register and deal

¹ See: courses and prices: <http://www.uptergratis.it/>

with specific issues. The quality management system, UPTER identified a number of principle aims, such as satisfaction amongst all those involved, continuous updated and improving of the education and training provision; motivate the personnel to care about quality. The Quality Charter is for this reason, widely discussed and made public within the organisation and outside the organisation (it is published on the website).

B) Organisational level

At an organisational level it is necessary to clearly identify who are the main stakeholders and what kind of services the provider offers. As UPTER offers both individual courses, courses for companies and courses funded by public funds, this entails that there are a number of principles that should underlie the organisational structure.

This firstly means that the organisation employs and hires highly qualified personnel, having adequate professional experience. UPTER deliberately choose not to focus specifically on whether the person has a didactical qualification, but focuses on the knowledge, competence and experience the person takes with him in the classroom. In addition, the teacher, or better, facilitator, is not considered to be a traditional teacher, but should, in collaboration with the participants create a motivating and stimulating learning environment. Each facilitator will enrol in one course a year to update, improve its competences (this is demanded by the Lazio Directive).

Secondly, on an organisation level, the technical, infrastructural resources should be in place, meaning that the class rooms are suited for the education and training offered.

Thirdly, apart from the quality charter, participants and stakeholder receive additional documents providing as much transparency needed for successfully participating in the courses (for instance, introductory paper on the course, the curriculum, calendar, rules concerning withdrawal from the course, information concerning tests and certificates, telephone numbers of secretariat).

C) Operational level

The first two levels provide so to speak the basic hygiene of the organisation. On an operational level, standards are developed and indicators are set. The main areas are identified according to the needs and expectations of the participants / beneficiaries:

- Design and planning of the main activities;
- Identification of training needs;
- Designing intervention;
- Obtaining resources (internal and external);
- Improvement and / or redesign;
- Provision of the service;
- Controlling the flow of information;

For facilitators the following competences are required:

- Competency A: Communicate and manage relationships effectively
- Competency B: Ability to evaluate
- Competency C: Knowledge and application of teaching methods
- Competency D: Ability to organize teaching units/lessons
- Competence E: Knowledge of the subject taught
- Competence F: Ability to engage, inspire and enthuse the participants in learning

As can be seen, the required competences show a mix of professional, content related competences and more personal empathy related competences. Also, didactical competences are included in the list. In addition to these competences, other characteristics are demanded in order to be fully able to provide adult learning courses. These include flexibility and punctuality.

In order to monitor the quality in UPTER, the following table provides an overview of the:

- Quality factors (Fattori di qualità)
- Indicators (Indicatori)
- Quality standards (Standard di qualità)
- Instruments to verify whether standards are met (Strumenti di verifica)

Quality factors	Indicators	Standards of quality	Verification instruments
Communication and technical innovation	Ratio between resources invested in communication and innovation and the total volume	Ratio larger or equal to 0.05	Annual survey data
Realised hours of education/training	Ratio between number of hours accounted and total amount of hours foreseen	Ratio larger or equal to 0.7	Data collection for each project, the annual assessment
Drop-out of participants	Ratio between number of users switching to other channels of education / training and the total users of approved projects	Ratio larger or equal to 0.7	Data collection for each project, the annual assessment
Accounted costs for educational activity 1	Ratio between real and accounted costs	Ratio smaller or equal to 1.0	Data collection for each project, the annual assessment
Accounted costs for educational activity 2	Ratio between total approved costs and participants in the project	Ratio smaller or equal to 1.0	Data collection for each project, the annual assessment
Accounted costs for non-educational activities	Ratio between real costs and approved costs	Ratio larger or equal to 0.9	Data collection for each project, the annual assessment
Effectiveness of the project (application)	Ratio between the eligible projects and the number of projects submitted	Ratio larger or equal to 0.9 (90%)	Annual survey data
Adequacy of the courses in the world of work	Ratio between the average of the scores assigned by students and teachers through the monitoring system and the maximum score that can be acquired	Ratio larger or equal to 0.8 (80%)	Monitoring tests during and at the end of each course
Clarity and effectiveness of content	Ratio between the average of the scores assigned by students and teachers through the monitoring system and the maximum	Ratio larger or equal to 0.7 (70%)	Monitoring tests during and at the end of each course

	score that can be acquired		
Effectiveness of the didactical methods	Ratio between the average of the scores assigned by students and teachers through the monitoring system and the maximum score that can be acquired	Ratio larger or equal to 0.75 (75%)	Monitoring tests during and at the end of each course
Overall rating of the course	Ratio between the average of the scores assigned by students and teachers through the monitoring system and the maximum score that can be acquired	Ratio larger or equal to 0.7 (70%)	Monitoring tests during and at the end of each course
Final student grades for the course provided	Average of the marks obtained by all students through the monitoring system	Value between 27-30 ¹	Monitoring tests during and at the end of each course
non-compliance	Number of non-conformities and observations	Maximum 3 cases	Annual survey related to external inspection

In addition to the instruments mentioned to monitor the quality, UPTER conducts qualitative interviews with participants after finalising a course to identify what were strengths and weaknesses of the course. Also, learning biographies are used to identify the effects of learning and to learn what can be done to improve the provision.

D) Consumer protection level

At this level, procedures are identified how to deal with feedback from participants and beneficiaries. Feedback can involve evaluation data on the courses, but also complaints. Procedures are established how complaints should be handled and how the situation resulting in the complaint should be avoided in the future.

To conclude, the core element of the quality assurance system is transparency of how UPTER is organised, how the provision is organised, what competences staff are expected to have, how information can be obtained, and what happens with feedback provided to improve the courses.

The indicators are not used for each activity (course/project) individually, however, there are general statistics about the courses offered. Concerning the project, measurements can be part of a specific work package. The general statistics are used to plan the yearly activities, to avoid mistakes and to improve the quality. Evaluation reports are maintained under the responsibility of the teacher, but in case of any problem, the results are examined by the management.

Part 3: Contextual factors that influence the quality measure

The Quality charter is essentially a rationalisation of the practice before it was developed and implemented two year ago. The reason why it was developed was the Lazio Region Directive.

¹ ECTS grade B and A (Very good and excellent)

An effective new way to gather feedback on the quality of courses is the use of social media. UPTER last year initiated a Facebook page where participants can discuss the courses with each other and with UPTER.

Part 4: Outcomes and results

Before the Quality Charter, the emphasis was on accreditation. Accreditation only sets the minimum requirements and does not provide a culture to develop the quality as it only takes into account the output of the process. The Quality charter, under pressure of the Lazio Region Directive, focuses on the whole process of assuring and developing quality in non-formal adult learning. It hence contributed to an increased awareness and consciousness of quality in UPTER.

Part 5: Reflection on success and fail factors

The introduction of the Quality Charter rationalised the process. In doing this, nothing fundamental has changed, but, in rationalising how quality is monitored, also the process itself is better registered and guaranteed. UPTER is currently better able to identify where things go wrong, what are the reasons for this going wrong, and what can be done to solve it and prevent it from happening again.

Within the non-formal adult education sector being too restrictive with regard to quality assurance, could hamper. The costs for the courses are limited and hence the budgets spend on quality assurance and development can only be moderate. Given these budgetary constraints, the UPTER quality charter provides an overview of the main issues and matters, which will have to receive attention given the strategic objectives of UPTER.

Part 6: Conclusions

The following conclusions can be drawn on the basis of the case study:

- The reason for developing the Quality charter was the Lazio region Directive on State recognition of training providers and being eligible for public funds.
- The Quality Charter first of all, provides a rationalisation of the already existing practices.
- The adult learning specific elements can be found in the profile of the facilitators. The facilitators first of all, need to be able to communicate and collaborate with the participants in order to motivate and stimulate the learners.
- The Quality Charter is not restrictive and it is applicable to the wide diversity of courses provided by UPTER. For courses leading to a 'formal' qualification, i.e. a certification in which the competences are stated, other quality standards apply as for non-formal qualifications i.e. qualifications in which only the participation of the learner is stated.
- The quality indicators to monitor the quality on course and project level, could be interesting to further look at when discussing a European quality framework for adult learning.

10 Malta: QA Structures in basic skills

Name expert: Helen Keogh

Introduction: Description of the quality measure: introduction and short summary

The Directorate for Lifelong Learning (DLLL) within the Ministry of Education and Employment in Malta offers a wide range of adult education courses in subject areas covering the 8 key competences for lifelong learning¹. Since 2010, DLLL-provided courses in literacy, numeracy and computer awareness lead to an accredited qualification at Level 1 (General Education Award) on the Malta Qualifications Framework (Level 1 MQF / Level 1 EQF) for successful learners. All courses leading to a qualification on the MQF awarded by the Malta Qualifications Council (MQC) come under the QA arrangements of that body. The process is not yet standardized so each institution has its own take on the issue in agreement with the MQC. Standardisation of the MQC QA arrangements is underway and once these standards are published as legal notice all institutions seeking accreditation as official training providers will be required to meet them.

Where adult education courses leading to awards on the MQF are funded by the Directorate for Lifelong Learning (DLLL) they come under DLLL's quality assurance system developed to meet MQC requirements and to ensure that the courses' MQC level-rating² (Level 1) is retained. The DLLL quality assurance framework covers hiring staff and the provision of ongoing CPD; curriculum / materials development; learner assessment; and monitoring and evaluation. It operates at macro, meso and micro levels.

MACRO level: The Directorate for Lifelong Learning has devised an overall QA framework for courses which is aligned to the QA requirements of the MQC Council. DLLL draws up job descriptions for staff; interviews staff and organises CPD for teachers. DLLL appoints centre co-ordinators to manage centres and support teachers and learners and subject co-ordinators to develop curricula and support teachers. DLLL also appoints an Education Officer (inspector) to monitor the quality of provision. The Teaching Council issues a warrant to teachers, which they must hold to teach on a DLLL-funded course.

MESO level: At meso level, the **centre co-ordinator's** main role is **monitoring the quality and standards of teaching and learning**. S/he also organises continuing professional development (CPD) for staff and provides on-going support during regular class visits. **Subject coordinators** have responsibility for assuring the quality of teaching, including basic skills provision. They carry out periodic visits to adult learning classes where they use a DLLL observation form with indicators of quality performance in adult learning. The **Education Officer** (inspector) for basic skills within the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education ensures that the content delivered meets the standards and cri-

¹ See www.eveningcourses.gov.mt

² Level rating involves the evaluation of the level of difficulty that matches one of the eight level descriptors of the MQF, the work load measured in credits, learning outcomes, quality assurance and assessment criteria – see <http://www.mqc.gov.mt/faqs?l=1>

teria required for examination purposes. This also applies to processes for the validation of non-formal and informal learning.

MICRO: The DLLL quality assurance framework has direct impact on procedures and methods related to the quality of practitioners, the quality of training provided, the teaching/learning methodologies employed and the methods of assessment. There is external assessment of learning outcomes and external inspection of practitioners.

Overall objectives of the quality measure

The overall objective of the quality measure is to ensure the quality of Directorate of Lifelong Learning-funded course provision in Maltese, English, numeracy and ICT awareness leading to a Level 1 award on the Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF).

Part 1: Problem definition

All adult education courses leading to a qualification on the MQF awarded by the Malta Qualifications Council (MQC) come under the QA requirements of that body. Each institution must agree its own QA arrangements with MQC. Thus, the Directorate for Lifelong Learning was obliged to develop QA arrangements for its course provision in basic skills (Maltese, English, numeracy, and ICT awareness), which leads to an award at Level 1 of the MQF so as to achieve a level-rating for the courses and accreditation for itself as a provider¹.

DLLL wished to offer learners certification of their learning of basic skills of literacy, numeracy, and computer awareness. The quality measure was developed to meet the QA requirements of the Malta Qualifications Council in relation to courses leading to awards on the MQF and providers offering such courses. This involves accreditation of a provider; level-rating of the course vis-à-vis MQF levels; validation of the course; assessment according to the proposal for the validated course; and internal and external monitoring of assessment results.

The Malta Qualifications Council (MQC) quality assurance requirements are based on the following quality principles²:

- **Improvement mechanisms:** the main role of quality assurance should be that of regular monitoring and evaluation of provision which is then fed back into the system in order to improve provision;
- **Transparency of process and results:** processes and results, as well as resulting actions, should be made available to those involved within the institution as providers, to the MQC, to the learners themselves, and to other key player;
- **Involvement of key players:** MQC values the participation and collaboration of all key stakeholders in the quality assurance process;

¹ MQC accredits programmes of studies and institutions on the basis of level descriptors, quality assurance mechanisms and clear pathways for further training and education. Occupational standards also determine the accreditation of specific programmes of studies: <http://www.mqc.gov.mt/accreditation-and-validation?l=1>

² Edited version of those set out for VET providers in Malta Qualifications Council (2007) *Valuing All Learning, Book. 3: A Quality Assurance Policy for Vocational Education and Training*: <http://www.mqc.gov.mt/valuing-all-learning?l=1>

- **Contextuality of the quality assurance system:** MQC recognises that different sectors and levels of provision will require different quality assurance procedures;
- **Provider responsibility:** MQC holds providers responsible for developing quality assurance systems within their institutions and for their provision;
- **Equality of access:** MQC endorses equality in quality assurance, promoting greater access to a diverse range of learners.

MQC sets the criteria¹, which institutions applying for recognition and accreditation as providers must satisfy. These criteria require that institutions have mechanisms to ensure five main aspects, including:

- a. **acceptable physical amenities** to provide training in adequate and safe conditions
- b. **an administrative structure** that is efficient in the administration of the services provided
- c. **capacity of trainers**
- d. **assessment systems** which enable learners to have a fair and truthful judgement of their competences, together with a system of appeals which gives an individual the right to have a fair re-evaluation should there be a dispute on assessment
- e. **a quality assurance system**, internal and external, which provides continuous monitoring and evaluation, as well as mechanisms for improving provision within the institution.

Part 2: Approach

On the basis of the contextuality of a quality assurance system², it is up to a provider to decide how to go about meeting MQC quality assurance requirements. The QA approach to be adopted is set out in the DLLL application document to the MQC seeking level-rating on the MQF for its basic skills (literacy, numeracy, computer awareness) provision. This process follows a legal procedure and is agreed in a protocol signed by both parties. The application completed by DLLL documents the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competence) and how they will be achieved and assessed. The resources (including staffing) to be used to teach the courses are indicated and agreed. Quality assurance processes and procedures are also set out, including monitoring and evaluation personnel and practices. A protocol between DLLL and MQC agreeing the level-rating of basic skills courses in Maltese, English, numeracy and computer awareness was signed in August 2010.

The following are the core elements of DLLL's QA approach for the provision of these courses:

1. Ensuring the quality of teaching staff

¹ Edited version of those set out for VET providers in Malta Qualifications Council (2007) *Valuing All Learning, Book 2: Guidelines for a Vocational Education and Training System for Malta's National Qualifications Framework*: <http://www.mqc.gov.mt/valuing-all-learning?l=1>

² Malta Qualifications Council (2007) *Valuing All Learning, Book. 3: A Quality Assurance Policy for Vocational Education and Training*: <http://www.mqc.gov.mt/valuing-all-learning?l=1>

Staff is a key determinant of the quality of adult education provision¹. Qualification standards / requirements for adult learning staff² are set by the DLLL in relation to the courses it funds. The quality of staff on DLLL courses leading to an award on the MQF is ensured through the following measures:

- a. **Public Call for Applications by the Directorate for Lifelong Learning** including job description. Persons wishing to teach (school) compulsory subjects (languages, mathematics etc) to adults must hold qualifications related to the teaching profession and a valid Permanent Teacher's Warrant from the Teaching Council (Malta). Qualifications related to adult education, social sciences and/or youth studies are considered an asset.
- b. **Job description** - DLLL produces detailed job descriptions – required knowledge, skills and competences - for particular jobs. The knowledge required relates to EU adult education policy, MQC reform and the National Minimum Curriculum³. Skills relate to using the MQF learning outcomes approach; communication skills; teaching styles and techniques; ability to work in teams. In addition, teachers are expected to have the skills of: inter-personal communication, problem-solving, ability to speak the language of ordinary people, empathy, group work, animation, organisation and writing skills. The job description also sets out responsibilities to DLLL and its ethos.
- c. **Rigorous interviews** by three professionals to ensure the best quality of staff are hired. Even if the teacher will be working only 1 hour per week s/he must go through this process which has been in place since the DLLL was established in 2009 and began to focus on the quality of provision.
- d. **Contract of service / Engagement form** - teaching staff are employed on an annual definite contract basis and are paid at an hourly rate. After interviews have been completed, results are published in order of merit and applicants are offered positions according to this list and projected demand. Results are valid for a year. Each year DLLL issues a fresh call for applications for teachers / teacher trainers. The annual contract arrangement is seen as enabling DLLL to respond more flexibly to adult learning needs and quality requirements.
- e. **Continuing Professional Development (CPD)** - DLLL recognises investment in the continuing professional development (CPD) of staff as a key element of its QA framework. Accordingly, it organises CPD – 3 hours per month – as a continuous reflective exercise for all who teach level-rated courses, including pre-service (September), mid-service (February) and end of service (May) training. It is proposed that this CPD will be level-rated by MQC at Level 5 on MQF/EQF.

¹ European Commission (2007) Action Plan on adult learning: *It is always a good time to learn*: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/adult/com558_en.pdf

² The majority of those who teach adults on DLL-funded courses are not called 'teachers' due to the teachers' union (primary / post-primary) agreement with the government that only a person with a teaching warrant (from the Teaching Council) may be called a 'teacher'. Therefore, the majority of personnel teaching adults in DLL-funded courses are known as 'adult educators'. They teach drama; languages; health; childcare; social care, in fact all the key competences for lifelong learning (See http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/objectives_en.html#basic) except the first three. These three – communication in the mother tongue; communication in a foreign language; mathematical, science and IT competence – are taught by teachers with a Teacher Warrant from the Teaching Council.

³ Ministry of Education, Malta (1999) *Creating the Future Together, National Minimum Curriculum*: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/adult/com558_en.pdf

Under their contract, staff must attend this CPD, the initial part of which operates as an induction for personnel who do not hold an adult teaching qualification. In 2012 CPD focused on how to teach aspects of literacy, numeracy and computer awareness to adults. Sessions are presented by experienced personnel from within the DEE or they may be outsourced to bodies such as the University of Malta.

2. Support personnel

Additional personnel support the delivery of basic skills courses and carry out a range of quality-related duties:

- a. **Centre co-ordinators** are hired through a public call for applications by DLLL, followed by selection interview. Appointment is on an annual basis. They require a Permanent Teacher's Warrant and at least seven years teaching experience in compulsory education. Their main role is **monitoring the quality and standards of teaching and learning** while overseeing the smooth running of courses. To ensure that basic skills courses reach the MQF standards, they organise the CPD training for staff. They also provide on-going support during regular class visits by helping adult educators to develop formative and summative processes and procedures. The centre co-ordinator is also responsible for compiling and updating a centre's statistics and records as well as monitoring physical conditions in a centre. Further, they are tasked with ensuring learners' welfare and their readiness for assessment as well as following up on vulnerable learners.
- b. **Subject coordinators** appointed by DLLL have responsibility for assuring the quality of teaching in DLLL-funded courses, including basic skills provision. Subject coordinators carry out periodic visits to adult learning classes where they use a DLLL observation form with indicators of quality performance in adult learning.
- c. the **Education Officer** (inspector) of the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education (DQSE) in charge of adult basic skills subjects is responsible for ensuring that the content delivered meets the standards and criteria required for examination purposes. This also applies to processes for the validation of non-formal and informal learning. The Education Officer is the subject coordinators' line manager.

3. Provision of quality courses

MQC has published the level descriptors for key competences. The indicators for the award at Level 1 and the learning outcomes for the courses are based on these published descriptors and are, thus, referenced to the national standards set for the key competences by MQC. DLLL adopts the following approach to ensure that the learning outcomes of its courses leading to the MQF Level 1 award are at the standard required for the award:

- a. **Course descriptions** are written in terms of learning outcomes using templates developed by the MQC.
- b. **Course learning outcomes** are submitted to the MQC for level rating¹.

¹ Following evaluation by external experts the courses were level rated at 15 credits at Level 1 on the MQF (General Education Award). This is currently a partial qualification, but in future it will be possible for learners to accumulate credits and achieve a full Level 1 qualification

- c. **Periodic visits by subject coordinators** - in order to assure the quality of teaching the subject coordinators carry out periodic visits to basic skills classes where they carry out observations using a DLLL observation form to comment on the teacher's performance. In the event of any issues with performance being identified, DLLL takes action.
- d. **Provision of on-going professional development for staff** - Subject coordinators are also responsible for drawing up the competence profiles of staff working within their subject responsibility. These profiles help centre coordinators to identify CPD topics for staff.

4. Attracting, supporting and tracking learners

Promoting equality of access to courses and qualifications is an MQC quality principle and DLLL sees it as an important measure in its QA framework to attract adults with basic skills challenges through the following approaches:

- a. **Engagement of potential participants**, especially low-skilled individuals, including through communication campaigns and advertising and active approaches to the validation of non-formal and informal learning.
- b. **A subject coordinator for literacy & numeracy courses and a subject coordinator for ICT courses** provide guidance to low-skilled adult learners to support them in making course choices. Information on certification which is on a voluntary basis is also provided.
- c. **Subject coordinators gather quantitative and qualitative data** on: applicant numbers, drop-out / success rates; challenges encountered by learners etc.
- d. **Structure for processing of complaints by adult learners:** a DLLL system of redress through which learners can make a complaint to DLLL with respect to a service.

5. Assessment and validation of learning

To ensure the quality of assessment processes and procedures, including for validation of non-formal and informal learning, DLLL uses the following approaches:

- a. An **Education Officer** (inspector) ensures that the adult's learning outcomes are assessed in accordance with MQC requirements and DLLL quality standards.
- b. **Marking schemes for assessment procedures** are drawn up by DLLL to ensure uniformity and to ensure standardization of assessment. All staff involved in the marking process of the summative tasks must follow the set marking scheme.
- c. **Formative assessment** including a portfolio provides evidence that the learning outcomes (knowledge skills competences) have been reached according to the standardized framework. The continuous assessment carried out by the teacher is monitored by the centre or subject co-ordinator.
- d. The **final summative assessment** which is standardised by the institution is administered by the teacher. The learner's written paper / object / performance are reviewed by the teacher, the centre / subject co-ordinator and another external examiner. The learner receives a score and the final assessment paper / object is added to the learner's lifelong learning portfolio along with comments and a guidance letter regarding the next steps open to the learner. MQC certification is issued to the basic skills learners on successful completion of the course.

6. Monitoring and evaluation

- a. Progress is monitored by the subject coordinator who follows students and provides support and guidance to those who need help, in order to reduce drop-out rates.
- b. As set out above, Centre Co-ordinators, subject Co-ordinators and Education Officers have a monitoring and evaluation role in the provision of DLLL award-bearing basic skills courses and the validation of non-formal and informal learning of the basic skills.

7. Periodic review of quality indicators

- a. DLLL draws up the **quality indicators** based on the General Education Award Level 1 on MQF. MQC has published the level descriptors for key competences and the quality indicators for the Level 1 award and related learning outcomes are based on these published descriptors. As indicated, the MQC QA arrangements are not yet standardized so in the meantime DLLL is using EQA-VET as a basis for developing quality indicators for its provision
- b. These **quality indicators are reviewed annually** in the national context. Adult education professionals working in the area make recommendations related to the adult learners' journey from initial advice and guidance to progression opportunities.

The DLLL quality approach meets the quality assurance requirements of the Malta Qualifications Council (MQC) in relation to course provision leading to an award on the Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF). Thus, it has many elements in common with the quality approaches used by providers in other sectors, such as VET, to meet MQC requirements in relation to their courses which lead to awards on the MQF. MQC is in the process of developing standardised QA approaches which will be a requirement on all providers of courses leading to awards on the MQF once they have been published as a legal notice.

The approach to QA adopted by DLLL covers the key elements of developing, staffing, teaching, learning, resourcing, assessing, monitoring and evaluating in the provision of adult basic skills. By quality assuring these key elements the QA requirements of the MQC are met.

The main features of the QA system involves the implementation of practices which the Directorate considers as important to ensure quality. It has to be said that the Directorate has been inspired by the work on QA at European Level as well as an organisational commitment to providing a quality service of quality.

As DLLL is striving to develop and implement a quality assurance system for the courses it offers, it is also developing indicators. It is currently building structures to gather evidence on quality. Current indicators / descriptors include:

- the number of adults attending the courses;
- the number who succeed in gaining a qualification;
- learning outcomes achieved;
- feedback from students;
- involvement of social partners in the development of courses.

Many of these are very close to the indicators identified by EQAVET, but their reporting for QA purposes still needs to be developed by DLLL.

DLLL has recognised the importance of quality assurance and in 2012 has appointed a co-ordinator for QA, CPD and internal audit with a view to improvement of the quality assurance measure.

MQC quality arrangements apply to all providers in whatever sector who wish to offer courses leading to a qualification on the MFQ. Since MQC QA requirements have not yet been standardised and it is up to each provider to agree its own QA system with MQC, the detail of the QA arrangements will differ from provider to provider depending on context, but the overall contents will be similar.

In the case of the DLLL QA system, a distinguishing feature is the strong emphasis on addressing the challenges faced by low-skilled adults from point of contact to receipt of the partial certificate at Level 1 of the MQF. This is particularly exemplified by the emphasis on equipping the teachers to work effectively with the adults in question and the role of the Centre Co-ordinators in attracting, supporting, and tracking the adult learners.

In addition, and somewhat different from the situation in other sectors, the DLLL quality assurance measure is being rolled out in relation to provision which is staffed by part-time adult educators paid by an hourly rate, coming from many different sectors and with different academic and professional background.

National budgetary constraints and budgetary constraints in education and training are a barrier to the implementation of the quality measure in that the human resources necessary to fully roll-out the measure are limited at all levels.

Part 3: Contextual factors that influence the quality measure

There is a strong drive by government to increase the qualifications of adults in the Malta and to increase the percentage of adults in lifelong learning. For this reason it invested in setting up the DLLL and promoted the range of adult evening courses offered. The result was a significant increase in adult learners. This fulfills one of the targets set in the country's National Reform Programme.

There is also a drive to offer qualifications to learners at the lower levels of the qualifications framework and this has led to the development of the QA system.

DLLL considers that the quality of staffing is a key challenge in the context of the quality and quality assurance of adult education and that a major investment of money and time in the quality assurance of staff is required. Thus, funding is an issue.

In 2010, the Malta Qualifications Council (MQC) merged with the National Commission for Higher Education (NCHE). In the intervening period much time has been devoted by both staffs in the creation of one entity. This has influenced MQF-related quality assurance developments in general in Malta.

In general, it is considered 'early days to get co-ordination on quality assurance (in adult education) at a national level' in Malta.

The process of implementation of the DLLL QA measure for basic skills provision was done gradually with the different stakeholders involved at the different stages and with

the provision of training for relevant personnel in the processes and procedures developed by DLLL. The bounded nature of the measure enabled stakeholders to work in detail on a relatively small area of provision, namely, adult basic skills leading to a partial certificate at Level 1 MQF. This enabled a good deal of development work to be done with relatively limited resources. It also meant that the number of staff and other stakeholders involved was manageable.

Offering level rated courses was one of the motivations for improving QA. Success was contingent on investment in personnel within DLLL. A new call for adult educators was issued and more stringent requirements set. There was also investment in subject coordinators for the different areas – with a coordinator specifically for basic literacy, numeracy and ICT and the coordinators were responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the QA framework.

The ‘push / pull’ dynamic provided by the existence of the MQF and the quality requirements of the Malta Quality Council in relation to award-bearing courses was / is a positive element in the development of the quality measure. The general national and European-level emphasis on quality assurance in general and in VET in particular through EQA-VET means that the issue of quality assurance is part of the education and training discourse and therefore more likely to be addressed in practical terms.

The drive to increase participation in adult learning has resulted in a significant increase in applicants with a resultant pressure on the QA measure, which has had to be implemented on a larger scale.

Part 4: Outcomes and results

DLLL considers the success rates of the learners pursuing the basic skills provision leading to a partial certificate at Level 1 of the MQF to be a measure of the quality of its services and the quality assurance system itself. The fact that the required quality measure relates to basic skills provision leading to a partial certificate at Level 1 MQF means the impact is wide for adults with low levels of initial education. It opens opportunities of employment for those following the courses and also complements training sector specific training in VET.

In the academic year 2011 – 2012, the number of persons applying for adult learning courses increased as did the number obtaining qualifications in literacy. In addition, coordinators, adult educators and learners themselves have given feedback that provision was better organised, and of a better quality¹.

The successful implementation of the quality assurance measure has had a positive knock-on effect on the wider DLLL adult education provision. Developing and implementing the quality assurance measures for basic skills provision has given DLLL, teaching staff, centre co-ordinators, subject co-ordinators and Education Officers experience that can be transferred to setting up quality measures for other DLLL adult education

¹ Information from respondent, Victor Galea, Service Manager, DLLL.

provision. The upskilling of staff has implications means that some of the upskilled staff work in other areas of DLLL provision.

The 2010 Annual Report of the Ministry of Education and Employment reported that detailed descriptions (rationale, expected learning outcomes, assessment methods, requirements, and accreditation) of 145 different adult education courses had been sent to the MQC for validation of learning as per requirements of the MQF. DLLL is currently awaiting approval of these courses from MQC¹.

In addition, the experience gained by all involved will contribute to the implementation of the National Reform Programme (NRP)² under *Europe 2020*³ in relation to the upskilling of all teachers and trainers in the adult education sector by 2015.

Part 5: Reflection on success and fail factors /Conclusions

This case is interesting as it shows how it is possible for a relatively small adult education provider to align its provision with national requirements and to introduce QA arrangements to enable it to provide certification to its learners which are pegged to the national qualifications framework and the EQF. The Directorate for Lifelong Learning (DLLL) considers this an achievement for an adult (MQC) education provider in Malta.

This measure is transferable to other situations as it is small in scale and was introduced to a veritable 'green field' situation as far as formal quality assurance arrangements were concerned.

The key elements of the measure – staff recruitment and upskilling – are transferable to other situations. The commitment to the upskilling of adult education staff in Malta's National Reform Programme under Europe 2020 also makes a positive contribution to the development of quality measures. All EU Member States have developed a National Reform Programme under Europe 2020 so such a measure could be included.

The 'push / pull' dynamic provided by the existence of a national qualifications framework (MQF) and the quality requirements of a awarding body (Malta Quality Council) in relation to award-bearing courses was / is a positive element in the development of the quality measure. This situation is replicated in the majority of EU Member States.

The general national and European-level emphasis on quality assurance in general and in VET in particular through EQA-VET means that the issue of quality assurance is part of the education and training discourse and therefore more likely to be addressed in practical terms. This situation is also replicated throughout the EU.

Budgetary constraints make it more challenging to introduce a quality measure in any country / region / sector / field.

¹ Eurypedia: see National Education Systems. Malta.

<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Malta:Overview>

² Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment, Malta (2011) *Malta's National Reform Programme under the Europe 2020 Strategy*: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/nrp/nrp_malta_en.pdf

³ European Commission (2010) *Europe 2020, A Strategy For Smart, Sustainable And Inclusive Growth*: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:2020:FIN:EN:PDF>

DLLL reviews its achievements at the end of the academic year. In summer 2012, DLL Service Managers and the Education Officer met various coordinators to review and reflect on the results obtained as a result of the new QA procedures in place. In addition, as indicated, a co-ordinator with responsibility for QA has been appointed and it is expected that further improvements to the QA framework will be made¹.

Policy-makers should bear in mind the usefulness of:

- setting quality assurance arrangements for the delivery of basic skills within an external framework such as a national framework of qualifications and the QA requirements of an awarding body;
- starting small with a section of provision if QA is a new departure in a sector, field or region;
- consulting and involving all stakeholders, external and internal, in the endeavour;
- putting a strong focus on staff development as a key determinant of quality provision;
- building participation in CPD into the contractual conditions of staff
- ensuring a range of supports through personnel and / or material resources;
- inserting a goal of quality assurance and upskilling staff in adult education in the National Reform Programme under *Europe 2020*;
- rolling out the initiative step by step;
- monitoring, monitoring, monitoring;
- evaluating and revising on the basis of the findings of evaluation.

¹ Information from respondent Victor Galea, Service Manager, DLLL.



11 Netherlands: Quality Code EVC / APL

Name expert: Bert-Jan Buiskool

Introduction: Description of the quality measure: introduction and short summary

This case study address the Quality Code EVC / APL that has been developed in 2006. The quality code concerns the quality of providers offering APL trajectories. The Quality code API is a framework for accreditation and standardisation for APL-procedures in the Netherlands.

APL procedure in the Netherlands

An APL procedure in the Netherlands always contains the same steps:

- 1 Information and advice for the candidate, the employer or other organisation, etc.
- 2 Intake of the individual and making individual arrangements. The candidate makes the decision to start the APL procedure or not.
- 3 Recognition of competences: portfolio (supported by the coach)
- 4 Validation of competences: assessment (by the assessors)
- 5 APL report : Description of results and accreditation (by the assessor)

The basic assumption is that the accreditation is made for the candidate with a suitable nationally recognised competency profile and is conducted properly and independently. Questions are still raised on the comparability of assessments of informally acquired competences (APL) and assessment in formal context (examination). Sometimes the examination forms can be used for APL, sometimes they can't. But the APL candidates always need an assessor who can judge the experience and skills separate of the educational process. The work of the supervisor and assessors is crucial¹.

EVC in the Netherlands consists of two specific instruments:

- 1 The '*Ervaringscertificaat*'. This is the formal procedure in which a candidate can get accreditation of his/her learning outcomes. It is a summative approach; a portfolio is referred to a specific national qualification standard and the accreditation consists of a number of credits that can be cashed in at a qualifying institute or school. The portfolio therefore is a dossier-portfolio or a showcase of the relevant learning outcomes to be referred to at least one specific standard. This form can be called *Accreditation of Prior Learning* (EVC).
- 2 The '*Ervaringsprofiel*'. This procedure setup a generic, personal portfolio. It was developed in the context of the economic crisis. It is formative approach aimed at validation of all the generic competences of a candidate. It advises on the possible opportunities for accreditation or personal development steps. It also points out what to do when a specific qualification or diploma is at stake. This form can be called *Recognition of Prior Learning* (RPL or in Dutch the informal HVC or *Herkennen van Verworven Competenties*).²

¹http://www.kenniscentrumevc.nl/attachments/article/18/Information_APL_in_the_Netherlands_2009.pdf

² Cedefop, Update to the European Inventory on Validation of Non-formal and informal learning Country Report:

APL in the Netherlands is primarily an instrument for awarding exemptions for education programmes. It can also be used for admittance to education.

Since 2005 the broad experiences have led to further regulating of APL, especially regulation for assuring the transparency of results and the quality of procedures. In 2005, the Dutch cabinet and government, employers and trade unions therefore agreed as follows: “The Cabinet will promote the APL Knowledge Center’s development of a quality framework for the APL procedure with broad support across all relevant parties and one resulting in a covenant between the government and the parties on the use of this framework”¹

The framework is among others inspired by the ‘Common European Principles for the Validation of Non-formal and Informal learning’ and can be used to assess procedures, create more transparency and set a minimum standard for APL procedures². To monitor progress on these goals, an **APL Quality Code** (Kwaliteitscode EVC) was developed by the covenant partners. The Quality Code on RPL arranges that RPL providers are obligated to the following principles:

- 1 Any procedure starts with career counselling
- 2 Individual rights must be approved
- 3 Instruments and procedures must be appropriate
- 4 Counsellors and assessors must be professionals
- 5 Evaluation leads to permanent improvement

As a result, in 2006 a covenant between stakeholders was been signed to increase the accessibility, secure the quality, promote the use and ensure the transparency of APL. The covenant partners included representatives of employers’ and workers’ organisations, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the umbrella organisations of providers of VET and HE and representatives of the private education sector. These parties agreed on the following arrangements:

- The use of the code is voluntary, but the signing parties are dedicating themselves to promote the use of APL. Making its use mandatory would detract from the motivation to work with the APL code.
- Everyone who starts with an APL procedure agrees on the reasons for doing so. APL is not a standard process but an individualized series of arrangements customised to the goal and use of APL. Custom work is the standard.
- Every APL procedure ends with an APL report. This report states that the individual has documentation of the competences he possesses. This makes APL something independent of the educational provider.
- Accredited APL providers are listed in a directory.
- The competences of the people supervising these procedures and performing the assessments are documented. Only professionals can be supervisors or assessors.

Netherlands, By Ruud Duvekot

¹ Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid, 2005

² European Commission, 2004

- The quality of APL procedures is always being improved, both at the level of the providers of APL and at the level of the code itself.”¹

The APL providers need to apply for accreditation and are evaluated by Dutch review and assessment boards (Visiterende en Beoordelende Instanties), the VBIs. The used standard is the national quality code for APL. This evaluation is demanded every three year and for every standard of the APL provider. The providers with good evaluation reports, are registered in the National Register for accredited APL procedures. These APL providers are called ‘registered providers’ and their APL customers receive tax benefits. There is no certification authority that confirms the opinion of a VBI, so the national ministry is not able to control the VBIs. The VBIs could be any organization (private or public). If the EVC procedure fulfils the requirements, the name of the provider is formally entered into the Dutch register of recognised EVC providers (Register van Erkende EVC aanbieders).

National government has implemented a tax scheme to support the financing of an APL procedure if it is provided by an accredited APL provider. Companies get a reduction on their taxes of 300 euro per person per year. Individuals who pay the procedure themselves, can deduct the total costs from their income tax. In collective labour agreements, paragraphs on personal development sometimes include APL as one of the possible instruments to be used and refunded. Some sectoral training and development funds have started promotion campaigns for APL offering subsidies for APL procedures.

By the end of 2009, the Government had taken the initiative to give a quality impulse to APL. In relation with this initiative the policy regulation “Afgifte EVC-verklaringen” (Delivery of APL certificates”) was published in April 2010, based on the APL Quality Code of APL. As a result the Ministry took over the responsibility of deciding whether APL providers will be registered based on the information provided by the VBIs. The policy regulation includes the “up-or-out” principle. This means that only those providers of APL providing the required quality will remain in the system. A consequence is that for an organisation which loses its recognition as an APL provider, the procedures for APL by the provider concerned are no longer tax-deductible. Besides the formal regulation, registered APL providers are supported by the APL Action Plan, which is implemented by the APL Knowledge Centre. Besides a style guide for writing the experience certificate, and competence profiles of assessors, EVC coordinators and coaches, the Centre also offers training courses on different issues in running APL processes.”²

Most of the APL providers are organisations for vocational education or for higher professional education, and also private schools. However, there is a growing number of APL providers with different backgrounds, such as reintegration offices and intermediate organisations between local government or employers and the education field. In the Dutch APL system, every organisation can become an APL provider, as long as they work according to the APL quality code and have themselves evaluated by an evaluating organisation.

¹ See: Dutch Knowledge Centre for APL (2009), Information APL in the Netherlands, Background information APL in the Netherlands:

http://www.kenniscentrumevc.nl/attachments/article/19/Information_APL_in_the_Netherlands_2009.pdf

² The referencing document of The Dutch National Qualification Framework to the European Qualification Framework February, 2012.

Part 1: Problem definition

The provision of APL in the Netherlands is a typical example of a field in AL that transformed from a domain that was non regulated and left open to the market, to a sector in which the public sector has set clear standards for APL providers in conjunction with the stakeholders, by means of accreditation and financial incentives (tax reduction).

Since the 1990 the government stimulated APL but made however no regulations at that time. It was expected that the market itself would find out about the best way to develop, implement and use APL. This policy, called 'let a thousand flowers bloom', generated a lot of experience as well in educational institutes as in sectors of industry.

During these years the number of APL providers grew strongly in the Netherlands (estimation made during the interviews was around 190 providers), feeding the debate on quality of APL provision. Although Dutch organisations built up a lot of experience during the last ten years and the structure of APL is settled in the Netherlands, in practice the approach to APL was still too diverse. The absence of regulations made the users of APL start to doubt about the differences in quality of all those APL procedures and the outcomes in term of a experience certificate. These enforced questions on whether providers and procedures can be trusted and whether APL procedures can be recognised everywhere. These development forces the need for a guarantee for the quality of APL.

As a result, in 2006 a covenant between stakeholders was been signed to increase the accessibility, secure the quality, promote the use and ensure the transparency of APL. To monitor progress on these goals, an APL Quality Code (Kwaliteitscode EVC) was developed by the covenant partners.

The APL providers need to apply for accreditation and are evaluated by Dutch review and assessment boards (Visiterende en Beoordelende Instanties), the VBIs. The used standard is the national quality code for APL. This evaluation is demanded every three year and for every standard of the APL provider. The providers with good evaluation reports, are registered in the National Register for accredited APL procedures. These APL providers are called 'registered providers'

In early 2010 the Minister of Education took control of the execution of 'the Quality Code EVC'. This followed a critical evaluation by the Inspectorate of Education of the quality of the accredited EVC providers (PLW 2009, IvO 2010). In this evaluation the quality of the 113 accredited EVC providers both on the levels of VET as well as of HE was regarded as insufficient. In general the conclusions of the evaluation were:

- the Dutch Quality Code functions properly but there is a question of ownership. Specifically the decision about which organisations can inspect the providers of the *Ervaringscertificaat* needs to be regulated.
- the quality of the providers differs too much in the implementation of the assessments,
- the outcomes of the assessments ('*Ervaringscertificaten*') are not easily transferable between the providers.

The State Secretary of Education, Culture and Science therefore took control of the EVC process. It is intended that during a period of three years the bottlenecks in the process

should be overcome. It is expected that in the future this responsibility will be taken over by an intermediate organisation or a conglomerate of such organisations.

Therefore, the government based on the reports of the evaluating organizations categorised the APL providers in the following groups and made the following steps¹:

- 1 weak providers who hardly meet essential elements quality of the code. They are removed from the register of approved APL providers deleted. They may after a yet to be determined period a reassessment requests aimed at obtaining of accreditation;
- 2 providers with multiple deficiencies, within one year on to solve. They get a conditioned recognition for one year and within that year completely assessed;
- 3 providers with some shortcomings, which within a year to unloading. They get a conditioned recognition for one year and be reassessed within that year. Here there is a proportional assessment: only those parts where deficiencies been identified to be reassessed;
- 4 providers that meet all aspects of the quality code. They receive recognition for three years.

Apart from this responsibility the further design and implementation of validation remains to be developed as a strongly labour-market driven process in which the government expects the social partners to take responsibility and steer the EVC-process. The present Quality Code especially strengthens the summative use (i.e. the qualification approach) of EVC by linking personal portfolios to standards in VET or HE or branch qualifications. In this way EVC focuses on awarding exemptions and offers access to qualifications that are recognised on the labour market. This access both affects public funded as well as private funded education, as long as they supply national accredited standards in VET and HE. Nevertheless, there is a world to win, for make sure that APL is also used as labour market instrument, providing access or progress in jobs.

Currently, there are around 90 APL providers, showing a decrease in the last decade, due to increasing regulation and setting standards. Interviewees indicated that APL provision in the 90's was an emerging market with many new organisations stepping into the market, Now the market has become more mature. This 90 APL providers implement around 17.000 trajects a year, that still can be considered less given the volume of the market (active working population) in the Netherlands.

An analysis of the Kenniscentrum EVC showed that there are different reasons why APL providers decided to step out. These are financial reasons, the complexity of the product EVC, but also the required quality framework.

Part 2: Approach

The APL quality code consist of the following five codes and norms:

- 1 **The objective of APL** is to clarify, appraise and recognise present competences in individuals. The recognition of acquired competences has a value in and of itself and

¹ Kamerstuk 20012, nr. 30, BRIEF VAN DE STAATSSECRETARIS VAN ONDERWIJS, CULTUUR

EN WETENSCHAP Aan de Voorzitter van de Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, Den Haag, 15 december 2009

contributes to employability. In many cases, APL leads to further career-related personal development. Norm: Before the start of the procedure agreements are made with candidates about the objective associated with the APL procedure for the candidate. This is the broader objective in relation to the candidate's career prospects and/or the objectives of the organisation offering APL. The APL provider is responsible for all cooperating parties, so that all activities are coordinated to the candidate's objective. The objective of APL is described for each participant in written quantifiable criteria and is in relation to the candidate's career prospects.

- 2 **The competences of the participants:** APL answers the needs of the individual. Individual rights and agreements with the organisation offering APL are clearly expressed. Norm: (Potential) participants are properly and fully informed about the procedure and the results, accessibility is the same for everyone, participants participate voluntarily, privacy is respected and people can lodge complaints, as necessary. Candidates can make use of an appeal procedure.
- 3 **Procedures and instruments:** Procedure and instruments are reliable and based on proven standards. Trust is the key concept. Trust has to do with civil effect, well-defined standards, clear information about how assessments are conducted and the arguments on which conclusions are drawn. Norm: Instruments are specifically designed to clarify competences that are acquired through formal and nonformal learning. Data used in the procedure are sufficiently relevant, current, varied and authentic to serve as proof. Criteria are included in the APL procedure. A set of tools is available where these data still have to be tested. Another assessor with the same materials would have to come to the same conclusion. Each APL procedure results in an APL report that states the participant's competences in relation to the nationally recognised job or professional standard and in relation to the individual career objectives.
- 4 **Expertise of assessors and supervisors:** Assessors and supervisors are competent, independent and unbiased. Independence and impartiality are critical factors within the assessment and are embedded in the roles and responsibilities of the assessors involved. Unnecessary mixing of roles must be avoided. Impartiality can be reinforced through training and through the use of networks. Norm: Expertise of assessors (deciders) and supervisors is demonstrated. They are professional and easily assessed on the required competences. Assessors and supervisors continually verify whether the procedure meets and continues to meet the agreed objectives. They determine the quality of the proof, the assessment of the competency profile and the APL report. The expertise refers to the professional knowledge, assessment knowledge, and the remaining requirements for transparency, relevance, objectivity and validity. The APL provider has organised the procedure so that, in retrospect, it can verify that the assessor and the supervisor also have that expertise ('competences' in the APL code) and that they maintain this expertise.
- 5 **Assurance and improvement of the quality of the procedures:** The quality of APL procedures is assured and is continually improved: the quality of the APL procedure and the set of instruments used with the procedure are assured. Evaluations are made on a regular basis. The results are incorporated into improvement actions. Norm: Evaluations are prepared for maintaining and improving the total quality of the organised APL procedure. The APL procedure is evaluated by the APL provider on a regular basis and is systematically integrated in procedures and routines. APL providers measure whether the prepared objectives for participants that are linked to

the APL procedure are actually implemented through evaluations of participants and cooperating parties.

The APL providers are evaluated by the evaluating organisations, using the national quality code for APL. At the end of the assessment, the assessment organisation will tell the APL providers whether the APL procedure is in agreement with the APL code. It provides the providers with a report of all deviations it observes. This evaluation is demanded every three year and for every standard of the APL provider.

The providers with good evaluation reports, are registered in the National Register for accredited APL procedures. These APL providers are called 'registered providers' and their APL customers receive a.o. tax benefits.

The effort of the covenant to create more unity in the quality of APL has also found its way to the finance mechanisms and subsidy schemes. National government has implemented a tax scheme to support the financing of an APL procedure if it is provided by an accredited APL provider.

Profile of validation practitioners¹

In general validation practitioners are recruited from different professional groups (teachers and trainers; counsellors public/private; personnel managers; etc.) They all get training programmes for the specific validation-responsibilities they are applying for. Practitioners are made up of:

- assessors: the professionals who assess individuals when they want to apply APL for summative purposes;
- portfolio-guides: the professionals who help people fill in their portfolio;
- developers/advisors: the professionals who develop APL-procedures based on national standards; they also advise on this.
- teacher-trainers: the professionals who train the assessors and guides.

The training of validation practitioners is offered by the official APL-providers. The training programmes are in general based on the following criteria. There is however no formal, national standard. Practitioners must (according to the quality code for APL):

- Understand key concepts and benefits of EVC (and also when applicable of HVC, see earlier: Ervaringsprofiel):
- Review and analyse models of recognition and accreditation of prior learning
- Analyse and develop the skills, knowledge and processes required to support EVC practice
- Understand and apply the EVC process
- Reflect on the impact of EVC on their professional learning, practice and their educational setting
- Understand the organisation, management and marketing of EVC.

As noted above, according to the quality code for EVC, only professionals can be EVC supervisors and assessors and their competences must be documented. Only after having proved that they meet the required competences for the job can they take on their

¹ based on Cedefop report, Update to the European Inventory on Validation of Non-formal and informal learning
Country Report: Netherlands

role. Until now APL providers can choose their own methods in proving the capability of their APL workers.

During the interview it appears that there are some issues with the quality of assessors. These professionals are often teachers working in formal VET and face difficulties to assess clients from a working context, assessing the competence available and needed given certain task and activities. The main complaint is that most clients are still assessed too much from educational perspective: can they perform in the class room. This is an issue negatively impacting on the civil effect of an experience certificate.

A study is currently being conducted by the Kenniscentrum EVC on whether this is appropriate or whether other accreditation forms are necessary and a more elaborated description of acquired competences is needed to ensure the sustainable quality of APL. In general there is no standard or qualification for assessors in the Netherlands. There are however several ideas to create a standard for assessors which entails a system with standards and quality-assurance. These options were already formulated in the national policy paper from 2000 of the Werkgroep EVC (The glass is half full) but have not yet been taken up. The main option is to enhance an accreditation scheme for assessors and to evaluate the quality of assessors on the basis of a national standard, including a training course for assessors. Such a national standard (for internal company and external assessors) has not yet been formulated. In practice the EVC providers have their own competence profiles for assessors. Due to the EVC Quality-code they are, however, all obliged to use the same format for filling in the reports after the assessment. Therewith a certain degree of comparability and quality-assurance is maintained. The option of an accreditation scheme for assessors could be monitored on a tripartite basis which would allow for an evaluation that is going to be independent of sectoral or departmental interests, or of the interests of professional groups or training institutes. The author would recommend that it is important to study how this shared responsibility can be most efficiently organised and implemented.

Stakeholders involved

The **government** focuses on the infrastructure and on the quality of EVC and the EVC system. The government stimulates the use of EVC with a communication campaign (Ervaringscertificaat), subsidies for regional partnerships, a fiscal facility for EVC, the knowledge centre EVC, platforms with experts and companies, the regional learning and working desks, subsidies for the Ervaringscertificaat/Ervaringsprofiel during the economic crisis (2009-2011), research into the use, the success and failure factors and the effects of EVC.

The **Dutch Knowledge Centre for accreditation of prior learning (APL)** (Kenniscentrum EVC) is responsible for the knowledge management and dissemination on the subject APL in the Netherlands. It also plays an important role in the further development of APL in the Netherlands and in all the matters concerning the quality standards for APL in the Netherlands. The Dutch Knowledge Centre for accreditation of prior learning (APL) works by orders of the **Dutch Ministry of Education**.¹

In the early years, the focus was mainly on the development of APL. In 2010 and 2011, the focus of the work changed on the quality of APL providers. In 2012, the knowledge centre also increasingly focused on the market side of EVC. Ultimately, there should be a

¹ <http://www.kenniscentrumevc.nl/index.php/mt-apl-kcevc>

healthy balance between the quality of APL one hand and the use of APL in sectors, industries and labor organizations. The activities of the centre include the following areas: (1) Quality of APL providers (e.g. basic Training EVC, Intake training, career goal and portfolio supervision, Training of instruments for assessment of competencies, Writing Training experience certificate, Market analysis and business approach APL); (2) Quality of APL system, and support stakeholders (e.g. running the Secretariat Covenantpartners APL; Secretariat assessing organizations); (3) Quality of APL in the market (e.g. training, expert meeting and conferences); (4) Expert role, advice and research (e.g. research, Information, presentations, participation in networks, APL conference in the context of lifelong learning, Workgroup APL in labour agreements, Working Group on APL in the region, Workgroup APL in SMEs); (5) Public information and education (website www.kenniscentrumevc.nl, unlocking information from the register of accredited EVC providers and approved procedures, E-magazine for the APL professional).

Other stakeholders / Parties signing the covenant on the quality code for APL.¹

- Stichting van de Arbeid, the Labour Foundation, is a national consultative body organised under private law. Its members are the three peak trade union federations and three peak
- employers' associations in the Netherlands,
- Colo is the Association of Centres of Expertise on Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market.
- PAEPON (now NRTO) is the Platform of Accredited Private Educational Institutions in the Netherlands,
- The Centre for Work and Income (CWI) signs in part on behalf of the SUWI partners UWV (National organisation for re-integration and temporally income unemployed people), VNG (Association of Netherlands Municipalities) and Divosa (Association of managers with municipal services in the fields of work, income and social welfare).
- The Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences (HBO-raad), on behalf of all 44 government-funded Universities of Applied Sciences,
- The Netherlands Association of Vocational Education and Training Centres (MBO-raad), on behalf of all 42 government funded vocational education and training centres and all vocational schools,
- The Council for Agricultural Education Centres (AOC-raad), on behalf of all 11 government funded agricultural education centres,
- The Open University is the independent government-funded institute for distance learning at university level,
- The State Secretary of Education, Culture and Science, signs partly on behalf of the State Secretary of Social Affairs and Employment.

Evaluation framework

Apart from the monitoring and evaluation that is carried out under the Quality Code, concerning the quality of the accredited EVC-providers, there is no official framework

¹ See: Dutch Knowledge Centre for APL (2009), Information APL in the Netherlands, Background information APL in the Netherlands:
http://www.kenniscentrumevc.nl/attachments/article/19/Information_APL_in_the_Netherlands_2009.pdf

for qualitative and quantitative evaluation of progress and practice of EVC in the Netherlands.

However, following up on the EU Guidelines on Validation of Non-formal and Informal learning an evaluation framework is under construction and the results of the programmes supported by the project unit Learning & Working (under the Ministries of Education and\ Social Affairs) are monitored. There is also research into the use of EVC (Ecorys, EVC gemeten, 2010). Research has been done on the success and failure factors of the APL-market and the effects of EVC for the individual and the organisation. EVC providers have been requested by the government to register the number of participants in EVC-procedures in the EVC-register.

Part 3: Contextual factors that influence the quality measure

As noted above, the government has taken the lead on the national Quality Code for EVC which was adopted in 2006. In this code the criteria are mentioned for certified EVC procedures; for the format of EVC reports, etc.

The following contextual factor played a role in developing the quality code:

- Quality code is supported and developed by all relevant actors, following a bottom up approach, facilitated by the government (the covenant partners)
- The Dutch Ministry has financial incentives in place for employers, employees, and individuals, making use of accredited / registered APL providers
- Policy developments and APL providers are assisted by a national knowledge centre on APL, developing instruments, templates, but also providing training
- APL is embedded in a policy framework, emphasizing the importance of APL.

According to the Dutch Ministry of Education and Culture, but also the covenant partners, over the next three years the following bottlenecks in the system need to be overcome:

- the question of ownership - specifically the decision about which organizations can inspect the providers of APL needs to be regulated;
- the differing quality of the providers in the implementation of the assessments;
- the fact that the outcomes of the assessments (*'Ervaringscertificaten'*) are not easily transferable between the providers.

The standards for EVC procedures are connected with the requirements in VET and HE. The examination committee has its own responsibility for awarding against the outcomes of an EVC –assessment. There are no official regulations for using the outcomes of an independent EVC procedure for composing a learning path for an individual student to obtain a degree and/or diploma. Except for the fact that institutions have to accept applicants for exemptions based on (evidence of) non-formally and formally acquired competences. There are no rules on limits concerning the amount of credits to be given based on an assessment. Thus, EVC procedures are developed on the basis of the competence standards of VET and HE (and in this way actually based on the expected learning outcomes in these standards), while implementing the national Quality Code for EVC.

The quality of assessor is also under discussion, since not all of them have the competences to assess adults in a working context. Especially since assessors often are working

in formal VET education, they often assess clients in the educational context often leading to problems not getting a real insight in the personal competences. This reopens the debate to establish an accreditation scheme for assessors.

Other methods of ensuring the quality assurance on providers level include:

- Starting the implementation of EVC using pilots, followed by widening implementation by established procedures and the full use of assessments and other EVC instruments.
- Investing in developing the expertise of assessors, counsellors and other members of the staff in an EVC office.
- Separating the roles of assessor and counsellor (and other people involved in the preparation of the EVC -assessment).
- Current developments concerning the certification of assessors (there may in the near future be a national register and certification of individual assessor).
- Information and acquisition by:
 - Liaising with employers (meeting, workshops, regional networks etc.).
 - 'Traditional' media like websites, brochures, flyers, magazines, 'open house days' et cetera).
- Regarding a possible study trajectory for an individual student (should he/she wish to enroll in a study programme) the examination committee is responsible for the 'tailor-made' study programme offered to the individual.

The tax deduction for EVC can only be used on the condition that a certified EVC provider (quality code and EVC-register) is involved.

Part 4: Outcomes and results

Thanks to the successful introduction of the EVC Quality Code there is now a better overview of the quality procedures applied to vocational competence-standards in VET and HE. The around 90 recognised providers are included in the EVC Register, which clearly indicates to citizens and employers where they can have a customised procedure. The foundation for quality assurance of EVC has been laid and the government wants to further invest in this.

Also the number of APL providers decreased over the year from around 190 providers in 2000 to around 90 in 2012. A study carried out by Kenniscentrum EVC, made an inventory of the reasons why APL providers decided to stop offering APL. In the study it became clear that it is often a combination of factors. Yet almost all providers call the following reasons:

- **Financial:** The costs are too high for a APL procedure (assessors, designing procedures, maintain quality, accreditation, overheads) in relation to the number procedures.
- **Product APL** - many candidates drop out because of the gravity of the procedure, sometimes own costs are involved, combined with uncertainty about the outcome of the procedure. Furthermore, the needs of the participants is mostly related to a rapid training / certification (and that can be done in other ways than by APL). Besides, the awareness of APL is limited to potential participants and employers. Also, participants often have wrong idea of APL. At last, the transferability of experience certificates is

weak. This applies to both exam commission in educational institutes as well as employers (the latter taking people because of their qualifications and personality and not on the basis of an experience certificate).

- **Assessment Framework-** The qualification standards in HE lends itself mostly not for APL: the experience of participants is broad or too narrow (HBO).
- **(Internal) organization and quality:** organisation face difficulties with the implementation of APL within the required quality framework (quality code). Moreover, changing derequirement on APL such as language and mathematics, makes it very complicated to maintain APL. Providers also face difficulties to recruit qualified assessors or match own staff, and some organization mention insufficient support for APL in the organization as reason for stopping activities.

Overall, progress has been made, although some challenges are still there, such as the lack of clear ownership, and especially the governance of controlling organizations assessing APL providers; the quality of staff; and comparability between procedures and certificates.

As a result of quality difference between providers experience certificates are not easy transferable between one and other supplier. This means that educational institutes that should effectuate the certificates do not have sufficient trust doing this.

For example, research in the child care sector shows that not all APL providers come to the same results at the end of an APL procedure, even if they use the same APL methodology. For example, an average of 60% of the persons in the research attained a nationally recognised child care diploma without further training. However, the average was obtained by some providers whose success rate was as high as 90%, while other providers were much stricter and had a percentage of 0% diplomas without further training. Therefore, the use of the same methodology is not a guarantee to come to the same conclusions. Also staff should be highly competent. As discussed before this not always the case and further policies should be developed like competence profiles, training, but also reconsidering starting up an accreditation system for staff. Finally, quality plan should be in place.

Concluding, one could say that the assessment of Dutch review and assessment boards is no guarantee for the quality of the APL providers. This is illustrated by the fact that according to exam commissions and APL providers there are still certificates provided with insufficient quality, making it difficult to recognize by educational institutes as well as in the labour market. A possible explanation is that providers with an annual recognition and suppliers who have passed the entrance test are not rated yet on some parts of the Quality Code EVC (like e.g. the quality of the certificates). Another reason, could be that there are still providers registered based on the lighter assessment regime in the past (although within 3 years time these will disappear). One of the respondents notices that the current system with one year and three year inspection could result that still bad performing providers stay in the system for many years. Another explanation is the quality of the Dutch review and assessment boards of providers, since these providers are themselves not subject to quality control of their audits. From the receiver side, one see that exam commissions are insufficient informed about APL and have less experi-

ence and expertise with assessing an experience certificate. However, this will not exclude APL provider to come with a high quality, trustful and comparable certificate.

This explains perhaps the still the comparative low amount of APL traject that are implemented per year. According to a study of Ecorys in 2011, a total of 17,700 APL trajectories were realised. This is less than in 2010, but more than in 2009 and all previous years. Most APL procedures are realized in transport and logistics, administration and technology, and most APL procedures relate to industry-specific qualifications and level 2 of the MBO. APL providers that are not affiliated to a government-funded educational institution or a research center for vocational education and industry provide most APL procedure routes account for (over 65% of procedures in 2011). Half of the providers of accredited APL procedures expects the number of EVC routes over the next few years to grow. According to the APL providers, the proportion of participants that start an APL procedure with a training target is approximately equal to the proportion of participants that have an employment goal. Average, one third of the participants that finalised the APL procedure are eligible for direct certification. Nevertheless, respondents indicate that APL provision is still to much an instrument of the educational sector (getting exemption for an educational programme or direct certification), while less focus is on the role of APL in the labour market to make career progression.

With the signing of a new covenant in 2012, the government and the social partners took the next step in the consolidation of APL as a labour market instrument. The agreement builds on the previous "Quality Code for EVC of 2006. By placing their signature the government, labour unions and employers' organizations promise to work further on using APL as a labour market instrument in support to lifelong learning.

Part 5: Reflection on success and fail factors

As noted above, the government has taken the lead on the national Quality Code for EVC which was adopted in 2006. In this code the criteria are mentioned for certified EVC procedures; for the format of EVC reports, etc. Overviewing the success of the quality code can be explained due to:

- Quality code is supported and developed by all relevant actors, following a bottom up approach, facilitated by the government (the covenant partners)
- The Dutch Ministry have financial incentives in place for employers, employees, and individuals, making use of accredited / registered APL providers
- Policy developments and APL providers are assisted by a national knowledge centre on APL, developing instruments, templates, but also providing training
- APL is embedded in a policy framework, emphasizing the importance of APL.

Nevertheless, some bottlenecks According to the Dutch Ministry of Education and Culture, but also the covenant partners, over the next three years the following bottlenecks in the system need to be overcome:

- the question of ownership - specifically the decision about which organizations can inspect the providers of APL needs to be regulated;
- the differing quality of the providers in the implementation of the assessments;

- the fact that the outcomes of the assessments (*'Ervaringscertificaten'*) are not easily transferable between the providers.
- The quality of assessor, since not all of them have the competences to assess adults in a working context. Especially since assessors often are working in formal VET education, they often assess clients in the educational context often leading to problems not getting a real insight in the personal competences. This reopens the debate to establish an accreditation scheme for assessors.

The aim is to have the APL reports accepted in every educational institution in the Netherlands, without further assessments or testing. This requires trust among the institutions that the APL procedure is of high quality taking into account the same principles, qualification profiles and comparable assessment codes. So a lot of training, development of skills and expertise is necessary to improve reliability of the procedures. Now most of the APL providers have build there procedures, the next step we see is more and more cooperation between providers to improve their expertise and the quality of the assessments. After ten years of APL in the Netherlands, some landmarks or left behind us on the road of implementation, but certainly there are still challenges lying ahead of us. Life long learning is getting more and more tangible, but the paradigm shift still needs to take place in many institutions and in many heads. It requires a culture shift in various ways: A) from thinking in terms of one education and training programme for all to thinking in tailor-made training programmes on demand of individuals; B) from institutional perspective to individual perspective on learning throughout life; C) from focus on the content of learning programmes as truth in itself, to putting the focus on professional performance and competences; D) from thinking in terms of examination in formal settings to thinking in valuing learning in different contexts; E) These desired cultural changes take time to be incorporated in strategic policies, activities at the work floor and individual minds of those working in education, guidance and human resources.

Part 6: Conclusions

Overviewing the quality criteria one could not say these are specific for adult learning, although they are highly relevant for adult learning. Mainly the first norm, phrasing that the individual is placed central in the approach is an important criterion. So the objective of APL is to clarify, appraise and recognize present competences of individuals. APL answers the needs of the individual. Individual rights and agreements with the organisation offering APL are clearly expressed. Furthermore procedure and instruments in place should be of high quality and evidence based. Another assessor with the same tools should come to the same assessment. This is still an issue under further assessment. The introduction of an accreditation system clearly shows that there was an impulse of quality development. Also the role of the knowledge centre APL is positively assessed providing support and advice. Nevertheless some challenges are there, as discussed above. Main issue is who is controlling the assessors of APL providers, how to improve the quality of assessor, and how to assure the comparability of procedures and certificates. This example clearly shows that an overarching framework stimulates the quality improvement of APL provision.



12 Norway: Model for teacher training – continuing education

Name expert: Kim Faurschou

Introduction: Description of the quality measure: introduction and short summary

A background report from Norway (2006) in connection with OECD's Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) provides a lot of information that may be relevant for immigrant education. The focus is on the teaching and assessment of adults with basic skills needs and in particular the use of formative assessment.

The report provides an overview of teacher education in Norway and illustrates how adult education is integrated into the general teacher education, subject-specific teacher education, vocational teacher education and the one-year teacher education program. However, there is no specific study programme qualifying teachers for adult education, and there are no formal qualification requirements for teachers in adult education¹.

The report shows that there are about 3,000 full time teacher positions in adult education within the field of Norwegian language and social studies for adult immigrants. Adult education provided by local and regional authorities is to a great extent given by teachers in full-time positions.

Linguistic and social integration of immigrants is the main objective of the Government's actions. Language training is considered as the most important tool for achieving this goal. The Government values the teacher's competence as the main factor, which ensures high quality language training for adult immigrants, and therefore initiated an action to increase teachers' competence in the field of teaching Norwegian as a Second Language.

Part 1: Problem definition

The Introduction Act of 2003 is the act governing Norwegian language training for newly arrived immigrants. It states that refugees, persons granted humanitarian status and persons who have collective protection are to be offered a two-year introductory programme. This arrangement also applies to immigrants reunited with family members. In 2005, the Introduction Act was amended. A number of non-EU immigrants who got their residence permit after 1 September 2005 have a right and/or an obligation to complete 300 hours of tuition. In 2012, the Introduction Act was again amended, and for certain groups of immigrants the obligatory hours of tuition were increased from 300 to 600 hours.

The immigration and integration policy responsibilities lie with the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion and its directorates. However, it is the municipality where

¹ http://odin.dep.no/filarkiv/235560/Rammeplan_laerer_eng.pdf

the refugee/immigrant settles down, that has the obligation to provide language training within three months after settlement.

The national curriculum is regulated by the Introduction Act. Vox, the Norwegian Agency for Lifelong Learning,¹ has the responsibility for the implementation and further development of the curriculum. The curriculum is based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The competence goals in the curriculum are described for 5 proficiencies up to level B2 in CEFR, but training funded by public money stops at level B1. The curriculum is not limited to a 300/600 hour framework, but covers the whole range of training, as the individual can apply for more hours of free language training (up to a total of 3,000 hours) according to their individual needs.

The following aspects were on the Government's agenda:

- securing language training of high quality, given the fact that Norwegian tuition was introduced as an obligation for large groups of immigrants;
- Since very few immigrants sat for the National test, and the Government wanted to increase the number of candidates sitting, and passing the test.

At the same time, the following challenges had to be faced:

- Limited resources available;
- A need to reach all teachers in the whole of the country in a short period of time; and
- Lack of competence and interest within the academic field.

The main aim was to improve the quality of teaching of Norwegian as a Second Language to adult immigrants by increasing the teachers' competence.

Part 2: Approach

In order to improve the quality of teaching Norwegian as a second language to adult immigrants, a plan for quality was developed. Several measures were included in the Plan for Quality, but the central part of it was to develop effective systems for continuing and further education for the teachers of Norwegian as a Second Language.

Vox, as a national agency responsible for curriculum, language tests, and a variety of continuing education, provides nationwide courses. This includes 2-day courses in all the counties and 1-day courses on different topics, of which the counties may choose according to local needs and priorities. Approximately 2,000 – 2,500 teachers and leaders participate annually in these 2- day courses. The courses are developed based on the national curriculum and a Plan for Quality (a national scheme). The main aim for developing these courses were the following:

- Develop course content of high quality at as low cost as possible in a field where there were limited knowledge and competence;
- Reach all teachers by educating a few teacher trainers who will have presentations at county based courses all over the country, and share their competence with their colleagues at their local schools, in order to achieve a cascading effect.

The course content was developed in two stages. The first stage consisted of an input seminar, where Vox invited interested and competent teachers from all over the country

¹ <http://www.vox.no/no/>

to present their methods and ideas in the chosen field. The aim was to recruit teacher trainers to develop the content for the 2- day courses provided in the counties. The topics which were found during the input seminar were:

- Summative assessment (started in 2007, still running)
- Formative assessment (started in 2007, adjusted and is going through further development 2012/2013)
- Reading (2011)
- Alphabetization (2012)

The second stage consists of a further operationalisation of the topics identified. Here below the example of alphabetization is provided.

22 experienced alphabetization teachers from all over the country representing big and small schools participated in this stage.

- 3 x 2-day seminars
- Some articles and learning materials have to be read before the first seminar
- The seminar is led by two coaches from the University of Oslo and Bergen University College. Their speciality is oral beginner training and initial literacy;
- The seminars were led by the coaches;
- Important: Exchanging of ideas, sharing of experiences, discussion of theory and methods;
- Goal: To work out a common ppt presentation to be used in 2-day county based courses;
- The teachers will add their own pedagogical tips to the ppt;
- Duration of presentations: 45 min x 5; and
- The teachers work in pairs.

The general idea is that the teachers participating in the course will be able to guide and teach other teachers in their country, so that a broader group of teachers will increase the quality of provision. The approach can be characterised as being a pragmatic approach intended to solve the immediate challenges, namely to reach all teachers all over the country in a cost-effective way, and at the same time secure good quality at all levels. This cascading effect, i.e. teachers all over the country is directly or indirectly reached by the approach, is not something that has been seen to a great extent in other education sectors.

Indicators

A number of indicators and descriptors have been developed in order both to make the activities measurable and possible to steer:

- percentage of teachers and trainers participating in further training;
- amount of funds invested;
- share of candidates passing the National language test;
- evaluation for each course (at least 70% must provide an evaluation of 4 or 5 in a 5-part scale)

These indicators and descriptors cover a broad range of measurements and activities, and have supported the implementation process and finally the teacher training.

Since this was a new way of organising continuing education, it was necessary to have close contact with the field (i.e. the headmasters of the adult education centres) to avoid misunderstandings concerning amount of work given to the teachers participating in the development of the course content. These teachers had to be replaced by another teacher in class when they were participating in the development seminars and when giving the presentations at the courses in the counties. This was, for Vox, a time consuming aspect of the implementation of the approach.

Feedback from headmasters and teachers led to some adjustments of the approach. Primarily this involved factors concerning volume and frequency of teacher trainers' participation in the developmental process. It was also necessary to make an agreement of terms (financial) with the headmasters.

Part 3: Contextual factors that influence the quality measure

The Government gives directions to Vox every year. Vox ensures that at least 65 % of the candidates sitting for the National language test pass. In order to achieve this goal, the Government has identified the teacher's competence as the main factor in ensuring high quality language training needed to pass the test.

As factors that improved the success of the quality measure, the following aspects can be mentioned:

- The cascading effect
- Teacher – to – teacher training gives credibility and legitimacy.
- Teachers involvement in developing the course content ensures the relevance of the course
- Necessary funds that made it possible for teachers to participate in the courses in the counties were available

As factors that limit the success of the quality measure, the following can be mentioned. It may be a concern for Vox and the teacher trainers themselves if they have been given enough competence during the developmental period. Are they ready to educate their colleagues?

Part 4: Outcomes and results

The results from the National test improved after the first years that the quality scheme was implemented, and has been stable the last 2 years. This can be an indicator of improvement in quality in the adult learning, but many other factors may also influence the test results. Other results/effects noticeably related to the implementation of the quality measure are:

- Both Vox and the teachers increase their competence in the field of alphabetization (and/or other topics, last year the same model was used for the topic reading).
- The teachers in the topic group share their competence with their colleagues – schools get increased competence – cascading effect
- Teachers presenting to teachers on 2-day courses – credibility and legitimacy
- Increased awareness in the field of the chosen topic

Part 5: Reflection on success and fail factors

It is possible to learn from this successful Norwegian quality measure, and the main learning can be summarised to be the following:

- It works two ways - top down and bottom up
- Maximum results with minimum in-put
- Can easily be used for a variety of topics
- Involvement of important stakeholders

Both the working method and the explicit quality measure can inspire others in their work within quality assurance and development.

The quality measure is transferable to other situations. It is nevertheless important to bear in mind that the initial phase can be time- and resource consuming, since it is necessary to allow enough time to discussions with headmasters of the schools regarding agreement of various terms such as volume, frequency and benefits.

All courses have been evaluated and have received very good scores from participants, but there has not been any impact assessment carried out. Indirectly the progress of the work and the results achieved has been a kind of evaluation in itself. An evaluation with the conclusion, that it works and that the teacher training have achieved the goals and objectives set.

If you want to transfer this initiative to another setting, is it first of all important to allow time in the initial phase to have a close dialogue with headmasters and the future teacher trainers. With such a basis the next steps will be easier as motivation among all the actors is high.

Part 6: Conclusions

Adult learning has both a number of quality criteria that are common to all other types of education, and a number of quality criteria that are specifically relevant for adult learning. Among these one finds the following:

- To ensure that the management is involved through the whole process, both before and after training. Teacher training for three days a year is not enough. It is necessary to work with quality issues throughout the year, and it is the managers who are to be responsible for this in their own training institutions.
- To ensure that the teachers promote ownership in the process of quality development and reflect upon their own practice.
- To ensure that all the teachers have access to training.

The main characteristics of this Norwegian quality measure are:

- The cascading model;
- There is allocated funds earmarked for each county based on the number of teachers. When calculating the amount of funds for each county the geography, distances, etc. are also taken into account;
- The training is coherent and covers the whole country;
- The training includes all teachers teaching Norwegian as a Second Language

Some of these characteristics are very bound to the Norwegian context, where other of these can be transferred directly to new contexts.

The development and implementation phase have showed that the following quality instruments work:

- the involvement of the management ensures high participation and that the process of quality development will continue;
- a fixed program ensures that all the teachers acquire important expertise;
- decentralized courses increase the access and ensure high participation; and
- earmarked funds assures that funds are used as intended.

But there is room for improvement too, within the following areas:

- The establishment of a network for the managers can make involvement at management level even better;
- Counties may be given more freedom to choose content based on local needs.

And finally the conclusion is that we do not yet know whether the intervention leads to higher quality awareness among all teachers.

Overarching framework

Adequate provision of training for low skilled adults is one of the main conditions for the successful implementation of national policies for lifelong learning. Norway has put in place a number of measures to ensure that low qualified adults are able to take “one step up” in their qualifications, among them the free access to primary and secondary schooling (both lower and upper level), including basic skills. Large groups of immigrants are also granted free Norwegian language training. Current Norwegian policy aims at substantially increasing the number of adult participants in this type of training. This objective needs to be accompanied by an increased focus on the quality of provision which, at the moment, is not ensured by any comprehensive national quality system.



13 Sweden: A general system for support on the quality work

Name expert: Kim Faurschou

Introduction: Description of the quality measure: introduction and short summary

BRUK¹ is a system for supporting quality for all types of adult education. It includes structures, methods and tools for assessment; reflection; and development procedures for assessing quality in a local organisation. It is implemented at national level for use at provider level and covers all kinds of formal public funded education (including pre-schools, public schools, and special schools) and all their aspects regarding quality.

The tool was developed by the school authorities themselves (Skolverket²) in 2001 and then was followed up by an enlarged and improved version in 2008. This tool for assessing quality is an aid for all school organisers as they develop their own processes of describing objectives and assignments, carrying out follow-ups and evaluations of activities, of making analyses and judging the development and results of the efforts made.

BRUK is built on a long tradition of quality in education in Sweden and a long tradition of adult education. The overall objectives are to raise the quality of all formal education in general and here specifically to raise the quality of adult education and to define the educational activities of high quality work by:

- identifying targets and fulfilling national goals;
- meeting national objectives, needs and rules;
- fulfilling other objectives, needs and rules that are compatible with the national plans (e.g. school-plans, local working plans and other local plans.); and
- by providing a quest for renewal and continuing improvements based on the existing circumstances.

BRUK is based on national policy documents, such as the Education Act, regulations, and curricula. The following below provide questions included in the BRUK model which adult education providers to ask themselves in order to ensure that they focus on the quality of the delivery of their service.

Questions concerning the process:

- what resources are we working with?
- how do we organise the work?

Questions concerning fulfilling objectives:

- what will our work result in?

¹ BRUK is the Swedish name for this quality assurance and development tool. BRUK stands in Swedish for Bedömning, Reflektion, Utveckling, Kvalitet (Assessment, Reflection, Development, Quality).

² <http://www.skolverket.se/skolutveckling/kvalitetsarbete/bruk>

Questions concerning background factors:

- what are the preconditions?

The BRUK-tool works with indicators, criteria and assessments and judgments. These are described overleaf.

Part 1: Problem definition

All kinds of education providers focus on delivering high quality education – seen both from the perspective of the society, the learners and the labour market. BRUK were introduced by the school authorities Skolverket in 2001 for preschool and public schools. Adult learning and education were not among the users of BRUK before and it was only in 2008 that it was adapted specifically to adult learning.

Adult learning and education in Sweden consists of a huge range of different and heterogeneous activities and education sectors, which make it difficult to find a quality system which is useful for all kinds of adult education.

The school authorities insisted on all formal education providers to work with structured quality assurance and development systems. The development of a revised version of BRUK in 2008 targeted for the adult education sector is a milestone in the work of Skolverket in relation to secure a quality focus in provision.

BRUK is a quality system with a series of tools for self-evaluation which can be used in all formal curriculum-steered education institutions. The self-evaluation is carried out by the use of indicators based on national steering documents. BRUK can be of help for individual institutions, the working groups and for the local community. The tool can be used either to start a development process, or as a major part of the systematic work involved in ensuring quality.

BRUK can be considered as a part of a long tradition within raising the quality of education in Sweden.

The users of BRUK get an overview of the strengths, weaknesses and development areas in order to give an overview of the quality of the institutions' activities within adult education. It had been difficult to obtain a view of the quality of provision before the revision of BRUK in 2008. A major contribution was that the introduction of BRUK created a common language and way of thinking with respect to quality.

The main objectives and tasks of the assessors for quality are to investigate and assess the results of the different educational types and educational institutions. Results (and thereby quality) are defined as the institutions ability to reach and fulfil the national and local goals set while also respecting the rules and demands set in the policy documents.

BRUK contributes through setting standards for the quality of the adult education provided, and to raise the requirements related to quality in adult education. This is achieved through more systematic systems and structures based on the development of a number of quality tools and focus points within BRUK.

Part 2: Approach

BRUK has been used as a system for quality in other sub domains of the educational system before it was introduced to formal adult learning in 2008 and it is open to new indicators and proposals from the institutions. This openness of the model is a particular strength of the quality system and of the quality philosophy behind it.

BRUK is a tool for presenting, assessing, and developing quality within a number of educational institutions, among them adult education providers. The BRUK quality model:

- has the national policy documents as its starting point;
- does not rank in order of importance the objectives and targets set;
- is first of all a tool for the systematic quality work within educational institutions; and
- can be a tool supporting the work executed through quality assessments and reports.

BRUK works with five levels, These levels included

1. Main areas (3) (Swedish: Huvudområde)
2. Indicator areas (Swedish: Indikatorområde) for each main area
3. Sub areas (Swedish: Delområde) for each indicator
4. Indicators (Swedish: Indikatorer) for each sub area
5. Criteria (Swedish: Kriterier) for each indicator

BRUK might at a glance look complicated, but the logic and structure with the five levels broken down in indicators and descriptors have gained a lot of support and use among providers within adult learning.

Here below each of the five levels is further discussed.

1. Main areas identified included:

BRUK worked with three main areas in order to structure thinking about quality:

A. Process e.g.

- what are we working with?
- how do we organise the learning taking place?

B. Goal achievement

- what are the output and outcome of our activities/work?

C. Contextual factors

- what are our preconditions?

Each of these three main areas includes a number of indicators and descriptors with different degrees of detail. The main areas give an overview of and a structure for the different activities within adult education. Some of these are related to process, others to goal achievement and context. In principle all activities within adult education be placed within one of each main area.

2. Indicator areas

The three main areas are split in a number of indicator areas, signed with numbers and letters.

The main area Process covers the following indicator areas A: Pedagogical activities, B: Steering and management and C: Quality control and quality development.

The main area Goal achievement covers two indicator areas: The objectives of the institution and The objectives of the education.

The main area Contextual factors cover five indicator areas: Educational possibilities, Staff, Students, Costs and Resources.

The series of indicator areas show the main types of activities, actors and objectives involved in adult learning.

3. Sub areas

Each of the indicator areas are split in a number of sub areas, again signed with numbers and letters.

For instance, the main **area Process**¹ includes a number of sub indicator areas:

A. Pedagogical activities;

A1-The students responsibility and influence;

A2- Norms and values;

A3- The pedagogical work;

A4- Special support activities;

A5- The educations form and content?

A6- The interaction between schools and society

A7- Guidance

A8- Recruitment

B. Steering and management includes the following activities:

B1- The goals and objectives document

B2- The headmasters responsibilities and obligations

B3- Responsibility, decisions and management to be taken separately

B4- Legality; as well as ‘

B5- Health and safety,

C. Quality control and quality development

C1- Systematic quality work

There exist a similar structure for the two other main area Goal achievement and Contextual factors.

4. Indicators

Indicators are then described and selected for each of the sub areas. The indicators are here presented as statements and for each of these sub indicators there exist a number of detailed indicators, e.g. for indicator A1²: The students need to develop responsibility and influence:

A1.1: Cooperation/interaction between staff and students;

A1.2: Self esteem of staff and students and taking responsibility for their learning

A1.3: Democratic types of work

A1.4: Student influence – what and why?; and

A1.5: Other types of influence

¹ <http://www.skolverket.se/skolutveckling/kvalitetsarbete/bruk/vuxenutbildning/process>

² <http://www.skolverket.se/skolutveckling/kvalitetsarbete/bruk/vuxenutbildning/process/studerandes-ansvar-och-inflytande-1.60206>

Or like the example for the area B. Goal achievement¹ shows a number of indicator areas:

D1- Responsibility and influence²

D1.1: Democratic forms for work

D1.2: Influence from students

D1.3: Self esteem and taking responsibility

D2- Norms and values and personal development

D2.1: Basic democratic judgements

D2.2: Self esteem and self confidence

D2.3: Communication, cooperation and conflict-solving

D2.4: Respect for human differences

D2.5: Equality

D2.6: Initiative and taking responsibility

D2.7: Critical review and problem solving ability

D2.8: Ability to plan your future

D3- The pedagogical work

D3.1: Knowledge and judgement

D3.2: Individualisation in the teaching

D3.3: The students absence and drop out.

D4- A flexible education

D4.1: Flexibility

The indicators provide insight about the quality of the activities. Each indicator contains a description of what the indicator focuses on and a number of criteria to be assessed.

For each of these indicators there exist a number of focused criteria that are being assessed. The criteria for e.g. for indicator A1.1: Cooperation/interaction between staff and students is presented below. This indicator describes – by answering the questions/statements - how the institution works in order to develop good relations between students and staff:

1. The relation between staff and students is characterized by trust and mutual respect
2. The teachers aim at get to know each student they are responsible for in their teaching;
3. The teacher is aware are the student's background, knowledge and experiences taken into account.
4. The teachers use the students' knowledge and experience in the teaching
5. We are interested in the students as individuals without prejudices opinions about the persons background and ability to study
- 6 Students and adult individuals are treated in the same way in every situation

5. Criteria

¹<http://www.skolverket.se/skolutveckling/kvalitetsarbete/bruk/vuxenutbildning/maluppfyllelse-1.84158>

² http://www.skolverket.se/polopoly_fs/1.84119!/Menu/article/attachment/161110_VUX_D1.1.doc

Each criterion is expressed as a statement about the activities. The actors then assess to what degree the activities fulfil the statement made. The criteria range from A-not existing in the school to F-fully implemented. The range of evaluation criteria used are listed below:

- A. The criteria does not characterize the institution;
- B. Discussions about how to achieve the criteria has started;
- C. The staff has agreed in how to achieve the criterion;
- D. The work has started and certain characteristics are present;
- E. The institution is displays to a high degree the criterion; and
- F. This criterion characterizes the institution well.

Each of these criteria is assessed in relation to what degree the institutions activities fits with the criteria on the scale presented above.

There are a number of predefined proposals for criteria, indicators, sub areas, indicator areas, and main areas. The institutions are further asked directly to add new areas and indicators to the already defined group.

The possibility of making new areas and indicators are very important in order to motivate the individual providers of adult education to use and further develop BRUK.

Analysis within BRUK

After the work on the first five parts of BRUK, the next steps to follow include analysing the collected data within the adult learning institution and discussed among the staff involved in the adult education. This part of the work involves three steps¹:

- Discussion;
- Analysis of the current situation; and
- Activities.

Step 1. The discussion starts with how the assessments were made and what it was based on. Potential lack of information is indicated too, including how to complement the already collected data.

The data are collected in many different ways ranging for student satisfaction surveys, results of examination and the staffs experiences and reflections.

Step 2. During the analysis of the current situation, the criteria are mapped in order to obtain an overview of the assessment of the existing criteria and a judgement of the current situation can be made. This step provides an answer to the question 'Is quality good or bad?' Each criterion is estimated and the relative importance is assessed.

Step 3. Finally, the number of activities to be taken on is decided and the implementation is planned. The plans include a priority of the activities and a timing of them. Clear action plans are drawn up with actors and activities including the timing for follow-up:

How to continue. The process continues with more reflection;

What is needed to do immediately?

What is needed to be developed?

¹ http://www.skolverket.se/polopoly_fs/1.60171!/Menu/article/attachment/160263_VUX_A1.1.doc

What works? And how can it be secured?

What can wait and why?

How shall we follow-up and check on the work done?

Actors and activities

The staff is doing these analysis and this self assessment together and organised in quality teams. The data are collected by the use of a number of schemes¹.

The quality team discuss each of the statements and make the self-evaluation by choosing the mark that according to the team fits best to the perceived reality they face and experience.

The answers give a clear and commonly accepted picture of how the staff works within each aspect and activity within adult education. The discussions support also the formulation of clear objectives with the pedagogical activities, which again support the work against the same objectives and thereby reaching the planned quality.

The backside of the data collection scheme contains support questions to discuss and analyse the results and to enhance the quality within the individual provider of adult learning.

The analysis are made in three parts:

1. Discussion
2. Assessment of the current situation
3. Action plan

The discussion phase focuses on how the assessment was made and what it is based on. The question about a potential need for more information in order to get a proper overview of the current situation is raised together with how this can be done – if needed.

In the second phase: The Assessment of the current situation is the criteria mapped in a figure (shown above). This phase include the judgement of the importance of the individual indicators and criteria within the institution. This phase is summarised in a picture of the assessment of the different criteria and by that an overview of the current situation. Does the institution deliver good quality adult education or not? This is the key question discussed here.

The final phase in the analysis covers an action plan based on the current situation. This phase includes a priority of the different activities according to importance and potential. Some matters need action directly, and other requires development over time or functions well and need only to be secured.

For each activity decisions are made about what to do, by whom and when. Even the time for follow-up are decided together, who is responsible for the follow-up.

The school authorities Skolverket are responsible for the development of BRUK and do this in close cooperation with the different educational systems and levels that use BRUK.

Adjustments

BRUK has been adapted and adjusted during the implementation of the quality measure.

¹ http://www.skolverket.se/polopoly_fs/1.83855!/Menu/article/attachment/BRUK_NY.pdf

The first version of BRUK – from 2001 - focused mainly on assessing quality, where the main changes of the revised version in 2008 can be seen as the focus on the contribution to the quality process. Especially, the new section for analysis, support of that part of the quality development process, follow-up on the quality assessment.

This change in attitude from assessment to development is extremely important in the success of this quality approach.

The 2008 version of BRUK¹ included a number of changes:

- BRUK covered now adult education
- It was updated in relation to laws, rules and regulations
- Indicators and criteria were updated and made more clear
- New activities like equality-plans and individual development-plans were added
- A new sub area regarding systematic quality work was added
- A new section for analysis was added

Each version of BRUK is adapted individually to the educational field and firm. The focus on the individual adult's knowledge and experiences can be seen as specific for adult learning.

The version of BRUK presented here is the one that is adapted to adult education, but builds on the same structures as the other versions of BRUK adapted to other levels of the formal educational system. The specific part in relation to adult learning is first of all, the point of departure in the national steering instruments and curricula. Secondly, it builds on the 2008 version of BRUK on the specific characteristics of adult education, where the experiences of the learner, the heterogeneity of the learners and adult education and the educational traditions within adult education are taken into consideration. Last but not least, are the philosophies of BRUK based on self assessment, the possibilities to add own indicators and quality criteria, the structured analysis and the discussion approach. These aspects were very motivating for adult educational staff in general.

Students are the main beneficiaries of BRUK, even if the main users of BRUK are internal in the adult learning institutions. The management and the staff use BRUK to secure, assess and develop the quality of their work within formal adult education.

Implementation

BRUK can be used in many different types of education institutions, but is always adapted individually to the educational field and form.

BRUK supports the efforts made on raising quality in education. Raising quality requires the use of clear definitions and direct links to the formal objectives of education and the daily educational activities. BRUK includes all these requirements and is seen as an excellent way of securing and developing a quality culture within many schools, educational institutions and training centres.

BRUK is used internally as a key element in the public follow-up on the individual institutions activities within adult education as the assessment report from Stockholm shows².

¹ http://www.skolverket.se/polopoly_fs/1.83856!/Menu/article/attachment/Nytt%2520i%2520BRUK%25202008.pdf

² <http://www.ksl.se/download/18.133416c1135cb0a41f6159/Jensen+Education.pdf>

The assessed school has been inspired by BRUK to make an overview of their quality and presented this by the use of areas like strengths, weaknesses and areas for development. The overview is very detailed and gives a good overview of both the current situation in relation to quality in adult education at the institution and presents a number of areas to develop further.

The main barriers in the implementation have been to get accept of the need for and benefits of such a quality tool, together with developing a quality tool that was seen as a help.

Part 3: Contextual factors that influence the quality measure

Sweden has a long tradition of a high focus on education and quality in education. BRUK has been influenced by this tradition and the development of quality tools can be considered as the result of a long process of progress within quality assurance and development in the Swedish educational system.

Success factors

BRUK was introduced by school authorities in Sweden in 2001. It was then extended, and an improved version was developed in 2008. The almost 8 years of experience had served as a basis for a good starting point for developing a tool to be used for assessment and development of quality in all formal adult education. The combined focus on both assessing the quality of adult education as well as promoting the quality development process were key factors for its success.

It is to be acknowledged that the heterogeneity of adult learning made it difficult to develop a commonly accepted and useable quality tool. In fact, it took a number of years to develop the first version of BRUK that was both useful and acceptable for the formal adult learning sector. The development of the content part of BRUK was a big challenge for adult education as the first version focused too much on quality assessment, and too little on quality development. With further development, a better balance between the two aspects was obtained.

Part 4: Outcomes and results

The main contribution of BRUK is based on principles, that first of all quality must be defined in adult education sector and that tools to assess and develop the quality have been agreed on and implemented. A second characteristic includes the development of detailed indicator areas built on discussions involving all stakeholders, and the acknowledgment for the need of a focus on quality. Finally, another successful factor included wide acceptance by many adult educational actors including teachers and other staff and management for a focus on quality.

The clear definitions of quality seen from the side of the school authorities are a major outcome of this work and it gives an excellent ground for the work on quality in the adult educational institutions.

Quality is – according to BRUK - defined as, activities that

- Fulfil national objectives and fit national demands and rules
- Fulfil other objectives, demands and rules, which conform to the national objectives e.g. school plans, local working plans, local priorities
- Are characterised by a drive for development and continuing improvements based on the existing possibilities and resources

This clear definition of quality helps steer the adult learning staff to focus on how they can and will assess, document and develop the quality.

BRUK improved the quality in adult learning in many ways. BRUK is used as a common platform both internally within schools as well as externally by the assessors and evaluators of the quality of adult learning. This introduction of a common language of quality in adult education supports communication both internally and externally and results in a common direction for the quality development being taken.

The development of a common language and thinking around quality at many educational levels has supported better understanding of quality across educational levels and sectors.

Part 5: Reflection on success and failing factors

BRUK shows that it is possible to develop a quality system with a number of tools and a way of thinking that can be used across different educational levels. It shows that such a process takes time and that respect and adaptation to the different educational systems is necessary in order to get acceptance and to be used widely used within the sector.

BRUK's system, systematic and its tools, thinking, principles and structure are transferable with a certain degree of adaptation. The main consideration to be taken is the motivation of the educational system to ensure quality and building on existing experiences of quality assessment and development across educational systems and levels. The concept of self-evaluation fits extremely well within most adult educational worlds and is thereby a part of what makes this a successful and useful quality system and tool.

BRUK has not been directly evaluated, but the many years of experience have set the direction for continuous development and for the adoption of a more pragmatic approach to quality assessment and development.

Policy makers, programme managers and others willing to transfer this initiative to their contexts should bear in mind the following when applying this approach in another setting:

- Clear definitions of quality are needed
- The need for developing quality tools that both document and develop quality, and are seen as usable at all levels;
- To create a common language for and way of thinking of quality in almost all kinds of formal education; and
- To be systematic when working with quality.

Part 6: Conclusions

BRUK has been adapted to adult learning but the main focus is more on generic quality tools and philosophy. The focus of BRUK is not on differences, but on similarities across all the educational levels and systems where it is used.

The most important and efficient quality instruments within BRUK are: the definition of quality; the links to the national goals and objectives; the degree of freedom that it permits; the combination of documentation; and the quality process.

14 Slovenia: Offering Quality Education to Adults

Name expert: Balázs Németh

Introduction: Description of the quality measure: introduction and short summary

It was a special initiative of the Slovenian Institute of Adult Education (SIAE – ACS) to outline and develop a peculiar instrument for raising the quality of adult learning and education in Slovenia from 1999 both at national and local levels. The plan was connected to a project incentive called OQEA (Offering Quality Education to Adults – called POKI in Slovenian) with the objective to create an innovative mechanism for quality assessment and development and to give advice to particular educational organisations (schools and other adult education and training institutions outside the school system) through formal and non-formal learning referring to *self-evaluation of their quality* and outlining further dimensions for the development of their own activities and services.

The OQEA project and its model, created its special mechanisms of quality assessment, initiated its own logo for participating institutions since 2000. OQEA system today has its own website and it is officially supported by the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport.¹

At the beginning, the main reason behind the concept of OQEA was the necessity to respond to major directives of the EU in the field of developing adult learning and education through various goals and initiatives as part of the lifelong learning track by involving Member States and candidate countries to prepare for better functioning education and training system all around Europe with more individual participants and better learning performance. The well-known Lisbon declaration from 2000 strongly underlined such a desire for competitiveness, growth, employability and social cohesion. (European Council, 2000)

The OQEA concept has so far tried to reflect the recognition of the situation and development needs of Slovenian adult learning and education sector by involving most adult education providers in a special quality-oriented process on a voluntary basis. It became necessary to stress the importance of the responsibility of adult education providers for quality, together with their staff and employees, so as to raise the quality of services, teaching and learning. Also, OQEA has tried to help providers becoming successful in facing challenges of the labour market and several other factors requiring better and more sophisticated internal processes of decision-making. The main objective is to help participating organisations reach for a better position in the provision of adult education and training mainly accessible in the labour market.

When an organisation joins OQEA today, it is helped and guided to realise its vision and values as much as possible through the development of adult education. Another task is to help the participating organisation to assess its quality achieved so far and, addition-

¹ See: <http://kakovost.acs.si/oqea>

ally, to plan the steps of development for satisfaction of its users and external partners in a generally two-years long process of quality assessment and development.

The whole procedure started in 1999 and the first organisations joined the model in 2001. By 2012, approximately 80% of adult education centres, 27% of secondary schools, and 18% of private educational organisations belong to the OQEA model and that covers around one-third of publicly accredited programmes of adult education.

Part 1: Problem definition

A general reason behind the development of OQEA has been the need for raising the services of adult education providers through assessing the whole organisation with staff, employees, and enabling adult learners to make their reflections over the process of their education and/or training so as to emphasize relevant changes in the mechanisms of the organisation which may result in better learning performance and organisational management. That is why a total quality management (TQM) orientation has generally influenced OQEA as a basic principle to include mechanisms of *evaluating various quality factors, and the use of self-evaluation to promote decision-making*. Another important element of such a quality system is the introduction of quality indicators, which help entering into international comparison through quality monitoring.

Therefore, the OQEA model requires the participation and responsibility of all employees in an organisation in a voluntary manner that recognises *the necessity and benefit of self-evaluation for new and forward-looking ideas, which help the implementation of quality improvements and innovations*. This process needs continuous development as another basic principle to determine and tackle mistakes and mismanagement by allowing employees to reflect to arising matters influencing quality in their own areas of work and to define all possible means to develop their work.

OQEA is characteristic of being based on clear methodology of planning, achievement, procedure of evaluation and that of implementation of changes. This approach is strongly connected to a management, which is based on facts and arguments and on a process-approach by focusing on causes and consequences that enables the organisation to thoroughly consider the reflections of internal and external users in the processes of quality assessment and development.

Another essential element of, and condition for, the appropriate use of OQEA is *to improve an adequate learning climate that helps learning from individual practice and orientates towards continuous development*. Thereby, the organisation can turn to become a real learning organisation to address motivation and co-operation as necessary elements for the use of self-evaluation and planning of all actions over twenty-four months. That makes quality becoming a key value for an educational and training organisation.

Part 2: Approach

OQEA enables organisations engaged in adult education and training to recognise and develop their quality and, at the same time, helps tackling all factors, which pull back or divert organisations from quality orientation and better services. The OQEA is a systemic

tool for quality assessment and implementation of improvements and development initiatives based on self-evaluation methods, based on goals, like better quality of adult education, the development of employees and their learning and, also, team approach with the encouragement of participation in decision-making.

The management and staff of the organisation are directly involved in the process of quality assessment and development. All employees are allowed to decide upon how and according to what dimensions they use self-evaluation results.

This self-evaluation procedure of OQEA enables that the educational organisation, its adult education manager and/or its teachers decide on a voluntary basis on the following:

- to assess the quality of their work;
- which part of the educational process or factors they are going to monitor;
- which quality standards they will apply for themselves;
- what they will do with the results and achievements;
- what measures they will introduce based on the assessment received.

The OQEA model has been designed and prepared to be used in different adult education organisations, like adult education centres, private education and voluntary organisations, secondary and post-secondary education organisations, VET institutions, etc.

The main goal of OQEA is to help assessing formal and non-formal education. This model can either be applied for self-evaluation of the whole organisation participating the OQEA process, or to one programme, department, or even to a special section of education and its operation.

However, when an educational organisation applies OQEA model, this needs an on-going co-operation and engagement of the management, therefore, the whole staff of the organisation should participate the assessment, decision-making, and measures.

The self-evaluation process of OQEA implies four elements of self-evaluation methodology:

- *Planning*, through which the management and staff of the organisation have the chance to reflect to their own vision of quality and long-term goals referring to quality development. They can identify particular quality standards as subjects self-evaluation;
- *Carrying out* – a special process by which employees and other relevant partners of the organisation are informed of aims, and of the phases of self-evaluation. This is the process of data-collection, together with documentation of level of achieved quality;
- *The process of Evaluation of Results* by the use of quality standards and of the planned quality in the educational organisation. This quality assessment will either underline or reject some working phases and/or methods of improvement. Recommendations for improvement are connected to the maintain the level of quality;
- *Implementation of quality improvement* as final element of quality assessment reflected in an action plan for the implementation. The plan for improvement of apply-

ing quality development measures signals the beginning of a new quality cycle to which an on-going monitoring may be attached.

The implication of the QQEA model helps the organisation to benefit in the following dimensions:

- Self-evaluation process and related actions generate an added value to quality in adult education services;
- The QQAE model helps strengthening the quality-orientation of employees by determining and evaluating their own work;
- The QQEA model encourages and promotes teamwork of employees in an educational organisation. Self-evaluation activities open doors to more discussions over common problems within the organisation, and underline the necessity of participative decision-making and more dialogue about particular results and related tasks through the involvement of most employees by being given voice with opinions and suggestions.

The implementation of the development cycle for the QQEA quality assessment and development model has a two-year long duration and implies the following phases:

In the **first** year, a participating educational organisation has to:

- nominate a quality group within the organisation (these people are getting into continuous counselling organised by the Slovenian Institute of Adult Education);
- form a mission, vision, and values for its own organisation;
- form a first assessment on the level of quality within the organisation;
- prepare for interviews with essential interest groups;
- select areas and indicators subject to a more thorough quality assessment;
- create the organisation's quality standards for the selected indicators;
- Make relevant sources available and prepare tools for quality evaluation;
- conduct quality assessment;
- form a self-evaluation report;
- and generate discussion and debate over the achievements and relevant measures with staff and all employees.

In the **second** year:

- prepare an action plan for quality development;
- apply the measures and methods for improvement and development;
- monitor and evaluate implemented improvements;
- Generate a larger choice for further applications, entering into a new phase of development cycle.

The role of Slovenian Institute of Adult Education (SIAE) is focused on guidance and education, but each participating organisation in QQEA forms a quality group, which prepares and achieves individual procedure in quality assessment and development within the organisation.

The Slovenian Institute, therefore, organise *educational workshops* for quality-group member and provide all necessary knowledge over QQEA, the self-evaluation and qual-

ity improvement processes, namely, to gain a general knowledge over the model and over the process of how to work within the organisation and successfully manage the implementation and the maintenance of the model regarding each phase and follow-up procedures based on an on-going consultation with the staff, employees and adult learners.

This workshop is approximately eighty-hours long and is connected to the first and second years of participation in the project.

The same time-frame of eighty-hours are designated to *group counselling* in workshop frames during the self-evaluation process focusing on effective individual planning and on better execution of self-evaluation phases.

Individual counselling is also offered for each quality-group, members of such groups during the self-evaluation process, either in direct visits of the Slovenian Institute staff and experts or through on-line forms of e-mail, phone, etc.¹

This project is supported by the Ministry of Education, and Sport, and funded, since 2004, by the European Social Fund.

List of main OQEA areas, sub-areas and related quality indicators in adult education:

1. ACHIEVING THE GOALS OF CURRICULUM (KNOWLEDGE, VALUES, GENERAL EFFICIENCY)
 1. 1 ACHIEVEMENTS IN KNOWLEDGE
 1. 1. 1 Appraisal at internal assessment of knowledge
 1. 1. 2 Appraisal at external assessment of knowledge
 1. 2 DEVELOPMENT OF VALUES
 1. 2. 1 Basic social values
 1. 2. 2 Values of the individual
 1. 2. 3 Basic civic values
 1. 3 GENERAL EFFICIENCY
 1. 3. 1 Quality of knowledge from the employer's and individual's point of view
 1. 3. 2 Advancement in programme
 1. 3. 3 Transition to further education
 1. 3. 4 Employability and promotion
2. EDUCATIONAL PROCESS (LEARNING AND TEACHING)
 2. 1 PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF EDUCATIONAL PROCESS
 2. 1. 1 Introductory interview with each individual participant regarding the planning and execution of education
 2. 1. 2 Assessment and analysis of needs for education of a group of participants or an individual
 2. 1. 3 Understanding of individual's prior knowledge and experience
 2. 1. 4 Choosing forms of organisation, structuring educational process
 2. 1. 5 Amount of hours of organised education
 2. 1. 6 Goal planning in the operative curriculum

¹ Based on the interview with Ms. Tanja Mozina, a leading OQEA project expert at SIAE

- 2. 1. 7 Choosing and categorising educational topics
- 2. 1. 8 Choosing forms and methods of work
- 2. 1. 9 Choosing ways and methods of assessing and evaluating knowledge and adjusting conditions for promotion
- 2. 1. 10 Participants' influence on planning, execution and evaluation of educational process
- 2. 2 ROLE AND CO-OPERATION OF EDUCATORS IN PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION
- 2. 2. 1 Understanding syllabus and catalogue of knowledge
- 2. 2. 2 Teacher's preparation for educational process
- 2. 2. 3 Links between subjects
- 2. 2. 4 Teacher's role in educational process
- 2. 2. 5 Co-operation between principal/director and the head of adult education at education planning
- 2. 2. 6 Co-operation between head of adult education and teachers at planning and execution
- 2. 3 LEARNING ENVIRONMENT
- 2. 3. 1 Premises and equipment
- 2. 3. 2 Library, multimedia, self-study centre, internet access, access to information (COBISS)
- 2. 3. 3 Computers and technology
- 2. 3. 4 Additional rooms
- 2. 3. 5 Information centre or office for part-time students
- 3. PARTICIPANT IN EDUCATIONAL PROCESS
- 3. 1 PARTICIPANT IN EDUCATIONAL PROCESS
- 3. 1. 1 Personalised educational plan for each individual participant
- 3. 1. 2 Monitoring, guidance and help for the participant
- 3. 1. 3 Motivation for learning
- 3. 1. 4 Incentives for self-study
- 3. 1. 5 Communication between participants and teachers
- 3. 1. 6 Communication between participants and the head or the organisers of education
- 3. 1. 7 Communication among participants and the influence of a group
- 3. 1. 8 Participant satisfaction
- 3. 2 CONDITIONS FOR ADVANCEMENT
- 3. 2. 1 Social conditions
- 3. 2. 2 Economic conditions
- 3. 2. 3 The influence of working environment on education
- 4. TEACHERS
- 4. 1 PERMANENT EDUCATION
- 4. 1. 1 Kind, scope and plan of permanent professional training for andragogic work in educational organisation
- 4. 1. 2 Motivation of teachers for training for andragogic work
- 4. 1. 3 Conditions for teacher training for andragogic work
- 4. 1. 4 Self-education for andragogic work
- 4. 1. 5 Participation in international project for development and experience exchange

- 4. 2 DEVELOPMENT AND COUNSELLING WORK
 - 4. 2. 1 Participation in expert group work
 - 4. 2. 2 Active participation in the field of expertise, with outside professional organisations
 - 4. 2. 3 Co-operation with library, multimedia and other information centre; participation at preparation and development of learning materials for adults
- 4. 3 TEACHER SATISFACTION
 - 4. 3. 1 Teacher motivation for work in adult education
 - 4. 3. 2 Teacher satisfaction with work in adult education
- 5 EDUCATIONAL ORGANISATION AND ITS PARTNERS
 - 5. 1 INFORMING
 - 5. 1. 1 Ways of informing
 - 5. 2 POSSIBILITIES FOR INFLUENCING AND CO-OPERATION OF PARTNERS IN THE LEARNING PROCESS
 - 5. 2. 1 Employer influence on planning, contents and execution of the educational process
 - 5. 2. 2 Development of educational programmes (expert and professional training)
 - 5. 2. 3 Influence of local and wider environment
 - 5. 2. 4 Inclusion of partner into adult education evaluation
 - 5. 2. 5 Co-funding adult education
- 6. MANAGING AND ADMINISTRATION
 - 6. 1 POSITION OF ADULT EDUCATION
 - 6. 1. 1 How the adult education is organised in an educational organisation
 - 6. 1. 2 Independence, competence and normative structure of adult education
 - 6. 1. 3 Systematisation of posts
 - 6. 1. 4 Funding adult education
 - 6. 2 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE RESPONSIBLE FOR ADULT EDUCATION
 - 6. 2. 1 Following innovations in adult education
 - 6. 2. 2 Continuous professional training for adult education management and administration
 - 6. 3 MANAGING
 - 6. 3. 1 Planning (mission and vision of adult education)
 - 6. 3. 2 Decision-making
 - 6. 3. 3 Respecting particularities of adult education
 - 6. 3. 4 Evaluation; encouraging development and quality of adult education
 - 6. 4 ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE
 - 6. 4. 1 Mastering changes, encouraging learning culture
 - 6. 4. 2 Processes of communication and information exchange
 - 6. 5 RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
 - 6. 5. 1 Career planning and personal development of the employees in an educational organisation
 - 6. 5. 2 Stimulation of employees in adult education
 - 6. 5. 3 Managing funds for adult education

Part 3: Contextual factors that influence the quality measure

The *main condition to influence the introduction and application of OQEA/POKI* quality measure is that each Adult Education Centre, having been contacted for interview through its representative, holds a special position and status in the labour market. Both Centres indicated that the OQEA/POKI model was chosen to help them strengthening their positions in a quality development orientation.

Also, OQEA/POKI helped the adult education organisations to respond to the peculiar conditions of the labour market. In Zalec ISO 9001 was also used to assure the organisational mechanisms, whereas OQEA/POKI has helped them to raise the quality of content and services and how people could improve getting better through their own work.

Another condition is to raise participation and the performance of adult learners. Such a challenge made the organisations to reconceptualise their own vision on quality and to recognise how individual actions of employees strongly influence the success of realising such a vision.

There were several *factors to improve the success of OQEA/POKI*. It is necessary to mention, amongst such factors, the very accurate and helping work of the Slovenian Institute of Adult Education, which urged the organisations to seriously concentrate on how to satisfy adult learners with quality services and to take learners' view and suggestions, remarks into consideration regularly. Another helping element improving the effectiveness of such factors was that the Slovenian Institute channelled the systemic preparation and work within the implementation of OQEA/POKI, therefore, planning and organisational overview of the work through OQEA /POKI was introduced and connected to on-going documentation of actions. Such an approach required, later, an Action Plan for the second year of the OQEA/POKI model too.

It is high-time to underline another necessary factor to improve this model, and that was continuous commitment of staff and of all employees and, furthermore, a specific change of thinking to help realising the goals of the Action Plan of the organisation as part of the OQEA/POKI model.

The two *main factors to limit the success of OQEA* were time consumption and heavy, overloading bureaucracy, but there were only a few other significant factor mentioned in interviews on the issue. It was difficult for the indicated Adult Education Centres in Velenje and Zalec that only a small group was nominated to deal with and engaged in OQEA/POKI within the organisations, yet, the complex quality process would have required a bigger group. On the other hand, it was a real challenge how to motivate each and all colleagues within organisations to take the implementation of OQEA/POKI seriously. Most people have come to the conclusion that the OQEA/POKI process of evaluation ought to be shorter.

Part 4: Outcomes and results

So far as the *impact of OQEA/POKI on the improvement of quality in adult learning* is concerned, both interviewed quality counsellors of the organisations reflected that OQEA/POKI has definitely helped to raise quality of adult learning in the participating organisations. The model helped teachers and students to explore some factors and issues undermining quality education and training, and to find concrete ways of tackling

problems causing difficulties about realising the vision and mission of the educational organisations. Accordingly, OQEA/POKI made the participating organisations of education/training to consider the incoming feedbacks from students, participants of educational programmes reflecting their views and satisfaction over the services, and, at the same time, pointed out tasks and methods what teachers could concretely develop as a reaction to such reflections. Also, OQEA/POKI model helped to accurately define the vision and values of the organisations.

The model followed the mission of the organisations referring to the improvement of quality measures.

OQEA/POKI model and its quality processes emphasized group survey/monitoring to make the action plans of the organisations deal with most relevant suggestions of students.

In case one has to list *some concrete results/effects which can be related to the implementation of OQEA/POKI*, it is worth mentioning that this peculiar model helped raising the number of participants at a significant rate. Also, the advertising/marketing of programmes has become more successful as brochures of trainings reach potential students in direct mailing. Decision-makers have also recognised that the quality-orientation of the organisations participating OQE/POKI as more apparent through their study catalogues/improved advertising practices, which gives more credit to adult education activities focusing on more learners' needs.

The OQEA/POKI model also underlined the use and benefit of inclusive approaches, which recognise and accept different attitudes of adult students/learners.

By putting the Green Logo of POKI into the bulletins of the organisations, they have been recognised as quality-centred communities, which orientate themselves to their communities with better educational provision and services by maintaining a learner-centred atmosphere within the organisation.

The interviews underlined that interviewed colleagues of the Adult Education Centres were convinced that their Centres became more effective and transparent by using OQEA/POKI model for quality improvement. One can easily come to the conclusion that this model clearly helps the organisation to provide services focusing on better adult learning performance.

Part 5: Reflection on success and fail factors

When *reflecting on success and failure factors*, one must clearly summarize the following:

Other educational organisations can learn a lot from this particular quality model in the context of trying to become more systematic, and well-organised in the services for adult learners.

External bodies and partner organisations, decision-makers have recognised that adult education organisations using the OQEA/POKI model have become learner-oriented, working very intensively with learners/participants, which is a rather obvious manner to promote and achieve quality development. This clearly means that the learners are in

the centre of the organisations, which join in OQEA/POKI in order to develop their services.

Also, another sign of changing organisational life is that colleagues of these organisation (e.g. Adult Education Centres) have become more interested, enthusiastic of trying to raise the quality of their own work, therefore, after a while they will be more convinced when thing turn better either in organisational or in service dimension.

The local Chamber of Commerce in Velenje, for example, recognised OQEA/POKI as a genuine system of quality development for educational organisations other than ISO. They value the benefits of developing learning performance and raising participation through improving community, better management, communication, planning, etc. within the organisation.

The Slovenian Institute of Adult Education is also thinking of how to develop the OQEA/POKI system within the labour market.

So far as the *transferability of OQEA/POKI to other educational organisations* is concerned, both Adult Education Centres' representative have signalled that OQEA/POKI can be adapted by other schools, VET institutions, adult education organisations which directly operate in the area of adult education and/or training. This Case Study indicated at the introductory paragraph what kind of organisations have joined the model so far. It is obvious that most quality indicators mentioned would need re-conceptualisation in a non adult learning context.

OQEA/POKI model may also be used in counselling and guidance in an ad hoc form. The interviewed colleague from Velenje underlined that secondary-schools have been rather interested in using the model for improving their services to learners, but again some quality measures must be adjusted to the new environment other than adult education.

The impact assessment of the OQEA/POKI model is regularly provided by the Slovenian Institute of Adult Education (SIAE/ACS). It means that the Slovenian Institute monitors the organisations that participate in the OQEA/POKI model and candidate for holding the Green Quality logo. On the other hand, participating organisation must provide their own detailed OQEA/POKI report on particular elements, modules of quality improvement as part of their self-assessment to reflect to the values, mission, and vision they identify and clearly describe in their documents and embed into their Action Plan too.

When policy makers, programme managers and others trying to transfer the OQEA/POKI model to their contexts, they should consider the followings when applying the model:

Most organisations using the OQEA/POKI model are trying to survive in the labour market. The Quality Prize or logo is a good way of making adult learners recognise that the relevant organisation is representing quality and performance orientation. It also signals that individual work within the organisation is becoming valuable, and critically important to enable the services of the organisation be developed to adult learners.

OQEA/POKI model teaches us how to become systemic in activities and organisational functioning, however, the model also helps people to believe in their work and their tal-

ents and generates an interest to document personal development, work-based achievements and innovative thinking.

Part 6: Conclusions

Main quality criteria relevant for adult learning in the context of OQEA/POKI are the followings the interviews reflect:

- professionalism;
- quality;
- good care of students/learners;
- accessibility;
- flexibility;
- teamwork;
- learner's satisfaction;
- good communication towards the learner;
- honesty – good services;
- good conditions that help achieving most goals;
- co-operation with labour market partners;

Distinction from other educational sectors:

The above listed quality criteria are related to a learner-centred organisation of which operation and services are need to become and stay attractive for potential users. OQEA/POKI model for those organisations which try to develop becoming better with their services, based on team-work and proper learning climate.

Applicable quality instruments:

Interviewed organisational representatives openly addressed that they have got a rather well organised and equipped infrastructure that help regular partnership with students in order to help them develop in their own learning through quality knowledge transfer. One quality instrument identified in the interviews was the Action Plan each OQEA/POKI partner organisation has to provide to reflect how and in what dimensions the adult education organisation is prepared for organisational and functional/operational changes.

Another form of instrument is the additional services available and accessible at the educational organisation, such as public spaces where adult learners can exchange their ideas, participate some social and cultural events, and reach for most local and regional publication in relation to employment, education, community life, arts, sport, etc. This dimension requires some particular ICT technology access for adult learners that helps e- and blended forms of learning.

Overarching framework for quality in adult learning needed?

OQEA/POKI has been very systematically organised at national and local levels and it ought to be understood as an overarching framework for quality development in Slovenian adult education.

The Questionnaire of OQEA/POKI is available on-line at: www.kakovost.ac.si/oqea

The interviews additionally referred again to the issue that additional bureaucracy of OQEA/POKI, however, ought to be reduced.

Main challenges for the development of the framework:

It is important to have good professional support for quality development within the organisation trying to use OQEA/POKI model. Therefore, most institutions participating the OQEA network must educate and train their quality counsellors and other personnel dealing with quality development at organisational and/or individual levels.

OQEA/POKI requires some basic education to colleagues participating the programme for 2 year or for more and it also set an on-going training for quality groups/quality counsellors of organisations. The Slovenian Institute for Adult Education is responsible for such professional developments and quality skills development

It is essential to well-define each and all quality criteria and indicators.

Time and bureaucracy are the main challenges of the OQEA/POKI model. Also, it is essential that colleagues are generally motivated to maintain and develop the model within the organisation.

Transparency is required that the model and its usage is well-understood by staff and all employees.

The importance of networking and visits amongst OQEA/POKI users is underlined as being important to exchange experience and develop trust amongst users of such a quality instrument.

Further points of attention/guidelines in the OQEA/POKI model:

It is important to note that OQEA/POKI is a process-oriented quality instrument, which requires rather significant time and engagement from participating educational organisations, thereby, promoting professional assessment of organisational processes and, at the same time, to strengthen public recognition of services in inter-personal and virtual networking and partnerships.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that this system is representing co-operation based quality development instead of pure competition.

15 United Kingdom (Wales): Inspection of Adult Community Learning (ACL)

Name expert: Helen Keogh

Introduction: Description of the quality measure: introduction and short summary

Adult Community Learning (ACL) is defined as: flexible part-time and full-time learning opportunities for adults, delivered at a range of times in community venues to meet local needs. ACL caters mainly for adults aged 19+. The location of delivery is an important defining feature of ACL. Venues, which were not necessarily established to deliver adult learning provide flexibility and are more accessible to groups traditionally disengaged from learning. ACL includes both formal and informal/non-accredited learning opportunities.

ACL funded by the Welsh Assembly Government is delivered by 16 ACL Partnerships throughout Wales, which are responsible for planning and funding ACL provision in a specified geographical area. Partnerships involve a range of providers, including further education colleges, higher education institutions, the local authority, Welsh language centres and the voluntary sector. The range of courses – full-time and part-time - differs between providers, but includes courses in ICTs, art and design, adult basic education, Welsh for adults and personal development¹. Whilst making an important contribution to the skills agenda through supporting the development of generic skills for use in the workplace, ACL is not solely concerned with addressing the national skills agenda. ACL plays a key role in wider community development activities or in enabling progression to further and higher education and it also provides benefits for individuals, families and communities, promoting social justice, health and well-being.

Strategic aims were set out in the 2010 policy statement on ACL², including the aim to increase participation by those who have benefited least from education and also to achieve greater coherence in the nature and patterns of provision across providers. The policy statement sets out a range of priority groups for ACL to which a minimum of 80% of the total funding allocated to local authorities and further education institutions for ACL provision should be devoted:- i) anyone aged 16 and above accessing an ACL basic skills and/or ESOL programme, including contextualised basic skills and citizenship courses; ii) those who are not currently in education, training or employment and are in receipt of state benefits / support; ii) those aged 50+ who are not in full-time employment.

Estyn is independent from but funded by, the Welsh Assembly Government. The purpose of Estyn is to inspect quality and standards of education and training in Wales. In relation to post-16 education and training provision in Wales (including ACL), the Learning and Skills Act (2000) requires the Chief Inspector to report on:

¹ Estyn (2012) Annual Report 2010-2011: www.estyn.gov.uk/english

² Welsh Government Assembly (2010) *Delivering Community Learning for Wales*.

- the quality of the education and training provided;
- the standards achieved by those receiving education and training; and
- whether the financial resources made available to those providing education and training are managed efficiently and used to provide value for money.

Estyn has a key role in maintaining and improving the quality of ACL. During 2009-2010 ESTYN successfully completed the six-year (2004-2010) national programme of inspections of education and training in Wales, including ACL partnership inspections and the new inspection cycle (2010-2016) is underway. Inspection operates at national, sectoral, provider and learning site level as follows;

Macro level: ACL partnership inspections feed into the overall picture of quality of ACL provision in Wales and Estyn provides reports and advice on ACL to the Department of Education and Skills (DfES) and the Welsh Government.

Meso level: Inspection of an ACL partnership takes account of the overall management and facilities of the partnership as well as a review of the range of courses, enrolments, retention rates, success rates, learner progression and provider links with local businesses and the local community.

Micro level: The inspection of individual courses/subjects forms an important part of an overall inspection. This includes observation of lessons and examination of lesson plans by the inspectors.

Overall objectives of the quality measure

Estyn's mission is to achieve excellence for all learners in Wales through providing an independent, high quality inspection and advice service. In the case of ACL provision, the overall objective is to ensure the ongoing quality of ACL through inspection of partnerships on a cyclical basis. The outcomes of the inspection are intended to give learners more information about the quality of providers of ACL; to provide public accountability to service users on the quality of ACL; to inform the development of national policy by the Welsh Assembly Government; and to promote the spread of best practice in the delivery of ACL.

Part 1: Problem definition

ESTYN's inspection of ACL in Wales is part of the overall governance principles of publicly-funded services in Wales in the interests of improving provision of services to consumers, the transparency of public spending and the accountability of providers in receipt of public funding. It is also part of drive to transform education and training in Wales to make it responsive to the economic and social challenges facing the country in the 21st century. In addition, the year 2010 represented the end of the 2004-2010 cycle of ESTYN's national inspections of education and training in Wales, including adult community learning.

Various reports and documents from ESTYN and from the Welsh Assembly Government¹ acknowledge the strengths of adult community learning in responding to individual, community and national agenda in Wales during the ESTYN national inspection cycle 2004-2010.

While the number of adults participating in adult basic education is small compared to the overall learner population, the quality of teaching and learning in adult basic education increased steadily in that period, with successful completion rates rising by 17 percentage points to 72% in 2006-2009. Strengths identified included: generally good standards of learner achievement; collaboration with other providers and agencies, and responsiveness to the needs of particular groups, such as ethnic minority learners.

The same reports and documents also reveal an uneven distribution of high quality ACL provision across Wales and point to shortcomings in its delivery including the following:

- A previous lack of clear national policy, and strategic planning on a geographical basis, resulted in fragmented delivery, duplication of effort and variable quality up to 2010.
- Too many adults have low levels of basic literacy. Moreover, providers of adult basic education do not plan well enough to attract young adult learners who have not achieved level 2 qualifications in English or mathematics while at school.
- While learners' outcomes in ESOL improved in 2006 - 2009, the difference between individual providers remained too wide and there was lack of consistency in the availability of provision across Wales.
- 90% or more of learners made good or excellent progress but only a few learners achieved outstanding standards in their work. Below 20% of learners were often not sufficiently aware of how to use individual learning plans to set their own learning goals, take on more challenging work or make better progress;
- There were too many differences in outcomes between different learning areas. Half the providers did not offer enough opportunities for Welsh language and bilingual learners to develop their language skills. Learners taking courses in adult basic education (ABE) or ESOL often did not have enough courses available in community settings.
- There were shortcomings in about a quarter of teaching sessions observed in the period 2004 - 2009.
- Adult learners were often unsure of the support available to help them to succeed in their studies. A minority of Partnerships (below 40%) did not give adult learners access to consistent and clear information about the courses available.
- Systems to track learners' progress were not good enough. More consistency in the measurement of gains for learners undertaking informal learning is needed. Use of QALL to give credit for non-accredited adult learning was limited.

¹ Estyn (2007) *Leadership and strategic management in the further education, work-based learning and adult community-based learning sectors*; ESTYN (2011) *Annual Report 2009-2010*; Welsh Assembly Government (2010) *Delivering Community Learning for Wales* (2010):

- Leadership and management were good or better in just over a third of Partnerships. Less than 10% had outstanding features. 70% or more of Partnerships had poor strategic planning. Leaders and education professionals need better training;
- Around half of the Partnerships had shortcomings in their quality assurance arrangements. Partnerships often did not have enough clear targets or performance indicators to monitor quality.
- Only about half of ACL Partnerships offered good value for money. There is also a danger that stretching limited resources in too many directions will undermine effectiveness.
- Data on what is funded as ACL were often inconsistent and incomplete.

Part 2: Approach

Primary responsibility for improving the quality of ACL provision lies with the ACL partnership. Self-assessment has become increasingly embedded across education and training in Wales, and has contributed to improving quality and provision and raising attainment and achievement for all learners¹. Within this context the Welsh Assembly Government is working with ACL partnerships to strengthen their quality assurance arrangements, as part of the post-16 Quality Effectiveness Framework (QEF) introduced in 2009 for post-16 provision in Wales. Under the QEF ACL partnerships are obliged to submit an annual self-assessment report (SAR) which evaluates all of the ACL provision across its area and a quality development plan (QDP) to the Department for Education and Skills (DfES).

The ACL Partnerships set out their clear strategic direction in their strategic and quality development plans; their SAR assesses their performance against this annually. The SAR is the starting point for DfES's monitoring of performance. When concerns about performance are identified providers are required to implement action plans for improvement, and are closely monitored to ensure that the shortcomings are addressed.

The Partnership's SAR is also the starting point for the Estyn inspection of ACL Partnerships. Estyn worked closely with DfES to ensure that its new Common Inspection Framework 2010 (CIF) is closely aligned with the QEF². CIF and QEF use common data sets and jointly-badged toolkit materials to support quality improvement. The ESTYN guidance manual on self-assessment for ACL providers (2010)³ mirrors the key questions, quality indicators and quality aspects used in CIF and is designed to support providers' self-assessment activities and improvement planning.

An ACL inspection is carried out in partnership between Estyn and an ACL partnership with an overall focus on improving outcomes for learners and maintaining standards. A

¹ Estyn (2010) *A self-assessment manual for adult community learning 2010*: <http://www.estyn.gov.uk/english/inspection/inspection-guidance/adult-community-learning/>

² CIF is also aligned with the post-16 Quality Standards of the Welsh Government's basic skills strategy (for children) and adults (Basic Skills Cymru) which funds programmes leading to formal qualifications for adults who lack the literacy, numeracy, language and ICT skills needed for life and work. <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/allsectorpolicies/basicskillsymru/?lang=en>

³ Estyn (2010) *A self-assessment manual for adult community learning 2010*: <http://www.estyn.gov.uk/english/inspection/inspection-guidance/adult-community-learning/>

new six-year cycle of national education and training inspections began in September 2010 with the introduction of the new Common Inspection Framework (CIF). The development of the CIF followed extensive consultation with stakeholders which began in 2007. The new cycle of inspection is an example of transition from a centralised inspection approach to a 'lighter touch' inspection based on provider self-assessment. During the previous six-year national inspection cycle (2004-2010) Estyn found that many providers were performing well and their systems of self-assessment had matured and, as such, the majority of providers did not need such extensive inspections. Thus, the majority of the inspections are risk-based, allowing Estyn to target more resources at those providers that require closer inspection, while reducing the need to inspect consistently good performers.

The Common Inspection Framework (CIF)¹ is used for inspections of all publicly-funded education and training provision in Wales (apart from higher education with the exception of initial teacher education and training). The CIF embodies the following changes to inspection arrangements in the previous inspection cycle, 2004-2010:

- **Proportionate inspection** – all providers now receive a core inspection within a six-year cycle, with follow-up visits that are proportionate and responsive to particular issues within the provider. Greater emphasis is placed on the provider and individual practitioners taking responsibility for self-evaluation and continuous improvement;
- **Shorter core inspections based on three key questions and lasting up to 5 days** in ACL Partnerships. The Estyn team includes peer inspectors and a nominee who is a staff member of the provider;
- The **choice of which sessions to observe** depends on 5 - 10 'lines of enquiry' generated by an analysis of data on outcomes, information about the provider and debating a Partnership's own SAR. The lines of enquiry guide the work of the inspection team sampling evidence to test the partnership's own assessment of its work. Standards in literacy are always lines of inquiry in all sectors and there is now greater emphasis on skills-based learning and self-evaluation and on how well providers are delivering outcomes for learners;
- **A streamlined framework of inspection indicators and judgements** comprising four new judgments (excellent, good, adequate, unsatisfactory); two final overall judgments (current performance and prospects for improvement); three key questions and ten quality indicators;
- **An emphasis on the user** – to date the *Learner Voice* questionnaire has captured at least 25% of learners' views. The Welsh Government are currently developing a new post-16 'learner voice' survey to be implemented nationally from October 2012;
- **A focus on excellent ('sector-leading') practice** so that Estyn can share the information with other providers via its website, external conferences and publications;
- **More follow-up activity** based on a sliding scale of need;
- Clearer, more accessible reports.

The CIF is organised as follows:

¹ See ESTYN (2010) Common Inspection Framework; ESTYN Newsletters 2009 – 2012; ESTYN guidance materials for inspectors and providers – all at www.estyn.gov.uk

KEY QUESTION 1. How good are outcomes?

Quality Indicator 1.1 Standards

Aspect 1.1.1 results and trends in performance compared with national averages, similar providers and prior attainment

Aspect 1.1.2 standards of groups of learners

Aspect 1.1.3 achievement and progress in learning

Aspect 1.1.4 skills

Aspect 1.1.5 Welsh language

Quality Indicator 1.2 Wellbeing

Aspect 1.2.1 attitudes to keeping healthy and safe

Aspect 1.2.2 participation and enjoyment in learning

Aspect 1.2.3 community involvement and decision-making

Aspect 1.2.4 social and life skills

KEY QUESTION 2. How good is provision?

Quality Indicator 2.1 Learning experiences

Aspect 2.1.1 meeting the needs of learners, employers/community

Aspect 2.1.2 provision for skills

Aspect 2.1.3 Welsh language provision and the Welsh dimension

Aspect 2.1.4 education for sustainable development and global citizenship

Quality Indicator 2.2 Teaching

Aspect 2.2.1 range and quality of teaching approaches

Aspect 2.2.2 assessment of and for, learning

Quality Indicator 2.3 Care, support and guidance

Aspect 2.3.1 provision for health and wellbeing

Aspect 2.3.2 specialist services, information and guidance

Aspect 2.3.3 safeguarding arrangements

Aspect 2.3.4 additional learning needs

Quality Indicator 2.4 Learning environment

Aspect 2.4.1 ethos, equality and diversity

Aspect 2.4.2 physical environment

KEY QUESTION 3. How good are leadership and management?

Quality Indicator 3.1 Leadership

Aspect 3.1.1 strategic direction and the impact of leadership

Aspect 3.1.2 governors or other supervisory boards

Aspect 3.1.3 meeting national and local priorities

Quality Indicator 3.2 Improving quality

Aspect 3.2.1 self-evaluation, including listening to learners and others

Aspect 3.2.2 planning and securing improvement

Aspect 3.2.3 involvement in networks of professional practice

Quality Indicator 3.3 Partnership working

Aspect 3.3.1 strategic partnerships

Aspect 3.3.2 joint planning, resourcing and quality assurance

Quality Indicator 3.4 Resource management.

Aspect 3.4.1 management of staff and resources

Aspect 3.4.2 value for money

Inspectors use a four-point scale to make a judgement under each aspect of the 10 quality indicators as follows:

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

The **Summary contains** the two overall judgements on the ACL Partnership's current performance and prospects for improvement as follows:

Overall judgement on the Partnership's current performance: While the overall judgement is based on the judgements made on the three Key Questions, the greatest weight is given to the judgement about Key Question 1.

Overall judgement on the Partnership's prospects for improvement: The second overall judgement represents inspectors' confidence in the partnership's ability to drive its own improvement, especially as identified by the judgement about Key Question 3.

Recommendations: The recommendations give the ACL partnership a clear and specific indication of the areas for improvement that it will need to address in its action plan.

Follow-up activity: Depending on the balance of strengths and areas for development in a provider and its capacity to deliver improvements in standards and quality, there are various levels of follow-up activity, as follows:

- **Post-16 link inspector monitoring visit where** a small number of key questions or quality indicators are judged to be adequate, a post-16 link inspector will monitor these specific areas to ensure improvement is made.
- **Estyn team monitoring visit** - this type of follow up happens when at least one of the overall judgements is adequate, but is not causing concern to the extent that a re-inspection is required.
- **Re-inspection** - normally, when at least one of the overall judgements for a provider is unsatisfactory, Estyn will carry out a re-inspection.
- A provider which is judged to have excellent practice in a particular area of work is invited to write a
- case study of **sector-leading practice** for publication on Estyn's website.

Post-inspection questionnaires: Providers provide feedback on their experience of the inspection by completing a post-inspection questionnaire (PIQ), one part to be completed at the end of the inspection week and the second part to be completed when the report is published.

Potential barriers to implementation: Some of the potential barriers to implementation of the CIF 2010 were anticipated by Estyn by means of a wide range of guidance materi-

als developed to support education and training sectors and inspectors themselves in the transition the new CIF. Estyn's inspection reports and annual reports are clear and transparent.

Challenges arising from a reduction in Estyn's budget are being addressed through a range of policies and practices to support a drive towards greater efficiency and effectiveness in the organisation.

Part 3: Contextual factors that influence the quality measure

The legal framework in Wales supports the provision of well-regulated, responsive ACL in Wales. The Welsh Assembly Government is legally obliged by the Education and Training Act (2000) to make provision for adult learning. The status of publicly-funded ACL as a key response to a range of government economic and social policies is proclaimed in Welsh Assembly Government policies and reports. The need to ensure that ACL fulfils that role is also emphasised in government documents.

ACL contributes to the delivery of a number of Welsh Assembly Government policies and strategies which aim to strengthen and enhance the social resources of local communities. In addition to the economic agenda, ACL impacts on social inclusion, health and well-being, community regeneration, the eradication of child poverty and the older people's strategy. ACL is an important thread in the Welfare to Work agenda, providing a vital opportunity for those not engaged in education, employment or training to participate in learning. ACL also contributes to the wider Transformation agenda for education and training in Wales.

The general environment of fiscal constraints, cut-backs in public expenditure and a focus on returns on investment lead to a public appetite for accountability and transparency in the use of public resources. Estyn's inspection of publicly-funded education and training is very much part of the overall Welsh Assembly Government's whole-of-government emphasis on inspection and audit of publicly-funded services in Wales in the interests of consumers / customers and a return on the investment of taxpayers' money in public services.

Success factors

The range of factors contributing to the success of Estyn's inspection of ACL includes: i) consultation with stakeholders and detailed preparation; ii) well-defined and well-communicated systems and processes; iii) supports to providers and inspectors; iv) on-going review of inspection arrangements.

Consultation with stakeholders and preparation¹

Estyn's CIF 2010 was developed after a two-stage national consultation with education and training providers, learners and community groups. Pilot inspections using CIF 2010 were carried out in 2009, including in ACL providers. In 2010 sector guidance handbooks for inspectors and sector guidance manuals on self-evaluation/ self-assessment were

¹ Estyn Newsletters 2009 – 2012: <http://www.estyn.gov.uk/english/news/newsletters/>

published. In Summer 2010 training in the new inspection arrangements was provided for all inspection personnel.

Systems and Processes

Estyn has a transparent governance system and an explicit code of practice. Estyn's annual strategic plans present performance targets against which it measures its success in delivering each of its objectives. The performance measures reflect not only quantitative performance against measurable outputs, but also qualitative assessments of its impact on improving service provision. The reporting structure ensures that Estyn's efforts to drive improvement in education and training in Wales are focused and reflect efficient and effective use of its resources¹.

Estyn's inspection of ACL is a collaboration with ACL partnerships whose self-assessment report to DfES forms the starting point for the inspection. Thus, a synergy is achieved with the existing self-assessment arrangements and requirements of QEF and duplication of effort is avoided. In addition, the focus on a 'lighter-touch' inspection enables Estyn to 'do more with less' funding and places the focus on the provider's role and responsibilities in relation to quality assurance and improvement of provision.

Estyn adopts a team approach to inspection which includes peer inspectors and a nominee from the partnership being inspected and there is strong involvement of learners in the evaluation. The emphasis on follow-up activities, as necessary, ensures that resources can be concentrated on Partnerships where the inspection identifies challenges.

Partnerships engage with inspections through a 'Virtual Inspection Room' (VIR) where their pre-inspection documentation is uploaded, relevant guidance and support materials can be downloaded and post-inspection questionnaires can be completed. Learners use the VIR to complete questionnaires before the inspection.

Estyn's transparency about every aspect of the inspection creates trust with stakeholders, including adult learners. The clarity, succinctness and timeliness of inspectors' reports and the ongoing concern with accessibility ensure good information for stakeholders on the strengths and weaknesses of individual ACL partnerships and, ultimately, ACL provision overall. Estyn is currently evaluating how well providers implement the Welsh Government post-16 learner involvement strategy².

Provision of supports for providers and inspectors

Estyn has established strong communication with stakeholders, especially partnerships subject to inspection by means of guidelines, newsletters; good practice examples, annual / thematic reports; available on the website. The section on best practice showcases case studies from across all sectors on subjects such as literacy, financial education, online learning and wellbeing. In addition inspectors work with the ACL sector to provide guidance outside of inspection activities.

¹ ESTYN' (2010) *Strategic Plan 2010-2013 – Reporting our Progress*: <http://www.estyn.gov.uk/english/about-us/corporate-publications-and-accounts/>

² Estyn (2012) *Thematic report - the effectiveness of strategies for learner involvement in post-16 learning*

Continuing professional development and conferences contribute to upskilling inspectors and providers. Estyn's Blended Learning project aims to combine traditional face-to-face training and assessment with self-study using online material. It builds on the implementation of the VIR which is an integral part of all inspections and is said¹ to have secured Estyn's position as a leader within European inspectorates in the use of ICT. An Annual National Stakeholder Forum has been established with more regular Sector Network forum meetings as well as training workshops and events.

On-going review of inspection arrangements²

Estyn engages in on-going review of its inspection arrangements and in September 2011 it introduced small changes to how it reports on standards in inspection reports and on the selection of case studies on sector-leading practice. In early 2012, it launched a consultation exercise via an online questionnaire to gather stakeholders' views on how inspection arrangements are working. The feedback indicated that most respondents considered current arrangements to be working well. Estyn's then made small changes to the inspection handbooks and to a few inspection arrangements which it plans to pilot in autumn 2012. A mid-cycle review of inspection arrangements is planned for 2013 and any required changes will be made from the mid-cycle point in September 2013.

Possible factors limiting the success of the quality measure

It is early days in the change-over to the implementation of CIF 2010. The inspection of the 16 ACL partnerships will take place over the six-year cycle 2010-2016 and by January 2012 six inspections had been carried out, including in 4 Partnerships, one voluntary sector large provider and one provider of Welsh for adults.

The range of challenges in ACL identified by Estyn inspection during the 2004-2010 national inspection cycle will take time to address. Adapting to the new inspection arrangements under CIF 2010 is likely to be challenging and putting pressure on ACL providers in their bid to raise the quality of provision. The stronger emphasis on provider responsibility and self-assessment increases the responsibilities of ACL providers. The increased focus on learning outcomes and learner progression will also bring new pressures on providers.

As part of its ongoing programme of efficiency in line with the Comprehensive Spending Review in Wales³, Estyn has been obliged to make significant savings to meet reductions in its budget over the next few years with consequent reduction in spending in some areas of its activity. The organisation plans to work more efficiently while ensuring that the quality of its core business is not compromised but there is some possibility that the reductions in budget could impact negatively on inspection, including the inspection of ACL.

¹ In Estyn Newsletter June 2012: <http://www.estyn.gov.uk/english/news/newsletters/>

² Estyn Newsletter June 2012: <http://www.estyn.gov.uk/english/news/newsletters/>

³ See http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/spend_index.htm

Part 4: Outcomes and results

By January 2012 Estyn had carried out six inspections of ACL provision, including in four Partnerships, one voluntary sector large provider and one provider of Welsh for adults. Four have needed follow-up monitoring and / or inspection to monitor the progress these Partnerships make in addressing inspection recommendations.

Three case studies of sector-leading practice have been sought as a result of the inspections. Estyn believes that this approach is a key aspect of one of its three strategic objectives, namely, to promote and contribute to sustainable improvements in standards, quality and achievements for all learners in the education system of Wales. As it is of the opinion that 'inspection is a powerful driver for improvement through showcasing best practice and challenging weak practice', Estyn is endeavouring to encourage substantial numbers of practitioners to look at these case studies, reflect on their own practice and, where appropriate, adopt or adapt some of these initiatives and strategies in their own settings.

In addition, Estyn believes¹ that where the self-assessment process focuses on impact and outcomes, self-assessment leads to improvements in the educational experiences and outcomes for learners.

System feedback

Estyn has a key role in contributing to the evidence base that underpins policy on education and training in Wales to address the Welsh Government's commitments as set out in its Programme for Government. Each year the Welsh Government and Estyn agree a programme of education and training issues to look at in detail. Estyn carries out survey work into these issues in addition to its inspection work and presents its findings and advice in reports sent directly to ministers and provide recommendations for the Welsh Government, local authorities and providers. Subsequent to the publication of all remit reports, the Welsh Government publishes action plans to address the recommendations from each report.

Since 2008 Estyn Remit Reports have presented advice and informed ACL policy through reports on:

- The impact of ACL Partnerships as part of the wider education and training Transformation agenda (2010-2011)
- The impact of family learning programmes on raising literacy and numeracy levels of children and adults (2010 – 2011)
- An evaluation of the impact and effectiveness of providers' consultations with learners and their involvement of local communities in the development of learning that is fitted to local needs (2009)

¹ Estyn (2010) *Self-assessment guidance manual 2010*:
<http://www.estyn.gov.uk/english/search/?keywords=self-sessment+manual&qobut.x=18&qobut.y=12>

- An evaluation of the extent to which the recent rapid increase in learners in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) has impacted on the learning experience of all ESOL learners (2008)
- A review of strategic collaboration and partnerships by providers and stakeholders in the Adult Community Learning context with particular regard to involvement of the voluntary sector (2008).

Most recently (January 2012), ESTYN published a report¹ on the limitations of ACL provision in meeting the needs of learners aged 65+ who do not seek employment. The general emphasis is on developing a broad range of skills for employment and this does not suit older learners, especially those aged 70+, who are likely to be more interested in enrichment activities such as courses in hobby or craft skills or courses that help them to live a healthy life / maintain their wellbeing. Estyn also found failures in collaboration between education, health and social services to support wellbeing into old age and an absence of a clear strategy by Welsh Government departments and local authorities to meet the needs of a growing older population. In its report, Estyn outlines a series of recommendations to ACL partnerships, local authorities and the Welsh Assembly Government.

Recommendations from Estyn have also contributed to a decision by DfES to carry out a full review in 2012, as part of wider basic skills research and evaluation activity, of the suitability of the Post -16 Quality Standard to determine its ongoing added value. The evaluation will inform the future shape and operation of the Quality Standard for Post-16 basic skills providers in Wales.

Part 5: Reflection on success and fail factors / Conclusions

The main lessons relate to the potential of an inspection system to monitor and assess provision, to raise standards and quality and to impact on learner outcomes in adult community learning.

Impact assessment / other evaluations

Estyn's Annual Plans present performance measures - critical success factor, performance objective, performance measure, monitoring body, time when performance will be measured and targets - against which its success in delivering each of its objectives will be measured. The performance measures reflect not only quantitative performance against measurable outputs, but also qualitative assessments of its impact on improving service provision².

¹ Estyn (2012) *The impact of adult community learning on the wellbeing of older learners*: <http://www.estyn.gov.uk/english/docViewer/231367.5/skills-for-older-learners-the-impact-of-adult-community-learning-on-the-wellbeing-of-older-learners-january-2012/?navmap=30,163>,

² See: <http://www.estyn.gov.uk/english/about-us/corporate-publications-and-accounts/>

Annex 6 (Part B): Country factsheets

1 Austria

A) Quality assurance systems: an overview

HE	A new Federal Act for Quality Assurance in Higher Education sets a common frame for quality assurance in all sectors of higher education in Austria (public universities, universities of applied sciences, private universities). Part of the new law is the establishment of the trans-sectorial “Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria” by the 1st of March 2012. The new agency will unify the functions of AQA, FH Council and Accreditation Council for the private universities. AQA will operate until 2013 and progressively integrate its activities into the new agency.
VET	The Austrian Reference Point for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (ARQA-VET), was established October 1st, 2007. It serves to cross-link stakeholders of Vocational Education and Training in Austria and to play an active role to promote European networking.
Non-formal	(1) Ö-Cert provides registration as one of the Quality Providers of Adult Education in Austria. For transparency, simplified administration and to promote an overall strategy of quality, the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture developed the Ö-CERT (AT-Cert) - in cooperation with leading Austrian experts, representatives of the nine Austrian provinces and providers of Adult education. Ö-CERT is implemented at macro-level (policy) and the target is to assure the quality of providers all over Austria. Ö-CERT is focused by the Austrian Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture to assure and to improve the quality of structures of Adult Learning (Adult Education). (2) Academy of Continuing Education (wba) is a system for the qualification and recognition/accreditation of adult educators. www.wba.or.at/. Founded in 2007 the Academy of Continuing Education has a new approach to recognising acquired competences of adult educators in that it acknowledges previously acquired qualifications and offers guidance as far as the acquisition of missing skills is regarded. (3) Another interesting case is Austria, where institutions that want to take part in the “Initiative Erwachsenenbildung 2012 – 2014”, providing basic skills, have to apply for an accreditation which consists of several rounds of quality procedures including continuous external evaluation and monitoring.

B) Further elaboration on quality assurance in the country

Legal framework

In 1973 the Federal Act on the Promotion of Adult Education and Public Libraries established a legal basis for the federal funding of adult learning institutions in Austria. In March 2009, the *“Leistungsvereinbarungen”* (contract management) were concluded between the Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture and the associations within the Conference of Adult Education in Austria (KEBÖ). These agreements define the Ministry’s obligation to cover structural funding of these institutions (increasing the existing budget at the same time), for a period of three years.

The Austrian Adult Education is characterized by a great number of heterogeneous providers (about 3.000) and subsequently of the diversity of offers. Different Quality Management Systems and Quality Assurance Procedures are in use. This complex situation characterized by a great number of diverse providers employing different systems difficult to compare easily at a glance urged for a solution. To complicate it even more during the last 10 years some of the nine Austrian provinces created their own external Quality Assurance Procedure (as a basis for subsidies for course participant). Providers with offers all over Austria or in various provinces were (still are) obliged to pass and pay for the admission to several provinces Quality Assurance Procedures. The result was (to some extent still is) a very time-consuming and expensive procedure. In 2011 the Federal Ministry of Education, the Arts and Culture invited all stakeholders of Adult Education providers in Austria to promote, develop and to agree on an overall framework of quality for adult education in Austria, the “Ö-Cert”. Legal format and organization of Ö-Cert (AT-Cert): The Austrian Constitution regulates the contracts and cooperation between the Federal Republic and the Provinces (Länder) by the article 15a B-VG. The Federal Ministry of Education, the Arts and Culture signed a contract of cooperation with the Provinces (Länder) to create the Ö-Cert (AT-CERT). Starting in 2012 and under the administrative roof of the Federal Institute for Adult Education (bifeb)) the Ö-CERT-Office opened and the LOGO was registered. (<http://oe-cert.at/>)

Quality Concepts of HE and VET in Austria

A new Federal Act for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (Hochschul-Qualitätssicherungsgesetz) sets a common frame for quality assurance in all sectors of higher education in Austria (public universities, universities of applied sciences, private universities). Part of the new law is the establishment of the trans-sectorial “Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria” by the 1st of March 2012. The new agency will unify the functions of AQA, [FH Council](#) and [Accreditation Council](#) for the private universities. AQA will operate until 2013 and progressively integrate its activities into the new agency. AQA staff will take care of the current procedures in the proven manner and AQA meet all of its obligations. <http://www.aqa.ac.at/>

“Initiative Erwachsenenbildung 2012 – 2014”: The Austrian initiative for adult education arose from a cooperation of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture and the nine Austrian provinces. Its objective is to enable adults who lack basic skills or

never graduated from a lower secondary school to continue and finish their education. The innovative approach of this project is due to two characteristics. First of all, the implementation of consistent quality guidelines for courses of this program in all parts of Austria and, secondly, the fact that all courses are free of charge. The initiative for adult education has been formed over nearly three years of negotiations and concept development. During this process the partners have been representatives of the ministry and the nine Austrian provinces as well as experts of adult education. Their achievements are an official agreement of the ministry and the Austrian provinces in regard to the financing as well as a document describing the projects' intentions, the quality standards and the main structure and procedures during the realization. The agreement was finally signed at the end of 2011. Operations started at the beginning of 2012 and will be secured until the end of 2014. Further negotiations about the future of the initiative will be taken up then.

The Austrian National Agency recognizes the following quality attestations when it comes to eligibility of Adult Learning Centres in Grundtvig: ÖNORM EN ISO 9001:2008, ISO 29990:2010, EFQM, LQW, QVB, EduQua, OÖ-EBQS, CERT-NÖ, S-QS, wien-cert. Since February this year the Ö-Cert plays a major role when it comes to eligibility of Adult Learning Centres in Grundtvig (Link to PDF [Formale Kriterien Grundtvig](#)).

Moreover the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) that acts as a translation device to make national qualifications more readable across Europe, and thereby facilitates lifelong learning, becomes with its national implementation NQR increasingly important for quality approaches also in the field of Adult Learning. In this context the National Coordination Point for the National Qualification Framework in Austria has organized together with the NAs Grundtvig team 'Fit for NQR²: study outcome orientation in adult learning' (March 8th 2012).

The Austrian Reference Point for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (ARQA-VET), was established October 1st, 2007. It serves to cross-link stakeholders of Vocational Education and Training in Austria and to play an active role to promote European networking. (<http://www.arqa-vet.at/qualitaet/DE/>)

Quality approaches

Providers

Ö-Cert (AT-Cert) provides registration as one of the Quality Providers of Adult Education in Austria. The provider has to fulfil basic requirements (= criteria, if it is a provider of adult education): general basic requirements; basic requirements concerning the organization of the provider; basic requirements concerning the offers of the provider; basic requirements concerning principles of ethics and democracy; basic requirements concerning quality assurance.

The provider must have one of the valid Quality Management Systems or Quality Assurance Procedures – according to the Ö-Cert-List, which itemise nine accepted QMS and Quality Assurance Procedures. The most important selection criterion: they all must have an External Audit. Actually these are: ÖNORM EN ISO 9001:2008 (International Organisation for Standardization); EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management:

“Committed to Excellence” and “Recognised for Excellence”); LQW (Lernerorientierte Qualitätstestierung); QVB (Qualitätsentwicklung im Verbund von Bildungseinrichtungen); EduQua (Schweizerisches Q-Zerifikat für Weiterbildungsinstitutionen); and also four Quality Assurance Procedures of Austrian provinces: OÖ-EBQS (Upper Austria), CERT-NÖ (Lower Austria), S-QS (Salzburg), wien-cert (Vienna).

Staff development

The Academy of Continuing Education is a system for the qualification and recognition/accreditation of adult educators. www.wba.or.at/. Founded in 2007 the Academy of Continuing Education has a new approach to recognising acquired competences of adult educators in that it acknowledges previously acquired qualifications and offers guidance as far as the acquisition of missing skills is regarded. While adult education in Austria is still a heterogeneous field and difficult to compare, the Academy of Continuing Education sets standards and strengthens the professionalization of Austrian adult education. WBA does not offer further education programmes itself but accredits suitable further education programmes offered by various adult education institutes throughout Austria. Practical experience in the field of adult education is a prerequisite for a certification by the Academy of Continuing Education. The Academy of Continuing Education is directed towards individuals from one of the four main professions in adult education who are actively involved in adult education in Austria and beyond and want to take part in a certification process. Suitable work fields would be managerial positions in institutes of vocational and non-vocational adult education, responsibility for educational matters, the planning, organising and accompanying of learning processes, teaching, counselling or librarianship. Furthermore it is also directed towards adult education institutions that want to have their offers of further education accredited by the Academy of Continuing Education.

The Academy of Continuing Education awards two degrees: a certificate and based on the certificate a diploma. In a two-level modular curriculum the relevant competences are described. While the certificate attests a person’s basic competences in all four fields of adult education, the diploma stresses the specific field of adult education the graduate is working in. That could be either Teaching, Guidance/Counselling, Educational Management or Librarianship and Information Management.

The Academy of Continuing Education develops and ensures quality standards. It constitutes an important step toward the professionalization of Austrian adult education because it enables those taking part in its certification process to obtain a degree widely recognised within the profession. To sum up here are the top-characteristics of the Academy of Continuing Education:

- Four target groups of the Academy of Continuing Education correlate with the four main professions in the field of Austrian adult education: teachers/trainers, educational managers, counsellors and librarians/information managers
- The Academy of Continuing Education recognises existing formal qualifications as well as non-formally or informally acquired skills
- The Academy of Continuing Education acknowledges a broad range of documents as evidence of competence (certificates, confirmations, equivalents, assessments etc.)

- Compulsory three-day-assessment at the wba-certificate-level
- The Academy of Continuing Education offers individual educational counselling and career counselling by trained counsellors
- The Academy of Continuing Education's two-level modular curriculum is based on competence profiles
- The Academy of Continuing Education awards two different types of degrees: a) Certificate for certified adult educators (rated at 30 ECTS); b) Diploma for graduated adult educators (rated at 60 ECTS)

The Academy of Continuing Education in accrediting educational offers, sets a standard for quality and assures the quality of the offers accredited .

Challenges

The Austrian Adult Education is characterized by a great number of heterogenous providers (about 3.000) and offers. Different Quality Management Systems and Quality Assurance Procedures are in use. During the last 10 years some of the nine Austrian provinces created their own external Quality Assurance Procedure (as a basis for subsidies for course participant). Providers with offers all over Austria or in various provinces have to pass and pay for the admission to several provinces Quality Assurance Procedures.

Key factors for AL are the quality of staff, systems of guidance and information management (knowledge management). The Cooperative System of Austrian Adult Education Institutions (KEBÖ) with the Federal Institute of Adult Education and the Austrian Ministry of Education, Art and Culture established a "Quality Consortium": WBA (Weiterbildungsakademie).

The very nature of the adult learning sector allows for flexibility and change. This context is a fertile ground in which to develop appropriate QA systems and methodologies. QA standards in this sector must take account of the diverse range of providers and learners, many of whom come from disadvantaged groups or persons with special needs. Whilst leadership is also important in the field of AL a greater emphasis on the grassroots, 'bottom-up' approach is appropriate in this sector in order to develop trust, a shared understanding and greater stakeholder ownership.

General (non-vocational) Adult Education is characterized by a diverse and colourful landscape of institutions, NGO's, programs and projects. With the exception of the area of formal education (access to basic education for adults) there are no defined curricula with formally accepted qualifications and formally accepted professional profiles comparable to Higher Education and VET. Lifelong Learning seems to vanish the frontier between General Adult Education, VET, Higher Education, Further Education or Continuing Education, but on the other hand it erects new corridors between formally/ non-formally / informally acquired competencies. These competencies appear learner-centred (learning outcomes) and comparable (standardized and testable) in a framework (EQF/ NQF). The programs of non-vocational Adult Education have to accept the disadvantage in relation to those of VET and HE. Nevertheless a big chance exists in a new role of non-vocational Adult Education in the contexts of Community Education.

To perform good governance the Austrian Ministry of Education, Art and Culture agreed with the nine Austrian provinces (*Länder*, Federal Republic) to sign a law that regulates quality of delivery and financing programs of Adult Education. Important support to focus the issue of quality came in the last decade from European programs like ESF and Grundtvig as well as LLP. The challenge now is to translate the outcome of projects (project development) into a regular culture of quality in the field of AL.

2 Belgium

A) Quality assurance systems: an overview

HE	Flanders: Higher Education has a clear legal framework (visitations may lead to accreditation of programs by NVAO). The courses are accredited by the NVAO kept in Higher Education Register (NL: Hogeronderwijsregister (2)). The Flemish administration must ensure that the provision is in accordance with this register. In Flanders only (ex officio) recorded institutions must and can offer accredited courses leading to awarded diplomas - as Bachelor, Master and Doctor. And since 2009 the NVAO concerns also HBO5, higher vocational education. Wallonia: The agency for accreditation of HE in French Belgium is AEQES, which is part of the EU agency (ENQA). The Agency is responsible for assessing the quality of higher education and working for its continuous improvement. The agency receives money from the EU (European social funds). The recognition of competences is based on a dossier, with is examined by a jury. The first evaluation of the HE system is recently made, there are plans for a transformation. HE is thinking about introducing a test instead of only an administrative procedure.
VET	Flanders: VET has a legal framework HBO5 and education inspectorate in formal adult education. The AKOV, Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Training is responsible for the quality of pathways to evidence of professional qualifications in education, training, education and APL programs. The Inspectorate is an independent service with a view to carrying out its tasks by the Flemish Government is made available to the agency AKOV. In the future, some tasks are performed for other policy than the Education and Training policy - particularly for training - by a single cell within the agency independently and with knowledge of the policy area organizes its work VDAB and Syntra (non-formal VET) have their own quality systems, growth towards integrated quality framework for courses leading to recognized qualifications. Quality control within VDAB vocational education is organised by VDAB itself. VDAB can offer their own courses according to their own criteria, with their own quality systems. VDAB has a solid quality EFQM model and ISO-certified. If an accreditation is approved, there follows a second set of criteria. This is less strictly to the education itself, there is only looked at the professional components of the program. SYNTRA Flanders also looks after the quality of apprenticeships and entrepreneurial

	training itself. Apprenticeship counsellors and apprenticeship advisors will be called on to check the quality of apprenticeships. Aside from that, a self-evaluation tool will be used. The self-evaluations are assessed by a quality-assessment agency. (1). Also client questionnaire are set in to evaluate the offered quality of the program. To the extent that in the policy fields of sport and culture non-formal VET is offered leading to recognized professional qualifications, this will be integrated quality framework also apply to the policy fields of sport and culture. Walloon: There exists no specific accreditation system for VET. Although VET is not part the AEQES, when checking the quality of a curricula they try to include all comparable education, under which VET. Progressively, the AEQES have to take VET into account and come to more cooperation. On the short term is no prospect of developing a separate or broader quality system for VET.
Non-formal	Flanders: (1) The Support Centre for Non-formal Adult Education (SoCius) also supports quality assurance within the sector. Organisations which are subsidised under the decree concerning socio-cultural adult work are expected to take the principles of integrated quality assurance into consideration. Walloon: (1) The Higher Council for social advancement education developed a guide to quality management (Guide Qualité pour l'Enseignement de Promotion sociale) to promote the integration of a quality in all educational institutions for social promotion.

B) Further elaboration on quality assurance in the country

Introduction

Discussing quality in adult learning in Belgium one should take into account the institutional set up of Belgium, including the Flemish and Walloon communities. The federal state is the initiator of various measures taken to improve the quality of the workforce, some of which facilitate access to training. These include in particular paid educational leave. The federal state is also competent for matters related to labour law and social security: for example, one scheme entitles employers to pay lower social security contributions if they hire young job-seekers who combine work and vocational training. Distance education, social advancement education and part-time artistic education are the remit of the Communities. The government of the Communities is responsible for the general policy of continuing education for adults: under certain conditions, it grants allocations to continuing education bodies and subsidies for permanent staff positions. The Communities also have competence to legislate in the following areas: conditions for access to learning, conditions for organisation of courses, ongoing assessment and

exams, the minimum requirements for learning programmes, the issuing and approval of achievement certificates. Certification that results in legal implications (relating to access to a regulated occupation or a subsidised job, authorisation of an equivalence with other diplomas, as a factor of consideration for the setting of a public sector salary scale or receipt of an Structures of education and training systems in Europe interim allowance or unemployment benefit) is restricted to those bodies that respect the accreditation procedures stipulated by the Ministry¹. Subsequently we discuss some highlights in the different communities.

Flanders

Providers of adult learning

In Flanders adult learning is provided in Higher Education (HE), Vocational Education and Training (VET) and also in the non-formal sector. The diverse systems offering continuing education in Flanders are²:

- Adult education, which now consists of adult basic education (organised by Centres for Adult Basic Education, Centra voor Basiseducatie - CBEs³), secondary adult education and higher vocational education (organised by Centres for Adult Education, Centra voor Volwassenenonderwijs – CVOs⁴).
- Vocational education, organised by the VDAB⁵ (Flemish Service for Employment and Vocational Training - Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding) at its own competence centres
- Entrepreneurial training, organised by SYNTRA Flanders⁶, at their own campuses
- Part-time artistic education (deeltijds kunstonderwijs - DKO⁷), organised by academies for visual arts and music, word craft and dance.
- Training in agriculture, organised by centres for agriculture
- Non-formal socio-cultural adult work, organised by various types of socio-cultural institutions: Socio-cultural associations; Regional folk high schools; Specialised socio-cultural institutions and Socio-cultural movements.

A large proportion of adult education is formal. Non-formal education is provided by the SYNTRA Flanders and its partners, the VDAB and the socio-cultural institutions. All forms concern (partially) public-funded programs.

Legislation

Since 1991, the government maintains a quality system for the educational institutions for compulsory education, adult education, part-time artistic education and the pupil guidance centers that rests on four components: a) The primary responsibility for edu-

¹ Eurydice (2009). Educational Structures and Education Systems for Vocational Training and Adult Education in Europe Belgium - F Community

² Eurydice (2009). Educational Structures and Education Systems for Vocational Training and Adult Education in Europe Belgium - Flemish Community

³ <http://www.basiseducatie.be/>

⁴ <http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/onderwijsaanbod/lijt.asp?hs=vwo>

⁵ www.vdab.be

⁶ <http://www.syntra.be/>

⁷ <http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/dko/>

cation lies with the schools, institutes and centers; b) The government imposes substantive minimum standards of education; c) Schools, institutes and centers can rely on educational support; d) The government will ensure whether and to what extent the schools, institutes and centers receive results¹.

It was necessary to embed this general outline of quality in adult education. The Flemish Parliament approved therefore a new decree on adult education on 6 June 2007². The Flemish government ratified this decree on 15 June 2007. The goal of this decree is to give adult education a clear place in the provision of lifelong learning, in order to realise a knowledge-based society³. The decree specifies several issues regarding quality, including⁴: 1) a provider must offer support for individual learning trajectories; 2) a provider is obliged to perform a market analysis in order to get insight in the needs of the offered training and education; 3) specifications of the specific teacher training programmes, it must for instance contain a theoretical and a practical component; 4) the needed specifications for acceptance of a new training profile in adult learning, e.g: it must have a added value in several aspects; if it fits the qualification structure; if it satisfies the relevant legislation in adult learning. This decree only holds for public financed adult learning. No legislation of non-formal learning exists.

Differences between educational sectors

This section discusses the different framework for quality systems between the sectors. For HE, VET, non-formal VET and other non-formal forms for adult learning a description of the quality systems follows.

Higher Education has a clear legal framework. Visitations may lead to accreditation of programs by Dutch Flemish Accreditation Organisation (Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatie Organisatie – NVAO). The courses are accredited by the NVAO kept in Higher Education Register (NL: Hogeronderwijsregister⁵). The Flemish administration must ensure that the provision is in accordance with this register. In Flanders only (ex officio) recorded institutions must and can offer accredited courses leading to awarded diplomas - as Bachelor, Master and Doctor. And since 2009 the NVAO concerns also HBO5, higher vocational education.

VET has a legal framework, the education inspectorate is in charge of controlling the quality of educational programmes, as in Higher Education.

Non-formal VET: VDAB and Syntra have their own quality systems, and are growing towards the integrated quality framework for courses leading to recognized qualifications. For non-formal VET in the field of sport and culture which provide programmes leading to recognized professional qualifications, the integrated quality framework also applies.

¹ Memorie van Toelichting bij het decreet van 15 juni: http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/volwassenenonderwijs/beleid/documenten_regelgeving/2009-03-13-CR-MVT.pdf

² Decreet 17 juni: <http://docs.vlaamsparlement.be/docs/stukken/2006-2007/g1201-7.pdf>

³ Memorie van Toelichting bij het decreet van 15 juni: http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/volwassenenonderwijs/beleid/documenten_regelgeving/2009-03-13-CR-MVT.pdf

⁴ Memorie van Toelichting bij het decreet van 15 juni: http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/volwassenenonderwijs/beleid/documenten_regelgeving/2009-03-13-CR-MVT.pdf

⁵ Hoger Onderwijsregister: <http://www.hogeronderwijsregister.be>

Other non-formal learning for adults: different quality systems. If subsidized by the government, then it is controlled by the administration and supported by organizations (e.g. socio-cultural adult work). Otherwise no inspection takes place.

Quality instruments

This section gives a description of the mechanisms of quality assurance for each system of adult learning.

Adult education: Each Centre for Adult Basic Education (CBE) and Centre for Adult Education (CVO) develops its own internal quality-assurance system, but they can all rely on support from the Flemish Support Centre for all of Adult Education (Vlaams Ondersteuningscentrum voor het Volwassenenonderwijs – VOCVO¹), and the pedagogical counselling services. A steering committee has the task to arrange the development of knowledge and expertise within adult education. Whether or not the final objectives or the basic competences have been achieved will be considered by the inspectorate in the course of their full inspections, against the context of the centre and the characteristics of the course-participant population². As regards specific teacher training organised by the CVOs, Centres for Adult Education, and for higher vocational education of adult education, the same quality control system will apply as that for university colleges, i.e. the system of external reviews³.

Vocational Education: Quality control within VDAB vocational education is organised by VDAB itself⁴. VDAB can offer their own courses according to their own criteria, with their own quality systems. VDAB has a solid quality EFQM model and is ISO-certified. If an accreditation is approved, there follows a second set of criteria. This is less strictly to the education itself, there is only looked at the professional components of the program.

Entrepreneurial training: SYNTRA Flanders looks after the quality of apprenticeships and entrepreneurial training itself. Apprenticeship counsellors and apprenticeship advisors will be called on to check the quality of apprenticeships. Aside from that, a self-evaluation tool will be used. The self-evaluations are assessed by a quality-assessment agency⁵. Also client questionnaires are set in to evaluate the offered quality of the program.

Part-time artistic education: Within DKO, part-time artistic education, the Flemish Community inspectorate is in charge of quality control⁶.

Training in agriculture: Quality control in training in agriculture, is ensured by the Division Sustainable Agricultural Development from the Department for Agriculture and Fisheries which is in charge of the recognition of organisers (the recognized centres), the registration of trainers, the subsidising of training activities, the on-site inspections, the initialling of the certificates and the payment of the social-promotion allowances of the participants⁷.

¹ <http://www.vocvo.be/>

² Eurydice (2009). Educational Structures and Education Systems for Vocational Training and Adult Education in Europe Belgium - Flemish Community

³ Eurydice (2009). Educational Structures and Education Systems for Vocational Training and Adult Education in Europe Belgium - Flemish Community

⁴ Idem.

⁵ Idem.

⁶ Idem.

⁷ Idem.

Non-formal socio-cultural adult work: SoCiuS, the Support Centre for Non-formal Adult Education, offers advanced training and organises consultation meetings, meetings for colleagues and workshops. Special attention is paid to the themes 'interculturalisation' and 'community building and social activation'. SoCiuS also supports quality assurance within the sector. Organisations which are subsidised under the decree on socio-cultural adult work are expected to take the principles of integrated quality assurance into consideration in the course of their activities and to ensure professionalization and professionalism. The manner in which this is done forms part of the evaluation of their activities by the administration. The Agency Socio-cultural work for Youths and Adults (Agentschap voor Sociaal-Cultureel Werk voor Jeugd en Volwassenen - VOLC¹) assesses the activities of the organisations, amongst others through external reviews carried out by a mixed commission. The Agency keeps records and provides visitations.

Accreditation

AKOV, Agency for quality assurance in education and training

The Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Training (Agentschap voor Kwaliteitszorg in Onderwijs en Vorming – AKOV²) is responsible for the quality of pathways for recognition of professional qualifications in education, training and programs for recognition of prior learning.

The AKOV has an Inspectorate Department, which performs tasks in order of the Educational Inspectorate. The VDAB and the SYNTRA are more job-oriented and do not have a core focus on education standards. For these institutions it is planned to establish an independent cell to construct a supervisory framework for the recognition and accreditation based on learning outcomes. This cell enters the AKOV, so there is a direct link to the education inspectorate. It will also be supplemented with sector-experts. This cell will in this way be independently. The cell will be operational at the earliest in the academic year 2013.

HE: NVAO is responsible for the accreditation of HE, EQF-level 6, 7 and 8. NVAO examines new educational programmes and provides the visitation of existing programmes. There is no direct link between the AKOV and NVAO. There is thought to construct a network for accreditation, but that is vague and not concrete.

VET: Integrated quality framework

An integrated quality framework for VET is being developed, which means a system for all programs at all education providers. This includes VET providers offering initial education and training as well as continuing education and training for adults. The goal is to increase mobility and ensure comparability of the recognition of qualities. Affiliation is sought with EQAVET.

Private sector: No central authority exists to control the quality of providers of education and training in the private sector. A system of training vouchers is established in order to decrease the costs for participants for further education and training. In order to accept these vouchers, providers need to be qualified.

This training voucher is intended as an incentive from the government. In 2010 this plan was changed, it is narrowed. For instance, the non-work related training is no longer covered. The reason for this is a cost-cutting measure. The philosophy was to encourage

¹ <http://www.sociaalcultureel.be/>

² <http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/wegwijs/akov/>

competence development, but there was a lot of funding of non-work related training. Moreover, the training voucher seemed to be used by people who did not need it.

In theory, an individual who finished training in the private sector can apply for recognition of one's professional quality when the integrated quality framework is developed and implemented. However, the private sector is not yet involved in the process towards an integrated quality framework.

Professional development staff

In formal adult education each learning staff member must have a master degree and a pedagogical diploma.

The Support Centre for Non-formal Adult Education (SoCius) offers advanced training and organises consultation meetings, meetings for colleagues and workshops for staff members of non-formal socio-cultural adult work. Staff members in formal adult education can join a general association for teachers¹, but this is not especially for adult learning staff. Advanced training for adult learning staff depend on the type of provider. Requirements for adult learning staff depend on type of provider (f.e. formal education = teacher, Syntra Vlaanderen: staff must be practitioners too). The HR policy for continuous professional development is the autonomy of the provider

Challenges

The biggest issue in the Flemish part of Belgium is that there is a wide variety of providers who often fall under various relevant policy areas. The result is a variety of quality systems and organs. The challenge is to achieve an integrated quality framework for the courses which lead to recognized qualifications.

Wallonia

Providers of adult education

There are three types of training institutions in Wallonia: a) There exists – except from regular VET and HE - one formal institution for adult education; this includes secondary school and some curricula of bachelor and master. Students receive an official diploma. B) Four institutions for people looking for a job. This is non-formal education. Practically all curricula are given, but always linked with employment. Most curricula are related to technical VET. No certificate is given. C) Five operators formed a consortium for validation of competences (CVDV)². This concerns un-formal education. Students receive a certificate based on their job experience, which is recognized by employers. These five operators are³: 1) Bruxelles-Formation⁴; 2) l'Enseignement de Promotion Sociale (Enseignement de promotion sociale, CFWB⁵); 3) le FOREM (Forem Formation)⁶; 4) l'Institut wallon de Formation en Alternance des indépendants et des Petites et Moyennes Entreprises (Institut de Formation en Alternance et des Petites et Moyennes Entreprises,

¹ <http://www.vvl-onderwijs.be/>

² La Validation de competences: www.cvdc.be

³ La Validation de competences: www.cvdc.be

⁴ <http://www.bruxellesformation.be/>

⁵ <http://www.enseignement.be/index.php?page=26391>

⁶ <http://www.leforem.be/>

IFAPME)¹; 5) le Service de Formation des Petites et Moyennes Entreprises à Bruxelles (Espace de Formation des Petites et moyennes entreprises, EFPME)².

The French Community has competence for several other categories of training. Social advancement education is for adults and forms part of a process of lifelong learning. Article 7 of the French Community's decree of 16 April 1991 organising social advancement education sets out the main purposes of this type of education. A decree dated 14 November 2008 details the integration of social advancement education in the European area and another dated 30 April 2009 is meant to increase the offering of training in literacy by social advancement institutions for the under-educated public³.

Distance learning is organised by the decree of 18 December 1984 and part-time artistic secondary education (ESAHR) by the decree of 2 June 1998⁴.

The decree on support for action by associations in the framework of continuing education (17 July 2003) lays down the conditions for recognition and subsidisation of organisations active in continuing education for adults⁵.

Differences between HE, VET, and NVAL

In this section the accreditation system of HE, VET and non-formal education are discussed.

HE: The agency for accreditation of HE in French Belgium is AEQES⁶, which is part of the EU agency (ENQA). The Agency is responsible for assessing the quality of higher education and working for its continuous improvement. The agency receives money from the EU (European social funds). The recognition of competences is based on a dossier, with is examined by a jury. The first evaluation of the HE system is recently made, there are plans for a transformation. HE is thinking about introducing a test instead of only an administrative procedure.

VET: There exists no specific accreditation system for VET. Although VET is not part of the AEQES, when checking the quality of a curricula they try to include all comparable education, under which VET. Progressively, the AEQES have to take VET into account and come to more cooperation. On the short term is no prospect of developing a separate or broader quality system for VET.

Non-formal education: The consortium CVDV takes real tests to determine the level of knowledge of the students. These are external test which are the same for everyone. There exists a strict quality processes to get external assurance. This differs from the procedure of the AEQES. Also the consortium accepts all jobs from a secondary level, whereas the AEQES holds a minimal requirement of 5 years job experience. These procedures for external assurance of student's performances, might also effect the overall quality of the educational programmes.

Quality instruments

¹ <http://www.ifapme.be/>

² <http://www.efpme.be/>

³ Eurydice (2009). Educational Structures and Education Systems for Vocational Training and Adult Education in Europe Belgium - F Community

⁴ Idem.

⁵ Idem.

⁶ Agence pour ; Evaluation de la Qualité de l'Enseignement Supérieur: www.aeqes.be

Distance education, social advancement education and part-time artistic education are the remit of the French Community. The government of the French Community is responsible for the general policy of continuing education for adults: under certain conditions, it grants allocations to continuing education bodies and subsidies for permanent staff positions. The French Community also has competence to legislate in the following areas: conditions for access to learning, conditions for organisation of courses, ongoing assessment and exams, the minimum requirements for learning programmes, the issuing and approval of achievement certificates. Certification that results in legal implications (relating to access to a regulated occupation or a subsidised job, authorisation of an equivalence with other diplomas, as a factor of consideration for the setting of a public sector salary scale or receipt of an Structures of education and training systems in Europe interim allowance or unemployment benefit) is restricted to those bodies that respect the accreditation procedures stipulated by the Ministry¹.

AEQES: For HE the accreditation body is AEQES², which is part of the EU agency (ENQA). The Agency is responsible for assessing the quality of higher education and working for its continuous improvement. The Agency autonomously develops its procedures used for assessing the quality of teaching in bachelor and masters programmes in the institutions authorised by the French Community. It establishes an evaluation-plan on a 10-year basis, monitoring an appropriate group of programmes with the aim of fostering the alignment of programme profiles and objectives with the missions of the institutions involved, disseminating good practice and promoting synergies. The Agency provides information on the quality of higher education by publishing on its website the review reports, the system-wide analyses and the follow-up action plans, and highlighting best practice. It provides the heads of the institutions reviews and the Government with proposals on ways of enhancing quality. All its working procedures are based on the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)³.

CVDC: The recognition of job experience by the CVDC is measured by a test. Once approval has been gained for particular professions, Validation Centres schedule their testing sessions. Centre Managers appoint an examiner, an observer and a logistical manager for each test. During the test, a professional situation is reconstructed following the Validation Reference Indicators. Candidates are asked to demonstrate their skills in a practical fashion in the presence of experienced professionals who form the panel. Their work is observed by the examiner on the basis of a standard assessment criteria sheet. The observer (trade professional) checks that the testing procedure is organised correctly and participates at the end of the test. Directed by the Validation Centre Manager, a panel composed of the examiner and the observer deliberate the performance of the test. Each candidate can have an interview if required and will receive, if successful, a Skill Certificate by post⁴.

The Wallonia movement for quality

In Wallonia a movement for quality (Mouvement wallon pour la qualité⁵) is active since 1999, and has the mission to promote and develop in Wallonia consideration and im-

¹ Eurydice (2009). Educational Structures and Education Systems for Vocational Training and Adult Education in Europe Belgium - F Community

² Agence pour ; Evaluation de la Qualité de l'Enseignement Supérieur: www.aeqes.be

³ Agence pour ; Evaluation de la Qualité de l'Enseignement Supérieur: www.aeqes.be

⁴ La Validation de compétences: www.cvdc.be

⁵ Mouvement Wallon pour la Qualité: www.mwq.be

plementation of quality concept in all its forms and in all sectors of human activity, including research excellence, improving the safety and well-being and respect for the environment and ethics¹.

The activities of the movement have the focus to create, animate, energize and unite a network of players active in the field of quality, to coordinate and promote synergies. The scope of the movement is broad: its goal is to position itself, by skills and expertise as the preferred partner of bodies and authorities, both private and public, regional, community, federal and international, for all matters concerning the field of quality. Five priority actions are formulated: 1) To provide decision makers with information and guidelines for quality; 2) To develop, operate and communicate on the eve of trends in quality; 3) Being a laboratory methods and tools for creative, innovative and practical; 4) Ensure the promotion and implementation of tools and best practice documents; 5) Evaluate recognition tools by users.

FOREM is among the list of signatories of the Charter of confidence Walloon Movement for Quality. Although the scope of the movement is broad, education is among the subjects of focus.

Guide for quality: The Guide to quality management (Guide Qualité pour l'Enseignement de Promotion sociale:^{2,3}) was developed by the Higher Council for social advancement education to promote the integration of a quality in all educational institutions for social promotion, whether in the level of secondary education or higher.

It is designed as a support for open dialogue between different stakeholders on the evaluation and continuous improvement of teaching activities and training provided by institutions and its organizational aspects. It aims at anchoring a dynamic quality that integrates reflective practice on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and risks of the institution, consistent with the objectives of each.

The guide includes a theoretical, a functional and a documentary part. In the theoretical part a definition and description of the concept and the "quality" is given. The documentary chapters include a bibliography, a glossary and sitography. The functional part is the core of the guide, it contains four tool boxes in relation to four major processes identified in the management system of an institution: leadership, education, support, quality assessment.⁴ Currently, only the tools of the process "Education" are finalized. Gradually, during their design, other tools will be added and will add the guide. The tools are of no binding force. They can be used as presented, they can also be adapted by each institution. If they indeed rely on common legal and regulatory references, they also leave room for creativity and the establishment of a "quality culture" specific. The manual will, therefore, expanded by the principles, ideas, common sense and experience of people who are at the heart of the process within their institution⁵.

Professional development of staff

¹ Mouvement Wallon pour la Qualité: www.mwq.be

² Guide Qualité pour l'Enseignement de Promotion sociale:

<http://www.enseignement.be/index.php?page=26165>

³ Guide Qualité pour l'Enseignement de Promotion sociale (2009)

⁴ Guide Qualité pour l'Enseignement de Promotion sociale (2009)

⁵ Guide Qualité pour l'Enseignement de Promotion sociale:

<http://www.enseignement.be/index.php?page=26165>

Teachers in Institutions for Adult Formal Education in the FWB must have a bachelor or master in pedagogical competences delivered by the FWB. Experts are also hired for specific competences. Managers of institutions for Adult Formal Education must have the same qualifications as the teachers, plus a specific training including 5 modules (pedagogy, administration and communication). For Non formal providers' trainers have technical competences but some trainers are teachers. Non formal providers are part of the project "Formaform" (modules of initial and on-going training)

Challenges

The biggest challenge for AL in Belgium is for the individual to be able to go through the education system, to ease Life Long Learning. The major concern is with the early-school leavers: 25-20% of the young students leave school at 18 without diploma. It should be possible to keep what they have learned; an individual should not be obliged to start from the beginning. What is needed is an overall quality in measuring the educational completeness performed by an individual and the recognition and certification by means of EQF. The biggest challenge for the system is building bridges in the educational system. In this light it is unfortunate that secondary school and VET are not included in the consortium for improving quality and recognition of informal learning) so far.

3 Bulgaria

A) Quality assurance systems: an overview

HE	At a national level the two most important laws that have a relevance to quality are those on the Bulgarian higher education; the Higher Education Act (1995) and the Amendment to the Higher Education Act (1999). These two sets of legislation legalized previous reform efforts initiated by higher education institutions since 1990. At national level – the external quality evaluation and control is performed by the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency (NEAA), which is an independent body of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria. The NEAA's criteria and recommendations are to a great extent in compliance with the Standards and Recommendations for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, elaborated by ENQA.
VET	In terms of VET there are two authorities that apply their own approaches to quality assurance. In December 2009, the Minister of labour and social policy approved by an order a mechanism for quality assurance and control of adult education organized by the National Employment Agency. Since the beginning of 2010 a Quality Assurance Mechanism and Control for initial VET has been applied by the National Employment Agency (NAE). NAE in order to provide high quality and efficiency of the proposed training of adults in centres of its own authority applies a Method for Assessment of the Proposals for Vocational Guidance and Training of Adults when choosing the training institution. Similarly vocational training in Continuing Vocational Training Centres (CVTs) is monitored by the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET). NAVET is the institution, which licenses all CVTs, keeps a register of CVTs and exercises consistent control. NAVET also applies certain tools and mechanisms for monitoring & evaluating learning programmes and learners' achievements.
Non-formal	Not available

B) Further elaboration on quality assurance in the country

Legal framework

HE: At a national level the two most important laws that have a relevance to quality are those on the Bulgarian higher education; the Higher Education Act (1995) and the Amendment to the Higher Education Act (1999). In Higher Education (HE) with the adoption of the Higher Education Act in 1995, in Bulgaria a process of creation of quality management systems of higher education has begun firstly at national level, and later at university level. In accordance with the amendments of the Higher Education Act, in July 1996 a specialized state authority -the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency

(NEAA)- was established with the main task to assess the quality of education and the compliance of the activities of higher schools with the Higher Education Act and the state requirements. There are plans that the system of quality evaluation and control will be changed in two major ways – development of the system of internal evaluation and creation of a system of external evaluation.

The NEAA's criteria combine the principle of equality of the three main areas of activity of higher schools: education, scientific activities and governance. The Criteria list of the NEAA is developed in accordance with the basic models of evaluation, especially CIPP (context, input, process and product evaluation). Furthermore, it must be noted that in accordance with the Higher Education Act, all accredited higher educational institutions have built quality assurance systems at institutional level. These systems include mechanisms for approval, regular overview and monitoring of proposed teaching plans and curricula, and special attention is being paid to the structure and the educational contents, resource provision, reporting on student feedback and regular overview of syllabi.

The **External Evaluation and Accreditation** as it is implemented by the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency (NEAA) focuses on **accreditation**, hence the acknowledgement NEAA of the right of the higher schools to give higher education. The objective is to stimulate higher schools to develop their potential and to improve and maintain the quality of the offered education. NEAA monitors the ability of institutions, their main units and branches to provide good quality of education and scientific research through their internal quality assurance systems; assesses the quality of Bulgarian higher education institutions in order to establish whether they meet or not a number of pre-established criteria and whether they create preconditions, conditions and actions to improve it. The **main criteria used** for the external evaluation and accreditation procedure in HE are based on the four main characteristics of the higher schools which are their educational activities, research, management of the institution and functioning of the internal system for quality assurance, competitiveness of the institution.

In **Higher Education the Internal Systems of Assessment and Maintenance of the Quality** as it is implemented by the providers (HE institutions) aims to control, maintain and manage the quality of education in the offered fields of higher education and professional branches, as well as of the academic staff. In this respect there are operating systems for: 1) assessing and maintaining the quality of training of students and doctoral students; 2) assessing and maintaining the quality of a faculty; 3) self-assessment as part of the requirements for external institutional and programme accreditation; 4) monitoring of employment of graduates; 5) research, analysis and evaluation of students and post-graduate students' views; 6) systems for credit transfer and distance learning.

Improvement in the accreditation regime and in the quality control over the higher Education focuses on A) The availability of academic staff and proper material conditions was introduced as an absolute condition for the accreditation of universities. B) A prohibition was introduced for one and the same member of the academic staff to take part in the accreditation of more than two universities. C) An obligation was introduced for an opinion poll of students to be done at least once a year, with the results being announced publicly. D) Each member of the academic staff is now obligated to develop and announce a description of his/her course. E) There is now a requirement for the

evaluation of knowledge and skills of students to be done in writing, unless the specifics of the respective field do not allow that.

VET: In the VET sector the Employment Promotion Act (2006) also provides some possibilities for co-funding of the enhancement of the quality of training, including the assessment of the training institutions' capacity to implement training of adults; training of teachers of adults; designing and printing of innovative training materials. At a national level only in formal education a new system of academic degrees was introduced and an agency for quality assessment and accreditation of postsecondary school activities was created.

In terms of VET there are two authorities that apply their own approaches to quality assurance.

In December 2009, the Minister of labour and social policy approved by an order for quality assurance and control of adult education organized by the National Employment Agency. Since the beginning of 2010 a Quality Assurance Mechanism and Control for initial VET has been applied by the National Employment Agency (NAE). In order to provide high quality and efficiency of the proposed training of adults in centres of its own authority applies a Method for Assessment of the Proposals for Vocational Guidance and Training of Adults when choosing the training institution. The three main aspect of training are evaluated (syllabi, trainers and equipment). The evaluation of the proposals submitted by the centres is assigned to external experts nominated by the social partners. The mechanism is applied by the Employment Agency and financed by the national budget for active policy under the Operational Program "Human Resource Development". Training control is performed by checking documents and on-site inspections in respect of compliance with the regulatory requirements and the contractual obligations of training institutions and of the persons included in the training. The control is performed by the National Employment Agency and its territorial divisions jointly with representatives of the regional education inspectorates (if the training is conducted by schools), the National Vocational Education and Training Agency and the social partners. For the period January-September 2010 the number of trainings organised for adults by the Employment Agency was 6710, for which 28 438 inspections were performed. The inspections took place at the start, during and after the training. When the training courses last for more than a month, more than one inspection takes place during the process. The quality control of the training is also applied during state examinations for the acquisition of vocational qualification. Requirements have been defined regarding the facilities for conducting the training; the used equipment, teaching materials and aids; the team of trainers, the organisation and conducting of the training: attendance of classes, ongoing assessment of the acquired knowledge and skills by tests, independent assignments, interim examinations, etc. Questionnaire cards completed before, during and after the training are used to study the expectations, opinion and satisfaction by the training of both trainees and trainers. The results from the inspections show that there are still irregularities in the way studies are organised, in the provision of school toolkits, in the delivery of practical lessons and in the conduct of the examinations for the acquisition of vocational qualification.

Similarly vocational training in Continuing Vocational Training Centres (CVTs) is monitored by the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET). NAVET is the institution, which licenses all CVTs, keeps a register of CVTs and exercises consistent control¹. The procedure of licensing of a Centre of Vocational Education was adopted by the Managing Board (MB) of NAVET with Minutes № 7 dated 21.05.2003. It comprises the following: A) The Centre files 3 application forms and a set of written documents in NAVET; B) NAVET prepares written assessment of the documents; C) If the assessment is positive the MB of NAVET starts the procedure on licensing and appoints experts to evaluate the centre; D) The experts evaluate the presented documents and the conditions for education; E) The head of the experts' team presents to the experts' commission a generalised report on the results of the evaluation; F) The experts' commission prepares a consistent proposal to the MB of NAVET for granting or refusing a licence; G) The Managing Board of NAVET closes the procedure on Centre licensing in one of its meetings by hearing a summary of the report of the chairperson of the Experts' Commission, discusses the motion for licensing, conducts show of hands voting adopts a resolution for granting or refusing a license depending on the results of the voting; I) The president of NAVET issues the license.

The granted license gives the right to conduct vocational training of people over 16 years of age in a given profession or in the elements of a profession. The above licensing procedure is a basic prerequisite for enhancing the quality of education and requires compulsory licensing on part of the institutions offering training leading to acquiring a state recognised professional qualification. On completing the procedure, some information about the licensed centres is published on the NAVET website. The licensing procedure introduced by NAVET is the basic prerequisite for high quality training and requires that all stakeholders involved to be licenced so that the vocational training they offer can be officially certified. After the licencing procedure is over, NAVET publishes information about the licenced training centers on its website.

NAVET also applies certain tools and mechanisms for monitoring & evaluating learning programmes and learners' achievements. Assessing learning outcomes is crucial for any educational undertaking. Measuring the outcomes of adult education is, however, complex as outcomes relate to a wide range of aspects such as personal development, socio-economic and cultural factors and involves both competences and attitudes. For this reason this section should cover a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation perspective taking into account the programmatic and individual level. A key factor to achieve the objectives of the national policy is the availability of information on implementation results and the impacts of the policy, on which to base managerial decisions in this area. The full monitoring and evaluation includes: Ex-ante evaluation of new programs and

¹ NAVET is a specialized body to the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria for licensing of activities and coordination of the institutions related to vocational guidance, training and education. It was established in 2000 with VET Law. The activities of NAVET are organized in the following main directions: Participation in the development of policy documents in the field of VET and their implementation; Development and updating of the basic documents for regulation of vocational education and training system in the country – List of Professions for Vocational Education and Training and State Vocational Standards for acquiring qualification in professions; Licensing and control of Centers for Vocational Training of adults (employed and unemployed persons); Licensing and control of Centers for Information and Vocational Guidance

initiatives in view to achieve better quality proposals and an improved focus of actions proposed. On-going monitoring – performed by the institutions responsible for the realization of concrete measures/programs. Ex-post evaluation of the implementation and impacts from the implementation of programs and measures. Impact evaluations is carried out (gross and net) to establish actual results for the end beneficiaries from the performance of actions under the individual streams of the Employment Strategy.

Responsible Bodies

Relevant bodies exist for VET (initial and continuing) and Higher Education. In Bulgaria, the Vocational Education and Training Act (1999) established a special body, **National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET)**.

In 1996 the **National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency (NEAA)** was established as the national quality assessment body, in respect of the **higher education** system in Bulgaria.

Instruments

Professional development of staff: At national level, training activities to become a teacher are regulated by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science. The Ministry approves the professional fields and the number of students to be trained in each of them, as well as the state subsidy for the training of university students. The curriculums and the contents of the training are determined by the higher schools, which are autonomous in defining the format of training of the teachers, in compliance with the regulation documents. The Academic Council within each University approves the curriculums for the Bachelor and Master degrees, whereas the different faculties providing training for teachers design the syllabuses and control the quality of their implementation. If there is a need to introduce new content, the faculty councils introduce changes in the training content in compliance with the minimum compulsory requirements defined in the Regulation on the acquisition of the qualification “Teacher”. The quality of training monitoring within universities is conducted through specially regulated by the state procedures of accreditation of higher schools, implemented by the National Agency for Assessment and Accreditation. The initial training of teachers is implemented by the universities. For the Bachelor’s degree it has a duration of four years and for the Master’s degree after completing Bachelor’s degree in the same field – it is one year. The initial training of trainers and lecturers under different programmes for professional qualification in Vocational Education Centres also starts at university, but is carried out more intensively as part of the continuing education. A recommended requirement is for trainers to have teacher’s qualification. Their competency and legitimacy are assessed in the process of certification on behalf of the relevant educational institution (Vocational Education Centre) interested to offer professional qualification courses. The certification is provided in compliance with a specified by the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training procedure.

In the Universities, where pedagogy is taught, a major “Adult Education” is introduced in about 60 hours, both lectures and seminars. Additionally a Master Study Programme “Management of Adult Education” has been introduced in 2002 in the private New Bulgarian University” on the initiative and with the financial support of DVVInternational, Bulgaria.

In the multi-national companies high educated human resource managers are responsible for the in-service-training. They work with teachers and trainers from the formal or nonformal sector and the quality of provision is tested “by doing”.

Teachers working in the system of school education (grades 1-12), teachers in pre-primary education and tutors have to hold a Bachelor’s degree, and holding a Master’s degree is considered an advantage. In most of the cases the adult trainers are from the formal system: teachers and university lecturers. There is also cases when other specialist works in the field, especially in the non-formal system, because no official regulation for the field has been established.

In Bulgaria the profession of an adult educator does not belong to the list of professions, officially elaborated and recognized. This means that there is no a specific difference between the teachers and trainers for children and working in the formal system, and the adult educators/trainers and facilitators. In the report “Contribution to the joint progress report of the council and the commission on the implementation of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training education and training 2020” (2011, p.16) it is suggested that a new system will be introduced for assessing the quality of the teachers’ work which will be based on the new differentiated payment model. The reforms started in 2009/2010 aim a increasing the quality and applicability of knowledge and skills, increasing the participation in the education process by making economically efficient use of the available resources and development of lifelong learning as a way of thinking stimulating every individual to become aware of their own need for constant acquiring of new knowledge, skills and competences.

One of the most recent documents to adjust Bulgarian social and education policy for the next years is the “Operative Programme for Human Resource Development 2007-2013”. This programme is to serve as a framework for using money from the European Social Fund (with co-financing by the Bulgarian state budget) in the years 2007-2013. The overall aim of the programme is to improve the living standard of people in Bulgaria by development of human resources, high employment rates, higher productivity, access to quality education and lifelong learning, and social inclusion. The programme defines eight priorities. At least three of them concern directly adult education: Enhancing productivity and adaptability of employees, Improvement of education and training especially concerning labour market needs and Better access to education and training.

In private enterprises the educator (mentor) appointed by the enterprise has a crucial role in on the spot training. The requirements and obligations of the mentor are preliminary agreed between the educating establishments.

Self evaluation: At institutional level – internal systems for quality evaluation and control have been introduced by law. The amendments of the Higher Education Act of 1999 oblige every higher school to implement and develop a system of assessment and maintenance of the quality of education and academic personnel. The most popular type of structure for maintenance and distribution of quality within an institution is a Commission on Quality. In some institutions this commission is headed by a deputy rector, and in others – by a specially appointed person having experience in management. There are various forms of its “embedding” in the existing organs of management of the higher school. In recent years, many higher schools have successfully cooperated in an attempt to improve the established systems of quality management by creating common criteria and patterns for assessment and control of quality. The internal systems of quality of the Bulgarian higher schools is characterised by the fact that assessment is made on the

basis of criteria and indicators related to the output and the process, and not to the input of the system.

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have their own systems of internal evaluation and enhancement of quality, consisting of evaluation of teaching staff and plans for human resources development. The internal quality assurance systems of universities are the targets of the evaluation activities of National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency (NEAA).

External evaluation: The National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency (NEAA) is the only governmental institution dealing with the independent evaluation of quality of Higher Education and accreditation of HEIs. NEAA should guarantee the standards and quality, as well as the public trust and credential fidelity in HEIs. During the last years the efforts of the NEAA was on the complete implementation and alignment of the national system for quality assurance with the respective European standards and guidelines. Since 2008 NEAA is a full member of ENQA (European Network for Quality Assurance) in Higher Education and has entered the list of EQAR (European Quality assurance Register for Higher education).

In VET the State Educational Requirement for the assessment system introduces a model of external and internal assessment. Increased number of independent consultancy services for external evaluation of delivered training.

In 2011 the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science initiated the implementation of a project called Improvement of the Quality and Implementation of European Instruments and Practices within the System of Vocational Education and Training, which is aimed at the improvement of the quality in vocational education and training through the development and implementation of methodological and systematic prerequisites for the introduction of efficient European instruments, based on the results from the lifelong learning programme. The development of new framework programmes for the acquisition of professional qualification and providing horizontal and vertical mobility within vocational education is also anticipated. The project is implemented with the financial support of the EU, through the European Social Fund

Challenges

Although there are no specific challenges mentioned in any of the documents studied concerning adult education as such, it seems that the main strategic challenge is for higher education to provide quality education in a constantly changing international environment, in accordance with European standards. Meeting this challenge successfully is a precondition, in order for young Bulgarians to find employment and to have a career in an increasingly demanding domestic and global labour market. The main problems are faced by the internal quality assurance systems as these are implemented by the providers (HE institutions) and can be summarized as follows: 1) Formal attitude towards the quality assurance systems; 2) The outcomes of the quality assurance systems not used; 3) The effectiveness and efficiency of the quality assurance systems not assessed; 4) Part of the quality assurance systems do not cover all activities; 5) The Role of the systems for accumulation and transfer of credits in improving the quality of teaching and improving the learning process is insignificant; 6) There are also some problems with the evaluation and accreditation activity. These are: The formal attitude of the expert teams; Poor inclusion of foreign experts in the expert teams; A ten grade system had to replace the former four grade system; Criteria need improvement; A need to combine institutional and programme accreditation.

4 Cyprus

A) Quality assurance systems: an overview

HE	In Cyprus, the Council of Ministers, has initiated legislation for the establishment of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Education (CAQAA) as the competent authority to assure the quality of higher education offered in the Republic of Cyprus in any form. This is currently the only legislative act on quality approaches.
VET	The main policies in the field of VET, as outlined in the NRP, include the Upgrading vocational education and training, by improving the quality and attractiveness of the education and training systems, establishing mechanisms of lifelong guidance and validation of acquired skills, providing alternative pathways to young persons and upgrading the Apprenticeship System and facilitating the transfer of students between general education and VET. Other current national policy debates and/or issues, which have direct or indirect effects on VET, include the establishment of a System for the Assessment and Certification of training providers, which is considered of vital importance for the adaptation of the training system to the current needs of the labour and training markets and it is expected to contribute to the improvement of quality and effectiveness of the training provision in Cyprus. The introduction of a System for Assessment and Certification of Training Providers will be soon launched by the Human Resource Development Authority (HRDA). At the non-university level of education public educational institutions are accountable to the respective Ministries which are responsible for ensuring that quality standards are retained. Private non-university level institutions are inspected by the officers of the Department of Tertiary Education of the Ministry of Education and Culture. In addition, their programmes of study are liable to accreditation by the Council for Assessment and Accreditation (SEKAP), an independent body entitled with the accreditation of the programmes of study of the private non-university level institutions of higher education.
Non-formal	There is no quality framework (legislation / accreditation for formal adult education / second chance, and for the non formal part of AL except that of VET).

B) Further elaboration on quality assurance in the country

Legal framework

HE: The **Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Education (CAQAA)** is the competent authority to assure the quality of higher education offered in the Republic of Cyprus in any form. This is currently the only legislative act on quality approaches. This authority oversees four relevant bodies which are: a) The Advisory Committee on Tertiary Education (A.C.T.E.); b) The Council of Educational Evaluation Accreditation (C.E.E.A.); c) The Evaluation Committee for Private Universities (E.C.P.U.); d) The Cyprus Council for the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications (Ky.S.A.T.S.).

Concerning private universities, there is an **Evaluation Committee of Private Universities** which is the competent authority (stipulated by the Laws for the Establishment, Operation and Control of Private Universities 109(1)/2005 and 197(1)/2007), for the examination of the applications submitted for the establishment and operation of a private university. The Committee has seven members that serve on a five year tenure. The Committee is chaired by the Chairperson of the Council of Educational Evaluation – Accreditation (C.E.E.A). Two members of its members are from C.E.E.A and four are university professors from three different countries with extensive experience in university governance. The Committee is formed by the Council of Ministers after a relevant suggestion by the Minister of Education and Culture. The ECPU determines both the manner of convening its meetings, the procedures followed during the meetings and in general during the performance of its duties. It has the authority to appoint Teams of Experts to examine certain aspects concerning an application, but the final decision lies with the Committee.

VET: In May 2011, Cyprus submitted the final **National Reform Programme (NRP)** on EU2020, in conformity with the Integrated Guidelines for economic and employment policies agreed by the European Council on 17 June 2010. The NRP presents the national targets under the EU2020 strategy, the key measures to reach these targets and tackle bottlenecks and it also presents the structural reforms that aim to boost growth, employment and social cohesion. The main policies in the field of **VET**, as outlined in the NRP, include the Upgrading vocational education and training, by improving the quality and attractiveness of the education and training systems, establishing mechanisms of lifelong guidance and validation of acquired skills, providing alternative pathways to young persons and upgrading the **Apprenticeship System** and facilitating the transfer of students between general education and VET. Other current national policy debates and/or issues, which have direct or indirect effects on VET, include the establishment of a System for the Assessment and Certification of training providers, which is considered of vital importance for the adaptation of the training system to the current needs of the labour and training markets and it is expected to contribute to the improvement of quality and effectiveness of the training provision in Cyprus.

The introduction of a System for Assessment and Certification of Training Providers will be soon launched by the **Human Resource Development Authority (HRDA)**.

Difference between HE, VET and NVAL

There is **no quality assurance framework for NVAL sector**. At the **tertiary level** of education however quality assurance is exercised both in the form of internal and external evaluation. Internal evaluation is a form of self-evaluation which every institution is required to carry out. External evaluation is not the same for all institutions, depending on the type and the level of each institution.

At the **non-university level** of education, public educational institutions are accountable to the respective Ministries which are responsible for ensuring that quality standards are retained. Private non-university level institutions are inspected by the officers of the Department of Tertiary Education of the Ministry of Education and Culture. In addition, their programmes of study are liable to accreditation by the *Council for Assessment and Accreditation* (SEKAP), an independent body entitled with the accreditation of the programmes of study of the private non-university level institutions of higher education.

The **various agents offering continuing education programmes** are responsible for retaining quality standards of the respective programmes. The Inspectorate of the Ministry of Education and Culture is responsible for supervising and assuring quality of teaching at the Evening Technical School, the afternoon and evening classes at the Technical Schools, the Adult Education Centres and the State Institutes of Further Education. The HRDA Board of Governors is responsible for quality assurance for the HRDA programmes. In this framework it invited, in 2006, external experts to carry out an ex-post evaluation study of the programmes of the period 1998-2004. A system for the assessment and certification of training centres and training providers has also been implemented since 2006.

Quality Assurance bodies

Currently there are four different bodies related to Quality Assurance. These bodies are only responsible for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. The bodies are mentioned previously. However with the **Ministerial Decision No. 66.010/2007** the quality assurance and accountability for both public and private Higher Education Institutions through external accreditation and development of internal quality culture -based on the ENQA Standards and Guidelines and European Agreements- has passed to the **Cyprus Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency**. This new body, is expected to absorb the functions of SEKAP and KYSATS and carry out the evaluation of all public and private higher education institutions operating in Cyprus.

Furthermore, the Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus (HRDA) is a public body which began work in 1979. On November 1, 1999 came into force on HRD Law ar.125 (I) of 1999. HRDA's mission is to create the conditions for the planned and systematic training and development of human resources of Cyprus, at all levels and in all sectors, to meet the needs of the economy within the social and economic policy of the

state. To accomplish its mission and exercise the functions and powers of HRDA operates Human Resource Development Fund¹.

Instruments

Accreditation instruments: The **Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Education** (CAQAA) is responsible for the external evaluation of all tertiary education institutions. This Agency will integrate and replace existing arrangements for separate evaluation by separate accreditation bodies. The first attempt to regulate the evaluation process of Private Tertiary Education in Cyprus was initiated in 1987 with the establishment of the law for tertiary education institutions (N1/87). The Department of Higher and Tertiary Education, which is part of the Ministry of Education and Culture, undertook the task of creating an institutional framework for the educational evaluation - accreditation of programmes of study. The process of programmatic evaluation began in 1992, when the Ministry of Education and Culture accepted the first applications from Private Institutions of Tertiary Education (PITE) for the evaluation of their programs.

Quality Assurance Frameworks: At the **tertiary level** a number of measures have recently been put in place including the Council for Educational Evaluation and Accreditation (SEKAP), the Evaluation Committee for Private Universities, and the **Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Education**.

Staff development: The **HRDA** launches in the near future a gradual introduction of a quality assurance system (details of which are not available yet), with the operation of the Program Electronic Management System Assessment and Certification of Training Providers (e-AxioPistoSyn). Initially, the program e-AxioPistoSyn will accept electronic submission of applications by individuals for inclusion in the Register of Assessors HRDA in the following categories: a) Assessors for Vocational Training Centres (VTCs); b) General Assessors for Vocational Training Structures (VTSs); c) Building Infrastructure Assessors for VTSs; d) Examiners of Vocational Educators and Trainers (VETs)

A radical improvement in the quality of adult learning provision through the proficiency of the adult learning workforce and adult learning providers is one of the key objectives of the Education Reform Programme. Measures to improve proficiency include the strengthening of the administrative capacity of the public sector through training and development, encouragement for the private sector to get involved in education, training and development, and cooperation between policy makers, teachers' unions, trade unions, political parties, students and parents' organisations, employers' unions, employees' unions and local authorities.

External inspection: From information gathered in the reports concerning IVET and CVET, it is evident that current quality assurance practice in Cyprus uses inspection as a monitoring method in most cases. For example, these inspections are carried out in **Technical Schools** every two years, the **Apprenticeship System** also uses inspectors, and the **HRDA's** process of monitoring also includes inspection in addition to quality assessment at program approval stage and subsidy payment.

Challenges

¹ Each employer shall pay to the Fund fee will not exceed one percent of salaries paid to each of their employees, as each time you specified. Since this requirement excludes Government in its capacity as employer.

Quality is being continually addressed in the current education reform process. An example of this was the recent review of the STVE curricula and the study conducted by external consultants for the design of a comprehensive system for evaluating the HRDA's impact on the Cyprus economy. Progress has also been made towards the establishment of a system for the Assessment and Certification of Training Providers including trainers, which will upgrade the quality of training provision, by the HRDA.

The main development challenges in Cyprus, as outlined in the National Strategic Development Plan 2007-2013 include the enhancement of the competitiveness of the economy, the participation of all in the benefits deriving from the economic development, the promotion of research and innovation, the enhancement of social cohesion the protection of the environment and the improvement of the quality of life and the continuous development of human resources.

In Tertiary Education, the external Quality Assurance system of Cyprus is presently implemented within the scope of the Council for Educational Evaluation and Accreditation (SEKAP), which conducts programs of the private institutions of tertiary education. SEKAP consists of seven senior academics, of international standing, from at least three different countries. This occasionally creates some problems in implementing the actual policy.

The Educational Reform, the dialogue which has been initiated in 2005 for the restructuring and the modernization of the Cyprus Education System, constitutes a key vehicle of the LLL Strategy, in addressing the above challenges. The main aims of the Reform is to improve the quality of education, to modernize curricula and teaching methods, to offer equal opportunities to young people, and to contribute to overcoming the difficulties and eliminating obstacles for education of children and adults coming from diverse backgrounds and having diverse needs.

5 Czech Republic

A) Quality assurance systems: an overview

HE	The Act on Higher Education Institutions (111/2006) sets out a qualification system for formal education (which is open to adults) and stipulate the role of the Czech School Inspectorate. In addition, The quality of higher education is evaluated by the Accreditation Commission of the Czech Republic, which belongs to the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports”
VET	Education Act (561/2004) the Education Act stipulates that all schools providing vocational education and training (both IVET and CVET) have to engage in regular self-evaluation. On basis of the Act on verification and recognition of further education results (179/2006) a National Register of Vocational Qualifications has been established. Finally, the Employment Act (435/2004) regulates the state’s employment policy, which includes the funding of accredited educational institutions through the labour offices.
Non-formal	(1) Under the “Concept” programme the government is developing a five-star rating system for educational institutions that provide professional re-training courses.

B) Further elaboration on quality assurance in the country

Legal framework

The Czech adult learning sector can be divided into a public sector and a private sector. The main elements of the public sector are (1) the primary schools, (2) the secondary schools (3) tertiary professional schools, (4) the institutes for higher education, (5) language schools, basic art schools, and leisure centres, and (6) sectoral institutes. The private sector is made up of non-profit associations, profit-making companies, and individual trainers. Among the first type of private institutions the National Centre of Distance Education, and the Association of Universities of the Third Age are especially worth mentioning.

Adult education in the Czech Republic lacks a coherent legal framework and no state or non-state body bears overall responsibility for adult learning. As far as adult learning takes place in public educational institutions, responsibility lies with the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports, the regions, and the municipalities¹. A major non-governmental body is the Association of Adult Education Institutions of the Czech Republic (*Asociace institucí vzdělávání dospělých České republiky: AIVD*).

¹ The responsibility for the administration of public educational institutions is distributed among the central government, the fourteen regions, and the communities. The regions are given a high degree of autonomy. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports is the most important institution at the central level and is responsible for formulating long-term policy objectives and a number of other tasks.

Adult learning in the Czech Republic is partially covered by a number of different regulations. Especially worth mentioning are the Education and Higher Education Acts of 2005, the Act on the Verification and Recognition of Further Education Outcomes of 2006, and the Employment Act of 2004. In addition, the government's adult learning policy has been codified in a number of strategic documents¹.

The quality of adult learning is partially covered by the Education Act (561/2004)² and the Act on Higher Education Institutions (111/2006)³. These acts set out a qualification system for formal education (which is open to adults) and stipulate the role of the Czech School Inspectorate. In addition, the Education Act stipulates that all schools providing vocational education and training (both IVET and CVET) have to engage in regular self-evaluation. On basis of the Act on verification and recognition of further education results (179/2006)⁴ a National Register of Vocational Qualifications has been established. Finally, the Employment Act (435/2004) regulates the state's employment policy, which includes the funding of accredited educational institutions through the labour offices.

Difference between VET, HE and NVAL

Formal vocational education and training to adults is given within the regular (secondary and tertiary) school system and is subject to the same quality standards as initial vocational education and training. Professional retraining courses (CVET) are provided by accredited educational institutions, which are first accredited and later inspected by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports. There are no quality assurance mechanisms for the non-vocational adult learning sector.

Policies on quality

The national policies and plans with regard to quality approaches are part of the more general policies regarding adult education / lifelong learning. The main strategic documents are the 2001 White Paper on the National Programme for the Development of Education in the Czech Republic ("White Paper") and the 2007 Strategy of Lifelong Learning in the Czech Republic ("LLL-Strategy"). The White Paper formulates six strategic guidelines of the educational policy, of which number two and three relate to quality and evaluation⁵. Strategic guideline number two is: 'To improve the quality and relevance of education by developing new educational and study programmes that will meet the requirements of an information and knowledge society, sustainable development, employment, and the need for active participation in the life of a democratic society in an integrated Europe [...]'. Strategic guideline number three is: 'To build a system of evaluation of educational institutions' activities at all levels of government and administration, of monitoring education results, examinations, assessment of personal development levels, and of vocational guidance for children and young people'. The White Paper also mentions a number of issues related to adult education that merit specific

¹ These include the 2001 White Paper on the National Programme for the Development of Education in the Czech Republic, the 2005 Strategy of Sustainable Development in the CR, the 2005 National Reform Programme of the Czech Republic 2005-2008, and the 2007 Strategy of Lifelong Learning in the Czech Republic.

² This act can be found at: <http://www.msmt.cz/dokumenty/act-no-561-of-24th-september-2004?lang=1>

³ This act can be found at: <http://aplikace.msmt.cz/vysokeskoly/legislativa/highereduact.htm>

⁴ This act can be found at: http://aplikace.msmt.cz/PDF/PKsb061_06.pdf, English version: www.observa.org/file/882/download/934.

⁵ Note that these guidelines refer both to initial and to continuing education.

attention. These include (the development of) mechanisms for quality assurance, accreditation, and certification. The paper suggests to divide responsibility on adult education between a number of relevant ministries and to make each ministry responsible for quality assurance in its own sector, which includes the systematic application of accreditation. The educational institutions should be responsible for the means of quality assurance.

Likewise, the LLL-Strategy of 2007 formulates seven “main strategic goals”, which includes a strategic goal on quality. The document emphasises that quality assurance should be based on a combination of external evaluation and self-evaluation and on a combination of formal procedures and informal ways of quality assurance. Formal procedures include the certification of knowledge of individuals and the accreditation of institutions and programmes. Certification and accreditation should be tied to standards that are developed by the national, regional, and local stakeholders. A new National Qualifications Framework (NQF) was to be developed which ‘should form an administrative and relationship framework for all the qualifications recognized in the labour market and allow identification, classification and assignment of the results of learning obtained in various ways into 8 qualification levels and into a system of partial and complete qualifications’. Evaluation is to take place through the development of a monitoring system for the continuing education sector. External evaluation should be balanced by self-evaluation. To this end the government is to provide schools with methodical assistance, quality criteria, and means of self-evaluation. The working plan for the implementation of the LLL-Strategy was approved in January 2009.

Since early 2008 the government has been implementing the National Qualifications Framework. The development of the NQF is funded through the European Social Fund and is due to be finalized by 2015. In 2009 a project entitled Continuing Education Concept (*Koncepce Dalšího Vzdělávání*) was launched by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports with a view to implementing the other goals of the lifelong learning strategy. This project is due to be completed by the end of 2012 / beginning of 2013. Finally, the government is currently implementing the UNIV2 programme, which seeks to increase the involvement of secondary schools in continuing education. However, this programme has no direct relationship to quality improvement.

Instruments

Basic requirements for public educational institutions: Primary, secondary, and tertiary schools are listed in a central database; the Register of Schools. Inclusion in this register gives schools the right to provide education and is conditional upon the school meeting the conditions set out in paragraphs 141-159 of the Education Act (561/2004). Responsibility for quality assurance in these schools rests with the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports (both regarding initial and continuing education)¹ and the Czech School In-

¹ Adults are subject to the same rules as those applying to pupils and students in initial education. Training programmes, levels of qualification, curricula, quality Assurance and assessment does not differ for adult and youth students.

spectorate (see below). Teachers who teach in primary, secondary, and tertiary schools have to meet requirements that are stipulated in the Act on educational staff.

Accreditation: The Ministry of Education Youth and Sports is responsible for the accreditation of professional retraining courses who are eligible for funding from the national government. To be accredited an institution has to provide a course or courses that are deemed of importance by the ministry, and has to conform to the criteria set by the ministry. The accredited institutions and courses are collected in a national database which can be visited at www.dak.msmt.cz

Certification: Qualifications that can be obtained by participating in formal education (primary, secondary, higher education, language courses in state language schools) are covered by the qualification systems set out in the Education Act (561/2004) and the Act on Higher Education Institutions (111/2006). For Vocational Qualifications a National Register of Vocational Qualifications¹ (or National Qualifications Framework, *Národní Soustava Kvalifikací: NSK*) is being established on the basis of Act No. 179/2006 Coll. on verification and recognition of further education results. This register is managed by the National Institute for Technical and Vocational Training (*Národní ústav odborného vzdělávání: NUOV*) in cooperation with the relevant ministries and social partners². This institute falls under the authority of the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports. In the register all vocational qualifications are maintained. Every full qualification is further divided into partial qualifications, and for each partial qualification quality and evaluation standards have been developed. Qualifications are in line with the EQF. At this moment there are about 290 qualifications included in the register. It is aimed to include between 800 to 1.000 qualifications in the register, which is set to be completed by June 2015.

Examinations for retraining courses are undertaken by 518 “authorized persons” who are authorized to examine for 2260 qualifications; an average of about four qualifications per individual. Examination is obligatory in formal education and for retraining courses that have been financed by the state through the labour offices. Between January 2008 and April 2012 38.280 examinations have taken place.

Inspection: The external inspection and evaluation of institutions for primary, secondary, and tertiary education is executed by the Czech School Inspectorate (*Česká Školní Inspekce: ČŠI*)³. Its tasks are determined by the Education Act (561/2004). The quality of higher education is evaluated by the Accreditation Commission of the Czech Republic (*Akreditační Komise Česka Republica: AKCR*), which belongs to the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports.

The quality of professional retraining courses is assured through inspections executed by inspectors from the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports. There are about 50 to 100 inspectors who are responsible for the inspection of some six to ten thousand institutions and courses. The number of courses evaluated annually lies between 10 and 20 percent of the total.

¹ This register is also generally referred to as the National Qualifications System.

² The key social partners are the employers, who are gathered in 19 Sector Councils which serve as a platform to formulate the sector’s qualification needs.

³ It has been noted that the ČŠI only evaluates full-time education and has not dealt with the quality of part-time education. The inspectorate simply relies on the quality of part-time programmes being at the same level as their full-time counterparts.

Evaluation for formal education: Based on the School Act of 2005, all primary and secondary schools have to perform regular assessment of their own work for a three-year period. Self-evaluation is to include the evaluation of the school (as an institution), teaching staff, pupils, and curriculum. The project “Self-Evaluation - Creation of the system and support for schools in the self-evaluation field” (also referred to as “Road to Quality Improvement”) aims to support schools in the field of self-assessment. Under the project self-evaluation criteria are proposed and an evaluation tools portal is provided¹. The project is operated by NUOV in cooperation with the National Institute for Further Education (*Národní institut pro další vzdělávání*: NIDV). The regions are to develop supplementary self-evaluation mechanisms for their respective educational institutions. The ČŠI is to play a considerable role in the introduction of self-evaluation mechanisms at the institutional level. Please note that institutions for formal education also provide courses for adult learners.

Education and qualification of training staff: Any person older than 18 years who substantiates his or her good standing can undertake activities in the field of adult education. There are no qualitative criteria that condition these activities. Providers of continuing education employ both beginning and experienced trainers. The National Institute for Further Education (NIDV) has been created in 2004 to monitor the need for further education of pedagogical staff and to provide training courses for educational staff. It falls under the direct oversight of the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports.

Membership of the Association of Adult Education Institutions of the Czech Republic is promoted as an indicator of quality of adult trainers. The association provides courses for adult trainers and provides a professional certificate for adult lecturers.

QA institutions: The external inspection and evaluation of institutions for primary, secondary, and tertiary education is undertaken by Czech School Inspectorate (*Česká školní inspekce*: ČŠI)². The quality of higher education is evaluated by the Accreditation Commission of the Czech Republic (*Akreditační Komise Česka Republica*: AKCR). Accredited retraining courses and the institutions that provide them are inspected by about 50 to 100 inspectors from the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports.

Quality labels / seals / prizes: At this moment there are no quality labels for further education in the Czech Republic. Under the “Concept” programme the government is developing a five-star rating system for educational institutions that provide professional retraining courses.

Self evaluation: The state provides schools with methodical assistance, quality criteria, and means of self-evaluation. Schools are requested to submit an evaluation report every three years.

¹ All documents and criteria can be found on www.ae.nuov.cz

² It has been noted that the ČŠI only evaluates full-time education and has not dealt with the quality of part-time education. The inspectorate simply relies on the quality of part-time programmes being at the same level as their full-time counterparts.

Challenges

There does not yet exist a general legal framework for the adult learning sector. Coherent legislation regulating the sector should be set up to create a framework for quality assurance.

6 Denmark

A) Quality assurance systems: an overview

HE	With the 2007 Accreditation Act, accreditation became the key method for external quality assurance in Denmark within higher education. ACE Denmark is the accreditation operator for bachelor, master's and professional master's programmes.
VET	The Act on Adult Vocational Training Programmes (AMU) is stated that the continuing training and education committees have to continuously analyse the need for new competencies on the labour market and for developing relevant new joint competence descriptions and adult vocational training programmes. The Act on Adult Vocational Training was revised in 2009 and the new centres of adult vocational training were introduced. Some of the key tasks of the centres are adult guidance, counselling of companies, and coordinating and developing the provision of adult education and training offers. The Act (Chapter 8) focus on registers and quality assurance.
Non-formal	(1) The Act on The Danish Evaluation Institute evaluate all levels of education including all types of adult education that get public funding.

B) Further elaboration on quality assurance in the country

Legal framework

The Danish perception of quality (in VET)

Systematic quality assurance with focus on objectives such as completion rates, employability, satisfaction among stakeholders, and societal value, etc., is a relatively new issue in education, and did not appear on the political agenda until the late 1980s. Quality is not an absolute concept, however; it is rather a complex concept, which depends on the stakeholders' values, objectives, resources, policies and context.

As such, quality in education and teaching is continuously defined through political debate and by the democratic process. As to a national definition of quality, the Danish Ministry of Education has formulated it as follows in its description of the quality strategy for the VET sector:

"[...] it is not possible to say anything definitive and universal about quality in an education system. It is neither possible nor desirable to authorise one specific concept – be it in regard to methods or objectives and values. This is a basic democratic principle,

which takes into consideration the fact that it is possible to achieve the same goals by different routes and with different means and methods”¹.

In Denmark there is a wide range of legislation applicable on the different sub domains of AL.

Differences between VET, HE and NVAL

Formal Adult Education:

Within the Act's and executive orders' quality assurance requirements forms an important part of the overall framework for provision of public adult education and training programmes. In adult vocational training a comprehensive quality assurance system exists providing an internet based evaluation tool to be used by providers.

One of the general elements in the Danish quality strategy is the **Act on Transparency and Openness** in the education system adopted in 2002². This aims at providing access to comparable information on education and educational institutions for the stakeholders and the public, in such a way as to qualify the dialogue. All institutions are obliged to publish information about the courses they provide on their website. This includes their pedagogical values and practice, strategy plans, quantitative data on grade averages for individual subjects and levels, and the other indicators. Although grade averages may be an indicator of quality, they cannot stand alone. Therefore, the institutions must publish overall evaluations of their teaching, etc. The legislation also stipulates that the institutions must publish all information relevant for an assessment of the quality of the instruction provided. This initiative should be seen in connection with the quality element concerning output monitoring, because it can supply further information about an institution.³

The Act on general adult education (AVU): General adult education is offered at adult education centres (Voksenuddannelsescenter, Danish abbreviation: VUC). Since 1 January 2007 the VUCs are self-governing institutions. The teaching is financed via a taximeter funding (i.e. a cash-perstudent grant)⁴. Quality is specific mentioned in chapter 9 of the AVU Act about inspection (tilsyn) and quality system. The minister of Education supervises teaching, tests and exams under this law. The institution establish a system for quality development and assessment of the results in relation to the education and teaching. The minister of Education sets regulations about this. The minister of Education can by the suppliers of education in relation to this Act require all necessary informations to use for inspection and the preparation of statistics, including individual competence assessment. The minister of Education can define regulations about electronic communication between the institution and the Ministry, including form and format and about the use of digital signature when the informations are delivered. The Minister can further make demands to control and security measures.⁵ All VUCs must have and util-

¹ Source: The Danish Approach to Quality in Vocational Education and Training. 2nd edition (2008).

² "Lov om gennemsigtighed og åbenhed i uddannelserne m.v." Act no. 332 of 18/05/200

³ Source: The Danish Approach to Quality in Vocational Education and Training. 2nd edition. (2008).

⁴ Confintea report Denmark 2008 p. 34

⁵ Source: "Lov om almen voksenuddannelse og om anerkendelse af realkompetence i forhold til fag i almen voksenuddannelse, i hf-uddannelsen og i uddannelsen til studentereksamen (avu-loven)

ise a system for quality development and results assessment of each individual programme and of the teaching. The school must be in a position to document its quality system vis-à-vis the Ministry of Education, which supervises the school's implementation of the education programmes and its results¹.

The Act on Higher preparatory Examination (HF) and other adult education: In the Act (Bekendtgørelse af lov om institutioner for almen gymnasial uddannelse og almen voksenuddannelse m.v., LBK nr 880 af 08/08/2011) quality is mentioned directly in § 16 as a part of the selection criteria for the members of the board, in § 53 concerning the Ministers potential actions if the quality is low.

All schools offering one or more upper secondary education programmes must have and utilise a system for quality development and results assessment of each individual programme and of the teaching. Within the general requirements, the school itself decides the methodology for selfassessment and quality assessment it wishes to employ. The school must be in a position to document its quality system vis-à-vis the Ministry of Education, which supervises the school's implementation of the education programmes and its results².

All vocationally oriented higher education programmes must be approved by the Minister of Education. From January 1 2008, applications for approval of new education programmes are handled by the Ministry of Education, and a prerequisite for approval is that the programme has been accredited by the Accreditation Council. The handling of applications for approval of new education programmes is based on a number of minimum requirements. The minimum requirements are set up as checklists, which can be used when writing applications and measure the quality and relevance of the programmes. New education programmes are continuously developed in various areas and at different levels, and – as a part of the Bologna process - from January 1 2008 the following require accreditation: a) Business academy educations; b) Professional Bachelor's degree programmes; c) Continuing adult education programmes (VUU); d) Diploma programmes; e) Master's degree programmes.

Continuous accreditation of existing and new education programmes is ongoing at University Colleges, universities and other institutions of higher education.³

The accreditation system is based on the Danish Act on the Accreditation Agency for Higher Education, and the responsibility of implementing the Act lies with the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation. According to the Accreditation Act, the Accreditation Council is the specific unit that makes the decisions regarding the accreditation of all higher education study programmes. Decisions are made on the basis of accreditation reports prepared by accreditation operators.

The Act on Adult Vocational Training Programmes (AMU) (Labour Market Training Act, LBK no. 381 of 26/03/2010.): The continuing training and education committees have to continuously analyse the need for new competencies on the labour market and for de-

¹ Confintea report Denmark 2008 p. 35

² Confintea report Denmark 2008 p. 39.

³ Source: Adult Education in Denmark (2011).

veloping relevant new joint competence descriptions and adult vocational training programmes. The Act on Adult Vocational Training was revised in 2009 and the new centres of adult vocational training were introduced. Some of the key tasks of the centres are adult guidance, counselling of companies, and coordinating and developing the provision of adult education and training offers. The Act (Chapter 8) focus on registers and quality assurance. § 28 states that the Minister of Education may seek information about the educations, the teaching, assessments of basic literacy in reading, writing, spelling, calculation or mathematics and guidance in relation to this, individual competence assessments after this Act, participation, the teachers and the institutions further operation in order to decide on grants, inspection (tilsyn) and the preparation of statistics. The Minister can decide if this kind of information shall be delivered electronically and in which format, and set the requirements for control and security. § 29 states that the Minister of Education can after the opinion of The Council for Adult – and continuing education (Rådet for Voksen- og Efteruddannelse), set regulations for quality development and control. Stk. 2: The Education Committees and the educational institutions contributes to develop and renew the common quality tools. Sources: Chapter 6 in the Act mentions that the State can support development of analyse and quality measurements. Nine common measures for quality assurance and development are generally regarded as the main quality tools: 1) the involvement of stakeholders; 2) common national guidelines; 3) output monitoring; 4) ministerial approval; 5) monitoring and inspection; 6) testing and examination; 7) transparency and openness; 8) evaluations by the Danish Evaluation Institute; and 9) international cooperation and surveys¹.

The providers of Labour market Training (AMU) (CVET) are responsible for meeting the demands of their local labour market and the Ministry supervises provision and quality of the training activities. Moreover, the providers analyze the quality of the training activities i.e. the satisfaction rate is measured systematically among all participants and a representative segment of companies. The results are made available on the Internet by the Ministry.² The Act (§ 16) regulates which institutions get the authorization for offering adult vocational training (*arbejdsmarkedssuddannelser*). The Minister of Education approves after the opinion of The Council for Adult – and continuing education (Rådet for Voksen- og Efteruddannelse), which public and private educational institutions who can supply adult vocational training.

Act on Guidance : The 2007 amendment to the Act on Guidance regarding the qualifications of practitioners and the methods implemented for evaluation and quality assurance of practice with the objective of improving the professionalism of guidance services. Guidance practitioners are now required to complete a diploma programme in educational and vocational guidance or document equivalent competences through prior learning. A professional bachelor degree in education and vocational guidance has also been established. (Cedefop 2010, p. 59). The 2003 Act on guidance includes requirements concerning quality assurance, e.g. that the youth guidance centres and the regional guidance centres are obliged to implement a quality assurance system that can be used to document activities, quality and effect on clients and society. The Ministry of

¹ Source: The Danish Approach to Quality in Vocational Education and Training. 2nd edition. (2008).

² See (in Danish) www.viskvalitet.dk (Confintea report Denmark 2008 p. 28).

Education has developed several tools that the guidance centres can use for continuous evaluation and development of their services. Improvement of the guidance practitioners' qualifications is another way to ensure quality in guidance. With the 2007 amendments of the Act on guidance, it is now a requirement that guidance practitioners in the education system complete the diploma programme in educational and vocational guidance.¹

Act on Open education: Open learning is regulated by the Act on Open Education. The aim of the Act is to ensure that an adequate provision of vocationally-oriented education is available all over the country. Open education is provided by various institutions under the aegis of the Ministry of Education and approved to offer vocationally-oriented programmes at upper secondary or tertiary education level².

Non-formal adult education

The Act on preparatory adult education (FVU) mentions quality among other activities in chapter 9 on Management and teacher qualifications, premises and quality control and further. The Minister can set further regulations in relation to quality, is all what is mentioned.

The Act on folk-high schools, continuation schools, home economics schools and art and craft schools does not mention quality directly, but the wide range of educations has each their paragraphs regulation the quality indirectly by setting up the framework conditions and the regulations for receiving public support. The latest law on folk high schools has an opening for parts of formal competence-yielding educations to be directly included in the folk high school studies, and the government granted 3 MDK a year in 2006 - 2008 for the schools to try out these new possibilities. Extra funding was allocated for organising qualification-yielding folk high school courses, linked to a mentor programmes, and for the folk high schools to take an active part in integration projects. The folk high school law is a shorter version of the applicable law, called law on folk high schools, efterskole schools, domestic science and handicraft schools (free boarding schools)³

The Act on peoples' enlightenment (folkeoplysning⁴), including day folk high schools and the university extension, does not mention quality directly but sets the regulations and defines the structures for the educational activities together with a description of the conditions for receiving public support.⁵

The Act on The Danish Evaluation Institute regulates its activities and their tasks within the area are divided into two main tracks. The institute evaluate all levels of education including all types of adult education that get public funding. EVA carries out initial accreditation assessments of short-cycle and medium-cycle further continuing professional education. In the assessment EVA focus on quality and relevance in relation to demands of the labour market. EVA also carry out evaluations and surveys of how the

¹ Confintea report Denmark 2008 p. 46.

² Eurodyce 2011, p. 41.

³ Sources: Adult Education in Denmark (2011) and "lovbekendtgørelse nr. 662 af 14. juni 2010, and nr. 276 af 5. april 2011" and www.ffd.dk

⁴ The term *folkeoplysning* is difficult to translate into English because no corresponding concept exists in English-speaking countries. The most frequently used translations are 'liberal adult education' or 'popular adult education'

⁵ Source: Adult Education in Denmark (2011) and www.folkeuniversitetet.dk

different aspects of the area function, e.g. preparatory adult education and basic adult education – a parallel to respectively lower and upper secondary education in the mainstream education system¹.

Instruments

In the formal part of adult education there exist a relatively similar quality philosophy behind all the formal educations, including: A quality system is required; Broad stakeholder involvement; Transparency and openness; External evaluation from The Danish Institute for Evaluation. Most of the different Act requires that “The institution establish a system for quality development and assessment of the results in relation to the education and teaching.” And that “The minister of Education sets regulations about this.” This requirement and demand for a quality system can together with the institutions freedom to construct this system and the transparency and openness be regarded as the key quality instrument and the main quality philosophy in the Danish educational system. The non-formal educations has not the same structured focus on quality, and it is up to each of them how to work with quality, except for the quality requirements linked to the funding of their activities.

The role of EQAVET

The Danish work on quality in VET has been closely related and linked to the European Quality Assurance Framework for VET both during the development phase and in the presentations of the Danish quality system eg. “The CQAF (the forerunner for the European Quality Assurance Framework for VET) has been chosen as a framework for the description of the Danish approach to quality, and to describe the state of affairs in regard to the overall policy priorities: employability, matching and access².

The role of social partners

The social partners can be seen as a major “institution” or structure that contributes to quality assurance. It is a system in which the social partners play an institutionalised role at all levels, from the national councils that advise the Danish Minister and the Danish Ministry of Education about VET, to the local training committees which advise the VET providers about the local education plans. This applies to both IVET and CVET. This tripartite structure plays a significant role in all the quality aspects of VET.

Professional development of staff

There exist in general regulations for the teacher competences within all types of formal adult education. Chapter 6 in the Act (**Adult Vocational Training Programmes (AMU)**) mentions that the State can support development of professional and pedagogic further education of the teachers.

The competence profiles for adult learning staff differ among the different types of adult education. There seem to be a tendency to be more “soft” in the requirements in

¹ Source: LBK nr 1073 af 15/09/2010

² Source: The Danish Approach to Quality in Vocational Education and Training. 2nd edition (2008).

general and non-formal adult education, where it is mentioned that the teacher either need to be educated within the subject or have similar qualifications. This opens for different local interpretations of what similar qualifications are.

The Act for general adult education sets the qualification requirements to the teachers in §26: In order to teach in relation to this law shall the teacher have completed the education to teacher in the primary school with the topic as main subject or have similar qualifications. Stk. 2 In order to teach in Danish as second language shall the teacher have completed the education in Danish as second language for youth and adults or have similar qualifications.

The Preparatory adult education (FVU) mentions quality among other activities in chapter 9 (§ 18) the Management and teacher qualifications. The manager has the administrative and pedagogical management of the institution and makes all decisions in relation to the individual learner, including the learners access to the education. (Stk. 2). The teachers shall have the necessary pedagogical and professional competences. The guidance-staff shall additionally have the necessary competences in guidance.

The VET teachers are mainly trained at Metropol. Many other teachers have the Adult teacher education. Other again a number of different professional and university backgrounds.

Challenges

A major reform of the administrative structure was implemented in 2007 whereby 5 regions replaced 14 counties and the number of municipalities was reduced from 275 to 98. The aim of the reform was to increase the quality of public services and make them more cost effective. The strategy pays considerable attention to the areas of transfer between pathways, guidance and counselling, and validation of prior learning. The Danish strategy for lifelong learning also stresses the importance of ensuring a high quality in the provision of education and training, and of improving labour market efficiency and inclusion. In the strategy for Lifelong Learning, there is a strong focus to increase participation in adult education and training among unskilled, low-skilled, older workers, people with literacy problems, and bilingual groups as they participate in less training than others in the labour market. In its strategy paper, the Government stresses that adult education and training is a shared responsibility: individuals are responsible for continuously developing their competences; the social partners are to contribute to the development of labour force competence and of enterprises as places of learning at work; and the authorities are to provide a good framework, relevant programmes of high quality and an incentive structure for individual learners. (Cedefop 2010 p. 18)

Political focus on the quality and efficiency of the different programmes in relation to the overall outcome for the society.

CVET is generally less widely debated. Much of the focus regarding adult education is nonvocational, dealing with issues such as literacy levels. The area of training schemes for the unemployed has recently been the subject of negative attention. These debates have primarily concerned quality issues, but again primarily concern general skills as opposed to more specialised vocational training.

7 Estonia

A) Quality assurance systems: an overview

HE	Estonian Higher Education Quality Agency - EKKA continues the work of the Estonian Higher Education Accreditation Centre and the Estonian Higher Education Quality Assessment Council that operated from 1997 to 2008. EKKA was established on January 1, 2009. In Estonia, pursuant to the Universities Act, the Institutions of Professional Higher Education Act, and the Private Schools Act, a new national system of quality assurance of higher education will be implemented as of 1 January 2010.
VET	The non-formal CVET is under the responsibility of training institutions and providers. Private training providers must be licensed by the Ministry of Education and Research according to the Private School Act (only training at licensed providers is tax deductible). A training licence is valid for three to five years. New principles and criteria for issuing training licences are being prepared. The licences will be replaced by the right to register the curriculum at the Estonian Education Information System (EHIS), an online database of the whole educational system in Estonia. Quality issues are gaining more attention as the provision of adult training increases. Raising awareness of participants and employers has had a positive impact on training quality.
Non-formal	(1) Private training providers must be licensed according to the Private School Act

B) Further elaboration on quality assurance in the country

Legal framework

Adult Learning in Estonia takes place in formal education (general, VET and HE), in continuing training (professional education and training and inservice training) and popular adult education. There is no formal CVET separate from IVET.

In Estonia, adults can acquire basic education and general upper secondary education either in the 16 upper secondary schools established specifically for adults (täiskasvanute gümnaasium) or in the 18 adult departments created in general education schools. Vocational upper secondary education can be followed.

The Lifelong Learning Strategy (LLS) 2005-2008 envisaged the creation of a quality system for adult training and ensuring the information concerning the quality of training to learners / training subscribers. Activities have been initiated on the national level to improve quality and provide relevant information to the general public. The internal and external evaluation system is being implemented by the Estonian Non-formal Adult

Education Association (ENAEA), an umbrella organisation that unites liberal adult education centres. Numerous training courses for educators have been carried out and awarding professional qualifications of adult educators/andragogues takes place. The new national lifelong learning strategy for 2009-2013 focuses on adult education. Important goal is to increase the proportion of people with qualifications framework level IV-VIII education among people aged 25-64. The aim is to increase the participation rate in LLL to 13.5% by 2013. By 2020 the participation rate is expected to grow further – to the level of 17% (the goal is adopted in Estonian 2020 strategy).

The Development Plan of Adult Education 2009-2013 does clearly stress the importance of quality of education and high level competencies of providers. Therefore, the activities supported by Grundtvig are all relevant as these facilitate acquisition of knowledge and skills, sharing best practice and updating competencies. Nordic-Baltic cooperation programme NordPlus is supporting several activities similar to LLP through its funding schemes (Junior, Higher education, Adult, Horizontal). (Refernet p. 32).

Adult learning fall within different legal frameworks: A) Adult education in general: Adult Education Act (Täiskasvanute koolituse seadus, 1993) regulates education and training provisions for adults. The preparation work for amendments started in 2010. (Refernet p. 43). B) VET: Conditions and Policies for Arranging Professional Training for Working Adults in VET Institutions (Täiskasvanute tööalase koolituse kutseõppeasutuses korraldamise tingimused ja kord, 2007) regulates the provision of IVET, CVET and retraining in VET institutions. (Refernet p. 43). C) VET and HE: The standard of vocational education (2006) and the standard of higher education (2008) govern, among other things, acknowledgement of prior studies and professional experience in vocational and higher education. In graduation from vocational education, a previously passed vocational examination may be accounted for as a vocational or specialized final examination.

Based on legal acts in force, educational institutions have the responsibility to establish a more detailed regulation for their institution as regards acknowledgement of prior studies and professional experience.

The Employment Services and Benefits Act (Tööturuteenuste ja toetuste seadus, 2006) regulates the provision of employment services to job seekers (including training provision) and to employers. Training is commissioned by county employment offices and paid for by the Ministry of Social Affairs (Sotsiaalministeerium), local authorities may also allocate resources for this purpose. Training may be commissioned from any licensed body approved by the Ministry of Education and Research. Quality assurance is guaranteed by the requirement to verify the training commissioned with professional standards. In addition, all training must be commissioned from providers with a licence.

Differences between VET, HE and NVAL

Formal education

Formal education institutions have started to develop quality systems based on internal and external evaluation that encompass the activities of the entire organisation and hence extend to adult training as well.

The private training institutions

The (private) training institutions that offer courses do not have a common quality system. In order to develop the field, it is necessary to constantly and systematically develop and support the professional abilities of adult educators and course organisers.

Public VET

In 2002, there were 58 state owned VET institutions. The number has been reduced to 30 through very decisive actions. The objective of these actions was to increase the quality, accessibility and efficiency by reducing the number of VET institutions. The standard of vocational education establishes the requirements for vocational training.

An amendment to the Vocational Educational Institutions Act is being prepared by the Ministry of Education and Research according to which the currently used education licences are replaced with a right given to an educational institution to carry out study in a respective curricular group and the quality of study will be evaluated through accreditation of curricular groups. Eurypedia

Adult education in general

Also a new Adult Education Act has been prepared, giving the Minister of Education and Research the right to conduct state supervision also in adult education institutions and establishing the requirement to conduct internal evaluation.

VET and Prof. Higher Education

Since 2007 the Ministry of Education and Research has applied the state funded study places scheme to provide short term training for working adults in the existing VET colleges and professional higher education institutions in order to raise the competitiveness and well-being of workers and to improve the quality of work. The free occupational training is available in all counties of Estonia. The program, financed by ESF, is called "Work-related training and development activities for adults". Since 2010, unemployed can participate too. The main activities in the Professional training for adults and development (2009–2012): a) Offering continuing education and retraining to the adult population; training is offered in a minimum of 30 vocational education institutions, training will be received by a minimum of 33,000 people. B) Studies to find out the reasons for the adult population's absence from education and possibilities to increase study motivation, etc. c) Training for adult educators. d) Renewing the system of issuing education licences to private adult education institutions, developing a quality system for adult education institutions. E) Expansion of the Estonian Information System for Education (national register in the field of education) to store information on adult education.

Non-formal adult education

The model for evaluation of non-formal education centres was developed by long-term members of the Estonian Non-formal Education Association.

Instruments

Accreditation

Adult learning centres (formal)

One of the most important and efficient tools for evaluation is the training licence given by the Ministry of Education and Research to an adult education centre. For applying for

the licence a centre has to prepare and present to the evaluation group the following documents: description of the target group(s) the training is meant for; a detailed curriculum by what the training will be provided; a list of trainers, their qualification level; detailed description of classrooms and permit from the health care office using these; rooms for training; available teaching equipment; training schedule; additional social care possibilities like nursery, for example; description of document the graduates will receive when finishing the course. The licence is valid for five years. After that time all mentioned documents should be updated. Adult learners taking courses in training centres and/or private schools having the licence from the Ministry of Education and Research are entitled to an exemption from income tax in the amount spent on training.

Non-formal CVET

The non-formal CVET is under the responsibility of training institutions and providers.

Private training providers must be licensed by the Ministry of Education and Research according to the Private School Act (only training at licensed providers is tax deductible). A training licence is valid for three to five years. New principles and criteria for issuing training licences are being prepared. The licences will be replaced by the right to register the curriculum at the Estonian Education Information System (EHIS), an online database of the whole educational system in Estonia. Quality issues are gaining more attention as the provision of adult training increases. Raising awareness of participants and employers has had a positive impact on training quality.

The Employment Services

Training is commissioned by county employment offices and paid for by the Ministry of Social Affairs (Sotsiaalministeerium), local authorities may also allocate resources for this purpose. Training may be commissioned from any licensed body approved by the Ministry of Education and Research. Quality assurance is guaranteed by the requirement to verify the training commissioned with professional standards. In addition, all training must be commissioned from providers with a licence.

Self evaluation

VET: The Quality Manual (LIFELONG GUIDANCE FOR LIFELONG LEARNING AND SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYMENT) focuses on the quality of general management, which in turn affects the quality of career services – career education, provision of career information and career counselling – and, ultimately, stakeholder satisfaction.

The Career Information and Career Counselling Manual describes services, processes and quality assurance, and provides an overview of service quality assessment, reviews and improvement of quality results, and requirements concerning services and records management.

The Career Education Quality Manual contains ideas on how to ensure the quality of career education in schools. The authors of the manual seek to provide recommendations to teachers and directors of general education and vocational training institutions on how to link the various components of quality assessment systems to career education in a more effective manner. Since 2009 career information and career counselling in the 17 centres are provided according to the new service standards,

which state the activities, the methodology, the principles, as well as documentation, the minimum volume and quality assurance of the service provision. In 2010 the standards were developed into three quality manuals – the Career Services Quality Manual, the Career Information and Career Counselling Manual and the Career Education Quality Manual.

All kinds of Adult Education: Having hard competition on the training market each adult training centre, private schools, NGOs, providing courses for adults, open universities and/or continuing education departments of universities, also adult education departments of vocational schools and applied higher education institutions continuously assess their training programmes, curricula, organisation etc. Without that the sustainable existence of such kind of institutions is not conceivable. Methods for assessment are: continuous analysis of training activities by the teaching staff and managers of training centres; involvement of learners to assessment process – feedback after each module and/or training session, observing colleagues' training, trainers self-assessment.

The Quality Manual focuses on the quality of general management, which in turn affects the quality of career services – career education, provision.

Quality assurance institutions

The Ministry of Education and Research (MER) is responsible for Ensuring quality of training; Labour market training Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund. Their responsibilities are raising the effectiveness and improving the quality of labour market training commissioning; Provision of workforce retraining courses aimed at enterprises creating new jobs

VET and HE: Archimedes Foundation. Their responsibilities are making participation in vocational and higher formal education more attractive by increasing the quality of education; Recognition of prior learning and work experience (RPL).

National Examinations and Qualifications Centre. Their responsibilities are making participation in vocational and higher formal education more attractive by increasing the quality of education

Non-formal Adult Education: Estonian Non-formal Adult Education Association. Their responsibilities are financing of work-related and lifelong learning key competences training in liberal adult education centres; Ensuring quality of training;

Adult educators: Association of Estonian Adult Educators Andras. Responsibilities: Ensuring quality of training.

Higher Education: Estonian Higher Education Quality Agency (EKKA) which provides counselling for preschool children's institutions, general educational schools and vocational educational institutions in matters of internal evaluation; analyzes the internal evaluations performed by educational institutions, provides feedback to managers and owners of the institutions; prepares an analytical summary for the Ministry of Education and Research once a year.

VET and Adult learning: The VET and Adult Learning Department of the Ministry of Education and Research (Haridus- ja Teadusministeeriumi Kutse- ja Täiskasvanuhariduse osakond) co-ordinates the preparation and implementation of education policies through local governments and other relevant Ministries. The role of the Ministry of Education and Research is to establish, reorganise and close public educational

institutions (except universities and applied higher education institutions); to direct and organise the preparation of curricula, study programmes, textbooks and teaching/study aids (except for universities); and to administer public assets allocated to the education system. The implementing arm of the Ministry is the National Examinations and Qualifications Centre (NEQC) - (Riiklik Eksami- ja Kvalifikatsioonikeskus (REKK), whose main objective is to implement the national education and language policy in the field of primary, basic and secondary education as well as in vocational and adult education.

Professional development AL staff

The development of a professional qualifications system for adult educators has been initiated in Estonia during the last couple of years, which is a precondition for guaranteeing the quality of AL. The systematic description of qualifications from the second to the fifth level ensures seamless transition from one level to the next and creates accordance with Estonia's other professional qualifications and European qualification system, as well as enabling the harmonisation of study programmes. The possibilities for proving professional qualifications by adult educators have also been extended. The new professional qualification standard is based on adult educator's competences, what imposed to change the curriculum of adult educators' training. The most important competences, forming the bases for the adult educator's qualification, are listed at p. 55-56 in Contentea) together with a series of personal characteristics p. 57. The fifth stage in evaluating adult education in Estonia started in May 2007. The professional qualifications of adult educators became more competence-based. A new level, II level, was added in order to motivate educators at the beginning of their career. The new standard is also taking in account previous study and work experience. For example the teachers of adult

Gymnasia can now apply for a professional certificate without completing the qualification course if they have at least 8 years of teaching experience. The applicant proposes the level he or she believes to have and provides documents that prove the self-evaluation. For the examination the educator compiles a professional portfolio. And often the members of the vocational exam commission attend the applicant's activities at his or her workplace as supervisors.¹

Challenges

Most important questions addressed in key studies in adult education result from the situation in the labour market but also in the Estonian society in general. There are several important criteria. One is the demographic situation (ageing of population and declining of birth rate). The second domain is the participation of risk groups in training.

¹ Source: <http://www.nordvux.net/object/18217>

8 Finland

A) Quality assurance systems: an overview

HE	Universities are governed by the Universities Act (558/2009) and the Universities Decree (115/1998) while Polytechnics are governed by the Polytechnics Act (351/2003) and the Polytechnics Decree (352/2003). Universities, polytechnics and institutions providing liberal adult education have the freedom, within the framework of the legislation, to autonomously decide the manner of organising adult education. The performance of universities and polytechnics is regularly evaluated by the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINHEEC). Institutions providing liberal adult education are evaluated by the Education Evaluation Council.
VET	The Vocational Education and Training Act (630/1998), effective as from the beginning of 1999, governs the organisation of curriculum-based upper secondary vocational education and training for both young and adult students. (Eurypedia). Quality is mentioned directly in the Act (Lagen (630/1998) and in the regulations förordningen (811/1998). The Vocational Adult Education Act (631/1998) stipulates about the upper secondary vocational qualifications, further vocational qualifications and specialist vocational qualifications taken as competence tests irrespective of the method of acquiring the vocational skills, as well as for the preparatory training for these tests. In 2006, changes were made to this Act in regard to preparatory training for competence-based qualification, individual plans of students, completing qualifications and contracts for arranging competence tests. (Eurypedia) Quality is mentioned directly in the Act (Lagen (631/1998) and in the regulations förordningen (812/1998)). Legislation on vocational education and training and vocational adult education and training gives the education providers extensive discretion on matters pertaining to the organisation of education and use of financing allocated to education as well as quality assurance. The aim of national steering on vocational education and training is to set objectives on vocational education and training and on its quality as well as to ensure that they are attained. The key steering mechanisms in quality assurance include legislation governing the activities and funding, the authorisation of providers of vocational education and training, the degree structure and core curricula, the principles for financing the activities, performance-based funding and the qualifications requirements of teaching personnel. Additional steering mechanisms include the education and research development plan confirmed by the Government, the Budget and development and information steering by the educational authorities. The provision of vocational education and training requires authorisation by the Ministry of Education to provide vocational upper secondary educa-

tion and training or vocational continuing education. The authorisation is granted on application by the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education may grant the authorisation to provide education to a municipality, federation of municipalities, a registered organisation or foundation or an unincorporated state enterprise. Education can also be provided in a state educational institution. The authorisation requires that the education is necessary and that the applicant possesses the professional and economic prerequisites to provide the education in an appropriate manner. The authorisation permit to provide vocational upper secondary education and training lays down provisions on the level of education, fields of education, qualifications, teaching language, municipalities in which the education can be provided, the number of students, special educational tasks, form of provision of the education and other matters pertaining to the provision of education. The authorisation permit to provide vocational continuing education lays down provisions on the educational tasks, including provisions on the teaching language, fields of education, the number of student years of education leading to competence-based qualifications and other vocational continuing education and the number of apprenticeship agreements, as well as on special educational tasks and working life development and service tasks and other matters pertaining to the provision of educations and qualifications. The Ministry of Education may change the authorisation, even without an application, if the education offered significantly differs from the educational needs. The Ministry of Education can also revoke the authorisation if the education does not fulfil the requirements set for the granting of the authorisation or the education is otherwise provided contrary to the law or the provisions pursuant to it.

The Quality Management Recommendation for Vocational Education and Training was adopted in 2008 by the Ministry of Education to support and encourage VET providers to pursue excellence when improving the quality of their operations. The recommendation is based on the Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF) in vocational education and training.

An electronic student feedback system was introduced in 2008 in order to monitor and evaluate the system of competence based qualifications.

Non-formal

(1) the Liberal Adult Education Act (632/1998) mention the possibility to get support to quality development. (2) The Decree on the Finnish National Board of Education (805/2008) stipulates that the FNBE is responsible for the evaluation of educational outcomes in education from pre-primary to adult education.

B) Further elaboration on quality assurance in the country

Legal framework

Adult education may be arranged in various forms, including self-motivated courses, vocational courses, labour market courses or staff training. Courses leading to diplomas or certificates and supplementary courses are offered by some 800 educational institutions and universities and colleges. A substantial proportion of the adult education that takes place in Finland is held at workplaces and as non-formal learning utilizing information networks, libraries and other learning environments. Popular adult education, based on the principle of lifelong learning, is to support personal development and the ability to function in society, as well as promoting democracy, equality and pluralism.

Institutions offering popular education courses include folk high schools, "citizens' institutes" (adult education centres often associated with the labour movement), study associations, sports movements and summer universities. They present Adult Education within the following structure (slightly adjusted): Popular adult education, Basic (primary and secondary) and upper secondary education for adults; Certificates of skills demonstration; Tertiary vocational education; Adult education at universities; Liberal education; Education and careers; Labour market courses; Choice of occupation and career planning.

The aim of the government during the 2007–2011 is to implement a total reform of the adult education system, with a development programme for liberal adult education, improving apprenticeship training, enhancing the competence of the teaching staff, and supporting employment and integration for immigrants. The cited objectives are to: continually raise the knowledge level in the adult population, improve the study options for adults with poor educational backgrounds, promote the overall societal good, equality and active citizenship.

The Ministry of Education and Culture bears the main responsibility for self-motivated adult education, while the Ministry of Employment and the Economy is responsible for staff training.

Differences between VET, HE and NVAL

General work on quality assurance in education in the sector of the Ministry of Education

In the Ministry of Education, the quality assurance system of education can be considered as comprising of: 1) the national steering system for education policy; 2) evaluation systems of education providers and 3) external education evaluation activities. The quality assurance system is based on legislation. International policies on quality assurance in education are being increasingly reflected in the national quality assurance system. The quality assurance measures or systems of education providers, maintaining organisations and higher education institutions comprise one key element of the quality assurance system.

Quality assurance in vocational education and training

Legislation on vocational education and training and vocational adult education and training gives the education providers extensive discretion on matters pertaining to the organisation of education and use of financing allocated to education as well as quality assurance. The aim of national steering on vocational education and training is to set

objectives on vocational education and training and on its quality as well as to ensure that they are attained. The key steering mechanisms in quality assurance include legislation governing the activities and funding, the authorisation of providers of vocational education and training, the degree structure and core curricula, the principles for financing the activities, performance-based funding and the qualifications requirements of teaching personnel. Additional steering mechanisms include the education and research development plan confirmed by the Government, the Budget and development and information steering by the educational authorities. The aims of vocational education and training, the provision of education and qualifications, teaching and other educational responsibilities are defined in the Vocational Education and Training Act and Decree and the Vocational Adult Education and Training Act and Decree. The Government decides on the national objectives of education and common studies and their scope.

Quality assurance in higher education

The main responsibility for the quality of teaching, research and development, scientific research and other activities rests with the higher education institutions themselves. They, like other Finnish education providers, must conduct self-evaluations of the education they provide and its effectiveness and participate in external evaluations of their activities, the results of which are made public. Concluding, there are a well developed and integrated quality system in Finland following the same basic structures and philosophies for all public funded educations including the adult educations. There exist local adaptations but the thinking and principles behind the quality are very similar. The biggest suppliers of non-formal adult education seems to be very inspired by this way a working with quality and has a number of activities going on within quality.

Instruments

Quality Assurance framework / guidelines

In general terms, steering means the mechanisms through which the activities are regulated and the objectives set for the activities are implemented. In the educational sector, steering can be considered as comprising normative steering, performance steering, financial steering, the evaluation of education, information steering and other administrative steering. Other mechanisms can also be considered as being related to steering, such as judicial review and appeals. Joint policies and recommendations on education quality assurance agreed upon at the European Union level play an increasingly important role in the development of national quality assurance systems in education.

Higher Education: Quality assurance cooperation is at its most advanced in the higher education sector, in which the Bologna Process has provided joint frameworks for quality assurance in higher education. Provisions apply to polytechnics and universities.

Liberal Education: The folk high schools (Finnish: kansanopisto, Swedish: Medborgarinstitut)¹ have a number of experiences from their work with quality the last many years. One conclusion is that small steps and simple tools are needed. One of the “institutes” work on developing their own quality handbook with focus on totality of activities. The

¹ <http://www.nordvux.net/object/9929/smastegochenklaverktygbehovsikvalitetsarbetet.htm>

current quality work focus mainly on the teaching, that the courses are held, that the teachers are satisfied. Topics like administration, counseling of the staff and marketing will be included in the round of quality work.

VET: Finland has been very active in the Copenhagen process and especially in the development of the different versions of the common quality assurance framework.

The Quality Management Recommendation for Vocational Education and Training was adopted in 2008 by the Ministry of Education to support and encourage VET providers to pursue excellence when improving the quality of their operations. The recommendation is based on the Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF) in vocational education and training.

The recommendation was prepared by the Finnish National Board of Education in cooperation with VET providers, representatives of the world of work and enterprises as well as students. The purpose of the Quality Management Recommendation is to provide a framework for long-term development of quality management in all types of vocational education and training. The recommendation has been prepared so that it can be applied at both VET provider and institutional levels and used at different stages of the quality improvement process. An electronic student feedback system was introduced in 2008 in order to monitor and evaluate the system of competence based qualifications.

The qualification requirements for all adult education and training institutions are the same as the corresponding levels in youth education. Education and training providers will be given a statutory duty to see to it that their personnel get continuing professional education on a regular basis. The Ministry of Education has set up a committee, which includes providers and social partners, to prepare this reform, which should be implemented starting from 2010. The Finnish report on key competences (2009) specify some areas that have been allocated separate research and development funding in teacher training and the training of teacher educators: entrepreneurship education, gender and equality awareness, multiculturalism and immigrant education, active citizenship and social empowerment, the use of ICT in education, and instruction of special-needs pupils. Most continuing training is free of charge and teachers enjoy full salary benefits during their participation. The responsibility for funding rests with teachers' employers, which are mainly local authorities. Employers also decide on the content of the training. There are no qualification requirements for in-company trainers, who frequently have a vocational qualification, but hold no pedagogical qualifications. However, workplace instructors are able to participate in three courses, based on curricula approved by the Finnish National Board of Education.

The Copenhagen Process has similar aims with regard to vocational education and training. As for general education, quality assurance has primarily been a national focus of development, which is nevertheless affected by European Union policies.

In certificate-oriented further vocational training and in initial training preparing for competence-based qualifications, the key quality assurance mechanism comprises the respective qualification requirements and their follow-up. The qualification committees responsible for organising and supervising competence tests ensure that qualifications are designed in accordance with the requirements of working life. The Vocational Adult

Education Act and the Decree on Vocational Adult Education oblige education providers to evaluate their educational provision and its effectiveness and to participate in external evaluations of their operations. Responsibility for external evaluations rests with the Evaluation Council for Education and Training.

Accreditation

VET: The provision of vocational education and training requires authorisation by the Ministry of Education to provide vocational upper secondary education and training or vocational continuing education. The authorisation is granted on application by the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education may grant the authorisation to provide education to a municipality, federation of municipalities, a registered organisation or foundation or an unincorporated state enterprise. Education can also be provided in a state educational institution. The authorisation requires that the education is necessary and that the applicant possesses the professional and economic prerequisites to provide the education in an appropriate manner. The authorisation permit to provide vocational upper secondary education and training lays down provisions on the level of education, fields of education, qualifications, teaching language, municipalities in which the education can be provided, the number of students, special educational tasks, form of provision of the education and other matters pertaining to the provision of education. The authorisation permit to provide vocational continuing education lays down provisions on the educational tasks, including provisions on the teaching language, fields of education, the number of student years of education leading to competence-based qualifications and other vocational continuing education and the number of apprenticeship agreements, as well as on special educational tasks and working life development and service tasks and other matters pertaining to the provision of educations and qualifications. The Ministry of Education may change the authorisation, even without an application, if the education offered significantly differs from the educational needs. The Ministry of Education can also revoke the authorisation if the education does not fulfil the requirements set for the granting of the authorisation or the education is otherwise provided contrary to the law or the provisions pursuant to it.

Higher Education: Accreditation and evaluation of higher education is stipulated in respective legislation: the Universities Act (645/1997) and the Act on Polytechnic Studies (351/2003). The universities and polytechnics need to evaluate their own education. Accordingly, their external evaluation is the responsibility of the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council, which is an independent expert body under the Ministry of Education.

Accordingly, the Decree on the Higher Education Evaluation Council (1320/1995) stipulates on its duties, responsibilities, composition, sections, meetings and Secretariat.

Self evaluation

In 1999 a broad legislative reform in the field of education was put into action. This reform underlined the importance of evaluation. Education and training providers are obliged to carry out self-evaluations. Additionally, there are national evaluations on the quality and results of education and training, which are carried out by two national evaluation councils. The higher education council is responsible for the evaluation of universities and polytechnics, while the education evaluation council is responsible for secondary and liberal adult education. Both councils fall under the supervision of the

Ministry of Education, but their status is defined in such a way that they can function independently.

Higher Education: Legislation on education and higher education institutions lays down provisions on the education providers and higher education institutions obligation to evaluate education. Legislation in various sectors is based on trust and gives education providers, maintaining organisations and higher education institutions extensive powers in matters pertaining to the evaluation of education and quality assurance. The actors determine their own quality assurance systems and set the quality assurance criteria within the guidelines and framework provided by educational policy. In self-evaluation processes, the most popular methods and frameworks include evaluation for development, for example multiple constituency or peer review, frameworks of comprehensive quality assurance or self-developed models and indicators. However, self-evaluation of an education provider, maintaining organisation or a higher education institution must be systematic and regular.

VET: Legislation on vocational education and training obligates the providers of vocational education and training to self-evaluate their education, its impact and take part in external evaluations of their activities. The implementation of the evaluation obligation under the legislation requires that the education provider has an operating system in place with the appropriate and effective quality assurance procedures. Education providers can decide independently on these procedures. The system is specific to each provider and comprises the principles and procedures that the organisations activities should systematically follow. The system can be documented in the form of a quality manual but more important than the form is that the system functions in practice and encourages systematic activities and their further development.

The Ministry of Education adopted a quality assurance recommendation for vocational education and training in January 2008. The aim of the recommendation is to support providers of vocational education and training in developing their activities towards excellence. The recommendation is based on the Common European Quality Assurance Framework for Vocational Education and Training (CQAF) and is an important part of the Finnish implementation of the measures agreed upon in the Copenhagen Process. Currently, a national quality strategy for vocational education and training is being prepared. In addition, preparations are being made for introducing the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training, EQARF, on which the European Parliament and the Council issue a proposal for recommendation in spring 2009.

External evaluation

Higher Education: Another key element in a quality assurance system is external evaluation. External evaluation is organised by the Finnish Education Evaluation Council and the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council. In addition to the Evaluation Councils, evaluations and various monitoring activities are performed by numerous other bodies, such as the National Board of Education, the State Provincial Offices, the Academy of Finland and international bodies and, to some extent, also the National Audit Office of Finland and state auditors. In October 2008, the Ministry of Education made a decision on a national education evaluation plan for 2009–2011, which has been drawn up in co-operation with the Finnish Education Evaluation Council, the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council and the National Board of Education. The aim of the evaluation plan

is to increase the impact, stability and predictability of the external evaluation of education. The plan is based on the strategies, policies and working plans determined by the Councils for them.

VET: The aim of external evaluations of vocational education and training is to ensure the implementation of legislation on vocational education and training and to support the development of the education and to improve the conditions for learning. Education providers are legally obligated to participate in external evaluations of education. The evaluations are organised by the Finnish Education Evaluation Council or another evaluation body appointed by the Ministry of Education. The National Board of Education is responsible for monitoring learning outcomes. Evaluations are usually based on the principle of evaluation for development, which means that they aim to support education providers in developing their activities and to produce information to support decision-making by both education providers and the education authorities. The Ministry of Education decides on the external evaluations of vocational education and training in its education evaluation plan. Priorities for the external evaluation of education include the effectiveness, quality, efficiency and economy of educations.

Quality price

One quality price within each of the following sectors: 1) adult education centres (Medborgarinstitut) (ex from 2007); 2) VET (Yrkesutbildning) (ex from 2006, 2007); 3) Läroavtalsutbildare (ex from 2007, 2008). The price is at provider level. The purpose of the Quality price within VET is to support and to motivate the providers of education and educational organizations to a continuous assessment and development of the quality together with their fundamental tasks. The purpose includes the development of good practice for the fundamental for learning Internally in the organizations and the quality price shall make VET more known and attractive. The purpose of the quality price for "läroavtalsutbildare" are to encourage employers To use and develop the "läroavtalsutbildningen" and to find the best methods and Spread these to other employer-organisations as examples of best practice for "ordnat läroavtalsverksamhet". The enterprises will be analysed according to The assessment criteria used in the European model for quality: (EFQM). It is also the purpose of the price to give more focus to the "läroavtal. The price was Euro 30.000 in 2007 for Medborgarinstitut and Euro 5.000 in 2007, 2008 for Läroavtalsutbildare. The purpose of the Quality price is to support and inspire the " medborgarinstitut" to further development of their activities and their quality. The Quality price supports and inspires the "medborgarinstitut" local and regional tasks and their influence on the society and their general context.

The different "medborgarinstitut" can apply for the price and in 2007 there were 12 Applicants among the "medborgarinstitut". The Ministry og Education have established And evaluation group that judge the different applications and propose a winner.The prices are followed by a long and detailed motivation explaining why the winner Got the price. The motivation shows the key quality aspects in order to motivate others to follow this best practice. Each price and year has it own theme, that show what – seen from the Ministry of Education is especially interesting and on focus that year.

Professional development of staff

The Ministry of Education has particular responsibility for assuring the quality of the provision of adult education and of qualified and competent teaching personnel.

On the average, Finnish teachers participate in continuing professional training for 9-15 days a year. Local authorities and other teachers' employers are responsible for teachers' in-service training and its funding, but the state budget also contains an annual appropriation of about € 12 million earmarked for their continuing training in education policy priority areas. Typical topics include the contents of teaching subjects, evaluation and assessment, social issues in education and training, pedagogical use of ICT, on-the-job learning and education and training for heads of educational institutions. Approximately 20 000 teachers (nearly 30 %) participate in continuing training organized from state budgeted funds.

Most teachers in adult education are working in vocational adult education or in liberal adult education. In 2006 there were 3061 teachers working in vocational adult education (Opettajat Suomessa 2005, National Board of Education publications 2005). The Ministry of Education is planning to increase supply of vocational adult education by 20-30 % in 2003-2010, which will also influence teacher demand. Vocational adult education centres are the main providers of vocational adult education. In them, 53 % of the teachers are formally qualified. In liberal adult education most teachers are working on hourly charge. Only 20-30 % of the lessons are given by full-time teachers. 70 % of the teachers are formally qualified.

As a result of rapid changes in society, changes in teachers' work, the age structure in the teaching profession and education policy reforms, large input is needed to upgrade teachers' competencies. The Ministry of Education has launched several national development projects to this end. Teachers' professional training has largely focused on competencies relating to adult vocational training, liberal adult education and counselling.

VET: In 2008, it adopted the Quality Management Recommendation for Vocational Education and Training to provide a framework for long-term development of quality management in all types of vocational education and training. It can be applied at both VET provider and institutional levels and be used at different stages of the quality improvement process. The Ministry of Education has set up a committee, which includes providers and social partners, to prepare a reform that gives education and training providers the duty to see to it that their personnel receive continuing professional education on a regular basis.

General adult teachers within the formal educational system: Teachers' qualification requirements are a) degree in the teaching subject and b) 35 credits in pedagogic studies. One credit is 40 hours of student's work. In addition, adequate vocational education and working experience of at least 3 years on one's own profession is required for vocational teachers. Most qualified teachers have a higher academic (Master's) degree of 160-180 credits. Qualification requirements for teachers in adult education are the same as for other teachers. Teacher education is funded as a part of university and polytechnics education. Anticipation of labour and educational needs has become an increasingly important task. Several national and local anticipation projects have been carried out and they have influenced the planning of the volumes of teacher education and training. The number of teaching workforce in Finland is approximately 67 000. This figure covers all kinds of teachers, with the majority around 40.000 in basic education, 7000 at High

Schools, 12.000 in VET. Figures from 2005 and an article from 2007: Reijo Jouttimäki: The role of unqualified teachers in the Finish educational system.

Trainers/workplace instructors: Trainers/workplace instructors have no formal qualification requirements. During teacher training the assessment is continuous. Thus coursework, the thesis and teaching practice are assessed according to the principles adopted by each institution. There are no national regulations or guidelines regarding the assessment. When in service teachers and trainers are not formally assessed in Finland. The principals are the pedagogical heads of their institutions and thus also responsible for the instruction in their institutions. The vocational institutions assess the quality of the on-the-job learning in enterprises as part of their self-evaluation.

Higher Education: The quality of all teacher education is monitored mainly through the self-evaluation of each university or polytechnic. External evaluations are conducted by the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINHEEC). External evaluations are not carried out regularly.

Training providers: Main providers of initial teacher education in Finland are universities and vocational teacher education colleges operating in conjunction with polytechnics.

The Ministry of Education and Culture bears the main responsibility for self-motivated adult education, while the Ministry of Employment and the Economy is responsible for staff training.

Council for Lifelong Learning: The Council for Lifelong Learning is an expert body within the Ministry of Education and Culture which considers issues relating to cooperation between educational institutions and the labour market as well as the conditions for lifelong learning.¹

Quality Assurance Institutions

The Decree on the Evaluation of Education (150/2003) stipulates about the objectives, principles of conduct, division of labour and cooperation, the functions, composition, sections, meetings and the Secretariat of the Education Evaluation Council.

The Decree on the Finnish National Board of Education (805/2008) stipulates that the FNBE is responsible for the evaluation of educational outcomes in education from pre-primary to adult education. External evaluation is organised by the Finnish Education Evaluation Council and the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council. In addition to the Evaluation Councils, evaluations and various monitoring activities are performed by numerous other bodies, such as the National Board of Education, the State Provincial Offices, the Academy of Finland and international bodies and, to some extent, also the National Audit Office of Finland and state auditors.

Challenges

In certificate-oriented additional vocational training (and in initial training preparing for competence-based qualifications), the key quality assurance mechanism comprises the respective qualification requirements, and sees whether they are met. Responsibility for organising and supervising competence tests rests with qualification committees which

¹ http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Koulutus/aikuiskoulutus_ja_vapaa_sivistystyoe/?lang=sv

contain social partner representatives to ensure that qualifications are designed in accordance with the requirements of working life.

The purpose of the Quality Management Recommendation is to provide a framework for long-term development of quality management in all types of vocational education and training. The recommendations can be applied to vocational education and training implemented in different ways: initial VET and further and continuing training, competence tests and training preparing for competence-based qualifications, as well as curricular or school-based VET, special needs VET and apprenticeship training. In addition, the recommendations have been prepared such that they can be applied at both VET provider and individual unit levels and they are relevant to users at different stages of quality improvement.

9 France

A) Quality assurance systems: an overview

HE	Quality in adult learning is partially covered by the legal framework regulating the quality of initial (primary, secondary, tertiary, higher) education. The quality of VET and higher education is to a large degree guaranteed by the state since it either directly manages the relevant institutions or exercises oversight on these institutions. At the national level France has two inspection authorities who fall directly under the minister of National Education and the Minister of Higher Education and Research. The General Inspection for National Education (Inspection générale de l'éducation nationale: IGEN) and the the General Inspection for the Administration of National Education and Research (Inspection générale de l'administration de l'éducation nationale et de la recherche: IGAENR) monitors, studies, and evaluates the functioning and efficiency of the educational system. The jurisdiction of IGEN and IGAENR is limited to institutions for national and higher education under the responsibility of the two ministries (colleges, lycées, institutes of higher education). In addition to these authorities, an autonomous administrative authority for the evaluation of research and higher education has been created in 2007. This Agency for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (Agence d'évaluation de la recherche et de l'enseignement supérieur: AERES) evaluates institutes for higher education and their educational programmes and diplomas, and validates these institutions' procedures for the evaluation of staff.
VET	Quality in adult learning is partially covered by the legal framework regulating the quality of initial (primary, secondary, tertiary, higher) education. A National Commission on Professional Certification establishes certification requirements and evaluation methods for each certificate that has been registered in the National Inventory of Professional Certifications. Regular degrees are issued and controlled by the state. The General Inspection for National Education (IGEN) and The General Inspection for the Administration of National Education and Research (IGAENR) evaluate the national educational system, institutions, and personnel. External evaluation in the institutes for initial (primary, secondary, tertiary, higher) education is performed by IGEN, IGAENR, and AERES. SAIA evaluates the quality of alternating training in each académie. The Offices Pôle Emploi evaluate the training programmes that they finance and, in particular, AFPA training. Sectoral agencies such as the National Observatory on Farming Education monitor the quality of (continuing) vocational education and training in their respective sector. Formal education and training for adults is provided in the <i>Gretas</i>, the vocational secondary schools, the institutes of higher education, the AFPA

	centres, the CFAs and the CFPPAs. All these organizations fall under the direct responsibility or oversight of either the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Higher Education and Research, the Ministry of Agriculture, or the Ministry of Employment They have to track and evaluate their programmes and are submitted to evaluations by the Ministry. The <i>Greta</i>, vocational secondary schools, and CFAs fall directly under their respective ministries and are inspected by agencies operated jointly by the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Higher Education and Research (IGEN and IGAENR). The label Lycée des Metiers (“Vocational Secondary School”) has been created in 2001 by the Ministry of National Education and is offered to vocational and polyvalent schools for secondary education who combine the vocational and technological tracks. Its creation was driven by four objectives: (1) to promote the attractiveness of the vocational route, (2) to push the regional networks of VET providers towards quality, (3) to reinforce synergies between the vocational and technological routes of training, and (4) to restructure regional training provisions to make them more consistent. The label is seen as an important approach to create a dynamic towards quality and excellence in VET and to promote accountability against common criteria for quality. The label can not be obtained by regular or technical schools for secondary education (Lycées d’enseignement général et technologique), unless they sign a partnership with a vocational high school. The initial number of criteria for accreditation was four and has been increased to nine in 2005. The key demands of the label are that the Lycée has to offer a coherent range of vocational training around a consistent group of jobs and to develop narrow relationships with local and regional employers. While the Lycées des Metiers have a lot to do with initial vocational education and training, they are also relevant from the perspective of continuing VET, since one of the demands is that the school provides vocational education to a variety of target groups including adults. The label Lycée des Metiers is attributed by the rector of an académie (region) by means of a regional committee in charge of labelling. The label is valid for a period of five years. At this moment about 800 Lycées have been awarded the label.
Non-formal	(1) Quality label as Greta Plus (public adult learning including second chance and VET) and (2) Lycee der Metiers (vocational secondary school) serves as measure to boost quality. (3)The label Lycée des Metiers (“Vocational Secondary School”) For the non formal learning, only label regarding the quality of language education

B) Further elaboration on quality assurance in the country

Legal framework

The French adult learning sector can be divided into a public sector (which has a market share of about 20 percent) and a private sector (which has a market share of about 80 percent). The main elements of the public sector are the (1) *Gretas*, (2) the institutes for higher education, (3) the National Association for Adult Vocational Training, and (4) the National Centre for Distance Education.¹ The private sector exists of about 48.000 establishments and individual consultants. A large part is made up of non-profit associations and profit-making companies, while independent trainers play a relatively smaller role. Especially noteworthy are the network of secondary chance schools and the popular universities.²

Different types of programmes are provided. In general, one can distinguish between collective programmes, individual programmes, alternating training, and integral training organized in cooperation with employers. In addition people can obtain a degree through the validation of professional experiences. The French public adult learning sector is managed jointly by the state, the regions (referred to as “*académies*”), and the social partners (representatives of labour organisations and employers’ organisations). These actors operate within the boundaries set by the Code on Education and the Code on Employment, and more specifically by the *Loi Delors* of July 1971, the *Loi sur la formation professionnelle tout au long de la vie et la dialogue sociale* of May 2004, and the

¹ The main public educational institutions are: A) The Greta (groupements d’établissements) are structures that group together public educational establishments that cooperate to provide continuing training. These structures consist of vocational secondary schools (lycées professionnels), general and technical secondary schools (lycées) and lower secondary schools (colleges). The current number of Gretas in France is about 270, counting 6.500 separate training grounds. B) The Vocational Secondary Schools (lycées de métiers) are vocational and polyvalent schools for secondary education who combine the vocational and technological tracks and meet a number of quality criteria. One of the criteria is that they have to offer education and training to both pupils and adults. C) The institutes for higher education (universities and the Conservatoire national des arts et métiers: CNAM) provide continuing education programmes that are directed by departments of continuing education. D) The National Association for Adult Vocational Training (Association nationale pour la formation professionnelle des adultes: AFPA) provides continued vocational education and training leading to a professional qualification. The AFPA falls under the authority of the Ministry of National Education but operates as a semi-autonomous governing body. It has a mandate to develop the government’s policies in the relevant field (this is referred to as an association gestionnaire). E) The National Centre for Distance Education (Centre national d’enseignement à distance: CNED) provides about 3.000 courses via mail or internet, ranging from kindergarten level to university level. Its relation to the government resembles that of the AFPA. F) Centres for Alternating Training (Centres de formation d’apprentis: CFAs). These centres are created jointly by the state, the academies, the professional chambers, companies, and public and private educational institutions. They are either private or public institutions. In the latter case they are operated at the national level (Ministry of National Education) or at the académie level. G) Centres for Vocational Training for Adults (Centres de formation professionnelle et promotion agriculture: CFPPAs). These centres are public institutions under the authority of the Ministry of Agriculture and provide vocational education for adults in the field of agriculture.

² The main private educational institutions are: A) The Popular Universities (universités populaires) provide a wide range of courses for adults. They are united in the Association of French Popular Universities (Association des universités populaires de France). B) The schools of second chance (écoles de deuxième chance), all part of a single foundation, offer education and training courses of between nine months and one year to youth between 18 and 25 years of age who have dropped out of initial education without obtaining a qualification

Loi relative à l'orientation et à la formation professionnelle tout au long de la vie of November 24th 2009¹.

In France there exists a clear policy on adult learning (*formation continue*) which is part of a broader policy regarding life long learning (*formation tout au long de la vie*). However, while much attention is paid to quality improvement, no broad policy has been designed for quality assurance.

Formal education and training for adults is provided in the *Gretas*, the vocational secondary schools, the institutes of higher education, the AFPA centres, the CFAs and the CFPPAs. All these organizations fall under the direct responsibility or oversight of either the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Higher Education and Research, the Ministry of Agriculture, or the Ministry of Employment (see box 1). They have to track and evaluate their programmes and are submitted to evaluations by the Ministry. The *Greta*, vocational secondary schools, and CFAs fall directly under their respective ministries and are inspected by agencies operated jointly by the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Higher Education and Research (IGEN and IGAENR). An autonomous administrative authority has been established in 2007 to evaluate institutes for higher education (AERES). The CFPPAs fall directly under the Ministry of Agriculture and are supervised by this ministry. The *AFPA* and *CNED* operate as semi-autonomous governing bodies and have substantial freedom in their (quality management and quality assurance) policies. Apart from inspection and evaluation, the French state has attempted to improve and assure quality of formal education and training through the creation of a national vocational certification register (*répertoire nationale des certifications professionnelles*: RNCP) and the establishment of a number of labels.

Non formal education and training is provided by the *CNED* - which falls under the oversight of the Ministry of National Education - and a range of private organisations and establishments such as the Popular Universities and the schools of second chance. No formal policy concerning the quality of non-formal education and training exists, except for a label regarding the quality of language education. Several labels have been developed by non governmental organisations and are used in the private sector as well as the public sector.

Difference between VET, HE and NVAL

The quality of VET and higher education is to a large degree guaranteed by the state since it either directly manages the relevant institutions or exercises oversight on these institutions. Quality label such as *GretaPlus* and *lycée des métiers* serve as measures to boost quality. The quality of non-formal / non-vocational adult learning is not guaranteed by the state, and the state has no direct control over or oversight on the relevant institutions, with the exception of the *CNED*. Except for the *qualité français langue étrangère* label no state-sanctioned quality labels exist for this sector.

Instruments

Certification: All regular diplomas (the BAC, DAEU, et cetera) are issued by the Ministries of National Education and of Higher Education and Research. In addition, France has developed a National Vocational Certification Register (RNCP), which is largely in

¹ Not all laws are relevant for the issue of quality assurance in adult learning.

line with the European Qualification Framework. This inventory is managed by the National Commission on Professional Certification. The CNCP establishes certification requirements and evaluation methods for each vocational certification that has been registered.

Inspection and evaluation: At the national level France has two inspection authorities who fall directly under the minister of National Education and the Minister of Higher Education and Research. The General Inspection for National Education (*Inspection générale de l'éducation nationale*: IGEN) evaluates educational programmes, monitors and evaluates personnel (including regional - académie level - inspectors), and plays an important role in the development of educational programmes and exams. The General Inspection for the Administration of National Education and Research (*Inspection générale de l'administration de l'éducation nationale et de la recherche*: IGAENR) monitors, studies, and evaluates the functioning and efficiency of the educational system. The jurisdiction of IGEN and IGAENR is limited to institutions for national and higher education under the responsibility of the two ministries (colleges, lycées, institutes of higher education). In addition to these authorities, an autonomous administrative authority for the evaluation of research and higher education has been created in 2007. This Agency for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (*Agence d'évaluation de la recherche et de l'enseignement supérieur*: AERES) evaluates institutes for higher education and their educational programmes and diplomas, and validates these institutions' procedures for the evaluation of staff. The idea behind AERES is that independent authorities provide trustworthy information that leads to enhanced competition between institutes of higher education in the field of quality. The organisation was created by the *Loi de programme de la recherche* of April 18th 2006. Finally, the Ministry of National Education disposes of a Regional Service for the Inspection of Alternating Training (*Service académique d'inspection de l'apprentissage*: SAIA) in each *académie*.

At the *académie* level regional councils also perform quantitative and qualitative monitoring of the training policies they set up. A complementary evaluation system is set up by the employer-employee organisations (*Offices pôle emploi*) in each region¹. They evaluate the training programmes that they finance and perform quality controls on AFPA training. Finally, there are sectoral agencies that monitor quality. The National Observatory on Farming Education (*Observatoire national de l'enseignement agricole*: ONEA) is mentioned most frequent in the literature. ONEA is placed under the Ministry of Agriculture en Fishing and produces an annual quality report.

Agreements between regions and educational institutions

At the *académie* level regional councils sign quality charters (*Chartes de Qualité*) with professional organisations in specific sectors, or with training bodies that sign contracts with the *académie*. The charters contain sector specific agreements pertaining to the quality of management and services.

Labelling: GretaPlus: The GretaPlus label has been developed by the department for the continuing education of adults of the Ministry of National Education to certify *Gretas* and promote higher quality. Traditionally the *Gretas* have been covered by a set of different labels for quality assurance, and some of them possessed ISO certification. Since

¹ The Pôle Emploi is the government agency for the re-integration of jobless into the labour market. Offices are based in each region.

2001 these different labels have been replaced by a single reference label, which covers the same demands as made by the previously existing labels. This GretaPlus label is related to a common reference framework which contains identical demands for all *Gretas*. In 2009 a new reference norm was developed in cooperation with the French Association for Standardization (*Association Française de Normalisation*: AFNOR) and linked to the GretaPlus label. This reference on good practice (*Référentiel de bonnes pratiques*) is referred to as BP X50-762 and is intended to strengthen the legitimacy of the *Greta* system. The new reference norm contains twenty-six commitments which are categorised under seven key demands. The single most important demand is that the *Greta* provides tailor-made training (*formation sur mesure*). As such, the label should guarantee that training takes account of a student's demands, goals, and current level of skills and knowledge. Other demands are that the *Greta* provides extensive information, assistance in orientation, and counselling, and that the student's progress is monitored and validated¹.

Each *Greta* can individually decide to apply for the GretaPlus label, and this label is not a prerequisite for executing its functions. Before applying the *Greta* should have at least one year of working experience with the national quality approach. After a *Greta* has applied for the label, a number of "blank" audits are organised by the relevant académie, followed by an audit by auditors from the Ministry of National Education. During the audit the inspectors evaluate whether the *Greta* meets the requirements of the reference on good practice. A National Committee on Labelling (*Comité National de Labellisation*: CNL) provides a recommendation on the attribution of the label, on the basis of the audit results. On this basis the Minister for National Education decides whether or not to grant the label. The quality label is given for a period of three years but the regional inspection has to undertake an internal audit report every year to monitor implementation of the quality objectives in the *Greta*. Only 50 out of 220 *Gretas* had obtained the GretaPlus label in 2011.

Lycée des Metiers: The label *Lycée des Metiers* ("Vocational Secondary School") has been created in 2001 by the Ministry of National Education and is offered to vocational and polyvalent schools for secondary education who combine the vocational and technological tracks. Its creation was driven by four objectives: (1) to promote the attractiveness of the vocational route, (2) to push the regional networks of VET providers towards quality, (3) to reinforce synergies between the vocational and technological routes of training, and (4) to restructure regional training provisions to make them more consistent. The label is seen as an important approach to create a dynamic towards quality and excellence in VET and to promote accountability against common criteria for quality. The main criteria are listed in annex A.

The label can not be obtained by regular or technical schools for secondary education (*Lycées d'enseignement général et technologique*), unless they sign a partnership with a vocational high school. The initial number of criteria for accreditation was four and has been increased to nine in 2005. The key demands of the label are that the *Lycée* has to offer a coherent range of vocational training around a consistent group of jobs and to develop narrow relationships with local and regional employers. While the *Lycées des Metiers* have a lot to do with initial vocational education and training, they are also relevant from the perspective of continuing VET, since one of the demands is that the

¹ The document with detailed quality criteria can be found at: http://media.education.gouv.fr/file/Formation_continue_adultes/84/1/Gretaplus_livret-referentiel_112841.pdf.

school provides vocational education to a variety of target groups including adults. The label *Lycée des Metiers* is attributed by the rector of an *académie* (region) by means of a regional committee in charge of labelling. The label is valid for a period of five years. At this moment about 800 *Lycées* have been awarded the label.

Qualité Français Langue Étrangère: The label *Qualité Français Langue Étrangère* is provided by the Ministry of Higher Education and Research, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Culture and Communication, by means of the Inter-ministerial Committee on Labelling (*Commission Interministérielle de Labellisation*: CIL). The label can be awarded to public and private educational institutions who provide French language training and meet a number of criteria¹.

Labels by non governmental organisations: Both public and private educational institutions have made and continue to make use of three types of labels or standards issued by private organisations. First, use is made of the standard ISO-9001, which specifies requirements for a quality management system (1) where an organization needs to demonstrate its ability to consistently provide product that meets customer and applicable statutory and regulatory requirements, and (2) where an organization aims to enhance customer satisfaction through the effective application of the system, including processes for continual improvement of the system and the assurance of conformity to customer and applicable statutory and regulatory requirements. Secondly, use is made of quality labels provided by the Professional Office for the Qualification of Training Establishments (*Office professionnel de qualification des organismes de formation*: OPQF). This organisation has been created by the initiative of the Federation for Vocational Training (*Fédération de la formation professionnelle*) and is recognized by the state. The qualification certificate provided by the OPQF certifies that the establishment (1) possesses the competences and resources that are necessary to perform its activities, (2) makes these competences suitable for use in its programmes, and (3) delivers high quality services, satisfying its customers². Finally, the French Association for Standardization (AFNOR) issues two labels. First, the label “Marque NF Service” is a type of voluntary certification and is used to indicate that the quality of services is in line with French, European, and International norms. Secondly, a National Charter for the CFA and CFPPA (*Charte nationale des CFA et CFPPA*) has been developed in cooperation with these organisations. The label relates to the reception of students, the results of the centre, the development and implementation of training programmes, and the follow-up for the integration of young people. An audit is undertaken every three years.

Education and qualification of training staff: One can distinguish between teachers (who are employed in the *Lycées*) and instructors, which is a generic term for any player in continuing training. Training of teachers employed in the continuing education sector is given according to the same principles as apply to teachers employed in the initial education sector. It largely takes place in university-level institutes training teachers (*instituts universitaires de formation des maîtres*). Training has been overhauled and modernized in the past years and is based on a wide range of qualification programmes and programmes culminating in diplomas awarded by universities, and on a vocational degree awarded by the Ministry of Employment. Instructors in the *Gretas* are trained in

¹ The criteria can be found at <http://www.labelqualitefle.org/images/stories/documents-a-telecharger/referentiel.pdf>

² The criteria for this label can be found in annex B

their respective *academies* and by the Academic Centres for Vocational Education (*Centre académique de formation continue*: CAFOC). AFPA instructors benefit of a continuing training offer by AFPA's National Institute of Training Professions.

Responsible bodies

There are a number of responsible bodies: 1) The National Commission on Vocational Certification (CNCP); 2) The General Inspection for National Education (IGEN); 3) The General Inspection for the Administration of National Education and Research (IGAENR); 4) The National Committee on Labelling (CNL); 5) Inter-ministerial Committee on Labelling (CIL); 6) International Standardization Organization (ISO); 7) Professional Office for the Qualification of Training Establishments (OPQF); 8) French Association for Standardization (AFNOR).

Challenges

The main issue is the low degree of influence the state exercises on the (private) non-formal education sector. Multiple sources note that the high number of private establishments makes it difficult to form a clear picture of quality in the private sector.

10 Germany

A) Quality assurance systems: an overview

HE	The Law establishing the foundation "Foundation for the Accreditation of Study Programmes in Germany" from 15 February 2005 serves as the legal basis for the activity of the Accreditation Council. The law sets up a legal framework for the binding definition of tasks, responsibilities and authorities of the central players in the accreditation system, i.e. the Accreditation Council and the currently six licensed accreditation agencies
VET	The Law establishing the foundation "Foundation for the Accreditation of Study Programmes in Germany" from 15 February 2005 serves as the legal basis for the activity of the Accreditation
Non-formal	Non available at federal level. The responsibility for non-vocational CET does lies with the states. These regulate the quality requirements in the CET and training leave laws. In almost all states CET and adult education laws exist in with the support requirements such as public offer, professional leadership, economic efficiency etc. are defined. There are special quality-related regulations exist in the following states: Bremen, Mecklenburg West Pomerania, Lower Saxony, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland, Schleswig-Holstein and Thuringia.

B) Further elaboration on quality assurance in the country

Legal framework

There are different legislations in place for assuring quality in adult learning, launched at national and regional level.

National regulations:

- Distance Learning Protection Law [Fernunterrichtsschutzgesetz (FernUSG)] for distance and e-learning
- The Social Code Book III [Sozialgesetzbuch III (SGB III)] with the Recognition and Certification Ordinance [Anerkennungs- und Zulassungsverordnung (AZWV)] for continuous vocational education and training (CVET) in the field of the Federal Employment Agency
- The Vocational Education Law [Berufsbildungsgesetz (BBiG)] and Crafts Regulation Code [Handwerksordnung (HwO)] for qualification-oriented vocational training (continuing training occupations recognised on national level)

Federal regulations:

- CET or adult learning laws in almost all states defined by eligibility criteria such as public supply, professional leadership, economic performance etc.
- Special quality control regulations in the following states: Bremen, Mecklenburg-West Pomerania, Lower Saxony, North Rhine Westphalia, Saarland, Schleswig-Holstein, Thuringia

Especially as an eligibility criterion, the importance of possessing quality management (QM) systems (e.g. certification by ISO, EFQM or similar systems) is increasing both on national and federal level. In addition to this supply-side policy, the German Consumer Protection Law provides the basis for quality standards to be set from the demand side. Measures range from check lists and data bases for more transparency to education tests of a consumer protection organisation (Stiftung Warentest).

The First Law for Modern Services in the Labour Market (Erstes Gesetz für moderne Dienstleistungen am Arbeitsmarkt) in 2003 steered the discussion on quality of CET/CVET for the unemployed in a new direction. According to the law, not only employment agencies are responsible for quality control of measures and their providers in the SGB III field, but also external certification bodies. The details of the implementation are settled in an implementation regulation (AZWV). In addition to this national regulation, individual states also have agreed on quality regulations in their range of action, laws for CET and quality regulations. In Bremen or North Rhine Westphalia adherence to these laws is relevant for funding. Parallel to these supply-side efforts consumer protection in CET is being further strengthened (by transparency rules, tests and check lists). Overall, quality management on national and federal level has become a routine procedure and hence a part of daily business.

The responsibility for non-vocational CET does lie with the states. These regulate the quality requirements in the CET and training leave laws. In almost all states CET and adult education laws exist in with the support requirements such as public offer, professional leadership, economic efficiency etc. are defined. There are special quality-related regulations exist in the following states: Bremen, Mecklenburg West Pomerania, Lower Saxony, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland, Schleswig-Holstein and Thuringia.

Instruments

National level:

The certification bodies granted the right to certify by the AZWV must officially be approved by the Federal Employment Agency; this procedure corresponds to ISO certification. There are the certifiers sent by the German accreditation council (Deutscher Akkreditierungsrat) – among others consistent of representatives from trade unions and the federal Ministries for Economics and Labour – represents the certifiers.

State level:

The states recognise federal level accreditations of certifiers. Rules vary as the recognition of the eligibility of institutions for support measures is dependent on the laws on further training of the respective state. In most cases the state administration holds the responsibility and seeks the consultation of a National Committee for CET or similar constructs when needed. In 3 states (Hamburg, Hessen, North Rhine Westphalia) state-specific associations for seals of approval play a central role and assume a large part of

QM certifications. However, other certificates (ISO, EFQM, LQW etc.) are considered to be equally valuable eligibility criteria in these states.

Factually the ISO concept is **the guiding force** behind all quality considerations. It is the guiding concept upon which all other CET-specific concepts are built. Central elements are: Control of quality management, not product quality; external evaluation; cyclically repeated testing; development orientation and the obligation to provide proof (e.g. QM-handbook).

External evaluation

Usual procedures in QM are based on external evaluation. As a rule, the support bodies (e.g. federal and state governments, Federal Employment Agency) as well as the providers of CET rely on the judgement of the certifiers. In justified exceptional cases (e.g. suspicion of financial irregularities) official inspections are carried out. Only in the Adult Education Law of Lower Saxony evaluation obligations are manifested in addition to quality requirements. The establishments recognised by the particular law must be evaluated every four years. Individual institutions regularly check their subsidiaries and branches as part of their management routine.

Self evaluation

As an orientation for self-evaluation, CET establishments can either use requirement catalogues of established procedures (e.g. ISO, EFQM and LQW) or their own specially developed check lists, which are available in form of books or brochures (Questionnaire of the state association of adult education centres in Lower Saxony 1996).

Consumer protection

Quality policy in Germany is not only supply-side-oriented, but also demand-side-oriented. Thus, Stiftung Warentest (an independent government-supported body) regularly tests CET offers (e.g. language and computer courses) and publishes test results in the magazine “test” and in special issues. Check lists and references to consumer rights (withdrawal from contract, poor service) constitute part of this consumer information.

Quality price

An example can be found in the Ludwig-Erhard-Award, innovation award of the German Institute for Adult Education [(Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung (DIE) – Leibniz Centre for Lifelong Learning], Hermann-Schmidt-Award of the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training. [Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung (BiBB)], quality assessments of Stiftung Warentest.

Professional development of staff

For **full-time** pedagogues in CET (mostly in a planning or managing position) diploma or BA/MA course of study “Adult learning/CET”, yet in practice in competition with other academic degrees. Teachers coming from second chance education (late acquisition of secondary school certificates) must be in possession of the respective certification as a teacher.

There are no binding specifications for **part-time pedagogues or pedagogues working on a voluntary basis**, which hold the majority of CET events. CET courses (also in form of higher education) are offered, yet participation is voluntary.

There are no legal requirements or recommendations, yet different recommendations from practice [e.g. the German Adult Education Association (Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband (DVV))] and academia exist.

There is no uniform representation of interests for the teaching staff of CET. The labour unions (GEW, ver.di), national and federal associations of institutions [e.g. German Adult Education Association (Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband (DVV)), Federal Catholic Association for Adult Education (Katholische Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft für Erwachsenenbildung (KBE), German Protestant Association for Adult Education (Deutsche Evangelische Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Erwachsenenbildung (DEAE)), the Association of Private Schools (Verband der Privatschulen), the Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce] (Deutscher Industrie- und Handelskammertag (DIHK)), the German Confederation of Skilled Crafts (Zentralverband des Deutschen Handwerks (ZDH)) take over this representation of interests.

Most of the CET providers only take into account professional competence when selecting teaching staff, pedagogic-didactic qualities are mostly of secondary importance. Only few providers require evidence of pedagogic qualification in advance. One can however observe that based on the results of the participants' feedback within QM procedures unqualified staff is excluded or they receive skill refreshment.

Only for reasons of competition, providers try to keep good personnel and enhance its skills. The human resource development is also a guideline of most QM procedures. Nevertheless, the possibilities in CET are limited, as the majority of teaching is carried out by part-time workers, which are difficult to persuade to make an additional effort to increase their pedagogic skills, particularly. A further problem is that CET in Germany is chronically underfinanced in comparison to other education sectors, so that employee training often has to be financed by participants themselves.

Quality organisations

- German Accreditation Council, AZWV certification authority
- Approval authorities for support of CET providers, Central Office for Distance Learning [Zentralstelle für Fernunterricht (ZFU)]
- Associations for seals of approval and other certifiers (ArtSet, Certqua, DEKRA, TÜV Cert etc.)
- Consumer protection organisation (Stiftung Warentest)/Consumer advice centres

On national level there is only one competent authority, namely the central body for distance learning and non-vocational distance Learning offers and e-learning.

On state level the supreme state authorities are responsible for CET, the authorised/accredited certification bodies and, in some cases, associations for seals of quality. CET associations on federal level often play an advisory role.

Challenges

- Comparability of the individual QM procedures
- Assessment of the effects on training providers and quality of CET
- Too high level of bureaucracy, too high costs in the face of unsure effects
- Routinisation of quality management as a form of “quality seal safeguarding”/as a marketing instrument without true quality awareness
- QM criteria become relevance filters which steer action in a direction which may result in misallocation of resources (“depedagogisation” of CET)

11 Greece

A) Quality assurance systems: an overview

HE	The Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency (HQAA) prescribes the establishment of Quality Management Units (MODIP) in each higher education institution, setting a framework for quality assurance in higher education. Among HQAA's main responsibilities are the formulation of quality standards, quality control methodologies and criteria, and promotion and coordination of external and internal quality control mechanisms in tertiary education institutions. The basic criteria for quality evaluation defined by Law (3374/2005) are centered on four basic quality themes: a) curricula, b) teaching, c) research and d) other services. Additionally, this Law demands for each institute an external evaluation conducted by a "Committee of External Evaluation", with experts drawn from a special register developed by HQAA".
VET	Law 3191/2003 stipulates the establishment of the National System for Linking Vocational Education and Training with Employment (ESSEKA). OEEK the Organization for Vocational Education and Training under which operates all IVET in the country through IEKs (Institutes for Vocational Training) is responsible for applying the policies, however the quality parameter is not very visible at a national level but only during the periods of National Examinations for IVET Accreditation where an external examination board is responsible for the whole accreditation process. At sectoral level policies largely refer to quality approaches in CVET as these are implemented by the National Accreditation Centre (EKEPIS) [that is very recently in 21 November 2011, merged with two other organizations into a single entity, and created EOPPEP, the National Organisation for Accreditation of Qualifications & Vocational Guidance, under the supervision of the Minister of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs. EKEPIS operates varied quality measurement instruments such as the Trainers Registry. EKEPIS operates its own framework for accrediting both CVET structures but also CVET trainers and supporting staff. This framework prescribes the development of a registry for trainers as well as a set of infrastructural guidelines for CVET centres that could be accredited by EKEPIS.
Non-formal	(1) a new initiative called 'T3 framework' (National Quality Assurance Framework for Lifelong Learning) is proposed. The T3 framework recommends the incorporation of quality system in the LLL, including quality indicators and quality principles

B) Further elaboration on quality assurance in the country

Legal framework

Lifelong Learning (LLL) strategy has been adopted by the political leadership of the Ministry of National Education, Lifelong Learning & Religious Affairs (MoNE). The first legislative framework (Law 3369/2005) prescribed the establishment of a National Committee of Lifelong Learning, that would aim to ascertain the needs of lifelong education and training, to evaluate the overall quality of delivery and to co-ordinate the institutions of lifelong education and training as well as to oversee their interconnection with the National System of Connecting Vocational Education and Training with Employment (ESSEKA). Under its latest Operational Program (2007-2013) and under the new legislative framework for LLL (Law 3879/2010), MoNE has planned a series of measures that aim at creating a system of education and lifelong learning that will provide the resources and skills necessary for active participation in society, for unimpeded access to the labour market and for completion of school education – especially regarding at risk populations – and which promote the reduction of regional educational disparities. According to it, some of the basic reform priorities of the education, training and LLL systems is **to assess progress in education through the implementation of systems for quality assurance** – assessing the factors involved in the education system, and secure the development of high quality VET pathways.

Programme evaluation and quality assurance constitutes a core priority for the **General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning (GSLL)**. The period 2006-2008 saw the implementation of the National Quality Assurance Framework (**NQAF**), which follows the general principles of the Common Quality Assurance Framework for VET in Europe (**CQAF**). According to the Greek framework, adult learning providers design and implement self-evaluation procedures for their programmes following national programme evaluation standards and procedures. Self-evaluation concerns evaluation of procedures (administrational procedures, management and leadership, resources and outcomes/educational pathways) as well as evaluation of educational processes (teaching methods, training packages and contents, learner assessment model, teacher evaluation procedures and training, etc.). In addition, external audit procedures have been carried out by regional evaluators in all 13 regions of the country to ensure accountability and quality improvement. Furthermore, the National Framework ensured both the assessment and accreditation of learning outcomes through the development of a National Competency Framework (**NCF**). The NCF assesses performance on six generic key competencies (i.e. organizational, technical, cultural, personal, civic, communicative) and it covers a wide range of knowledge, skills and attitudes adult learners acquire after their training in each individual programme. Finally, the NCF assesses and recognises prior learning.

Currently, at national level, quality improvement and quality assurance are fundamental concepts of the recent national strategy for Lifelong Learning (LLL), according to the respective legislation, mainly **Law 3879/2010**, where assessment and quality improvement are clearly linked to all the dimensions of learning (inputs, procedures and outputs/outcomes) and all organisations involved (be it LLL service providers or policy makers). In this respect there are three major quality frameworks that operate at national

level. The first one - the ' π^3 framework'- is still under revision and has not been implemented yet. The other two are the EKEPIS framework for quality in CVET provision, and the HQAA quality framework for higher education.

More specifically now, the current **National Programme for Lifelong Learning** puts emphasis on quality, since the Ministry Of Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs has incorporated the notion "Quality Everywhere" as a strategic objective in its planning for a 3-year period (2011-2013). The Ministry, aiming at effectively coordinating the role of all organisations towards the improvement of quality and the alignment with the national policy and the European strategy, has also developed a framework for the improvement of Lifelong Learning, the ' π^3 framework', which sets the principles for quality improvement and provides all organisations involved with a tool for planning, delivering and assessing their results in all the area of Lifelong Learning. The implementation of π^3 (which is not as yet been implemented but it is still in the form of a proposal) will apply to all the organisations involved in the non-formal education system and supervised either by the MoNE or by other Ministries. The ' π^3 framework' is based on 8 quality principles of Lifelong Learning that are linked to as many as possible dimensions of learning (inputs, procedures and outputs/outcomes). The ' π^3 framework' is still at the form of a proposal and has not yet been implemented. It suggests however a broad spectrum of factors that can be taken into account for quality assessment in the area of LLL in Greece and more particularly in the area of formal and non-formal AEL, and at the same time complements the National LLL strategy in terms of providing a general yet accountable framework for quality assessment.

A policy framework that has been applied since 2001 and which has great relevance to **CVET provision**, is the one been implemented by **EKEPIS**. EKEPIS is recently merged with two other organizations into a single entity, EOPPEP, the National Organisation for Accreditation of Qualifications & Vocational Guidance, under the supervision of the Minister of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs. **EOPPEP** became operational in 21st November, 2011. The National Accreditation Centre for Continuing Vocational Training (EKEPIS) however was founded in 1997 under the Law 2469/1997 (Official Journal 38A/14-03-1997) and the Presidential Decree No 67 (Official Journal 61A/ 21-4-1997) and is located in Athens. EKEPIS until November 2011 was a statutory body supervised by the Minister of Employment and Social Protection with administrative and financial autonomy. Today it is supervised by the Ministry of National Education and it is administered by the Board of Directors, the Chairman of the Board and the General Director.

The Centre's mission is to develop and implement the **National Accreditation System for Continuing Vocational Training** in three consecutive phases. This system aims at: 1) ensuring quality assurance in vocational training; 2) improving effectiveness of training services; 3) reinforcing reliability in vocational training; 4) linking vocational training with employment and the demands of the labour market; 5) interlinking the systems of VET (linking initial with continuing vocational training systems); 6) promoting lifelong learning

EKEPIS (as part of EOPPEP) also works towards: a) Accreditation of Vocational Training Centres and Special Centres for the Social and Vocational Integration of people with disabilities and former users of illegal substances. B) Monitoring and Evaluation of Accredited Vocational Training Centres and Special Centres. C) Accreditation of Trainers of Continuing Vocational Training. D) Accreditation of Support Services Providers. E) Accreditation of Job Profiles. F) Accreditation of Continuing Vocational Training Programmes. G) Accreditation of knowledge, skills and competencies.

Courses offered by KEKs are not connected with the general VET system and do not lead to official accreditation or diploma. This aspect of accreditation is currently under development by the EKEPIS. The intention is to establish an automatic recognition of the knowledge gained in the training programs. Another aspect under this perspective is the accreditation of pre-existing competences and qualifications. EKEPIS has formed a Registry of accredited trainers, who have eligibility for employment in EU co-funded programmes. Furthermore, this organisation has developed a system for accreditation concerning assistant-services tailored to the needs of the social vulnerable groups (Support Services Professionals); EKEPIS is also responsible for the accreditation of Occupational Profiles on continuing vocational training programmes. In the future, EKEPIS aims at accrediting the knowledge, skills and competences acquired by the trainees, who have successfully completed an accredited training programme.

Finally a policy framework that is operative since 2005 and which proves to be the most successful so far in terms of its implementation (amid with resistance by parts of the academic community) is the one that is set down by the **Law 3374/2005**. This Law which follows the Bologna process had undertaken the commitment to enact a national quality assurance system up to the meeting of Bergen in spring 2005. The public discussions however, were again very intense and the official dialogue was inevitably contrasting, especially during spring 2005 when the draft-law was published for further social consultation. The law was finally voted in July (Law 3374/2005). Despite various problems in its implementation, this Law which establishes the Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency (HQAA) and prescribes the establishment of Quality Management Units (MODIP) in each higher education institution finely sets a framework for quality assurance in higher education. According to this framework for quality assurance there are three aims that need to be fulfilled: Accountability, Improvement and Development.

Differences between VET, HE and VET

The most common difference is that the quality criteria that are set in VET and HE are largely related with measurable indicators (quantitative). Although the quality assurance 'π³ framework' is not yet in operation, it seems that it follows the VET pattern for setting a set of measurable quality criteria. EKEPIS has already set a number of quality measurable criteria both for the structures it accredits well as the trainers it includes in its registry. HQAA has also applied a number of quantitative criteria for quality assurance in HEIs albeit the extensive qualitative criteria it applies during the self-evaluation phase.

More specifically now and in terms of the differences in the non-vocational adult learning sector compared with the development of quality assurance systems in VET and Higher Education, the following seem to apply:

NVAL	VET & HE
- quality assurance for training services - improvement of the accreditation procedure for the knowledge acquired - optimal use of resources - networking and collaboration of stakeholders	- better adaptation of VET to the requirements and challenges of the labour market via the systematic recording of training needs and skills gaps - raising incentives concerning participation in LLL - ensuring equal learning opportunities - promotion of VET's recognition

- enhancing quality of accreditation systems	- optimising social partners involvement - upgrading stakeholders' engagement in processes - monitoring, assessment and evaluation of systems - quality assurance in qualification systems - improvement of counselling and vocational guidance systems - overcoming overlappings in the field of VET: responsibilities and actions of multiple authority bodies, levels of VET - alleviating overburdening of bureaucracy with impact on the progress of implementation of the legislative framework - reinforcement of gender equality aiming at improvement of the access and participation of women in the labour market - investing in pedagogical innovation - development of a Data Bank, which will coordinate the existing information and documentation of electronic networks and the information flow towards stakeholders and interested parties.

Instruments

The degree to which LLL institutions incorporate the ' **π^3 framework**' principles in their systems and operational procedures will be evaluated once the framework is implemented, at a top level via a set of fifteen (15) measurable qualitative and quantitative indicators, presented in the table below:

These key indicators can and should be enhanced, analysed and further developed by the organisations involved in terms of their content and the Ministry of Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs has developed a "toolbox" of forty seven (47) additional indicators to support this effort. Based on the above indicators the ' **π^3 framework**' prescribes a continuous improvement of Lifelong Learning which requires the integration and alignment of all systems and operational procedures of LLL bodies with the eight quality principles, which is achieved via the implementation of a sequence of five steps, the LLL quality cycle.

The LLL Quality Cycle is based on the EQAVET Quality Cycle, except that the step "Evaluation" of the EQAVET Quality Cycle has been further analysed to "Measurement" and "Evaluation" in order to emphasise the need for an assessment based on measurable (qualitative and quantitative) data. The LLL Quality Cycle is the tool that continuously helps LLL institutions to self-assess their systems and operational procedures and improve their alignment to the eight quality principles of Lifelong Learning and, subsequently, to the π^3 framework. This means that all organizations that adopt the π^3 framework periodically use the LLL quality cycle in order to evaluate the degree of incorporation of each one of the eight quality principles into their operation and, therefore, to plan the necessary improvements. The maturity of the organizations in the use of the LLL quality cycle and in the incorporation of the quality principles may be rated on a scale from 0 to 5 per quality step, leading to an overall score, that can be used as a benchmark (for each organisation or even among organizations) for monitoring improvement.

For evaluation purposes **EKEPIS** operates an online system, where KEKs can upload data related to the accreditation criteria. Every two years each KEK around Greece is undergoing a process of external evaluation by a group of 2 evaluators appointed by EKEPIS. The evaluators write an evaluation report on the degree to which a KEK complies with the evaluation criteria. The evaluators are selected from the "Unified Register of Evaluators", which is maintained by MoNE. A main central level policy adopted regarding the modernisation of the KEKs curricula and their accreditation process through EKEPIS was

that it should be based on the design and adoption of documents, the so called “Occupational Profiles”, describing the knowledge, skills and capacities required for the performance of specific occupations. This is a newly introduced innovation aiming to drive a wider reform in vocational training in Greece by linking it closely to the contemporary professional demands of specific occupations.

Among **HQAA**’s main responsibilities are the formulation of quality standards, quality control methodologies and criteria, and promotion and coordination of external and internal quality control mechanisms in tertiary education institutions. The basic criteria for quality evaluation defined by Law (3374/2005) are centered on four basic quality themes: a) curricula, b) teaching, c) research and d) other services. The members of this Agency are appointed by the Minister of Education. The Law further demanded from each tertiary education institution in Greece to set up a “Quality Assurance Unit”, with the responsibility to coordinate internal evaluations implemented by each one of the educational units of an institution every two years. Additionally, this Law demanded from the institutions to implement external evaluation conducted by a “Committee of External Evaluation”, with experts drawn from a special register developed by HQAA.

Professional development of staff

Staff are very generally prescribed in ‘**TT³ framework**’ (trainers have relevant and adequate qualifications, trainers take part regularly in training of trainers learning activities, etc.) but it is essentially applied only through **EKEPIS**. The adult trainers' accreditation system operates on two levels: A) Through the creation of the Introductory Adult Trainers' Accreditation Register, which is a catalogue of trainers who have all the required typical qualifications as well as the required professional and teaching experience; and B) Through the creation of the Accredited Adult Trainers' Register, which is a catalogue of trainers who are already registered in the Introductory Adult Trainers' Accreditation Register and who have completed successfully the training and accreditation process. This is further supported through a training period (75% by distance learning). Competence profiles are only developed for **EKEPIS** that holds its own body of professional for training CVET trainers.

Challenges

As it is stated in the applicable law (3879/2010) the national strategy for lifelong learning focuses on the need for national and regional growth as well as the implementation of a modern, flexible, dynamic, competitive, efficient and fair system of education and vocational training. According to the specifications of the European policy, it must be ensured that the total population should have access to the educational services via a system of lifelong learning, which promotes quality, social cohesion, equality, employment and accountability. The **increase of attractiveness and the quality of educational programs** (to ensure mobilization of non-traditional learners), the application of certification of knowledge, the continuous training of Trainers and the connection of programs of education and training with the job market constitute the most fundamental challenges.

As far as **quality assurance mechanisms** are concerned, according to the National Strategic Reference Framework (ESPA), general education and VET play a crucial role because they contribute to social policy, economic and cultural development and to the foundation of knowledge, skills and human resources in order to face future challenges. In this framework, ESPA states that evaluation should be encouraged in order to develop long-term policies. Decision makers should realize what is going on within their systems through the encouragement of an evaluation culture. A basic choice towards this direction is the process of quality assurance through assessment functions in order

to lay emphasis on the level of qualitative features of the Greek education system. The continuous recording of the findings will enable and strengthen interventions. Thus, Greece needs to open communication channels for the organisation of research. Apart from collecting data, it should also develop mechanisms for the evaluation of the implemented policies.

More specifically now and in terms of the existing quality assurance frameworks and policies:

The '**π³ framework**' needs to be fully implemented before a conclusion is drawn regarding its adequacy. So far the framework is nothing more but a prescription of quality principles and quality indicators.

For **EKEPIS** however it seems that the framework that is in place operates according to its initial expectations. What might be challenging in this respect is the need for continuous updating of the framework especially considering the role of EKEPIS after its merging with the National Centre for Professional Guidance (EKEP) and the National Centre for the Accreditation of Qualifications (EOPP).

For the framework of **HQAA** for quality assurance in HEIs the challenges faced are the many. LLL is a newcomer to Greek higher education, but there is now a movement in its favour in the universities. This is the result of a top-down government policy within a general framework for wider educational reform, but it is not clear yet how far it has been taken on board by the universities as a matter of strategy. The policy in its present form has only been in operation for the last year or so (since September 2010 with the Law 3879/2010). It is financed primarily by the EU and has both positive and negative implications. On the positive side, the revenues from the EU act as an incentive for many university departments and academics to become involved. On the negative side, those who see no benefit in engaging in such courses are reluctant to participate and many question their value and survival. But it seems that LLL is here to stay. Indeed, everything indicates that it will gain momentum in the immediate future. The traditionalists and those who oppose reform have no convincing arguments or alternative proposals and they have no answer as to what must be done in the face of rapid socio-economic change. LLL as a concept and as an educational policy remains fuzzy and continues to mean different things to different people. Certainly, its deeper educational philosophical and social implications have not been clarified or even discussed in the literature. Hence, many opponents see the new programmes as a policy imposed by international organisations and governments to serve the needs of the free market. This is perhaps more evident today with the economic crisis. Related to this is the criticism that LLL is simply a training tool, which is not really what university education is about. Hence, they see its introduction as an erosion of university autonomy and a threat to its standards.

The establishment of HQAA and the introduction of the legislative framework on quality assurance in tertiary education have, so far, produced some results, but there is a long way towards building a consensus around the idea of quality control mechanisms. All these years, the public discourse on the justification of quality assurance mechanisms in tertiary education was centered on the issue of chronic public under-investments in tertiary education. The main, widely shared, argument of those among the academics who opposed the idea of quality assurance schemes was that the State has first to increase funding to the levels of most other European countries and then demand from Universities and Higher Technological Institutes (ATEIs) to provide evidence of the quality of ser-

vices offered. Another critical issue in the public discourse was the methodologies that should be followed by a quality assurance scheme. Many academics feared that the establishment of a quality assurance scheme which would reflect the dominant, mainly Anglo-Saxon, tradition (by placing too much emphasis on quantitative indicators of academic excellence, such as the number of academic papers published in refereed journals or the amount of money that a Department attracts from various sources apart from public ones, for research), would result in the devaluing of more theoretically oriented studies and would, in effect, transform universities into a meaningless paper-production industry. Others who follow the lead emanating from the rhetoric of the literature of international organisations and governments talk of LLL as a panacea for all social, economic and even political problems. This leads to the conclusion that extensive research on its various aspects and ramifications which will allow for in-depth discussion and understanding of the problems and the possibilities involved is now urgently needed. A general conclusion is that the introduction and the operation of LLL available in Greek universities is bound to be affected by the fact that the educational system at large is highly centralised and state controlled at all levels. Due to historical political developments in modern Greece, education, and higher education in particular, have been subject to political influence, if not control. This is still true and includes the universities which, despite their constitutional autonomy, cannot really initiate independent reform. They are aware of the need for reform in view of the changes which are taking place in contemporary society. Official educational provision, however, must be provided within a strict legal framework and be approved by the government. All courses must be approved by the Ministry of Education, as must the appointment of the regular members of staff working in the official system. Any educational reform follows a top-down process with the government as the initiator. In this context, the government has tried to introduce LLL in higher education within its general programme of reform of higher education. The legislation introduced in the last five years (first with the Law 3369/2005 and then with the Law 3879/2010 and more recently with the Law 4009/2011 that stipulates the operational structure for all HE institutions), and the last two in particular, points clearly to favourable conditions for LLL provision. It must be emphasised, however, that the reforms and LLL as a form of education provision are a response to the demand for mass education and immediate socio-economic problems rather than a well thought out, long term strategy based on sound educational considerations.

Last but not least another challenge lies with the stakeholders and their role in quality assurance framework. It seems that stakeholders want and need different thing from HEIs. These challenges can be summed up as follows:

- Goal is to maximize effectiveness
- Must be involved in setting policies
- Intermediary between institutional management and academic units
- Funding issues
- Ensure funding / Justify cost vs. benefits
- Managing expectations
- Results are seen in long term
- Changes / improvements are not visible by the students within the time of their studies
- Avoid degeneration into a bureaucratic process

12 Hungary

A) Quality assurance systems: an overview

HE	Higher education itself is not regulated by the Act on Adult Education. On the other hand, higher education is the field where accreditation was set up very early at the beginning of 1993 when the Hungarian Accreditation Commission was established. According to the 69/2006. Government Statutory Rule on Higher Education accreditation, this organisation regulates institutional and programme accreditations in higher education in Hungary.
VET	Vocational education and training has got two levels, one is the VET in formal education, which is organised in vocational schools and vocational secondary-schools (and at universities in the case of post-secondary VET). That form of VET is allowed to issue a Vocational Certificate for pupils referring to vocations registered into the National Vocational Registry/OKJ. In formal education, the accomplishment of such studies is free and has got no cost. VET in formal education is regulated by the CLXXXVII Act on Vocational Education and Training. Whilst VET in schools are part of the formal education system, quality assurance is achieved through accreditation procedures and regulations. VET outside the school system/formal education is organised as a part of adult education and training, which may lead to a VET certificate, listed in the National Vocational Registry/OKJ, or to a non state-recognised CVET training. In the case of vocational certificates, which are recognised by the state, quality assurance is provided by the official Vocational and Examination Requirements and are issued by the Minister, being responsible for VET, in a statutory rule. The Vocational and Examination Requirements are set and publicly issued in a legal document that clearly defines the tasks of the vocation in use, the conditions of enrolment into the VET programme, the contents of modules of the concrete programme (with task and competence profiles), the requirements of examination and the minimal tools as conditions of the VET process. Since this regulation is set in law, it is compulsory for each and every VET institutions and organisations to fulfil its points and regulations. namely, this prove that wherever a student participate a concrete registered vocational training programme, he/she will obtain the same competences, therefore, certificates issued in that vocation all around the country will have equal value and recognition.
Non-formal	(1) Act on Adult Education (CI/2001), modified in 2004, which regulates non-formal adult education and training. According to the law, there is a national system of accreditation of adult education and training, currently under legal re-construction as part of the act on adult education and training.

B) Further elaboration on quality assurance in the country

Legal framework

There are two basic areas/sectors of adult education, which are regulated by two separate laws in Hungary:

- The New Act on Public Education (CXC/2011) regulates formal education to which formal adult education belongs to (This sector belongs to the Ministry of Human Resources). Institutions of public education must provide, according to law, a pedagogical programme, which has to imply a system, methods and tools of quality policy. According to this pedagogical programme, educational and training activities are provided, which is approved by the owner of the concrete school. Most schools are owned by the state, however, a number of schools are also owned by local councils. In formal adult education, adults have a special legal relation with the school as students.
- Act on Adult Education (CI/2001), modified in 2004, which regulates non-formal adult education and training (this sector belongs to the Ministry of National Economy). Institutions and organisations of adult education being active in this sector, for example public education institutions, higher ed. institutions, adult education enterprises, state-owned regional training centres (as the István Türr Training and Research Centre), NGOs, Chambers of Commerce and Industry, workplaces must register their activities and, also, should register their adult education activities programmes in the nearby labour/employment office administered by the County Government Office. According to law, adult education providers must register in those Labour Office, however, the database to imply them is open to the public at <https://finy.munka.hu>. At the moment 9920 adult education providers are registered in this system, and that is the first step toward quality, to know very clearly who provide adult education.

Adult education institutions can create and run their own standardized quality system, e.g. ISO, TQM, EFQM, etc., but the newly built system of accreditation in adult education is to directly regulate the quality assurance processes of adult education institutions and their programmes. This quality centred administration makes institutions to provide more administrative work, however, it inevitably gives them a great advantage.

Higher education itself is not regulated by the Act on Adult Education. On the other hand, higher education is the field where accreditation was set up very early at the beginning of 1993 when the Hungarian Accreditation Commission was established. According to the 69/2006. Government Statutory Rule on Higher Education accreditation, this organisation regulates institutional and programme accreditations in higher education in Hungary.

Vocational education and training has got two levels, one is the VET in formal education, which is organised in vocational schools and vocational secondary-schools (and at universities in the case of post-secondary VET). That form of VET is allowed to issue a Vocational Certificate for pupils referring to vocations registered into the National Vocational Registry/OKJ. In formal education, the accomplishment of such studies is free and has got no cost. VET in formal education is regulated by the CLXXXVII Act on Vocational Edu-

cation and Training. Whilst VET in schools are part of the formal education system, quality assurance is achieved through accreditation procedures and regulations.

VET outside the school system/formal education is organised as a part of adult education and training, which may lead to a VET certificate, listed in the National Vocational Registry/OKJ, or to a non state-recognised CVET training.

In the case of vocational certificates, which are recognised by the state, quality assurance is provided by the official Vocational and Examination Requirements and are issued by the Minister, being responsible for VET, in a statutory rule. The Vocational and Examination Requirements are set and publicly issued in a legal document that clearly defines the tasks of the vocation in use, the conditions of enrolment into the VET programme, the contents of modules of the concrete programme (with task and competence profiles), the requirements of examination and the minimal tools as conditions of the VET process. Since this regulation is set in law, it is compulsory for each and every VET institutions and organisations to fulfil its points and regulations. namely, this prove that wherever a student participate a concrete registered vocational training programme, he/she will obtain the same competences, therefore, certificates issued in that vocation all around the country will have equal value and recognition.

Instruments

According to the law, there is a national system of accreditation of adult education and training. Two ways of accreditation is available for adult education providers: institutional accreditations and programme accreditation. The Board of Accreditation for Adult Education and Training/FAT is regulated by the Act on Adult Education (CI/2001) and its modification in 2004 (24/2004 Ministerial decree on the procedure and requirements). However, the issue of accreditation is under legal reconstruction as part of the act on adult education and training

Institutional accreditation means the regulation of main processes of the Institution/organisation. Main identifiable processes of the adult education institutions are:

- primary processes (e.g. education/training, examination, VPL, offering adult education services);
- secondary or side processes (communication and marketing processes, service department and handling of grievance);
- Supporting processes (HR, physical resources, innovation, quality development, and the course of business);
- Management processes.

The objective of the institutional accreditation is to guarantee that end-users get a picture of quality providers, the regulated frames of training activities, and, at the same time, it makes clear what purposes educational and training providers use European subsidies for and how effective that may be. The institutional accreditation as a process-regulation, and it examines whether the activities of the adult education provider, services, management and decision making are in accordance with conditions of operation set in law. The validity of institutional accreditation is four years.

The programme accreditation is to prove that the educational/training programme is fit for the educational/training goal, the criteria of accomplishment, and pedagogical, andragogical requirements. Programme accreditation is valid in between two and five years, depending on the obsolescence of the content of the programme.¹

There is no quality seal in adult education and training, however, several planning has reflected a claim for it. According to the Adult Education Act, the Adult Education Accreditation Council (still FAT, and a possible national office for accreditation after 2012) issues certificates of accreditation after successful institutional or programme accreditation which is valid for four years in the case of institutions and 2-5 years referring to programmes.- The quality label of ISLO:9001 procedure is the only available Quality-label for institutions and organisations of adult education.

Institutional and programme accreditations are voluntary. There are 1502 accredited institutions and more than 6000 accredited programmes today in Hungary. Institutional and programme accreditation is a precondition of applying for European or national government funding, and, of entering into trainings for companies they out-source.

Institutional and programme accreditation is administered by the Commission for Adult Education Accreditation (FAT) of Directorate for VET and Adult Education of the National Labour Office/NMH.

The Act on Adult Education and the related ministerial decree (24/2004) on accreditation procedures underline the necessity of self-evaluation of providers as part of their quality assurance process and as a precondition for institutional accreditation.

External evaluation, according to law, belongs to the National Institute for VET and Adult Education/since Jan. 2012. to its succeeding National Labour Office. Also, certain external evaluation can be accomplished by QA firms and agencies in case of external evaluation of audits in a QM procedure.

Adult learning staff members are required, according to law, to hold relevant certificates of professional teaching skills, practical knowledge in case of accredited programmes and provision represented by accredited AE institutions.

The operation of adult education providers can also be monitored and controlled by the County Labour Office and by the FAT referring to the maintenance and improvement of quality of services of the institution/organisation. The inappropriate operation can be sanctioned, and, in the case of severe breaking of law and/or rules, adult education provider can be excluded from its operation in adult education and training.

Continuous professional development are part of the policies of educational and training institutions which employ adult educators. On the other hand, this issue moved some Hungarian universities to open up for adult education BA and MA courses to professionally train adult educators/adult education professionals helping their organisa-

¹ Dr. Takács-Miklósi, Márta (2011) Minőségirányítás és akkreditáció a felnőttképzésben/ Quality-regulations and accreditation in adult education and training. University of Debrecen. Pp. 86-92.

tions/institutions provide quality services in adult learning with effective teaching, assessment and, for example, guidance.

Challenges

Corresponding experts from interviewed organisations have so far indicated in their responses that a major issue is that in what depth adult education providers can implement regulations stated in the law, and, at the same time, how far institutions/organisations of adult education are capable of and ready operating their own quality management systems.

The main advantage of the legal regulation of adult education and training, including the quality-regulations (accreditation), is the unified system of requirements, the quality-oriented regulations and the transparency, which are assured together with the identification of minimal conditions of adult education provision. However, its disadvantage is that legal rules regulate in a centralised way and do not differentiate in between one provider and another. It means that the same rules are used in the case of an micro-enterprise with 2-5 employees and for a big adult education enterprise with more than hundred employees and having a national scope, or to a state-run educational institution.¹ Some elements of quality assurance are overregulated (e.g. administration), some elements are under-regulated (e.g. requirements, and conditions of adult education services).

It would also be worth rethinking the set of requirements of both the institutional and programme accreditation procedures as they imply, at the moment, a collection of dominantly formal requirements instead of the concrete content-based requirements of providing quality services in adult education and training. Another important quality tool could be financing itself, in case it is connected to a kind of quality indicator or benchmark.

In order to accomplish productivity and effectiveness in adult education, it is essential to plan the curriculum and to provide relevant study materials, together with efficient organisation of education/training and a proper learning environment. All those criteria are concretely mentioned in the legal regulations upon the accreditation procedure. On the other hand, there is no legal regulation about adult education staff (organisers, teaching staff) ought to have a significant knowledge in adult education or andragogy and in the methodology of adult education and training. In a great number of occasions, the lack of effectiveness in adult education programmes can be routed back to the low number of available qualified and experienced adult educators. In order to raise the quality and professionalism in adult education, it is essential to raise the number of adult education staff and personnel with appropriate andragogical/ adult education certificate to demonstrate relevant experience with quality knowledge and skills.

¹ The representative of the Association of Adult Education Enterprises indicated the same issue as a problem area underlining changes to be made in the regulations of accreditation in adult education.

Another issue referring to quality is the impact of adult education and training referring to the rate of useful knowledge and skill gathered in such programmes. It is important to provide relevant statistics for the economy in order to prove the results and improvement through adult education and training in social and economic terms based on cost-benefit models. We still do not have a standardized national information database for such measures be taken in order to draw a rather clear picture on what direct and indirect benefits of adult education and training programmes for the economy would be. Monitoring is another important tool for valuable performance and effectiveness in adult education. An output-oriented qualification-system may be of help in the aspect of quality development.

Accreditation procedures should involve indicators for signalling a true institutional processes rather than trying to assess quality dominantly based on available documents!

A further challenge for Hungarian Vocational and Adult Education is how the European initiatives are embedded into the system of VET and Adult Education. In the field of VET, the main issue is to make Hungarian VET compatible to the quality frames of European Area of VET through CQAF, EQF, ECVET and EQARF. Still this process needs further improvement, however, the project example underlines that a lot of developments have been achieved in the last 4-5 years. The European initiatives, like that of the Action Plan and the current Renewed Agenda on adult Learning also require further dialogue and bottom-up developments in order to raise participation of adults in learning with a better performance.

Finally, good project examples and cases of good practice in Leonardo da Vinci, Grundtvig, and in project results having been developed in the National Development Plans need better dissemination and valorisation through coordinated information database, through the involvement of the Hungarian Tempus Public Foundation.

13 Ireland

A) Quality assurance systems: an overview

HE	For training at Levels 7 – 10 the QA system for the IoTs (HETAC, system; HEA system) or the universities' QA systems (internal; IUQB; HEA system) apply. The principal legislation underpinning quality assurance (QA) in Irish further education and training and in higher education and training outside of the universities where adult engage in learning is the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999 and the Universities Act 1997. The Universities Act, 1997, specifically requires each university "to establish procedures for quality assurance and to carry out evaluations, and review the effectiveness of its QA procedures". In 2002, the seven Irish universities established the Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB), which has delegated authority to organise periodic reviews of the effectiveness of the QA procedures in place in universities. The Higher Education Authority (HEA), which has a statutory role under the Act to assist the universities achieve their objectives, also has an overarching role with regard to reviewing quality assurance procedures within the third-level sector. The Irish Higher Education Quality Network, which comprises the main organisations with a role or interest in quality assurance in higher and education and training in Ireland, was established in October 2003. The National Qualifications Authority Ireland (NQAI)¹, the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC)² were established in 2001 under the 1999 legislation. FETAC's and HETAC's main functions are to make awards, to determine and monitor standards for awards and to recognise awards on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ); to agree and review providers' quality assurance arrangements delivering programmes leading to these awards; to validate programmes of education and training leading to these awards; to ensure fair and consistent assessment of learners by providers. HETAC must agree their QA procedures with the NQAI, and are subject to quality assurance arrangements, which include regular evaluation by national and international experts and evaluation by learners of their VET programmes and ancillary services. The effectiveness of the NQAI itself was reviewed in 2007.
VET	Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999. The National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), set up under the Qualifications Act, requires that all awards included in the National Framework of Qualifications are quality assured, and a key objective of the NFQ is to promote and maintain standards. Therefore, where NVAE providers offer courses leading to awards on

¹ www.nqai.ie

² www.hetac.ie

	the NQF they are obliged to meet all the quality requirements set down by FETAC (non-tertiary FET and VT providers). Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC)¹ was established in 2001 under the 1999 legislation. FETAC's main function is to make awards, to determine and monitor standards for awards and to recognise awards on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ); to agree and review providers' quality assurance arrangements delivering programmes leading to these awards; to validate programmes of education and training leading to these awards; to ensure fair and consistent assessment of learners by providers. FETAC must agree their QA procedures with the National Qualifications Authority Ireland (NQAI), and are subject to quality assurance arrangements, which include regular evaluation by national and international experts and evaluation by learners of their VET programmes and ancillary services. The effectiveness of the NQAI itself was reviewed in 2007.
Non-formal	(1) The Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) & the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) were established in 2001 under the 1999 legislation. FETAC, HETAC & IUQB & their quality assurances roles have been subsumed into the recently (2012) established Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). (2) The voluntary NALA Evolving Quality Framework (2005) for improving and monitoring the quality of adult basic education (ABE)

B) Further elaboration on quality assurance in the country

Legal framework

The **principal legislation** underpinning quality assurance (QA) in Irish further education and training and in higher education and training outside of the universities where adult engage in learning is the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999 and the Universities Act 1997. The National Qualifications Authority Ireland (NQAI)², the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC)³ and the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC)⁴ were established in 2001 under the 1999 legislation. FETAC's and HETAC's main functions include:

- to make awards, to determine and monitor standards for awards and to recognise awards on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)
- to agree and review providers' quality assurance arrangements delivering programmes leading to these awards
- to validate programmes of education and training leading to these awards
- to ensure fair and consistent assessment of learners by providers

¹ www.fetac.ie

² www.ngai.ie

³ www.hetac.ie

⁴ www.fetac.ie

FETAC and HETAC must agree their QA procedures with the NQAI, and are subject to quality assurance arrangements, which include regular evaluation by national and international experts and evaluation by learners of their VET programmes and ancillary services. The effectiveness of the NQAI itself was reviewed in 2007.

The **Universities Act, 1997**, specifically requires each university "to establish procedures for quality assurance and to carry out evaluations, and review the effectiveness of its QA procedures". In 2002, the seven Irish universities established the Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB), which has delegated authority to organise periodic reviews of the effectiveness of the QA procedures in place in universities. The Higher Education Authority (HEA), which has a statutory role under the Act to assist the universities achieve their objectives, also has an overarching role with regard to reviewing quality assurance procedures within the third-level sector. The Irish Higher Education Quality Network, which comprises the main organisations with a role or interest in quality assurance in higher and education and training in Ireland, was established in October 2003.

NOTE: Institutional structures are changing. Later this year the NQAI, FETAC, HETAC and IUQB will be replaced by the QQAAI, the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Authority of Ireland. The legislation is currently passing through the national Parliament.

The **Aontas / Women's Community Education Quality Assurance Framework¹** (2005) was developed by **Aontas**, the National Adult Learning Association in partnership with seven women's community education groups and networks throughout Ireland. The Quality Assurance Framework names the vision, aspirations and goals of Women's Community Education, the four principles that are its foundation (women-centred; quality; equality; justice) and the four dimensions (rooted in the reality of women's lives; women-led; political; strategic) that make up the practice of women's community education. Women's Community Education groups use the quality framework as a strategic planning, quality assurance and evaluation resource and a guide to quality practice. The extent to which the framework is used in a systematic way by women's community education is not known.

NALA is the National Adult Literacy Agency, an independent membership charity committed to the development of literacy and numeracy services in Ireland. The **NALA Evolving Quality Framework²** (EQF - 2005) is a system for improving and monitoring the quality of adult basic education (ABE) in Ireland. It is a method of self-evaluation for the staff, students and managers working / learning in ABE centres. It is termed 'evolving' because it adapts to new situations and needs as circumstances in ABE change. At the heart of the Evolving Quality Framework is a set of values that describe the ethos of adult basic education, the Guiding Principles.

EQF identifies five general areas of activity that are essential in any good ABE service, entitled Quality Areas, described in more detail by 19 Statements of Quality. Quality Areas and Statements of Quality together enable an ABE team of practitioners and learners to examine each aspect of the service in a centre. Quality Signs are indicators, or signs, that you can use to judge whether a centre is meeting the standards of quality for a particular statement. Self-evaluation with the EQF involves using a method made up of nine distinct steps, called the 9-step process. The extent to which the EQF is used in a systematic way by providers of ABE is not known.

¹ http://www.aontas.com/download/pdf/quality_assurance_framework_nov_2005.pdf

² <http://www.nala.ie/sites/default/files/documents/cmcnally/Evolving%20Quality%20Framework.pdf>

YOUTHREACH is a programme for early school leavers in Youthreach centres. It also operates in Senior Traveller Training Centres¹ (STTCs for the Traveller community). These centres operate under the **Youthreach Quality Framework**². Youthreach centres and STTCs are also subject to whole-centre evaluation by the national **Schools Inspectorate** of the Department of Education and Skills. Implementation of the quality framework is supported by extensive documentation and a programme of staff continuing professional development.

The National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), set up under the Qualifications Act, requires that all awards included in the National Framework of Qualifications are quality assured, and a key objective of the NFQ is to promote and maintain standards. Therefore, where NVAE providers offer courses leading to awards on the NQF they are obliged to meet all the quality requirements set down by FETAC and, less often, HETAC as described under 1) above. In other cases providers of community-based NVAE may use the Aontas / Women's Community Education Quality Assurance Framework and ABE providers may use the NALA Evolving Quality Framework.

Challenges

Economic downturn is leading to greater focus on the accountability of providers and the returns on public investment in a context of budgetary restrictions, high unemployment and adult learning being hailed as an economic recovery strategy;

Legal requirements under legislation relating to awarding bodies and national qualifications and the increasing responsibility of providers in relation to the assessment of learning outcomes leading to awards on the NQF;

Recent alarms in relation to the integrity of a small number of FETAC qualifications and the robustness of their QA monitoring procedures ;

The **diversity** of providers – statutory, community and private (limited in the area of non-vocational adult learning) and their structures, resources, staffing, M&E arrangements etc;

Evolving area so quality concerns are only beginning to be addressed by some providers – focus for last 10 years only;

Very diverse staffing arrangements and qualifications in the context of an evolving profession;

Diverse initial and continuing professional development arrangements and requirements in non-vocational adult learning;

Not all providers provide national awards therefore they will not come under the NFQ requirements;

National database on publicly-funded adult learning is only emerging with consequent limited focus to date on M&E outcomes;

Relatively weak practice-policy feedback loop due to weak M&E arrangements.

¹ www.sttc.ie

² <http://www.youthreach.ie/>

14 Italy

A) Quality assurance systems: an overview

HE	Within general education, VET and the university sectors there are accreditation systems in place. In fact, with the national plan, there is a general accreditation system for all education provision. This system is built upon the EQAVET system and takes into account the facilities, skills of the trainers, financial aspects, placement rate, etc. within institutes. Each education sector has its own agency for quality assurance, guidance and support. For the Universities it is ANVUR. The VET sector has ISFOL and in the Adult Education sector (CTP and evening schools) INDIRE/ANSAS provides quality support. INVALSI monitors the primary and secondary education sector. The non-formal sector does not have a quality assurance institute.
VET	It should be noted that parts of the education sector (predominantly the VET sector) are the responsibility of the Regions, not of the National Ministries. Recent developments in the field of VET is the National Plan for Quality Assurance of VET. This Plan, complying with the request of the EQAVET Recommendation, should undergo a further consultation with social partners as well as representatives of providers. Also second chance education, provided by the CTP (Permanent Territorial Centers), is included in this national plan. The plan follows the general Plan, do, check, act cycle and is built upon existing practices. Already before the National Plan on Quality Assurance, there were a number of policies in place concerning quality assurance, both at national and regional level. Also a number of institutes have been established to monitor and improve the quality of VET in Italy. Institutes that focus on education governed by the Ministry of education, university and research (Ministero dell'Istruzione, Università e Ricerca). In general, the initiatives on quality assurance and reforms within the education sectors are related to European developments and initiatives (for instance, Bologna process, EQF and EQAVET/EQARF). In addition, the European Social Fund plays an important role in financing vocational education. Also, at regional level there are policies in place. Within the VET sector, the regions have their own evaluation system (finance; impact; intercultural activities; social integration; etc.) such as; Emilia Romagna, Piemonte; Toscana, Veneto; Lombardia; Umbria; Marche; such practices are less diffused in the South. Due to the Reform of the Title V of the Constitution (transfer of the central responsibility in the training system to the Regions and Provinces), the state cannot interfere with the local authorities). Within general education, VET and the university sectors there are accreditation systems in place. In fact, with the national plan, there is a general

	accreditation system for all education provision. This system is built upon the EQAVET system and takes into account the facilities, skills of the trainers, financial aspects, placement rate, etc. within institutes. Each education sector has its own agency for quality assurance, guidance and support. For the Universities it is ANVUR. The VET sector has ISFOL and in the Adult Education sector (CTP and evening schools) INDIRE/ANSAS provides quality support. INVALSI monitors the primary and secondary education sector. The non-formal sector does not have a quality assurance institute.
Non-formal	(1) Various providers of non-formal adult learning, such as UPTER (Folk university Rome), have developed an own self-evaluation system.

B) Further elaboration on quality assurance in the country

Legal framework

In Italy¹, as in Europe, 'adult education' adult learning takes place in the following institutions:

- "Permanent Territorial Centres (Centri Territoriali Permanenti - CTPs)
- Evening classes at lower secondary schools
- Other non-formal providers: NGOs working within the field of Adult Education include: 1) Unieda, Unione Italiana per l'Educazione degli adulti. Italian Association for the Education of Adults; 2) Cnupi, Confederazione Italiana delle Università Popolari Italian Confederation of Folks Universities (Università Popolari); 3) Unitre (National Association of Università per la Terza Età)
- Universities

There are legal frameworks for the different education sectors in Italy. It should be noted that parts of the education sector (predominantly the VET sector) are the responsibility of the Regions, not of the National Ministries. Within the university sector, the Universities act autonomous. Also with regard to quality assurance. Concerning the non-formal sector there is neither a legal framework, nor national policy on quality assurance.

The Permanent Territorial Centres (Centri Territoriali Permanenti - CTPs) are the most important entities in the adult learning landscape in Italy. They have been instituted to guarantee a wider educational and training offer, to better meet the different social requirements at national level. The responsible ministry is The Ministry of Education, University and Research (MUIR). There is not a specific quality assurance system for these entities. ISO certificates are used to rationalise processes at institution level.

From school year 1998/99 to school year 2001/02, adult learning initiatives carried out

¹ Eurydice:
https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Italy:Institutions_Providing_Adult_Education_and_Training

by Permanent Territorial Centres were monitored by the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR). Since school year 2003/04, this monitoring exercise has been commissioned by MIUR to ANSAS (National Agency for the Development of School Autonomy, former Indire) and is addressed to both Permanent Territorial Centres and upper secondary schools which run evening courses.

The most important recent development in this regard is the National Plan for Quality Assurance of VET (Piano nazionale per la garanzia di qualità del sistema di istruzione e formazione professionale)¹. In March 2012 the National Plan for Quality Assurance of VET was endorsed at institutional level (Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Education and Regions). This Plan, complying with the request of the EQAVET Recommendation, should undergo a further consultation with social partners as well as representatives of providers. Also second chance education, provided by the CTP (Permanent Territorial Centers), is included in this national plan. The plan follows the general Plan, do, check, act cycle and is built upon existing practices.²

Here below the National Plan on Quality Assurance is presented for the **VET system**. This system is based on the European initiative EQARF. This system does not apply to the CTPs and evening schools.

A-B: Plan and Act:

At system level the following activities are foreseen:

- the use of mechanisms and procedures to define the training needs
The involvement of interested stakeholders in defining the objectives of education and training, as well as in the definition of implementation plans
- The alignment of the purposes of education and training with European targets
- The definition and monitoring of objectives via specific indicators
- An information policy to ensure the best dissemination of results
- Standards and guidelines for the recognition, validation and certification of competence of persons
- Interventions to verify and ensure the quality of the educational system and educational provision
- Procedures for the analysis of results and the revision of the activities
- the examination of the resources required, the capacity of users and the tools and guidelines necessary to support them
- Guidelines and standards for implementation at different levels
- Specific support for the training of teachers
- A clear description of the responsibility of providers of vocational education and training in the implementation process
- Identification of the responsibilities and the functions attributed to persons / entities concerning quality assurance

At school level the following activities are foreseen

¹ Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, Ministero dell'istruzione dell'università e della ricerca, Regioni e Province autonome, Coordinamento Regionale, (2012), Piano nazionale per la garanzia di qualità del sistema di istruzione e formazione professionale.

² See for a more elaborated discussion on this plan Part 2 of this country factsheet.

- Aligning the local targets with the objectives set at European, national and regional level concerning VET
- Establish and monitor explicit objectives and targets
- Organize ongoing consultation with stakeholders to identify specific local and individual needs
- Explicitly assign the responsibility for management and development of quality
- Involve employees in planning, also with regard to quality development
- Anticipate initiatives for cooperation with other education and training providers
- Having an explicit and transparent quality system
- Appropriately allocate internal resources to achieve the targets set in the implementation plans
- Promote relevant and inclusive partnerships for the implementation of the measures
- Define a strategic plan for developing the skills of staff which specify the training needs of trainers
- Regularly update staff and cooperate with external parties to strengthen capacity and improve quality and increase performance

Already before the National Plan on Quality Assurance, there were a number of policies in place concerning quality assurance, both at national and regional level. Also a number of institutes have been established to monitor and improve the quality of VET in Italy. Institutes that focus on education governed by the Ministry of education, university and research (Ministero dell'Istruzione, Università e Ricerca¹) include:

- INVALSI (Istituto nazionale di valutazione del sistema educativo di istruzione e formazione: National institute for the evaluation of the education system)². This institute has the task to monitor the knowledge and skills of students and the quality of the provision, also with regard to continuing education.
- ANSAS/INDIRE (Agenzia Nazionale per lo Sviluppo dell'Autonomia Scolastica: National agency for the development of school autonomy)³. This Agency has the task to support institutions in European affairs, in innovation processes and in increasing integration with the territories.
- ISFOL (Istituto per lo sviluppo della formazione professionale dei lavoratori: Institute for the development of professional training of workers)⁴, which is a research institute concerning education, labour market and social affairs.
- ANVUR (Agenzia nazionale di valutazione del sistema universitario e della ricerca: National Agency of Evaluation of the University and Research institutes) is a public institution supervised by the Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR), entrusted with the following tasks: (a) execution of a program of external quality assurance of the activities of universities and public research institutions and private recipients of public funds, (b) guidance in internal quality assurance processes in universities and research institutions, (c) evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of public financing programs and incentives for research and innovation.

¹ <http://www.istruzione.it/web/hub.jsessionid=660CC096218407D94B3B2CB5A9BD2F16>

² <http://www.invalsi.it/invalsi/index.php>

³ <http://www.indire.it/index.php>

⁴ <http://www.isfol.it/index.scm>

In general, the initiatives on quality assurance and reforms within the education sectors are related to European developments and initiatives (for instance, Bologna process, EQF and EQAVET/EQARF). In addition, the European Social Fund plays an important role in financing vocational education.

Also, at regional level there are policies in place. Within the VET sector, the regions have their own evaluation system (finance; impact; intercultural activities; social integration; etc.) such as; Emilia Romagna, Piemonte; Toscana, Veneto; Lombardia; Umbria; Marche; such practices are less diffused in the South. Due to the Reform of the Title V of the Constitution (transfer of the central responsibility in the training system to the Regions and Provinces), the state cannot interfere with the local authorities).

Differences between VET, HE and NVAL

Within the VET sector, there is an accreditation system referring to quality assurance. This systems takes into account facilities, skills of the trainers, financial aspects, placement rate, etc.¹

The Higher Education system has its own system, but there is no indication that the position of adult learners is taken into account in the quality assurance systems.

The non-formal sector does not have a nation wide system.

Instruments

Accreditation: Within general education, VET and the university sectors there are accreditation systems in place. In fact, with the national plan, there is a general accreditation system for all education provision.² This system is built upon the EQAVET system and takes into account the facilities, skills of the trainers, financial aspects, placement rate, etc. within institutes^{3,4}

For some sectors the accreditation is the responsibility of the Regions. Within the VET sector, there is an accreditation system referring to quality assurance. This systems takes into account facilities, skills of the trainers, financial aspects, placement rate, etc.⁵

The Higher Education system has its own system, but there is no indication that the position of adult learners is taken into account in the quality assurance systems.

The non-formal sector does not have a nation wide system.

¹ http://www.isfol.it/Notizie/Dettaglio/index.scm?codi_noti=4151&cod_archivio=1

² ISFOL (2011), Il Piano nazionale per la garanzia di qualità dell'istruzione e formazione professionale: http://www.isfol.it/DocEditor/test/File/2011/Editoria%20digitale/Focus/Il_Piano_nazionale_per_la_garanzia_d_i_qualit%C3%A0_dell%E2%80%99ifp%282%29.pdf, see as well the latest version: Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, Ministero dell'istruzione dell'università e della ricerca, Regioni e Province autonome, Coordinamento Regionale, (2012), Piano nazionale per la garanzia di qualità dei sistema di istruzione e formazione professionale.

³ http://www.isfol.it/Notizie/Dettaglio/index.scm?codi_noti=4151&cod_archivio=1

⁴ The National plan is being discussed in more detail in Part 2 of this factsheet.

⁵ http://www.isfol.it/Notizie/Dettaglio/index.scm?codi_noti=4151&cod_archivio=1

Self evaluation: Self evaluation is promoted. The University sector has its own systems for self evaluation¹. Various providers of non-formal adult learning, such as UPTER (Folk university Rome), have developed an own self-evaluation system. In another sectors no examples can be provided.

External evaluation: In the University sector ANVUR conducts external evaluations. Each discipline is evaluated according to specific indicators and one academic is responsible for each domain.² In the VET sector INDIRE fulfils this task.³

ISO 9000 certificates, EFQM and CAF⁴ or others are being used.

Professional development staff: There are no strict regulations concerning adult learning staff competences. The Directorate General for School Personnel of Ministry of Education, University and Research is responsible for the teachers training. In addition, many projects to improve the quality of staff are also assigned to ANSAS INDIRE.

Associazione Italiana Formatori (AIF) is the professional association of experts in adult training.⁵ The AIF developed professional profiles and established certification procedures.⁶ AIF developed professional profiles for: A) Trainer; B) Training developer; C) Project manager D) Institute manager; E) e-tutor (basic); F) e-tutor (specialist)

Although there are no strict regulations, in the accreditation system for VET 'staff' is included.⁷ However, there is nothing specific on competences for adult learning staff.

Quality Assurance Institutes

For the vocational system the responsables of the accreditation of institutes are the regions. This was agreed upon in 2008 with the national agreement concerning the relationship between the State, the Regions and the autonomous provinces of Trento and Bolzano.⁸

A number of institutes have been established to monitor and improve the quality of VET in Italy. Institutes that focus on education governed by the Ministry of education, university and research (Ministero dell'Istruzione, Università e Ricerca⁹) include INVALSI, ANSAS/INDIRE, ISFOL, ANVUR.

For the formal adult learning and non formal sector the Ministry of Labour is responsible.¹⁰ However, this only applies to the provision which is funded by the State.

For the accreditation and evaluation of the Universities the Ministry of Education, University and Research together with ANVUR is responsible.¹ No explicit mention of adults is in the accreditation systems.

¹ <http://www.anvur.org/?q=content/composizione-dei-gruppi-di-esperti-della-valutazione>

² <http://www.anvur.org/?q=content/composizione-dei-gruppi-di-esperti-della-valutazione>

³ http://www.indire.it/ida/content/index.php?action=lettura&id_m=8254&id_cnt=8444

⁴ Common Assessment Framework: CAF is a common European quality framework that can be used across the public sector as a tool for organisational self assessment. See:

http://www.eipa.nl/CAF/FAQ/CAF_FAQ.htm#01

⁵ <http://www.aifonline.it/showPage.php?template=articoli&masterPage=home.html>

⁶ <http://www.aifonline.it/showPage.php?template=istituzionale&id=116>

⁷ http://www.isfol.it/Notizie/Dettaglio/index.scm?codi_noti=4151&cod_archivio=1

⁸ http://www.isfol.it/DocEditor/test/File/Isfol_accordo_accreditamento_%2020_marzo.pdf

⁹ <http://www.istruzione.it/web/hub;jsessionid=660CC096218407D94B3B2CB5A9BD2F16>

¹⁰ <http://www.lavoro.gov.it/Lavoro/Eurolavoro/SezioneOperatori/Formazione/FormazionePermanente/>

Challenges

A currently debated subject is the development of the national qualifications framework. Related to this subject, the division of tasks between the national governments and the regions and consequently the alignment of qualifications and education pathways is subject to discussions. Quality of adult learning as such is not heavily debated.

15 Latvia

A) Quality assurance systems: an overview

HE	In adult formal education – basic (general/VET), secondary (general/VET) and tertiary education (general/VET) – operating the same quality approaches and standards as common education. The general principals of quality standards and control for providers (including teaching staff) and provision are set in the Education law and field laws.
VET	In recent years vocational education prestige, quality and social dialogue have become a great policy priority, therefore, in 2009 the concept “Raising attractiveness of vocational education and involvement of social partners within vocational education quality assurance” (Profesionālās izglītības pievilcības paaugstināšana un sociālo partneru līdzdalība profesionālās izglītības kvalitātes nodrošināšanā) developed by the MoES was approved. The Concept aims at outlining solutions for key challenges in vocational education policy and reaching agreement between state and social partners regarding most appropriate solutions for the problems. Precondition of the entering vocational further education programmes are resaved vocational education or professional activity. Providers must be accredited education institution who implements licensed education programme. Programmes must be developed according to the Standards of the Professions. The Education Law determines that all educational institutions, except those which implement only interest-related education programmes (realisation of the individual educational needs and desires of a person regardless of age and previously acquired education), have to be accredited. Accreditation is carried out within five years starting with the first day of activity by the education institution. Besides, each education or study programme (a school or a higher education institution develops one or more education programmes) have to be accredited as well. It must be done within two years from the day of the programme's start, and not less than once in six years. In September 2010, new CoM Regulations “Procedure of accrediting general and vocational education programmes, education establishments and examination centres” (were adopted, uniting the accreditation of both general and vocational education accreditation systems. These Regulations stipulate a uniform accreditation procedure, clearly define quality requirements in general and vocational education (the EQF levels 1-4). State agency “State Service of Education Quality” (under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and Science) is responsible for the quality control of formal education provision and provider as well as for vocational development education programmes and further vocational development educa-

	tion programmes and providers, also agency have a mandate to react on complains irrespectively of education programmes types.
Non-formal	(1) Education Law determines that all educational institutions, except those which implement only interest related education programmes have to be accredited. Private enterprises who are not in the State Education Register and individuals must receive the local municipalities' licence for implementing the adult non-formal education programmes

B) Further elaboration on quality assurance in the country

Legal framework

The Formal education for adult learning consist of basic education, secondary education and higher education.

Non-formal education could divided into vocational non-formal education and non-vocational or on personally growth orientated non-formal education.

There are two types of vocational non-formal education defined in the Vocational education law¹: vocational further education - a special kind of vocational education which provides an opportunity for adults with previous education and professional experience to acquire a specific level vocational qualification; and vocational development education - a special kind of vocational education which provides an opportunity for persons, irrespective of their age and previous education or vocational qualification, to acquire systematic vocational knowledge and skills corresponding to the requirements of the labour market.

The vocational development education programmes differ from other non-formal adult education programmes in its duration (not less than 160 hours) as well as provider's accreditation requirements and education programme licensing requirements. The graduates of vocational non-formal education programmes receive a certificate which testifies a completion of mentioned programme².

The quality of adult education as a part of the education system needs further research to work out criteria for its measurement. In adult education there is a lack of system for improving the quality. Section 46 of *the Education Law* states that adult education programmes will determine the content of such programmes and the conformity thereof to the interests of the State, employers and individuals, and adults have the right to acquire such programmes throughout their life regardless of previously acquired formal or informal education programmes.

Adult learning and education (ALE) in Latvia is part of the educational system and is covered by different laws, namely: 1) Education Law/Law of education; 2) General Educa-

¹ <http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=20244>

² <http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=122686&from=off>

tion Law; 3) Vocational Education Law; 4) Professional Education Law ; 5) Law On Institutions of Higher Education.¹

Formal education: In formal adult education – basic (general/VET), secondary (general/VET) and tertiary education (general/VET) – the same quality approaches and standards are implemented as common education. The general principals of quality standards and control for providers (including teaching staff) and provision are set in the Education law² and field laws³. The specific principles have been set in the Cabinets of Ministers by relevant regulation acts for each type of education⁴ and accreditation and licensing regulation acts⁵ (National approach).

VET: Discussion among the social partners on the solutions offered in the Concept is expected to serve as basis for the new Vocational Education Law (expected by August 2011), thus, this document is rather significant step in vocational education policy development.

Non-formal education: More liberal requirements regarding to non-formal adult education implementation have been set in Education law (Section 46). Educational institutions are entitled to implement non-formal adult education programmes without obtaining a licence, but other legal persons and natural persons which are not registered in the Educational Institution Register – need a licence from the local municipalities according to the local regulation⁶ (regional approach).

Policies

The main LLL policy planning document is the “Guidelines for lifelong learning policy for 2007- 2013” (*Mūžizglītības politikas pamatnostādnes 2007.-2013.gadam*, 2007) and relevant implementation programmes prepared by the MoES. The following aims for lifelong learning policy were listed: To develop a **qualitative education offer** for adults providing sustainable competences for further socioeconomic and civic activities – in the Guidelines, the following activity directions are given: to create state regulated mechanisms for impacting the offer and demands of education and labour market, to coordinate adult education within the education system, to develop state support for adult education providers, **to evaluate the quality of adult education**, to implement a validation system for informal and non-formal learning.

VET: In recent years **vocational education prestige, quality and social dialogue** have become a great policy priority, therefore, in 2009 the concept “Raising attractiveness of vocational education and involvement of social partners within vocational education quality assurance” (*Profesionālās izglītības pievilcības paaugstināšana un sociālo part-*

¹ <http://www.nyulawglobal.org/globalex/latvia.htm>

² <http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=50759>

³ [Vocational Education Law](#) (ENG) and [Law on Higher Education Institutions](#) (ENG)

⁴ For example: [Regulations Regarding the State Basic Education Standard and Basic Education Subject Standards](#) (ENG); [Regulations Regarding the State General Secondary Education Standard and General Secondary Education Subject Standards](#) (ENG); [Regulations Regarding the State Vocational Secondary Education Standard and the State Industrial Education Standard](#) (ENG).

⁵ For example: [Procedures for Registration of Educational Institutions](#) (ENG); [Procedure for licensing of Higher Education Programme](#) (LV);

⁶ For example: (LV) <http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=246149&from=off>

neru līdzdalība profesionālās izglītības kvalitātes nodrošināšanā) developed by the MoES was approved. The Concept aims at outlining solutions for key challenges in vocational education policy and reaching agreement between state and social partners regarding most appropriate solutions for the problems.

Lifelong learning strategy (Basic Guidelines of Lifelong Learning Policy for 2007-2013) and Programme for 2007-2013 for implementation of Lifelong learning policy 2008-2013 (updated in the end of 2009 to respond to the crisis)¹

Recognition of priori learning: Regulatory framework does not provide non-formal education graduation (distribution). According to Education law, section 46, non-formal adult educational programmes shall determine the content of such programmes and the conformity thereof to with the interests of the State and of employers, as well as of individual development, and adults have the right to acquire such programmes throughout the length of their whole life regardless of previously acquired education.

The policy for validation of knowledge and skills acquired in non-formal education and informal learning has been included as a priority in the Lifelong learning strategy. The recognition of knowledge, skills and competence acquired outside formal education is based on the idea that learning outcomes are valuable no matter where they have been acquired.

Both in VET and HE, the legal framework is adopted to provide opportunities to recognise individuals' previous professional and learning experience.

Instruments

Formal Education: State agency “State Service of Education Quality” (under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and Science) is responsible for the quality control of formal education provision and provider as well as for vocational development education programmes and further vocational development education programmes and providers, also agency have a mandate to react on complains irrespectively of education programmes types.

In the referencing process quality agencies – the Higher Education Quality Evaluation Centre, the Higher Education Council and the State Education Quality Service – were involved as full-fledged stakeholders. The activities of these agencies are based on the European principles and guidelines. When licensing education programmes or during the accreditation process, the external experts from the State Education Quality Service evaluate the correspondence of education programmes to the state education standards, occupational standards, occupational classifier, as well as to requirements of legal regulations regulating education content and process, also making sure that the planned content of education programmes would allow students to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and competences, i.e. whether the content and outcomes of education programme corresponds to the relevant qualification level description.

¹ <http://polsis.mk.gov.lv/view.do?id=2169>

VET: Precondition of the entering vocational further education programmes are resaved vocational education or professional activity. Providers must be accredited education institution who implements licensed education programme. Programmes must be developed according to the Standards of the Professions. The graduates of vocational further education programmes receive a certificate which testifies a completion of mentioned programme and in a case of passing professional qualification exam, a professional qualification (professional qualification level confirm theoretical and practical preparedness, which provides an opportunity to perform work corresponding to a certain level of complexity and responsibility (Vocational education law Section 5)).

Non-formal education: It can be concluded that compairing two different (relevant) types of non-formal education programmes, more stringent requirements have been set for the vocational non-formal education.

The learning outcomes for the formal education are guaranteed and regulated by the State.

Basic documents regulating the content of vocational education are 1) the State vocational education standard; 2) the profession standard; 3) the vocational education programme. Vocational education programmes shall be licensed and vocational education institutions shall be registered and accredited in accordance with the procedures specified by the Education Law. The acquisition of a vocational education programme shall be concluded with the qualification examinations and by other final examinations specified in the vocational education standard. The Ministry of Education and Science shall determine the procedures of the process of the State final examinations.

The State vocational education standard and profession standard shall be mandatory for everyone who draws up and implements vocational education programmes (formal or non-formal).

Higher education: According to the Law on Higher Institutions¹, higher education institutions are autonomous institutions of education and science with the right to self-governance. The autonomy of an institution of higher education are expressed in the right to select the ways and forms for the implementation of the tasks set forth by the founders of the institution of higher education and corresponding to Law on Higher Institutions, as well as in responsibility for the quality of education acquired in an higher education institutions. Higher education institutions have the right astronomically to 1) develop and approve the constitution of the institution of higher education; 2) to form the academic staff of the institution of higher education; and 3) to independently determine the content and forms of study programmes, additional provisions for the admission of students, basic trends of scientific research work etc.

Accreditation

In Latvia assessment of the quality of school performance takes place during accreditation process. The Education Law determines that all educational institutions, except those which implement only interest-related education programmes (realisation of the

¹ (ENG) <http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=37967>

individual educational needs and desires of a person regardless of age and previously acquired education), have to be accredited. Accreditation is carried out within five years starting with the first day of activity by the education institution. Besides, each education or study programme (a school or a higher education institution develops one or more education programmes) have to be accredited as well. It must be done within two years from the day of the programme's start, and not less than once in six years.

Higher Education: A higher education institution or a college may be accredited only if more than 50% of its study programmes are accredited. Normally, accreditation granted for a higher education institution is permanent, while that of a study programme - 6 years.

The accreditation of institutions and education programmes and school head attestation should be done in accordance with the procedures prescribed by the Cabinet of Ministers. Educational institutions have to prepare an internal evaluation report and a development plan, which are taken into account during external evaluation.

At higher education level accreditation of institutions and programmes is conducted according to the Law on Higher Education Institutions (1995).

VET: National education quality assurance system imparts whole formal education system. In September 2010, new CoM Regulations "Procedure of accrediting general and vocational education programmes, education establishments and examination centres" (Kārtība, kādā akreditē vispārējās un profesionālās izglītības programmas, izglītības iestādes un eksaminācijas centrus) were adopted, uniting the accreditation of both general and vocational education accreditation systems. These Regulations stipulate a uniform accreditation procedure, clearly define quality requirements in general and vocational education (the EQF levels 1-4).

Precondition of the entering vocational further education programmes are resaved vocational education or professional activity. Providers must be accredited education institution who implements licensed education programme. Programmes must be developed according to the Standards of the Professions.

Non-formal education: Private enterprises who are not in the State Education Register and individuals must receive the local municipalities' licence for implementing the adult non-formal education programmes. Licensing requirements may vary from *novads* (one of 119 the local amalgamated municipality) to *novads*.

In order to reduce the administrative burden on private educational establishments and to ensure equal opportunity in the implementation of non-formal adult education, amendments were made to the Education Law in March 2010 that provided for the right of private educational institutions as well to implement non-formal adult education programmes without being required to obtain a license. Private enterprises and individuals must receive the local municipalities' licence for implementing the adult non-formal education programmes.

Quality Assurance Frameworks

The Latvian Adult Education Association (LAEA), in line with the tasks envisaged in the Development plan for Latvia, and in cooperation with colleagues in Europe, has created and introduced a quality measurement system for ALE in Latvia. Its implementation across the country will be a significant contribution to the quality of ALE in all sectors.

With the financial support of ESF and the Government of Latvia (via MES), the Latvian Adult Education Association (LAEA) has carried out research into the availability of life-long learning in Latvia, which to a large extent includes and consists of adult learning and education.

VET: National vocational education quality control (since 2002) is ensured through education programme and establishment accreditation, which is outlined in the Cabinet Regulations “Procedure of accrediting general and vocational education programmes, education establishments and examination centres” (Kārtība, kādā akreditē vispārējās un profesionālās izglītības programmas, izglītības iestādes un eksaminācijas centrus, 2010). The principle of accreditation ensures that programme content meets the required standards of publicly provided vocational education and occupational standards. It also assists in the transparency of training; thereby, fostering the ability to recognise Latvian qualifications in other countries. The State Education Quality Service (since June 2009) among other functions organises licensing and accreditation of vocational education programmes, as well as accreditation of vocational education institutions and examination centres. The accreditation process involves both self-assessment and external assessment; in which an external expert commission including representatives of social partners participate. The same regulations for accreditation of formal education institutions refer to all schools regardless their ownership (state, local government and private). Only accredited local governments’ and private vocational education establishments may apply for state funding for implementing vocational further education, vocational improvement and vocationally oriented education programmes.

Informal VET (enterprise provided training): A type of informal vocational education is **enterprise provided training**, which can assist employees adapting to new tasks or to re-qualify to improve their career chances. Legally training in the enterprises is addressed only in the Labour Law (2001, 2006). However, in most cases, training in enterprises depends on enterprise initiative and resources, since training is a voluntary activity. Training provides an opportunity to acquire completely new skills or to add certain competences (e.g. teamwork skills). Training providers are free to produce a study programme of different courses. Trainers may be employed by a training provider or may be contracted to provide a certain course directly by the employer. It is usually at the discretion of the provider to design their own training programmes but for certain regulated professions other bodies may be consulted to ensure that relevant occupational standards are met. *The quality of provision is not otherwise monitored.*

Labour market training: TRAINING PROGRAMMES TO HELP JOB-SEEKERS AND PEOPLE VULNERABLE TO EXCLUSION FROM THE LABOUR MARKET. Providers are responsible for programme quality. The SEA follows the learning provision at education establishments at least once in the quarter. The education provider also awards graduates with certificate.

VET Guidance: To promote quality assurance for guidance implemented in schools in 2010, the State Education Development Agency and the State Education Quality Service drafted a set of amendments for the Cabinet Regulations stipulating procedures for ac-

crediting vocational education programmes and schools in order to integrate quality criteria on guidance and counselling which were passed in September 2010.

Non-formal education: According to the binding rules of the local municipality.

External evaluation

VET: State Education Quality Service (Izglītības kvalitātes valsts dienests, the former State Inspectorate for Education) is also under the direction of the MoES. In vocational education the Service performs the following functions: licenses education programmes (except leisure education, informal/non-formal education for adults and higher education programmes); evaluates quality of vocational education (except professional higher education).

Non-formal education: In result of complain or dissatisfaction of the provision, the State Service of Education Quality have mandate initiates external inspection.

Self evaluation

VET and HE: Phase (2013-2015) of the implementation of a LQF– foresees the review of the Self-Assessment Report, on the basis of the new Vocational Education Law, Higher Education Law and the results of several existing projects, e.g. ESF project “Development of sectoral qualifications system and increasing the efficiency and quality of vocational education” (2010-2013).

Non-formal education: Not required, but is often used by the providers.

Professional development of staff

Adult teachers in general: The retraining and upgrading of the teachers of adult learners/adult educators is provided on a regular basis. The average number receiving in-service training in this field is approximately 200 per year. The system for obtaining the status of adult educator varies depending on the field in which the educator will work. The certification of the adult educator could occur after a certain period of practice (usually one year) served as a teacher trainer, with the presentation of the results of the practice at a final colloquium. A refresher course is shorter (usually about 16 hours) and involves a required presentation of a practical analysis of a relevant topic of adult education in written form. These papers are officially presented at an open discussion.

Various organisations provide continuing training for vocational education teachers including school boards, municipalities, professional associations, the National Centre for Education, learning and examination centres, universities and higher education institutions, as well as continuing vocational training centres.

The quality assurance of in-service teacher education programmes is ensured along with other continuing vocational education programmes.

Higher education: Strengthening the quality of higher education, at least twenty per cent of persons elected to academic positions shall have doctoral degrees. In academies, at least thirty per cent of persons elected to academic positions shall have doctoral degrees.

Requirements for HEI and college teacher education and professional qualification are stipulated by the Law on Higher Education Institutions (1995). To improve the quality of the teacher pre-service education, it is planned by September 2012 to introduce in HEI aptitude tests for teacher education students candidates, as well as to stipulate with what grades in state centralized examinations the candidates have to have to be allowed to apply. This measure will be taken because teacher education programmes are rather popular, but frequently graduates do not work in schools.

Teacher education programmes in HEI are licensed and accredited along with other HE study programmes by the Higher Education Quality Evaluation Centre (*Augstākās izglītības kvalitātes novērtēšanas centrs*, HEQEC) in line with the procedure stipulated by Law on Higher Education Institutions (1995). Meanwhile, teacher professional improvement programmes are harmonised by the National Centre for Education.

Non-formal education: There are no special requirements for adult education staff as pedagogical education, or professional qualification applied to non-formal adult education.

Traditionally the adult non-formal educators are specialist or professionals in their field. There is a lot of evidence about the increasing popularity of non-formal forms of education and adult learning providers in the projects of ESF programmes that use innovative forms of professional education, such as individual or group consultations, joint projects of schools, discussion clubs, summer camps of school teams etc. (e.g. The National Agency of Latvian Language Training). More than 3600 pedagogues and 150 civil servants and life-long learning regional coordinators have received in-service training with upgrading of their professional capacity. Adult education pedagogue training programmes are designed. Employers participate in the design of study content and vocational standard development.

Need assessment procedures

The State Employment Agency (agency under the supervision of the Ministry of Welfare) performs short-term forecasts of the labour market. Short-term forecasts are developed on the basis of annual inquiries of employers (on regional and sectoral level) carried out by the State Employment Agency.

The aim of the inquiries of employers is to find out the current situation in the labour market, i.e., information on demand for workers and basic skills required in various professions (foreign language skills, computer skills, driver's licence etc.) as well as on additional requirements that are set by employers.

VET: School curricula are designed by vocational schools in line the state vocational education standards (*valsts profesionālās izglītības standarti*) and relevant occupational standards (*profesiju standarti*) and recommendations set by the National Centre for Education since July 2009. Thereafter, curricula are evaluated by the Centre and licensed by the State Education Quality Service since June 2009. The Centre arranges the development of templates for vocational basic, vocational, vocational secondary education programmes (as well as for continuing vocational education) and provides consultations for the schools. The social partners are more involved in designing occupational standards, on which basis schools develop education programmes.

Non-formal education: Determined by the provider

Challenges

Diversity of the adult non-formal education provision and wide range of the non-formal adult education providers (state, local government, private education institutions, big companies and individuals), impossibility of provision standardization and rapid obsolescence of statistic information on providers and provision are main challenge on quality assurance.

16 Lithuania

A) Quality assurance systems: an overview

HE	The Law on Science and Study (Mokslo ir studijų įstatymas, 2009) establishes science and study quality assurance principles, the award and recognition of higher education qualification and science degrees, science and study institutional management, activity organisation and monitoring, science and study financing. According to the law, there are two types of tertiary education institutions: universities (universitetas) and colleges (kolegija).
VET	The Law on Vocational Education and Training (1997, new edition 2007) sets out the structure and management of the VET system, design, management and award of qualifications, organisation and management of VET as well as VET funding. Based on this Law, the VET system in Lithuania covers initial VET, continuing VET, and vocational guidance. VET may be provided in parallel with general lower or upper secondary education. The Law shapes provisions for quality assurance by setting the principles for VET quality assurance. New impulse for the development of VET system was given after adopting the new edition of Law on VET in 2007. It sets principles for the VET system management and quality assurance, defines national qualifications framework, introduces apprenticeship and creates legal preconditions to bridge IVET and CVET. On 24 November 2008, the Minister of Education and Science approved the Concept for Quality Assurance in Formal Education. The purpose of the Concept is to provide a conceptual framework for political and social arrangements regarding the understanding of education quality and methods for quality assurance in formal education, as well as to create preconditions for harmonisation of the quality assurance policy in education. The Qualifications and VET Development Centre (Kvalifikacijų ir profesinio mokymo plėtros centras, QVETDC (until January 2010 - Methodological Centre for VET) under the MES perform functions of Qualifications Management Institution as established in new edition of Law on VET (2007) including organisation of VET and qualifications standards development, research of qualifications demand and qualifications formation. It also develops VET quality and performs functions of Quality Assurance National Reference Point for VET and EQF National Coordination Point.
Non-formal	Non available

B) Further elaboration on quality assurance in the country

Legal framework

VET policies and LLL

The Provisions of the National Education Strategy 2003-2012 (Valstybinės švietimo strategijos 2003-2012 m. nuostatos, 2003) establish the key aims and key quantitative as well as qualitative outcomes to be used as the basis for the development of education and evaluation thereof in 2003-2012. The key aims of developing education includes to ensure quality of education which is in line with the needs of an individual living in an open civil society under market economy conditions, and with the universal needs of society in the modern world.

New impulse for the development of VET system was given after adopting the new edition of Law on VET in 2007. It sets principles for the VET system management and quality assurance, defines national qualifications framework, introduces apprenticeship and creates legal preconditions to bridge IVET and CVET.

VET: The Law on Vocational Education and Training (Profesinio mokymo įstatymas, 1997, new edition 2007) sets out the structure and management of the VET system, design, management and award of qualifications, organisation and management of VET as well as VET funding. Based on this Law, the VET system in Lithuania covers initial VET (pirminis profesinis mokymas), continuing VET (tęstinis profesinis mokymas) and vocational guidance (profesinis orientavimas). VET may be provided in parallel with general lower or upper secondary education. The Law shapes provisions for quality assurance by setting the principles for VET quality assurance.

The amended Law has legitimated the internal and external assessment of the managerial and pedagogical performance of VET providers and defined the responsibilities for the quality assurance.

HE: The Law on Science and Study (Mokslo ir studijų įstatymas, 2009) establishes science and study quality assurance principles, the award and recognition of higher education qualification and science degrees, science and study institutional management, activity organisation and monitoring, science and study financing. According to the law, there are two types of tertiary education institutions: universities (universitetas) and colleges (kolegija).

Non-formal education: The activities of non-formal education are not coordinated in a centralized way.

Instruments

Formal education: On 24 November 2008, the Minister of Education and Science approved the Concept for Quality Assurance in Formal Education. The purpose of the Concept is to provide a conceptual framework for political and social arrangements regarding the understanding of education quality and methods for quality assurance in formal education, as well as to create preconditions for harmonisation of the quality assurance policy in education.

Quality assurance in formal education is understood as an analysis of the overall education system, its components and interrelations to determine to what extent the fields

under evaluation comply with the quality requirements or conceptual understanding of quality assurance in formal education. It also includes collection of relevant data necessary for undertaking other functions of evaluation: revealing, understanding and explaining the formal education processes, encouraging and teaching providers of formal education to work better, providing arguments for the new goals of formal education and improvement of its quality, gathering information about the activities of formal education providers, creating conditions for the transparency of these activities, and reporting on the work carried out.

In Lithuanian institutions of early childhood and school education and also formal adult education, evaluation processes are undertaken at the level of the evaluation of educational institutions (external evaluation and self-evaluation of their quality assurance) and at the level of the individual teacher evaluation (appraisal of teachers and school heads).

Higher Education: In higher education institutions, evaluation processes cover the external evaluation of higher education institutions' activities, evaluation of study programmes and evaluation of research and artistic production (activities). Eurypedia

VET (all types): In 2010 the preparation for implementation of internal quality management tools in VET institutions and for external VET quality assessment was ongoing. Additionally, in 2010 the national project for improvement of VET teachers' technological (subject) competences was started. Within the national-level project "Development and Implementation of a Common Quality Assurance System in Vocational Education and Training" (Vieningos profesinio mokymo kokybės užtikrinimo sistemos sukūrimas ir įdiegimas, 2005-2008) the Concept of VET Quality Assurance System in Lithuania was developed. The Concept is applicable both for initial and continuing (including the non-formal education) VET. The Concept was developed on the basis of the Study of Quality Assurance in VET in Lithuania and Other Countries (2007) and considering the Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF) for VET in Europe. In order to realise the concept and the measures of the Practical VET Resources Development Programme (cf. 2.1) it is foreseen to implement internal VET quality assurance mechanisms in VET institutions and to develop and pilot external assessment until 2014.

At the national level VET quality is assured by implementing the following measures:

- Development and approval of VET standards. VET standards are the basis for the development of VET programmes and assessment of the achievements of pupils and students. The VET standard is comprised of the following parts: general description of occupation; occupational purpose; areas of activity; competences and their range; training objectives; assessment of competences; key competences; and final assessment of qualification. After approval of new or amended VET standards, programmes must be revised accordingly.
- Development and registration of training programmes and issuing licences. A VET provider is entitled to implement a registered training programme if its resources are sufficient for implementation and if its teachers correspond to requirements set in the training programmes and legal acts.
- Supervision of training provision. Since the internal quality assurance system in Lithuanian vocational training institutions is still under development, an important

role is assigned to the supervision of training quality. The respective departments at the Ministry of Education of Science are engaged in the supervision of the training process and performance.

The National Audit Office (Valstybės kontrolė) conducts selective examinations of training institutions, which include analysis of the efficiency of their performance. Other public bodies authorised to exercise control can also perform thematic inspections.

Higher Education: The principles for quality assurance of higher education level college programmes (ISCED 5) are set in the Law on Science and Study (2009). As stipulated in the Law, higher education institutions are responsible for quality of training, every higher education institution must have an internal system of quality assurance based on the provisions of quality assurance in studies of the European Higher Education Area and on the strategy of the improvement of the quality of performance as approved by the institution itself. In order to improve the quality of the activities of higher education institutions, external evaluation of study programmes and their accreditation and external institutional assessment are performed.

Only accredited study programmes are carried out, the ones that are entered into Study and Training Programmes Register. The external evaluation of study programmes of higher education institutions is coordinated by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education.

Accreditation

Secondary education: In 2004, the Minister of Education and Science approved the criteria of accreditation of educational programmes and the procedure for its implementation which establishes the goal of accreditation of the programmes of secondary education, the tasks, principles and criteria, organisation and performance of accreditation and the procedure for considering of appeals. The goal of accreditation of the programmes of secondary education is to ensure quality conditions to acquire secondary education for all the learners.

Accreditation is organised and performed by the Commission for Accreditation of Secondary Education Programme, the accreditation coordination commissions and assessment groups. Members of the assessment groups (accreditation experts) are prepared according to the programme for preparation of accreditation experts approved by the Minister of Education and Science.

Non-formal education: In the field of non-formal education, a great number of state institutions (most often within departmental activities) and non-governmental organisations are operating, but, due to insufficient monitoring and control of such activity, the quality and the results of such non-formal teaching and learning remain unclear. (

Self evaluation

VET: For assuring and improving VET quality it is foreseen to implement monitoring of VET on the basis of monitoring indicators approved by the minister of education and science, quality self-assessment and external assessment, assessment of VET programmes and learning outcomes and supervision of VET implementation and qualifications awarding.

External evaluation

One of the main tools employed by the state seeking to ensure quality is assessment, self-assessment and audit of training centres and schools for adults. This is a continual and thorough process of reflections involving all the subdivisions and employees of schools whose aim is to analyse the aspects of school activities, identify the advantages and disadvantages and draft plans for the improvement of school activities. The internal audit of a school covers 7 fields: the content of education, learning achievements, learning and education, assistance for learners, ethos (i.e. the environment at school, the relations between the teachers and learners, regulations of the school in respect of the conduct of learners and the subjects, etc.), resources, school management and quality assurance. On the basis of the results of the audit, a strategic plan of the school is drafted for a period of 3 years where a vision of the school is formulated, the goals and priorities are set, the tasks are formulated and a clear and specific procedure for their implementation is established. A municipality performs the external audit of a school. Independent experts may also be invited to carry out the external audit. Currently, the assessment of educational establishments performs the following functions: formative (when the assessment is made with a view to improving); generalising (when account of the performed works is given); administrative (when it is sought to better perform the management functions). The first function is performed by examiners from educational and scientific establishments seeking to find out the relevant issues in the field of education (for example, a thorough investigation of the activities of schools participating in the experiment of profiled teaching, the assessment of schools in the transition to 10-year basic education, etc.), the issues of efficiency and effectiveness of textbooks and educational programmes, the opinion of learners and the society about the development of education or changes in educational system. The Ministry of Education and Science together with the Education Departments of municipalities (counties) regularly organise the assessment of the quality of education at schools of general education. Educational establishments themselves perform the second function when they account for their activities to a municipality, the county administrator, the Ministry (or the founder) in the form of various reports, questionnaires, etc. The third function – inspection – is carried out by the inspectors of Education Departments of the county governor's administration and specialists of respective departments of the Ministry of Education and Science. This is a systematic monitoring, analysing, control and assessment of the educational system, and the activities of its separate chains and separate establishments.

Higher education: The procedures for higher education institutions external assessment and accreditation and methodics for the institutional assessment were approved in 2010. External assessment of colleges is foreseen to start in 2011. Only accredited study programmes are carried out, the ones that are entered into Study and Training Programmes Register. The external evaluation of study programmes of higher education institutions is coordinated by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education.

Need assessment

VET

A newly drafted VET programme is subject to approval by a competent employer organisation (e.g. the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts). Next, experts (vocational

teachers, employers) evaluate the quality of the programme, and, in the case of positive assessment, the programme is entered on the Register of Study and Training Programmes.

Quality Assurance bodies

VET: The Qualifications and VET Development Centre (Kvalifikacijų ir profesinio mokymo plėtros centras, QVETDC (until January 2010 - Methodological Centre for VET) under the MES perform functions of Qualifications Management Institution as established in new edition of Law on VET (2007) including organisation of VET and qualifications standards development, research of qualifications demand and qualifications formation. It also develops VET quality and performs functions of Quality Assurance National Reference Point for VET and EQF National Coordination Point.

Higher Education: The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (Studijų kokybės vertinimo centras, SKVC) under the MES aims to encourage the quality of activities of higher education institutions through an external assessment and accreditation of institutions and study programmes.

The functions of the Centre shall be as follows: to evaluate the activity of higher education establishments and study programmes, as well as to disseminate information about their quality and good experience. The activity of this institution helps create conditions for free movement of persons – adults who intend to study can adequately choose study programmes, and persons who have acquired qualifications abroad are provided opportunities to receive their recognition in Lithuania and find a job that is in line with their qualification.

Education Exchange Support Foundation. Its functions shall be as follows: to improve the quality and accessibility of adult learning and education by supporting international co-operation and mobility between adult learning and education institutions; to help the institutions make use of the 10 possibilities provided by international co-operation, to administer programmes and disseminate the performance results.

VET (Labour market training): The following institutions responsible for adult learning and education are subordinate to the Ministry of Social Security and Labour: A) Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority. The functions of the Authority shall be as follows: to develop vocational training of adults, guidance and consulting as active measures of the labour market policy by means of which it is sought to increase employment of the unemployed and persons belonging to risk groups and to develop skills of working persons to compete in the labour market. B) Lithuanian Labour Exchange. One of its functions is to direct persons registered with the Labour Exchange to the programmes of vocational training and increasing employment of the population.

Professional development of staff

In 2005 the Teacher Training Conception (Pedagogų rengimo koncepcija) was approved. It defines the goals, objectives, key provisions for teacher training, teachers' pedagogical competence, organisation of teacher training and measures to assure quality of training. In 2006 a National Reform Programme for Teachers Initial and Continuing

Training was approved (Valstybinė pedagogų rengimo ir kvalifikacijos tobulinimo pertvarkos programa). In 2008 a Teacher Training Regulation (Pedagogų rengimo reglamentas) was approved and later amended in 2010. The document sets out the models for teacher training, requirements and composition of pedagogy studies as well as requirements for providers of pedagogy studies.

In 2004, the Teacher Competence Centre started its activities. Its purpose is to organise supervision of quality of the system of pedagogues' qualification improvement, perform expert evaluation of the programmes of pedagogues' qualification improvement and to provide every professional assistance for institutions operating in the field of pedagogues' qualification.

The sphere of adult education covers a wide range of professionals, such as pedagogues, education managers, administrators, representatives from non-governmental organisations, etc. Currently adult teachers – andragogues – receive education at Kaunas Vytautas Magnus university, Vilnius Pedagogical (Teachers' Training) university and Klaipėda university. Those andragogues' in 'service' qualification receive significant contribution from the institutions subordinate to the Ministry of Education and Science, such as Lithuanian Adult Education and Information Centre, the Centre for Pedagogues' Professional Development, and the Education Exchange Support Fund. The activities of the Pedagogues' Education centres have recently become more active and intense

The andragogues from the national adult education institutions could further develop their adult teaching competencies within the framework of the project "Development of Adult Education Institutions in Providing Modern Competencies on the Regional Level". During this project, topical and innovative training and education was conducted on subject-related issues (computer and legal literacy, English language and entrepreneurship skills) and management. Country Report on the Action Plan on Adult Learning:

In 2010, the implementation of another ESF-funded project "Development of Adult Education System by Providing Generic Competencies to the Learners" was launched. The project is targeted at a comprehensive development of the adult education system, focused on providing generic competencies to adults in a significant number of Lithuania's municipalities, nurturing the competencies of heads and teachers of adult educational institutions, developing and implementing an innovative adult education curriculum framework as well as deploying information and monitoring system. The direct project target group is comprised of about 2000 people. The project outcomes are also believed to be beneficial for adult educational institutions and their employees as well as other stakeholders.

17 Luxembourg

A) Quality assurance systems: an overview

HE	Quality in higher education is guaranteed by the Ministry of Higher Education and Research (Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieure et de la Recherche), which ensures through internal and external evaluations the quality of (both initial and continued) higher education.
VET	The Loi portant réforme de la formation professionnelle of December 19th 2008 (art. 43) describes which institutions can provide vocational training. It also stipulates that private institutions who wish to perform activities in the field of vocational training have to receive authorisation and have to conform to article L. 542.8 of the Labour Code as modified in March 2012. The 2008 law (art. 44) also establishes a quality label for organisations or individuals who are engaged in continued vocational education and training. The law was partially modified by the law of March 28th 2012. The government has implemented the quality label for non-formal education since 2000 and is currently in the process of establishing a quality label for CVET in consultation with the social partners (and based on the 2008 law). The Department for Vocational Training (Service de formation professionnelle) is responsible for the quality of CVET. The quality of formal continuing education (excluding higher education) is guaranteed by MEN. Secondary and technical secondary schools, the schools of second chance, the labour college, CNFPC, and INL fall under the direct responsibility of the ministry. These institutions have obtained prior approval from MEN to engage in adult education, in line with the laws of December 2008 and March 2012. The SFP is responsible for the quality of CVET. People who teach classes for adults in these institutions have to conform to nearly the same standards as their counterparts in initial education (law of July 1991). Since the law of November 2011 new teaching staff has to follow a traineeship followed by a final exam and are given the title "adult trainer" (formateur d'adultes).
Non-formal	(1) The Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training has developed a quality label for non-formal continuing education (since 2000)

B) Further elaboration on quality assurance in the country

General framework

The Luxembourgian adult learning sector can be divided into a public sector and a private sector. The main elements of the public sector are (1) secondary and technical secondary schools, (2) the school of second chance, (3) the labour college, (4) the Univer-

sity of Luxembourg, (5) the National Centre for Vocational Training, (6) the National Language Institute, (7) professional chambers, and (8) the municipalities (see box 1). The private sector exists of about 300 establishments. This sector includes non-profit associations, profit-making companies, and individual consultants. Especially worth mentioning are the sectoral organisations.

Different types of programmes are offered throughout the sector. In general, one can distinguish between collective programmes, individual programmes, alternating training, and integral training organized in cooperation with employers. In addition people can obtain a degree through the validation of professional experiences.

The Luxembourgian public adult learning sector is managed by the Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training (*Ministère de l'éducation nationale et de la formation professionnelle*: MEN). Within the ministry the Service on Vocational Training (*Service de la formation professionnelle*: SFP) and the Service on Adult Training (*Service de la formation des adultes*: SFA) are in particular responsible for adult learning. The Service for the Coordination of Research and for Pedagogical and Technical Innovation (*Service de coordination de la recherche et de l'innovation pédagogiques et technologiques*: SCRIPT) is responsible for quality management in secondary education including the school of second chance. The National Institute for the development of Continued Vocational Training (*Institut national pour le développement de formation professionnelle continue*: INFPC) operates under the oversight of the ministry and is occupied with promotion of continued vocational training. Luxembourg has a confirmed tradition of involving the social partners in all matters of education, and especially VET. This includes the sharing of common responsibility, the representation of social partners in advisory bodies, and the requirement that they have to be consulted on proposals for new laws and regulations.¹ The main private educational institutions are: The Luxembourg Banking Training Institute (Institut de Formation Bancaire Luxembourg) and the Construction Sector Training Institute (Institut de Formation Sectoriel du Bâtiment) offer vocational training relevant to their sector. They are referred to as the sectoral organisations.

In Luxembourg there has in recent years been developed a policy on adult learning and life long learning (*formation tout au long de la vie*). A number of changes have been made to the educational system in recent years. At this moment the government is working on a lifelong learning strategy, in which it will set coherent criteria for adult education which relate to transparance, content, assessment methods, staff compe-

¹ The main public educational institutions are: A) The secondary and technical secondary schools (Lycées and Lycées techniques) offer different types of adult education and training. B) The school of second chance (école de deuxième chance / deuxième voie de qualification) has been created in 2008 as an integral part of the national education system. The school provides education and training for youths between 16 and 24 years old who have dropped out of initial education without obtaining any qualifications. C) The labour college (école supérieure du travail) provides employees and the self-employed with courses through which they can acquire, improve, and adapt their knowledge in a number of fields (e.g., economy, taxation, law). The labour college falls under the direct authority of the Ministry of Labour and Employment. D) The University of Luxembourg offers diplomas that can be obtained through continued education. The university also issues certificates for different types of short courses. E) The National Centre for Vocational Training (Centre Nationale pour la Formation Professionnelle Continue: CNFPC) is the preferred place for the implementation of the ministry's continued vocational training offer. The Centre is placed under the responsibility of the SFP. F) The National Language Institute (Institut National des Langues: INL) offers language education in different languages and at different levels. Students can undergo internationally recognised exams. G) The Chambers of Labour, Trade, Agriculture, and Craft (Chambres Professionnelles) offer diverse forms of continuous vocational education and training. H) The municipalities and associations offer types of training such as language courses, ICT, crafts, and arts.

tences, and whether education is outcome oriented. The new lifelong learning strategy is intended to be in line with European standards (e.g., EQAVET).

The quality of formal continuing education (excluding higher education) is guaranteed by MEN. Secondary and technical secondary schools, the schools of second chance, the labour college, CNFPC, and INL fall under the direct responsibility of the ministry¹. These institutions have obtained prior approval from MEN to engage in adult education, in line with the laws of December 2008 and March 2012. The Agency for Quality Development in Schools is responsible for the quality of secondary schools, including their second chance education offer. The SFP is responsible for the quality of CVET. People who teach classes for adults in these institutions have to conform to nearly the same standards as their counterparts in initial education² (law of July 1991). Since the law of November 2011 new teaching staff has to follow a traineeship followed by a final exam and are given the title “adult trainer” (*formateur d’adultes*). The ministry is currently in the process of designing a quality label for CVET in consultation with the social partners.

Non-formal continuing education largely takes place in the communities and associations that have previously been individually qualified by the ministry, or is organized by the Chambers of Labour, Trade, Agriculture, and Craft. The main quality assurance mechanism for education provided by the communities and associations is the quality label (*label de qualité*) which has been established by the regulation of 2000 (discussed in detail below). This label allows the government to regulate and keep track of adult learning in these institutions. The main way of ensuring quality standards in the training provided by the Chambers is through attaching quality criteria to subsidies provided by MEN. The SFA is responsible for the quality of non-formal adult education.

According to the law of 2008, private establishments have to be granted ministerial authorisation that allows them to perform the activity of “managing an establishment for continued vocational training”. In order to be accorded authorisation, the manager of a private establishment has to satisfy a number of general conditions³. Foreign establishments operating in Luxembourg who have an authorisation to exercise the activity of continued vocational training in their country of origin do not need authorisation from the Luxembourgian authorities⁴. Persons who want to work in the non-formal learning sector have to hold a certificate or a diploma that grants them the right to teach a specific course in Luxembourg. People without such qualifications need to apply for permission at the Service for Adult Training (SFA).

¹ Higher education is covered by the Ministry of Higher Education, which has no specific mechanisms for quality assurance in continuing education.

² The training of **teachers in initial vocational education** (technical secondary education) is laid down by legislation on the education system. The recruitment of teachers with civil servant status is by competitive examination, after the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training has planned teaching staff needs each year. To sit this examination, candidates must, depending on the post involved, have attended a three or four-year university course in one of the options available in the Luxembourg system. Applicants for the post of science teacher in technical education must possess a diploma of higher education recognised in the country in which it was obtained and approved in Luxembourg. Applicants for the post of teacher of technical education must possess either a Luxembourg secondary or technical secondary school-leaving certificate, or a technician’s certificate, or a qualification recognised as equivalent by the Ministry.

³ These entrance requirements can be found in annex A (in French).

⁴ When they decide to establish themselves in Luxembourg they have to obtain authorization nonetheless.

Differences between VET, HE and NVAL

All institutions that want to engage in adult learning need prior approval from MEN. Quality of CVET provided by public institutions is further assured by requirements towards teachers and trainers, who need to have the same qualifications as their counterparts in IVET and, since 2011, need to follow a traineeship before they become *formateur des adultes*. In the future the quality label on CVET is expected to increase the quality of this type of vocational education and training. Quality of CVET provided by private institutions is not assured by the government, but when organizations such as the Chambres and the sectoral institutes want to be subsidized they have to work with qualified establishments and fulfil certain reporting duties. Quality in higher education is guaranteed by the Ministry of Higher Education and Research (*Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieure et de la Recherche*), which ensures through internal and external evaluations the quality of (both initial and continued) higher education.

Quality in the non-vocational education and training sector is assured to a limited degree by the quality label of March 2000, which is used by nearly all municipalities and institutions because it is coupled to government financial support. This quality label is detailed below.

Instruments

Accreditation

All public educational institutions are automatically authorized by MEN to engage in adult learning activities. Private institutions have to be granted ministerial authorisation for providing courses for adults.

Evaluation

The secondary and technical secondary schools are evaluated by their respective principals. Each year external evaluation is undertaken by a team of evaluators from the Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training. On request of the minister an additional evaluation can be undertaken by the College of Inspectors or by the Agency for Quality Development in Schools. An external evaluation of the whole educational system is undertaken every five years by one or more university institutes. The *lycées* are required to perform self-evaluation on a regular basis under an Action Protocol on School Quality (*Protocole d'action qualité scolaire*). There is no (uniform) evaluation procedure for other public institutions, but they all fall under the direct supervision of MEN.

Labelling

The Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training has – conform the regulation of March 2000 - developed a quality label to be used on a voluntarily basis by municipalities and associations. The quality label consists of a series of quality criteria which relate to: (1) pedagogical aspects, (2) the programme and methodology, (3) student orientation and counselling, (4) evaluation and certification, and (5) the modalities of organization and finance¹. The quality label is awarded by the SFA. Possession of the quality label allows a municipality or association to apply for government subsidies, which is a major reason for the high degree of nation-wide coverage of the label. This thick cov-

¹ The regulation and the quality criteria can be found at <http://www.legilux.public.lu/leg/a/archives/2000/0034/a034.pdf#page=2>

erage allows the government to gather data and statistics on non-formal education. The quality label outlined in the law of December 2008 has not yet been implemented, since consultation with the social partners is still ongoing.

Teachers and Trainers

Adult education trainers in the public sector (*formateurs d'adultes*) have to satisfy nearly the same criteria as teachers in initial education but, since the law of November 2011, get a special training (*stage pédagogique*) at the beginning of their career. SCRIPT (a department of MEN) has a training institute for civil servant teachers: the *Institute de Formation Continue*.

Staff involved in non-formal adult learning at the municipalities and associations have to possess the certificates and diplomas legally required to teach in their area of education, or the practical experience needed. The SFA decides who is accorded permission to provide non-formal education and training. There are no explicit requirements for private trainers working in the field of continuing education. The SFA communicates all training offers to adult learning staff employed in municipalities and association in possession of a quality label. In Luxembourg there are no explicit education and training criteria for private trainers working in the continuing vocational training field.

Relevant stakeholders

The main stakeholders are a) the Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training; b) the Service on Vocational Training (*Service de la Formation Professionnelle: SFP*); c) the Service on Adult Training (*Service de la Formation des Adultes: SFA*); d) the Service for the Coordination of Research and for Pedagogical and Technical Innovation (*Service de coordination de la recherche et de l'innovation pédagogiques et technologiques: SCRIPT*) and its Agency for the Development of School Quality (*Agence de Développement de Quality Scolaire*); e) All matters on Higher Education are under the responsibility of the Ministry of Higher Education and Research.

Challenges

The main challenge concerning quality in adult education is the recognition of learning outcomes by referencing them to national qualification framework, which is currently under development.

18 Malta

A) Quality assurance systems: an overview

HE	The legislation establishing the Malta Qualifications Council covers QA in the context of the NQF awards and the courses leading to such awards. To further develop the Government's strategic objectives for higher and tertiary education the 2006? Education Act established the National Commission for Higher Education (NHCE) which is responsible among other responsibilities for preparing key performance indicators and benchmarking the sector against international developments. In 2009, the "Further and Higher Education Strategy 2020" outlined 12 priority areas of action and identified 3 areas of policy development as an immediate priority. The priority directly related to quality was: 'The development of a new Licensing, Quality Assurance and Accreditation framework (for further and higher education including the establishment of a competent authority (Quality Assurance Agency) to carry out such functions and resource allocation for improvement of current internal quality assurance systems in place across various state institutions. Quality organisations are the national Commission on Higher Education, academic Programmes Quality & Resources Unit of UofM, and MCAST - foreign awarding bodies - BTEC (EDEXCEL) and City & Guilds & Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft
VET	All adult education courses leading to a qualification on the NQF awarded by the Malta Qualifications Council (MQC) come under the QA arrangements of that body. The MQC which has a role in quality assurance of courses/qualifications. MQC established the criteria for NQF levels (including HE). Once the provider, including private institutions, has accreditation a double protocol is applied, namely, validate the course AND level rate it. Then a provider is recognised as a provider of that course which is approved. An EQA-VET project is under development but in general, QA in VET is not yet part of a coherent framework. VET courses which are part of DLL-funded provision are also covered by DLL's QA system. The system covers hiring staff and the provision of ongoing CPD, monitoring and evaluation; learner assessment; curriculum and materials development. Courses provided by non-governmental providers subsidised by DLL also come under these arrangements.
Non-formal	A small number of non-governmental AL providers are subsidised by DLL and, therefore, come under DLL QA measures.

B) Further elaboration on quality assurance in the country

Legal framework

In Matla there are different institutions that play a role in QA in different subsectors of the AL sector.

- **The Matla Qualification Council (MQC)** has the role as a QA institution. This involves accreditation of a provider; validation of the course; level-rating of the course vis-à-vis NQF levels; assessment according to the proposal contained in the validated course; internal and external monitoring of assessment results. The provider submits a course for level-rating on the NQF to MQC. This process follows a legal procedure and is agreed by both parties. The application document completed by the applicant for a level rating indicates the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competence) and how they will be assessed. On receipt of a level-rating the course is then taught using the resources indicated in the application and agreed. The learning outcomes are assessed as per the application and the agreement. The continuous assessment carried out by the adult educator is monitored by the centre or subject co-ordinator. The final assessment which is standardised by the institution is administered by the adult educator and the learner's written paper/object/performance is reviewed by the adult educator, the centre/subject co-ordinator and another external examiner. The learner receives a score and the final assessment paper/object is added to the learner's lifelong learning portfolio along with comments and a guidance letter regarding the next steps open to the learner. This is the assessment procedure for all adult learners in the DLL courses leading to an NQF award.
- The **Directorate of Quality and Standards** is the QA institution for compulsory education.
- **Second-chance schools for adults come under the MQC regulations.** However, the process is not standardized – each institution has its own take on the issue in agreement with the MQC. The emergence of convergence is in the process. [The respondent would like to see a Directorate of Quality and Standards for adult learning established.]
- The Directorate of Lifelong Learning (DLL) has a QA role in relation to the AL courses it funds. The quality assurance system of the Directorate of Lifelong Learning (DLL) has a range of elements, relating to: curriculum, syllabi and materials development; hiring staff and providing ongoing CPD and monitoring (namely: Job descriptions for staff, including qualifications requirements; Staff recruitment processes; Staff induction processes (pre-service training); Staff CPD; Staff end of service training; and staff monitoring by Education Officer (inspector); centre co-ordinator; subject co-ordinator). Curricula, syllabi and materials are developed within DLL. If the course leads to an NQF qualification it is subject to the MQC validation, level-rating and assessment approaches. Where non-governmental providers are DLL-funded the same arrangements apply. Outside of the DLL-funded courses, NVAL run by various providers are reviewed through internal systems set up within the institution or the non-governmental organisations themselves. Courses which lead to qualifications from foreign institutions such as BTEC, City & Guilds and others follow the external auditing and review systems of those bodies. DLL draws up job descriptions, including qualifications requirements and issues the public call for adult educators for DLL-funded courses. For example, to teach basic skills people have to be warranted teachers and have to have the academic qualifications plus a number of years of teaching experience. But so as

not to exclude the teaching of any of the key competence for lifelong learning DLL looks for the expertise in the subject – but not necessarily in the teaching. In this case the entry requirements are for qualifications in the subject area. There is a transparent public call for general adult education and VET teachers each year. This is followed by a rigorous process of interviewing and selection. Even if the teacher will be working only 1 hour per week s/he must go through this process which has been in place since the DLL was established in 2009 and began to look at quality as well as quantity. For now until there is a system in place an annual contract of service is issued. There are differing requirements for entry by 'teachers' in the different sectors. Those who teach adults are not called 'teachers' because the teachers' union (primary, post-primary teachers) have an agreement with the government that only a person with a teaching warrant (from the Teaching Council) can be called a 'teacher'. Therefore personnel teaching adults in DLL-funded courses are known as 'adult educators'. They teach drama; languages; health; childcare; social care – all the key competences except the first three. These three – communication in the mother tongue; communication in a foreign language; mathematical, science and IT competence - are traditionally taught by teachers. If an applicant / appointee does not hold a teaching warrant from the Teaching Council then s/he must attend pre-service training; mid-service training and end of service training, all of which is in the form of modules at Level 5 of the NQF. If the teacher holds a warrant but has not worked with adults s/he will receive CPD. In fact CPD is mandatory for all personnel. **Centre/subject co-ordinator administrators** require skills and a diploma in education administration and leadership (offered by University of Malta). As part of their contract, all adult educators must attend compulsory CPD sessions, pre-service, mid-service and end of service provided by experienced personnel from within the DES and DQSE (such as Service Managers and Education Officers) or outsourced from entities such as the University of Malta. These sessions cover themes such as the philosophy, ethos and structure of DLLL, an understanding of the different levels of the NQF and expected learning outcomes of the courses offered; good practice in adult teaching strategies as well as training on the formative and summative assessment of adult courses. **Centre co-ordinators** are required to be in possession of a Permanent Teacher's Warrant. Qualifications/experiences in adult education, youth studies and/or social sciences are considered as an asset during the selection process. All applicants must have at least seven years teaching experience in compulsory education. The National Reform Programme 2009 states that DLL 'will (also) embark on a programme to train the trainers and have all teachers and trainers employed in this sector certified or are in possession of a better qualification in adult teaching by 2015."

- National Commission on Higher Education prepares key performance indicators and benchmarks HE against international developments.
- The Academic Programmes Quality and Resources Unit (APQRU) of the University of Malta is responsible for QA in that institution. **MACAST offer a B-TEC Level 5 Diploma in Adult Learning for** its own staff which is also open to the public but is not often taken up by people outside of MCAST. The respondent believes that the NC (of RAAL) must look to a national diploma for prospective staff rather than existing staff (Respondent is the current NC). Since 1993 the University of Malta has provided diploma and degree courses intended to improve the quality of provision and staffing in adult education. Courses leading to the Diploma in Adult Education and to the Diploma in Adult Training and Development have been run. There were also M.Ed. specialisations in Adult Education. As of 2008, a Master's of Arts professional degree in Adult Education combining theory and practice is offered to graduates from all disciplines.

To further develop the Government's strategic objectives for higher and tertiary education the 2006 Education Act established the National Commission for Higher Education (NHCE) which is responsible among other responsibilities for preparing key performance indicators and benchmarking the sector against international developments.

Instruments

VET: Initiatives to improve **the quality of VET** in Malta include: a) Referencing vocational education and training programmes to the MQF, to ensure standards and quality, comparability and permeability and facilitate mobility; b) Developing professional standards for vocations and trades using Competence Matrices and Occupational Standards in nine identified sectors.

In 2011 the MQC launched the European-funded project: EQAVET aimed at developing a QA tool to help Vocational Training Institutions verify the different aspects and requirements for QA of their institutions & their courses. The Process involves the participation of 4 Maltese vocational institutions which are reviewing their own QA systems with regards to 30 VT courses. The main project output, a manual, will serve as a QA tool for VT programmes and institutions and will provide an opportunity for other institutions to review and restructure their QA systems.

The key public providers of VET in Malta are Employment and Training Centre (ETC), Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS); Institute of Conservation and Management of Cultural Heritage (ICMCH). The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) provides VET at higher education level (see below).

VET trainers have expertise in their subject area but many lack training in pedagogy. In the past VET courses were not validated but now because they lead to qualifications on the NQF they come under the QA arrangements of the MQC. VET courses which are part of DLL-funded provision are also covered by DLL's QA system. Student feedback is part of QA in DLLL-funded VET.

To ensure quality training, programme coordinators and trainers in the Education and Training Centre (ETC) conduct evaluation during courses and on course completion. In recent years the ETC has introduced a number of accredited programmes that impose certain QA standards in the organisation, delivery and assessment stages. Trainers are recruited through an open call for services and are required to be subject experts in the area in which they will deliver training. Preference is given to those who are qualified and have had experience in the delivery of training. To ensure that they provide effective training, trainers are required to participate in a Train the Trainers programme organised by the ETC (DGEAC AE Policy document 2008). This recruitment procedure is similar to that used by the DLL.

Most of the QA of the courses provided by Institute for Tourism Studies (ITS) is carried out through external quality assurance by foreign examination boards. This process applies to all providers whose courses lead to awards from foreign examination boards such as B-TEC and City and Guilds.

Higher Education: In 2009, the *"Further and Higher Education Strategy 2020"* outlined 12 priority areas of action and identified 3 areas of policy development as an immediate priority. The priority directly related to quality was: 'The development of a new Licensing, Quality Assurance and Accreditation framework (for further and higher education including the establishment of a competent authority (Quality Assurance Agency) to carry out such functions and

resource allocation for improvement of current internal quality assurance systems in place across various state institutions.

Adult Education: All adult education courses leading to a qualification on the NQF awarded by the Malta Qualifications Council (MQC) come under the QA arrangements of that body. When such adult education courses are funded by the Directorate of Lifelong Learning (DLL) they also come under the quality assurance system of DLLL. The system covers hiring staff and the provision of ongoing CPD, monitoring and evaluation; learner assessment; curriculum and materials development. Courses provided by non-governmental providers subsidised by DLL also come under these arrangements. The Lifelong Learning Centre (LLC) which runs DLL-funded by the DLL courses moved to larger premises to provide more programmes and be a recognised hub for quality lifelong learning by 2011. It is also embarking on a programme to train the trainers and have all teachers and trainers employed in the adult education sector certified or are in possession of a better qualification in adult teaching by 2015. Where adult education is provided by other bodies they come under the QA arrangements of those bodies, including the QA requirements of foreign awarding bodies such as B-TEC and City and Guilds

A summarising overview of quality systems and measures in the different subsector is provided in the table below.

Measure / Initiative	VET	HE	NVAL
Legislation	√ MQC Act applies	√ Education Act 2006	√ as part of MQC Act where course leads to an NQF qualification
Accreditation system	√ as part of MQC Act where course leads to an NQF qualification;		√ as part of MQC Act where course leads to an NQF qualification;
QA framework	√ - ENQA-VET in theory but in practice QA in VET is not yet part of a coherent framework	√ in MCAST	
QA system		√ in University of Malta √ in MCAST	√ as part of MQC Act where course leads to an NQF qualification; √ when course is DLL-funded √ when course leads to a qualification from a foreign examining body
QA measures	√ - project as part of ENQA-VET √ when course is DLL-funded √ VET providers have various QA measures in place	√	√ as part of MQC Act where course leads to an NQF qualification; √ when course is DLL-funded √ when course leads to a qualification from a foreign examining body
Quality Institutions	√ MQC - when course leads to an NQF qualification; √ DLL - when course is	√ National Commission on Higher Education	√ MQC - when course leads to an NQF qualification; √ DLL - when course is DLL-funded √ Directorate for Quality and Standards

	DLL-funded √ Foreign examining body - when course leads to a qualification from such a body	√ Academic Programmes Quality & Resources Unit of UofM √ MCAST - foreign awarding bodies - BTEC (EDEXCEL) and City & Guilds & Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft	in Education (DQSE) of the schools system – when the DLL-funded course is academic in nature √ Foreign examining body - when course leads to a qualification from such a body
Monitoring Personnel	√ Education Officers for Lifelong Learning (inspectors) for DLL-funded courses √ Subject / centre co-ordinators) for DLL-funded courses √ External verifiers of examination results when course leads to NQF award √ MQC personnel but not implemented due to staff shortages	√ External examiners	√ Education Officers for Lifelong Learning (inspectors) for DLL-funded courses √ Education Officers of the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education (DQSE) of the schools system – when the DLL-funded course is academic in nature √ Subject / centre co-ordinators) for DLL-funded courses √ External verifiers of examination results when course leads to NQF award √ MQC personnel but not implemented due to staff shortages
Quality Seals	√ MQC seal for level-rated courses leading to an NQF qualification		√ MQC seal for level-rated courses leading to an NQF qualification
External assessment of student learning	√ when course leads to an NQF qualification √ when course leads to a qualification from a foreign awards body		√ when course leads to an NQF qualification; √ when course leads to a qualification from a foreign awards body
Self-evaluation tools	√ when course is DLL-funded √ when course leads to an NQF qualification; √ providers own internal arrangements	√ HEIs own internal arrangements	√ when course is DLL-funded √ when course leads to an NQF qualification; √ providers own internal arrangements
Student feedback	√	√	√
System for staff IPD	√ when course is DLL-funded	√ HEIs own internal arrange-	√ when course is DLLL-funded √ providers own internal arrangements

	✓ providers own internal arrangements	ments	

Challenges

The fact that Malta still does not have a lifelong learning strategy is seen as a barrier to the development of extensive QA approaches in Malta. A top-down approach to the development of such a strategy was tried but did not work. A proper consultation process on the lifelong learning strategy is required. A Ministerial Steering Group is currently working on developing a strategy. A Green Paper on lifelong learning has already been published. It is considered 'early days to get co-ordination (on QA) at a national level' in Malta. A lifelong learning strategy should incorporate quality assurance and QA approaches will follow from there the strategy should incorporate the benchmarks of the EU and the strategy should have its own benchmarks (Respondent).

The quality of staffing is seen as a key challenge in the context of the quality and QA of AL. It is considered that a major investment of money and time in the QA of staff is required. Thus, funding is an issue.

The understaffing at the MQC is also considered a barrier to the roll out of QA in Malta. Additional staff is required to improve QA approaches.

Information on what is happening in private providers (outside of DLL-funded courses; University of Malta; MCAST, E&TC etc) who are not providing qualifications on the NQF is limited. Where a provider is offering courses leading to NQF qualifications then the MQC QA procedures apply to those courses. This lack of information on QA in private providers is likely to be an issue for learners seeking courses.

There is overlap between the remit of the MQC and the NCHE (National Commission on Higher Education) and there needs to be clarification of whom and what regulates programmes in vocational higher education in MCAST (Refernet report).

19 Netherlands

A) Quality assurance systems: an overview

HE	Quality in higher education is subject to the responsibility of the institutions and the programmes are accredited according to the accreditation framework governed by the NVAO (Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders). There is however no explicitly mentioning of adult learning in the Assessment frameworks for the higher education accreditation system.
VET	Quality in adult and vocational education is subject to the Adult and Vocational Education Act (WEB: Wet educatie en beroepsonderwijs). The institutions offering adult and vocational education under this act are supervised by the Inspectorate (Inspectie van het Onderwijs; Ministry of Education, Culture and Science). The Accreditation framework for adult and vocational education (Toetsingskader bve) includes two levels of inspection: Level 1: Institute analysis every three years (based on desk research (yearly reports, results other signals); site visits (study a sample of educational programmes offered, study on quality assurance systems). The results of the analysis will be discussed with the Board. Every year a quick scan takes place on the basis of desk research. Level 2: In case the discussion with the Board given an indication of serious risks, inspection at level 2 will take place. This involves a study on the quality and a study on quality improvement. The accreditation frameworks identified seven quality areas, each having their own specific indicators (Educational process, examination and certification, results, quality assurance, compliance with legal requirements, quality of teachers/staff, and financial continuity) The quality in this area is the responsibility of the providers themselves. There are no strict legal requirements towards programmes <i>not</i> leading to an accredited degree. In case the private providers offer accredited degrees (e.g. Bachelor, master, VET diplomas), the programmes and the provider is subject to supervision and accreditation. The Dutch referencing report states that "Private education providers accredited by the Education Minister comply with the quality rules and requirements of funded institutions. In addition, professional and industry sectoral associations have formulated their own quality codes. NRTO members, the representative organisations of private training institutes, sign the Code of Conduct for Training and Education and are also obliged to use the Terms and Conditions as drawn up by the NRTO and the consumer organisation, "Consumentenbond".
Non-formal	(1) code of conduct private training institutes; (2) quality seal for folk universities; (3) Quality code for APL centres including accreditation

B) Further elaboration on quality assurance in the country

Legal framework

In the Netherlands, the formal and publicly funded provision has well advanced national policies, frameworks and legislation in which quality issues are described. That which is not funded by the government has well developed quality assurance procedures. A distinction is made between the following types of learning which also includes the learning of adults: Higher Education; Adult and vocational Education; VAVO: secondary education for adults; Adult learning provided by private providers; Non formal non vocational adult learning (Folk universities). Each type of adult learning has its own legal, political environment with regard to quality approaches and quality assurance:

Quality in higher education

Quality in higher education is subject to the responsibility of the institutions and the programmes are accredited according to the accreditation framework governed by the NVAO (Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatieorganisatie¹: Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders). The monitoring of higher education system is regulated by the Law on Higher Education and Scientific Research and by the Law on Education Inspection (WOT). The Inspectorate ensures that higher education institutes takes account of the law in the delivery of education, the applicability of admission criteria, the administration of examinations and doctorals and the awarding of diplomas. The Inspectorate also oversees the board's and the council's compliance with the laws.² According to the Dutch Higher Education and Research Act (WHW), the accreditation system comprises six assessment frameworks:

- 1. an institutional-level framework to be used for “institutional quality assurance assessments”³, the so-called institutional quality assurance assessment;
- 2. a programme-level framework with “limited assessment criteria for the accreditation of institutions whose institutional quality assurance assessment produced a positive result”⁴, the so-called limited programme assessment;
- 3. a programme-level framework with “extensive assessment criteria for accreditations”⁵, the so-called extensive programme assessment (required if an institutional quality assurance assessment turns out negative and for institutions that have not applied for an institutional quality assurance assessment);
- 4. a programme-level framework with “limited assessment criteria for the initial accreditation of new programmes provided by institutions whose institutional quality assurance assessment produced a positive result”⁶, the so-called limited initial accreditation;

¹ <http://www.nvao.net/>

² The referencing document of The Dutch National Qualification Framework to the European Qualification Framework February, 2012.

³ Dutch Higher Education and Research Act (WHW), Articles 5a.13a - 13e.

⁴ Dutch Higher Education and Research Act (WHW), Article 5a.13f.

⁵ Dutch Higher Education and Research Act (WHW), Article 5a. 8.

⁶ Dutch Higher Education and Research Act (WHW), Article 5a.13g.

- 5. a programme-level framework with “extensive assessment criteria for the initial accreditation of new programmes”¹, the so-called extensive initial accreditation (required if an institutional quality assurance assessment turns out negative and for institutions that have not applied for an institutional quality assurance assessment);
- 6. an assessment framework to determine whether an institution or a programme has any distinctive features.²

There is however no explicitly mentioning of adult learning in the Assessment frameworks for the higher education accreditation system.³

Quality in adult and vocational education

Quality in adult and vocational education is subject to the Adult and Vocational Education Act (WEB: Wet educatie en beroepsonderwijs)⁴. The institutions offering adult and vocational education under this act are supervised by the Inspectorate (Inspectie van het Onderwijs; Ministry of Education, Culture and Science)⁵. The Accreditation framework for adult and vocational education (Toetsingskader bve)⁶ includes two levels of inspection: Level 1: Institute analysis every three years. This includes: risk analysis on the basis of desk research (yearly reports, results other signals); site visits (study a sample of educational programmes offered, study on quality assurance systems). The results of the analysis will be discussed with the Board. Every year a quick scan takes place on the basis of desk research. Level 2: In case the discussion with the Board given an indication of serious risks, inspection at level 2 will take place. This involves a study on the quality and a study on quality improvement.

The accreditation frameworks identified seven quality areas, each having their own specific indicators: 1) Educational process; 2) Examination and certification; 3) Results; 4) Quality assurance; 5) Compliance with legal requirements; 6) Quality of teachers/staff; 7) Financial continuity.

Although within the accreditation framework the word ‘adult’ is not mentioned, the framework provides room to develop quality adult learning provision since elements which also apply to adult learning are included (e.g. Tailored provision, guidance, insight in learning needs). On the other hands, the framework is very much attuned to learning taking place in schools.⁷

Quality in VAVO, secondary school education for adults

¹ Dutch Higher Education and Research Act (WHW), Article 5a. 10a.

² Dutch Higher Education and Research Act (WHW), Article 5a.10.

³ See: NVAO (2011), Assessment frameworks for the higher education accreditation system

⁴ http://www.st-ab.nl/wetten/0467_Wet_educatie_en_beroepsonderwijs_WEB.htm

⁵ <http://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/>

⁶ Inspectie van het Onderwijs (2011), Toezichtkader bve 2012:

http://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/binaries/content/assets/Actueel_publicaties/2011/Toezichtkader+bve+2012.pdf

⁷ See: Inspectie van het Onderwijs (2011), Toezichtkader bve 2012:

http://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/binaries/content/assets/Actueel_publicaties/2011/Toezichtkader+bve+2012.pdf

For the examinations of VAVO the same rules are applicable as in the Law on Secondary Education and the frameworks of the Inspectorate of Education.¹

Quality in the privately funded adult learning

The quality in this area is the responsibility of the providers themselves. There are no strict legal requirements towards programmes *not* leading to an accredited degree. In case the private providers offer accredited degrees (e.g. Bachelor, master, VET diplomas), the programmes and the provider is subject to supervision and accreditation. The Dutch referencing report states that “Private education providers accredited by the Education Minister comply with the quality rules and requirements of funded institutions. In addition, professional and industry sectoral associations have formulated their own quality codes. NRTO members, the representative organisations of private training institutes, sign the Code of Conduct for Training and Education and are also obliged to use the Terms and Conditions as drawn up by the NRTO and the consumer organisation, “Consumentenbond”. In case of a dispute the consumer or the training and education agency can make use of an out-of-court dispute resolution scheme (known as De Geschillencommissie). Any agency aspiring to become a member of the NRTO is assessed by the NRTO Committee on Quality. An evaluation is made of the degree of compliance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct. The Committee on Quality also investigates any indications of poor quality which they are aware of. Finally, the NRTO carries out an annual survey of all members on the degree of compliance to varying aspects of the code.”² The Dutch Council for Training and Education (NRTO: Nederlandse Raad voor Training en Opleiding)³ is involved in a number of initiatives to assure and improve the quality of the provide providers:

- **Agreement on principles** (Hoofdlijnenakkoord) with the Ministry concerning quality in adult education. This agreement deals with the following issues:⁴ Quality of education and quality assurance; Quality of teachers/staff; Transparency and information; Efficiency; Education to adults; Associate Degree programmes; Other education programmes for adults.
- The NRTO developed a **Code of Conduct** for the members (i.e. the providers). Which includes rules concerning:⁵ Information; Guidance for teaching staff; Work processes; Learning material; Guidance and counselling; Education and exams; Facilities; Recruitment; Complaints procedures; Registration; Transparency.

In order to be eligible for VAT reduction in providing education to adults, the private providers need to be registered in the CRKBO-register.⁶ The principles and requirements are in line with the code of conduct developed by NRTO.

¹ The referencing document of The Dutch National Qualification Framework to the European Qualification Framework February, 2012.

² The referencing document of The Dutch National Qualification Framework to the European Qualification Framework February, 2012.

³ <http://www.nрто.nl/>

⁴ Hoofdlijnenakkoord MinOCW en NRTO, 13 January 2012.

⁵ See NRTO (2011), Gedragscode Consumenten en NRTO (2011), Gedragscode Beroep en bedrijf: http://www.nрто.nl/kwaliteitslabels_en_keurmerken/gedragscodes/

⁶ Central Register for Short Vocational Education: Centraal Register Kort Beroepsonderwijs (CRKBO): <http://www.crkbo.nl/Default.aspx>

There has been an initiative to further develop and promote a specific ISO-certificate for privately provided education and training. The NRTO was part of this development. Due to a lack of interest of the members of the NRTO to actually use the ISO certificate, this process has been put on-hold. The reasons for this was that the fear that the introduction of the ISO certificate lead to a high administrative burden.

Quality in the non formal non vocational adult learning

This has been left open by the Ministry of education. A code of conduct/quality seal for folk universities has recently (2007) been developed and some providers have been awarded the quality seal.¹ This bottom-up framework focuses on: a) Quality of education offer; b) Quality of care for teachers, staff and volunteers; c) Quality of care for participants; d) Quality of resources (learning material, other facilities). In addition to quality assurance procedures in the different education sectors, a **quality code has been developed for APL**.² In 2006, a covenant between stakeholders was signed to increase the accessibility, secure the quality, promote the use and ensure the transparency of APL. The covenant partners included representatives of employers' and workers' organisations, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the umbrella organisations of providers of VET and HE and representatives of the private education sector.³ To further improve the quality, the Government initiated a regulation by which providers which do not comply with the quality code), the procedures for APL by the provider concerned are no longer tax-deductible. The five components of the APL Quality Code are:⁴ **1 Objective APL:** The purpose of APL is to reveal, appreciate and recognise specific competences. The recognition of prior learning is a value in itself and contributes to employability. APL leads in many cases to further personal career development. **2 Rights:** APL meets the needs of the individual. Rights and commitments are clearly articulated and assured. **3 Research:** Procedures and instruments are reliable and based on recognised standards. "Trust" is a key word. Trust has to do with well-defined standards, civil effects and clear information about how assessments are conducted and what arguments conclusions are based on. **4 Assessors and supervisors:** Assessors and supervisors are competent, independent and impartial. Independence and impartiality are key factors in the assessment and are embedded in the roles and responsibilities of the assessors. It is important to avoid confusion of roles. Impartiality can be strengthened through training and participation in learning networks. **5 Quality:** The quality of the APL process is secured and constantly improved. The qualities of the APL procedure and of the instruments used during the procedure are assured through the quality arrangements. There are regular evaluations, following which results are incorporated into actions to secure improvements.

Challenges

Almost 85 per cent⁵ of the adult education/learning is provided by the private sector or the company where the persons works, not by state funded formal and non-formal edu-

¹ Bond van Nederlandse Volksuniversiteiten (BNVU): <http://www.volksuniversiteit.nl/>

² See: <http://www.kenniscentrumevc.nl/index.php/mi-over> and http://www.kenniscentrumevc.nl/attachments/article/31/leaflet_kwaliteitscode_evc_incl_normering.pdf

³ The referencing document of The Dutch National Qualification Framework to the European Qualification Framework February, 2012.

⁴ See: The referencing document of The Dutch National Qualification Framework to the European Qualification Framework February, 2012.

⁵ ECBO (2011) Een leven lang leren in 2010, p. 72

cation providers (Higher education institutes, Regional Training Centres (ROC: Regionale opleidingscentra). This high level of private funded provision, demands a different approach to quality assurance and management than in more centrally, government-led education sectors.

Recently (i.e. April 20, 2012), the **Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands** (SER: Sociaal-Economische Raad)¹ published their advise to the Ministry concerning post-initial education and training². In this advise, the main point (concerning quality) are that the educational offer should be more and better attuned to the continuing changing and developing demand of the labour market. There is a need for transparency of the educational offer provided by Sectoral Training Funds (O&O fonds: opleidings- en ontwikkelingsfonds). In addition, there is a need to further develop APL procedures (EVC: Eerder Verworven Competenties). Finally, employees and self-employed have an own responsibility to update their skills and competences. In general, it can be concluded that concerning quality assurance and development it is the perspective of the 'consumer' i.e. the learner and the employer that is the guiding principle (demand-driven system). Demand driven and flexibility are also stimulated by the Ministry.³

This is in line with the debates surrounding the implementation of the **EQF** and subsequently, the **NIQF** (Nederlands nationaal kwalificatiekader)⁴. Every qualification can be referenced to a particular level of the NIQF on the basis of the learning outcomes attributed to the qualification. The publicly funded education sector is referenced to the NIQF directly; the private providers need to submit an application for referencing. The application includes information concerning quality assurance⁵.

The private sector expresses the position that quality of adult learning is predominantly the concern of the **professionalism of the provider**. There are certain 'input' conditions (transparency, information) and 'output' checks (satisfaction rates of students and employers, drop-out rates etc.). In line with the EQF, the way *in which the education and the learning is provided* should not be relevant when the learner at the end of the course acquired the before mentioned and communicated skills and competences.

¹ www.ser.nl/: The Social and Economic Council (SER) comprises representatives of employers' and workers' organisations and government-appointed experts. SER advises the Dutch Government and the Dutch Parliament on socio-economic policy. SER also carries out administrative and supervisory functions, including the supervision of production and industry. According to the Law on Industrial Organisation, SER represents not only the special interests of industry (both employers and workers) but also encourages business in the context of the public interest. See: The referencing document of The Dutch National Qualification Framework to the European Qualification Framework February, 2012.

² SER (2012), Werk maken van scholing, advies over de postinitiële scholingsmarkt: http://www.ser.nl/~media/DB_Advies/2010_2019/2012/b30739.ashx. The Social and Economic Council (SER) comprises representatives of employers' and workers' organisations and government-appointed experts. SER advises the Dutch Government and the Dutch Parliament on socio-economic policy. SER also carries out administrative and supervisory functions, including the supervision of production and industry. According to the Law on Industrial Organisation, SER represents not only the special interests of industry (both employers and workers) but also encourages business in the context of the public interest. See: The referencing document of The Dutch National Qualification Framework to the European Qualification Framework February, 2012.

³ See: Kamerbrief over toekomstbestendigheid van deeltijdonderwijs: 30-03-2012: http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/ministeries/ocw/documenten-en-publicaties/kamerstukken/2012/03/30/kamerbrief-over-toekomstbestendigheid-van-deeltijdonderwijs.html?ns_campaign=kamerstukken-ministerie-van-onderwijs%2C-cultuur-en-wetenschap&ns_channel=att

⁴ www.nlqf.nl/

⁵ Nationaal Coördinatie Punt NIQF: <http://www.nlqf.nl/>

20 Poland

A) Quality assurance systems: an overview

HE	The Minister of Science and Higher Education grants accreditation to private HEIs. For HE the central institution is PKA (Państwowa Komisja Akredytacyjna). The primary responsibilities of PKA are among else quality assessment of education in a given field of study, including teacher training
VET	For VET no central institution for accreditation exists, this might come in the future, but is not decided yet. For VET a proposal is under construction, with 10 quality standards. The regulation of the Minister of National Education of 7th October 2009 on pedagogical supervision, which is presently in force sets requirements for primary schools, lower and upper-secondary schools, art schools, continuing and practical education establishments and professional development centres in the following areas: (1) The effectiveness of school in students' performance and in providing care; (2) The processes taking place in a school; (3) Functioning of a school/ centre in the local community; and (4) Managing a school/ centre. External evaluation of the above mentioned areas is regularly conducted. It is the basis for assigning scores on the scale where the best performance in fulfilling requirements is marked A and the lowest E. That methodology influences the quality assurance in the Polish education system. The same regulation obliges the head of school/ centre to conduct internal evaluation and using its results to improve school functioning. The internal evaluation is a tool to gather information on the quality of a school work, the assessment of effectiveness and helps in planning future actions. The in-ternal evaluation allows the headmaster of school to find out what are the school deficits and to plan how to develop the school. Institutions and centres of continuing education which provide non-formal education can obtain accreditation which confirms that they meet specific requirements and assure quality of education. However, the accreditation introduced in 2003 is voluntary, therefore the out-of-school establishments providing education in compliance with the principles of free business activity are able to avoid any quality related supervision. Most institutions dealing with non-formal education have quality assurance by means of a ISO-certificate.
Non-formal	(1) Institutions and centres of continuing education which provide non-formal education can obtain accreditation. However, the accreditation introduced in 2003 is voluntary; therefore the out-of-school establishments providing education in compliance with the principles of free business activity are able to avoid any quality related supervision.

B) Further elaboration on quality assurance in the country

Legal framework

Adult vocational training and adult general education can be provided both in the school and in out-of-school forms. Adult education in school forms is provided in primary schools, gymnasias, basic vocational schools, upper secondary and post-secondary schools, and in higher education establishments¹.

Vocational training and general education for adults in out-of-school forms (except post-graduate studies) can be organised in different forms by²: public education institutions (A-D, see below); non-public education institutions (E-G, see below).

Non-public education institutions can be organised by³ social organisations and associations. The footnote mentions the institutions/organisations delivering adult learning⁴.

The Act on Promotion of Employment and Institutions of the Labour Market of 20 April 2004 (under responsibility of the Ministry of Economy and Labour) includes legal regulations concerning institutions of the labour market. The goal is to create an atmosphere that allows the introduction of new instruments to stimulate demand for continuing education and training and improve the quality of available training offers. The instruments introduced in the new law include⁵:

- The law encourages employers to create a Training Fund to upgrade employees' skills. Creation of the Training Fund is not compulsory; however, employers are required to invest not less than 0,25% of the wages fund once it has been created.
- The law encourages employers to organise a strategic plan for staff development; the Training Fund should be dispensed based on the Company Training Plan.

¹ Eurydice (2009/2010) Structures of Education and Training Systems in Europe: Poland. 2009/10 Edition.

² Eurydice (2009/2010) Structures of Education and Training Systems in Europe: Poland. 2009/10 Edition.

³ Eurydice (2009/2010) Structures of Education and Training Systems in Europe: Poland. 2009/10 Edition.

⁴ 1) Continuing Education Centres (CEC). The centres are located throughout the country. They operate under an ordinance of the Minister of National Education and Sports. Their main functions are providing education and continuing education to adults in schools (the centre) and through out-of-school programmes, and developing teaching methods for adult education and requalification in co-operation with labour offices and employers. 2) Practical Training Centres (PTC). The centres are located in larger towns and also operate under an ordinance of the Minister of National Education and Sports. They offer well-equipped school workshops for vocational education, training and apprenticeships. 3) PTC is a budgetary unit of a poviast or town, financed by the local budget. The centres are run by local authorities (starost of the poviast) and overseen by an education supervisor. These centres are usually created from former vocational school workshops. About 90% of PTCs co-operate closely with labour offices and with higher schools and scientific institutions. 4) Schools for adults. These institutions deliver day, extramural and evening classes at various educational levels: primary schools, lower secondary schools and basic vocational schools, as well as secondary general and vocational schools. They are supervised by education supervisors and training costs are covered by public funds. 5) Tertiary-level schools. These institutions offer day, evening, extramural and external programmes. They award professional titles as BA, MSc, MA and PhD. The schools operate independently, but are supervised by the Minister of National Education and Sports. 6) Scientific institutions, research and development centres. These institutions offer training courses and/ or post-graduate studies, under commercial regulations and operating principles. 7) Further training and vocational development centres, associations, foundations, joint-stock companies, civil partnerships and limited-liability companies, co-operatives and other entities. These institutions conduct adult training under the commercial regulations and operating principles. Some programmes have been offered under business activity law since 1996. 8) Work establishments. Individual enterprises or organize training programmes for staff development

⁵ OECD (2004) Thematic Review on Adult Learning Background report- Ministry of Economy and Labour, Poland. 30 November 2004

- Financial support from the Labour Fund is available only to those employers who have created a Training Fund.
- New and modified activation programmes financed by the Labour Fund include elements of training (internships, on-the-job training) and are aimed at young people under the age of 25 and people facing challenges in labour market. After completing the internship or on-the-job training programme, participants receive a certificate issued by the local labour office giving information about the skills acquired.
- Programmes to stimulate staff development in employment services offer licensing for placement officers and guidance advisors, as well as bonuses and promotions for individuals who participate in systematic skills upgrading.

The quality policy on education in general is in Poland in development. A framework (PQF as the national interpretation of the EQF) is now implemented. The focus is on HE, but there is also a need to implement the framework for VET and for informal and non-formal education.

All sectors and all ministries are involved in articulating this strategy of human capital (Strategia kapitału ludzkiego: 3). This broad strategy document will include an appendix about the prospective of adult learning. A point in this document is that non-formal and informal education should be more stressed, but it is a big discussion how to validate and recognize the competences.

Guidelines on assuring quality in adult learning (both general and vocational) are set in the following regulations in Poland: 1) the regulation of the Minister of National Education of 7th October 2009 on pedagogical supervision, (OJ of 9th October 2009); 2) the regulation of the Minister of National Education and Sport of 20th December 2003 on accrediting establishments and centres conducting continuing education in the out-of-school forms (OJ of 30th December 2003).

Different between VET, HE and NVAL

There is a huge difference between the sectors. HE is formalized, while non-formal and informal education is not. The question is of the recognition of the competences. In the other sectors than HE no objective recognition exists.

The introduction of PQF, and the ISVET-system might have a positive change of the recognition of competences. The question is whether it is possible to create a big system. But the biggest barrier is that there is no demand from the side of the labour market so far.

Instruments

In Poland a body for quality assurance exists, but only for HE. For HE the central institution is PKA (Państwowa Komisja Akredytacyjna)¹. The primary responsibilities of PKA are²:

- Quality assessment of education in a given field of study, including teacher training
- The compliance with the requirements for the provision of degree programmes as laid down in the legislation

¹ http://www.pka.edu.pl/www_en/index.php

² <http://www.grossroads.eu/quality-assurance-and-accreditation/poland---pka-40>

- The establishment of a higher education institution
- An authorization for a higher education institution to provide degree programmes in a given field of study and at a given level of study, within a macro-field of study or as interdisciplinary programmes
- An extension of a permit for the establishment of a higher education institution
- The establishment of a teaching centre in another location by higher education institution
- The establishment of a higher education institution based on the territory of the Republic of Poland by a foreign higher education institution

For VET no central institution for accreditation exists, this might come in the future, but is not decided yet. For VET a proposal is under construction, with 10 thematic areas. Within the project "A vocational school, the school of a positive choice," quality standards for vocational education are being developed, they include: quality standards of the school / establishments of vocational training, based on a regulation on the pedagogical supervision of education and quality standards for conducting training in an occupation. Its aim is to guide and support school headmasters and teachers in developing internal quality assurance systems and preparing internal evaluations resulting from the regulation on the pedagogical supervision. The quality standards of vocational training will provide a comprehensive document covering all aspects of training covered in 10 thematic areas and will eventually contain direct references to all legal acts regulating education and training, including changes implemented since September 2012, as well as the desired target state to achieve in each area. Thus, the tool will also support directors and teachers of VET schools in the implementation of changes resulting from the modernization of VET system in Poland.

Moreover, the standards are a form of national approach to implementing in Poland the EQARF / EQAVET initiative. Following the recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of European reference framework for quality assurance in education and training, Member States are recommended to develop, no later than till 18th June 2011, approaches to improve, where necessary, quality assurance systems. It is expected that the guidelines, after their final approval in the first half of 2012 despite voluntary basis for their use, will contribute to improving the quality of education in both IVEAT and CVET schools.

Non formal education

Institutions and centres of continuing education which provide non-formal education can obtain accreditation which confirms that they meet specific requirements and assure quality of education. Accreditation can be given to the entire set of courses or to its part only (on the basis of the Education System Act). According to the provisions included in the Act, both public and non-public institutions can apply for accreditation related to all or some of the courses provided. Accreditation is awarded by the education superintendent (kurator) supervising the area where the institution is located. It is based on the analysis carried out by the team of experts who investigate school's functioning. The information on accredited units is entered in the register kept by the superintendent, it is available to the public. Accredited bodies, on their request, may also be registered in the database run by the regional labour office. Local labour offices are obliged to use this database while organizing publicly-funded training for unemployed people and job seekers. Accreditation may cover all or just a part of the education provided. The establishment that applying to become an accredited institution has to fulfil

the following requirements: 1) Provide a base which is equipped with teaching aids; 2) Employ qualified personnel; 3) Develop and provide materials and teaching methodology; 4) The accreditation may be cancelled by the superintendent if the above mentioned requirements are no longer fulfilled.

However, the accreditation introduced in 2003 is voluntary, therefore the out-of-school establishments providing education in compliance with the principles of free business activity are able to avoid any quality related supervision¹. Most institutions dealing with non-formal education have quality assurance by means of a ISO-certificate.

The regulation of the Minister of National Education of 7th October 2009 on pedagogical supervision, which is presently in force sets requirements for primary schools, lower and upper-secondary schools, art schools, continuing and practical education establishments and professional development centres in the following areas:

- The effectiveness of school in students' performance and in providing care.
- The processes taking place in a school
- Functioning of a school/ centre in the local community.
- Managing a school/ centre.

External evaluation of the above mentioned areas is regularly conducted. It is the basis for assigning scores on the scale where the best performance in fulfilling requirements is marked A and the lowest E. That methodology influences the quality assurance in the Polish education system. The same regulation obliges the head of school/ centre to conduct internal evaluation and using its results to improve school functioning. The internal evaluation is a tool to gather information on the quality of a school work, the assessment of effectiveness and helps in planning future actions. The internal evaluation allows the headmaster of school to find out what are the school deficits and to plan how to develop the school.

To summarise accreditation system is fully operating for: 1) continuing education centres; 2) teacher's training and professional development centres; 3) higher education institutions.

Quality labels

There are different quality labels (ISO 9001:2000, EFQM- European Foundation for Quality Management, Investor in People, Szkoła z klasą (top class school), Szkoła ucząca się (a learning school), green certificate, Interkl@sa quality label- provided by the Ministry of Education to schools considerably improving students digital skills, and language labels: PASE, European Language Label, etc.)

Professional development of staff

The requirements for teachers' qualifications are set in: 1) the regulation of the Minister of National Education of 12th March 2009 on the specific qualifications required from teachers (...) 2) The regulation of the Minister of National Education and Sport of 20th December 2003 on accrediting teacher training centres.

¹ Eurydice (2009/2010) Structures of Education and Training Systems in Europe: Poland. 2009/10 Edition.

A person working with adult learners must be specially prepared for teaching adult learners (an andragogics course). The Ministry of National Education is participating in the works of Thematic Working Group VET trainers which is going to design the professional profile of trainers preparing future VET teachers, their competences and expected features.

Responsible bodies

The Minister of National Education is responsible for co-ordination in the field of adult education and in particular through the activities of the Department of Vocational and Continuing Education. The Minister of Education co-operates with the Minister of Labour and Social Policy, the Minister of Culture and National Heritage and the Minister of Health in the area of vocational and continuing education¹.

The *powiat* (district) authorities are responsible for running of post-gymnasium schools including those for adults, continuing and practical education centres and other non-school institutions².

The *gmina* authorities are in charge of primary and lower secondary schools for adults (apart from special schools). The school head is responsible for school's management³.

All public schools for adults are organised and run by territorial self-government units⁴.

Non-public schools for adults are organised and run by individual persons or by bodies such as associations, social and religious organisations, etc⁵.

Accreditation & assessment

A double system of registration and accreditation of training institutions is in operation. One system is operated by local government units on the basis of the law on education. The second, functioning as the Register of Training Institutions (RIS), is operated by regional labour offices⁶.

In the system supervised by the Minister of National Education which includes schools for adults, continuing education institutions, practical training centres and further training centres, the pedagogical supervision is performed by school heads and education superintendents (*kuratorzy*) according to the same regulations as in the schools for youth⁷ (see also question 4).

The quality of education in the schools for adults which educate in a specific vocation is also assured within the framework of the external assessment system, as in the school system for youth. External vocational examinations aim at confirming vocational qualifications acquired during the course of school education. They are based on examination requirement standards established by the Central Examination Commission and conducted by Regional Examination Commissions⁸.

¹ Eurydice (2009/2010) Structures of Education and Training Systems in Europe: Poland. 2009/10 Edition.

² Eurydice (2009/2010) Structures of Education and Training Systems in Europe: Poland. 2009/10 Edition.

³ Eurydice (2009/2010) Structures of Education and Training Systems in Europe: Poland. 2009/10 Edition.

⁴ Eurydice (2009/2010) Structures of Education and Training Systems in Europe: Poland. 2009/10 Edition.

⁵ Eurydice (2009/2010) Structures of Education and Training Systems in Europe: Poland. 2009/10 Edition.

⁶ Eurydice (2009/2010) Structures of Education and Training Systems in Europe: Poland. 2009/10 Edition.

⁷ Eurydice (2009/2010) Structures of Education and Training Systems in Europe: Poland. 2009/10 Edition.

⁸ Eurydice (2009/2010) Structures of Education and Training Systems in Europe: Poland. 2009/10 Edition.

21 Portugal

A) Quality assurance systems: an overview

HE	A3es - Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education, is responsible for evaluation and accreditation of courses of study in Portugal.
VET	With regard to quality assurance, the National Qualification and Vocational Education Agency (NQVEA) plays an important role for the non-higher education qualifications (VET). It is the responsibility of the National Qualification and Vocational Education Agency (NQVEA) to manage the network of New Opportunities centres, the design and updating of the National Qualifications Catalogue (NQC), the organisation and rationalisation of training provision available in dual certification courses, as well as the supervision and support of information activities and guidance for qualification and employment.
Non-formal	(1) Quality Charter of the New Opportunities Centres (NCOs), ANQ (2007) - designed to frame the quality approaches of E&T providers within the New Opportunities Initiative, including a set of reference indicators and benchmarks.

B) Further elaboration on quality assurance in the country

Legal framework

The most important policies with regard to adult education in Portugal are focused on second chance education corresponding to primary and lower secondary levels. A major initiative has been undertaken the last decade to increase the qualification level of the population (New Opportunity Initiative).

From 1999 to date, a new adult education and training policy has been in effect. At the beginning of this period, the Knowing+ Programme for the Expansion and Development of Adult Education and Training (1999-2006) was approved. This programme revealed a clear will to encompass education and training in social policies within Portugal's economic modernisation objectives, according to economic globalisation trends. This also enabled the Europeanisation of Portuguese public policies and application for funding from European Union programmes, namely the European Social Fund from 2000-2006 within the III Support Community Framework.

Since 2005, following the same principles and the European Union's main orientations, while benefiting from funding programmes (2008-2013), the New Opportunities Initiative was launched within the scope of the National Employment Plan and the Technological Plan. Two main forms of provision were recovered from the previous programme and have been developed with the aim of dramatically raising the qualification of adults (school education and professional qualification): 1) the Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competencies that aims to recognise and certify knowledge and skills

previously acquired throughout life, though this provision might also require adults to attend short-duration training modules that are geared towards very specific contents through Modular Actions (including education and vocational contents mainly devoted to adults who have not concluded basic education); and 2) Adult Education and Training Courses that allow adults to achieve school education certification (1st, 2nd or 3rd levels of basic education and secondary education) and a professional qualification (according to levels established by the European Union).

The adoption of an innovative public policy since 1999 and the dramatic widening of access to education that happened since 2005 have been interesting developments for adult learning. However, the stress upon a small number of main forms of provision (Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competencies complemented by Modular Actions and Adult Education and Training Courses) seems to be insufficient in solving socioeconomic-educational problems and needs.

The New Opportunities Centres are authorised to be established (or terminated) according to specific criteria (mainly territorial and economic ones) that are considered in the evaluation of applications as well as an assessment of activities. Apart from the National Agency for Qualification, the Ministry of Education is responsible for the accreditation and audit of New Opportunities Centres in basic and secondary education schools, and the General Directorate for Employment and Industrial Relations is in charge of private vocational education and training providers.

In 2008, the National Agency for Qualification called for the involvement of higher education institutions in the development of training programmes for adult education professionals in New Opportunities Centres. Since then, short vocational training courses for professionals such as recognition, validation and certification of competencies professionals, diagnosis and guidance technicians, trainers, external evaluators, coordinators and directors have been carried out, involving more than 7,000 adult educators. Apart from higher education institutions, local teacher training centres have offered short training courses devoted to the same professionals.

According to Eurydice, in Portugal, adult education corresponding to primary and lower secondary levels is provided through various schemes, in particular the EFA (*Educação e Formação de Adultos*) courses, which are open to everyone over the age of 18. Learning outcomes related to the first nine years of schooling (ISCED 1 and 2) are divided into courses at three separate levels, leading to certificates corresponding to four, six and nine years of schooling. The courses consist of four standard areas: language and communication, mathematics for life, ICT, and citizenship and employability. Their content is developed taking into account the specific needs of adults. Courses at the third level include a vocational component and lead not only to a third cycle basic education certificate but also to a vocational certificate at levels 1 and 2. The EFA courses can be combined with the recognition, validation and certification of competences acquired in non-formal and informal contexts.¹ The EFA courses are linked to the levels of the National Qualifications Framework. The EFA (*Educação e Formação de Adultos*) courses can be organised by public, private or cooperative education establishments, vocational training centres belonging to the Institute for Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP) and

¹ See: Eurydice (2011), *Adults in Formal Education: Policies and Practice in Europe*

other accredited bodies. There is also a network of around 500 New Opportunities Centres, where people over 18 years of age who have at least three years' professional experience can have their prior learning validated, undertake education and training courses, or receive guidance services. The New Opportunities Centres are promoted by mainstream schools, vocational training centres, companies, municipalities, local and regional development agencies and other bodies.¹

All non-higher education qualifications are included in the National Qualification System (NQS). The purpose of the National Qualification System (NQS), which was created by Decree-Law no. 396/2007, 31st December, is to promote the widespread conclusion of upper-secondary education (both for young people and adults) as the minimum qualification for the population, as well as the tools necessary for its implementation. The National Qualifications Catalogue (NQC), which is a tool for the strategic management of non-higher education qualifications, boasts a set of essential benchmarks for competitiveness and the modernisation of enterprises and the economy, as well as the personal and social development of citizens. It facilitates a better match between training provision and the needs of enterprises, the employment market and citizens, organised according to dual, academic and vocational certification and divided into qualification levels described in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

Differences between VET, HE and NVAL

As mentioned, in the new policies, the focus is on primary and lower secondary education. This includes therefore a large part of vocational oriented qualifications. The NVAL sector as such (i.e. education not leading to a qualification) remains outside the scope of these new initiatives. With regard to quality assurance, the National Qualification and Vocational Education Agency (NQVEA) plays an important role for the non-higher education qualifications (VET). It is the responsibility of the National Qualification and Vocational Education Agency (NQVEA) to manage the network of New Opportunities centres, the design and updating of the National Qualifications Catalogue (NQC), the organisation and rationalisation of training provision available in dual certification courses, as well as the supervision and support of information activities and guidance for qualification and employment. The legislation that creates the NQS establishes the need to monitor and assess policy implementation of education and training, in order to guarantee the quality of the system. As such, the NQS should promote quality vocational training via through the NQC, the certification of training bodies, the qualification of trainers and other training professionals, as well as periodic evaluation of their results. The information and educational and vocational guidance, as well as public funding of vocational training also contribute to the quality of the National Qualification System.

In Higher education, in 2006, under responsibility of the Portuguese government, the ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) conducted a review of the quality Assurance in HE. Strengths and weaknesses were identified, and recommendations proposed to improve the quality in HE. In this, 'adults' were not addressed specifically.

¹ See: Eurydice (2011), Adults in Formal Education: Policies and Practice in Europe

Instruments

In the framework of the New Opportunity Initiative, the SIGO – Integrated System for Management of the Double Certification Training Supplies – has been under development since 2007, providing information on the work achieved by New Opportunities Centres as well as activities undertaken by adults in adult education and training. This system aims at preventing malfunctions and at making an efficient use of existing resources. It also provides relevant information for stakeholders and the National Agency, being a significant monitoring device. This electronic tool (SIGO) that links all Centres and the National Agency for Qualification establishes a virtual network that aims at: 1) being a monitoring device for these Centres' activities in what concerns enrolment, information, guidance, counselling, training and certification of competencies provided by pedagogical teams to adults; 2) supporting the decision-making concerning training provision in order to be more effective in involving target-groups and optimizing financial resources assignment; 3) strengthening the provision by providing an informative, integrated and exhaustive tool for stakeholders.

Furthermore, a training programme addressed to pedagogical teams of the New Opportunities Centres has been developed since 2007 at national and regional levels. This programme was launched by the National Agency for Qualification and has involved members of the pedagogical teams. It is intended to reinforce competencies of these professionals within specific tasks related to the forms of provision promoted, to help professionals reflect critically on work achieved, and enable the sharing of good practices.

In 2008, within an agreement with the National Agency for Qualification, seven higher education institutions have implemented a specific part of this programme. The continuing education activities have involved different adult education professionals of the New Opportunities Centres and have included more than 7,000 professionals – from directors, and coordinators, to information, diagnosis and guidance technicians, recognition and validation of competencies professionals, trainers and external evaluators. Additionally, local teacher training centres have been implementing short training courses directed at these professionals. Trainers involved in the two forms of provision referred to above, should possess a specific qualification in a Key Competencies Area as well as certification as a qualified trainer. A model of monitoring of the New Opportunities Centres and the Adult Education and Training Courses has been implemented to assure efficacy, efficiency and quality. For non-formal education, no national level systems have been developed.

Responsible parties

As mentioned, the National Qualification and Vocational Education Agency (NQVEA) plays an important role for the non-higher education qualifications. This is a public institute integrated in the indirect administration of state. Regulated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity and Ministry of Education, has the mission of coordinating the execution of the educational and vocational training policies related with young people and adults and assuring develop and management of the Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competencies (RVCC) system. Further entities are:

- Directorate-General for Employment and Industrial Relations (DGERT) – MTSS: central service, directly administrate by the state whose mission is support the conception of the policies related to employment, training and professional certification and certifi-

cation of training entities by one hand and to professional relations, job environment and health in workplace by the other hand.

- Institute for Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP) – MTSS: public service of national employment whose mission is promote the creation and quality of work, fighting the unemployment with active policies of employment and vocational training.
- Cabinet for Strategy and Planning (GEP) – MTSS: has the mission of guaranty the technical support to the formulation of policies and to sustain the operational planning. Is also responsible for the monitoring and evaluations the execution level of the policies, planning instruments and results of the management systems in articulation with other services of the MTSS.
- Observatory for Employment and Vocational Training (OEFP) – MTSS: is an advisory entity whose mission is contributing to diagnose, prevention and solution of problems in the scope of employment and vocational training.
- Inspectorate-General of Education (IGE) – ME: has the competence to act directly on the education settings in the services of the ME. It has the responsibility of monitoring, controlling, evaluation and audit technical-pedagogical and administrative-financing activities of the education establishments.
- Cabinet for Education Statistics and Planning (GEPE) – ME: has the mission of guaranty the production and analysis of the statistics about education, concerning the technical support to the policies formulation, operational planning and the observation and evaluation of the global results obtained in the educational system.
- Directorate-General for Innovation and Curricular Development (DGIDC) – ME: has the mission of assuring the concretization of the policies related with the pedagogical component of the education and to guaranty the technical support to the formulation of these policies related with curricular innovation and development.

22 Romania

A) Quality assurance systems: an overview

HE	The Law on Quality Assurance, passed in 2005 regulates quality assurance at all levels and sub-systems and the quality assurance institutions (National Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, National Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education). Nevertheless, it has only been applied for initial education and training and for higher education, the adult training part being covered separately by distinct methodologies and provisions on the authorisation/accreditation of training providers. The MoERYS-Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport is responsible for VET system, initial and continuing (excepting the apprenticeship on the job). The MoERYS has 3 subordinated institutions dealing with quality assurance aspects: (1) ARACIP (Pre-university Education); (2) ARACIS (University Education); and (3) NQA (CVT).
VET	The orientation of the Romanian system of adult learning and education, towards quality is strongly related to vocational education and training, and to labour market training programmes. The MoERYS-Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport is responsible for VET system, initial and continuing (excepting the apprenticeship on the job). The MoERYS has 3 subordinated institutions dealing with quality assurance aspects: ARACIP (Pre-university Education); ARACIS (University Education); NQA (CVT). For the authorisation of the formal CVT providers, there are county's authorisation commissions (LACs) at county level consisting of 5 members, local representatives of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection; Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport; National Agency for Employment; Trade Union and Employers' Organisations. The authorisation is granted by the LAC based on the evaluation reports prepared by two specialists/evaluators in the field of the training programme. The Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport through the National Authority for Qualifications is responsible for quality assurance within the nationally regulated CVT system (formal, non-formal and informal). The mutual recognition of the certificates is a reality only between the formal and the non-formal/informal branches of the nationally regulated CVT system. The main principles implemented are: Quality assurance, Access, Decentralization, and Social partnership.
Non-formal	Not available

B) Further elaboration on quality assurance in the country

Legal framework

The provision of AL and the actors involved is portrays a very diversified picture. Having scrutinized the Romanian system of adult learning and education, it must be recognised that its orientation towards quality is strongly related to vocational education and training, and to labour market training programmes. This orientation is clearly reflected in the central approach to continuing vocational training and its adult learning contents, methodology, and tools.

There are several parallel labour market oriented VET systems in Romania which imply adult learning:

- Within the national education system – the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport is responsible for quality assurance through two agencies: ARACIP (Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-university Education) and ARACIS (Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in University Education);
- Apprenticeship on the job – Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection is responsible for quality assurance;
- Continuing Vocational Training: nationally regulated (Formal; Non formal and informal); regulated at sector level; not regulated.

The Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport through the National Authority for Qualifications is responsible for quality assurance within the nationally regulated CVT system (formal, non formal and informal). The mutual recognition of the certificates is a reality only between the formal and the non formal/informal branches of the nationally regulated CVT system.

It is the **National Education Law (No. 1/2011)** that has a special point, recognised as lifelong learning all learning activities to be accomplished by a person during his/her lifetime, under formal, non formal or informal learning contexts, aiming to develop his/her competences under a personal, civic, social or occupational perspective. As part of lifelong learning, continuing adult education and vocational training are focused on the development of key-competences or of specific competences related to an occupational domain.

The National Education Law stipulates the responsibilities related to LLL of different central public administration bodies (Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport, Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection, Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, etc.) and, at the same time, the establishment of the **National Authority for Qualifications (NAQ)**. The responsibilities of the NAQ, amongst other issues, are:

- Coordination at national level of the **quality assurance system** in continuing vocational training (CVT) (authorisation¹ of adult training providers and of competences assessment centres; certification of competences assessors);
- Development, implementation and updating of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF);

¹ The term “authorization” used by the current legislation of adult vocational training has the meaning of “accreditation”.

- Coordination of the development of national occupational standards and training standards.

From the point of view of the quality assurance system in CVT and the occupational standards, the NAQ, having been established in 2011, continues the activity of the former National Adult Training Board (NATB), tripartite body, responsible for the quality assurance in CVT. The attributions, personnel and assets of the NATB have been included within the NAQ.

Having started at the beginning of 2004, the **authorisation** process of the CVT providers and of the competences assessment centres became operational.¹

These normative documents have been subsequently modified in some details for many times, but not conceptually. It is worth noting that the methodological support of the authorisation input had been developed with the common contribution of the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport and the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection. The main principles implemented are:

- **Quality assurance:** 1) Content of the training curricula developed based on national occupational standards; 2) Provision of training – authorization of the CVT providers based (more) on input criteria (resources) and (less) on outputs criteria (only 2 indicators: drop-out rate and graduation rate); 3) Assessment and certification – Graduation and Qualification Certificates + (Europass) Certificate Supplements (emphasizing the acquired competences – based on occupational standards);
- **Access** facilitated through: 1) Modularisation, customised training itineraries; 2) Mutual recognition of the acquired competences between formal and non formal/informal sub-systems
- **Decentralization** of the CVT providers' authorization: 1) Coordination at central level by the NAQ (former NATB); 2) Accreditation of the CVT providers by Local (County) Accreditation Commissions (LACs); 3) Note: In the non-formal/informal sub-system the authorization of the Competences Assessment Centres is the direct attribution of the NAQ (but intermediate certification bodies are envisaged at sector level);
- **Social partnership:** 1) The former NATB (established in 1999) used to be an autonomous decisional tripartite body; The NAQ is an administrative body under the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport working with a consultative multipartite council (representatives of the social partners, sector committees, ministries, universities, students etc.); 2) The LACs have a tripartite structure (representative of local administration, employers' organizations and trade unions); 3) The occupational standards are validated by the Sector Committees (social partners, professional associations, and other organizations representative at sector level).

The CVT providers are authorised by occupation/qualification for a period of 4 years (at least 3 monitoring visits are made during this period). The evaluation of the provider

¹ The system is regulated by several normative and supporting documents, which mainly are: Government Ordinance No. 129/2000 – Adult Vocational Training; Government Decision No. 522/2003 – Methodological Norms for the application of the Government Ordinance No. 129/2000; Common Order of the minister of labour and minister of education – Methodology of Authorisation of the Adult Vocational Training Suppliers; Common Order of the Minister of labour and Minister of education – Methodology of Certification in Adult Vocational Training; Common Order of the minister of labour and minister of education – Procedure for the assessment and certification of the competences acquired through non formal and informal learning; Instructions elaborated by the NATB.

(curriculum and resources) in view of authorisation and during the monitoring visits is performed by specialists selected by the LAC.

The authorised CVT suppliers and the authorised competences assessment centres provide “nationally recognised” certificates awarded by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport and the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection.

It should be noted that, in some sectors, there are specific regulation regarding the CVT provision. The sector criteria are usually additional to the general ones, but there are certain situations when only the sector criteria are taken into consideration.

Differences between VET, HE and NVAL

The Law on Quality Assurance, passed in 2005 regulates quality assurance at all levels and sub-systems and the quality assurance institutions (National Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, National Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education). Nevertheless, it has only been applied for initial education and training and for higher education, the adult training part being covered separately by distinct methodologies and provisions on the authorisation/accreditation of training providers. It created a national quality assurance framework aligned with the European developments in the field and it provides for the general concepts on quality assurance and appraisal, the methodology on quality assurance in education and the accreditation of training providers and programmes. Subsequently, quality assurance standards, procedures and instruments were developed and are implemented in a unitary manner. There is concern for developing a quality culture at provider level and self-assessment as well as internal quality assurance management is mandatory. There are clear input, output, impact and performance indicators.

The adult learning suppliers providing training programmes for the 8 European key-competences can be authorised under the same regulations as the CVT providers. In the national education system – pre-university, university, post-university a Law on *Quality Assurance in Education* has been implemented. Two institutions under the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and sport – ARACIP (for pre-university education) and ARACIS (for university education) are responsible for the implementation of the Law within the education institutions. The QA system implemented in both levels –secondary schools and universities- are based on the following main components, similar to the QAS of the CVT: 1) self-assessment based on elements of ISO 9001/2008 and EFQM Excellence Model; 2) external assessment by ARACIP/ARACIS; 3) implementation of corrective actions for the identified nonconformities and 4) authorisation(initial level)/accreditation decision.

There are education units (schools, colleges, universities) which provide adult learning programmes and ask for authorisation under the CVT regulations.

It is a paradox that the certificates issued by the authorised CVT providers are not recognised within the education system even if they are awarded by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport and the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection.

For non-vocational adult learning there is not any national legislation for quality assurance (accreditation or some similar approach). There are specific regulations in some sectors (culture, for example). If the non-vocational adult training is performed by a complex body, it is possible to have a QMS system voluntary implemented according to: a) ISO 9001/2008 QMS standard; b) EFQM Excellence Model; c) Investors in People; d) ISO 17024/2003 Personnel Certification Body; e) Balanced Scorecard.

There is a National Quality Award Foundation in Romania which is organizing each year the contest for the National Quality Award. One perspective is to have a Quality Award for Education schools, universities and CVT providers.

Responsible parties

The **MoERYS**-Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport is responsible for VET system, initial and continuing (excepting the apprenticeship on the job).The **MoERYS** has 3 subordinated institutions dealing with quality assurance aspects: ARACIP (Pre-university Education); ARACIS (University Education); NQA (CVT).

For the authorisation of the formal CVT providers, there are county's authorisation commissions (LACs) at county level consisting of 5 members, local representatives of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection; Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport; National Agency for Employment; Trade Union and Employers' Organisations.

The authorisation is granted by the LAC based on the evaluation reports prepared by two specialists/evaluators in the field of the training programme. The specialists are selected by the LACs based on their professional background; there is not any mechanism for the certification of these specialists. It is one of the weak points of the current system; the CALISIS project proposes a new approach for the profile, certification and monitoring of the specialists/ evaluators. For current activities, each LAC has a technical secretariat (TS) with a permanent staff of 2 persons, employees of the local unit of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection.

From the institutional point of view, the system is a hybrid one: At national level, the NAQ (which are under the MoERYS) coordinates and controls the activity of the LACs (mainly methodologically; NAQ has not any administrative leverage to intervene in the activity of the LACs). At local level, the activity of LACs is supported by the local units of the MoLFSP.

An important role in assuring the quality of training is played by the sector committees (SCs). The CVT programmes are developed based on occupational standards which are validated by the SCs and finally approves by the NAQ.The activity of the SCs is supported and coordinated by the NQA.

In the non formal/informal CVT branch, the authorisation of the competences assessment centres is the direct responsibility of the NQA. The authorisation is accorded based on the evaluation reports provided by the external evaluators. The competences assessment centres work with internal evaluators for maintaining the internal quality assessment system and with competences assessors for counselling the candidates and assessing their competences based on occupational standards.

The NQA is responsible for the evaluation and certification of the internal and external evaluators and of the competences assessors.

The CALISIS model maintains the existing levels (NQA, LACs, providers), but requires the implementation of internal quality management/assessment systems at all levels. The CALISIS ESF HRD project developed a QAS which will be implemented within all 3 specific CVT levels: level 1:CVT providers; level 2:Counties' authorization commissions; and level 3:National Qualifications authority.

Level 2 will authorize/accredit the **Level 1 QMSs**, by using special evaluators selected and coordinated by a CVT Evaluators national Register.

Level 3 will assess and accredit the **Level 2 QMSs** by using special evaluators selected and coordinated by a CVT Evaluators national Register.

The Level 3 QMS will be self-assessed and probably by a EQAVET Peer Review scheme.¹

For non-vocational training providers , which implemented on a voluntary basis a kind of QMS, there are several certification institutions: QMS nationally accredited certification bodies; Investors in People certification schemes; Romanian Quality Award Foundation; Personnel Certification Bodies.

Challenges

Main challenges related to quality assurance consist mainly in the harmonisation with the EQAVET Recommendation. The authorisation of CVT providers and the authorisation of the competences assessment centres are conceptually different. While the authorisation of the competences assessment centres is more likely to fit the European criteria, the authorisation of the CVT providers needs a more substantial adaptation, such as (at least): 1) Implementation of quality management/assessment systems at providers' level, LACs' level and NAQ's level (PDCA cycle), based on self-evaluation and external evaluation; 2) Evaluation and accreditation based on outputs oriented indicators (performance and impact indicators); 3) Correlation between the results/level of performance and the rights granted through accreditation; 4) Implementation of a national system for the certification of the quality evaluators/auditors.

The quality management/assessment system developed under the strategic ESF CALISIS Project (January 2009 – January 2012; Beneficiary: NATB/NAQ) respond to these challenges. Regarding the authorisation of the competences assessment centres the strong points consists of: A consistent self-evaluation and external evaluation, based on a set of criteria following the PDCA cycle; Authorisation for 1, 2 or 3 years, depending on the level of performance; Certification of competences assessors, of internal and external evaluators. Some improvements are needed, mainly concerning: Establishment of an additional level between the NAQ and the centres: intermediate certification bodies; More accent focused on counselling (before and after the assessment of competences); Counsellors and assessors play different roles and have to be different persons; Competences assessment performed by at least two assessors for a candidate. As mentioned before, the implementation of changes at system level depends on the decisions taken at national level.

General issues and challenges referring to quality in adult learning are: 1) Quality assurance at provider level is tackled as part of the authorisation process; there is no quality culture at provider level; internal quality assurance systems are not a prerequisite for authorisation; 2) Monitoring and evaluation of training provision and providers – though decentralised at county level, it faces difficulties raised by the lack of trained human resources available; 3) Lack of systematic self-assessment at provider level – vast differences in the internal quality management mechanisms or even concern for quality assurance varies significantly at provider level; 4) Lack of human resources (both at system level and at provider level) trained to develop and implement quality assurance systems; 5) Training provision is reactive, not pro-active – the medium and long term skills forecasts are still isolated initiatives; 6) Competitiveness may lead to lowering quality in an attempt to lower costs.

¹ a CVT providers authorization scheme has been developed, structured on 6 performing levels, from 0 to 5. For the Levels 4 and 5 CVT providers could be granted the CVT QA label.

23 Slovakia

A) Quality assurance systems: an overview

HE	In higher education a government related body, an Accreditation commission (AK), is responsible for accrediting of all three cycles of higher education. AK cooperates with international institutions such as The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) or The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (IN-QAAHE).
VET	The secondary IVET system is dominantly based on a traditional quality assurance mechanism – responsibility for quality assigned by law to respective players (e.g. director of school, establisher, Ministry of Education) and the supervision by the State School Inspection. It must be stressed that no national quality assurance programmes have been elaborated yet and no quality assurance mechanisms based on specific European tools (CQAF, EQARF) were made obligatory. Nevertheless, the non-existence of national quality management system was expressed a weak point and the introduction of such systems in all segments of VET, regional schooling, higher education and CVET/LLL was indicated an explicit goal to be achieved within the activities of the 2007-2013 ESF Operational Programme Education.
Non-formal	Not available

B) Further elaboration on quality assurance in the country

Legal framework

The Lifelong learning strategy 2011 was approved by the Government of the SR on October 12, 2011. Objective of this document¹ is “to propose a way towards a LLL functioning system which might be beneficial for all groups of population. It should bring new and topical elements to the LLL system, which should, through systemic instruments, assist in developing the educational potential of the individual as well as the whole society.” It identified the following priorities: Attitude and motivation towards LLL; Learning outcomes advancing the employers needs; System and structure of counselling services focusing on adult population; Level of competencies for professional and personal development: financial literacy, business competences,

¹ see English version at <http://nuczv.sk/wp-content/uploads/lifelong-learning-strategy-2011.pdf>

communication in foreign languages, digital literacy and active citizenship; Financing of further education. Four recommendations out of identified 12 are worth stressing due to high relevance to quality management. It must be stressed however that in contrast to earlier expectation the need to introduce quality management system or the introduction of measures in support of quality was not highlighted and in fact not explicitly addressed.

- Create an environment where education institution will inform their clients on all relevant issues based on which they will decide on their future education path (on further education).
- Create a sustainable system of communication between education institutions and employers in order to provide for exchange of information on knowledge, skills and competences required on the labour market.
- Create an integrated system of carrier counselling consisting of databases providing information on training possibilities and on labour market.
- Utilise the PIAAC project research results in order to identify the level of competences in adults' working life.

No quality approaches nor standards and other quality assurance relevant developments in the field of non vocational adult learning are however addressed by legislation. It is indicated that Slovakia was lagging behind in the development in this field.¹ remarkable progress has been visible since 2008 however only with regard to accredited programmes. Thus, it affects rather VET related adult learning more than the non VET one as the latter is not subjected to accreditation as a rule. Despite this, a little progress is visible with regard to non VET adult learning since 2008, but it is fully up to the provider to what extent the shift to learning outcomes paradigm is followed and whether quality assurance or at least simple quality check procedures are introduced.²

Differences between VET, HE and NVAL

In Higher Education and VET, development of quality assurance systems is addressed and some instruments are introduced in contrast to the non vocational adult learning sector where quality is finally an issue of market forces only.

In higher education a government related body, an Accreditation commission (AK; <http://www.akredkom.sk/en/>), is responsible for accrediting of all three cycles of higher education. AK cooperates with international institutions such as The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) or The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE). However, as already indicated, its accreditation procedure is dominantly input based. AK is also expected to per-

¹ The 2.3 Part Monitoring and Evaluation of Programs and Evaluation of Education Outcomes of the Slovak Confintea VI report „The development and state of art of adult learning“ (available at http://www.unesco.org/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/INSTITUTES/UII/confintea/pdf/National_Reports/Europe%20-%20North%20America/Slovakia.pdf)

² Act No 568/2009 Coll. on LLL (see this legislation in Slovak at http://www.minedu.sk/data/USERDATA/Legislativa/Zakony/568_2009.pdf) and subsequent Education Ministry Decree No. 97/2010 Coll. specifying quality checking and accreditation procedures in particular (see this legislation in Slovak at http://www.minedu.sk/data/USERDATA/Legislativa/Vyhlasaky/97_2010.pdf) This legislation applies universally unless specific legislation applies (eg. Act No. 578/2004 Coll. regulating health sector or Act No 73/1998 Coll. applying for policemen and other justice enforcement related professions). There exist also earlier pieces of sectoral legislation stipulating requirements for performance of specialised activities.

form a so called comprehensive accreditation a “comprehensive accreditation of activities of higher education institutions” (according to § 84 of Higher Education Act No. 131/2002 Coll.). Within this process numbers of professors and associate professors were taken into account together with other in advance agreed criteria for categorisation of higher education institutions into universities and two categories of non-university higher education institutions. During the counties first comprehensive accreditation twelve institutions out of 20 assessed public universities, failed to meet university status. Financial bonuses for universities, originally envisaged for funding from the state budget, have not been applied and comprehensive accreditation preliminary terminated. Furthermore a private academic ranking and rating agency www.arra.sk evaluates HEI issuing their ranking.

The secondary IVET system is dominantly based on a traditional quality assurance mechanism – responsibility for quality assigned by law to respective players (e.g. director of school, establisher, Ministry of Education) and the supervision by the State School Inspection. VET schools and school establishments (e.g. centres of practical training) are accredited by the formal input assessment procedure. The already established schools just need to stick to the state educational programmes. In the process of their registration into the network of schools and school establishments, new schools (including private and church affiliated) are subjected to the formal assessment of compliance of their application (and documents enclosed) with conditions required by law, including the compliance of their school educational programme with respective state educational programme.

Introduction of a quality management system (QMS) in LLL was originally promoted within the 2004-2007 ESF project “Creation, Development and Implementation of an Open System of Lifelong Learning in the SR for the Labour Market”, and reflected in its background documents and used for elaboration of a policy paper with planned validity till 2015: The Strategy of Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance was adopted by the Government on 25th April 2007, followed by the Action Plan for LLL Strategy Implementation, adopted by the Education Ministry on 13th November 2007. The policy declared four explicit components:

- System of monitoring and survey of the education needs with the aim of elaboration of their prognoses and information system on LLL;
- System of quality of lifelong learning with an emphasis on the quality on non-formal education and informal learning;
- System of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning for obtaining qualification – permeability;
- Supporting tools of financing of LLL.

Subsequently, two pieces of legislation¹ address „further education“, i.e education and learning opportunities outside formal education offered by regional schools and higher education institutions, thus affecting also adult learning. This legislation detailed and refined the recent accreditation procedure concerning educational programmes and expanded the Accreditation Commission activity. It is now also responsible for the accreditation of institutions for validation and recognition of learning outcomes, based on the

¹ Act No. 568/2009 Coll. on Lifelong Learning was adopted followed by the Education Ministry Decree No. 97/2010 Coll.

specific examining resulting in awarding partial or full qualification. The main improvement of this act is related to validation and recognition of prior learning and working practice in the relevant field. The option to acquire a partial qualification is, however, an important step forward under Slovak conditions. At the same time, exactly this makes a need for rethinking the quality assurance in VET more acute. Furthermore, a renewal of the National System of Qualifications is urgently needed.

Instruments

- **Accreditation systems:** Accreditation procedure is traditional in approach, dominantly input based with optional quality check aimed at reviewing of compliance with accreditation conditions earlier approved.
- **Quality Assurance Institutions:** Education Ministry and diverse Accreditation commissions of which the Accreditation commission for „further education“ is the most relevant to be mentioned here as it was established to accredit „further“ education programmes, i.e. other than regional schooling programmes and higher education programmes, thus also genuine adult education programmes. There are three other Accreditation commissions in education sector with specific focus and there are also Accreditation commissions in other sectors (e.g in health sector to accredit health programmes).
- **Monitoring instruments:** Traditional supervision stipulated by Decree No. 97/2010 Coll All programmes accredited according to Act on LLL can be subjected to supervision procedures by the Education ministry. All accredited programmes must be assessed by participants providing for feed back for training institution, future clients and the Education ministry. Assessment procedure is not regulated and left to the discretion of respective education programme provider.
- **Self evaluation:** No selfevaluation programme for provision of adult learning is promoted, in contrast to the regional schooling where Scottish HGIOS derived national model is offered to regional schools
- **External evaluation:** No external evaluation of learning outcomes is officially applied. There is no external evaluation of providers introduced except inspection aimed at compliance with accreditation requirements and conditions approved. Failure can be fined and accreditation cancelled
- **Competence standards:** No detailed qualification standards for adult learning staff are set, except general stipulation of the Act on LLL concerning staffs' level of education and length of practice (in years). Specific requirements can be set by sectoral legislation in case of aforementioned sectorally regulated professions and specific professional activities.
- **HR policies on continuous professional development:** HR policies differ depending on sectors, fields of education/training and objectives of programmes. In general it is left to the regulatory institution (issuing respective legislation) and on respective providers. Association of Adult Education Institutions in the Slovak Republic (AIVD, www.aivd.sk) a non-governmental organisation established in 1991, developed training programmes for adult education trainers offering a certificate and maintaining a

list of certified trainers (lecturers). It is not obligatory, however this certificates offer a comparative advantage in the market. 2011 – 2013 Leonardo da Vinci Transfer of Innovation Project, „Increasing Quality of Future Education Teachers Educational and Certification System“ is coordinated by National Institute of Lifelong Learning aimed at adjusting Austrian know-how for certification of trainers (lecturers) and establishing a certification institution in Slovakia.

Responsible bodies

There are no genuine bodies responsible for supporting quality management systems as such systems have not been developed yet, except traditional accreditation procedures and accreditation bodies mentioned earlier:

- Accreditation Commission of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport (for continuing/further education)¹;
- Accreditation Commission of the Slovak Republic Government (www.akredkom.sk)

These two accreditation commission are the most relevant, however not the only ones.²

Accreditation Council for Continuing Training of Pedagogical and Professional Staff³ can be also mentioned here and Accreditation Commission affiliated to the Ministry of Health accrediting health programmes is an example of such body outside the education sector.

Nevertheless, the National Institute of Lifelong Learning (NILLL) is expected to develop to an important player with system supporting functions. It is responsible for promoting 2011 LLL strategy and the development of LLL communication strategy adjusted to regional needs. In March 2011, NILLL became a focal point for the EQF in the Slovak Republic. Since 2013, NILLL should become the National Authority for verification of professional competence of lecturers in Slovakia.

Challenges

The topical issue relates to financing adult learning. It is fully up to the learner to pay for non-VET as there is no fiscal incentive of support of LLL. Although recommended by 2007 Strategy and backed by feasibility study Education Ministry did not managed to persuade Ministry of Finance to support tax incentives for LLL including adult learning. A draft act on LLL contained an article on fiscal incentive (partial tax deductible), however this article has been removed before submitting to the Government due to criticism of Finance Ministry, National Bank of Slovakia as well as employers representatives.

Very low participation of adult in Slovakia in LLL is explained by some analysts also by low incomes of inhabitants and missing financial incentives. Also the 2007 Strategy announced a 15% benchmark as a 2015 target Slovakia is far from meeting 2020 benchmark of the European Union as LLL participation rate of adult is stubbornly below 5% and declining even to the EU third lowest position with 2,8%. A second hot debated

¹ see <http://www.minedu.sk/index.php?lang=sk&rootId=639> and a novelty, an Information System of Continuing Education set up following the Act on LLL No. 568/2009 Coll. at <http://isdv.fri.uniza.sk/> (Both sites are however only Slovak speaking)

² All accreditation bodies affiliated to the Education ministry are listed at <http://www.minedu.sk/index.php?lang=sk&rootId=629>.

³ Akreditačná rada Ministerstva školstva Slovenskej republiky pre kontinuálne vzdelávanie pedagogických zamestnancov a odborných zamestnancov: <http://www.minedu.sk/index.php?lang=sk&rootId=5602>

topic relates to the quality of trainer (lecturer) and the need to guarantee a standard quality to clients. It is reported elsewhere in this text that AIVD (Association of Adult Education Institutions) and National Institute of LLL have addressed this issue.

The third widely discussed topic is legislation that is seen too restrictive as a consequence of obligatory aligning of accreditation to National System of Qualification Standards. Firstly, NSQ is far from being completed and secondly as a consequence of this, non-VET learning programmes are discouraged to ask for accreditation, or their programme accreditation is even impossible. Thus the opportunity to make use of accreditation as one of the quality assurance instruments has not been utilised. Other current problems of accreditation procedures are addressed elsewhere in this text.

24 Slovenia

A) Quality assurance systems: an overview

HE	The Higher Education Act (Articles: 51e): In line with the article 51e of Higher Education Act, the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (NAKVIS) was established by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia. The Agency commenced its operations on 1 March 2010 after, on 28 February 2010 when the Council for Higher Education of the Republic of Slovenia had ceased to work. On the other hand, there are no specific quality approaches for higher adult education; hence quality assurance of adult education is included within the quality frameworks used by the faculties.
VET	The Vocational Educational Act (Articles: 15, 16, 17.). The provider of secondary vocational education and training (young and adults), has to implement the internal quality system. It has to have a quality commission, and carried out self-evaluation in accordance with the quality circle (plan, do, check, act.). The School council following the proposal of the principal or headmistress (hereinafter referred to as principal), appoint a committee for quality, white a main task to monitor and assure the quality of the educational process. The quality commission is composed of the President and members: school representatives and representatives of employers, representatives of parents of students. The Commission consists of Chairman and at least five members. The School publishes an annual report of the work of the quality commission on its website. The post-secondary Vocational Educational Act (Articles 15) indicates that the post-secondary school has to have the quality commission. The task of the commission is to carry out self-evaluation and to cooperate in the external evaluation and accreditation procedures. In the field of post-secondary education the external evaluation and accreditation procedures are carried out by the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for higher education (NAKVIS).
Non-formal	(1) The Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training has developed a quality label for non-formal continuing education (since 2000)

B) Further elaboration on quality assurance in the country

Legal framework

It must be clearly emphasized that quality approaches in adult education in Slovenia have so far been connected to different conceptual routes, largely dependent on what kind of education it was, and what environment (social, economic etc.). Since the field

of adult education is very diverse and includes formal as well as non-formal education and training, the providers have to follow legislation represented by different sectors when they are developing internal quality systems. We can observe the same heterogeneity when analysing the development of quality approaches at the level of educational system.

So far as legislation is concerned, one can list different legislative frameworks that influence the development of quality approaches in different fields of adult education. Rather often, the providers of adult education in Slovenia implement different types of adult education (for example: they provide secondary vocational programs and post-secondary programs, and they also have different support activities as are centres for self-directed learning etc.). In this case, they have to follow different legislation when developing internal quality assurance and development approaches:

The Organization and financing of education Act¹ (Articles 20, 21): According to the Law, new formal education programs, methods, learning materials can be implemented in practice as "pilots". The pilots have to be carefully monitored. Slovenian Institute for Adult Education has the responsibility of such kind of monitoring in the field of adult education. The results of such monitoring have to be carefully studied before implement the new program or method in the whole system of adult education. For the coordination of monitoring of new accredited programs and for the evaluation of the system of education the minister can appoint the Council for evaluation.

The Adult Education Act² : In the field of Adult Education, there is no obligation for quality assurance. Despite of this, the mechanisms of self-evaluation are implemented nowadays in a lot of adult education institutions.³

¹ The organisation and financing of education Act. http://www.see-ducoop.net/education_in/pdf/law_fin_edu-slo-enl-t04.pdf.

² The Adult education act (1996) http://zakonodaja.gov.si/rpsi/r09/predpis_ZAKO449.html

³ Furthermore, there are specific acts for different subsectors: **The Higher Education Act** (Articles: 51e: Higher Education Act. http://zakonodaja.gov.si/rpsi/r02/predpis_ZAKO172.html): In line with the article 51e of Higher Education Act, the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (NAKVIS) (hereinafter: "the Agency") was established by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia. The Agency commenced its operations on 1 March 2010 after, on 28 February 2010 when the Council for Higher Education of the Republic of Slovenia had ceased to work. On the other hand, there are no specific quality approaches for higher adult education, hence quality assurance of adult education is included within the quality frameworks used by the faculties. **The Vocational Educational Act** (Articles: 15, 16, 17: Vocational Education Act: http://zakonodaja.gov.si/rpsi/r02/predpis_ZAKO982.html). The provider of secondary vocational education and training (young and adults), has to implement the internal quality system. It need to have a quality commission, and carried out self-evaluation in accordance with the quality circle (plan, do, check, act.). The School council following the proposal of the principal or headmistress (hereinafter referred to as principal), appoint a committee for quality, white a main task to monitor and assure the quality of the educational process. The quality commission is composed of the President and members: school representatives and representatives of employers, representatives of parents of students. The Commission consists of Chairman and at least five members. The School publishes an annual report of the work of the quality commission on its website. The law clearly describes that at the level of educational system the public institution that was established for the development of vocational and professional education assess quality of vocational and professional education, using the statistical data from schools and other statistical data. For quality assurance in specific cases also an independent group of expert can be appointed by the Minister. Those educational organizations that carry out vocational programs for young and for adults, use different practices in appointed quality commissions. Some of them have one quality commission and in it there are also representatives from adult education. Others have separately quality commissions for young and adult education. **The post-secondary Vocational Educational Act** (Articles 15). The post-secondary school has to have the quality commission. The task of the commission is to carry out self-evaluation and to cooperate in the external evaluation and accreditation procedures. The commission for monitoring and quality assurance consists of: five lecturers from the school, two students. In the field of post-secondary education the external evaluation

In the period 2009-2011 the new **White paper for Education in Slovenia** was prepared, including the recommendations for the further development of the quality procedures of the field of adult education. The following recommendations were included:

Internal and external assessment of quality in adult education

It seems sensible to foster future development so that both internal and external approaches to quality assessment and development in adult education become established; they are clearly separate, but complementary. The following recommendations were given for the future development of external approaches of quality assessment and quality development: Implementation of institutional and programme accreditation; External monitoring; External examination (of knowledge/results); External evaluations. By linking self-evaluation, accreditation, monitoring and external evaluation and external examination we would create a complementary system of quality in adult education system that would guarantee simultaneous information about the quality of the processes, their results and effects, both on the systemic level, as well as the level of an individual education provider.¹

Difference between VET, HE, and NVAL

In case we analyse the development of quality approaches in different fields of education, it can be noticed that there are a lot of common characteristics that can fit well also in adult education. For example: internal quality assurance systems build on a concept of quality circle (plan, do, check, act). This could be a common methodology used in different field of education. It is used in Slovenia in vocational and in non-formal adult education and also in higher education. The approach within which the providers have an organisational structure – for example a quality commission that is responsible for implementing an internal quality assurance system, is applicable at different type of providers of education. The main issue that cannot be transferable without adaptations among different type of education and also different type of adult education are quality indicators or quality standards. One may face different specifics that have to be taken in consideration when we develop quality standards for example: different target groups, different didactic approaches – organisation of learning process, different goals of formal and non-formal education, and different approaches of assessment of learning outcomes. It is also important to mention that we need different approaches of data collection from different target groups of adults: for example we can collect data about satisfaction with the education with a standardised questioner when we are facing target groups of adult in secondary or post-secondary education or at university, but this method is not suitable when we are asking data from the participants in literacy programs, etc., when participants face problems with the literacy competences. So also the methods used in different quality assurance approaches cannot be the same one in different learning programs for adults.

and accreditation procedures are carried out by the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for higher education (NAKVIS).

¹ Reference: White paper on education in Republic of Slovenia, 2011; page: 402;
http://www.belaknjiga2011.si/pdf/bela_knjiga_2011.pdf

One more issue about adult education: in Slovenia we developed different activities that support adult education for example: a national network of guidance centres for adults, a network of centres for self-directed learning etc. These are all activities that are aiming to support adult to find the way in education and learning and to help them during their learning. These are public services, financed from the state, and in last years also from European social funds. As there are public services, it is very important to assure the quality of its services. And that's why the question of the quality approaches that they use is very important. For this kind of activities we cannot just transfer quality approaches that are in use in education and training, but we have to take into consideration the specifics of these services, its goals etc., when developing quality approaches, quality standards and quality indicators.

Instruments

Accreditation systems: Accreditation is mainly used in the context of higher education, however, accreditation procedures are planned to be used as external evaluation of the quality provided for certain basic criteria considered as necessary by experts, e.g. in the assessment of operation of guidance centres.

Quality labels: THE GREEN OQEA LOGO aims to motivate and reward educational organisations and experts who care about how they do their work and are prepared to constantly learn, test new findings, systematically assess the effects of their work and implement measures to develop quality. Currently, 37 organisations use the green OQEA logo.¹

External evaluation: The Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (NAKVIS) performs professional and developmental tasks in the field of higher education and regulatory tasks for the purpose of external quality assurance in higher and tertiary vocational education.² The recommendation of the White Paper on Education emphasizes external evaluation: External evaluations ought to be national and international. National external evaluation should assess processes, results, and effects of adult education; both external national system evaluations as well as external national expert evaluations should be carried out on the basis of a long term plan approved by the Council of Experts of the Republic of Slovenia for Adult Education and performed by development-research groups with appropriate research and development capacities. The current system with evaluation grants via the Evaluation fund is, at least in the field of adult education, too non-systematic and haphazard for the results of external evaluations to provide insight into the quality of the adult education system and individual conceptual, expert and other solutions that are being implemented in it.

Self evaluation: According to the Adult Education Act, the mechanisms of self-evaluation are implemented today in a lot of adult education institutions. Based upon the recommendations of the White Paper on Education, internal approaches of quality assurance should be based on the self-evaluation of quality, and should principally be carried out by educational organisations and staff they employ. Only the following should be pre-

¹ http://kakovost.acs.si/spodbude/zeleni_znak/pregled/

² <http://www.nakvis.si/indexang.html>

scribed on the national level in connection to the internal approaches in quality assessment and development in adult education: a) Educational organization that wants to provide a publicly accredited adult education must have at least one approach to self-evaluation of quality implemented and it must be continuous and include the entire activity of adult education; b) Regardless of the model of self-evaluation the organisation uses it must be clear that the model includes the following: planning of self-evaluation based on clear methodology of data acquisition and their assessment, execution of self-evaluation, assessment of the acquired self-evaluation results, planning of measures based on the self-evaluation results, evaluation of the results of measures; c) Educational organization is required to publicly present which approaches to self-evaluation it uses, what are the characteristics of this approach and which improvements it has already implemented on the basis of the self-evaluation results.¹

Professional development staff: The Network of Quality Counsellors' Quality guidance in adult education : This is a process in which an adult education a quality counsellor expertly advises on how to assess and develop quality in adult education effectively, holistically, systematically and permanently, offers help in carrying out the processes for quality assessment and development, and helps clients to perform certain tasks by themselves, as agreed within the educational organization.

As part of the OQEA project there is a process of helping the implementation of HR policies as SIAE provides trainings for the quality groups from educational organisations so as to be able to realise their quality processes, and professional development amongst it. Peer reviewing of quality assessment methodology and adult education guidance together can help HR policies for better professional performance of adult educators. The quality guidance is, amongst others, for teachers who participate in the planning and performing adult education. Simultaneously with the educational workshops, there is group and individual counselling to individual quality counsellors regarding quality development in different organisation, and we also counsel them regarding evaluation of achievements, products they prepare during individual phases. Whenever questions arise during certain activities for quality development, and the quality counsellors can't solve them on their own, they are given a possibility for individual guidance via email or telephone, or our visit to a particular educational activity.

There are a number of projects clearly underlining the existence of quality development and assessment processes. It is also important to mention different initiatives and project that are carried out in other fields of education, but also have influence in development quality approaches in different settings of adult education. In the field of vocational education the Centre for Vocational Education is responsible for implementing the Slovenian Reference Point for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training. It is an important initiatives that with its implementation will have effects to the providers of vocational adult education. The reference point for the work of SIQA VET is the European network for quality vocational education ENQA-VET; The national refer-

¹ White paper on education in Republic of Slovenia, 2011; page: 402;
http://www.belaknjiga2011.si/pdf/bela_knjiga_2011.pdf

ence point supports the implementation of the work program of the European Network of ENQA-VET and informing the public about the results of professional activities; Performs activities in the development of quality assurance system of vocational training in accordance with the plans of the Ministry of Education and European recommendations for linking actors in the field of vocational education, develop and implement different approaches for identifying, developing and providing quality at the state level and at the provider level; advise the educational organizations in establishing and managing comprehensive quality system of vocational training, especially for self-evaluation.

The Centre for Vocational Education also provided training for quality groups from the providers of vocational education in implementing self-evaluation. In the years 2009-2010 the peer review method was implemented for the first time in the field of vocational education.

Bodies involved

The following organisations and institutions play a significant role in the implementation of accreditation: Ministry of education, science, culture and sport in Ljubljana; Slovenian Institute for Adult Education – SIAE e.g. The network of quality counsellors consists of quality counsellors who perform quality guidance in adult education organisations; *ISIO guidance centres*, to represent a national network of guidance centres that provide free, professional and impartial information's to adults, regarding entering in lifelong learning. Other relevant stakeholders: School for Leadership; the National Education Institute; Centre for Vocational Education to implement a *Slovenian Reference Point* for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training; National Examination Centre; Adult education centres; secondary schools; and private educational organisations.

At this point two other relevant examples are indicated about the Quality-approaches that are in widely used among the providers of adult education in Slovenia, underlining stakeholders' and providers' partnership for better learning performance, which are supported by the Ministry of education, science, culture and sport, by the Social funds or other EU projects: Implementation of a GREEN QUALITY LOGO in adult education; implementing the peer review as a method of quality assessment and development in adult education guidance.

In 2011, the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education entered a new international project European Peer Review in Guidance and Counselling – EuroPeerGuid¹ with a task to develop further an innovative approach to implement peer review method in the field of guidance in adult education. In 2011, the Manual for using the peer review method was developed to make it more generable for its use in different European counties. The action plan has been prepared for piloting the implementation of peer review method in 3 Slovenian ISIO guidance centres in 2012.² The aim for the future is too implement the peer review method as an inherent method within the Quality model used by the Slovenian national network of guidance centres. The use of peer review method within the network should foster exchange of good practice and cooperation within the network of

¹ <http://www.europeerguid.eu>

² <http://isio.acs.si/>

guidance centres. And it should bring an external view to the quality of the processes carried out by the guidance centres. In this way peer review method is a complementing tool, aiming at upgraded the self-evaluation processes in guidance centres and fostering networking through professional cooperation of counsellors in the roll of peers.

Challenge

The outstanding peculiarity of the adult learning sector in Slovenia is its heterogeneity. As adult education consists of different types of formal and non-formal education with different target groups, different goals, different ways of financing etc., it is impossible to develop for example one national model for quality assurance that all providers would use. And, on the other hand, especially when it comes to that part of adult education that is publicly financed, the main challenge is how to develop a common framework of quality assurance and at the same time leave enough space to providers to develop their own quality systems.

25 Spain

A) Quality assurance systems: an overview

HE	Quality assurance systems applies in Spain to the HE and professional education system: The National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation of Spain, ANECA, is a Foundation whose aim is to provide external quality assurance for the Spanish Higher Education System. ANECA has developed several evaluation Programmes in order to perform its activities (evaluation, certification and accreditation), with the purpose of integrating the Spanish system into the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Royal Decree 1892/2008 which focuses on access to higher education for people aged 25 years or more as well as those aged 40 years or more, including the recognition of professional or working experience.
VET	Royal Decree 1538/2008 which is devoted to the general organisation of vocational training, indicating that vocational training for adults must have the same characteristics and follow similar guidelines as mainstream vocational training.
Non-formal	Not available. A proposal of experts exists to coordinate and assure quality of delivery but it was still not put into consideration.

B) Further elaboration on quality assurance in the country

Legal framework

A legal framework on quality approaches and standards could not be identified in the area of Adult Education (AL). Nevertheless quality measures of Higher Education and VET could be studied as well as of the formal sector of education.

The Education Act (*Ley Orgánica de Educación*), enacted in 2006. Article 5 defines as one of the main objectives that lifelong learning is every citizen's right. The responsibility to carry this out on behalf of the State, resides at the different regional levels. Chapter IX of the law (articles 66 to 70) is devoted to adult education. There are two important elements: i) adult education is presented as voluntary, and the State can collaborate with other administrations in order to develop programmes serving it; and ii) the law establishes the structure of adult education: a) Basic education; b) Post-compulsory education (upper secondary education and professional training); c) Other, including access to professional training, access to higher education, learning foreign languages, Spanish language learning for immigrant people (which could also be other official languages in the State, depending on the territory), etc.

There are other Education Acts such as Andalusia's (2007) and Catalonia's (2009) that regulate adult education in the formal sector. For instance, in Andalusia the Education Act refers to permanent education for adults and learning networks, and stresses the role of ICT and distant education. Furthermore, there are other Adult Education Acts

that are specific to adult education. Apart from these, there are other specific legal documents relevant.¹ Other measures to be highlighted are:

- The Qualifications and Professional Training Act, enacted in 2002. The main characteristics of this law are: i) it is intrinsically related to the labour market; ii) it outlines the creation of a Catalogue of Professional Qualifications; iii) it delineates a modular structure more adequate to the labour market; iv) it points to the possibility that training can be offered not only in educational institutions but in labour institutions and social agencies such as trade unions.
- Royal Decree 1046/2003, devoted to the system of Continuing Professional Training. It attempts to define the concept of continuing professional training as: improving the knowledge and practices of workers in order to upgrade their competitiveness.

Furthermore, Royal Decree 1147/2011, establishes a general legal bases for the professional formation of the educational system: here concepts of quality (evaluation) are put into consideration of the administration units: “all actions of education should be evaluated” (BOE 182, 30 de julio 2011, Sec. I. Pág. 86783).

Differences between VET, HE and NVAL

Quality assurance is mentioned in various documents but is not present in the non-vocational adult learning sector. A proposal by experts exists, but still not considered for the praxis of AL/AE (non-vocational AL).² For the HE sector the ANECA foundation takes care of evaluation (ANECA, the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation of Spain). VET is regulated by a number of regulations.³

Instruments/responsible bodies

As indicated above Quality assurance systems applies in Spain to the HE and professional education system.

Higher Education: The National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation of Spain, ANECA, is a Foundation whose aim is to provide external quality assurance for the Spanish Higher Education System. The fulfilment of this mission is structured in the following functions: a) To strengthen the enhancement of teaching, research and University Management activities; b) To contribute to the performance appraisal of Higher Education according to objective, procedures and transparent processes; c) To provide to the Public Administrations with appropriate information for the decision making; d) To keep the society informed about target achievement of Universities in their activities. ANECA has devel-

¹ See: Royal Decree 1892/2008 which focuses on access to higher education for people aged 25 years or more as well as those aged 40 years or more, including the recognition of professional or working experience; Royal Decree 1538/2008 which is devoted to the general organisation of vocational training, indicating that vocational training for adults must have the same characteristics and follow similar guidelines as mainstream vocational training (this is important because what has recently emerged is the disappearance of adult education and adult learning as specific educational fields of study); Royal Decree 1224/2009 that recognises professional skills acquired through working experience, including in the non-formal context and informally.

² EL APRENDIZAJE PERMANENTE EN ESPAÑA, (2011) MINISTERIO DE EDUCACIÓN, Secretaría de Estado de Educación y Formación Profesional, Subdirección General de Documentación y Publicaciones. [The Spanish LLL-Plan]

³ The Organic Law 5/ 2002 on Qualifications and VET. The Organic Law 2/2006 on Education. The Royal Decree 1538/2006 on General Organization of VET. The Royal Decree 395/2007 on Professional Employment training.

oped several evaluation Programmes in order to perform its activities (evaluation, certification and accreditation), with the purpose of integrating the Spanish system into the European Higher Education Area (EHEA):

Institutional and programme evaluation:

- VERIFICA Programme (evaluation of degree proposals)
- MONITOR Programme (follow-up of an ex-ante accredited programme)
- AUDIT Programme (guidance for Higher Education Institutions to establish their own internal quality assurance systems)
- MENCION Programme (quality label recognition of PhD programmes)

Academic staff evaluation Programmes:

- PEP Programme (non-civil servant academic staff hiring; evaluation of the teaching and research activities as well as the academic backgrounds of future applicants to positions of non-civil servant academic staff)
- ACADEMIA Programme (national accreditation for civil servant academic staff)
- DOCENTIA Programme (support for Universities wishing to establish their own mechanisms to evaluate the quality of the teaching activity of their academic staff).

Not present in the AE/AL sector; those developed in the HE sector are represented only: ANECA's mission is to provide external quality assurance for the Higher Education System and to contribute to its constant improvement.

Quality Assurance (VET): Considering the Quality Assurance in VET, two major entities of the central government are involved:

- The Ministry of Education is responsible for the enactment of basic standards by establishing general rules for the educational system; setting minimum standards for teaching centres; establishing the overall education program, setting the minimum contents of education programs, and regulating the validity of academic and occupational qualifications across Spain; guaranteeing the right and obligation to know the Spanish language, without impairing the right of those Autonomous Regions with languages of their own establish their own standards guaranteeing that individuals know and use their own linguistic heritage. Additionally, the Autonomous Regions are responsible for the regulatory development of the basic national standards and the regulation of the non-basic elements or aspects of the education system.
- The Ministry of Labour and Immigration is responsible for implementing the National Vocational Education and Training Plan; implementing the National Plan for School-Workshops, Trade Learning Centres and Employment Workshops (programming, organization and management, and the issue, accreditation or recognition of vocational certificates; (...)) co-operating at an international bilateral and multilateral level in vocational training for the unemployed; initiating high-level inspection procedures.

Other important organisms that have a major role in QA in VET is the Institute of Evaluation (IE), reports directly to the General Secretary of Education: elaborating multiannual projects of general assessment of educational system; coordinating the participation of Spanish State in international evaluations; elaborating the National System of Education Indicators that will contribute to the knowledge of educational system and to direct the decision-making of educational institutions and of all sectors involved in education; collaborating in the realisation of general diagnostic assessments, which permit to obtain

representative data, as well from students and centres of the Autonomous Communities as the whole State, in the framework of general assessment of educational system.

The National Institute of Qualifications (NIQ) is depending on the Ministry of Education, Directorate General of Vocational Education and Training, which supports the General Council of Vocational Education and Training in order to achieve the objectives of the National System for Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training (NSQVET). The responsibilities of the NIQ include defining, creating and updating the National Catalogue of Professional Qualifications (NCPQ), which mean to observe qualifications and their evolution, to determine qualifications, to accredit qualifications, to develop the integration of professional qualifications and to follow-up and assess the National Program on Vocational Training. The NSQVET consists of instruments and actions which are necessary to promote and develop the integration of vocational education and training through the NCPQ and aims at promoting and developing the assessment and accreditation of professional competences in order to encourage the professional and social development of the people and to meet the needs of the productive system. These instruments and actions include the NCPQ; a procedure to recognize, assess, accredit and register professional qualifications; information and guidance concerning vocational education and training, and employment; and the assessment and quality improvement of the NSQVET to provide pertinent information about the operation of the System and its adaptation to the learning needs of individuals and of the productive system. According to the law (Act 5/2002 of 19 June 2002 on Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training), the assessment of the NSQVET shall aim to guarantee the effectiveness of its actions and its adaptation to the needs of the labour market.

Three elements ensure the quality of the training offered: Evaluation, Inspection, Teaching staff (which must possess degrees).

In Spain, a VET quality network has been created in order to support regional governments and improve the image of VET, identify, select and share indicators that will be appropriate to evaluate the quality of VET, foster the relationship between systems and educational centres and diffuse information on the events at European level in the area of quality assurance.

The National Public Employment Service cooperation with the regional governments will together elaborate and execute an annual evaluation plan that allows the evaluation of quality, effectiveness, efficiency impact of the VET system for employment and identification of the aspects susceptible to improvement.

Professionals of educational sector and teachers only need 1 month of pre-training as adult educators (optional). Formation of experts for adult education is offered on university level: “título specialist en educación para adultos” (30 ECTS), UNED (Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia)

Challenges

The European programs opened in 2010 a new discussion in Spain to renew the system of AE/ AL based on the Action Plan “It’s always a good time to learn”, and a proposal was published in 2011: (EL APRENDIZAJE PERMANENTE EN ESPAÑA, (2011) MINISTERIO

DE EDUCACIÓN, Secretaría de Estado de Educación y Formación Profesional, Subdirección General de Documentación y Publicaciones). Until now, this document was not considered to be put into practice, and as mentioned, the actual deep crisis of the financial sector and the high levels of unemployment is reducing efforts and financing of the AE sector. Quality approaches are not considered as of actual importance. The challenge is to strengthen the AL sector and to promote good practice of community education.

26 Sweden

A) Quality assurance systems: an overview

HE	The Higher Education Act contains provisions about the higher education institutions that are accountable to the government, local authorities or county councils. These provisions are often supplemented by the regulations in the Higher Education Ordinance. Swedish National Agency for Higher Education) to review the quality of higher education. This work includes evaluating subject areas (main fields of study) and study programmes; and Granting degree awarding powers
VET	In order to secure quality in post-secondary education and training the Government has introduced a common framework of Higher Vocational Education as of 1 July 2009, the National Coordination Point for EQF. Quality and national equivalence will be guaranteed through uniform quality criteria and quality indicators for different forms of post secondary vocational education and training outside higher education. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate's (Skolinspektionen) follow-up of the quality of work-based learning in upper secondary school the Government is discussing a series of measures aiming at further improving the quality of work-based learning as well as apprenticeship training. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate has supervisory responsibility for pre-schooling, school-age child care, schooling and adult education. This means that the Agency checks that the municipalities or the independent schools comply with the legislation and other provisions applicable to their activities. The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education makes tenders for new advanced VET educations lasting in average around 2 years.
Non-formal	(1) The Swedish National Council for Adult Education (Folkbildningsrådet) is responsible for the distribution of the state grants and for developing and monitoring the activities within the popular and liberal adult education; (2) BRUK, a system for support on the quality work for all types of adult education

B) Further elaboration on quality assurance in the country

Legal framework

A number of different types of adult education exist:

A. Formal Adult Education (provided by municipalities): 1) Municipal adult education, kommunal vuxenutbildning, (komvux) (basic adult education (grundläggande vuxenut-

bildning); upper secondary adult education (gymnasial vuxenutbildning): 2) Municipal adult education for adults with intellectual impairments/learning disabilities (vuxenutbildning för utvecklingsstörda, särvux); 3) Swedish tuition for immigrants (svenskundervisning för invandrare, sfi); 4) Distance education provided by the Swedish Agency for Flexible learning. Supplementary education programmes (kompletterande utbildningar) are independently organised and supported by the state. These constitute a complementary education at upper secondary level within certain subjects and vocational fields. The supervisory authority is the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education.

B. VET, which can be divided into: 1) *Advanced VET*: Post secondary Advanced Vocational Education programmes, in which a part of the time usually is spent at a workplace, is administrated and supervised by the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education ([Myndigheten för Yrkeshögskolan](#) (Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education)). The programmes are financed by the state and organised by private and public actors, in conjunction with actors from working life. 2) *Labour market training*: The Swedish Public Employment Service ([Arbetsförmedlingen](#) (The Swedish Public Employment Service)) a public authority with offices and personnel all over Sweden, is responsible for labour market training (arbetsmarknadsutbildning) intended primarily for unemployed adults in need of retraining or further training and education. The Parliament and the Government has assigned the Swedish Public Employment Service to focus on people who are at some distance from the labour market and who, for example, have been unemployed for a longer period of time.

C. Non-formal adult education (*Liberal adult education*): The liberal adult education sector (folkbildning) provides adult education through folk high schools (folkhögskolor) and adult education associations (studieförbund). The folk high schools are united in [Folkbildningsrådet](#). Some folk high school courses and some of the education within the supplementary education programmes and labour market training programmes are comparable to Advanced Vocational Education programmes in terms of content. Some folk high schools provide Swedish tuition for immigrants as well as, among other courses, second chance education where students can obtain the equivalent qualifications to the compulsory school leaving certificate and the upper secondary school leaving certificate.

D. Higher Education: The universities are in general not mentioned in the international reports on adult learning in Sweden.

For all (adult) education, except for liberal adult education, goals/learning outcomes and regulations are defined by the state and falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Research. The Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket) is the central administrative authority for the public school system and its responsibility include nation-wide monitoring and evaluation of all school activities as well as central development work. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate (Skolinspektionen) is the authority responsible for the supervision and quality evaluation of the (adult) school system. Regular school visits is one of the methods used.

Quality is one of the key topics in the new school act¹ and is mentioned in chapter 4: Quality and influence and in chapter 26 on Inspection, public quality revision and national follow-up and assessment.²

The main responsibility for developing policies for adult learning have been decentralised to regional and local governmental levels in Sweden.

With regard **upper secondary education (VET)**, as a result of the Swedish Schools Inspectorate's (Skolinspektionen) follow-up of the quality of work-based learning in upper secondary school the Government is discussing a series of measures aiming at further improving the quality of work-based learning as well as apprenticeship training. The Inspectorate identified several areas in need of development including lack of follow up from teachers, the failure in taking into account relevant course syllabi in planning the work-based learning and insufficient cooperation between schools and the place of work³. Concerning **advanced VET**, the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education uses a very marketoriented but trust- based model of steering their more than 1,100 educations with more than 50,000 students at 250 different providers. The underlying principles of these advanced educations are: a framework act with focus on results (outcome); a very low degree of detail-steering; no national curricula; outcome – not input – steers the quality thinking; proofed demand determines the start of an education; proofed quality in results and finalisation of the education sets the limits for the providers⁴

The new School Act⁵ mention in a number of requirements both at national, educational owner and provider level in order to fulfil the demand for having a systematic quality system e.g.: the key stakeholders shall be involved; the management are responsible for the systematic quality work process; the quality works shall focus on the formulated goals; the quality and quality work shall be documented; routines for complains shall exist; the students shall be involved; the health and safety regulations shall be followed; the shall exist discussion fora for all stakeholders; the quality process shall be planed and information available.

Instruments

Concerning **adult education in general**, the **National Agency for Education** is the central administrative authority for the public school system, publicly organised preschooling, school-age childcare and for adult education. The Agency's mission can be summarised as follows: a) drawing up clear goals and knowledge requirements; b) providing support for the development of preschools and schools; c) developing and disseminating new

¹ The new School Act (2010:800)

² Other relevant legislation is: Förordning (2002:1012) about Municipal adult education does not mention quality directly. Teaching plan for the free school types (Läroplan för de frivilliga skolformerna Lpf94). Förordning (1994:895) for Swedish tuition for immigrants does not mention quality directly. Förordning (1992:736) for Municipal adult education for adults with intellectual impairments/learning disabilities does not mention quality directly. Förordning (1991:977) for public support to the Liberal adult education (om statsbidrag till folkbildningen (med kompletteringar 1992:737, 1998:973, 2000:1451 samt 2006:1499) does not mention quality directly, but the criteria for getting support can be seen as quality criteria.

³ See Refernet p. 17

⁴ <http://www.yhmyndigheten.se/>

⁵ <http://www.riksdagen.se/webbnav/index.aspx?nid=3911&bet=2010:800>

knowledge of benefit to our target groups; d) communicate to improve. The following answers to the question "How does the agency work for a better school?" can be seen as key quality instruments:

1) National goals and steering documents: They set up the frameworks and guidelines on how education is to be provided and assessed with the aid of syllabuses and subject plans, knowledge requirements and tests, as well as general guidelines. This is of special importance in the light of the ongoing reforms of the preschool, compulsory and upper secondary schools, as well as adult education. Major initiatives will be implemented to provide support for the implementation of the new reforms, covering conferences, web-based information, and different types of informational material.

2) National knowledge assessment: The Agency is responsible for the national system for assessing knowledge. Together with universities and university colleges, we develop national tests and assessment guides for teachers to ensure pupils receive equivalent assessment.

3) Evaluation: By means of in-depth studies and analyses, the Agency evaluates schooling to identify and highlight those areas where national development is needed. Causes of variations in goal attainment among different principal school organisers and schools are analysed. The Agency takes part in international studies to benchmark our own education system and compare it with other countries. The Agency disseminates the results and outcomes by different means, such as reports and knowledge overviews.

4) Follow-up: The Agency is responsible for statistics in the school system and childcare. The aim is to provide an overall view of schooling and material to follow up and evaluate at the national and local levels. Each year the Agency collects data on children, pupils, school staff, costs and education outcomes. The data is presented in statistical form by type of activity and school. This contributes to comparisons between different principal organisers and types of activities.

For all kind of curricula-steered adult education, support tools of many kinds are available on the homepage of the Agency, including BRUK (see case study). BRUK can be seen as a tool for discussion and internal **self-evaluation and development** for providers. The model/tool defines quality by relating it to the fulfillment of national targets and objectives without making any priority of these.

There exist¹ a Quality Prize targeted all kinds of Swedish schools including the municipal adult education. The Prize are grounded in the School Act from 2010, where a requirement are that all schools shall work systematically with quality and that the work shall be documented. The Prize can function as a motivation and inspiration in the work on quality in all schools including adult education.

The **Swedish Schools Inspectorate** has supervisory responsibility for preschooling, school-age child care, schooling and adult education. This means that the Agency checks that the municipalities or the independent schools comply with the legislation and other provisions applicable to their activities. The goal is good education in a secure environ-

¹ <http://www.skolverket.se/skolutveckling/kvalitetsarbete/kvalitetsutmarkelse>

ment. In addition, the Schools Inspectorate is responsible for approving applications and grants for independent schools.¹

Here below a number of instruments are described per education type.

Specifically with regard **Swedish Tuition for Immigrants (SFI)**, numerous initiatives and measures have been taken to improve the quality. The aim of this measures, which include skills enhancement for teachers, national tests, clearer goals, educational bonus and time limits for education, are all set to improve standards. A quality improvement in education will increase the participating immigrants' entry in working life and integration in society. The course syllabi for SFI have been revised, such as by clarifying the course objectives in order to improve the education's content and quality. A test of performance-based bonus, SFI-bonus, was introduced in some municipalities during 2009 in order to explore whether financial incentives help immigrants learn the language faster and thereby stand greater chances to get a job. The SFI bonus is awarded to newly arrived immigrants who complete their studies with a pass within 12 months. From 1 September 2010 the SFI-bonus was introduced nationwide.

In **Advanced VET**, The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education makes tenders for new advanced VET educations lasting in average around 2 years. The providers application must include: a) Labour market statistics that proofs the need for the education; b) A list of enterprises and organisations involved in the development of the education; c) A list of enterprises expected to be involved in the education; d) An overview of the available resources eg. Teachers, equipment etc. One other important quality tool within advanced VET are the cooperation between the providers of the educations. The objectives of this cooperation are (among others) to raise the overall quality of all advanced VET-educations. The cooperation is at the moment (2012) mainly on regional level. The Agency for Higher Vocational Education (Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan) establishes guidelines to ensure that higher vocational education meets quality measures and better reflects actual labour market skill needs. The main focus are on results (= employment) and the providers get only permission to run the education for a shorter period. Evaluations will decide if the provider can continue or has to stop with this education. The provider has the freedom to decide on their own quality systems and quality processes, but there are still a number of expectations to the providers quality systems, mainly that it follows the contents and the logic of the European Quality Reference Framework for VET and includes follow-up systems on the students.

The Agency for Higher Vocational Education (Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan) insists on that the providers shall use self-evaluation in their quality work. These self-evaluations are used as a central part of the inspections together with the providers other work on quality. The Agency has in 2012² made an overview of the quality systems and mechanisms at a number of providers, in order to get the providers to get inspired and to work

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http://www.skolverket.se/2.3894/publicerat/2.5006?_xurl=http%3A%2F%2Fwww4.skolverket.se%3A8080%2Fwtpub%2Fws%2Fskolbok%2Fwpubext%2Ftrycksak%2FRecord%3Fk%3D2492

² <http://www.yhmyndigheten.se/hem/nyhetsrum/rapport-om-utbildningsanordnares-kvalitetsarbete-inom-yrkeshogskolan>

together. In addition, the Agency for Higher Vocational Education (Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan) has teachers competences as one of the quality criteria in relation to their education. The teachers need to be competent when they teach and not only when they got their education. A high proportion of parttime teachers from enterprises are active in this kind of education.

In **Higher education**, in accordance with "Focus on knowledge – quality in higher education", there will be changes in the direction of the national quality assurance system for higher education institutions. The purpose of the changes is to strengthen their incentives to achieve high standards for learning outcomes at their study programmes. Higher education institutions with high quality study programmes will be rewarded through increased appropriations. The new system will consist of quality evaluations of higher education programmes and reviews of degree-awarding powers. The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education will be responsible for implementing these evaluations and reviews, and these should take place every fourth year, instead of every six years as has been the case earlier. Resources for study programmes at first and second cycle level will be allocated on the basis of programme evaluations, as well as on the number of full-time equivalent students and their annual performance equivalents. Eurypedia

In relation to **non-formal adult education**, the Swedish National Council for Adult Education (Folkbildningsrådet) is responsible for the distribution of the state grants and for developing and monitoring the activities within the popular and liberal adult education. The state defines the purpose of governmental grants while objectives and regulations are set independently by the liberal education providers. The state exercises control by means of reviews, assessments and development efforts carried out by the national inspectorate agency. The Swedish National Council of Adult Associations (Folkbildningsrådet) is entitled to collect quality reports from Folkhögskolor and Studieförbund every year. The reports are collected electronically on the web. The objectives of the quality work within this adult education sector are to secure that the providers (folkhögskolor and studieförbund) develop their quality and that the work supports the national and internal goals. The liberal adult education sector (folkbildning) provides adult education through folk high schools (folkhögskolor) and these schools have created a network¹ for their quality managers/coordinators. The network shall primarily be a support to the quality managers/coordinators in the practical work and stimulate to exchange of experiences between the different "folkhögskolor" and between the schools and "Folkbildningsrådet". The network shall even make it easier to do and implement the quality work and to stimulate to new cooperation.

The Swedish National Council of Adult Associations (Folkbildningsrådet) collect² quality reports from Folkhögskolor and Studieförbund every year. The reports cover the part of the activities that are supported by the state. The report shall cover the following top-

¹ <http://www.folkbildning.se/Folkhogskolor/Kvalitet/Kvalitetsarbete-pa-folkhogskolorna/Natverk-for-kvalitetssamordnare/>

² From the letter of 15 november 2011 from The Swedish National Council of Adult Associations (Folkbildningsrådet): Till samtliga folkhögskolor Anvisningar för den nationella kvalitetsredovisningen för folkbildningen 2012.

ics: 1. The systematic aspect of the quality work (Self-evaluation of goals, systematic; Examples of developments; Areas that need to be stronger; Risk analysis; Potential external or internal assessments since the last quality report). 2. The State objectives (Self-evaluation in relation each of the official goals and objectives); 3. Results and effects. Description of how the systematic quality work has been implemented and which results has been achieved. The presentation shall include four exact examples from the organizations goals. For each of these shall the different phases with planning, implementation, follow-up, evaluation and learning be covered including a presentation of the results and effects. Two of the “cases” shall be linked to the public state objectives, one to a general course and the last are free of choice. 4. Development and profile: This includes a description of how the organisation have worked with development and profile and finally how the public funding have been used.

Concerning **municipal adult education**, the inspection¹ looks at a number of main quality criteria and areas for municipal adult education (e.g. Teaching and learning; Basic values and influence; Security and room for study; Educational support; Assessment and grades, etc.).

The Education Act states that “Each municipality shall ensure that teachers have the necessary knowledge of the regulations applicable to the national school system, in particular the regulations setting out the aims of the education, and that each municipality shall ensure that further training is arranged for personnel and endeavour to plan the further training.” The state thus stipulates that teacher skills development be implemented but gives no details about the contents.

With “A boost for teachers” the state encourages municipalities and individual teachers to take part in supplementary education. In the four year period 2007-2010, the Government will be offering 30 000 fully qualified teachers, i.e. around 25 per cent of all primary, secondary and upper secondary school teachers in Sweden, an education focusing on reinforcing teachers’ knowledge of their subjects and enhancing their teaching ability. The Government spends SEK 2.9 billion on in-depth education. Another SEK 500 million will be provided for research studies.

In order to secure quality in **post-secondary education and training** (VET) the Government has introduced a common framework of Higher Vocational Education as of 1 July 2009, the National Coordination Point for EQF. Quality and national equivalence will be guaranteed through uniform quality criteria and quality indicators for different forms of post secondary vocational education and training outside higher education. The work to implement EQF is ongoing, as is the development of a NQF. The implementation process will be carried out with divided responsibility between the Ministry of Education and Research and its Agency for Higher Vocational Education and Training. Close cooperation with stakeholders, social partners, sectors and authorities are foreseen. The implementation of EQARF and ECVET is in its early stages and decisions on how this will be carried out in more detail are expected shortly.

The Government wishes to strengthen teachers’ competence and to improve the status of the teaching profession. A professional certification for teachers has been adopted

¹ <http://www.skolinspektionen.se>

and is put in place starting from 2011. Also the Government envisages support for in-service-training specifically tailored for teachers in VET in the form of work placements in relevant industries or other organisations. To stimulate professional development, 'specially qualified teachers' will be recognised and be able to assume responsibility for fields of study, quality assurance, and to serve as advisors for teacher students and as mentors for newly-educated teachers.

Responsible parties

The National Agency for Education support the quality work in many ways, and set thereby a kind of mental quality framework and guidelines for the work on quality and National school development in general. The Agency provides support to preschools, schools and principal organizers for their development. The support to be given should be nationally prioritised. This may involve general development initiatives, which are justified on the grounds of shortcomings and problems that have been identified by means of different national and international studies, such as in mathematics, languages, and reading and writing skills. It can also deal with other issues such as mobbing and bullying, gender equality, minority languages and the position of newly arrived pupils in Sweden. Competence development is also an important part of our work. The Agency is responsible for the National School Leadership Training Programme and the initiative for professional supplementary training of preschool teachers and teachers.

For all education, except for liberal adult education, goals/learning outcomes and regulations are defined by the state and fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Research. The Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket) is the central administrative authority for the public school system and its responsibilities include national monitoring and evaluation of all school activities as well as central development work. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate (Skolinspektionen) is the authority responsible for the supervision and quality evaluation of the school system. Regular school visits is one of the methods used.

The Agency for School Improvement is initiating, organising and carrying out developmental efforts in order to improve quality, strengthen legitimacy and increase equality concerning the validation of adults' skills and knowledge.

The School Inspectorate's (Skolinspektionen) main task is to examine the quality and outcome of education in municipalities and independent schools, as well as supervise their activities.

The Swedish Schools Inspectorates conducts regular supervision of all municipal and independent schools, from pre-school to adult education. Activities are scrutinized on a number of points. Our decision states in which areas a school is failing to meet national requirements. At a seminar with those responsible from the municipality and school, we discuss the areas where improvements are needed. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate may make use of penalties and apply pressure so that a principal organizer rectifies its activities. If the principal organizer does not take action or seriously disregards its obligations, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate may decide to impose a conditional fine or

measures at the principal organizer's expense. In the case of an independent school, its licence to operate may be revoked.¹

As for **upper secondary schools** the Swedish National Schools Inspectorate (Skolinspektionen) carries out regular inspections. Municipalities responsible of the administration of adult education also play a role in quality assurance as do adult learning centres themselves. Refernet p. 43

For **Advanced VET** the Agency for Higher Vocational Education (Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan) establishes guidelines to ensure that higher vocational education meets quality measures and better reflects actual labour market skill needs. Courses and programmes within higher vocational education are based on a unit-based credit system. Workplace training (Lärande i arbetslivet (LIA)) forms an integral part of the programmes.

In **higher education**, the Swedish National Agency of Higher Education is responsible for the quality of the education.

¹ <http://www.skolinspektionen.se>

27 United Kingdom

A) Quality assurance systems: an overview

HE	Separate legislation for each of the 4 nations, Northern Ireland; England; Wales; Scotland: a) Legislation for the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) with UK-wide remit; b) Legislation in all 4 countries on HEIs in relation to their autonomous status and their responsibility for self-evaluation.
VET	Separate legislation for each of the 4 nations, Northern Ireland; England; Wales; Scotland. Legislation covers: a) Credit and Qualifications frameworks in each country; b) Inspectorates in each country, eg The Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989. In the UK VET quality assurance systems are in place and compatible with the EQAVET Recommendation. The UK is implementing this through the EQAVET network and working groups. Vocational Higher Education, whether undertaken in universities, other HE or FE institutions, is generally the responsibility of the HE funding and quality agencies. Where VET courses lead to qualifications on the national credit and qualifications framework (one in each of the 4 nations) the QA requirements related to those qualifications apply. When VET is delivered by Further Education Colleges they are autonomous, independent bodies with responsibility for QA of their provision. They are required to engage in self-evaluation and it is carried out within a context of quality frameworks and self-evaluation tools supplied by external QA bodies. The resulting self-evaluation reports contribute to and form a basis for external evaluation carried out by: National inspectorates (in each nation); Funding bodies; The relevant Departments of Education . Publicly funded VET learning providers are required to keep records of all learners, including demographic data, the course(s) which each learner is taking and data on completion (whether the learner completes the course) and achievement (whether the learner gains the target qualification). Some of this data is collected primarily as the basis for the calculation of funding, but it is also used to monitor the quality of provision and to form the basis of “league tables” in which the success rates of individual providers can be compared. There is also a small proportion of the funding which is dependent on the learner having completed the course and achieved the target qualification. The Inspectorate (in each of the four nations) is responsible for inspecting and reporting periodically on the quality of teaching, learning and management of individual colleges, private training providers and other learning providers. The reports of the Inspectorate are used to monitor the quality of provision, to pro-

	vide ‘benchmarks’ against which providers can judge their own performance (by enabling comparisons with other providers of similar size and student characteristics), to ensure that action is taken where providers are failing and to provide examples of good practice. The Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) was formed to accelerate quality improvement, increase participation and raise standards and achievement in the learning and skills sector in England. ‘Skills that Work for Wales’ (2008) signaled the introduction of a new Quality and Effectiveness Framework (QEF) for the skills sector in 2009 to enable the Welsh Government to monitor learning providers’ performance, ensure that public funding is used effectively and that there are possibilities to intervene if necessary. The framework places increased emphasis on providers themselves taking responsibility to work together to drive up quality and share good practice, through initiatives such as benchmarking and peer review. The Welsh Government carries out regular reviews of providers’ performance and monitors their progress, but against a more streamlined set of performance indicators with the main focus being on learner outcomes and provider responsiveness. Providers with a good track record of delivering high quality learning undergo ‘lighter touch’ assessments.
Non-formal	Each country has own specific systems, an example is: ESTYN Inspection of Adult Community Learning (ACL) in Wales.

B) Further elaboration on quality assurance in the country

Legal framework

There is no distinct “adult learning sector” in the UK. Adult education and lifelong learning in the UK are provided by various types of institutions and may be found in a range of locations. Provision is offered: in sixth form, tertiary and further education colleges (FECs); via adult and community learning (ACL) in a range of settings (public and private) including community centres, libraries and museums; in universities and other Higher Education Institutions (HEIs); through work-based and work-related training; through Trade Unions’ provision; at private training providers; in prisons; via voluntary organisations such as the Workers’ Educational Association and the University of the Third Age; and via private sector businesses in the travel, hotel, tourism and guiding sector. In addition, there is much informal provision that remains unmapped¹. In order to understand the complexity of AL provision, in its subdomains but also in the different regions, we provide an overview below.

In **Northern Ireland**² adult learning opportunities are available in:

¹ Osborne, M (for Research voor Beleid) Country Case Study: UK.

² Part of the information supplied by respondent Angela Whiteside, Department of Employment and Learning

- a) **Statutory Further Education Sector** in Further Education (FE) Colleges. FE Colleges are the main providers of adult education and lifelong learning courses, for those aged 19 and over, promoting social cohesion through the provision of skills for work, undertaken within either a community setting or a local FE College. Through its network of **main campuses** and **outreach centres**, the FE Sector delivers a wide and varied adult curriculum to meet the learning needs of adults in local communities across Northern Ireland. Adult education remains a key focus for all six FWE Colleges in Northern Ireland. In the last three years, the FE Sector has enrolled 337,001 learners, aged 19 and over. The range of courses provided by FE Colleges span essential skills, a wide range of vocational and academic programmes at levels 2 and 3 and Higher Education programmes;
- b) **The Non-Statutory Further Education Sector** – FE Colleges collaborate with a voluntary and community organisations to bring FE provision to a wider cross-section of the community. This strategy is set out in the Department's (D/Employment and Learning Northern Ireland) document "FE Means Business".
- c) **A network of approximately 40 training providers** provide adult apprenticeship training and training for the unemployed;
- d) **Non-governmental organisations** (NGOs) provide local community-based non-formal adult learning opportunities and may be working in collaboration with their local FE College / Outreach Centre;
- e) **Higher Education** – undergraduate and post-graduate courses along with the mainstream student body; part-time courses, leading / not leading to credit towards HE qualifications;
- e) **Private (for profit) providers** of adult learning in areas such as ICTs, languages etc¹

In **England**² adult learning opportunities are available in:

- a) **Further Education Colleges** – FE Colleges traditionally offered technical and vocational courses, but many have since broadened their role to offer more general education programmes, including basic skills and GCSEs and GCE A levels for adults, access to higher education courses and in some cases higher education programmes, particularly short-cycle vocational programmes such as foundation degrees. They may also provide informal adult and community learning;
- b) **Adult and community learning** - adult and community learning is provided by FE colleges (see above), local authorities & voluntary organisations. Such provision receives government funding via the Skills Funding Agency through the Adult Safeguarded Learning (ASL) stream. Within the FE sector, providers include general FE colleges and specialist designated institutions, which have a long tradition attracting disadvantaged adults to informal adult learning. Local authority provision may be delivered in adult education centres dedicated to this purpose, or in settings with other purposes, such as local

Northern Ireland; <http://www.delni.gov.uk/index/further-and-higher-education/further-education/fe.htm>

¹ NOTE: This factsheet concentrates on publicly-funded adult learning at a) – e) above.

² See https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/United-Kingdom-England:Institutions_Providing_Adult_Education_and_Training

community centres, libraries, schools, children's centres and other venues. The means of delivery is usually part-time (day or evening) and include workshops or 'taster sessions' designed to stimulate interest and encourage adults with low levels of confidence.

Adult and community learning covers both informal learning and formal learning leading to accreditation or a qualification. Informal learning opportunities without accreditation are often designed to encourage progression to a programme leading to a qualification. Adult and community learning includes:

- programmes for personal development, cultural enrichment, intellectual or creative stimulation and enjoyment
- learning opportunities and outreach for people living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, such as activities to develop active citizenship and community leadership skills or employability skills
- family learning programmes designed to enable adults and children to learn together or to enable parents/carers to learn how to support their children's learning, covering literacy, numeracy and ICT skills and courses such as parenting and creative arts.

c) **Private or voluntary sector training** - organisations in receipt of public funding which provide adult apprenticeships, other work-based learning provision and other FE provision through franchising arrangements;

d) **Higher education** - institutions which offer a wide range of programme, including lecture series and one day courses, weekend courses and summer schools as well as longer part-time programmes. Some programmes offered without accreditation, while others offer credits towards a HE award. HEIs also provide under-graduate and post-graduate courses for adults as part of the mainstream student body.

e) **Distance learning** - University for Industry delivers further education courses through the provider Learndirect. Learners can study at a local centre, or via the internet. The Open University and other HEIs offer under-graduate and post-graduate courses for adults through distance learning.¹

In **Wales**² adult learning opportunities are available in:

a) **Further education** - Further Education Colleges have broadened their role to offer more general education programmes, including basic skills and GCSEs and GCE A levels for adults, access to higher education courses and in some cases higher education programmes, particularly short-cycle vocational programmes such as foundation degrees. Colleges may also provide informal adult and community learning;

b) **Adult community learning (ACL)** - funded by the Welsh Government ACL embraces learning opportunities which are offered by further education (FE) and higher education (HE) institutions and local authorities. It is defined in 'Delivering Community Learning for Wales' (2010), as flexible learning opportunities for adults, delivered in community

¹ NOTE: This factsheet concentrates on publicly-funded adult learning at a) – d) above.

² https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/United-Kingdom-Wales:Institutions_Providing_Adult_Education_and_Training

venues to meet local needs. Within adult community learning (ACL), **the location of delivery is seen as an important defining feature**. Venues which were not necessarily established to deliver adult learning, such as schools, community halls and libraries etc., provide flexibility and are more accessible to groups traditionally disengaged from learning. Within the further education sector, ACL provision is delivered in a variety of settings, including specific college outreach centres.

c) **Independent training provision** - includes private or voluntary sector training organisations in receipt of public funding. They provide apprenticeships, other work-based learning provision and other further education provision through franchising arrangements;

d) **Higher Education** - a wide range of programmes is available, including lecture series and one day courses, weekend courses and summer schools as well as longer part-time programmes. Some programmes offered without accreditation, while others offer credits towards a HE award;

e) **Distance learning** - University for Industry delivers further education courses through the provider Learndirect. Learners can study at a local centre, or via the internet. The Open University and other HEIs offer under-graduate and post-graduate courses for adults through distance learning.¹

In **Scotland**² adult learning opportunities are available in:

a) **Training and Further Education** - Colleges, independent trainers and employers in the workplace offer vocational education and training. The colleges offer a wide range of programmes from access level to professional level. They include "core skills", as well as blends of theory and practice. Some are designed to incorporate extensive periods of skills development in college workshops and other specialist areas. The main providers of both vocational and general further education in Scotland are the colleges, which offer a wide range of courses at non-advanced (and also advanced) levels and which provide continuing education beyond school or preparation for further study. They cater for both full-time and part-time students, with the latter in the majority. The courses are mainly vocational and include both theoretical and practical work. However, the colleges also offer courses leading to awards recorded on the Scottish Qualifications Certificate (SQC);

b) **Community Learning and Development (CLD)** - CLD Adult education and training is offered in a widespread infrastructure of community settings, eg, learning centres, libraries and informal venues, by CLD services of local authorities, voluntary organisations, colleges and higher education institutions, including universities. There has been an increase in the use of ICT in rural communities, to complement outreach activities provided by colleges and others. The education units in prisons also provide adult education. Voluntary organisations play an important part in adult education at both national

¹ NOTE: This factsheet concentrates on publicly-funded adult learning at a) – d) above.

² https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/United-Kingdom-Wales:Institutions_Providing_Adult_Education_and_Training

and local levels using a CLD approach - the Workers' Educational Association (WEA), the churches and Linking Education And Disability (LEAD), as well as a number of small local groups.

c) **Higher Education** – undergraduate and post-graduate courses provided for adults as part of the mainstream student body.¹

Legal framework

There is **Separate legislation** for each of the 4 nations, Northern Ireland; England; Wales; Scotland. Legislation covers: a) Credit and Qualifications frameworks in each country; b) Inspectorates in each country, eg The Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989.

Legislation for Higher Education

There is legislation for the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) with UK-wide remit and secondly, legislation in all 4 countries on HEIs in relation to their autonomous status and their responsibility for self-evaluation

Differences between VET, HE and NVAL

In **formal**, structured adult learning, there are generally **internal quality improvement processes** in place, where learner, provider and stakeholder feedback is sought as part of a wider quality process. The **quality assurance** is often provided by external means, such as by **inspection, accreditation, external validation of assessment** or gaining a **quality mark**. This is the case for **vocational and non-vocational adult learning** in FE Colleges, in publicly-funded Adult (and) Community Learning (in adult education centres; community centres etc etc) and in Higher Education Institutes

Where adult learning is **non-formal publicly-funded adult learning** in adult (and) community centres, it is subjected to the same QA arrangements as formal vocational and non-vocational adult learning in FE Colleges and Adult (and) Community Learning centres, including inspection, gaining a quality mark

With regard to **informal learning**, where learning is accidental, **quality is unlikely to be captured or documented even within a quality system**. However, there are pockets of activity occurring within England and Wales in which organisations are piloting systems for recognising and reporting progress and achievement in non-accredited learning activities.²

When non-formal adult learning is publicly-funded it is subject to the same QA requirements, external inspection and ministry review as publicly-funded VET. With the exception of inspection, this is also true of HE.

Instruments

In the UK VET for young people and adults quality assurance systems are in place and compatible with the EQAVET Recommendation. The UK is implementing this through the

¹ NOTE: This factsheet concentrates on publicly-funded adult learning at a) – c) above.

² DeCicco, E. QualC – *Quality Assurance Models and Quality Marks in the UK*.

EQAVET network and working groups. Vocational Higher Education, whether undertaken in universities, other HE or FE institutions, is generally the responsibility of the HE funding and quality agencies.

Where VET courses lead to qualifications on the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF introduced 2010 for Northern Ireland, England and Wales) the QCF Quality Assurance regulations state that each awarding organisation (e.g. City and Guilds; Trinity College) is responsible for the quality and standards of its qualifications and each awarding organisation's governing body will be required to confirm whether it is complying with the recognition conditions to which it is subject is regulated by.

Scotland has its own system, the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) published its own quality framework for providers of courses leading to qualifications on the SCQF¹. The quality processes and criteria are: Process 1: Management of an SQA centre; Process 2: Approval to offer specific SQA qualifications; Process 3: Internal verification of internal assessment; Process 4: External verification of internal assessment; Process 5: Quality control of external assessment; Process 6: Validation of SQA qualifications.

When VET is delivered by Further Education Colleges they are autonomous, independent bodies with responsibility for QA of their provision. They are required by the funding government Department and as part of Inspection requirements to engage in self-evaluation and it is carried out within a context of quality frameworks and self-evaluation tools supplied by external QA bodies. The resulting self-evaluation reports contribute to and form a basis for external evaluation carried out by: a) National inspectorates (in each nation); b) Funding bodies; c) The relevant Departments of Education.

Publicly funded VET learning providers are required by the funding government Department and as part of Inspection requirements to keep records of all learners, including demographic data, the course(s) which each learner is taking and data on completion (whether the learner completes the course) and achievement (whether the learner gains the target qualification). Some of this data is collected primarily as the basis for the calculation of funding, but it is also used to monitor the quality of provision and to form the basis of "league tables" in which the success rates of individual providers can be compared. There is also a small proportion of the funding which is dependent on the learner having completed the course and achieved the target qualification.

The Inspectorate (in each of the four nations) is responsible for inspecting and reporting periodically on the quality of teaching, learning and management of publicly-funded individual colleges, private training providers and other learning providers. The reports of the Inspectorate are used to monitor the quality of provision, to provide 'benchmarks' against which providers can judge their own performance (by enabling comparisons with other providers of similar size and student characteristics), to ensure that action is taken where providers are failing and to provide examples of good practice.

¹ Scottish Qualifications Authority (2006) *SQA's Quality Framework: a guide for centres*.

The Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) was formed to accelerate quality improvement, increase participation and raise standards and achievement in the learning and skills sector in **England**.

'Skills that Work for Wales' (2008) signalled the introduction of a new **Quality and Effectiveness Framework (QEF)**¹ for the skills sector in 2009 to enable the Welsh Government to monitor learning providers' performance, ensure that public funding is used effectively and that there are possibilities to intervene if necessary. The framework places increased emphasis on providers themselves taking responsibility to work together to drive up quality and share good practice, through initiatives such as benchmarking and peer review. The Welsh Government carries out regular reviews of providers' performance and monitors their progress, but against a more streamlined set of performance indicators with the main focus being on learner outcomes and provider responsiveness. Providers with a good track record of delivering high quality learning undergo 'lighter touch' assessments.

Performance measures: Learner outcomes; Responsiveness: learner satisfaction & employer engagement; Leadership and management.

Higher Education for young people and for adults

HEIs in UK are autonomous, self-governing institutions. Each is responsible for the standards and quality of its academic awards and programmes and has its own internal procedures for attaining appropriate standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of its provision. HEIs in UK are supported in their internal evaluation procedures by reference points which aim to define clear and explicit academic standards provided by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). The Agency is an independent body, funded by subscriptions from universities and colleges of HE and through contracts with the funding bodies. However, the QAA is not a regulator. It has no powers over HEIs and no statutory authority.

HEIs are recommended to undertake internal quality assurance following the Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) approach but are autonomous as far as decision making in this area is concerned. Enhancement-led institutional review (ELIR) is one component of the quality enhancement framework (QEF), a radical approach to quality assurance and enhancement in higher education introduced in Scotland in 2003. The main focus of the ELIR method is to review an institution's approach to improving the student learning experience. It also examines an institution's ability to secure the academic standards of its awards and to manage the quality of the learning opportunities it provides for its students, including adult students.

External evaluation of HEIs throughout the UK is undertaken by the QAA. There are some differences between the arrangements in operation for reviewing quality and standards in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. In England and Northern Ireland, the method used is institutional audit. Scrutiny of internal quality assurance systems forms

¹ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/learningproviders/raisingqualityandstandards/?lang=en>

a central part of the institutional audit process of external evaluation. The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) has a statutory duty to ensure that provision is made for assessing the quality of the education it funds

The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) Northern Ireland, Universities UK (UUK) and GuildHE are currently working together on the future development of the quality assurance system for higher education in England and Northern Ireland. As a result a new institutional audit method is being used from 2011-2012.

Periodic review of institutions is carried out, typically, every five years and normally involves external review teams largely made up of senior staff from UK higher education institutions and the professions. Comparative data on the performance of higher education institutions in widening participation, student retention, learning and teaching output, research, and employment of graduates are published annually by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) for all publicly funded HEIs in the UK.

Evaluation of research in HEIs is carried out every few years on behalf of all the UK higher education funding bodies through the Research Excellence Framework (REF). This monitoring considers how effectively a programme achieves its stated aims, and the success of students in attaining the intended learning outcomes. It is usually undertaken by the department providing the programme, and often involves a programme team appraising its own performance at the end of an academic year.

Further Education colleges provide VET and general education for those aged 16+. The primary responsibility for improving the quality of provision in publicly funded further education (FE) lies with the further education colleges themselves, which are autonomous, self-governing institutions. But all providers have been required by the funding government Department and as part of Inspection requirements to carry out **an annual self-assessment** covering all aspects of their provision. The self-assessment report, together with data on student outcomes, became the starting point for external inspection.

Self-evaluation in the FE and AL Sectors

NI - Guidance on quality assurance, including self-evaluation and its links to inspection, is available in, 'Improving Quality: Raising Standards: Arrangements for the Inspection of Further Education Programmes in Northern Ireland' (ETI, 2010). Providers must submit their annual self-evaluation reports and improvement plans to the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) for monitoring and approval. The evaluation of the effectiveness of a college's self-evaluation arrangements forms an important part of external inspections.

England - The requirement for self-evaluation applies equally to all providers in the FE sector, including providers of adult and community learning, whether provided directly by local authorities (LAs) or secured by them under contract from further education colleges community groups or voluntary organisations. The criteria set out in the '*Common inspection framework for inspecting post-16 education and training*' are now expected to be the starting point for self-assessment. The inspection report looks at how learners

have progressed into further education and employment in relation to their starting point. It takes into account: support, guidance and encouragement; how well learners' needs and interests are met and their results; the quality of provision; leadership and management; different subject sector areas. These headings provide the starting point for self-assessment which in turn forms one of the areas inspected by the external inspection. The self-assessment process, report and outcomes are also reviewed by the funding Department's review of provision.

Framework for excellence (FfE) is a government provided **tool for performance management and quality improvement** in the FE sector. FfE was designed in consultation with the sector and other partners and was fully implemented in 2010. FfE is formed from **a set of performance indicators** that cover aspects of a college or provider's provision such as: success rates ; views of learners and employers; learner destinations. Performance of providers is assessed annually and scored against comparative data with scores available for each performance indicator where applicable. A range of performance indicators is required by law to be made available to students, prospective students and the wider community in England.

The **Excellence Gateway**, delivered by the **Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS)** through collaboration with learning providers, Government agencies and a range of sector organisations, is an online service for everyone working in FE in England. It provides examples of effective practice and support documents to help develop knowledge and skills.

WALES - The 'Quality Handbook' (Welsh Assembly Government, 2009) sets out the requirements for providers of further education and adult and community learning to submit an annual self-assessment report and quality development plan. The 'Self-Assessment Guidance' (Welsh Government, 2011) sets requirements for providers to produce an annual self-assessment report (SAR) and quality development plan (QDP). This self-assessment is the starting point for the Department for Education and Skills' monitoring of performance in the annual **Provider Performance Review (PPR)**. The Department for Education and Skills - DfES is committed to securing quality provision, expanding choice and delivering better value for money. As part of this commitment DfES officers are working with Further Education Colleges, School Sixth Forms, Work-Based Learning Providers and their representative bodies to undertake a ground-breaking project "Benchmarking of post-16 Education in Wales (other than HE)". The benchmarking project has established an evidence-based model that can be accessed via a web-based self-assessment tool hosted by Tribal Consultants¹.

'Skills that Work for Wales' (2008) signalled the introduction of a new **Quality and Effectiveness Framework (QEF)** for the skills sector in 2009. This 'new generation' framework developed in close partnership with Estyn, provider representative bodies, learners and other stakeholders gives a greater degree of freedom and flexibility to those which consistently demonstrate their effectiveness. QEF is based on a small number of core indicators: Learner outcomes: Learner outcomes reports (LORs); Tribal Benchmarking tool;

¹ <https://www.tribalbenchmarking.co.uk/Wales/Home.aspx>

Value Added; National Comparators; Responsiveness: Employer engagement; Learner satisfaction; Learner involvement; Leadership and management: Self-assessment; Peer Review; Education for Sustainable Education and Global Citizenship (ESDGC). As well as the core indicators, there are a number of other aspects of providers' performance which are not necessarily quantifiable, but which remain important to determining overall effectiveness to be measured mainly through provider self-assessment.

Scotland - FE Colleges are expected by the funding government Department and as part of Inspection requirements to engage in self-evaluation and improvement planning for themselves.

External Inspection of FE and AL Sectors

NI - The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) evaluates the quality of the organisation's improvement planning through district visits and scrutiny of their self-evaluation report and improvement plan. Each organisation's improvement plan is graded, and feedback provided to both the DEL and the organisation. 'Improving Quality: Raising Standards (IQ:RS)' (ETI, 2010) is the Inspectorate's quality assurance framework for further education.

England - Inspection of further and adult education is the responsibility of **Ofsted** (the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) as per the 'Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills from September 2009' (Ofsted, 2010). Following a rigorous and demanding regime of QA and regulation in the last decade, well performing FE institutions have now a 'lighter touch' inspection regime. Ofsted, the inspection body, now concentrates on external monitoring and support of the institutions that have evident performance problems. This development is considered 'a big turnaround from the last 10-15 years of compliance and centralised planning'

WALES – see case study

Scotland – The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) is responsible for external QA in FE colleges, including their contributions to training and to CLD. It contracts Education Scotland (formerly HMIE)) to provide a range of evaluative and enhancement activity. There is no formal evaluation of training provision outwith colleges. Local authorities carry responsibility for quality assurance of Community Learning and Development (CLD) provision by their own staff or by 'Arm's Length Organisations' or trusts, which provide CLD on their behalf. Education Scotland undertakes external evaluation in this area. A review of each college is conducted every 4 years, on the basis of 'External Quality Arrangements for Scotland's Colleges' (HMIE, 2008). The summary evaluations of each review are conveyed through four "confidence statements" relating to learner progress and outcomes, the learning experience, learner engagement, and quality culture.

In all four countries where providers of what is termed 'Adult Community Learning' or 'Community Learning and Development (Scotland) (non-formal adult learning, in practice) receive public funding, they come under the external inspection system of the national inspectorate and are reported on in the annual reports of the respective inspectorate. Adult community learning that is not publicly-funded does not come under the remit of the Inspectorate in Scotland, or indeed in any of the other three UK countries.

Education Scotland uses the publication *How Good Is Our Community Learning and Development?* (2) as the basis of evaluating **learning communities**. Education Scotland inspects learning communities alongside the inspections of secondary schools. The learning community inspections focus on provision for young people and adults and for community capacity building in the learning community represented by the secondary school catchment area. Learning community inspections also examine improvements in performance including trends of improvement over time and also how well the service is improving its work through self-evaluation.

Regulations regarding teacher qualifications in FE Colleges

NI - The Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) (Further Education) is a mandatory qualification for all new entrants to teaching posts in FE colleges who are permanent, full-time and associate lecturers and who are not qualified teachers. In 2009, Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) (the then sector skills council for the lifelong learning workforce) published professional standards for teachers, tutors and trainers in the lifelong learning (further education) sector in Northern Ireland. The new standards are designed for all teachers, tutors and tutor role trainers in the lifelong learning sector and underpin the Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) (Further Education). In 2007, professional status for teachers in the further education sector as 'licensed practitioners' was introduced. All new entrants are now expected to work towards the new professional status of Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) for those undertaking a full teaching role, or Associate Teacher, Learning and Skills (ATLS) for those undertaking less than a full teaching role.

England - The Further Education Teachers' Qualifications Regulations (England) 2007 require all new teachers appointed from 1st September 2007 to hold or acquire within a specified period of time. Having gained an appropriate qualification teachers can gain licensed practitioner status as either Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) or Associate Teacher Learning and Skills (ATLS) by successfully completing Professional Formation. New professional standards for teachers, tutors and trainers developed by LLUK were published in 2007. A 'Guide for using the new professional standards for teachers, tutors and trainers' was published by LLUK in 2011.

Wales - The pay, working time, professional duties and conditions of employment for teachers in further education colleges are a matter for national negotiation but are not subject to regulation. Nor are recruitment procedures regulated. These are all matters for the employer, which is the FE institution. However teaching qualification requirements for teachers working in FE colleges are regulated by law. The 'Professional Standards for Teachers, Tutors and Trainers in the Lifelong Learning Sector in Wales' were published in 2007 by LLUK. The standards cover the same areas as the English ones alongside standards addressing the distinct needs of Wales such as bilingualism, cultural diversity and sustainable development and global citizenship.

Scotland - Teachers in colleges may undertake training leading to a Teaching Qualification (Further Education). The majority do so. They may also thereafter register with the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS). There is, however, no legal requirement for them to do either. There are no specific arrangements for the training as teachers or providers of voca-

tional training outwith colleges. Initial qualifying training for community learning and development practice is at degree level. The training involves both academic and practical work. The guidelines for community education training (encompassing adult education, community work and youth work) were published by the Community Education Validation and Endorsement (CeVe) committee, the role of which has now been taken over by the Standards Council for Community Learning and Development. All courses of training for professional community education practitioners must be approved by this body. The Scottish Government Lifelong Learning Directorate is taking forward a national training programme for adult literacy and numeracy practitioners, providing improved training options for volunteer tutors and professional staff.

Challenges

Quality systems are not in place or embedded in all organisations providing adult training and learning, in particular those which are not publicly-funded and are therefore not subject to an ESTYN inspection; ii) a lack of resources to implement quality systems; iii) issues with the quality of practitioners delivering learning and training; iv) no coherent QA model designed to be applied specifically for informal & non-formal learning; v) European project funding, on which much of informal & non formal learning delivery is dependent on, is increasingly predicated on employment outcomes, threatening ACL which is for purposes other than employment. These issues are considered less than optimal for quality assurance of adult learning¹.

¹ DeCicco, E. QualC – *Quality Assurance Models and Quality Marks in the UK*.

28 Iceland

A) Quality assurance systems: an overview

HE	The legal framework covering higher education in Iceland is the Higher Education Institution Act no. 63/2006. This act applies to educational institutions providing higher education leading to a degree and which have been accredited by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.
VET	As all education and training in Iceland, continuous vocational education is open to all and therefore special provisions for people over a certain age are not necessary. The Adult Education Act was passed by parliament in the spring of 2010. According to the second article of the Act, among its main objectives are to create the necessary scope and solutions to meet the demands of industry for increased knowledge and competences of employees. In Iceland the accreditation of education and training providers does not make a difference between public and private institutions: both are subject to the Adult Education Act of March 2010. The Adult Education Act states that education and training providers should make an effort to ensure that courses are compatible with other studies, and that studies can be evaluated and validated in order to receive credits within the formal education system. Curricula or course descriptions must be certified by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture or by a body assigned the task by the Minister. This certification confirms that the course fulfils the format and quality requirements set by the Ministry. Financial accounts must be signed by a chartered accountant and be made accessible to the National Audit Office. Accreditations may be revoked if an education or training provider no longer fulfils the conditions of the Adult Education Act. Accreditation of education and training providers The Minister of Education, Science and Culture, or a body assigned the task by the Minister, provides accreditation to adult education and training providers.
Non-formal	(1) the Adult Education Act (2010) includes articles on accreditation and certification, evaluation and quality control, funding, information provision and the recognition of prior learning. This Act does not apply to non formal learning and education that is based on legislation for upper secondary or higher education.

B) Further elaboration on quality assurance in the country

Legal framework

Since 2005, the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (mennta- og menningar-málaráðuneyti), on behalf of the government, has lead intensive work towards the for-

mation and implementation of a comprehensive national lifelong learning strategy. This resulted in 3 Acts on pre-primary, compulsory and upper secondary education, which were passed by the Parliament in 2008. The main emphasis was on “co-operation and continuity between school levels, improved governance, increased decentralisation and autonomy, quality assurance and evaluation and the enhancement and improvement of vocational education and training as well as flexibility and second chance for those who drop out... [T]he main emphasis [is] on flexibility and to make it easier to combine academic and vocational education so that those who choose vocational lines will have easier access to Higher Education Institutions should they choose to do so. (Source: Joint Report Education and Training 2010 National Report Iceland.¹

Continuous education and training: The Act on continuous education and training was passed by the Parliament in the spring of 2010 (available in Icelandic at²). Its main emphasis was on easing the access to education and training for those with limited education, although it was stressed that everyone should have the right to further training.

VET: In the Upper Secondary School Act (nr. 92/12008, available in English at³) puts VET completely on par with general education. Students graduating with a VET degree will have the same rights to university education as students from general programmes. Each university faculty defines exactly its access requirements, which may e.g. be a certain level of knowledge in certain subjects (e.g. mathematics, physics and languages). It will also be possible for schools to develop new degrees, combining VET and general education. For each new study programme the schools must have an authorisation from the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture⁴.

CVET: As all education and training in Iceland, continuous vocational education is open to all and therefore special provisions for people over a certain age are not necessary. The Adult Education Act was passed by parliament in the spring of 2010 (available in English at⁵). According to the second article of the Act, among its main objectives are to create the necessary scope and solutions to meet the demands of industry for increased knowledge and competences of employees.

General Adult Education: The most important act concerning adult education and training is the Adult Education Act, which was adopted in 2010. This Act focuses on competences for the labour market, stating the overall objectives of adult education to be the development of solutions to meet the industry’s demands for increased knowledge and competences among employees, and the provision of opportunities for people to increase their vocational skills. The main target groups are people with little formal education and with reduced educational and professional opportunities; they should be provided with suitable education and training, not only to increase their employability, but also to increase their opportunities for active participation in society. Beyond the needs of these specific target groups, the Act also aims to increase the general educational level and to strengthen the educational system as a whole. The Act includes articles on accreditation and certification, evaluation and quality control, funding, informa-

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/natreport07/ice_en.pdf.

² <http://www.stjornartidindi.is/DocumentActions.aspx?ActionType=Open&documentID=48a5fa07-5935-4e2f-8cdc-359e4dbee78d>.

³ http://www.nymenntastefna.is/media/frettir//Upper_secondary_school_Act.pdf

⁴ Cedefop Refernet p. 14

⁵ <http://eng.menntamalaraduneyti.is/media/MRN-PDF-Althjodlegt/Adult-Education-Act.pdf>

tionnprovision and the recognition of prior learning. This Act does not apply to education that is based on legislation for upper secondary or higher education.

Upper Secondary Education: The Upper Secondary School Act of 2008 also covers certain aspects of adult education, such as evening classes and distance learning courses. According to the Act, schools may also establish Lifelong Learning Centres, in cooperation with such parties as municipalities, employers, employees' organisations and companies. The 1997 Act on Labour Market measures provides for the right of the unemployed to study in connection with a job-seeking plan compiled by regional employment centres in consultation with the job seeker. In addition, a new act on guidance counsellors was adopted in May 2009 (35/2009). It stipulates that the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture has to grant permission for each person who wishes to use the title educational and vocational counsellor based on the necessary and relevant university education.

The Eurydice report from 2009/10 stresses that the same rules apply to quality assurance in public adult and continuing education as in the different levels of the school system. (European Commission, 2009/10)

Instruments

Higher Education: Quality Enhancement Framework for Icelandic Higher Education. The Icelandic Framework for Quality Enhancement (QEF) were introduced at a conference the 18. oktober 2011¹

Upper Secondary Education: The Upper Secondary School Act 92/2008 makes new provisions for both internal and external evaluations of school programmes. One of the main aspects to be internally evaluated is quality. Thus, article 41 states that "Each upper secondary school systematically evaluates the achievements and quality of school activities".

Continuous Education and Training: According to the Act on Continuous Education and Training, the Minister of Education, Science and Culture has to validate all curricula for this type of training. This validation means that certain quality standards have been met.²

In Iceland the **accreditation of education and training providers** does not make a difference between public and private institutions: both are subject to the Adult Education Act of March 2010. The Adult Education Act states that education and training providers should make an effort to ensure that courses are compatible with other studies, and that studies can be evaluated and validated in order to receive credits within the formal education system.

Curricula or course descriptions must be certified by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture or by a body assigned the task by the Minister. This certification confirms that the course fulfils the format and quality requirements set by the Ministry. Financial accounts must be signed by a chartered accountant and be made accessible to the Na-

¹ <http://www.rannis.is/english/news/nr/2506/conference-on-quality-assurance-in-icelandic-higher-education/>

² Act on Continuous Education and Training, 27/2010, [http://www.stjornartidindi.is/DocumentActions.aspx?ActionType=Open&documentID=48a5fa07-5935-4e2f-8cdc-359e4dbee78d.\)](http://www.stjornartidindi.is/DocumentActions.aspx?ActionType=Open&documentID=48a5fa07-5935-4e2f-8cdc-359e4dbee78d.)

tional Audit Office. Accreditations may be revoked if an education or training provider no longer fulfils the conditions of the Adult Education Act.

Two forms of criteria have been developed to quality assure adult and continuing education: the Accreditation for Lifelong Learning (ALL); and the Recognition of Quality in Lifelong Learning (RECALL). Article 7 in the Adult Education Act indicate that the Minister of Education, Science and Culture, or a body assigned the task by the Minister, provides accreditation to adult education and training providers. The accreditation shall be based on evaluation of the following: a) teaching and learning facilities; b) organisation and supervision of studies; c) curricula or course descriptions; d) the competences of adult education providers, with regard to their knowledge and experience; e) financial issues and insurance, and f) the existence of a quality control system focused on adult education.

The Lifelong Learning Strategy aims to improve governance, increase decentralisation and autonomy and **improve quality assurance and evaluation**, at all educational sectors, including adult education. One objective of this strategy is that under the Adult Education Act, accredited providers of adult education and training are obliged to provide the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and the Board of the Education and Training Fund with information regarding their education and training activities, results and development, financial provisions, statistics, and any other information that is considered necessary. Education and training providers must also carry out a systematic evaluation of the quality of their activities and are obliged to publish information about their quality control process, results and plans for improvement. Additionally, the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture carries out surveys, analyses and research in order to ensure the quality of adult education.

Evaluation and quality control in Adult education

According to the adult education act from 2010, the objectives of evaluation and quality control for adult education are firstly, to ensure that education and training providers operate according to provisions of the Act; secondly, to increase the quality of education and training according to this Act, and thirdly, to ensure that the rights of individuals, that use the services provided on the basis of this Act, are respected. The act describes as well that the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture administers the collection and dissemination of information about adult education with regard to its policy making and supervisory role. Furthermore, education and training providers shall carry out a systematic evaluation of the quality and results of their activities and publish information about their internal quality control and subsequent plans for improvement. Finally, the Minister of Education, Science and Culture shall administer surveys, analyses and research that aim at ensuring the general quality of adult education and a general understanding and knowledge of related issues. Implementation of these tasks shall normally be entrusted to a neutral body.

Responsible bodies

Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (mennta- og menningarmála-ráðuneyti): The Ministry furthermore bears the responsibility of overseeing quality in education and training and is in charge of distributing funds to the schools and training centres.

Ministry of Welfare (velferðarráðuneyti): Bears the formal (legal) responsibility for training in the labour market according to *lög um starfsmenntun í atvinnulífinu* – the Act on Training in the Labour Market number 19/1992. In real terms this means mainly education and training of the unemployed, where Vinnumálastofnun (The Directorate of Labour) and the local employment offices are responsible for implementing training offers or guiding their clients to such offers which other training bodies may initiate.

Regional and local authorities play no role in IVET as they (municipalities) are responsible for compulsory education only and at that level, no IVET is on offer.

Challenges

Quality assurance and evaluation is an important aim of the Icelandic Lifelong Learning Strategy. Teacher education is being redesigned so as to be in line with the Comprehensive National Lifelong Learning Strategy, taking into account both initial and in-service training, school development, assessment procedures, production of learning materials and support for schools and teachers to develop and adopt a competence-based approach. Curricula are also being revised, based on the eight Key Competences recommended by the European Union in 2006. In 2010, drafts for the new curriculum guides have been published for consultation. The plan is to release the new guides in early 2011.

Improving the quality of adult education is an important objective of the 2010 Adult Education Act which stipulates that the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture must provide accreditation to adult education providers based on an evaluation of performance in key.

The Ministry also administers surveys, analyses and research aimed at ensuring the general quality of adult education. Additionally, education providers are obliged to evaluate their own quality, assess the results of their activities and publish information about their internal quality control procedures and plans for improvement.

29 Norway

A) Quality assurance systems: an overview

HE	The Act relating to Universities and University Colleges (hereafter the Higher Education Act) applies to all higher education, both state and private. The work done by NOKUT on inspection of the educational quality in Higher Education are grounded in the regulation "Forskrift om tilsyn med utdanningskvaliteten i høyere utdanning (tilsynsforskriften)" from January 27. 2011.
VET	The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training is responsible for the development of subject curricula and development, supervision and quality control of primary, lower secondary and upper secondary general and vocational education and training. Norway enjoys a high degree of decentralisation, and in Knowledge Promotion reform of 2006, the central government delegated more responsibility to the local level. The 429 municipalities own and run the public primary and lower secondary schools, while the 19 counties are responsible for all aspects of public upper secondary general education and VET, including apprenticeship training. Municipalities and counties receive financial support from the central government. Adult Education Act (Lov om voksenopplæring) regulates different types of adult training not covered by the Education Act. Education and training for adults is provided by a variety of public and private institutions. Among the most important are private adult learning study associations (studieforbund) that offer primary and secondary education, but also IVET and CVET. Labour market training, work-based training and distance education. Quality is not mentioned directly in the law and in the regulations, but the many topics presented can be seen as a kind of quality standards and criteria for good quality. The Act relating to Post-secondary Vocational Education and Training (Lov om fagskoler 2003, latest amendment 2010) regulates public and private post-secondary vocational education and training at ISCED 4 level, with courses and programmes of 6 months' to 2 years' duration. Education and training under this law is not part of higher education. The main purposes of the Act relating to post-secondary vocational education and training is to ensure and promote quality provision, and to ensure student rights. The amendments to the law in December 2010 relate to the introduction of a national qualifications framework, to the recognition of prior learning and to the use of credits. The Act (LOV 2003-06-20 nr 56: Lov om fagskoleutdanning (fagskoleloven) mention directly the roles of NOKUT in relation to securing the quality of these educations and their institutions. NOKUT was established in 2003 as part of the Quality Reform legislation on higher edu-

	cation. NOKUT's areas of responsibility and operational mechanisms are regulated by the Act Relating to Universities and Colleges, the Act Relating to Tertiary Vocational Education and the associated Regulations issued by the Ministry of Education and Research. NOKUT's professional independence means that its accreditation and recognition decisions cannot be overruled by the Ministry. The National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (Nasjonalt organ for kvalitet i utdanningen — NOKUT) is responsible for the accreditation of both higher education and post-secondary vocational education and training.
Non-formal	(1) VOX accredits adult education associations and online schools under the new Act for adult education, introduced in 2010

B) Further elaboration on quality assurance in the country

Legal framework

Whereas legislative power lies with the Norwegian Parliament (Stortinget), the Ministry of Education and Research has overall responsibility for national policy development and administration of mainstream education and vocational training at all levels, including adult education. Operational responsibilities for the development of curricula, examinations and quality control are mandated to other public bodies at national and county levels.

The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (Utdanningsdirektoratet) is responsible for the development of subject curricula and development, supervision and quality control of primary, lower secondary and upper secondary general and vocational education and training. Norway enjoys a high degree of decentralisation, and in Knowledge Promotion reform (Kunnskapsløftet) of 2006, the central government delegated more responsibility to the local level. The 429 municipalities own and run the public primary and lower secondary schools, while the 19 counties are responsible for all aspects of public upper secondary general education and VET, including apprenticeship training. Municipalities and counties receive financial support from the central government.

General adult education

The Adult Education Act (LOV-2009-06-19-95 Voksenopplæringsloven) cover approval of state support to

- Approved Studieforbund
- Approved nettskoler
- Private schools with right to public support¹

¹ www.lovdata.no/all/nl-20090619-095.html

Quality is not mentioned directly in the law and in the regulations, but the many topics presented can be seen as a kind of quality standards and criteria for good quality.¹ This act regulates different types of adult training not covered by the Education Act. Education and training for adults is provided by a variety of public and private institutions. Among the most important are private adult learning study associations (studieforbund) that offer primary and secondary education, but also IVET and CVET. Labour market training, work-based training and distance education. It places significant responsibilities on private adult education associations for the delivery of CVET courses not regulated by national curricula and certification. Recognised IVET courses for adults with work experience are also to be developed. These may be organised by higher training institutions or accredited study associations and financed by the Ministry.

The Education Act (LOV-1998-07-17-61 Lov om grunnskolen og den vidaregåande opplæringa (opplæringslova)) does not mention quality directly, but the many regulations and requirements can be seen as quality standards eg.

- The adults rights to education
- The organization of the educations
- The competence expectation to the teachers
- The contents of the education
- Guidance
- Inspection, control and complains²

All Formal post secondary adult education

The key legal framework for quality approaches, standards, accreditation and inspection are in the regulation (Forskrifter frå Kunnskapsdepartementet) from 01.02.2010: **“Forskrift om kvalitetssikring og kvalitetsutvikling i høgere utdanning og fagskoleutdanning”**³

The regulation specifies quality assurance and quality development within all kinds of higher education and CVET (fagskoleutdanning).

The regulation specifies both the general rules and the specific rules for the individual types of education. The regulation covers the following topics:

General clause and provision (Chapter 1)

This chapter covers areas like the objectives, limitations, works on inspection and governance of NOKUT together with the specific task and tools.

Internal system for quality assurance for universities and CVET (Høgskoler) (Chapter 2)

This is the key chapter in relation to quality assurance and covers topics like the requirements to a quality assurance system, the evaluation of the institutions system for qual-

¹ http://www.lovdata.no/cgi-wift/wiftldles?doc=/app/gratis/www/docroot/all/nl-20090619-095.html&emne=VOKSENOPPLÆRINGSLOV*&

² www.lovdata.no/all/nl-19980717-061.html

³ <http://www.lovdata.no/cgi-wift/wiftldles?doc=/sf/sf/sf-20100201-0096.html>

ity assurance, the rights to refuse to apply for accreditation and finally the authority to establish studies and educations.

Accreditation of studies/educations within higher education (Chapter 3.)

This chapter covers the rules, regulations and standards in relation to accreditation of studies and institutions. How accredited studies and institutions are revised and finally how to apply for accreditation.

Joint degrees (Chapter 4)

This chapter covers the institutions access to give degrees and VET in cooperation with other institutions,

CVET (Fagskoleutdanning) (Chapter 5)

This chapter covers approval of educational offers according to the Act on CVET (lov om fagskoleutdanning), approval of providers, securing of quality, revision of the approved educations and institutions, test arrangements.

Approval of other higher education (Chapter 6).

This chapter covers approval of educations at same level as Norwegian Higher Education and the institutions approval of foreign Higher Education.

Complains (Chapter 7)

This chapter covers the participants in, the structures for complains together with the decisions made by the complain board.

Final regulations (Chapter 8)

This chapter covers when the regulation starts and other practical matters.

Finally, are there made a number of comments and explanations to each of the paragraphs.

CVET

The Act relating to Post-secondary Vocational Education and Training (Lov om fagskoler 2003, latest amendment 2010) regulates public and private post-secondary vocational education and training at ISCED 4 level, with courses and programmes of 6 months' to 2 years' duration. Education and training under this law is not part of higher education. The main purposes of the Act relating to post-secondary vocational education and training is to ensure and promote quality provision, and to ensure student rights. The amendments to the law in December 2010 relate to the introduction of a national qualifications framework, to the recognition of prior learning and to the use of credits.

The Act (LOV 2003-06-20 nr 56: Lov om fagskoleutdanning (fagskoleloven) mentions directly the roles of NOKUS in relation to securing the quality of these educations and their institutions.¹

Higher Education

Higher education is in Norway defined as research-based education and training. Through a higher education reform in 2003, the Quality Reform (Kvalitetsreformen), Norway completely changed its degree structure and implemented the Bologna Process

¹ www.lovdata.no/all/nl-20030620-056.html

3+2+3 model: three-year bachelor's degrees, two-year master's degrees and three-year PhD degrees.

The Act relating to Universities and University Colleges (hereafter the Higher Education Act) applies to all higher education, both state and private. The purpose of the act is to make provisions for Norwegian higher education institutions to

- a) provide higher education at a high international level.
- b) conduct research and academic and artistic development work at a high international level.
- c) disseminate knowledge of the institution's activities and promote the understanding and application of scientific and artistic methods and results in public administration, cultural life, and business and industry.

The Higher Education Act regulates organisational and management aspects, provides for the recognition of study programmes, examination and certification, for quality assurance as well as for the learning environment of students. It also regulates employment matters that are specific to higher education. The act is relevant for both IVET and CVET, as the higher education institutions offer both through regular study programmes.

The work done by NOKUT on inspection of the educational quality in Higher Education are grounded in the regulation "Forskrift om tilsyn med utdanningskvaliteten i høyere utdanning (tilsynsforskriften)" from January 27. 2011.¹

Non-formal adult education

Folk High School Act (Lov om folkehøgskoler — 2002, latest amendments 2006)

This act regulates the organisation and activities at public and private institutions and defines the terms for receiving state financial support. The folk high schools provide education and training for (young) adults. These folk high schools neither use centrally recognised curricula nor have examinations, the general purpose being to provide education based on clearly defined values and norms. Some schools offer vocational courses.

VET

The Act relating to Master Craftsman Certificates in Craft and other Industries (Lov om mesterbrev — 1986) establishes the framework for the master craftsman certificate. It stipulates that only a person awarded the master craftsman certificate (mesterbrev) is entitled to call himself "a master craftsman" (mester). The Ministry of Trade and Industry (Nærings- og handelsdepartementet) appoints the Master Craftsman Committee (mesterbrevnemnda), which develops policy and legislation, and administrates the scheme. The Master Craftsman Committee determines the requirements that shall be made to training and practice for obtaining a master craftsman certificate, and awards the certificate. The Master Craftsman Committee decides which subjects shall be included in the scheme. Several programmes at the post-secondary (ISCED 4) vocational colleges satisfy the requirements for Master Craftsman Certificates.

¹ www.nokut.no

30 Turkey

A) Quality assurance systems: an overview

HE	Regulation for Academic Evaluation and Quality Improvement in Higher Education Institutions regulates activities regarding evaluation of education, instruction and research activities as well as administrative services of higher education institutions, improving quality of them, verifying and recognizing quality level of them by means of independent "external auditing " process. The Turkish National Agency for Higher Education will be responsible for implementing these evaluations and reviews, and these should take place every fourth year, instead of every six years as has been the case earlier. In accordance with the regulations Higher Education Academic Evaluation and Quality Improvement Committee (YODEK) entered upon its duty Guide for Academic Evaluation and Quality Improvement in Higher Education Institutions that was accomplished by YODEK in May 2006
VET	Quality standards for VET providers in Turkey do exist. VET policy is conducted at a national level; however, a national approach for quality assurance is yet to be developed. No national Reference Point is identified or established in Turkey as yet. However, EQAVET liaises with MONE on the quality assurance issues in VET. According to Besim Durgun (a visiting scholar in BIBB) great progress has been made during the last two decades in the Turkish VET system in terms of outcome-based education and training. Qualifications development has a built-in quality assurance mechanism: from skills needs analysis, occupational standards, training standards/qualifications, to assessment and certification based on unitized/modularized qualifications. Bearing in mind that international and bilateral projects play a key role in order to promoting quality assurance in VET, the Turkish government has launched international project together with, for example, France, Germany, and Japan in different vocational schools. In general, these international and bilateral projects aim at developing curricula, training technical and vocational teachers home and abroad, renewing machines and equipment, and finding out additional resources outside the regular budget.
Non-formal	There is no quality framework (legislation / accreditation for formal adult education / second chance, and for the non formal part of AL)

B) Further elaboration on quality assurance in the country

Legal framework

So far there is no clear policy on quality in adult education. However there are positive signs towards this direction. A law on quality can be put in place however the whole procedure is highly complex as in Turkey, legislative arrangements at different levels are

centrally realized. Law quality arrangements are made by TBMM (the Turkish Grand National Assembly), statutes by Board of Ministers and regulations by Ministries, Board of Ministers or authorized institutions such as the Higher Education Council-YOK and the Inter-University Council. On the subject of legislative arrangements related with education, beginning level enterprises and provisions are generally made by MONE (Ministry of National Education) and presented to the government. However, for a law quality arrangement, related commissions of TBMM may propose a law. YOK may propose a law related with tertiary education by means of MONE. Then, Ministry of Labour and Social Security may make a study and demand new legal arrangements on a subject related with vocational education. Or, out of all these, law proposals prepared by means of the cooperative study of institutions may be offered to the authoritative organs.

For the time being and by taking the determination and analysis of current status and the specified education needs into consideration, a School Based Vocational Development Guide is prepared to support the vocational and personal development of teachers along with the determination of General Qualifications for Teachers and Specific Field Competencies. The application is expected to make significant contributions to the enhancement of education quality via on-the-job development of information and understanding, skills and qualifications, values and responsibilities of teachers.

According to Besim Durgun (a visiting scholar in BIBB¹) great progress has been made during the last two decades in the Turkish VET system in terms of outcome-based education and training. Qualifications development has a built-in quality assurance mechanism: from skills needs analysis, occupational standards, training standards/ qualifications, to assessment and certification based on unitized/modularized qualifications. The modular approach has an advantage to react to changes in the industry in a speedy way. It also allows permeability between different sectors, formal, non-formal and informal as well as different qualification levels, thereby promoting LLL. In addition, qualifications framework in Turkey is regulated by a tripartite semi-autonomous umbrella institution, namely VQA. This legal body is still in its childhood stage fostered by a newly launched IPA project to support its development.

In addition to the above, there is MEGEPs Policy Paper and Strategy Document for Lifelong Learning (LLL) in Turkey. International and bilateral projects play a key role in order to promoting quality assurance in VET. MEGEP (or English SVET - Strengthening the Vocational Education and Training System in Turkey) is an EU funded project within MONE that aims to improve vocational training and education system of Turkey. As an expected project output, the project developed the first Lifelong Learning Policy Paper in 2006. The policy paper recommends change in seven key areas:

1. System, Infrastructure and Funding of Lifelong Learning.
2. The Collection and Use of Data for Monitoring and Decision-Making.
3. Decentralisation and Devolution, Civil Society and Collaboration.
4. Information, Advice and Guidance to Learners, and a Culture of Learning.
5. The Development of Staff Capacity.
6. International Co-operation.
7. Quality Assurance and Accreditation.

¹ Extract from an interview conducted by Helena Sabbagh on behalf of DEQA-VET, in Bonn, 6 June 2011. The full interview is available at: <http://www.deqa-vet.de/de/2136.php>

Furthermore, in higher education area, the quality awareness and studies of higher education institutions in Turkey gain speed. Specifically the Bologna Process formed a significant knowledge and experience in this issue. Yet, excluding the foreseen applications within Higher Education Law, No. 2547 a quality assurance system could not be established within national frame in accordance with the international developments as per date. The most important leap to solve this deficit is fulfilled by Regulation for Academic Evaluation and Quality Improvement in Higher Education Institutions (see the following section).

Differences between VET, HE and NVAL

Bearing in mind that international and bilateral projects play a key role in order to promoting quality assurance in VET, the Turkish government has launched international project together with, for example, France, Germany, and Japan in different vocational schools. In general, these international and bilateral projects aim at developing curricula, training technical and vocational teachers home and abroad, renewing machines and equipment, and finding out additional resources outside the regular budget.

Large and medium scale enterprises, which constitute 64% of the employment in Turkey, seem to realise the importance of training quite recently. Some of the large-scale enterprises form training units and provide regular trainings. The most significant problem of these enterprises is the fact that these trainings are given by inadequate and even sometimes incompetent individuals and organisations. On the other hand, small-scale enterprises lack any system in identifying training needs and planning training activities. At these enterprises, the trainings are mostly offered in the form of “learning through on-the-job practice”. Training is generally approached as an unaffordable high-cost activity, which therefore leads to employing non-professional and non-specialist trainers for these purposes. Besides, off-the-job training is perceived as a waste of time and manpower; and even when it is provided free of charge, employees are not allowed to receive these trainings. Quality of the employment provided by SMEs is aimed to be improved through the philosophy of lifelong learning.

Finally in HE area, in recent years the knowledge that arises from Bologna Process and the cooperation process between various higher education institutions and foreign accreditation institutions has led to new formations. As mentioned in the previous section, first of these is the Regulation that arranges the issues related with higher education area such as academic evaluation and quality improvement (Regulation for Academic Evaluation and Quality Improvement in Higher Education Institutions). This Regulation is followed by organizations such as “Higher Education Academic Evaluation and Quality Improvement Committee” (YODEK) on YOK level and “Academic Evaluation and Quality Improvement Council” (ADEK) on academic level as well as publication of quality guide.

Instruments

Quality standards for VET providers in Turkey do exist. VET policy is conducted at a national level; however, a national approach for quality assurance is yet to be developed. No national Reference Point is identified or established in Turkey as yet. However, EQAVET liaises with MONE on the quality assurance issues in VET. According to Besim experts the quality control in the Turkish public educational system is carried out at two levels: a) a. Basic and secondary formal and non-formal education; b) b. Tertiary education institutions.

External supervision and evaluation processes are carried out by two different supervisory bodies of Ministry of National Education (MONE) Board of Inspection - Ministerial

inspectors at the national and central level and Primary Education Inspectors – at the provincial and sub-provincial levels. Supervision conducted by ‘external supervision and evaluation’ activities differ from one educational level to the other. Evaluation of the teachers who work at pre-primary and primary school levels is carried out by the primary education inspectors. Supervisors prepare the reports about the schools, administrators’ and the teachers’ performances. Supervision of the secondary school teachers is carried out by the ministerial inspectors. The supervision is based on the professional area of the teachers. Both supervisions (by primary education inspectors and ministerial inspectors) include the supervision of both institutions and personnel (administrators and teachers).

In the supervision of the institutions, work and operations of the schools and institutions such as performance of administrators, teachers and the other personnel, teaching, examinations, certification, environmental relations are investigated. The responsibility of the Ministry for Education (MONE) to carry out, monitor and supervise educational services includes not only supervision of educational services but also evaluation and development of them. The Ministry carries out this responsibility by means of school administrators at school level (internal evaluation) and by means of supervision and research-development system at local and national levels (external evaluation).

In addition, student achievement is evaluated by means of the national and international monitoring studies and research-development studies conducted or coordinated by MONE Directorate for Research and Development of Education (EARGED). The work that is conducted at national and international levels is important to show the general achievement in the primary and secondary education and allows international benchmarking.

The supervision in tertiary education is different from supervision of the MONE institutions. External supervision of tertiary education is carried out by Supervisory Board of Higher Education. This board inspects and evaluates the universities, affiliated units, academic staff and activities on behalf of Council of Higher Education (CoHE). When looking at the situation up to 2005, there was no legal regulation on quality insurance in tertiary education at national or university level. Recently, a new regulation the Regulation of Academic Evaluation and Quality Development organizing the academic evaluations and quality development subjects in tertiary education has come into force. The Commission on the Academic Evaluation and Quality Development at CoHE level and Academic Evaluation and Quality Development at university level, follow that regulation. Quality Assurance In terms of quality standards, one may say that a significant amount of public education institutions practice standards such as TQM, ISO 9000 and School Development model based on EFQM Excellence Model.

Relevant bodies

There is no independent quality assurance institution for non-formal education in Turkey. However, subjects related with standard of professions, curriculum and duration of the program, exams, certificate and supervision are under the control and supervision of MONE (Ministry of National Education). So that, a series of process may be mentioned insuring the quality in non- formal education.

On the other hand, the Vocational Qualifications Institution and Turkish Accreditation Institution founded in 2006 stands as the quality insurance institution for non-formal education programs. Also, the Ninth Development Plan (2007-2013) stipulates the developing quality assurance system, determining quality standards and developing a performance based model to spread high quality educational opportunities.

At a national level relevant bodies apart from the Ministry of National Education are the Ministry of Work and Social Security, the Turkish National Agency, some Business Corporations, TÜSİAD, some Educational Foundations, Universities, Private Companies.

At a regional level relevant bodies include the municipalities, the Public Education Centers (as the representatives of the Ministry of Education), İŞ-KUR (as the representative of Ministry of Work), some local business corporations, some foundations, private organizations. However, generally the Ministries are the ones who are responsible for applying legal measuring and accreditation.

The Turkish Education Board functions as directly affiliated to the Minister and is the most proximate scientific advisory and decision making body of the Minister. Adopts resolutions for ensuring enhancement of quality in profession of Teaching and administration¹.

Within the process initiated by Regulation for Academic Evaluation and Quality Improvement in Higher Education Institutions which was prepared by YOK and executed in 20 September 2005, crucial steps were also taken in evaluation and development of quality levels for higher education institutions. The Commission for Academic Evaluation and Quality Improvement in Higher Education (YODEK) was established (in May 2006) and commenced to operate to conduct and coordinate the studies in HE area on quality assurance matters. Regulation was prepared taken into consideration the developments in the world especially in Europe under the Bologna Process. A 'Main Process Map' for Academic Evaluation and Quality Development in Higher Education and Academic Evaluation and 'Quality Development Guide' for Higher Education Institutions have already been issued. The Guide was prepared by YODEK in 2006 considering the obligations of higher education supreme committees and higher education institutions and internal and external principles and criteria and details about the process were determined. These basic preparations can render the endeavors of evaluation and quality development of higher education institutions more systematic and traceable.

Challenges

One of the most important researches carried out in the field of adult education in the last 5 years in Turkey is "The Evaluation of the Effect of the Public Education Centers". The purpose of this research is to find out how to increase the quality of the public education centers. It is conducted by the Ministry of National Education and Karadeniz Technical University in collaboration in 2006. The results of this research show that in order to increase the quality of the public education centers:

- a) pre-service education for the candidate administrators of the public education centers should be organized,
- b) in-service training programs for the adult education staff should be provided in order to increase their teaching skills to adults having different social, economical and educational backgrounds,
- c) the image of the public education centers should be renovated to take attention of different groups of people in the society,
- d) Legal precautions should be taken in order to enable the public education centers to make advertisements and commercial of their services and products.

¹ Law on Organization and Duties of Ministry of National Education; Article 8.

Another vital issue concerning the future of adult education in Turkey is the need for professionalism in public education centres. Several recommendations have been suggested in order to increase the quality of the public education centres including: a) pre and in-service training for both administrative and teaching staff to increase skills; b) working to improve the image of education centres to attract a wider part of society and c) making legal adjustments to enable centres to effectively promote their services.

In the HE domain, one of the main changes about higher education is the studies of higher education institutions on adaptation to European Higher Education Area. Generally current discussions on higher education can be handled in three main stages. First stage is the issues related with the supplying higher educational demand and entrance to higher education. Second stage is the issues related with higher education management and increasing the quality. Third stage is the issues related with preparatory studies for European Higher Education Area of higher education institutions in Turkey.

Higher Education Council (YOK) made comprehensive modification in the tertiary education entrance system by a decision made in January 2009 valid from 2010. The actions for quality assurance have contributed to a more settled dialogue between the employers and the graduates. In addition to this, the starting of dialogue between Council of Higher Education and Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA)¹ of Turkey.

¹ VQA was founded by law No: 5544 dated September 21, 2006. This authority is responsible for determining the principles of national qualifications in the vocational fields and executing activities related to monitoring, evaluation and certification (YOK, 2009c).

31 Switzerland

A) Quality assurance systems: an overview

HE	The Swiss Centre of Accreditation and Quality Assurance in HE (OAQ) develops guidelines and quality standards, conducts accreditation and evaluation procedures and has an international commitment. It acknowledges the autonomy of the universities, perceives its role as an external partner for quality assurance and development and provides a range of supporting services.
VET	Special interest for the AL sector was the Vocational Education Law/ Vocational Education Degree): Q-Actors in VET: The Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology (OPET).
Non-formal	(1) eduQua label constitutes the framework in which quality of adult learning in Switzerland is assured; (2) Train the Trainer (AdA) as a 3-level core concept of staff quality.

B) Further elaboration on quality assurance in the country

Legal framework

National Law of Adult Continuing Education:

The adult continuing education sector in Switzerland is heterogeneously structured and poorly regulated by law. Since 2004, the federal law on vocational education also includes a chapter on vocational continuing education. These provisions, however, are not sufficient to regulate and support the continuing education sector in such a way that they match its current status. The same applies to the special laws (such as the Higher Education Act or the Unemployment Insurance Act), which also only cover certain aspects. Missing here is a comprehensive regulation that would allow the continuing education sector to be developed and supported as part of the national education system. The need for action is undeniable. Political demands have been raised for decades, since 1968 also by SVEB. And this persistence has finally paid off: On May 21, 2006 the nation voted yes to the new constitution on education. With this the Swiss people issued a mandate to the federal government to regulate for the first time by law the whole sector of adult continuing education as a whole. The relevant article reads:

- The federal government issues principle rules on continuing education.
- It can promote the development of the continuing education sector
- The law determines the areas and criteria.

Based on these principals Switzerland will adopt its first federal law on continuing education within the next few years. However, it has not been decided yet what specific form the law will have: whether it will be a new and comprehensive basic law or whether it will only be an extension of existing special laws. By the end of the legisla-

tive period 2011/12 a consultation draft for a basic continuing education law should be finished.

SVEB - Swiss Federation for Adult Learning

SVEB Switzerland is the umbrella organization of adult education and lifelong learning in Switzerland. It is a non governmental organisation, which represents nationwide private and state institutions, associations, representatives responsible for adult education on a cantonal level, institutions, in-house training departments and personnel managers. It also extends its reach to individuals who are active in adult education (lifelong learning). SVEB promotes cooperation among adult learning institutions, raises public awareness for lifelong learning and supports its members in their activities. In Switzerland over two million people participate in adult education programs every year. On the one hand SVEB helps people using adult learning facilities by continuously supporting new and innovative projects in the field of adult learning and by ensuring a high quality standard. SVEB also aims to inspire people to accept lifelong learning as a way to promote personal and social betterment by enabling them to choose from the wide range of educational opportunities to discover their capabilities and to use them to their best advantage.

Most importantly, SVEB has a longstanding commitment for improving and sustaining the high level of educational standard within Switzerland. This means it supports institutions, communities and its cantons to create optimal conditions to reach high quality adult education nationwide.

Activities

The diverse activities of SVEB are divided into three areas:

1. Education policy

The area "education policy" includes many activities that seek to improve the framework for adult education. SVEB is actively involved in educational policy developments and comments on current issues.

2. Development and Innovation

Its Department "Development and Innovation" includes a wide range of projects working on innovative and future-oriented goals for lifelong learning. To achieve these sustainable goals SVEB works with many partners both at home and abroad to disseminate and exploit results.

3. Service

Its operational field includes lots of services on offer not only for its members but equally for interested organizations, professionals and learning institutions. These services are divided into two areas:

- **Administration and Marketing** Including the administration of SVEB's various membership services as well as marketing and distribution of SVEB products.
- **Information and Quality** This department is responsible for communication and various public relations aspects, which include the "Nationwide Learning Festival" and the offices **eduQua** and **moduQua**.

In its function SVEB has been promoting adult education in Switzerland through several national and international projects. These projects were based on SVEB's long-term

commitment to improve the quality of adult education. SVEB has been able to share its experience and participate in several EU-Projects.

Quality of Professionalization of Further Education:

Unlike other areas of the education system the area of teacher trainings for adult education instructors is not regulated by the state. Consequently, many course instructors have traditionally been working on an honorary or a part-time basis but have not been trained professionally. This situation has been in a process of change for about 20 years. Nowadays, people who work in further education must increasingly demonstrate their methodical and didactic qualifications. In addition to general educational skills specialized teaching skills need to be included in the qualifications. The professionalization, however, is not limited to educational issues. It also includes: the development of job descriptions, **the introduction of approved qualifications** (e.g. Federal Certificate of Competence.), **quality development** (e.g. eduQua) and the coordination with international developments (e.g. the European qualifications framework). In various professional areas the appropriate professionalization processes have been carried out – for instance the modular system for “train the trainer” (AdA) – in other areas the development is still in its beginning phase.

On the university level so far only the University of Geneva is offering a graduate training for adult educators. **This happened so far:**

- In 1995, the SVEB-Certificate was introduced (AdA-module level 1)
- In 2000, the Federal Certificate of Competence for adult education instructors was introduced (AdA-module level 2)
- In 2000, the quality label for training providers “eduQua” was introduced (<http://www.eduqua.ch>)
- In 2006, the federal diploma “Advanced Federal Diploma in Training Management and Human Resources Management” was introduced (AdA-module level 3)
- In 2008, the new federally recognized qualifications for “Advanced Federal Diploma in Enterprise Training” vocational counselors was introduced.

Currently there are various on-going developments at a tertiary level. The new federal qualifications for vocational counsellors will obtain market positions within the next few years. In the coming years international issues will increase in importance. A central concern is the international recognition of diplomas of higher vocational education (tertiary B) because this field has no counterpart within Europe. See European Qualifications Framework and Copenhagen Process. In the area of specialized didactics new developments are to be expected. The fields of coaching and counselling are increasingly gaining in importance.

A new manual of eduQua is actually prepared. It will contain 6 minimum criteria and 22 indicators; the “client” (learner) stands in the middle of these criteria of quality. The quality agency revises the praxis of the institution (provider) of AL with the list of criteria and indicators. Finally the provider holds the eduQua certificate (if passed) but not the program or staff. A certification is valid for 3 years; during this period a yearly audit (ISO 17021) is realized by eduQua. (Cost of a certification: 3050,00)

Differences between VET, HE and NVAL

VET and Higher Education is not part of eduQua! From the first moment it was underlined, that the main goal of eduQua is to constitute a label of quality of methodology and didactics of AL (how an teaching/ learning process is conducted). This focus on methodology and andragogy is important to be understood by the auditor of the certification process.

Instruments

Concerning the quality assurance of Adult Education (the terms of Adult Education/ Adult Learning have to be revised in this context, CK) the eduQua label was founded in 2000 and constitutes the legal framework. Today about 1000 institutions (providers of AL) have passed certification. This certification is conducted by 7 agencies (eduQua agencies). With the exception of the Canton Appenzell-Innerhoden the certified providers of AL are distributed all over Switzerland. EduQua is in many cases a prerequisite for funding from the cantons. A legal bases for quality assurance is prepared actually and 2015/16 the legislation on quality of the AL sector should be possible.

With eduQua an important step towards the recognition of AE was successfully developed, a minimum of 50% of all providers for AL in Switzerland (Migros-Club-Schools) created a highly efficient and effective quality system. Hand in hand with a much better performance of AL staff (teachers/ trainers) and a professional development of the curriculum. The “client” (adult learner) is aware of the quality tool eduQua and is able to participate (reclamation). Another success is that teachers and trainers have to undergo regular evaluation (self-evaluation) and continuing teacher-trainings (ADA).

Challenges

Main issues is a continuous development of quality of the providers of AE. The first steps have been taken starting in 2000. eduQua starts with self-evaluation. The instrument of self-evaluation is seen as a instrument of leadership and should be continuously developed and put under revision. External evaluation is the next step in the process and is conducted by the auditor (agency). A list of minimum criteria must meet the conditions of teaching (trainer-responsibility); the minimum of training experiences is 150 hours starting with Leven I (SVEB I) certification. The process of certification looks at 6 criteria of quality of AL, the learner (“client”) stands in the middle, the quality of staff (teacher/trainer) is of great importance; since the last year too the quality of leadership is under control. EduQua is going to be a new instrument of leadership of Adult Education.

32 Croatia

A) Quality assurance systems: an overview

HE	Quality assurance in higher education and in science is regulated by the 2009 Act on Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Science. Internal quality assurance is provided by the institutions' internal QA systems in the form of internal checks. Study programmes delivered at public universities are self-accredited by university senates, while programmes delivered by private higher education institutions, polytechnics or schools of professional higher education are accredited by the Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE). ASHE is an independent public body responsible for external quality assurance in Croatia and implements regular audits, evaluations, accreditation of some professional, study programmes and re-accreditations of all higher education institutions.
VET	Formal adult education enables adults to gather a school certificate in case they had had now chance to do so in school-age period of their lives. This second chance is a way that can only be attained in formal system of adult education through elementary and secondary schools for adults. This formal adult education is the part of the system of public education, which is currently regulated by the CXC/2011. - Act on Public Education.
Non-formal	(1) Adult Education Act in 2007 set standards for professional monitoring and setting standards for adult education institutions regarding the form, content and implementation of formal adult education programmes, necessary qualifications for teaching staff in formal adult education, necessary conditions regarding premises and other material conditions.

B) Further elaboration on quality assurance in the country

Legal framework

There are some distinguished legal documents which have been produced and adopted in the last few years.¹ The Legal framework is based on a modern education strategy is based on the principle of lifelong learning, under which adult education becomes a key concept. In order to develop a strategic AE framework based on this principle, in 2004 the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport/MoSES appointed the Adult Education Committee, which had the task of drafting a Strategy for Adult Education and an Action

¹ See: The Strategy on Adult Education (2004 and second Extended Edition from 2007); The Adult Education Act (2007); The Volunteering Act (2007); The Development Strategy of the Vocational Education System in the Republic of Croatia 2008-2013 (2008); The Vocational Education and Training Act (2009); The National Youth Programme 2009-2013 (2009); The Croatian Qualification Framework – Introduction to Qualifications and; The Crafts Act (enacted 2003; amended 2007).

Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for Adult Education. These two documents were adopted by the Government of the Republic of Croatia at the end of 2004.¹

Following the guidelines of the Strategy, in 2006 the Croatian Government founded the Agency for Adult Education (AAE), which was later merged with the Agency for VET. Croatian Parliament passed the Adult Education Act in 2007 creating the conditions necessary for the integration of adult education into Croatia's education system as an independent subsystem equal in strategic relevance to the subsystems of primary, secondary and tertiary education. In addition to specifying the activities and objectives of the Adult Education Council and the Agency for VET and Adult Education, the Adult Education Act defines the forms of adult education and regulates their provision. The Act introduces the concepts of vertical mobility, education leave, adult education financing and the principle of partnership.

The Strategy on Adult Education points out that: "to develop a system of adult education that will offer equal opportunities for quality learning throughout life to all people, and in which education is based on and results from the demands and needs for learning".²

In March 2004 the Government of the Republic of Croatia adopted 55 Recommendations for the Growth of Croatian Competitiveness, drafted by the National Council for Competitiveness. It underlines that will contribute to the growth of competitiveness if the following, amongst other issues, is attained: establishing a system of evaluation and self-evaluation of the quality of educational processes and outcomes.³

Professional monitoring of adult education institutions is implemented by Agency for vocational education and training and adult education in accordance with Adult education act (Official Gazette 17/07, Article 29) Act on Agency for vocational education and training and adult education (Official Gazette 24/10, Article 4) and Institutions act (Official Gazette 76/93, 29/97, 47/99, 35/08, Article 68).

On Standards and Specifications in Adult Education Institutions (Official Gazette 129/08, 52/10) law states requirements regarding the form, content and implementation of formal adult education programmes, necessary qualifications for teaching staff in formal adult education, necessary conditions regarding premises and other material conditions.

Vocational education and training act (Official Gazette 30/09, Articles 9-12) regulates quality assurance in vocational education and training. Since some VET providers also implement adult education programmes, those adult education institutions are part of the vocational education and training quality assurance system. The structure of the Croatian Quality Assurance System is divided into six Priority Areas that cover the areas of quality from the aforementioned law that VET providers need to address. Each priority area is broken down into Quality Areas which are further defined through a number of quality criteria which determine the standard and level of activities and processes in VET. Priority area „Planning and programming of the work“, quality area „Design and improvement of adult learning programmes“, directly relates to adult education.

¹ <http://public.mzos.hr/lgs.axd?t=16&id=15674>

² <http://public.mzos.hr/lgs.axd?t=16&id=15674>

³ Croatian CONFINTEA VI Report, P. 27.

Differences between VET, HE and NVAL

The Agency for VET and Adult Education has emphasized that Quality assurance system that relates specifically to non-vocational adult education sector has not been developed. Implementation of formal adult education programmes (both vocational and non-vocational) is monitored through the process of professional monitoring of adult education institutions, realized by the Agency for vocational education and training and adult education.

Institutions that are providers of regular vocational education and training, and also provide non-vocational adult education are included in process of self-assessment. Since priority areas, stated in Vocational education and training act and included in Croatian Quality Assurance System relate to the institution in general (and not only its VET activities), non-vocational adult learning is then assessed as well.

One must recognize that the adult learning sector is regulated by a separate law (The Adult Education Act) with unique solutions for non-vocational and vocational adult learning. The development of quality assurance in adult learning will be developed by considering good practice of quality assurance systems in VET.

Instruments

One grounding element of quality assurance in adult education is monitoring and promotion of development of adult education, including professional monitoring of adult education institutions. The most essential goal of professional monitoring is to establish whether adult education institutions realize their activities in accordance with Adult education act and other laws and regulations that regulate adult education. It includes following areas: implementation of programmes and working with learners, keeping andragogical documentation, fulfilment of conditions regarding staff, fulfilment of conditions regarding obligations and rights of learners and institution, compliance of awarding public certificates with regulations, fulfilment of conditions regarding premises and other material conditions, fulfilment of obligations regarding submission of data to relevant bodies.

All VET providers produce an annual self-assessment report, the core of which should be an evaluation based on answers to the criteria of the VET Quality Framework. In drawing up their self-assessment report VET providers should make judgements about their performance and identify strengths, weaknesses and other aspects of provision in need of improvement. All judgements should be supported by reliable evidence. Since some VET providers also implement adult education programmes, those adult education institutions will also regularly produce self-assessment reports.

The Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education is main quality assurance body responsible for:

- Analytical and developmental tasks in the field of adult education;
- Harmonisation of proposals from professional bodies;
- Monitoring operations of adult education institutions;
- Performing professional and supplemental training of employees in the field of adult education;
- Providing innovative solutions, monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of adult education programmes;

- Stimulating cooperation and participation in the implementation of adult education programmes and projects;
- Maintaining a database and provide information and records to bodies of state administration and the relevant ministry, as well as other key data, regarding the monitoring of conditions and development of adult education and:
- Naming criteria for the establishment, implementation and monitoring of systematic financing of adult education with regard to programme, investment and material operation.

Self evaluation

A Committee for the Development of a Curriculum for the In-service Training of Principals of Primary and Secondary Schools has developed the Principals' Training Programme and the Draft Proposal for the Implementation of the Principals' Training Programme with the goal of developing and improving the professional competences of principals, with special emphasis on school system organisation and management. The training programme was implemented by three expert groups, one focusing on self-evaluation:

- Improvement of Knowledge, Skills and Competences in Teaching, Administration and Management for Croatian Staff and Teachers (organised in cooperation with the British Council)
- School Management (organized in cooperation with the Dutch School for Education Management)
- Self-evaluation of Schools (in cooperation with the Institute for Social Research, Zagreb)

External evaluation

A Committee for the Development of a Curriculum for the In-service Training of Principals of Primary and Secondary Schools has developed the Principals' Training Programme and the Draft Proposal for the Implementation of the Principals' Training Programme with the goal of developing and improving the professional competences of principals, with special emphasis on school system organisation and management. The training programme was implemented by three expert groups, one focusing on self-evaluation:

- Improvement of Knowledge, Skills and Competences in Teaching, Administration and Management for Croatian Staff and Teachers (organised in cooperation with the British Council)
- School Management (organized in cooperation with the Dutch School for Education Management)
- Self-evaluation of Schools (in cooperation with the Institute for Social Research, Zagreb)
- Professional development staff

The Act on Adult Education defines forms of adult education and determines who, and under what conditions, can provide adult education. The Agency for VET and Adult Education provides professional education and training of employees in the field of adult education, training programmes through professional and pedagogic reviews of programmes for which the adult education institutions seek approval for implementation by the MoSES; It also designs professional seminars/counselling sessions for employees in the adult education system.

Responsible bodies

Currently the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education is body responsible for supervising, managing, implementing and supporting processes and mechanisms for quality assurance at national/regional level.

The Ministry of Science, Education and Sports is body responsible for the accreditation of providers.

The Adult education Council and Agency for VET and Adult Education are responsible for regular monitoring of the overall adult education system. Ministry of science, education and sports is responsible for administrative and inspection supervision of adult education institutions. Agency for vocational education and training and adult education is responsible for professional monitoring of adult education institutions. Agency for vocational education and training and adult education is also responsible for developing a quality assurance framework for the VET system, which partially covers adult education institutions.

Establishment of adult education institutions (providers of formal adult education) and implementation of formal adult education programmes must be approved by the Ministry for science, education and sports. Prerequisite for certification of programmes is positive opinion of Agency for vocational education and training and adult education.

Challenges

Comprehensive quality assurance system that relates specifically to adult education has not been developed. Therefore, quality assurance of adult education is partially implemented through professional monitoring of Agency for adult education and training (for institutions that implement formal adult education programmes) and through self-assessment process of VET providers who also implement adult education. Institutions that carry out only non-formal adult education programmes are not part of any quality assurance system.

One of the challenges that is specific for adult education relates to certification of adult training and further training programmes. Adult training and further training programmes are developed by adult education institutions themselves, and in order for them to be formally certified by the Ministry of science, education and sports, they, as well as all other formal adult education programmes, first need to receive positive opinion from the Agency for vocational education and training and adult education, where they are professionally reviewed. This kind of quality assurance process regarding adult training and further training programmes gives institutions, who develop those programmes, more creativity, but on the other hand, it creates confusion by producing number of nominally distinct programmes, that relate to same content.

The issues and challenges in adult learning sector are:

- validation of non-formal and informal learning;
- intensifying supervision of professional work of adult education institutions;
- intensifying professional and supplemental training of employees in the field of adult education (teachers, instructors, professors, professionals, lecturers, coaches, counsellors and other adult educators);
- promotion of adult education;
- production of adult education materials and textbooks.

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