



iv4j



GUIDE ECVET IMPLEMENTATION



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Guide - ECVET implementation

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Authors

GoDesk | Potenza, Italy

Euro-net | Potenza, Italy

SBH Südost | Halle, Germany

FA-Magdeburg | Magdeburg, Germany

Omnia | Espoo, Finland

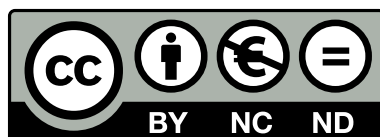
Partas | Dublin, Ireland

University of Utrecht | Utrecht, Netherlands



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Preface

Preface

The project IV4J is a project funded with support from the European Commission in the framework of the Erasmus+ Programme - Key action 2 – Strategic Partnerships for vocational education and training - Development of Innovation.

The project intends to introduce strong innovation in the VET system thanks to new, alternative and successful methodologies and approaches to the learning environment, in order to create a novel system aimed at job-oriented learning.

The objective is to stimulate entrepreneurship and work and job-oriented learning and create more awareness on the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET).

ECVET is an important European initiative that wants to facilitate and permit the accumulation, the certification, the transfer of credits obtained in vocational education and training (VET) in formal, informal and non-formal learning outcomes all over Europe: its objective is to facilitate the mobility of the workforce in VET across Europe.

So the intention of this Guide is to give a complete and professional tool describing and clarifying the whole ECVET methodology to maximize its use and its awareness.

So, please, follow us and discover ECVET.

The IV4J Project project team

Antonino Imbesi

Introduction

This is a guide, supported by multimedia materials and practical vision, describing the ECVET, explaining in details how to implement it in VET, introducing tips and providing a suggested quality management system.

The idea on the basis of this Intellectual Output is to give a practical point of view by explaining step-by-step the ways to implement ECVET – a need that some partners already faced in previous EU projects and that was used also to recognize and validate the Learning Outcomes for the staff involved in the JSTE.

The selected approach is:

- Research all over Europe coming from the Good Practice research and further in-depth analysed and discussed during project meeting
- Full methodology description including relevant bibliography and links
- Pedagogical approach to be used in order to be more effective in VET
- Practical training schemes and tips for an effective implementation

Chapter 1 is describing the ECVET system (what it is, how it works and its steps)

Chapter 2 is dedicated to ECVET integration in Geographical mobility.

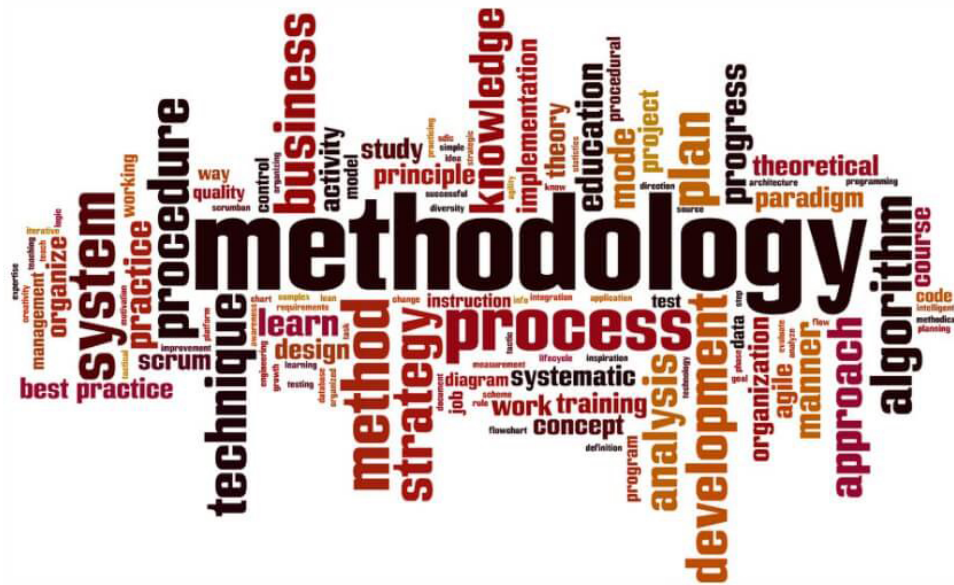
Chapter 3 is analyzing and describing in details how to create a Memorandum of Understanding

Chapter 4 is showing the results of the research on the state of art and cases from partner's counties and all over Europe.

Chapter 1. **ECVET system**

1.1 What is ECVET?

ECVET is a common methodological framework that facilitates the accumulation and the transfer of credits for learning outcomes from one qualifications system to another.



It aims to promote transnational mobility and access to lifelong learning.

It does not want to replace national qualification systems, but to achieve better comparability and compatibility among them.

ECVET applies to all outcomes obtained by an individual from various education and training pathways that, then, are transferred, recognized and accumulated in view of achieving a qualification.



ECVET was established by the Recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council of 18 June 2009, which invited all Member States to create the necessary conditions to implement it gradually in the respective countries.

The ECVET system is not a requirement for different education and training systems and should be developed and implemented gradually on a voluntary basis by European countries, taking into account national or regional legislation and/or existing sectoral regulations regarding qualifications.

As part of the strategy of lifelong learning, that is working for the growth and employability of citizens in the European space and labor market, ECVET has the following 2 important objectives:

- Facilitating the mobility of students and workers (ECVET for mobility)
- Making national qualifications systems more flexible and suitable for recognition and credits transfer (ECVET for lifelong learning) with a view to acquiring a qualification or a part thereof.



ECVET:

1. is used for all qualifications of non-academic education and training systems (while for academic credits is used the ECTS - European Credit Transfer and accumulation System);
2. facilitates the mobility done to work or study in another country by learners in vocational education and training, giving them a tool for the recognition of the credits and experience gained abroad or in another learning context;
3. provides a framework for the assessment, validation and recognition of learning outcomes helping the integration of mobility into learning pathways and improving the quality of all VET mobility;
4. is one of the European tools used for qualifications. The others are:
 - EQF – the European Qualifications Framework, a system for comparing the professional qualifications of citizens of European countries,



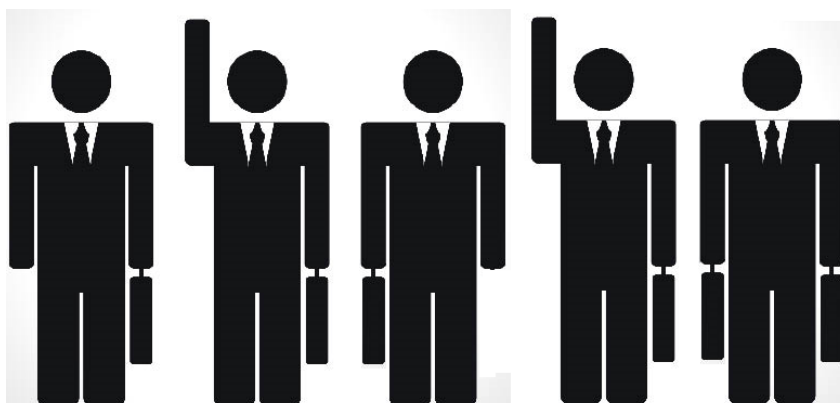
- Europass, an initiative of the Directorate-General for Education and Culture of the European Union to improve the transparency of qualifications and mobility of European citizens,
 - EQAVET - the European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training, a community of practice that promotes European collaboration in developing and improving quality assurance in VET, by providing authorities with common tools for the its management,
 - ECTS - European credit transfer and accumulation system (indicated at the previous point 1),
5. Is a flexible system to accommodate the characteristics of national VET systems without changing them;
 6. contributes to making mobility an integral part of the learning process, encouraging the use of training and work experience and the mutual trust between schools, training institutions and companies at national and European level.

1.2 How does it work?

As described before, ECVET was created for the VET system with the intention to achieve credits expressed in learning outcomes to obtain, in a double logic of needs and opportunities, qualifications and units of certified learning outcomes, in several steps and with an integrated mix of modalities: formal training, experience of mobility abroad, recognition of skills developed at work, etc.

It helps the following 3 categories of subjects facilitating their world and giving them opportunities in their job and or business:

- individuals
- providers
- employers



It facilitates individuals because it supports learners and employee in mobility because it permits the recognition of units of learning outcomes across Europe and it encourages lifelong learning using the flexibility of programmes and pathways to achieve qualifications.

On the other side, it helps VET providers because it helps them to create, plan or define clear learning objectives and training programmes and it helps them to offer better training activities as well as to communicate them better. It also permit them to create better cooperation with other organization at national or international level and to manage in a better way the learners in mobility offering them training that can offer them effectiveness.

Moreover, also employers can obtain great advantages because it helps them to define and develop job profiles as well as to find and select training activities that can really answer to the needs and the gaps of their companies, obtaining at the end employees more qualified.

The system is based on the following 3 elements, that involve competent institutions or authorities:

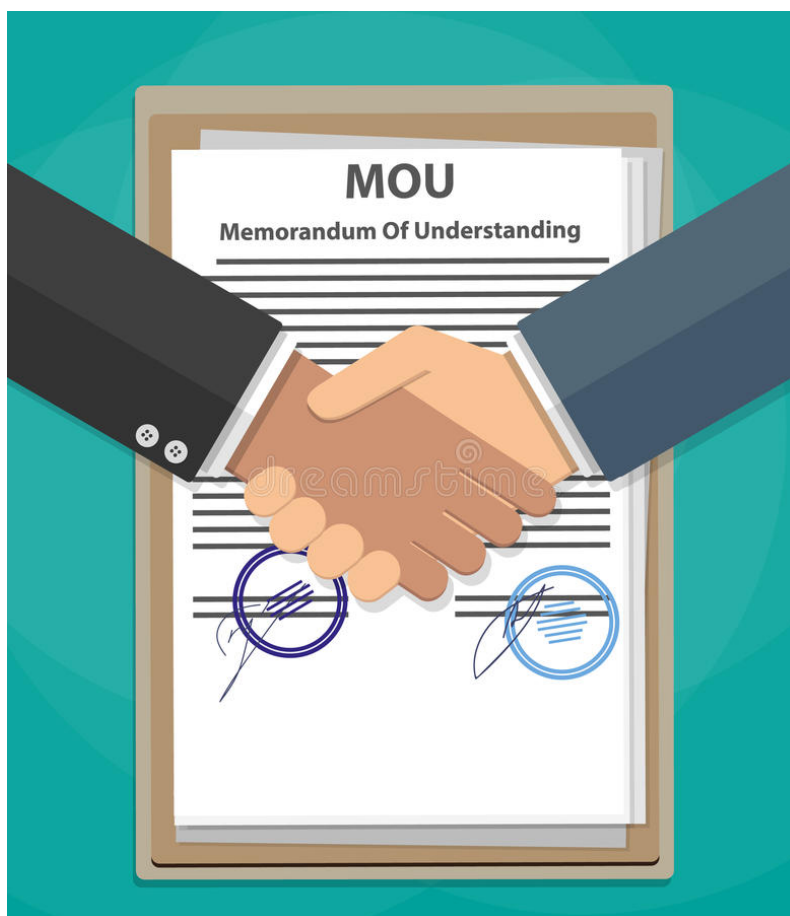
- Units of learning outcomes
- ECVET points
- Transfer of credits

The system works by providing qualifications more flexible and modular, articulating them in **units of learning** outcomes corresponding to a specific combination of knowledge, skills and competences.



Each of the unit can be separately assessed and then validated and recognized by a partnership of competent institutions (authorities responsible for the design and issue of qualifications or the recognition of units or other functions related to the ECVET system, in compliance with the rules and practices of the respective countries).

Credits should not be confused with ECVET points because credits are learning outcomes achieved by a person who have been assessed and who can be accumulated for qualification or transferable to other learning programs or other qualifications, while ECVET points are a numerical representation of the overall weight of learning outcomes in a qualification and the relative weight of the units in relation to the qualification.



This process permits to learners in VET mobility to obtain, accumulate and **transfer credits**: in fact the partnerships among competent institutions helps the recognition of credits as they trust each other's qualifications and assessment and thanks to a **MoU - Memorandum of Understanding** (that is a voluntary agreement subscribed by them to define the conditions, the rules, the criteria and the procedures to be used for the mobility abroad) these institutions can formalize the arrangements for the cooperation, in this way permitting the recognition of the competences achieved in a VET period in another country.

The description of the qualifications in terms of units of learning outcomes allows improving the readability in favor of the competent institutions" issuing qualifications and which certify parts of qualifications and for employers: they can be described using ECVET points that can arrive to a maximum of 60 points in a year of formal full-time VET.

Chapter 2. **ECVET** **integration in** **geographical** **mobility**

2.1 Its objectives in geographical mobility

As mentioned previously, ECVET is a common methodological framework that describes the certifications on learning outcomes in terms of units to which credit points are associated and thus allows the accumulation, capitalization and transfer of learning units concerning the vocational education and training in Europe.

It is based on the concept that the mobility of people and workers is certainly a competitive factor for the EU internal market and for increasing employment.

But to make sure that citizens can move between countries, and to see the acquired titles recognized abroad, the national training systems must be harmonized.



It is therefore necessary to capitalize all the skills, including those learned in non-formal contexts: these are the objectives of the ECVET system in geographic mobility.

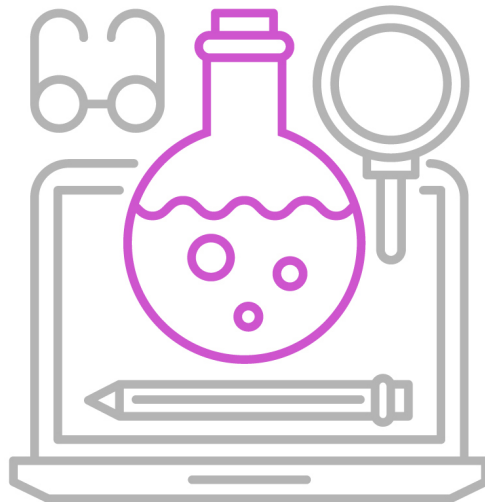
The ECVET system allows to certify and record the results of learning paths carried out by a person in different national or foreign contexts:

- formal,
- non-formal,
- informal.

The results of these acquisitions can be transferred to the contexts of origin of the persons concerned, where they can be accumulated, and a certification can be obtained.

So ECVET therefore permits to remedy the persisting diversity of national systems that define the levels and content of certifications by encouraging the mobility of trainees across Europe.

The system has been designed specifically for those who have done or want to carry out learning activities outside of their context of origin or, more generally, for those who want to integrate and capitalize the learning outcomes achieved in various training fields.



LEARNING TOOLS

ECVET is also an extremely useful tool for vocational education and training organizations as it provides a common technical framework for the development of training paths and certification of learning outcomes, encouraging cooperation between different subjects and the search for synergies between actors. public and private.

ECVET, therefore, provides a good example of bottom-up construction of the European Union that has the intention, promoting and using it, to increase the numbers and the duration of mobility exchanges significantly.



2.2 What EU & EC are doing to promote it

In this context, of course, the European Union recommends the Member States to:

- promote ECVET, with reference to vocational education and training qualifications (VET) in order to promote transactional mobility and recognition of learning outcomes;
- create the necessary conditions and to adopt measures to enable them to be applied gradually to VET qualifications, in accordance with national legislation and practices and in the light of trials and trials;
- apply, in accordance with national legislation and practices, the common quality assurance principles in VET (as defined in the Council conclusions of 28/05/2004), in particular with regard to the evaluation, validation and recognition of the results of learning;
- guarantee access to the information and instructions for the use of the ECVET system to the individual parties, to ensure that the application of this system is publicized by the competent authorities and that the associated Europass documents contain explicit information on the matter;
- promote the development of national and European networks and partnerships, to test, implement and promote the ECVET system and to involve authorities and institutions responsible for qualifications and diplomas, VET providers, social partners and other stakeholders;
- ensure the existence of monitoring and coordination mechanisms, in accordance with the legislation, structures and requirements of each Member State, to ensure the quality, transparency and consistency of the initiatives taken to apply ECVET.



On the other side, the European Commission is committed to:

- support Member States in the performance of the above tasks and in the use of the principles and technical specifications of the ECVET system;
- develop, in cooperation with Member States and with national and European experts and users, a manual and tools for use and adapt the relevant Europass documents; develop know-how for the improvement of compatibility and complementarity between the ECVET system and ECTS and provide regular information on ECVET system developments;
- promote, by participating with the Member States, a European ECVET network, comprising stakeholders in the field of VET and the competent national institutions in order to disseminate and support ECVET in the Member States and establish a sustainable platform for exchange of information and experiences;
- set up within this network a group of users of the ECVET system (called the ECVET Users Group), to help update the manual and improve the overall quality and coherence of the ECVET application cooperation process;
- follow up and verify the initiatives taken and, after evaluating them in cooperation with the Member States, report to the European Parliament and the Council.

2.3 The steps for its implementation

The ECVET mobility process can be divided in the following 3 moments:

1. Before the mobility
2. During the mobility
3. After the mobility



BEFORE THE MOBILITY

In the first period (so before the mobility), we have the following 2 different phases:

- Orientation phase
- Preparation phase

The **Orientation phase** is dedicated to build a partnership (taking into consideration that VET providers may not have the authority to take all the decisions related to ECVET mobility and it should be necessary to involve regional or national authorities that could do it), while the **Preparation phase** is composed by the following 3 moments:

- a) comparison of learning outcomes and units,
- b) definition and subscription of an agreement, called “Memorandum of Understanding” (that could be bilateral or between networks of institutions from several countries) to clarify rules for validation and recognition of credits and the subscription of specific Learning Agreements for each of the learners in mobility,
- c) and, then, organization of the mobility period, to help the learners to have the best mobility possible (so it concerns practical arrangements for transport, accommodation, etc.).



DURING THE MOBILITY

During the implementation of the mobility abroad, there are other 3 steps:

- Acquisition of knowledge, skills and competence
- Assessment of knowledge, skills and competence
- Documentation of acquired knowledge, skills and competence

During the mobility in another country, the learner should acquire the knowledge, the skills and the competences indicated in the **Memorandum of Understanding** and in the specific **Learning Agreement**.

These knowledge, skills and competence are then, firstly, evaluated by the responsible people at the receiving institution following the rule established in the 2 documents indicated above and later documented in a personal transcript (PT), that is handed over to the mobile learner and/or sent to the sending institution after the end of the mobility phase.

AFTER THE MOBILITY

After the mobility abroad, there are the last 3 steps:

- Conclusion of the transfer process with validation and recognition of acquired knowledge, skills and competence by the home institution with a final certificate
- Evaluation (involving all the actors) of the mobility and transfer process to verify if it should be necessary for the future to adopt possible changes and/or adaptations to have better results
- Follow-up to have/obtain a feedback report from each of the learners in mobility on the experience done.

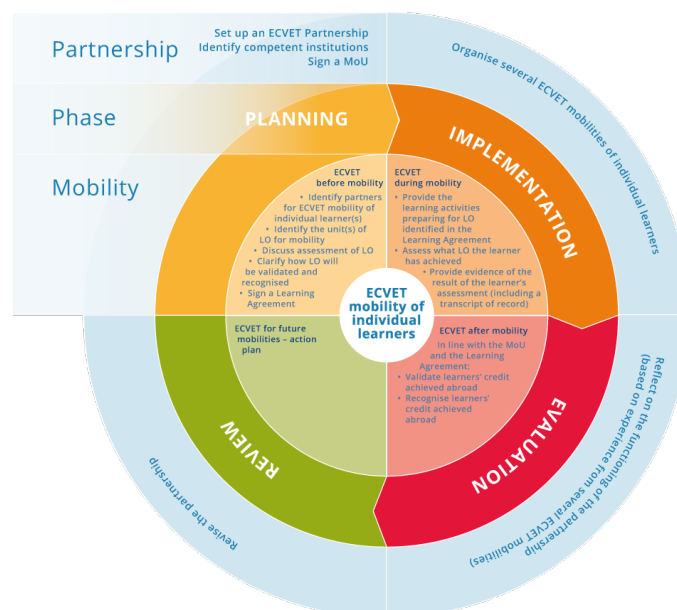


FEEDBACK

2.4 A quality circle

From what we have described in the previous chapter is clear that the ECVET system, to guarantee the quality of its results, creates a kind of “quality circle” based on the following 4 steps:

1. Planning
2. Implementation
3. Evaluation
4. Review



The **planning phase**, of course, is realized before the mobility and it involves the definition of the Memorandum of Understanding that should clearly specify the objectives of the partnership and also should contain clear statements on how the partnership will be evaluated.

The implementation phase is realized during the mobility when the learners are doing their respective experiences abroad: in this phase, it is necessary to apply for specific assurance measures.

The evaluation phase is realized after the mobility when the learners' credits achieved abroad are evaluated, validated and recognized: in this phase are assessed also the functioning of the partnership, the impact of the mobility period and many other important details.



The review is the final step of the quality circle and it uses the results of the evaluation phase to improve future mobility actions and avoid previous mistakes or problems achieved.



In this way, applying all the indicated steps the ECVET systems try to learn from the experiences achieved to realize and obtain better results and to guarantee a real quality of learning in geographical mobility.

Chapter 3. **ECVET and Memorandum of Understanding**

3.1 What is a MoU?

When two or more competent institutions want to give validation and recognition as well as quality assurance to their vocational and educational training abroad they have to realize a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) among them, formalizing the partnership for ECVET mobility and setting the framework for credit transfer.

The Memorandum of Understanding defines rules, measures, procedures, process and arrangements for cooperation indicating also requirements and responsibilities of all the partners involved in the partnership and roles to be applied.

This framework agreement between mobility partners will be bilateral in case of an agreement between only two institutions or it will be multilateral in case it will be accepted and subscribed by more parties.



To have the possibility to subscribe a Memorandum of Understanding it is necessary that between/ among the partners involved there should be trust and confidence because:

- the required learning outcomes have to be assessed in a reliable and valid manner;
- the learners' credit for the learning outcomes expected should have an appropriate level;
- the competent institutions have to know the approaches used by the partners for designing units, assessment, validation, recognition as well as quality assurance of the VET mobility abroad.

But also to have a MoU that can be effective and operative and that can produce a real recognition of the credits obtained during training activities in another country, it is also necessary to have on board in the partnership subjects that have the competency for defining the point and the consequent credits giving them a sense in the educational system such as qualification authorities, ministries, universities, regional authorities, etc.*



The key elements that are at the base of a successful Memorandum of Understanding are:

- delineation of the areas of competence and responsibility of each competent institution in the respective country;
- definition of qualifications and units of learning outcomes to be used with learners in VET mobility abroad;
- acceptance of quality assurance, assessment, validation and recognition criteria and procedures for learning recognition and/or credit transfer;
- designation of training objectives as well as aims of the activities;
- confirmation of roles and responsibilities in the assessment procedures (tools, techniques, mechanisms, templates, duration of the mobility, etc.);
- identification of all other possible organizations and/or institutions involved in mobility, validation and recognition related activities, confirming their roles and duties;
- agreement on units that can be adapted or improved to satisfy better the learning necessities and recognition.



3.2 What is a Learning Agreement?

While the Memorandum of understanding (MoU) is an agreement that concerns the condition for the recognitions of the credits in the partnership (so it is a sort of framework contract), the Learning Agreement (LA), on the other side, defines the specific individualized conditions for an VET mobility abroad.

The Learning Agreement should be signed by the following actors:

1. sending organization
2. hosting organization
3. learner



It is a kind of agreement that is realized within the Memorandum of understanding procedures and that indicates

- who is the learner
- the duration of the mobility abroad
- the learning outcomes to be achieved by the learner during the specific mobility to be realized and how these outcomes should be assessed.

3.3 What is a Personal Transcript?

The Personal Transcript (PT) is, as indicated by its name, a “personal” document that belongs to the learner and contains all the learning achievements really obtained during the mobility period.



For this reason, the Personal Transcript describes:

- the effective results assessed directly by the learner;
- the units and the ECVET point awarded to the VET activity;
- the identity of the learner;
- the competent institutions that have assessed and validated the credits.



The difference between the Learning Agreement and the Personal Transcript is that the Learning Agreement describes what the learner is expected to obtain during the mobility, while the Personal Transcript indicates exactly what was effectively achieved during that period abroad.

This means that a document like a Europass Mobility could be used as part of the Personal transcript if it will be updated with some other additional and important information, such as units' titles, information on assessment done, etc.

Chapter 4. **ECVET** **research all** **over Europe**

4.1 An added value

Since the beginning, the ECVET system has had a growing and increasingly widespread application.

The experimentation contexts are now numerous and the results are sufficient for a first analysis of the impacts.

According to the data collected by the ECVET Team (www.ecvet-team.eu), the first concrete applications showed a high added value in the integration of learning models and paths.



The exchanges carried out in the context of various projects have produced significant advances in the upward harmonization of the quality of training services thanks to benchmarking processes.

In this chapter, we want to show some results or best practices realized at European level to demonstrate that ECVET provides a good opportunity for professionals in the vocational training sector to open up at the European level and innovate their offer by ensuring, on one hand, the benefit of the accumulation and recognition of the learning outcomes achieved by the learners and, on the other hand, improving the quality of the training offered.



4.2 Approach used

The approach used in this guide is a practical one dedicated to making simple and understandable concepts sometimes abstruse and difficult to perceive because they are linked to contexts and various types of methods.

The goal of IV4J's partnership is to give a concrete idea of how ECVET has positively influenced the recognition of qualifications and training activities carried out abroad in VET.

So the approach used is directed to:

- realize a research all over Europe coming from the Good Practice research and further in-depth analyzed and discussed during project meeting
- make a full methodology description including relevant bibliography and links
- underline the pedagogical approach to be used in order to be more effective in VET
- show practical training schemes and tips for an effective implementation.



To do this, examples of good ECVET practices developed in the various partnership countries were collected in order to concretely show the implications of the validation and recognition action and of the comparability of qualifications and learning achievements across countries.

This kind of approach ensures a better understanding of the system also for a neophyte who looking and studying the cases of study reported can understand how to structure its own validation path through the development of the various steps of ECVET and define a partnership that could permit to have at the end effective benefits for all the actors involved in a mobility period abroad (learners, vocational education and training providers, employers, etc..).



In fact, the Case Study is a method of social research that is particularly suitable for dealing with complexity, analyzing systems of relationships and studying unique and unrepeatable cases: it makes use of the contemporary use of a variety of both qualitative and quantitative social research techniques.

The case study allows to deepen and grasp the whole where more fragmented and reduced techniques aim to provide a synthetic point of view focusing the relevance, validity and reliability of the information collected.



It therefore aims to answer questions such as “what”, “how”, “why”, where the experiment responds to questions like “how” and “why” and the survey to questions like “who”, “what”, “Where”, “how many”, “how much”.

In short, it can, therefore, be said that our case studies represent an organic and finalized collection of examples of good practices linked to the objectives of the research conducted.

Just the assembly and organization of this complexity is the real challenge of this method: the information collected and processed must, in fact, be linked in an organic whole without losing relevance, validity and reliability, showing a clear and understandable overall vision of the ECVET system and its implementation phases.



The many cases analyzed will, in this way, be used as an example for future new partnerships and applied to the ECVET system to make it more and more harmonious and effective at European level.

4.3 State of art and case studies

State of art and case study no. 1:

ECVET in EU-funded projects

EURO-NET (partner in IV4J project) is using since few years ECVET in the implementation of several EU-Funded project.

METHODOLOGY USED

ECVET system was used as a way to recognise the learning acquired by partner's staff during the project activities and mainly during a mobility period.

During a Short-term Joint Staff Training Event, the partners' staff are meeting for 1 full week in order to be trained about several methodologies and test some innovative practices.

The experiment is reinforced by the mix of activities and transfer of knowledge thanks to lessons where the teachers are the participants, thanks to the professional background of each staff partner involved.

It is a valuable possibility to enrich the participants curricula and for the partner organisation to increase knowledge and possibility to exploit results in further activities, improve and apply changes/remedial to the project outcomes and foster a peer-learning approach.

At the end of the week the partners are recognising and validating the competences under ECVET system by naming the participating staff as expert in a specific topic.

HOW IT IS IMPLEMENTED

The partners are identifying the learning outcomes and are assigned to a specific topic they have expertise about.

The learning outcomes are the unit of learning to be delivered during the mobility event (Joint Staff training Event). The main challenge is to identify and assign the learning outcome to each partner in accordance to the staff that is going to participate to the event and to their skills and competences.

An added value is also connected with the experimental approach where the teachers are the participants following this simple rule: teacher for 1 day for all the other participants and learner for the other days.

WHY IS IT SUCCESSFUL/HAS AN IMPACT ON PARTICIPANTS AND ORGANISATIONS?

This challenging situation is important to acquire a relevant transfer of knowledge, for the group-building and to test the topics, methodologies and approaches later used to produce interesting intellectual outputs.

Thanks to ECVET, the partners' staff participating to the mobility event are named as expert and this competence is recognised thanks to a specific Memorandum of Understanding signed by all partners' organisation and also by some stakeholders.

PRACTICAL TIPS

Following some tips in order to be more effective in designing and managing ECVET system:

- design the event in advance because the preparation phase is intensive
- detect the participants as soon as possible because the content of the learning outcomes depends merely on the skills and competences of the participants
- in order to increase the possible impact, select a varied mix of activities with practical workshops
- take into account that ECVET is requiring a lot of documents to be prepared and signed and that is better to collect it in a systematic way
- because ECVET is not usually known at higher educational level, it is better to clarify that it is not about 'university credits' where the process, the teachers and the system is completely different

EXAMPLES OF ECVET IS SOME EU-funded projects

1. **IV4J project:** ECVET was used to recognise the participating staff as “European Innovator in VET” after a 7-days Joint Staff Training Event at University of Utrecht (Netherlands)
2. **INNOVATIVET project:** ECVET was used to recognise the participating staff as “European Expert in Inclusive and Disruptive Learning” after a 7-days Joint Staff Training Event at University of Turku (Finland)
3. **VET4Start-Up project:** ECVET was used to recognise the participating staff as “European Start-Up Advisers” after a 7-days Joint Staff Training Event at University of Wolverhampton (United Kingdom)
4. **CREATUSE project:** ECVET was used to recognise the participating staff as “Experts in Creativity and Shareable Policies” after a 7-days Joint Staff Training Event at University of Bari (Italy).

Examples of certificates of attendance



Photos from Joint Staff Training Events



State of art and case study no. 2:

Implementation of ECVET system in Finland

In June 2009, the European Commission issued the EU member states with a recommendation on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET). Already before that the Finnish National Agency for Education was active concerning the ECVET system by running ECVET related projects together with European partners (Finecvet I, II and III years 2004-2009).

One reason for taking the system in use is that the Finnish curricula in Vocational Education have been ECVET “friendly” already 20 years – the vocational qualifications are composed of units of learning outcomes and the assessment criteria are clearly described there. Also, the recognition of prior learning is in Finland stipulated by legislation since 2006.

Successful ECVET implementation requires that qualifications be described in terms of learning outcomes, with learning outcomes brought together in units, and units often accumulated to form the basis of qualifications or awards. Assessment, validation and recognition processes must also be agreed, among all those participating, and should respect existing national, regional, sectoral or institutional practice.

In cases where credit can be awarded, a points system might also be considered with points directly attributed to ECVET units and qualifications. (www.ecvet-toolkit.eu)

ECVET system has several objectives; two of them are essential – it promotes international mobility and facilitates lifelong learning. The starting point is a system based on learning outcomes, which are defined as knowledge, skills and competences. In the Finnish curricula of Vocational Education, it is easy to find this structure – the skills are described in assessment criteria so, that the learner and the trainer can find the real working life tasks behind them.

The implementation of ECVET in Finland is part of the current reform in Finnish Vocational Education. The system has strengthened the competence-based approach and the introduction of the competence points (ECVET points) to describe the scope of qualifications and qualification units.

The basic principle is that competences can be acquired from a variety of sources and can be assessed by persons other than the student's current teacher – for example during mobility abroad. This procedure must be written in **Memorandum of Understanding** and the **Learning Agreement/ Training Agreement** must content the actual learning outcomes which student/learner supposes to achieve.

When planning and actualizing the reform of vocational education in Finland, the Finnish National Agency for Education had to raise questions and find answers to several issues related also the ECVET-system, because the Finnish Authorities had decided to take the ECVET system fully in use. It means that the reform needs to make sure that ECVET principles will take place. Ms Hanna Autere, Counsellor of Education in Finnish National Agency for Education published an article "ECVET in Finland – Country Factsheet" where she gives the answers to most of the actual questions. The following text is a short version of her article:

Questions and Answers:

How is ECVET used in Finland - In learner mobility and in lifelong learning?

All Finnish vocational qualifications are composed of units of learning outcomes. Each unit of qualification is assessed independently in real working life situations and documented in students' training agreement and in his/her personal study record. A system-wide national framework enables transfer of assessed learning outcomes in a lifelong learning perspective. This procedure makes it possible to students to return into his/her studies later for continuing the studies or update his/her skills.

Are Finnish VET qualifications composed of clearly defined groups of learning outcomes?

All Finnish VET qualifications are composed of clearly defined units of learning outcome. The National Qualification Requirements define the targeted learning outcomes and the assessment criteria for each skill requirements of a unit.

Are the groups of learning outcomes within a qualification capable of independent assessment?

Individual qualification units are assessed separately. The assessment takes place by demonstrating skills in real working life situations. A learner's learning outcomes are assessed by comparing them with those defined in the national qualification requirements. Both the theory and the practice will form a common grade. The possibility to acquire separate units of learning outcomes makes it possible to move between school and working life according to the learner's needs.

How is assessment of each group of learning outcomes documented?

Each vocational school has a registry system where students' performance and grades are marked – it is formed so that it follows the units of learning outcomes by national qualification requirements. The Finnish National Agency has developed a national register for studies (Koski) and it will be taken in use gradually in all Finnish schools.

Do individuals in Finland have the opportunity to have their learning outcomes validated irrespective of how and where they have acquired them, including non-formal and informal learning?

Finland is among the first European countries to have adopted standards and legislations in IVET and CVET for the validation of non-formal and informal learning. A student has the right to demand the validation and recognition of prior learning that corresponds to the vocational skills requirements or the objectives for competence-based learning outcomes stated in the national core curriculum. The validation of prior learning can be done based on the documentation by competent authority or by a skills demonstration. Each learner has an individual competence plan – previous acquired competences are recognized and validated.

Do individuals in Finland have the opportunity to accumulate their assessed groups of learning outcomes towards a qualification?

The system enabling accumulation and transfer has been in place for a long time in Finland. Flexible study pathways and the possibility to accumulate the assessed learning outcomes is the key to maintaining study motivation. The modular system with each unit assessed and documented independently helps to keep track of the already achieved learning outcomes.

Do individuals in Finland have the opportunity to transfer their groups of learning outcomes validated in one context to other contexts?

Individuals have the right to transfer their assessed and validated learning outcomes as part of the vocational qualifications. The transfer is based on the documentation of learning outcomes by competent authority or by skills demonstrations. Learners may have obtained relevant skills in any learning environment either in Finland or abroad.

What is the quality assurance system used in Finland?

The National Requirements for Vocational Qualifications including the skills requirements and assessment criteria for each unit form the foundation for quality assurance for flexible study pathways. The ECVET system itself facilitates the quality assurance of the mobility process, because it is linked to the institution's existing quality assurance system and methods; for example, the quality cycle – planning – implementing – evaluating- developing. The documents like Memorandum of Understanding and Training Agreement and the personal transcript are a solid foundation for high-quality activities in vocational schools.

The Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture has published a clear picture of new Vocational Education and Training reform in Finland. It shows how students' learning process takes place from the very start of Educational path until the qualification.

OMNIA cases

Example from studying entrepreneurship skills in InnoOmnia

Learning outcomes/objectives

- Student develops business idea or productizes his/her own knowhow into entrepreneurship
- Student assesses development needs based on changes in operating environments in his/her vocational sector, assesses customer needs, competition, working environment and his/her own expertise
- follows the principles of profitable business operations in his/her entrepreneurship
- considers the cost structure of the operation

Assessment criteria

- develops a business idea as a member of a group or productizes his/her own expertise
- finds out about operational or business ideas related to his/her business operations and key services and products working in a group
- acquires information on product or service development needs based on e.g. changes in operating environment, customer needs...
- in his/her work compares options and sets of quality and cost objectives
- chooses the option that is to be executed cooperatively and derives an operation plan
- presents the plan and changes it based on feedback received
- adopts usual working methods, tools, and materials required for the operation plan using information technology
- works in the corporation observing safety instructions and agreed principles of sustainable development
- assess the progress of his/her own activities and business operations
- works or runs his/her business operations observing profitability
- calculates the costs of the activities and the share accumulated by his/her own work input

The Finnish project participants in Omnia introduced a new way of studying entrepreneurship skills in an open space together with teachers and entrepreneurs running their businesses.

The space in InnoOmnia is an open and collaborative one, in which everyone can interact and choose where they would like to study and learn. It offers different programs such as education, vocational training and support for entrepreneurship, especially for start-ups in the areas of arts and services.

For students in their final years of high school, innovative teaching methods such as gamification and mobile technology are used.

Professional development for teachers and educational leaders relating to all areas of basic and vocational education is also promoted.

At the school, teachers, students and entrepreneurs serve as a community and regularly share their experiences. The students develop a personalized learning plan with teachers, in which the world of work forms part of their day-to-day studies. Business owners sign up to be part of this community and receive daily support for their business. Students and teachers collaborate with the entrepreneur to seek out and create innovative solutions to help each business succeed. This activity gives students an opportunity to get their hands dirty and learn by doing.

Relation to ECVET system and reform in vocational Education in Omnia

The general objectives of ECVET are to make transnational mobility easier and more qualitative and increase the lifelong learning. By taking in consideration and following the different technical components of ECVET system, the implementation of ECVET will be more effective and easier.

When students in Omnia take part in entrepreneurship studies in InnoOmnia open space environment, they are reaching towards their own qualification – following their own study plan and study pathway.

The **qualification** of students could be from Business and Administration field, or it could be also from Social and Health care, or Clothing design field. Different types of educational fields need entrepreneurship skills.

Each student has a certain unit or group of **units** related to entrepreneurship skills to achieve depending on the content and structure of qualification.

The size of qualification and the relative weight of units have been in advance defined as **competence points** (ECVET credits).

The assessment criteria are defined in National Qualification Requirements. The assessment is done by teachers, tutors, entrepreneurs and by student her/himself.

The studies done in InnoOmnia Open space hub will be **validated and recognized** into students' qualification by Education provider.

Students are using **Training Agreement and personal transcript** and the grades will be marked into those documents.

State of art and case study no. 3:

ECVET in Germany

The beginning of testing ECVET is almost 10 years ago. The structures for the implementation of the ECVET principles were set up in pilot projects until 2012. Thereafter, a gradual application and use of the ECVET system for the recognition of vocational qualifications acquired abroad was also carried out in Germany. In the meantime, numerous experiences have been evaluated, evaluated and processes for adaptation and extension initiated.

In Germany, the National Agency (NA) at the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) with the national coordination center NKS-ECVET is responsible for implementing and further developing the ECVET principles.

The goal of implementing ECVET in Germany is:

1. Facilitate mobility
2. Promote transparency and permeability through learning outcome orientation
3. Improving the quality of competence acquisition in the various mobility projects
4. Such as dealing with learning times more efficient

The application of ECVET thus represents a challenge in Germany despite all successes. It requires an improvement of the permeability in the German education system for example learning outcomes orientation, skills assessment, validation of informal and non-formal learning.

Focusing on learning outcomes (LE) is the key to successful ECVET implementation. The dual training system in Germany does not provide for a formal crediting of learning outcomes and examinations. There are no consistent standards / criteria available for widespread use. The workload for the development of LE is high. However, the structured description of qualifications in terms of learning outcomes allows for greater transparency and comparability in VET through the use of a "common language".

ECVET and the German dual education system

In Germany, about 70% of young people learn a state-recognized apprenticeship in the dual system. The theoretical training content is taught in the vocational schools and practical vocational training takes place directly at the workplace or in special training workshops. The training occupations (326 professions as of July 2018) are constantly being evaluated and further developed in close cooperation with the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB), the federal states and social partners. The German VET system thus occupies a special position in Europe. In many European countries, a purely school education is common. Through the combination of theory and practice, the high qualification of German craftsmen and skilled workers is internationally recognized. The integration of theoretical and practical learning has such a high professional relevance. Young people have a good chance of gaining skilled employment after the training. This is also shown by the low unemployment rates of under-25s compared to other European countries. The dual system

thus ensures that the economy meets the demand for skilled labor of the future and contributes to the competitiveness of the economy.

Dual education aims to develop professional skills - professional knowledge and skills and cross-cutting skills. For the comparability of the ability of the trainees to ensure the underlying regulations, which apply to companies and vocational schools, as well as a generally binding final exam. The professional laws and training guidelines set the qualification profiles. However, these are only partially competence-oriented and contain no learning outcomes.

For the principle of lifelong learning, it is necessary to improve the transparency of vocational training in order to open the students new perspectives. It is necessary to create conditions for the attribution of competences and qualifications acquired outside the dual training without compromising the quality of vocational training. For this, structural conditions have to be created to create transparency in the proof of learning outcomes, trust in the assessed and recognized learning outcomes.

The ECVET principles help to identify a “common language” with the learning outcomes descriptions, thus making it easier for the sending institution to decide on the credits after the learner’s stay abroad.

The condition is that:

- describe learning outcomes work situations which are of course these establishments, including those who are not familiar with the dual training.
- References to the means of order are established, so that companies have clear occupational assignments and credits are made possible.
- learning outcomes are described in detail, so that the companies can get an idea of the extent of the acquired competencies.
- The level of learning achievements can be seen by means of precise descriptions to enable companies to assess whether the competence / qualification acquired abroad corresponds to that of a comparable apprentice
- all learning outcomes are described so that they can be tested.
- all learning outcomes are described in such a concrete way that educational institutions can clearly derive and examine objectives and have little room for interpretation.

The learning outcomes units defined according to the ECVET principles and their description (knowledge, skills, competences) make it possible to clearly define the learning objectives and to derive a valid assessment of performance.

With the use of ECVET, our dual training system also remains transnationally connectable and also “readable” for the other European countries.

The transfer and crediting of learning outcomes is regulated in Germany by the Vocational Training Act (BBiG, §7, §8) as well as the craft code (HwO, §27a, §27b). The crediting is based on a case by case decision and is the responsibility of the company.

Therefore, it is crucial that before the stay abroad in the preparatory phase, the partnership agreements are closed, the learning outcomes units are defined and the procedures for collection and evaluation are determined by the sending and receiving institutions.

The use of ECVET points, as recommended in the ECVET principles, is used low in Germany. In the dual education, no points are used. They do not play a role in crediting and transferring learning outcomes to education. In the dual vocational training there are no partial qualifications that can be provided with points. The formal vocational qualification is not achieved through accumulated units of learning outcomes but through a final examination. The recognition processes of foreign qualifications are made possible by the validation of learning outcomes, but not by the summation of individual ECVET points. The recognition of learning outcomes can, however, correspond to a “credit balance” that can lead to a shortening of the training period.

The recognition of learning outcomes image E t no substitute against regulated final examinations. The legal foundations have priority and must be adhered to. The final exam is an integral part of the respective vocational training.

In Germany, European funded projects make the use of ECVET transnational mobility purposes tested. The published project and experience reports point out that using the ECVET principles, the mobility measures are more targeted, planned and implemented in a more secure and binding manner.

ECVET is perceived in Germany above all as an instrument of transnational mobility in vocational training. But ECVET has more potential. With its system-neutral approach focusing on learning outcomes, ECVET can lead to greater transparency and comparability within the German education system. It is about adapting ECVET components to existing systems and procedures. Projects such as ECVET 2nd Generation, Connect and DECVET provide initial starting points such as competence and learning outcomes orientation across educational levels with European tools for German VET can be usefully implemented.

State of art and case study no. 4:

ECVET in Ireland and other 4 EU countries

ECVET for Community Development (EfCD)

<http://www.communitydevelopment.eu>

The purpose of the EfCD project was to develop and implement methodologies for the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) to a Level 3 Award in Community Development qualification. This would enable it to be delivered and recognised in a wider range of European countries. The project had a partnership of 5 organisations:

- Ireland – Capacity Ireland
- Italy – Materahub
- Romania - Centrul De Resurse Economice Si Educatie Pentru Dezvoltare (Creed)
- Spain – Third Sector International (3si)
- United Kingdom – Dsc Regen

Methodology:

EfCD methodology incorporated a programme of desk based and primary research to support the development of the Intellectual Outputs (IOs) that formed the core content generated by the project, including:

- reviews of relevant Vocational Education and Training (VET) provision
- development work to adapt the Level 3 Award in Community Development qualification to different national contexts;
- development and piloting of a new 'European Community Development' unit that was to be incorporated within updated versions of the course.

The findings of each partner were reviewed via transnational level analysis, comparing and contrasting between each country and assessing the suitability and relevance of the available provision at local, regional and national levels, as well as in the broader European context.

The National Level Reviews focused on identification of relevant VET courses in each participating member states and assessment of take-up and outcomes in terms of total number of learners enrolled and qualifications achieved.

The EfCD project partners also reviewed the suitability and relevance of the available provision by obtaining input and feedback from VET learners, employers and local, regional and national stakeholders in relation to the suitability and relevance of relevant courses via structured questionnaires.

Conclusions from National Analyses

The individual National Level Reports all pointed towards the existence of community development (albeit not necessarily under this label) as being an element of social activity for at least over a century in each of the partner countries.

In all cases, there was a significant period between the establishment of organised community development and the advent of related learning opportunities and even today, there is a clear need for more variety in the courses available, and for more of them to be accredited.

It was also evident that in each of the partner countries, community development actions are seen as vital in the fight against poverty, unemployment and inequality on a local and national level.

With respect to the educational opportunities related to community development available at a European level, it is apparent that there is a distinct lack of courses which can either be transferred within the ECVET system, or that even seek to approach the topic from a European perspective. While the courses available within individual countries in Europe offer a good grounding in the sector, they tend to focus on local and national solutions, leaving an unexplored opportunity for those wishing to engage in community development on a transnational basis. There is also an apparent need for more accredited courses to be made available to those interested in pursuing careers within community development.

Overall Research Conclusions

The research undertaken in the EfCD project has given a strong understanding of the nature of community development in each of the partner countries, as well as a good understanding of the availability and suitability of related VET courses. What they found is that while the concept of community development is an important element within each partner country, there are notable differences regarding the individual historical contexts in which it exists, the support community development is afforded by local and national governments and the other key actors who play a part in its operation, whether this be schools, charities or faith institutions, amongst others.

In addition to this, the information collected with regards to related VET provision leads to the belief that although there is now more opportunity than ever before to study within this discipline, there is nevertheless a distinct lack of accredited courses available, and a need for a more collaborative, European-wide approach remains.

Training materials developed

The ECVET for Community Development (EfCD) project came to an end on 31 August 2017 but the project outputs continue to provide opportunities for both learners and VET providers interested in the community development sector in Ireland, especially those also interested in community development at a transnational level. Capacity Ireland, the Irish project partner, is accredited by Learning Research Network to offer the Level 3 Award in European Community Development qualification for learners in Ireland and will continue to offer this course beyond the lifetime of the EfCD project. This qualification is not yet recognised in Ireland by QQI (Quality and Qualifications Ireland) but it is fully accredited and recognised by Ofqual in the UK.

The project had also initially intended to develop a new accredited module focussing on the European dimension of community development, but later amended that idea to the co-development of an additional unit to the course that was being created with the Learning Research Network (LRN). Therefore the European dimension became integral to the overall accredited course and the strengths of the LRN were instrumental in ensuring the European dimension and ECVET appropriateness of the training materials.

Learners who wish to gain the Level 3 Award in European Community Development, can now do so by following the process below:

- They must first go to www.lrnglobal.org to gain a full overview of the qualification specification to see if it fits in well with their previous level of study or work experience
- If they believe the course is relevant to their profession or interests and is of an appropriate study level, they then contact the LRN to find the nearest provider of the qualification (at the time of writing, Capacity Ireland is the only provider offering this course in Ireland)
- As the Level 3 Award in European Community Development is at the same level as a Level 5 qualification in Ireland, completion of the course would enable the learner to progress to the QQI accredited Level 6 Award in Community Development Practice (Minor Award)
- This qualification would be a beneficial form of CPD to a community development practitioner who has already achieved a relevant national qualification. In particular, if they were looking to work

overseas, the European nature of the course means that having it would give them a significant advantage when applying for community development jobs in other European countries.

VET providers who might wish to either gain accreditation for the Level 3 Award in European Community Development or are interested in gain QQI accreditation to deliver community development qualifications in Ireland are offered the following process:

- Go to www.lrnglobal.org and download the full qualification specification to gain a comprehensive idea of the course content and the level of learner study and support required
- Undertake a review to research if they have adequate demand for the course and if it fits in well with their centre's capacity to provide resources
- Request a Centre Accreditation Application Form from LRN. Capacity Ireland can advise on completing the LRN Centre Accreditation Form.



State of art and case study no. 5:

ECVET in The Netherlands

The state of the art of ECVET practices in The Netherlands mirrors the definition on the current [EU ECVET website](#). It shows that ECVET ultimately targets Life-Long Learning and Optimal Opportunities to Migrate between Jobs. For this goal the next instruments can be found in the explicit Dutch policies as defined below:

1. Learning outcomes, which are statements of knowledge, skills and competence that can be achieved in a variety of learning contexts.
2. Units of learning outcomes that are components of qualifications. Units can be assessed, validated and recognized.
3. ECVET points, which provide additional information about units and qualifications in a numerical form.
4. Credit that is given for assessed and documented learning outcomes of a learner. Credit can be transferred to other contexts and accumulated to achieve a qualification on the basis of the qualifications standards and regulations existing in the participating countries.
5. Mutual trust and partnership among participating organizations. These are expressed in Memoranda of Understanding and Learning Agreements.

On the website of the DNCP ([Dutch National Coordination Point](#)), the common core of ECVET rational and its impact can be found. It lists that the adoption and implementation of ECVET in the participating countries is voluntary. Currently, the participating countries and the Commission support a Europe-wide testing of this instrument to which all stakeholders have been invited to participate. The DNCP further articulates that the ECVET's purpose is to enable recognition of learners' achievements during periods of mobility by creating a structure, bringing a common language, and stimulating exchanges and mutual trust among VET providers and competent institutions across Europe. In the context of international mobility but also mobility within countries, ECVET aims to support recognition of learning outcomes without extending learners' education and training pathways. Three subsequent missions for ECVET are 1. valorizing mobility, 2. enhancing the opportunities for lifelong learning and 3. monitor and increase the attractiveness of VET.

ECVET is based on concepts and processes which are used in a systematic way to establish a common and user-friendly language for transparency, transfer and recognition of learning outcomes. Some of these concepts and processes are already embedded in many qualifications systems across Europe.

ECVET focuses on ways to objectify learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills and competence definitions. Intrinsically these attempts for objectifying is aimed at via modularization assessment discipline. For that reason, learning outcomes are expressed in figures, preferably. Credits via proven learning achievements are expected to be valid in contexts outside the initial setting; even in the manifold diversity of jobs in other countries. The targeted Memoranda of Understanding try to increase mutual trust and partnership among participating organizations.

Four demonstration projects on ECVET in the Netherlands have been signaled:

1. “ECVET has proven to be an excellent instrument for valuing and quantifying work experience in the Dutch Defense Organizations. Its reports show that it facilitates the migration of employees within and between defense functions, and also for bridging the in- and outbound migration of labor force between Defense and its Civil Counterparts. The calibration of criterion tests has been supported by the CITO; The Dutch Institute for Educational Test Development.
2. The PROVOET ECVET pilot project fosters the training for 13.000 foot-care professionals. This project found out that also in this field of body care, strict observations and performance indicators can be made. Its goal is to make further progress in tuning the training to the very personal status and style of the individual apprentice. In this sense, ECVET has shown to be a permanent driver for tailoring instruction and increased productivity.
3. STOOFF: Integration of ECVET in the swift growing branch of Flex workers. Typically, the reputation of ‘learning by assisting professionals’ is low. In fact STOOFF has demonstrated that the Master-Apprenticeship model has an important role in transferring best practices and professional habitus. STOOFF invests in two pilot subprojects: In Logistics like DHL and meal delivery for hospitals and airplane catering. The power of Flex work support is its versatility and high degree of informal and situational learning. Its effect is more possibilities to find alternative jobs and build upon earlier learning experiences. The effect is Flex workers’ experience that finally they can be certified and recognized as specialists as well.
4. The ECVETpilot logistics. Its goal is to help workers to reintegrate in the labor organization. The policy of SWB is to adopt ECVET in order to instigate more jobless people to apply for positions. Its target is to have such process done within one year, in order to make them believe in change and ambitions. Candidate trainees come from very diverse origins: School leavers, allochthone/autochthone citizens, youngsters/elderly people, etc. The main source for differentiation is the degree to which learners can focus and contemplate on a learning task. Those who cannot learn from open learning resources will be guided through tutorials and mentoring.

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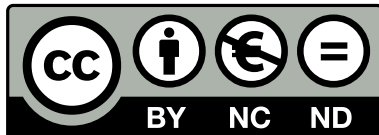
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