



Eu Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-13
Subprogramme Leonardo da Vinci - Call for proposal DG EAC/61/06
Priority 4 "ECVET" of Action "Multilateral Projects - Transfer of
Innovation"
Project Code LLP-LDV/TO1/07/IT/305

Highlight

the competences

European cooperation for a system of credit transfer for VET-ECVET, relating competence and professional needs of the cooperative enterprises working in the services sector

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ECVET Memorandum of Understanding – MoU

Establishment of the partnerships involving competent institutions for the establishment of European correspondence for the qualification
"Site Supervisor in the Cleaning Services"
and learning results concerned by transfer, evaluation, validation processes

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Introduction

Background to general context of MoU

The need for a continuous renewal of the citizens' knowledge, skills and competence is crucial for the EU's competitiveness and social cohesion, and, in this respect, vocational education and vocational training have a key contribution to make. However, complexity and a lack of cooperation between different providers/authorities and between different national systems weaken its impact. These barriers hinder individual citizens from accessing education and training and from combining and accumulating learning outcomes achieved in different learning contexts. They make it difficult for citizens to move within the European Vocational Education and Training (VET) area and the European labour market and to pursue genuine lifelong learning without borders.

The Lisbon European Council in 2000 concluded that increased transparency of qualifications and lifelong learning should be two of the main components in the efforts to adapt Europe's education and training systems both to the demands of the knowledge society and to the need for an improved level and quality of employment. The 2002 Council Resolution on the promotion of enhanced European cooperation in VET (the "Copenhagen Process") emphasised that giving priority to a system of credit transfer for VET was one of the common measures needed in order to promote the transparency, comparability, transferability and recognition of competence and/or qualifications, between different countries and at different levels.

In the 2004 Maastricht Communiqué, the Ministers responsible for VET, the Commission and the European social partners agreed to give priority to the development and implementation of ECVET. This was confirmed by the same group in the 2006 Helsinki Communiqué which calls further development of common European tools namely ECVET.

One of the main obstacles to attracting more interest in trans-national mobility as part of initial and continuing vocational training and education is the difficulty in identifying, validating and recognising learning outcomes acquired during a stay in another country. Furthermore lifelong learning is taking place increasingly in different countries and in a wide variety of contexts, formal, non-formal and informal.

What is needed, therefore, is a way of enabling people to pursue their learning pathway by building on their learning outcomes when moving from one learning context to another, and from one country to the other.

One of the most important challenges to be faced is the diversity, even fragmentation of education, VET and qualifications systems in Europe. A large number of qualifications and of different competent institutions and actors may be involved. Their activities may include the definition of qualifications, methods for assessing and validating learning, setting training objectives, determining the content of learning outcomes, implementing training programmes. A wide range of providers may also be involved: ministries, agencies, occupational sectors, companies, social partners, chambers, non-governmental organisations, and so forth. In some cases, a national authority may accredit or empower training providers or other actors to prepare and

issue qualifications, points, etc. In other cases, these functions can be devolved to the regional level, or to the providers.

Countries have a national framework defining levels of qualifications or a classification for these levels. These frameworks may or may not be geared towards the organisation of education or training cycles. Moreover, depending on the systems, qualifications may be obtained either after only one type of formal training programme or following several kinds of learning processes.

The award of qualifications is based, in some systems, on the accumulation of units of learning outcomes either associated with credit points (United Kingdom, Finland, Sweden...) or without credit points (France, Spain...). Credit systems are sometimes developed within a broader qualifications framework (Scottish and Welsh credit and qualifications framework) or designed for specific qualifications (IFTS system in Italy). Furthermore, depending on the Country, there are many ways of using units and points for learning outcomes and, in certain Countries different practices for the allocation of points for learning outcomes may coexist.

Considering the diversity described above, common conventions and technical principles are required in order to ensure mutual trust and to enable the transfer and recognition of learning outcomes in the context of trans-national mobility.

Existing provisions for the MoU at European level

The ECVET common European tools belong to a series of European initiatives, including the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), Europass, the European Quality Charter for Mobility (EQCM), the European principles for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning and the European Qualification Framework for lifelong learning (EQF):

- ECTS was promoted by the Recommendation of the European Parliament and Council of 10 July 2001 on mobility within the Community for students, persons undergoing training, volunteers, teachers and trainers, used in higher education. ECVET should be compatible with ECTS so as to enable bridging vocational education and training and higher education.
- Europass was created by Decision No 2241/2004/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 December 2004 on a single Community framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences.
- The European principles for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning were agreed in the form of Council Conclusions in 2004. The implementation of ECVET will take these principles into account.
- EQCM was adopted through the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on trans-national mobility within the Community for education and training purposes (European Quality Charter for Mobility). It states in point 8 of its Annex that, when mobility is undertaken by individuals, "participants should be provided with assistance to facilitate recognition and certification" of learning outcomes. ECVET is intended to support the quality of individuals' mobility as required by the above mentioned Recommendation.

- EQF was launched by the 2008 Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European qualification framework (EQF) as a reference tool for the comparison of qualification levels in national qualifications systems and also in qualifications systems developed by international sectoral organisations. ECVET will complement and build on common concepts and principles with the EQF. Indeed, ECVET uses EQF as the reference level for qualifications.
- ECVET was recently object of the specific Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET).

ECVET does not apply to the mutual recognition of qualifications in the area of regulated professions, as that is ensured by Directive 2005/36/EC of 7 September 2005, because ECVET is not a tool for granting rights to migrants in recognition of their qualifications acquired in one Member State with a view to exercising a regulated profession in another Member State. In such a case, only the Directive imposes legally binding obligations on Member States' authorities.

Definitions

For the purposes of the Memorandum of Understanding - MoU, the definitions which apply are the following:

- a) "Qualification": a formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent institution determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards;
- b) "Learning outcomes": statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process and which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence;
- c) "Unit of learning outcomes" (unit): a component of a qualification, consisting of a coherent set of knowledge, skills and competence, that can be assessed and validated;
- d) "Credit for learning outcomes" (Credit): individuals' learning outcomes which have been assessed and which can be accumulated towards a qualification or transferred to other learning programmes or qualifications;
- e) "Competent institution": institution which is responsible for designing and awarding qualification or recognising units or other functions linked to ECVET, such as allocation of ECVET points to qualifications and units, assessment, validation and recognition of learning outcomes, under the rules and practices of participating countries;
- f) "Assessment of learning outcomes": methods and processes used to establish the extent to which a learner has in fact attained particular knowledge, skills and competence;
- g) "Validation of learning outcomes": the process of confirming that certain assessed learning outcomes achieved by a learner correspond to specific outcomes which may be required for a unit or a qualification;
- h) "Recognition of learning outcomes": the process of attesting officially achieved learning outcomes through the awarding of units or qualifications;

- i) "ECVET points": a numerical representation of the overall weight of learning outcomes in a qualification and of the relative weight of units in relation to the qualification.

General and specific objectives of the MoU

In ECVET, units of learning outcomes achieved in one setting are assessed and then, after successful assessment, transferred to another setting. In this second context, they are validated and recognised by the competent institution as part of the requirements for the qualification that the person is aiming to achieve. Units (professional competencies linked to specific learning outcomes) can then be accumulated towards this qualification, in accordance with national, sector or regional rules. Procedures and guidelines for the assessment, validation, accumulation and recognition of units of learning outcomes are designed by the relevant competent institutions.

Credit transfer based on ECVET and applied to learning outcomes achieved in formal learning contexts should be facilitated by establishing partnerships and networks involving competent institutions, each of which is empowered, in their own setting, to award qualifications or units or to give credit for achieved learning outcomes for transfer and validation.

The establishment of partnerships aims to:

- provide a general framework of cooperation and networking between the partners, set out in Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) through which a climate of mutual trust is established;
- facilitate the partners to design specific arrangements for credit transfer for learners.

The MoU will confirm that the partners:

- accept each other's status as interested actors and/or competent institutions;
- accept each other's quality assurance, assessment, validation and recognition criteria and procedures as satisfactory for the purposes of credit transfer;
- agree the conditions for the operation of the partnership, such as objectives, duration and arrangements for review of the MoU;
- agree on the comparability of qualifications concerned for the purposes of credit transfer, using EQF to establish the reference levels;
- identify other interested actors and competent institutions that may be involved in the process concerned and their functions.

For applying ECVET to learning outcomes achieved in formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts, the competent institution which is empowered to award qualifications or units or to give credit, will establish procedures and mechanisms for the identification, validation and recognition of these learning outcomes through the award of the corresponding units and the associated ECVET points.

The "Highlight the Competences" Project, multilateral intervention for the transfer of innovation (ToI) in matters of recognising and transferring of competences and professional qualifications, which is underway within the sectoral programme

Leonardo da Vinci of the EU Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-13, was designed to achieve the general objectives mentioned above with particular reference to the services sector. More specifically, the project focuses on the professional qualifications of "Site Supervisor in the Cleaning Services" sector, and "Site Supervisor in the Logistics Services" sector.

The project is financed within the priority 4 "European credit transfer for VET (ECVET)" of the ToI Leonardo da Vinci projects, and as such it is aimed to give a contribution to the development of the European ECVET system for the transfer of training credits, in particular promoting transparency and comparability of professional qualifications, as well as transferability, validation and recognition of the learning outcomes achieved in formal, informal and non-formal training contexts, in the various Countries and at different level.

The project partnership includes important representative organisations of the services cooperation at national level (in Italy, the *Consorzio Nazionale Servizi* – Services National Consortium, and the *Associazione Nazionale delle Cooperative di Servizio e Turismo* – National Association of the Services and Tourism Cooperatives; in Spain the *Fundación EZAI* – EZAI Foundation; in Malta *Koperattivi Malta* – Apex Organisation of Maltese Cooperatives), public institutions (in particular, the French *Commission Nationale de la Certification Professionnelle* – National Commission for Vocational Certification, and the Italian *ITACA* – *Istituto per l'innovazione e trasparenza degli appalti e la compatibilità ambientale*) and VET specialised organisations (the Italian project leader *Aris Formazione e Ricerca Società Cooperativa* – Aris Training and Research Cooperative Society, the French *Centre de Ressources pour le Développement* – Resources Centre for the Development, the Polish *ZDZ* – *Zakład Doskonalenia Zawodowego w Kielcach Centrum Kształcenia Zawodowego w Radiomiu*, the Greek *Econometrica Ltd*, the Swiss *Fondazione ECAP*). The project is developed also with the support of organisations at regional and national level, as the Italian regional competent authority Regione Umbria and the Italian national sectoral social partner ONBSI – Organismo Nazionale Bilaterale Servizi Integrati, already adherent to the Leonardo da Vinci Lifelong Learning Programme "Highlight the Competences" project, as well as with the collaboration of the Italian national competent organisation Isfol.

The project is aimed to the organisation and realisation of the 4 fundamental steps of the ECVET process:

- Phase 1: Establishment of the European Partnership: to establish the correspondence between qualifications (units and credit units) and the learning outcomes interested by the transfer, as well as the evaluation, transfer and validation (units/unit parts) the social partners of the services cooperation sector and the public institutions competent at the different levels of the participating Countries will undersign a Memorandum of Understanding – MoU, utilising the EQF common principles;
- Phase 2: Learning Agreement: signed by the sending and hosting organisations and by the apprentice/worker, in coherence with the MoU, it will contain a description of the learning outcomes achieved during the mobility period, in qualitative and quantitative terms (units/unit parts and associated credit points);
- Phase 3: ECVET credits awarding: the ECVET credits (units/unit parts and associated credit points) will be awarded after the learning outcomes evaluation; to assure their transparency, the credits will be registered and transcribed, utilising

the EUROPASS documents, detailing knowledge, skills, obtained competences and the credit point associated with the achieved learning outcomes;

- Phase 4: Transfer, validation and accumulation of ECVET credits: in accordance with the MoU and the learning agreement, credits will be transferred, then validated by the sending organisation and recognised for obtaining the qualification concerned, by accumulation, according to the national rules.

As yet, the project implementation process has been centred on the preparation of the useful documentation at the aim of the Memorandum of Understanding – MoU signing. Following the “Démarche Européenne de Professionnalisation Durable – DEPD” methodology (defined and implemented in the European Pilot Project of “Professionalisation Durable” initiated by the French Ministry of Education during the EU Presidency in December 2000, with the participation of 17 Countries, specifically to overcome the barriers to the professional recognition, to the transferability and so, to the employability at trans-national level), the LdV project “Highlight the Competences” has until now allowed the definition of a trans-national document, shared by all the participating European partners, which describes in terms of activities, tasks, units of learning outcomes and correspondence between units and associated credit points, the professions of the “Site Supervisor in the Cleaning Services” (see Appendix 1 of this MoU) and of the “Site Supervisor in the Logistics Services” (contained in the similar appendix of the related MoU).

Form and content of the MoU

1. Participants

The MoU is an agreement open to all the interested organisations and in particular to the competent authorities and to other interested Parties, to implement the MoU at European national, regional and sectoral level, starting from the partners of the Leonardo da Vinci Lifelong Learning Programme “Highlight the Competences” project and by the organisation adhering and collaborating to this:

2. Purpose of the MoU

For applying ECVET in the participating Countries to learning outcomes achieved in formal, non-formal and informal learning context namely for the services sector, in particular for its segments operating in the cleaning services, particularly for the professional qualification of the “Site Supervisor in the Cleaning Services”, this MoU establishes that each participant:

- accepts each other’s status as interested actors and/or competent institutions;
- accepts each other's quality assurance, assessment, validation and recognition criteria and procedures as satisfactory for the purposes of credit transfer;
- agrees the conditions for the operation of the partnership, such as objectives, duration and arrangements for review of the MoU;
- agrees on the comparability of qualification concerned for the purposes of credit transfer, using EQF to establish the reference levels;
- identifies other actors and competent institutions that may be involved in the process concerned and their functions.

3. Ratification and effectiveness of the MoU

This MoU has been duly executed and signed by an official representative of each of signatories. MoU shall come into effect for each party from the date of its signature.

This MoU and its Appendixes shall be executed in English and in the national languages of the signatories.

This MoU, includes two Appendixes:

- Appendix 1, describing in terms of activities, tasks, units of learning outcomes and correspondence between units and associated credit points, the professional figures of the "Site Supervisor in the Cleaning Services";
- Appendix 2, meant to outline the mechanisms for the implementation of the MoU.