Administration Personnel?

Learning is not only classroom

Best practices guide: A step by step approach for the validation of formal, non formal and informal learning for any non regulated profession

(Intellectual Output 12)

Validation of Formal, Non-Formal and Informal Learning: The case study of Administration Personnel

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Executive Summary

The objective of this guide is to identify best practices for the validation of Formal, Non Formal and Informal learning in order to use it for the development of the qualification for any non regulated profession. In the project EUPA_NEXT, the case of administration personnel was studied as a case study for the identification of a methodology for the validation for Formal, Non Formal and Informal learning.

We are now in the position to draw some useful conclusions and to develop a concrete methodology for the validation of Non Formal and Informal Learning of any non regulated profession. At the same time, we have developed a process for the development of a qualification framework as well as a toolkit of best practices/guidelines for the development of curricula, training materials and assessment tools leading to qualifications.

For the development of this methodology we have taken into consideration:

1. The comparative reports on the situations of the countries as far as EQF and ECVET is concerned
2. The methodology guide that described different methodologies used by different EQF and ECVET projects
3. A workshop that took place during which the partners have shared their experiences from the current project and drew some useful conclusions.

The results of our findings are presented in the pages that follow.

Methodology used for the development of this guide

The objective of this guide is to present the best practices identified through the process of this project and describe them in a way that will be helpful for other interested parties to adapt or develop them further. The following methodology has been adapted for the development of the current guide.

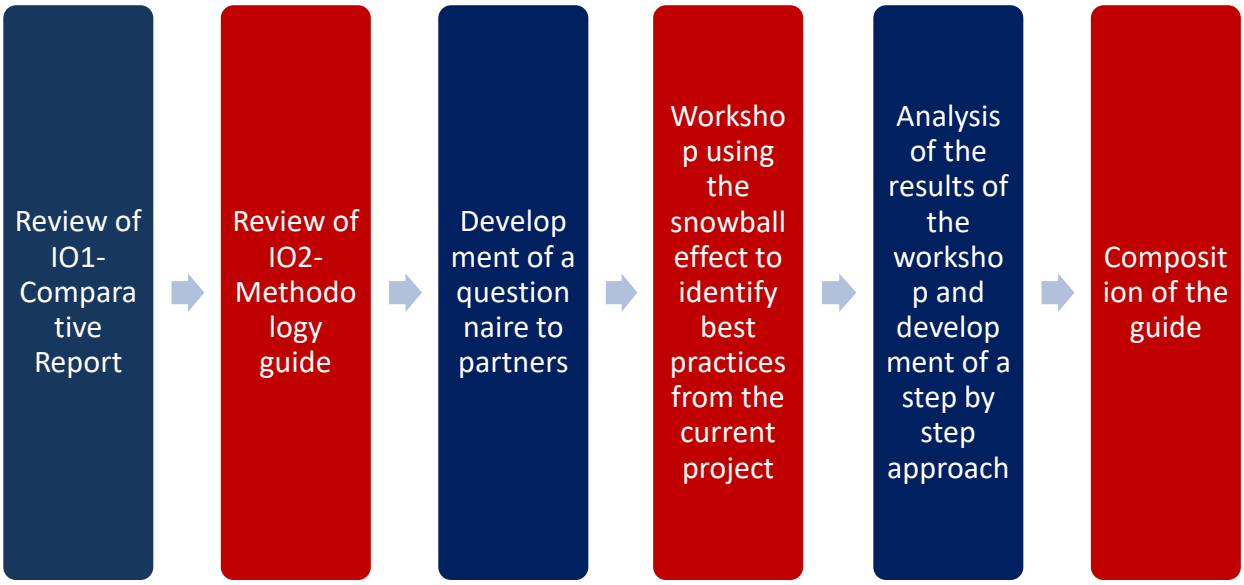

Figure 1: Methodology used for the development of the guide

The questionnaire used during the workshop is presented in **Appendix one** of the current guide.

Review of IO1- Comparative report

The Project EUPA_NEXT aimed to develop a methodology for validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning concerning non-regulated professions using administration personnel as a case study. The European/International qualification for administration personnel corresponds to four levels of the European Qualification Framework (EQF) and contributes to the development of a European Area of skills and qualifications.

EUPA_NEXT promotes the validation of knowledge, skills and competences using the assessment tool aligned with ISO17024 which certifies people competences. In order to achieve this, a qualification framework was developed adapting both a holistic approach but also analysing the holistic learning outcomes into knowledge, skills and competences[1]. The training curriculum, training materials and online books correspond to four EQF levels (Level 2,3,4 and 5). One of the objectives of the project is to increase the labour market relevance of the Vocational Education Training (VET) through the linkage of curricula and training materials with a job oriented qualification framework.

The research conducted during the initial phase of the project EUPA_NEXT contributes **to a comparative study on the situation of the partner countries concerning the development of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), implementation of the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) and validation of Formal, Non-Formal and Informal Learning in each of the partner country**. The results of the research are incorporated into the comparative report which is a summary report based on the single national reports of five partner countries: Germany, Greece, Cyprus, Slovakia and Spain. The national reports embrace the desktop research and results of the interviews/questionnaires conducted with 18 stakeholders, 78 VET providers and 325 learners. The desktop research is carried on the development of NQF, and the inclusion of Non-Formally and informally acquired skills in NQF and ECVET in each partner country. The aim of the interviews with stakeholders is to acquire information about the actual situation of the countries as far as EQF, NQF and ECVET are concerned. The questionnaires to VET providers are conducted to verify the level of their awareness about this framework and find out whether the

[1]Thus recognising the fact that the qualification framework will be used for the development of curricula, training materials and assessments.

training programs offered by the VET institutes are designed in accordance with EQF. The questionnaires filled by the group of learners serve as a source of data on their familiarity with EQF, NQF and ECVET. Through the questionnaires, the information whether the learners choose the training programs taking into consideration the specific level of the training according to the National Qualifications Framework is collected. The overall report consists of the introduction, summary of the desktop research, the results of the interviews and questionnaires to stakeholders, VET providers and learners, glossary and references.

Main findings identified by the report are the following:

- Efforts have been taken to include the validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning in partner countries. The governmental organizations have already initiated the development of the validation mechanisms and their inclusion in the NQF. Different projects are carried out in some of partner countries aiming identification and documentation of learning outcomes.
- Although the ECVET is mostly understood as an instrument of transnational mobility in vocational education and training, it can be also applied beyond mobility activities e.g. transferability and definition of learning outcomes for various VET trainings. There is still need to extend the potential of ECVET among various target groups, according to the recommendation of ECVET experts, "*the stakeholders in initial training are already aware of ECVET while other areas of education like continuing training are not*"[2]. The ECVET in partner countries is usually used as an instrument of transnational mobility. The partner countries give a number of the examples for projects concerning the implementation of ECVET.
- During the interviews the stakeholders were asked whether there is **a strategy for validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning in their countries**. In **Cyprus** two of the stakeholders mentioned that there is no strategy for the validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning. Only one of the stakeholders stated that there is a strategy probably because of the System of Vocational Qualifications of HRDA in which validation is possible and will be incorporated in the CyQF. According to the stakeholders in **Germany** there is yet no strategy for the validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning. Such a strategy is in the preparation stage.

[2] http://www.ecvet-info.de/_media/Recommendations_of_Team_of_ECVET_Experts_2015.pdf

The validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning through the development of a national and easily understood system, based on occupational standards, is still remaining a promising issue for the social dialogue than a concrete operational reality for the national policy agenda in **Greece.** The stakeholders mentioned that the official document of strategy for validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning does not exist in **Slovakia**. It is in the process of being developed and should be a part of a new law that is being prepared on further education. All stakeholders in **Spain** pointed that there isn't a strategy for the validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning in VET. Some stakeholders foresee the changes concerning the validation of Formal and Non-Formal learning in future. According to the stakeholder from Greece there is a general consent that the question of the recognition of qualifications, regardless of the way they have been acquired is urging. German stakeholders mentioned that the recommendations concerning the inclusion of Informal and Non-Formal competences are under development in Germany.

The main conclusion from the comparative report is the need for a strategy for the validation of Non Formal and Informal learning. Many countries do not have a strategy as well as there are incompatibilities between the countries. What is even a bigger challenge is the development of a qualification that is European and not national. This is what we believe is our main contribution to this area as we have managed to combine and integrate the European Strategies of EQF, ECVET and Validation of Non formal and Informal Learning with an internationally recognised standard that certifies personal competences. Taking into consideration that there is no European Organisation for this type of validation, this "marriage" of the models with ISO17024 may be the solution to the validation of Formal, Non Formal and Informal learning.

Review of IO2, the Methodology Guide

The initial objective of this intellectual output, as also stated in the application, was to specify the methodology to be used for the assignment of credits to different learning outcomes to EQF levels 3,4,5. It was then decided also to use the same methodology to reassign credits to level 2[3].

When start reviewing different projects, several other issues related to our project were also identified such as the way the learning outcomes were expressed, the different types of assessment tools used, the assignment of ECVET points etc.

In fact **eleven (11) different dimensions** of interest were identified and all projects were compared and contrasted based on those dimensions.

These dimensions are presented in the following diagram. We consider these dimensions to be in fact key decisions that need to be taken into consideration in any project dealing with validation of formal, non formal and informal learning.

[3] In Eupa project credits were assigned on the learning outcome basis. In EupaNext project they were assigned on the unit basis.

Figure 2: Key issues to be considered in any project dealing with validation of Formal, Non Formal and Informal learning.

Of course, comparing projects on the above mentioned dimensions was neither an easy nor a quick task. However, it provided us with an in depth understanding on how EQF and ECVET are currently treated placing emphasis also to the fact that the approaches used as in many situations very different. Additionally, this process allowed us to think critically on how the whole system should work.

Based on this exercise, certain decisions were taken related to the project EupaNext. The results of this exercise was of course to identify the methodology for the assignment of credits as well as to develop the research tools to be used. It is noted that this methodology has been applied during the implementation of **IO5: Three Qualification Framework of EUPA Level 3-5 with credits based on ECVET**.

In summary the review of the different projects led us to the following key decisions:

- As far as **the way the learning outcomes are being expressed**, the consortium recognizes the fact that there are specific advantages in the holistic approach that provides an overview of related knowledge, skills and competences. In fact, this approach was adapted by the predecessor project EUPA. The main disadvantage however of this approach, is the fact that the QF itself does not provide clear guidance to curricula and training materials' developers on what exactly they need to include in the curricula and training materials respectively. EupaNext project, although used and improved the existing QF, has decided to analyse the holistic learning outcomes into learning outcomes dealing with knowledge, skills and competences separately thus providing developers with clear instructions and at the same time demonstrating the progression between the levels.
- As far as **the context in which the learning outcomes** will be used in the project, we recognise the fact that EupaNext uses the learning outcomes for curricula and training programmes. Learning outcomes are also used for the development of assessment. Therefore they should provide specific guidance to the developers of the above on what they need to develop.

- As far as the **procedure of development of a qualification framework** is concerned, the procedure should always begin with a research including both the target group and other stakeholders. This research should begin with the tasks one performs and how these tasks differentiate across levels. Once the tasks are identified, these are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competences that should also progress across the levels taking into consideration the main principles of EQF. These learning outcomes expressed in knowledge, skills and competences will guide curricula and training materials developers.
- In EupaNext learning outcomes have been designed towards a **whole qualification** in four different levels. However these qualifications are structured into units (defined as a set of related learning outcomes) thus providing a flexible way of learning. In that sense we can also say that learning outcomes have been designed as a part of a qualification.
- As far as the allocation of credits is concerned, the examination of different projects was indeed very useful and a real learning process. Seven out of the ten projects examined did allocation of credit points in one way or another. **In general we need to stress out that the points are being allocated in a diverse way using different methodologies which leads to the conclusion that more clear instructions may need to be provided if we want to have a robust compatible system across the countries of the European Union**. Additionally the following are being mentioned:
    - It is often the case that credits are allocated based on the parameter of time (i.e. how long the training is). To our opinion although this method is comparable to the ECTs points it is not compatible and aligned with **the output orientation of the EQF approach**. ***We should not be interested on how the knowledge, skills and competences have been attained but whether one has them or not.***
    - In other cases expert advice is provided to assign credits to a whole qualification
    - There are projects that allocate credits to learning outcomes (EUPA) or to units
    - Allocation of points to units is done either by taking into consideration the workload for the unit or the relative importance of the unit to the whole qualification. In some cases this is done solely through the use of expert's opinion
    - As well stated in projects Recomfor, NetinVet, Cominter,***there is no mathematical way of allocating points***. Projects need to consult all stakeholders and engage in a negotiation process. It is difficult to say if the result is a neutral representation of the importance of the units. In ECTS, points represent the volume of workload in terms

of time, which is maybe considered as a more neutral representation. ***As this is not possible with ECVET, the only solution is to work towards a common agreement and the consensus of all stakeholders, although they look at units from a different point of view***.

- **In** EupaNext the consortium strongly feels that ECVET credits should adapt the **output oriented approach.** In other words we should not care how much time one spend to learn something but what he/she know and is able to do.
- As far as assessment is concerned, different projects have used different assessment methods from online assessment methods ranging from online assessment tools, self-assessment. Assessment methods such as simulation, oral assessment, multiple choice, written exercise, discussion, inspection of supplied evidence, observation and r ole play have been mentioned. In some cases assessment is on the level of the learning outcome and in others it was on the level of the unit. In some cases there is a formal assessment process described e.g. EasyMetal. This assessment process takes into consideration the verbs used in the learning outcome, thus the assessment responds directly to the verb. Assessment criteria are also mentioned. In some countries a different assessment process is used between the countries. **In EupaNext a** variety of assessment methods have been used including written exercises, oral exercises, practical demonstration and projects. A formal assessment process and criteria were set through IO4.
- As far as the validation is concerned, in some of the projects validation is done through the use of ECVET instruments. In other projects validation is done through assessment. In many cases this validation is non-formal (EUPA) i.e. it is not officially recognised. In other cases it is formal. **In EupaNext t**he consortium considers the ISO certification to be a formal validation for the learning outcomes.
- **In EupaNext** qualification framework, training materials, curricula and assessment are aligned with the level definitions in the European Qualification Framework.
- As far as the expression of learning outcomes is concerned, i**n EupaNext l**earning outcomes are defined in clear and simple language, they encourage active participation and they use active verbs (adapting Blooms taxonomy)
- As most of the projects examined were EQF and ECVET projects special care was taken to encourage students' active participation.

The process of the comparison of different projects provided us with the critical thinking on identifying advantages and disadvantages of several approaches. This in turn was reflected in the best practices suggested in the current guide.

Questionnaire to partners

It is important to note here that the partners were first required to answer the questionnaires on their own, then to discuss in small groups and then the two groups (approximately 4 people each) to present their ideas and solutions to the whole group. Using this snow ball effect we have managed to identify opinions, to examine them through in depth discussions and to reach some useful conclusions on the validation of non regulated professions.

The first question imposed to partners was to develop a system of actions that will lead to the validation of non regulated profession. The rest of the questions aimed to identify best practices in the different steps that this consortium went through e.g. development of qualification framework, assignment of ECVET credits, development of curricula and materials, development of assessments etc. The questionnaire also focused on issues dealing with the cooperation of a successful consortium.

Workshop

The workshop took place during the final meeting of the consortium (although we have started the development of the guide well before that meeting). During the workshop the consortium: -

- Identified factors that make a practice, a BEST PRACTICE (accuracy, causing the multiplication event, publicity, welcomed by all stakeholders)
- -Developed a tool for collecting and evaluating each best practice against all indicators
- -identified the best practices to be included in the guide.

Analysis of the results of the workshop

Qualitative analysis was used to analyse the results of the workshop

Composition of the guide

The current is the sixth version of the guide that was developed in parallel to the developed of the project and was finalised after the implementation of the workshop.

Description of the methodology used by Eupa Next

The methodology at a glance

The following methodology was developed and followed by the Eupa Next project in order to validate formal, non formal and informal learning

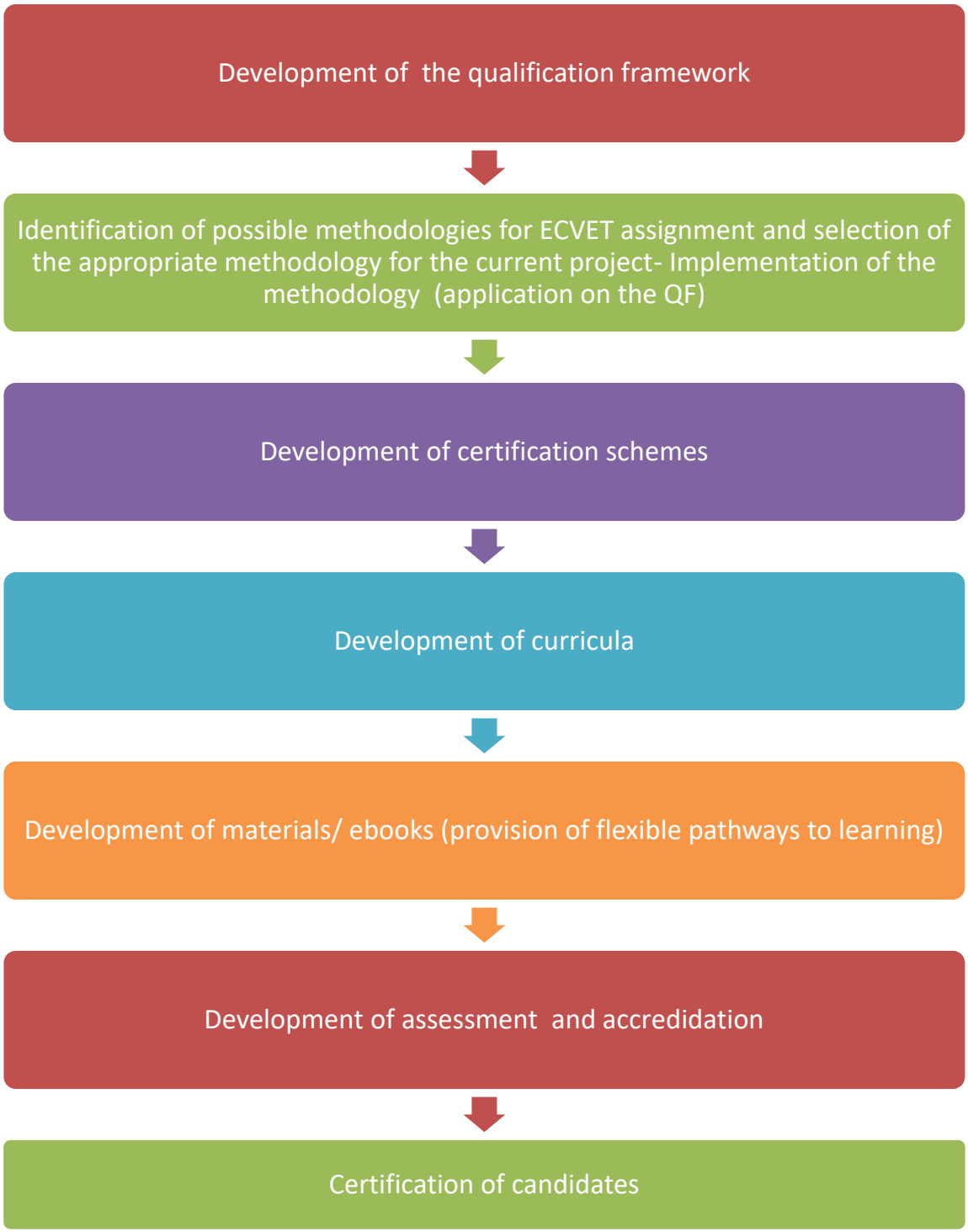

Figure 3: EupaNext Methodology

Short description of the stages

Stage	Description and main findings of the stages of the project
Development of the qualification framework	It is noted here that in our case the qualification framework was developed during our previous Eupa project. Its development was based on field research taking into consideration both the people in the field (in our case administration personnel) but also other stakeholders that have interaction to people in the field (managers, suppliers and so on). The qualification framework developed in the Eupa project was adapting a holistic approach ie the learning outcomes were not expressed as knowledge, skills and competences (distinctively). [4] According to our application, the qualification framework developed in EUPA project would be used and credits would be assigned to this one[5]. During the kick off meeting we decided to keep the holistic approach but additionally to analyze the learning outcomes as knowledge, skills and competences so that it will be easier at a later stage to assess them. Therefore, one more activity has been added on this intellectual output. This activity however proved to be really valuable for the development of the project. Firstly it allowed us to develop curricula and materials that were completely aligned to the qualification framework as the learning outcomes were now very specific and distinguishing between

[4] The term holistic approach was adapted by the consortium to describe the learning outcomes of the previous project.

[5] Initially with the exception of level 2 as credits were assigned to level 2 during the previous project. Finally as a different approach for the assignment of credits was applied in EupaNext, credits were also reassigned to level 2.

Stage	Description and main findings of the stages of the project
	knowledge, skills and competences. Secondly the same qualification framework guided us for the development of the assessments as we have used different types of assessments for assessing knowledge, skills and competences.
Identification of possible ECVET methodologies and selection of the most appropriate one for the current project / Reaching several decisions based on the analysis of other projects	As already mentioned, the initial objective of this task was to identify how ECVET credits would have been assigned to the qualification framework. Through the analysis of different projects, we have identified many other dimensions that are worth considering when implementing such a project. These are listed below: • **Dimension 1:** How the learning outcomes are defined in the selected projects? Is it holistic approach or description in terms of EQF knowledge, skills and competences? Or other approach? • **Dimension 2:** In which settings are the learning outcomes used: Occupational Standards, Curricula and Training Programmes, Assessment specifications, Qualification descriptors, NQF Level Descriptors, Uses of learning outcomes for purposes other than teaching and assessment? • **Dimension 3:** What is the procedure of developing qualification or curricula in the context of EQF/ECVET? What was taken into consideration for the development • **Dimension 4:** What is the procedure of developing mobility activities in the context of ECVET? What are the technical tools used? • **Dimension 5:** Are the learning outcomes designed towards whole qualification/Curriculum or only part of

Stage	Description and main findings of the stages of the project
	the qualification/curriculum? • **Dimension 6:** Are the credit points assigned? If yes, what is the approach to assign the credit points? How many hours are assigned to 1 ECVET point. What was the procedure behind the assignment of ECVET points? Are they assigned according to the relative weight/percentage of the activity within a job profile? Or according to the time required to achieve a given unit of the learning outcomes? • **Dimension 7:** What are the assessment methods and criteria for learning outcomes? • **Dimension 8:** What are the validation methods for learning outcomes? • **Dimension 9**: Are the occupational standards put in place? Were they used in the development of the project? • **Dimension 10:** Is the reference to the EQF/NQF given? • **Dimension 11:** Are the following criteria for description of the learning outcomes fulfilled? ○ Are they defined and described in clear and simple language? ○ Do they encourage students' active participation? ○ Do they demonstrate achievement within a set timeframe? ○ Can the Learning Outcomes be assessed? Based on the above dimensions of course several decisions were

Stage	Description and main findings of the stages of the project
	taken for the current project. These decisions are being briefly presented in the previous section. One of the most important decisions however was the **assignment of ECVET credits** to our improved qualification framework. It is noted that in the previous EUPA project ECVET credits had been assigned on the level of the learning outcomes. Our experience as well as thorough studying of other projects, led us to the decision **that credits should be assigned to the level of the unit and not the learning outcome**. Based on the input and decisions of the previous step we have adapted an output oriented approach on the assignment of ECVET points. We strongly believe that ECVET should not be based on the duration of a teaching unit as this opposes the output oriented approach of EQF ie interested only on what a person knows and is able to do and not how these knowledge and skills have been acquired. Therefore, assignment of credits was finally based **on field research** with the people in the field ie the administration personnel, VET providers and employers. VET providers and employers were asked to assign credits based on the **perceived importance**. People in the sector were asked to assign credits **based on their workload**. Credits were assigned to the level of the unit and people in the sector provided the 50% of the final weight while employers and VET providers provided the rest 50%. In total 100 credits were provided to each level. More specifically: The assignment of credits was be done using three target groups:

Stage	Description and main findings of the stages of the project
	1. Administrators 2. VET Providers 3. Employers VET providers and Employers were asked to **assign credits to all levels**. As it was too difficult to classify employers and VET providers according to levels these two target groups had to assign credits to all levels. For these two target groups credits were assigned in accordance to **PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE**. The above target groups were asked to allocate 100 points to the units. As far as people working in the sector are concerned, based on criteria they were be diverted to a specific level to assign credits to units in accordance to their WORKLOAD. In order to assign the ECVET points the following took place **1.** We have calculated the average number of credits assigned to each unit by administrative personnel. Employer and VET **[AverageAdmin] [Average Employer] [Average VET]** **2.** We have estimated the average number of credits assigned to each unit by employers and VET **[AverageEmplVet]** 3. We estimate the Average between **[AverageAdmin] and [AverageEmplVET]** where Average= ([AverageAdmin]+

Stage	Description and main findings of the stages of the project
	[AverageEmplVet])/2 thus providing 50% of the weight to the administrative personnel and 50% of the weight to employers and Vet providers together. 4. The total number of credits after the above exercise was 96.26 5. We have converted this to 100 points (ie the number of credits in each QF will be equal to 100] All the above calculations are available. The tools used for the assignment of credits are presented in Appendix 2, 3 and 4.
Development of certification schemes	Two certification schemes have been developed by the Cyprus Certification Company with the input of the consortium. The first one dealt with the certification of training curricula and materials and the second one with the certification of the assessment and the process of assessment.
Development of curricula (and ISO certification)	The curricula have been developed to be completely aligned with the qualification framework, i.e. taking into consideration the knowledge, skills and competences each unit should develop. This was then checked by the Cyprus Certification Company prior to certifying the curricula.
Development of materials (and ISO certification)	The term "training materials" refers to the PowerPoint presentations of the trainers as well as the methodological tools (exercises, role plays, case studies etc- at least one for each

Stage	Description and main findings of the stages of the project
	learning outcome) The training materials have been developed to be completely **aligned with the qualification framework**, i.e. taking into consideration the knowledge, skills and competences each unit should develop. Additionally, they are completely aligned with the curricula (in terms of order in which topics are presented, training techniques used to develop knowledge, skills and competences accordingly, durations etc). This was then checked by the Cyprus Certification Company prior to certifying the materials.
Development of assessment and accreditation	Four assessment tools have been developed, one for each level. It is noted here that the assessment tool for level 2 was also revised. The assessments were checked by Cyprus Certification Company for their alignment with the qualification framework and they have been certified.

Table 1: Description of the main stages of the project

Best practices identified from the current project related to the validation for formal, non formal and informal learning

The following sections present the main lessons learned by the different stages of the EupaNext Methodology. More specifically the following are being discussed:

1. Development of a good qualification framework
2. Assignment of ECVET credits
3. Development of a system for the validation of formal, non formal and informal learning
4. Best practices in the development of curricula
5. Best practices in the development of materials
6. Best practices in the development of assessment.

Development of a qualification framework

Based on what we have learned from the previous and current project, we suggest a process similar to the one presented in the following diagram for the development of the qualification framework.

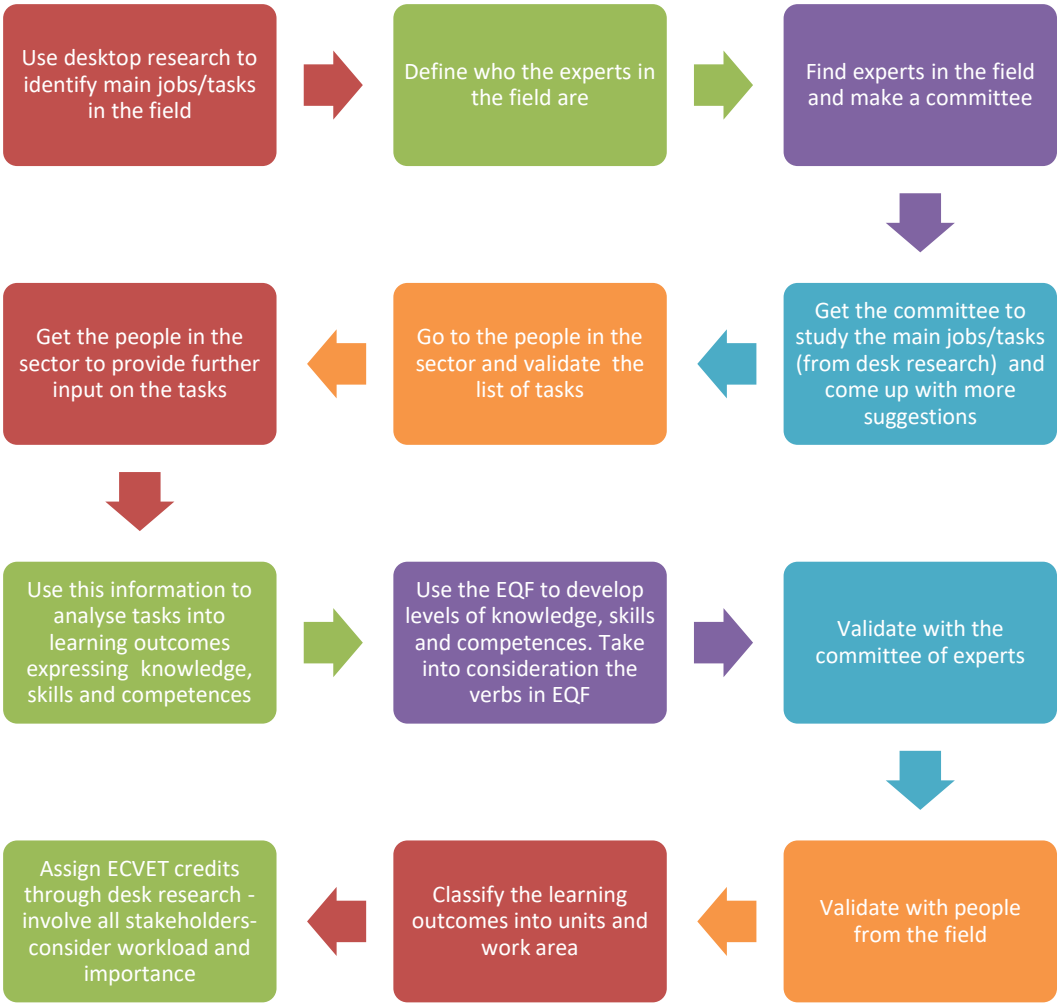

Figure 4: Best practices for writing a qualification framework for a specific sector

The following should be noted:

- You are safer in producing something that is of value if you use several resources. Desk research is always a good start as it provides you with information on what others have done.
- You should **always involve experts**. Experts could be other stakeholders communicating regularly with your target group, or people from the target group that are known for their outstanding performance or even VET providers providing training to this target group.
- The process is not sequential. Make sure you validate your results within the stages to avoid the disappointment of reaching the end having produced something your stakeholders do not approve.

- Analyse tasks into learning outcomes. Make sure that one that has the learning outcomes you have specified can really do the task. Don't miss learning outcomes.
- Pay attention on how you express your learning outcomes.
    - They should be short and concrete.
    - They should use **action verbs**.
    - They should be **specific** and **measurable**.
    - Learning outcomes should make **expectations clear**.
    - Learning outcomes should be **focused on the learner**: rather than explaining what the instructor will do in the course. Good learning outcomes describe knowledge or skills that the student will employ.
    - They should be **realistic**, not aspirational: all passing students should be able to demonstrate the knowledge or skill described by the learning outcome at the conclusion of the course. In this way, learning outcomes establish standards for the course.
    - They should focus on the application and integration of acquired knowledge and skills: good learning outcomes reflect and indicate the ways in which the described knowledge and skills may be used by the learner now and in the future.
    - They should indicate **useful modes of assessment** as well as the specific elements that will be assessed: good learning outcomes prepare students for assessment and help them feel engaged in and empowered by the assessment and evaluation process.
- Align your learning outcomes with the European Qualification Framework. Use, if possible, the verbs used in the EQF.
- As far as units are concerned:
    - Units form the building blocks of all qualifications
    - Units must have a unit title that is clear, concise and reflects the content and is meaningful in its own right
    - All units must contain learning outcomes that:
        - should relate to the title of the unit
        - set out what a learner is expected to know, understand or be able to do as the result of a process of learning

- are clear and coherent, and expressed in language that is understandable by the learners for whom the unit is intended
- are capable of assessment and, in conjunction with the assessment criteria related to that outcome, set a clear assessment standard for the unit

- As far as ECVET point assignment is concerned this is discussed in the following section.

ECVET point assignment

This is probably the most important dimension of our project as it was one of the main project objectives to review methodologies from other projects and decide how we will allocate ECVET points. The following are worth noticing:

- Seven out of the ten projects examined did allocation of credit points in one way or another. In general **we need to stress out that the points are being allocated in a diverse way using different methodologies which leads to the conclusion that more clear instructions may need to be provided if we want to have a robust compatible system across the countries of the European Union.** Additionally the following are being mentioned:
    - It is often the case that credits are allocated based on the **parameter of time** (ie how long the training is). To our opinion although this method is comparable to the ECTs points it is not compatible with the output orientation of the approach. We should not be interested on how the knowledge, skills and competences have been attained but whether one has them or not)
    - In other cases **expert advice** is provided to assign credits to a whole qualification (SME MASTER Plus)
    - There are projects that **allocate credits to learning outcomes** (EUPA) or credits to units
    - **Allocation of points to units** is done either by taking into consideration the **workload** for the unit or the **relative importance** of the unit to the whole qualification. In some cases this is done solely through the use of expert's opinion
    - As well stated in projects Recomfor, NetinVet, Cominter There is no mathematical way of allocating points. Projects need to consult all stakeholders and engage in a negotiation process. It is difficult to say if the result is a neutral representation of the importance of the units. In ECTS, points represent the volume of workload in terms of time, which is maybe considered as a more neutral representation. As this is not possible with ECVET, the only solution is to work towards a common agreement and the consensus of all stakeholders, although they look at units from a different point of view.

Our suggestion is the following:

- ECVET credits should not be based on time needed to gain the skills or competences (eg the duration of the training). This is an input oriented approach and is not compatible with EQF
- Take into consideration all stakeholders. In other words we believe that ecvet credits should be assigned based on research on not based on the opinions of a single expert
- Take into consideration both the workload related to each unit as well as the perceived importance of the unit

Validation of formal, non formal and informal learning – steps taken for the qualification of such professions

EupaNext consortium proposes the following steps for the development of the qualification of non regulated professions.

The whole process is presented in the following figure. More specifically:

The first three steps deal with the development of the qualification framework (more details are provided in the next section). Then the process recognises **three different routes to the validation of non formal and informal learning of non regulated professions**

1. The first route is to **match the existing experience with the Qualification Framework**. This is something that happens in many situations. In reality however, matching experience does not necessarily mean that the person has the knowledge, skills and competences necessary to do the work or that they do the work in the appropriate way. It is very well known that even for experienced people sometimes we need to erase learning and rewrite new learning. So although we have it as an option as a consortium we do not really recommend it. Additionally, this is not an option however in the case ISO certification (17024) is the selected standard as the assessment is compulsory in this case.
2. **The second route allows a person to proceed directly to the certification without participating in any training activities**.
3. The third route allows a person to participate in classroom training activities and then proceed to the certification process. In the case of EupaNext we have developed training materials and methodological tools for the trainer to use in classroom activities. However it is noted that the training activities are recommended and not compulsory as what we are interested in is the success or failure in the assessment.
4. The final route links mostly to **self directed learning** using materials such ebooks.

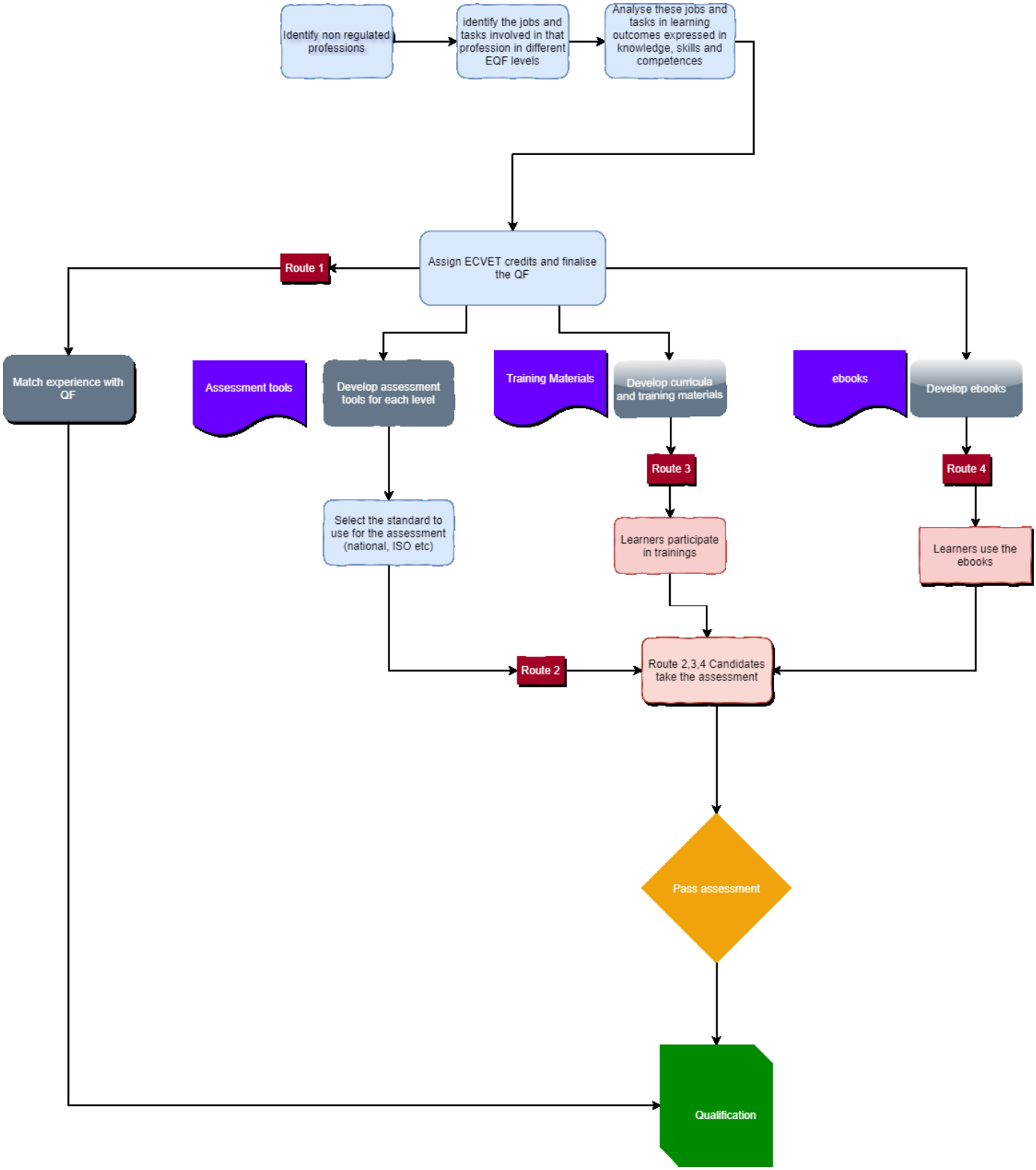

Figure 5: Process for the provision of qualifications to non-regulated professions

Development of curricula (and ISO certification)

The following best practices have been identified as far as the development of curricula is concerned.

1. Curricula should be aligned with the qualification framework.
2. This does not mean just to cover the **topics** mentioned in the qualification framework. It means also to ensure that they develop **knowledge or skills or competences** in accordance to the qualification framework.
3. Satisfying the second criterion means that we have listed the **appropriate techniques** depending on whether we are developing knowledge, or skills or competences (eg lecture for knowledge, experiential workshops, role plays etc for skills and so on)
4. Ensure that your curricula are detailed enough especially if the materials will be developed by the trainers.
5. Make sure that you end up with the training technique ie have the topic, then the subtopic, then the training technique as shown in the section below:

Topic 1

- Subtopic 1
    - Technique 1
- Subtopic 2
    - Technique 2

Development of materials (and ISO certification)

The following best practices have been identified as far as the development of training materials are concerned.

1. Training materials should be aligned with the qualification framework.
2. Training materials should be modular. Self assessment may be used to support learners in their selection of units they need to undertake.

3. This does not mean just to cover the **topics** mentioned in the qualification framework. It means also to ensure that they develop **knowledge or skills or competences** in accordance to the qualification framework.
4. Satisfying the second criterion means that we have developed the **appropriate techniques** depending on whether we are developing knowledge, or skills or competences . Therefore a variety of training materials should be developed to be used for the development of knowledge, skills and competences. Powerpoint slides, books etc could be developed for lectures that will develop knowledge. Experiential workshops, role plays, snowballs, simulations, practical exercises etc will be developed for the development of skills and competences.
5. Ensure that your training materials are detailed enough
6. Develop materials that are interesting. Slides should be visual. Methodological tools should be innovative.

Development and accreditation of assessment

The following best practices have been identified as far as assessment is concerned:

1. Develop a variety of assessment tools so that you can alter the assessment by selecting assessment tools randomly
2. Assessment tools should be aligned with the EQF level they assess.
3. The type of the tool should be aligned with the learning outcomes (expressed as knowledge, skills and competences). Different assessment tools will be used for knowledge and different for skills. Therefore you may use multiple choice tests to assess knowledge and role play to assess skills. The action verb used by the learning outcome should guide you on how the learning outcome will be assessed.
4. One possible type of assessment tool is also observation
5. If you are assessing using ISO17024 then assessments such as project review cannot be used.

Best practices identified from the current project related to the cooperation of the consortium

During the workshop implemented partners were asked to review and evaluate the method and tools used for the cooperation of the consortium

The following are worth noting:

1. Meetings and skype meetings are very useful for keeping the project on track
2. Coordination emails (regular – on a weekly basis) were also considered to be vital especially for challenging projects such as Eupa_Next.
3. Informal communication through viber and whats app to resolve day to day issues
4. Dropbox or shared google drive are very useful to share documents and to avoid sending big documents through emails
5. Although trello was used to indicate the deadlines, partners were not in favour of trello and have preferred to use activity lists prepared by the coordinator

Conclusions

Project EupaNext was a useful and successful project in the area of validation of formal, non formal and informal learning. The project has suggested:

1. A complete system for the validation of formal, non formal and informal learning of non regulated professions providing four different routes to validation and qualification.
2. A step by step approach for the development of a qualification framework.
3. A set of good practices for the development of curricula, training materials and assessment tools.
4. Some guidelines on running an effective consortium and handling a challenging project.

More information on the EupaNext project can be found on www.eupanext.eu

Appendices

Appendix 1

Identification of good practices for the validation of non-regulated professions

1. Let's identify the steps to be taken for the validation of such professions (Helicopter view)

Please provide the steps in a graphical form

2. What are the best practices in developing a qualification framework for a specific sector?

Please provide the steps in a graphical form

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.

3. How about the allocation of ECVET points?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.

4. What are the best practices in designing training curricula and materials?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.

5. What are the best practices in the development of assessments?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.

6. What do you consider as good practices regarding the cooperation of the consortium?

i. As far as communication is concerned (comment on how often, using what means etc)

ii. **As far as tools are concerned (project management tools eg trello, common storage e.g. dropbox etc)**

iii. **As far as organization of meetings are concerned**

iv. Other

Appendix 2

Questionnaire to employers for the assignment of ECVET credits

- Enclosed as a separate document

Appendix 3

Questionnaire to VET providers for the assignment of ECVET credits

- Enclosed as a separate document

Appendix 4

Questionnaire to Administrative Personnel for the assignment of ECVET credits

- Enclosed as a separate document

Checklist

Before submitting, this output please make sure that the following tasks have been completed:

☒ The table of contents has been updated

☒ Captions have been used for all tables

☒ The Repeat Header Row function has been used for all tables

☒ The list of tables has been updated

☒ Captions have been used for all figures

☒ The list of figures has been updated

☒ The footer is complete

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