



Imprinting Quality to Entrepreneurship Education

Common Reference Framework

For the implementation of a Quality Assurance System
in entrepreneurship education

July 2019



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union





Project information

Project Title:	Imprinting Quality to Entrepreneurship Education
Project Acronym:	IN-QUAL
Grant Agreement Number:	2018-1-PT01-KA202-047332
Coordinator:	Instituto Pedro Nunes
Project Website:	www.in-qual.com

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

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Executive Summary

The Common Reference Framework is a document produced for the Quality Managers of Entrepreneurship Education Providers, to support them in the implementation of Quality Assurance Mechanism and Processes inside their Organizations.

The document comprises three main chapters:

- Methodologies and Tools for the implementation of Quality Assurance strategy in VET, an introductory chapter containing general methodological guidelines, toolkits and tools for QA in entrepreneurship education, guidance on European EQAVET standards and a few interesting case studies;
- Standard principles and indicators for entrepreneurship education providers, a chapter aimed at supporting and enhancing quality assurance in VET providers, in particular regarding the entrepreneurship education, based on the EQAVET recommendation and indicators;
- Methodology and tools to set the strategy to reach the most relevant stakeholders, which provides both general information on stakeholders' engagement, as well as a more detailed description of the benefits and pitfalls of stakeholders' engagement, and methodology and tools that can be used for this purpose.

In the first chapter a series of methodologies for VET providers are presented and discussed: first a series of procedures and tools for an internal evaluation, to be applied as a first step in the Quality Assurance process, followed by the external evaluation methodology.

Then the reader is presented with a description of the EQAVET toolkit, composed of 10 indicators for the Quality Assurance. The EQAVET Quality Process is based on a Quality Cycle, that divides the actions of the process in four recurring phases: Planning, Implementation, Evaluation, Review.

Moreover, other available tools are presented and briefly discussed, and finally a selection of case studies is included.

The second chapter is the central focus of the Common Reference Framework, and describes, in an in-depth analysis, the standard principles and indicators, specifically focused for Entrepreneurship Educators Providers.

The main focus of this chapter is still on the EQAVET principles and indicators, and comprises two tables: the first one containing the four dimensions of VET provision, which derive from the 6 EQAVET Building Blocks, the second one addresses instead the concept of the Plan, Do, Check, Act Quality Cycle.

Finally, the last chapter is dedicated to the Stakeholder Engagement, an important part of the Quality Management, and specifically it includes a description of possible Stakeholders, an analysis of the benefits and also of possible pitfalls of the Stakeholders Engagement, and methods and tools that can be used to reach them during the Quality Assessment process.

Noteworthy is also the Glossary of terms contained at the end of the Common Reference Framework, which defines the main terms used in the Framework, especially the more technical ones. It also contains references to the sources used to provide the definition.

Introduction

One of the main objectives of the IN-QUAL project is to develop a **Common Reference Framework** that will represent the base of the adaptation of the EQAVET tools to the entrepreneurship education sector. This framework consists of the following pillars:

1. Methodologies and tools for the implementation of Quality Assurance strategy in VET
2. Standard principles and indicators for entrepreneurship education providers
3. Methodology and tools to set the strategy to reach the most relevant stakeholders
4. Glossary of terms

This document is produced to help the future entrepreneurship education *'Quality Manager'* to correctly use and adopt transparency mechanisms in his/her own organisation. The framework will include: the identification of standard principles and indicators entrepreneurship education providers should refer to a good Quality Assurance implementation within their own organisations; methodology and tools to set the strategy to reach the most relevant stakeholders in VET provision in the field of entrepreneurship education at National and European level, addressing mainly VET providers (both iVET and cVET); methodologies and tools for the implementation of Quality Assurance strategy within VET providers, focusing in particular on entrepreneurship education and a glossary of terms.

1. Methodologies and Tools for the implementation of Quality Assurance strategy in VET

In this first section we will discuss useful methodologies and tools to implement a Quality Assurance strategy in VET organisation providing training for entrepreneurship education. General methodological guidelines, toolkits and tools for QA in entrepreneurship education, guidance on European EQAVET standards and a few interesting case studies are provided in the following paragraphs.

1.1. Quality Assurance methodologies for VET providers

1.1.1. Methodology for internal evaluation

In order to identify problem areas in the quality of the entrepreneurial education in VET, it is recommended to undergo internal evaluation first, so that the problem areas can be tackled. This methodology is set up, based on a checklist for internal evaluation. The most important components are provided below:

- **Management and organisation**

First, the basis of the VET entrepreneurship education quality in VET institutions, needs to be checked. This is the management and organisation and includes aspects like quality management (including evaluation), finance and administration, learner engagement (in decision making), external relations (e.g. community, enterprises, other providers) and engagement in general. Here the focus is on the entrepreneurial education, which means that for example finance and administration should revolve around financing entrepreneurial programme(s).

- **Infrastructure**

The infrastructure should be organised in a certain manner, which provides the ability to facilitate the entrepreneurship education. Here, the buildings, facilities and equipment are of importance. For the best quality of entrepreneurship education, certain facilities and equipment (e.g. rooms, digital boards, computers, paper, markers, etc.) are needed.

- **Personnel**

Personnel with relevant knowledge and skills should provide entrepreneurship education. The following aspects are important here: manager/principal competence (development), staff development and working conditions of staff. The staff should be kept up to date about the entrepreneurship education by following trainings/workshops and by contacting the entrepreneurs for their feedback regularly.

- **Programmes**

Entrepreneurship education should be provided within certain programmes, specifically designed for this type of education. These programmes include among others: a particular curriculum, didactics, learning outcomes which promote and enhance entrepreneurial knowledge/skills, learner assessment to evaluate the level of entrepreneurial knowledge/skills and learner

destination. The curricula and didactics for example, should be adapted to provide entrepreneurship education in the best possible way.

By following the above described steps of evaluation, the quality of entrepreneurship education should be assured internally. It is important to be up to date, regarding each aspect and to keep checking on it regularly (every three months).

1.1.2. Methodology for external evaluation

External evaluation of VET institutions, which provide entrepreneurial education, should be made by the state, an intermediate authority or by an independent competent body (professional/sectoral or in relation to internationally recognised standards e.g. ISO) and should include one or more of the following:

- **Inspection**, e.g. Schools Inspectorate, which also focuses on the inclusion of the entrepreneurial elements in teaching, learning and assessment;
- **Audits** e.g. with a focus on management, budgets, facilities assigned for entrepreneurship education;
- **Site visits** by public/private reviewers to agree on self-assessment reports specified for entrepreneurship education;
- **Peer review** in order to achieve and maintain successful entrepreneurship education;
- **External review of references from key stakeholders** – e.g. employer-, learner-surveys relevant for entrepreneurial learning (entrepreneurial knowledge and skills);
- **External evaluation by means of an Information Management System (IMS)** and the analysis of data supplies related to indicators e.g. participation, completion, success, placement rates (quantitative data on entrepreneurship education results).

1.2. Available toolkits & tools for Quality Assurance in VET

To support the VET providers with the quality assurance, there are available tools & toolkits presented for the quality assurance. First, there are EQAVET toolkits & tools presented, as EQAVET promotes European collaboration in developing and improving quality assurance in VET. After that, there will be other existing toolkits and tools presented for the VET providers to use in order to assure quality.

1.2.1. EQAVET toolkits & tools

- **EQAVET indicators’ toolkit**

This toolkit for quality assurance is based on 10 indicators, the relevance of which is based on the context and needs of each VET provider. The ultimate goal is to assure the quality of VET at both the system and the providers’ level. It does not matter where you are in the EQAVET quality assurance and improvement cycle (see the next page), making use of indicators is a necessary step to monitor progress.



Figure 1 - EQAVET quality cycle

1. Purpose and Plan

Set up clear, appropriate and measurable goals and objectives in terms of policies, procedures, tasks and human resources.

2. Implementation

Establish procedures to ensure the achievement of goals and objectives (e.g. development of partnerships, involvement of stakeholders, allocation of resources and organizational or operational procedures).

4. Review

Develop procedures in order to achieve the targeted outcomes and/or new objectives; after processing feedback, key stakeholders conduct discussion and analysis in order to devise procedures for change.

3. Assessment and Evaluation

Design mechanisms for the evaluation of achievements and outcomes by collecting and processing data in order to make informed assessment.

The 10 indicators presented in the [EQAVET indicators' toolkit](#) are:

1. Relevance of quality assurance systems for VET providers
2. Investment in training of teachers and trainers
3. Participation rate in VET programmes
4. Completion rate in VET programmes
5. Placement rate in VET programmes
6. Utilisation of acquired skills at the workplace
7. Unemployment rate¹ according to individual criteria
8. Prevalence of vulnerable groups
9. Mechanisms to identify training needs in the labour market
10. Schemes used to promote better access to Vocational Education and Training

All these indicators are presented in separate modules, which are designed in the following way:

- A definition of the indicator
 - Two main headings are used to organize information: *Key Information* and *Technical Notes*
 - Guiding *Questions & Answers* are used to present the information regarding different dimensions of each indicator
 - Seven dimensions are considered to be: operational definition, recommended use, EQAVET related indicators, possible additional information, indicator's components, indicator mathematical formula and usually reported subgroups
 - A final *Note* provides those who are interested to read the on line existing practices in Member States.
- [EQAVET Quality Assurance for VET systems](#)

This tool is developed in the EQAVET framework for VET systems. First it focuses on the 10 indicators mentioned above and on the building blocks related to the stages of the EQAVET quality assurance and improvement cycle. Every block is being described. Afterwards, the four stages of the EQAVET quality assurance and improvement cycle are being highlighted to build their own system:

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

- *Indicative descriptors* help to review own quality assurance system and to approximate how much progress has already been made.
- [EQAVET+²](#) *Indicative Descriptors* include more indicative descriptors, which concern a wider range of learning contexts, including the achievement and recognition through informal and

¹ Definition according to ILO and OECD: individuals 15-74 years old without work, actively seeking employment and ready to start work

² EQAVET+ complements EQAVET to further strengthen quality assurance approaches in line with EQAVET. It provides more information on the Annex I of the EQAVET Recommendation, i.e. related to the indicative

non-formal learning. Each stage has own EQAVET+ indicative descriptors, except for Evaluation.

- *Indicators* which are being specified.

What else?

- After the system is built by following the four stages mentioned above, there is a possibility to *monitor the quality of own system* by the stages Evaluation and Review.
- EQAVET Quality Assurance for VET systems also provides *downloadable materials* which are designed to support European, national and regional organisations that are interested in using the EQAVET Recommendation so that they can monitor and/or develop their quality assurance approaches.
- There is an *overview of the participating countries and the organisations involved* in the EQAVET working groups which produced this on-line tool.
- The tool also describes the *EQAVET+*, by informing on the EQAVET+ Approach, EQAVET+ Key Themes and EQAVET+ Brochure.

- [EQAVET Quality Assurance for VET providers](#)

The tool for VET providers has almost the same structure as the one for VET systems. The information is now addressed to VET providers. There are no *Indicators* included for each of the EQAVET quality assurance and improvement cycle stages in the **Building your System** section. The **Material** section provides relevant documents for the VET providers. The **Participating Countries** section, now focuses more on the organisations that support VET, like Ministry of Education and an Inspectorate.

EQAVET for Work-based learning (WBL)

In the case of EQAVET for Work-based learning, there are 6 building blocks involved, which are built on the EQAVET indicators and indicative descriptors. These blocks are:

- Design
- Improve
- Respond
- Communicate
- Train
- Assess

descriptors. EQAVET+ indicative descriptors can also be applied to school-based provision; apprenticeships, in-company training, lifelong learning programmes, informal and non-formal learning.

The EQAVET for Work-based learning is mainly based on the National Reference Points and can be helpful to encourage VET providers, so that they apply Quality Assurance approach that could be integrated in line with their EQAVET compatible system.

1.2.2. Other existing toolkits & tools

There are a lot of tools available based on the PDCA/quality cycle. Those tools are meant to be applied for internal quality management. Only a number of them is presented below. For more tools based on the PDCA/quality cycle, please consult [Handbook for VET providers](#) created by Cedefop.

- **Questionnaire to teachers for self-reflecting on learner's assessment**

This is a tool which helps the teachers to reflect on how they evaluate learners. It consists of multiple-choice questions, that the teachers have to answer about this topic. This way the teachers will get an overview on how they evaluate learners regarding time management, correction of written texts, mark and appeal. This tool could easily be modified and applied for entrepreneurial education.

- **Guidelines for a staff appraisal interview**

This tool is specifically designed for the school principal to guide him or her through an interview with the staff. This should be a good opportunity to pay attention to the entrepreneurial education and what support is needed for that, a specific training, for instance. The accompanying document will help to set mutual agreements to improve teacher's work.

- **Evaluation of cooperation with companies**

The document developed to evaluate cooperation with companies and could be very well used to monitor the communication and cooperation with successful start-ups and newfound enterprises, active in the field of entrepreneurship education. Those start-ups and enterprises could provide valuable information for the sector. This tool can be adapted for the cooperation and communication's evaluation regarding specifically these companies.

- **Questionnaire to parents on learners' progress**

This tool is also very interesting, because here the parents of the VET learners are involved. They also play an important role in the education of their children and can provide valuable input in terms of the entrepreneurship education as well. For this matter it is wise to adjust and customize questions, so that the focus is on entrepreneurship education, but also on the entrepreneurial competences and skills learners acquired.

1.3. EQAVET toolbox of indicators for VET providers

EQAVET indicators are a useful tool for VET providers to support the implementation of their Quality Assurance strategy. This set of 10 indicators was first introduced in 2009 as an Annex to the Recommendation that established the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework³.

The Framework comprises a quality assurance and improvement cycle based on a selection of quality criteria, descriptors and indicators applicable to quality management at both VET-system and VET-provider level. The text of the Recommendations specifies that the Framework should be regarded as a ‘toolbox’: users are not invited to adopt the package of descriptors and indicators as a whole but rather to choose those that are most relevant to the requirements of their particular quality assurance system. The aim of the Framework, in fact, is not to introduce additional standards but to “support Member States’ efforts whilst preserving the diversity of their approaches”⁴.

The EQAVET Framework includes the following 10 indicators:

Indicator	Type of Indicator	Purpose of the Policy
Overarching Indicators for Quality Assurance		
1. Relevance of quality assurance systems for VET providers: 1.1 Share of VET providers applying internal quality assurance systems defined by law/at own initiative 1.2 Share of accredited VET providers	Context/Input indicator	→ Promote a quality improvement culture at VET-provider level → Increase the transparency of quality of training → Improve mutual trust on training provision
2. Investment in training of teachers and trainers: 2.1 Share of teachers and trainers participating in further training 2.2 Amount of funds invested	Input/Process indicator	→ Promote ownership of teachers and trainers in the process of quality development in VET → Improve responsiveness of VET to changing demands of labour market → Increase individual learning capacity building

³ ‘Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training’ (2009), *OJ C 155, 8.7.2009, p. 1–10*.

⁴ *Ibidem*.

		→ Improve learners' achievements
Indicators supporting quality objectives for VET policies		
<p>3. Participation rate in VET programmes:</p> <p>Number of participants in VET programmes⁵ according to the type of programme and the individual criteria⁶</p>	Input/Process/Output indicator	<p>→ Obtain basic information at VET-system and VET-provider levels on the attractiveness of VET</p> <p>→ Target support to increase access to VET, including for disadvantaged groups</p>
<p>4. Completion rate in VET programmes:</p> <p>Number of persons having successfully completed/abandoned VET programmes, according to the type of programme and the individual criteria</p>	Process/Output/Outcome indicator	<p>→ Obtain basic information on educational achievements and the quality of the training processes</p> <p>→ Calculate drop-out rates compared to participation rates</p> <p>→ Support successful completion as one of the main objectives of quality in VET</p> <p>→ Support adapted training provision, including for disadvantaged groups</p>
<p>5. Placement rate in VET programmes:</p> <p>5.1 Destination of VET learners at a designated point in time after completion of training, according to the type of programme and the individual criteria⁷</p> <p>5.2 Share of employed learners at a designated point in time after completion of training, according to the</p>	Outcome indicator	<p>→ Support employability</p> <p>→ Improve responsiveness of VET to the changing demands in the labour market</p> <p>→ Support adapted training provision, including for disadvantaged groups</p>

⁵ For IVT: a period of 6 weeks of training is needed before a learner is counted as a participant.

For lifelong learning: percentage of population admitted to formal VET programmes.

⁶ Besides basic information on gender and age, other social criteria might be applied, e.g. early school leavers, highest educational achievement, migrants, persons with disabilities, length of unemployment.

⁷ For IVT: including information on the destination of learners who have dropped out.

type of programme and the individual criteria		
6. Utilization of acquired skills at the workplace: 6.1 Information on occupation obtained by individuals after completion of training, according to type of training and individual criteria 6.2 Satisfaction rate of individuals and employers with acquired skills/competences	Outcome indicator (mix of qualitative and quantitative data)	→ Increase employability → Improve responsiveness of VET to changing demands in the labour market → Support adapted training provision, including for disadvantaged groups
Context information		
7. Unemployment rate⁸ according to individual criteria	Context indicator	→ Background information for policy decision-making at VET-system level
8. Prevalence of vulnerable groups: 8.1 percentage of participants in VET classified as disadvantaged groups (in a defined region or catchment area) according to age and gender 8.2 success rate of disadvantaged groups according to age and gender	Context indicator	→ Background information for policy decision-making at VET-system level → Support access to VET for disadvantaged groups → Support adapted training provision for disadvantaged groups
9. Mechanisms to identify training needs in the labour market: 9.1 information on mechanisms set up to identify changing demands at different levels	Context/output indicator (qualitative information)	→ Improve responsiveness of VET to changing demands in the labour market → Support employability

⁸ Definition according to ILO and OECD: individuals aged 15-74 without work, actively seeking employment and ready to start work.

9.2 evidence of their effectiveness		
10. Schemes used to promote better access to VET 10.1 information on existing schemes at different levels 10.2 evidence of their effectiveness	Process indicator (qualitative information)	→ Promote access to VET, including disadvantaged groups → Support adapted training provision

The Recommendation of 2009 also invites Member States to establish Quality Assurance [National Reference Points](#) for VET in order to bring together existing relevant bodies and to involve the social partners and all stakeholders concerned at national and regional levels. National Reference Points are intended to advise, support and facilitate VET providers in the implementation of the Framework at national level; as such, they should be the first to promote a flexible approach to the tool, allowing for alignment with the pre-existing self-monitoring mechanisms of VET providers at national level.

1.4. Case studies

Although numerous initiatives on entrepreneurship education are under way at all levels across the EU, most of them are neither integrated into the curriculum nor form part of a coherent framework: as a result, most students cannot yet take part in entrepreneurship courses and programmes⁹. This also accounts for the scarcity of case studies with a specific focus on quality assurance in entrepreneurship education and reconfirms the centrality of the objectives that the IN-QUAL project sets off to achieve.

The following case studies were selected in 2017 by the EQAVET Network working group, which gathered to discuss how the EQAVET+ descriptive indicators were already being used to support quality assurance. The below examples form part of a set of 29 case studies which are considered illustrative of effective practice in the use of EQAVET standards with regard to quality assurance. One meaningful case study was selected for each of the countries participating in IN-QUAL in order to offer a country-specific example which can be taken as inspiration and adapted to the national provision of entrepreneurship education.

⁹ [‘Entrepreneurship in Vocational Education and Training – Final Report of the Expert Group’ \(2009\), European Commission, Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry](#)

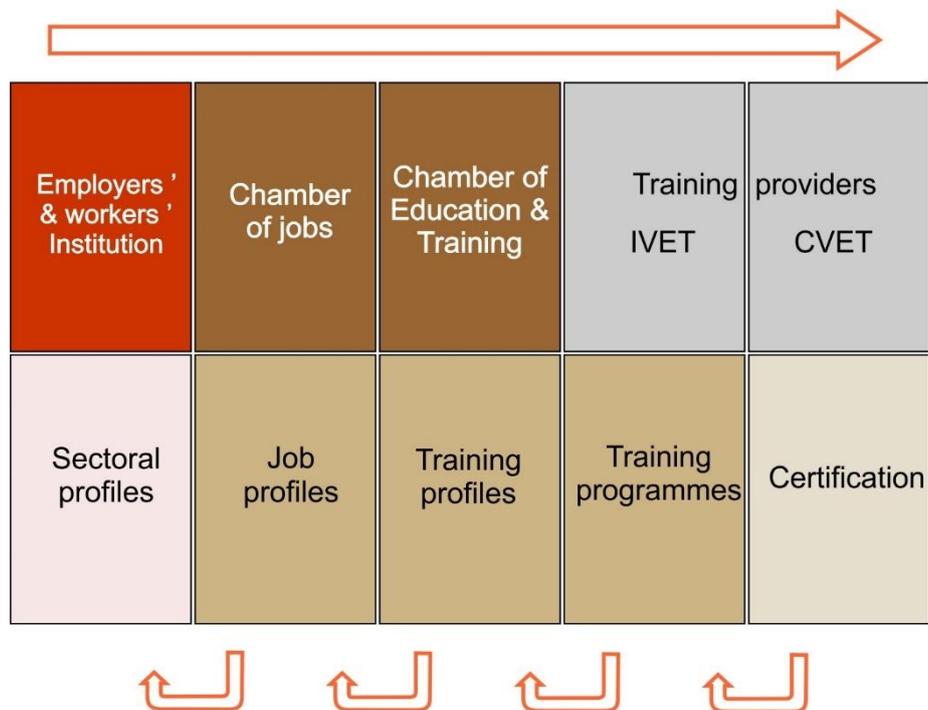
- **Belgium:** [Service Francophone de Métiers et Qualifications](#) (SFMQ)

The Belgian (French-speaking) Service for Jobs and Qualifications (SFMQ) was founded in 2009 as part of a broader policy programme in line with the European initiative set out in the Lisbon Strategy. In September 2010 the government of the French-speaking Community agreed in principle to create a qualifications framework with a “double entry” system, one for education qualifications and one for professional qualifications. These qualifications are organised in eight levels and are consistent with the descriptors of the European Qualifications Framework.

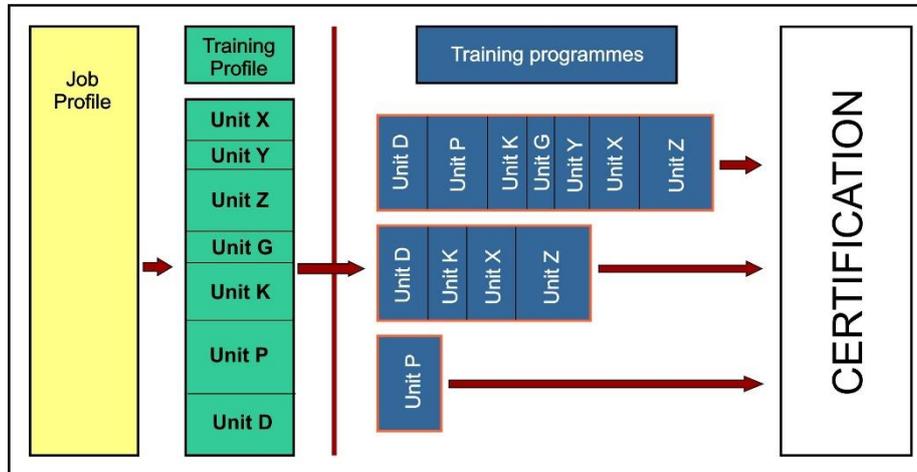
The SFMQ aims to:

- Design job profiles based on sectoral demand;
- Design training profiles which are described in the basis of job profiles to strengthen the link with the needs of the labour market;
- Provide all education and training providers with a set of common training profiles for initial and continuing and VET;
- Collaborate with all relevant stakeholders to enhance the transparency of the system.

Within the SFMQ, qualifications are designed using learning outcomes that clearly define what the learner knows, understands and can do within an agreed level of autonomy and complexity. The process starts with a certain professional sector requesting the SFMQ a qualification for a certain job. The Chamber of Jobs establishes a commission of experts which identifies the key activities and tasks for each job and elaborates a ‘job profile’. Once this is done, the Chamber of Education and Training creates a separate commission of experts which divides the previously identified key tasks and activities into learning outcomes, thus developing the ‘training profile’.



The learning outcomes are organised into units to allow for the modularisation of learning:



As part of the government's plan to review qualifying education, the Wallonia-Brussels Federation has established a mechanism to certify units of learning outcomes (CPU) working in synergy with the SFMQ. The SFMQ provides a common framework for all VET providers, which have to prove that their training programme contains all units of the learning outcomes set out in the SFMQ's training profile in order to award a certificate. The SFMQ makes proposals for the level of each certificate by comparing the learning outcomes of the certificate with the level descriptors in the Francophone Framework of Certification (*Cadre Francophone des Certifications, CFC*).

In 2013 the Walloon Region and the Wallonia-Brussels Federation developed the project [Alter+](#) to ensure that the quality of training is standardised across all training providers at a local level. The project takes account of the diversity of different contexts and target populations and makes it possible, and makes it possible for the SFMQ to evaluate whether each training provider guarantees achievement of the apprenticeship as set out in the training profile. This approach focuses on the ways in which the training provider evaluates its processes and the ways in which it awards certificates based on learning outcomes. Designing this system took a number of meetings as training providers were not using the same vocabulary – it therefore became important to establish common terms, without ambiguity, to ensure there was a shared understanding of the concepts which lay behind the meaning of the words.

- **Greece:** Designing qualifications based on learning outcomes

In December 2015, the Greek delegation to the EQF Advisory Group presented an update on quality issues in the education system and the steps which have been taken to improve quality assurance in all education sectors. A decision was made to reference the [Hellenic Qualifications Framework \(HQF\)](#) to the European Qualification Framework and a HQF Referencing Report was produced, setting out the quality assurance regimes that currently apply to the design and award of qualifications in each educational sector in Greece.

A recent change in legislation (Law No 3879/2010) required setting out learning outcomes¹⁰ as a prerequisite for any qualification to be included in the HQF. The process for developing quality assured VET qualifications based on learning outcomes has involved consultations with all relevant stakeholders, particularly the education institutions, and has included:

- Establishing committees with representatives from employers' and employees' organisations, educationalists and experts from the field of each relevant occupation;
- A more effective mechanism to forecast skills established in 2016; the mechanism is based on an effective way of identifying labour market skills needs and will have an impact on the development of VET qualifications and relevant curricula;
- A database of all qualifications in the HQF linked to the [EQF database](#)

The development of occupational standards for over two hundred profiles has been completed in a very short time, prompting doubts about the accuracy and validity of the learning outcomes (particularly in relation to the associated assessment and certification processes). ([Greece's National Reference Point for EQAVET](#)) has taken action to overcome or contain potential obstacles and addresses the quality assurance aspects of defining, describing and most importantly assessing learning outcomes. Measures undertaken by EOPPEP include the creation of instructions and guidelines for developing assessment standards and criteria based on learning outcomes and the organisation of consultative and informative activities to create a common understanding of learning outcomes in relation to assessment, certification and regulations.

- **Italy:** Creating an information management system for a national VET provider

[CIOFS-FP](#) is a VET provider active in 13 Italian regions through 13 Regional Associations and 61 centres. The association aims to support young people with an interest in practical activities through career guidance, trainings and opportunities for employment; this helps them develop their professional skills, meet personal objectives and transition effectively from the training stage to the labour market.

CIOFS-FP is certified to ISO 9001 and ISO 29990 standards and uses [UNI-INAIL](#) guidelines for health and safety at work. On top of this, the association has recently designed an integrated management system (IMS) which brings together all existing systems and processes and enables each regional association to adopt the same approach and set common goals. The system requires all stakeholders involved (trainers, companies, learners and their families) to collaborate in order to meet the needs of the learners, ensure that the needs of the labour market are met and facilitate the learners' transition from school to work.

CIOFS-FP's VET provision focuses on strengthening learners' motivation and skills. Each centre linked to the association uses the same pedagogical model (the [Salesian preventive system](#)), which involves the creation of individual professional pathways for each learner, including learners with special needs.

¹⁰ The term 'learning outcomes' is not commonly used in Greece. Teachers refer to 'content' to create relationships between learning objectives, learning content, teaching methods and the instruments which are used to assess learners' achievements. In addition, there is a need to consider the assessment/certification processes when designing learning outcomes-based qualifications using occupational profiles.

Each professional pathway is prepared by connecting the learning outcomes set in the national job profile to a set of possible learning units, which are then enriched by the trainer with information relevant to the individual learner. Learners are regularly made aware of which assessment rules and minimum performance thresholds apply to their individual learning pathway.

While the process of connecting CIOFS-FP's integrated management system with EQAVET indicators is still ongoing, the two appear particularly aligned along indicators 1 (Relevance of quality assurance systems for VET providers) and 2 (Investment in training of teachers and trainers).

▪ **Netherlands:** The development, assessment and certification of units of learning outcomes

In 2014 the Dutch Ministry of Education commissioned the Partnership for Lifelong Learning to organise a number of employer-based pilots to test the use of ECVET principles in a lifelong learning context. The pilot projects officially ended in 2016 but have since continued with the support of the Dutch National Reference Point ([CINOP](#)).

Projects are based on the needs of the labour market: they enable employers to easily update or improve the skills of their employees, or enable the employees to acquire new skills as efficiently and effectively as possible. Each project follows a three-step process:

- An expert divides a qualification or a job profile into ECVET units based on meaningful clusters of learning outcomes; detailed arrangements for the units are made in consultation with the employer and the descriptors of the EQF/NLQF ([Dutch Qualifications Framework](#)) are used to design the learning outcomes of each unit;
- The support team works closely with employers to identify what is needed to validate such ECVET units and to prove that the employee has achieved the required learning outcomes; this process includes the developments of methods to validate prior learning and, subsequently, of a tailored training to assist the employee in acquiring those learning outcomes that the validation process identified as missing;
- Finally, customised training is provided to meet the needs of individual learners.

Quality assurance is not explicitly addressed in the projects but it is a natural part of the process; more specifically, the chosen approach has a focus on:

- Stakeholder engagement, including the VET providers' examination boards (that quality assure the process of validating ECVET units and the issuing of certificates to employees) and representatives from the Inspectorate of Education;
- The quality assurance cycle, particularly in relation to discussions with employers about the practical relevance of ECVET units and the processes which are used to recognise achievement;
- Evidence-based research, in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of lifelong education and training.

- **Portugal:** Getting employers more involved

(EPA) offers vocational courses including work-based learning based on an alternance model which calls for learners to be based in a company for one/two days a week for most of the three academic year; at the end of the second or third year (depending on the alternance approach) they are expected to complete a fourteen-week full-time placement.

The work-based programme offered by EPA involves six groups of stakeholders: the employer, the VET school, the monitoring and professional team, the course coordinator, the work-based learning tutor and the learner. Depending on the vocational and training area, learners spend 60 to 70% of their time in the VET school and 30 to 40% of their time in the company.

EPA is certified under the Quality Certification NP EN ISO 9001:2008 and the International Social Responsibility Certification SA:8000. The work-based learning is subject to a quality cycle which includes the following steps:

- *Design:* the courses are designed to respond to the region's yearly training needs analysis;
- *Adapt:* the monitoring and professional team develops a work-based learning plan for each trainee in order to match their individual profile to the company's characteristics;
- *Communicate:* the online platform provides the means for efficient communication between all those involved in the work-based learning process;
- *Train:* the monitoring and professional team helps everyone to understand how work-based training is organised, which procedures are required and how quality will be assured;
- *Assess:* trainees' social, personal, technical and professional skills are assessed during work-based learning through formal quantitative assessments as well as a continuous review of the trainee's learning plan;
- *Improve:* monitoring and evaluation occurs throughout the work-based learning process in order to continually improve its quality; this takes place through a call-centre, the online platform and individual meetings.

EPA uses, among others, seven of EQAVET quality indicators, namely indicators No 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 9¹¹. Evaluation conducted on the base on EQAVET indicators has shown that EPA learners and companies recognise that the work-based learning programme is helping to develop the competence required by the labour market (indicators No 4 and 5 relative to rates of course completion and placement). To support this finding, the great majority of employers indicated that they would be interested in maintaining the partnership in the future.

¹¹ See pages from 22 to 25 of this document

2. Standard principles and indicators for entrepreneurship education providers

This section aims to support and enhance quality assurance in VET providers in particular regarding the entrepreneurship education, based on the EQAVET recommendation and indicators. The goal is to help VET providers in adapting and implementing EQAVET principles and standards to entrepreneurship education. To this aim, two main documents were consulted and are available in EQAVET website:

- 1) [EQAVET Guide – VET providers ‘self-monitoring by using the EQAVET toolbox of indicators;](#)
- 2) [EQAVET Building blocks](#) – Building a quality assurance approach in line with the EQAVET Framework – Guidelines for VET providers.

The two tables developed below are addressed to all VET providers, especially those engaged with entrepreneurship education, who wish to develop and implement a quality assurance mechanism based on EQAVET recommendations.

In the first table four dimensions of VET provision are suggested. These dimensions derive from the 6 EQAVET building blocks but, in the same time, they redefine building blocks creating 4 categories:

1. Management and Organization;
Ensure there is a management culture committed to quality assurance and supportive to staff training
2. Delivery of entrepreneurship education and training provision;
Develop approaches which reflect the provider’s circumstances
3. Entrepreneurship education and training learners’ achievement and performance;
Develop a culture of self-assessment and use data and feedback to improve VET provision
4. Meeting entrepreneurship training stakeholders’ needs.
Ensure VET provision is based on the involvement of external and internal stakeholders

These categories attempt to create a linkage with EQAVET indicators and, as a result, questions or clarifications are formulated in order for the indicators set for entrepreneurship education providers to be more concrete and perhaps more simplified.

Dimensions of VET provision	EQAVET indicator	Indicator for entrepreneurship education provider
Management and Organization	1. Relevance of quality assurance system	1.1 - There is a quality assurance system in place.
		1.2 - The quality assurance system is in compliance with the EQAVET framework.
		1.3 - The established Quality Culture of the organization is built on the interaction between a well-functioning professional Quality management System (QMS) and committed staff members who demonstrate quality-oriented behaviour.
Delivery of entrepreneurship education and training provision	2. Investment in training of teachers and trainers	2.1 - Share of teachers and trainers participating in further training about entrepreneurship. 2.2 - Amount of funds invested in the training of teachers and trainers regarding entrepreneurship education.
	3. Participation rate in VET programmes	3.1 - Number of participants in VET programmes of entrepreneurship education.
Entrepreneurship education and training learners 'achievement and performance	4. Completion rate in VET programmes	4.1 - Number of trainees that successfully completed the entrepreneurship training programme / number of trainees that abandoned the entrepreneurship training programme.
	5. Placement rate in VET programmes	5.1 - Placement of the trainees after the completion of the entrepreneurship training programme.
		5.2 - Share of trainees that are self-employed after the completion of the entrepreneurship training program.
	6. Utilisation of acquired skills at the workplace	6.1 - Share of trainees that report information about the occupation obtained after completion of the entrepreneurship training program.
6.2 - Satisfaction rate of trainees who concretely acquired competences and skills during the entrepreneurship training program.		
6.3 - Satisfaction rate of the employer with the acquired competences and skills of the trainee who is also his/her employee.		
7. Unemployment rate	7.1 - Unemployment rate among trainees after the completion of the entrepreneurship training program.	
Meeting entrepreneurship training stakeholders' needs	8. Mechanisms to identify training needs in the labour market	8.1 - Results on the efficiency of the mechanisms set up to identify training needs in the labour market.
		8.2 - Perception about the effectiveness of the mechanisms set up to identify training needs in the labour market.
	9. Schemes used to promote better access to Entrepreneurship training	9.1 - Results on the effectiveness of the mechanisms set up to promote better access to entrepreneurship training.
		9.2 - Perception about the effectiveness of the mechanisms set up to promote better access to entrepreneurship training.

In the second table, formal statements that refer to the Plan, Do, Check, Act EQAVET quality cycle have been improved. They aim at giving stakeholders the opportunity not only to realise what PDCA is about but at the same time to also motivate them to be more engaged and more active.

EQAVET indicator	Planning	Implementation	Evaluation & Review
<p>1. Relevance of quality assurance system</p>	<p>Should ensure to have an explicit and transparent quality assurance system in place that all stakeholders can have access to and understand.</p> <p>Management team must value quality assurance and provide leadership contributing to the development of a positive organisational culture.</p>	<p>The management must communicate its vision and strategic priorities with the staff to ensure the commitment and involvement in quality assurance.</p> <p>The communication process with the stakeholders should be structured.</p> <p>The different roles and responsibilities of staff involved in the QA process must be clear and understood.</p>	<p>The management team must have strong commitment to drive a sustained improvement and to foster a culture of self-monitoring.</p> <p>The outcomes of self-assessment should be used to make improvements.</p>
<p>2. Investment in training of teachers and trainers</p>	<p>The VET provider must have a plan for training teachers and trainers in entrepreneurship.</p> <p>There must be an early stage involvement of staff in planning, including with regard to quality development.</p>	<p>Staff must receive regular training and get the opportunity to work with external stakeholders to develop its practice and enhance performance.</p> <p>A strategic plan for staff competence development must be put in practice, specifying its needs.</p>	<p>The VET providers must evaluate the training of their staff through assessment tools.</p>
<p>3. Participation rate in VET programmes</p>	<p>VET provision is based on local/individual needs following consultation with stakeholders.</p> <p>Entrepreneurship courses must be promoted and disseminated to enrol participants.</p> <p>The trainees must be motivated by the VET provider to participate and to engage in the programme.</p>	<p>VET provider’s programmes should enable learners to meet the expected learning outcomes and become involved in the learning process.</p>	<p>Procedures on feedback and review should be part of a strategic learning process and the reviews must be planned and the regular updating of practice must be informed.</p>

EQAVET indicator	Planning	Implementation	Evaluation & Review
<p>4. Completion rate in VET programmes</p>	<p>The information gathered by the VET provider should be robust in order to make judgments about its training provision. Conclusions and action must be planned and implemented in the VET training provision concerning the completion rates.</p>	<p>The information used by teachers/trainers for improving their learners' achievement and performance must be valid, accurate and reliable.</p>	<p>Learner's feedback should be gathered on his/her own individual learning experience and on the learning and teaching environment.</p> <p>The collected feedback should be used to improve further actions.</p>
<p>5. Placement rate in VET programmes</p>	<p>The entrepreneurship education provider must keep track of its learners after the training is completed.</p>	<p>VET providers must use approaches to pedagogy and assessment tools which enable learners to achieve the expected learning outcomes.</p>	<p>A set of tools must be used to approach the graduate learners (e.g. questionnaires, surveys etc) in order to keep track of the trainee after the training.</p> <p>Feedback from the trainees must be collected to improve the entrepreneurship training or to improve the tracking process.</p> <p>Also, the entrepreneurship education provider should evaluate learners' feedback in order to adjust their curricula and update them according to the market world's needs.</p>
<p>6. Utilisation of acquired skills at the workplace</p>	<p>The VET provider should fit together the different needs and will of self-employers and employees.</p>	<p>The learners should develop their skills/competences, including new skills as demanded by the labour market.</p> <p>The information must be provided by trainers/teachers for improving their learners' achievement and performance must be clear and accurate.</p>	<p>Results and outcomes of the evaluation process must be discussed with the trainees and trainers and appropriate action plans should be put in place.</p> <p>The trainees must be satisfied with the information, advice and guidance they got from their providers after completing their training.</p>

EQAVET indicator	Planning	Implementation	Evaluation & Review
<p>7. Unemployment rate</p>	<p>Explicit goals/objectives and targets for the VET programme should be set and monitored.</p>	<p>There must be a clear relation in how goals and objectives are set and monitored delivering what it is required / it has promised to deliver to learners, parents and employers.</p>	<p>The causes of non-successful learners must be analysed and evaluated.</p>
<p>8. Mechanisms to identify training needs in the labour market</p>	<p>Ongoing consultation with relevant stakeholders must take place to identify specific local/individual needs.</p> <p>The VET provider should implement some mechanisms for the identification of learning needs that involve stakeholders.</p> <p>The relevant stakeholders should participate in the process of analysing local needs.</p>	<p>VET providers should listen to the industry/labour market via questionnaires, frequent discuss panels or focus groups.</p> <p>Also, discussions must be made with policy providers and higher education institutions in the future training needs should be implemented.</p>	<p>Procedures on feedback and review should be part of a strategic learning process for the VET provider that supports the development of high-quality provision and improve opportunities for learners.</p> <p>VET provider must measure the mechanism used to collect feedback and review it from time to time.</p>

EQAVET indicator	Planning	Implementation	Evaluation & Review
<p>9. Schemes used to promote better access to Entrepreneurship training</p>	<p>The entrepreneurship education provider should intend on increasing the access to entrepreneurship training. This should become a goal of the organisation.</p> <p>The policy of the organisation must emphasize on entrepreneurship education.</p>	<p>The results should be measurable to indicate the effectiveness of the mechanisms, in order to have access to entrepreneurship education.</p> <p>All those involved in entrepreneurship education must participate in self-assessment in order to boost the effectiveness of the mechanisms and promote better access to the training.</p> <p>The staff should be trained effectively so that it can support these mechanisms enough and promote better access to the entrepreneurship training programme.</p> <p>The data collected should be used properly to increase the effectiveness of the mechanisms and to give better access to the entrepreneurship training.</p>	<p>A variety of training programs should include entrepreneurship education courses.</p> <p>In alternative, the VET provider could create separate seminars dedicated to entrepreneurship.</p> <p>VET provider must measure if the rate of self-employed increases after the end of studies, keeping track of the number of new businesses started in the first 2 years and the survival rate after 1, 5 or 10 years.</p> <p>In case of the above results not being satisfactory enough, improvements must be suggested and corrective actions implemented.</p>

All the statements included in the tables above set up a holistic framework, based on which all stakeholders will have to reflect, not only in the short term but also in the long term, for example, in reference to:

- * the role of quality in trainings and in evaluation activities;
- * the actions that need to be taken by the VET provider and are related to the way trainers develop and deliver trainings;
- * the connection between the VET provider and the graduates in terms of feedback collected;
- * other actions that involve learners in terms of after graduation employment and the possibility for them to become entrepreneurs and to retain this identity in the following year.

The setting-up of these statements will definitely help all stakeholders to successfully and effectively achieve their goals or even set new ones from the very beginning.

3. Methodology and tools to set the strategy to reach the most relevant stakeholders

3.1. Stakeholder engagement definitions and principles

“Stakeholders are individuals, groups, or organizations who may affect, be affected by, or perceive themselves to be affected by a decision, activity, or outcome of a project, program, or portfolio”, as defined in the PMBOK Guide® (PMI, 2012) (563).

They can be individuals, groups or organizations. Nevertheless, every stakeholder and every stakeholder community have a unique and evolving set of cultures, expectations and perceptions.

To engage with these different key actors, effective communication is highly recommended giving that it takes into account the complexity of the people who contribute to, or benefit from, the outcomes of the project. Moreover, communication is a cornerstone of the process to commit the constantly changing group of people whose support and involvement are essential to project improvement and success.

Beyond the above-mentioned definition, it is relevant to underline that stakeholders have a stake in any particular issue, project or program they are involved in and therefore, potentially everyone is a stakeholder in a specific area of interest. Furthermore, for successful engagement, it is necessary to investigate and understand the nature of this stake. It may be:

- Interest: a circumstance in which an individual or a group will be affected by a decision, action or outcome;
- Rights (legal or moral): legal rights are usually enshrined in a country’s legislation (e.g. Privacy laws and Occupational Health and Safety). Moral rights refer to environmental, heritage or social issues;
- Ownership: shareholders’ ownership can be a portion of an organization’s asset or activity or the intellectual property resulting from the exploitation of an idea;
- Knowledge: experience gained in accomplishing tasks or participating in the lifecycle of an initiative. Knowledge is an important factor contributing to the success of an organization. Furthermore, its staff is going to be concerned too.
- Contribution: allocation of resources - people or materials, provision of funds - either some ‘political support’ within the organization’s hierarchy or the wider community.¹²

In every situation is therefore important to be able to identify the specific stakeholders that may affect or be affected by the matter in hand.

¹² IPMA 29th World Congress, 28-30 September 2015, Panama. The way to project management in multicultural context Targeted communication: *“The key to effective stakeholder engagement”* Lynda Bourne, DPM, FACS, FAIM

As a result, including stakeholders in the decision-making process has become increasingly popular in many different fields and policymakers, regulators, governmental and non-governmental organisations, businesses, training providers, etc. use it so far.

Each working context has its own specific characteristics regarding the working environment, the specific skills and competencies needed, the relations between different departments, etc. There are countries/municipalities that host a large number of VET providers delivering training in the entrepreneurship education sector, while there are other contexts where those VET providers are mostly focused on being identified and recognized.

Therefore, it is highly relevant for VET providers of entrepreneurship education to deeply analyse the local context and to identify exactly which are the stakeholders to be engaged in order to define the concrete learning needs to be addressed through their training programs.

In general terms, we indicate as relevant stakeholders: cVET entrepreneurship education providers, learners (cVET staff, in particular, managers and educators), entrepreneurship education providers working in partnership with companies, social partners working in close collaboration with cVET providers, public authorities, research institutions, business, etc. Of course, the list needs to be adjusted based on the specific local context, by the cVET providers themselves.

Engagement can be defined as: *“the various communication practices, processes and actions that an organization (or project team) must perform to involve stakeholders to secure their involvement and commitment, or reduce their indifference or hostility”*.¹³

Engagement means that the project’s stakeholders are aware of the project and of its outcomes and are prepared to have the necessary involvement, participation and interest in the work. Some groups or individuals can influence project success through provision (or withholding) of funds, support, or resources.

As mentioned above, stakeholders’ engagement can only be achieved through effective communication.

Communication includes informal discussions, emails, blogs and every other transfer of information from the project team to a stakeholder. The challenge is to keep the communication workload manageable and the communication effective.¹⁴

The purpose of the communication can be:

- ✓ To ensure that the stakeholder has access to essential or useful information,
- ✓ To reduce anxiety in change situations,
- ✓ Giving bad news, providing negative or positive feedback,
- ✓ Problem solving or issue resolution,

¹³ IPMA 29th World Congress, 28-30 September 2015, Panama. The way to project management in multicultural context Targeted communication: *“The key to effective stakeholder engagement”* Lynda Bourne, DPM, FACS, FAIM

¹⁴ <https://stakeholder-management.com/help-files/stakeholder-engagement/>

- ✓ For individual or team motivation.¹⁵

As a second step, it is then essential to clearly define the goals through which the group of stakeholders will be working. Defining clear objectives allows determining the appropriate level and techniques and methods of engagement (Reed, 2008).

As a consequence, when stakeholders understand the issues and processes involved, they feel encouraged and able to participate further in the consultation process, resulting in wider ownership and integration of sustainable, management solutions.

3.2. Levels of engagement

Approaches to stakeholder engagement vary from passive interactions, where the stakeholders only provide information, to a level where the stakeholders themselves initiate and design the process.

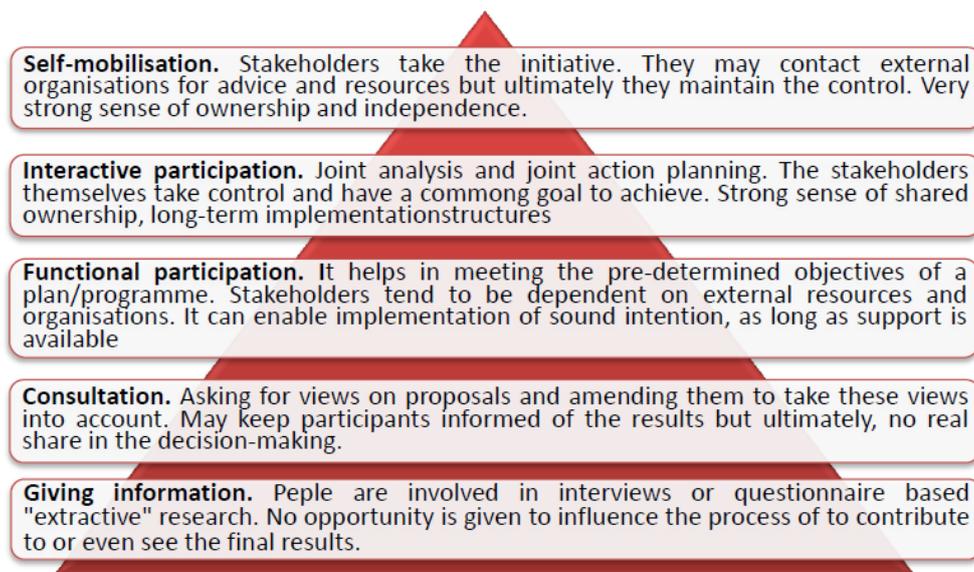


Fig. 3.1 - Ladder of participation. Adapted from Conde & Lonsdale (2004).

Fig. 3.1 clearly shows that different stakeholder groups and the same stakeholder groups at different times will be treated at different levels.¹⁶

¹⁵ IPMA 29th World Congress, 28-30 September 2015, Panama. The way to project management in multicultural context Targeted communication: "The key to effective stakeholder engagement" Lynda Bourne, DPM, FACS, FAIM

¹⁶ IPMA 29th World Congress, 28-30 September 2015, Panama. The way to project management in multicultural context Targeted communication: "The key to effective stakeholder engagement" Lynda Bourne, DPM, FACS, FAIM

3.3. Benefits and possible pitfalls of stakeholder engagement

Here below a potential list of benefits that the engagement of stakeholders can provide:

- engagement initiatives are able to provide more sustainable decisions because they create and strengthen local capacity and knowledge, provide and give value to different views, and, when successful, they usually lead to shared long-term decisions and plans;
- creating a link with stakeholders can help decision-makers to develop a better understanding of the area in which they work, thus allowing them to get more effective and efficient results;
- such mentioned connections can strengthen relationships between the different stakeholders and decision-makers. Participants can therefore feel more empowered and able to guide decisions;
- engagement process has the ability to guarantee equity in how decisions are carried out and to provide solutions if conflicting situations arise.

On the other hand, stakeholder engagement may create some sort of obstacles. An indicative list of pitfalls is as well provided:

- key groups or individuals might be excluded from the engagement process, and therefore not able to express their respective views, hence losing the possibility to guide or influence decisions;
- stakeholders may be distinguished in technical and non-technical. The first group provides quantitative data, the second is instead more focused on quality. It is therefore important to define carefully how to integrate the more qualitative information with the quantitative;
- a lack of planning in the engagement process might reduce the effectiveness of the engagement process;
- it is fundamental to define the objectives of the engagement process. Moreover, it is important to be aware of the limits imposed by the available resources (time, funds, etc.) in order to define what is realistically possible. Such preventative measures can avoid creating false expectations in participating stakeholders.

To conclude, stakeholder engagement should be considered as early as possible and throughout the process.

Stakeholder engagement should start from the very beginning, from concept development and planning, through implementation, to monitoring and evaluation of outcomes.

An early involvement is considered essential in order to obtain high quality and durable decisions (Reed, et al., 2006). Stakeholders should also be involved in monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of the process (Estrella & Gaventa, 2000)¹⁷.

¹⁷ Degree thesis “Development of a stakeholder engagement methodology for the creation of a framework for the collection of information on brownfield regeneration”, Cà Foscari University, 2011-2012.

3.4. The Stakeholder engagement methodology¹⁸

3.4.1. Purpose of the engagement

Before deciding to implement a stakeholder engagement strategy, it is essential for educational providers to first start thinking why they want to implement it and what they want to achieve. Indeed, it is very important not to start a stakeholder engagement process without a clear and well-defined goal. Usually, a stakeholder engagement strategy aims at improving an organizational strategy and/or at overcoming an operational issue.

3.4.2 Identifying the relevant stakeholder

Stakeholders can be individuals such as experts, groups of individuals or entire organizations that may affect and/or could be affected by the organization’s activities or services. An organization can address different types of stakeholders, depending on the necessity. It is very useful to establish a methodology to apply to every stakeholder engagement process that can support educational providers to contribute to their purpose. It is also important to keep in mind that it is also very interesting to map the stakeholder’s profile with information regarding the type of organization, expectation of the engagement, location and fields of interests.

3.4.3. Elaborate a plan to engage the stakeholder

When educational providers are approaching their stakeholders, they must not leave anything to chance, instead plan their strategy properly. Whenever educational providers approach a stakeholder, they need to set activities and related timeline, provide the name of the contact person, indicate some channel of communications, inputs/outputs and budget (if existing). Moreover, educational providers can plan different levels of engagement creating an engagement matrix, as follows:

Stakeholder	Inform	Listen	Consult	Involve	Collaborate
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And for each column educational providers may insert the methodology of engagement chosen taking into consideration the different levels of involvement.

¹⁸ *Concept of Stakeholders Engagement, Deliverable D.T1.1.2. CERlecon-CE119, Interreg – Central Europe, Riccardo Cariani for ENAIP Veneto.*

3.4.5. Implementation of the stakeholder plan

It would be beneficial to be sure that the stakeholders engaged are informed and invited to participate. Furthermore, they should remember to capture appropriately all the inputs and the discussions which may arise. They can also use the “stakeholders’ card”, which are documents including information such as: purposes, actions developed and stakeholders’ inputs (in relation to their questions, if any).

3.4.6 Review the plan

The review process is a straightforward process which can help an organization to improve its performance in order to achieve results for a successful stakeholder engagement. It is very important that every organization monitors and evaluates every stakeholder’s engagement process and its quality in terms of results achieved (to which extent they reach their objective) and process implemented correctly. Easily educational providers may ask themselves: what went well and what wrong; if something went wrong, what can be done to improve not satisfactory results?

3.5. Stakeholder engagement tools

Identifying stakeholders is usually an iterative process carried out through different methods and tools:

a) Invitation Letter

Useful in early stages of consultation to provide information regarding the process and disseminate instructions on how to respond/get involved.

b) Web-based questionnaires

Questionnaire is a mean of eliciting the opinions, beliefs and attitudes of some sample of individuals. Moreover, it is an individual form of engagement and it consists in a set of questions for obtaining information from respondents. It is usually concise with a pre-planned set of questions designed to yield specific data to meet a particular need for research information which can be easily analysed statistically. Questionnaires are convenient and efficient when we want to reach a large number of people. They need to be well structured and ensure that the questions are not misleading. A web-based questionnaire is any type of questionnaire, in which respondents are asked to complete it without the presence of the researcher. This typology of questionnaire should have clear instructions and questions because any kind of clarification to the respondent cannot be provided. Stakeholders shall be, therefore, provided with an easy-access link and related instructions to complete it.

c) Interviews

They may occur by telephone or in person. They can be individual or group interviews based on a series of questions related to a topic of interest to generate ideas, elicit feedback and/or answer a set of pre-determined questions.

d) One-to-one interviews

Stakeholders are engaged individually, either formally or informally. In formal interviews, a one on one interview guide (e.g. semi-structured interviews) may be used for evaluation. Informal procedures are flexible and sometimes include ad-hoc conversations that can allow you to gather additional information from stakeholders.

e) Semi-structured interviews

Generally used to engage individuals or a very small group (two or three individuals). Semi-structured interviews are conducted with an open framework which allow for focused, conversational, two-way communication in order to get immediate feedback. Structured questions are designed and phrased ahead of time and are typically asked during all interviews. Further questions are also created during the interview, allowing both the interviewer and the person being interviewed the flexibility to probe for details or discuss issues.

f) Public meetings

Individuals residing in a specific geographic area are invited to a public meeting to discuss issues relevant to their community. Often, these meetings enable presentation of basic information to the general public and are announced by the local media. They are attended by residents as well as other individuals including **the** most relevant players at local level, such as policy makers, business representatives, research institutes and professional experts. They allow large numbers of people to be involved in some limited discussion on a broad list of research topics/interests. They need to be carefully managed to ensure all views are heard. In general, everyone is offered the opportunity to speak in a relaxed environment.

g) Focus groups

A focus group is defined as a group of people assembled to participate in a discussion about a product and/or services before it is launched, or to provide feedback about it. The ideal time for a focus group to properly engage the stakeholder is around **45 minutes, and up to 90 minutes maximum**. After 1 hour and a half, people's productivity is likely to be very low, and it can become an imposition for the participants.

A focus group is usually a small group composed of **6 to 10 people maximum, 8 is a good number**. Ideally, this means that some partners need to conduct more than one focus group. Each focus group has usually a **moderator** whose goal is to create an open and spontaneous discussion among the participants to share their different ideas and opinions. The right moderator usually has an adequate knowledge of the topic.

h) Advisory Committee

The advisory committee and/or board is usually a voluntary organization that offers advice and/or support to the management board of an organization. Indeed, an advisory committee is made up of representatives of the stakeholders' sample that can meet on a constant base to provide advice. The opinions of the advisory committee are not binding. The advisory board is very important to create a critical mass and to create connections with relevant stakeholders on a specific topic with the aim to become leaders in the field.

i) Conferences/forums/symposia/workshops

According to the online business dictionary, a workshop is defined as a training class or seminar in which the participants work individually and/or in groups to solve actual work-related tasks to gain hand-on experience. When organizing a workshop, it's fundamental to set the workshop's objective, to choose the right location and to create a clear agenda keeping in mind the type of stakeholders that will attend it. During the workshop, the educational providers need to remember to get the

stakeholder involved; indeed, everyone needs to participate. Furthermore, the educational providers have to keep in mind that a workshop is not a talk, indeed they are not “lecturers” but facilitators.

j) Round Table Discussions

Round table discussions can be seen as debates among different groups of experts and stakeholders with different views and with the aim of finding points in common and/or an agreement. The idea of the round table underlines the necessity that each stakeholder involved has the equal right to participate. Indeed, during a round table discussion, participants decide the topic that opens the debate. *Use of the full range of the media*

To engage stakeholders, an educational provider may use a wide range of media: **new media** such as computers, websites, interactive computer installations and **old media** such as television, radio and magazines. Indeed, media are strategic tools (digital or not) that can be used to interact and generate engagement processes with the stakeholders. To create connections with the stakeholders it is important also to mention social media. It is proven that, during the years, social media like Twitter and Facebook have become online strategic resources for getting new knowledge and meeting people who share similar interests and professional profiles.

Conclusions

The Common Reference Framework is a working document, that aims to provide the fundamental notions of the Quality Assurance Tools and Methods, and, specifically, the EQAVET standards and principles, to Quality Managers of Entrepreneurship Education Providers.

This document is meant to function as a reference point for Quality Managers, who can reach the information contained in it in support of their work of with transparency and quality assessment in their organizations.

The Common reference Framework represents also the base on which to build the next steps of the IN-QUAL project, and specifically the creation of a Training Plan for Quality Managers. The Common Reference Framework represents, in the context of the Training Plan and Tools, a Reference Instrument, and the base of the adaptation of the EQAVET tools to Entrepreneurship Education.

Glossary of terms

ACCREDITATION: An attestation by a National Accreditation Body that a Conformity Assessment Body meets the requirements set by harmonized standards and, where applicable, any additional requirements including those set out in relevant sectoral schemes, to carry out a specific conformity assessment activity.

Source: [Regulation \(EC\) No 765/2008](#)

ADULT EDUCATION: General or vocational education provided for adults after initial education and training for professional and/or personal purposes

Source: [CEDEFOP - Terminology of European education and training policy](#)

CERTIFICATION: An activity which assesses whether a particular product, service, process or system (e.g. quality management system) complies with requirements defined by a standard or other document containing criteria. It is conducted by an external independent certification body. The result of the successful certification is the certificate awarded to the organisation by the certification body.

Source: [Eurostat's Concepts and Definitions Database, RAMON- Eurostat, European Union](#)

COMMITMENT TO QUALITY: The characteristic of a VET institution through which it systematically and regularly identifies strengths and weaknesses to continuously improve process and outcomes of VET quality.

Source: [Eurostat's Concepts and Definitions Database, RAMON- Eurostat, European Union.](#)

COMPETENCE: A combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the context. Key competences are those which all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment.

Source: [Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning](#)

EDUCATION/TRAINING PATHWAY: A set of related education or training programmes provided by schools, training centres, higher education institutions or VET providers, that facilitates individuals' progression within or between activity sectors.

Source: [CEDEFOP - Terminology of European education and training policy](#)

EDUCATION/TRAINING PROVIDER: Organisations specifically set up for the purpose of providing education and training, or others, such as employers who provide training as a part of their business activities, or independent individuals who offer services.

Source: [European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training - Glossary](#)

EFFECTIVENESS: The extent to which the intervention's objectives in the field of VET were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.

Source: [European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training - Glossary](#)

EFFICIENCY: Measures of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results

Source: [European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training - Glossary](#)

EMPLOYABILITY: Combination of factors (such as job-specific skills, soft skills) which enable individuals to progress towards or enter into employment, stay in employment and progress during their careers

Source: [European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training – Glossary](#)

EMPLOYEES: Workers who hold the type of job defined as "paid employment jobs". Employees with stable contracts are those "employees" who have had, and continue to have, an explicit (written or oral) or implicit contract of employment, or a succession of such contracts, with the same employer on a continuous basis. "On a continuous basis" implies a period of employment which is longer than a specified minimum determined according to national circumstances. (If interruptions are allowed in this minimum period, their maximum duration should also be determined according to national circumstances.) Regular employees are those 'employees with stable contracts' for whom the employing organization is responsible for payment of relevant taxes and social security contributions and/or where the contractual relationship is subject to national labour legislation.

Source: [Eurostat's Concepts and Definitions Database, RAMON-Eurostat, European Union.](#)

EMPLOYER: A legal entity that controls and directs a servant or worker under an express or implied contract of employment and pays (or is obligated to pay) him or her salary or wages in compensation

Source: [Business Dictionary](#)

ENTREPRENEURSHIP: The attitude to act upon opportunities and ideas and transform them into value for others. The value that is created can be financial, cultural, or social.

Source: [EntreComp: The Entrepreneurship Competence Framework \(FFE-YE, 2012\), p. 10.](#)

ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION: Entrepreneurship education is about learners developing the skills and mindset to be able to turn creative ideas into entrepreneurial action. This is a key competence for all learners, supporting personal development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employability. It is relevant across the lifelong learning process, in all disciplines of learning and to all forms of education and training (formal, non-formal and informal) which contribute to an entrepreneurial spirit or behaviour, with or without a commercial objective.

Source: [Thematic Working Group on Entrepreneurship Education - Final Report](#)

EUROPEAN CREDIT SYSTEM FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (ECVET): A set of knowledge, skills, and/or competences which constitute a coherent part of a qualification. A unit can be the smallest part of a qualification that can be assessed, transferred, validated and, possibly, certified. A unit can be specific to a single qualification or common to several qualifications.

Source: [CEDEFOP - Terminology of European education and training policy](#)

EUROPEAN QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK (EQF): A reference tool for the description and comparison of qualification levels in qualifications systems developed at national, international or sectoral level.

Source: [CEDEFOP - Terminology of European education and training policy](#)

EUROPEAN QUALITY ASSURANCE REFERENCE FRAMEWORK (EQARF): The Reference Framework forms part of a series of European initiatives which aim is to recognise qualifications and competences received by learners across different countries or learning environments, thereby promoting modernisation, mutual trust and mobility in vocational education and training (VET).

Source: [EQAVET Glossary](#)

EUROPEAN QUALITY ASSURANCE IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (EQAVET): A community of practice that promotes European collaboration in developing and improving quality assurance in VET.

Source: [EQAVET official website](#)

KNOWLEDGE: The outcome of the assimilation of information through learning. Knowledge is the body of facts, principles, theories and practices that is related to a field of study or work.

Source: [CEDEFOP - Terminology of European education and training policy](#)

LEARNING: A process by which an individual assimilates information, ideas and values and thus acquires knowledge, know-how, skills and/or competences.

FORMAL LEARNING: Learning that occurs in an organised and structured environment (e.g. in an education or training institution or on the job) and is explicitly designated as learning (in terms of objectives, time or resources). Formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view. It typically leads to validation and certification.

INFORMAL LEARNING: Learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support. Informal learning is in most cases unintentional from the learner's perspective.

NON-FORMAL LEARNING: Learning which is embedded in planned activities not explicitly designated as learning (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support). Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view.

Source: [CEDEFOP - Terminology of European education and training policy](#)

LIFELONG LEARNING: All learning activity undertaken throughout life, which results in improving knowledge, know-how, skills, competences and/or qualifications for personal, social and/or professional reasons.

Source: [CEDEFOP - Terminology of European education and training policy](#)

PDCA CYCLE: Acronym for “Plan-Do-Check-Act”. It is an iterative quality improvement model consisting of a logical sequence of four steps:

Plan: define a problem and hypothesize possible causes and solutions;

Do: implement a solution;

Check: evaluate the results;

Act: return to the Plan step if the results are unsatisfactory, or standardise the solution if the results are satisfactory.

Source: [The Deming Institute](#)

QUALITY ASSURANCE: An organisation's guarantee that the product or service it offers meets the accepted quality standards. It is achieved by identifying what "quality" means in context; specifying methods by which its presence can be ensured; and specifying ways in which it can be measured to ensure conformance

Source: [EQAVET Glossary](#)

QUALITY MANAGER: The person who oversees all activities and tasks needed to maintain a desired level of excellence. This includes the determination of a quality policy, creating and implementing quality planning and assurance, and quality control and quality improvement. In general, quality managers manage the quality of services in business organisations. They ensure the quality of in-house company operations such as customer requirements and service quality standards. Quality services managers monitor the company's performance and implement changes where necessary.

Source: [ESCO - European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations](#)

SELF-MONITORING: gives information on “where” the VET provider is at any given time (and over time) relative to its objectives and outcomes.

Source: [EQAVET's Guide for QA National Reference Points](#)

SELF-EVALUATION: gives evidence of “why” VET objectives and outcomes are being achieved or not.

Source: [EQAVET's Guide for QA National Reference Points](#)

SKILL: ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to perform tasks and solve problems.

HARD SKILL: Specific abilities, or capabilities, that an individual can possess and demonstrate in a measured way. Hard skills are demonstrable and quantifiable; individuals who possess hard skills can be tested to prove their capacity in each hard skill they possess. There are objective metrics that can be applied to the hard skill, not just subjective judgment. Furthermore, an individual's proficiency in any particular hard skill can be measured against the proficiency of other individuals who possess that same hard skill. Possessing a hard skill connotes mastery and an expertise within the individual to perform a specific task or series of tasks to complete a job.

SOFT SKILL: Character traits and interpersonal skills that characterize a person's relationships with other people. In the workplace, soft skills are considered to be a complement to hard skills, which refer to a person's knowledge and occupational skills. Sociologists use the term soft skills to describe a person's emotional intelligence quotient (EQ) as opposed to intelligence quotient (IQ)

Source: [Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23rd April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning](#)

VET: Acronym for Vocational Education and Training. Education and training which aims to equip people with knowledge, know-how, skills and/or competences required in particular occupations or more broadly on the labour market.

Source: [CEDEFOP - Terminology of European education and training policy](#)

iVET: Acronym for Initial VET. General or vocational education and training carried out in the initial education system, usually before entering working life.

Source: [EQAVET Glossary](#)

cVET: Acronym for: Continuing Vocational Education and Training. It follows the iVET and is part of lifelong learning. It may encompass any kind of education (general, specialised or vocational, formal or non-formal, etc.) and it is crucial for the employability of individuals.

Source: [EQAVET Glossary](#)

VET-PROVIDER: any organisation or individual providing education or training services. Education and training providers may be organisations specifically set up for this purpose, or they may be other bodies, such as employers who provide training as part of their business activities. Training providers also include independent individuals who offer services.

Source: [CEDEFOP - Terminology of European education and training policy](#)

References

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[‘Entrepreneurship in Vocational Education and Training – Final Report of the Expert Group’](#) (2009), European Commission, Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry; retrieved from:

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- [Shoreline management plan guidance, volume 2, appendix A: Stakeholder engagement strategies](#)
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- EQAVET, [Guidelines for Work-based learning](#)
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- EQAVET, [Quality Assurance for VET systems](#)
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Case studies retrieved from the [EQAVET webpage](#)

Hyperlinks included in the case studies:

- [Alter+ project](#)
- [CINOP](#)
- [CIOFS-FP](#)
- [Dutch Qualifications Framework](#)

- [EOPPEP](#)
- [Escola Profisional de Aveiro](#)
- [Greek Qualifications Register](#)
- [Hellenic Qualifications Framework](#)
- [Salesian preventive system](#)
- [Service Francophone de Métiers et Qualifications \(SFQM\)](#)
- [UNI-INAIL guidelines for health and safety at work](#)