



**SOCIAL
SEED**

INCUBATION METHODOLOGY FOR SOCIALLY EXCLUDED ENTREPRENEURS
SUPPORTED BY COMPANIES



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ANALYSIS THE POSSIBILITIES OF THE EUROPEAN CREDIT TRANSFER SYSTEM FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING



INTELLECTUAL OUTPUT 2 | DESIGN OF FORMATIVE CONTENT
COURSE FOR SOCIALLY EXCLUDED GROUPS TO ENTREPRENEUR

Intellectual Output 2: Design of formative content course for socially excluded groups to entrepreneur

2.4. Analysis the possibilities of the European credit transfer system for vocational education and training



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OVERVIEW

The main objective of our project is to design an incubation methodology to entrepreneur for individuals socially excluded or endangered with exclusion, as well as to develop a formative course focused on the needs and limitations of those future to be entrepreneurs. The course is to be developed within the EQAVET framework (European Quality Assurance in Vocational Training). Units and learning outcomes corresponding to the profile of future to be entrepreneur from the excluded target group will be described, and the required knowledge, skills and competences will be determined. In this way we will allow flexibility in the training pathway. The implementation of the ECVET system could lead to a better understanding of the learning outcomes obtained by learners, greater transparency, and should result in an increased professional mobility both within the national and European labour market.

EUROPEAN CREDIT SYSTEM FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (ECVET)

According to the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) of 18 June 2009 (2009/C 155/02) *ECVET is a technical framework for the transfer, recognition*



and, where appropriate, accumulation of individuals' learning outcomes with a view to achieving a qualification¹. The main aim of ECVET is to facilitate validation and recognition of skills and knowledge acquired in various systems and countries. This would encourage increased mobility between countries, a concept within the spirit of the Erasmus+ lifelong learning and educational mobility. Ensuring this requires increasing compatibility of different VET systems, which can be achieved by introducing ECVET system on a larger scale.

The ECVET system is built on four elements: 1. Units of learning outcomes; 2. Transfer and accumulation of learning outcomes, ECVET partnerships; 3. Learning agreement and personal transcript; 4. ECVET points.

Units of learning outcomes

The ECVET system is based the approach of **learning outcomes** when creating qualifications. Learning outcomes are what an individual understands and is able to. A unit is therefore a component of a qualification. It consists of knowledge, skills and competence (as

¹ The Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) of 18 June 2009 (2009/C 155/02) defines the basic elements of the ECVET system:

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



in EQF²) that *can be assessed and validated with a number of associated ECVET points*. Usually, a qualification comprises in several units. **Learning outcomes** should be grouped into **units of learning outcomes**, which are separate parts of a **qualification** and can be separately assessed and validated. Units of learning outcomes can be made up of interrelated sets of learning outcomes according to various criteria. What is important is that **a unit** may be attributed to one specific qualification or may be a common feature of different qualifications. In this way, a learner can gain a qualification by accumulating the required units of learning outcomes in various countries and contexts (formal, non-formal and informal). What must be taken into consideration are national regulations on accumulation of units and the recognition of learning outcomes.

In case of our Project, learning outcomes should be specific/detailed for each module, whereas the learning outcomes for the whole training can be generally described. It is advised not to use verbs that are ambiguous, such as knows or understands, because it is difficult to verify whether the learner actually knows or understands. Verbs such as defines, describes, performs are advised. Learning outcomes should be understood in the same way by all the project partners within the mobility partnership. It would be good that the teachers/trainers define learning outcomes, since the modules and the training will be addressed to them.

As for the units of learning outcomes they should include:

- a title;
- a title of qualification the unit refers to;
- reference to the EQF level and NQF (if appropriate);
- ECVET credit points if applicable;
- learning outcomes;
- procedures and criteria for assessing learning outcomes.

Transfer and accumulation of learning outcomes, ECVET partnerships

Transfer of learning outcomes within the ECVET means that units of learning outcomes achieved in one institution are assessed and transferred to a different one, meaning they

² *The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is a common European reference framework whose purpose is to make qualifications more readable and understandable across different countries and systems (<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/european-qualifications-framework-egf>). The EQF consists of eight reference levels defined by learning outcomes expressed in knowledge, skills and autonomy-responsibility. Knowledge is described as either theoretical and/or factual. Skills are understood as cognitive and practical, whereas autonomy-responsibility reflect learner's ability to use and apply knowledge in this manner. Each country has its own National Qualification Framework (NQF), which refers to the EQF.*



were recognised and validated. Those units can be accumulated towards achieving a given qualification.

Credit transfer based on ECVET should be facilitated by establishing partnerships and networks involving competent institutions appropriate to award qualifications or units or to accept achieved learning outcomes for transfer and validation. European institutions can create partnerships, this process is supported by three elements of the ECVET system: the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), the Learning Agreement (LA) and the Personal Transcript (PT). The partnership agreement may cover several qualifications, there is no need to prepare a separate MoUs for each qualification. Partner organizations must approve assessment procedures, documentation, validation and recognition of learning outcomes planned.

Learning agreement and personal transcript

Learning agreements between partners is concluded by two partnering institutions and a mobile learner. It defines *home* and *hosting* institutions, indicates the duration of the mobility, identity of the learner, learning outcomes expected and ECVET points attributed to those outcomes, as well as quality assurance criteria. It should also state that home institution will recognize and validate achieved learning outcomes of the learner (if achieved at the hosting institution).

Credit transfer between partners applies to learning outcomes achieved in formal, as well as non-formal and informal contexts.

ECVET points

ECVET points are a complementary information about qualifications and units of learning outcomes. A common approach assumes 60 points allocated to learning outcomes that are expected within a year of formal full time VET. First the points should be allocated to a qualification and then divided to its units, according to their weight within the given qualification. It is important that qualifications are comparable between the partners. Therefore a reference to EQF/NQF level should be indicated or a comparison to learning outcomes in a related professional field made. When establishing weight of a unit of learning outcomes it is important to consider the effort required from learner to acquire the knowledge, skills and competences related to the process. Another aspect is the importance of a qualification for labour market, social integration etc. Allocating ECVET points should be considered while designing qualifications and units.



NATIONAL VET POLICY AND APPROACHES IN LINE WITH ECVET RECOMMENDATION IN THE PROJECT'S PARTNER COUNTRIES³

Spain

Spain have formally updated their VET system along the lines of ECVET principles. This process took place in parallel with referencing qualifications to the Spanish NQF. There is a legal basis for its implementation, but it has yet to come into force.

Italy

The key impact of ECVET in Italy was in the context of transnational mobility. Within the context of lifelong learning, ECVET had a smaller role to play. There has been no official adoption of ECVET as a framework of reference. In Italy the years 2012-2014 have been marked by significant reforms, both of lifelong learning policies (e.g. the reform of centres for adult education) and systems and tools for transparency of qualifications (through the legislative decree 13/13 focused on drafting the framework for the validation and certification of competences acquired from experience). Many ECVET principles have been implicitly adopted, however, especially with regard to the recognition and validation of LO acquired through non-formal or informal learning, however without explicit reference being made to ECVET. ECVET is also attributed a significant role in promoting the principle of structuring qualifications into units of LO. There are discussions that ECVET tools and principles could be used by employment services in the context of recognition of prior learning for migrants. On the other hand, the discussion on the use of ECVET principles to promote progression between VET and higher education institution got stuck and is currently not a policy priority.

Isfol - Istituto per lo sviluppo della formazione professionale dei lavoratori - created an information page on ECVET, explaining its objectives, functioning, key concepts and references <https://www.isfol.it/ecvet/ecvet-1/che-cose>

Istituto Nazionale per l'Analisi delle Politiche Pubbliche created an information page on ECVET. It also established the ECVET National Expert Group, coordinated by the Erasmus+ National Agency Inapp, in the framework of activities supporting the implementation of the European Credit System for VET. <http://www.erasmusplus.it/formazione/gruppo-esperti-nazionali-ecvet/>

³ Annex 1 (Country factsheets) of Study on EU VET instruments (EQAVET and ECVET), European Commission, Brussels, 2019



Germany

National VET policy in Germany is developed independently from ECVET. ECVET is currently not discussed at system level. Modularisation as well as units of learning outcomes are still being heavily debated. Partial qualifications do exist in some places, and many programmes have become more modularised over time.

Poland

In Poland, three reforms since 2009 have gradually introduced learning outcomes and units in VET. An integrated qualification system (IQS) was introduced, bringing together formal qualifications, regulated 'market' qualifications and 'non-formal' (not regulated) qualifications. Standards governing those institutions responsible for validation and articulation of market qualifications were introduced, and links to the Polish Qualification Framework and qualification register were established. The key elements of the reform introduced in 2012/13 were a unitised LO based curriculum, new format of external assessment, and new procedures for validation non-formal and informal learning. They are considered in line with ECVET principles. The Act on the Integrated Qualifications System that establishes the Polish Qualifications Framework and the integrated qualifications registry came into force in 2016. Its main aim is to support lifelong learning.

Eksperci ECVET - The Polish Team of ECVET Experts, established in 2012 under the contract signed between the Agreement for the Development of the Education System and the Completed Agreement. The team consisted of 9 experts nominated by the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education <https://www.eksperciecvet.org.pl/>

CONCLUSIONS

What is especially important for the Project is the fact that any qualification acquired through non-formal or informal learning for which a formal learning pathway reference can be identified, and the corresponding units, carry the same ECVET points as the reference, since the same learning outcomes are being achieved⁴.

The ECVET system is voluntary, therefore significant discrepancies in its implementation in Project Partner Countries can be observed. Spain is the most advanced in this field, whereas Germany the least. For this very reason, we believe it is not possible to discuss the potential of using the European credit transfer system for vocational education and training at Project's level.

The greatest obstacle would be to identify the institution that could start the process, as well as potential partner institution required within the ECVET framework. Nevertheless, we made

⁴ The Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) of 18 June 2009 (2009/C 155/02)



sure that the Manual can be used by VET institution, which allows for the process of adapting to ECVET to be continued from then on.



