ECVET PERMIT

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The project **ECVET for Permeability and Transferability between the Non-Formal and Formal VET System (ECVET PERMIT)** aims to implement the European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) methodology in the curricula of VET study programmes within the non-formal and formal VET system, at national and EU level, in an effort to increase the permeability and transferability of the learning outcomes achieved within different learning contexts.

Specifically, the project aims to apply the ECVET methodology for describing, assessing and validating learning outcomes in the VET study programmes of three non-formal technical specializations in order to test the transferability of credits from the non-formal to the formal VET system, firstly within the national boarders (Cyprus) and secondly on a European level (Greece and Malta).

The selected technical specializations are:

- Electrician
- Plumber
- Automotive Mechanic

SECOND TRANSNATIONAL MEETING

Following the first transnational meeting in Malta, and the 5-day learning activity that took place in Cyprus, the second transnational meeting took place at Athens, Greece on the 17th and 18th of September 2015. This meeting served various objectives:

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- To present the final deliverable of Intellectual Output 1 – Methodological Guidelines for the Practical Implementation of ECVET within the project context;
- To present the current status of Intellectual Output 2 – ECVET Training manual for Curriculum Conversion within the CVET Framework; confirm its broad contents and timeframes;
- Present how the aims of Intellectual Output 3 – Curriculum Mapping within the ECVET Framework to National and Transnational Level, will be achieved in order to develop the required synthesis report;
- Propose and discuss the action plan for Intellectual Output 4 – Conversion of VET Study Programmes into the ECVET System;
- Present a preliminary action plan for Intellectual Output 5 – Common Assessment and Validation Process for Credit Transfer between the Formal and non-Formal VET System;
- Discuss quality indicators for all Intellectual Outputs;
- Carry out team and work group as necessary.

This meeting was attended by a compliment of fifteen participants representing all of the partners involved in this project: 3 from MCAST, 4 from Intercollege, 1 each from IDEC, CPC & HRDA, and 5 from IEK DELTA who also kindly hosted the meeting. The next transnational meeting is scheduled for the 12th and 13th of May 2016 in Cyprus.

PROJECT PROGRESS: CURRICULUM MAPPING WITHIN THE ECVET FRAMEWORK

The ECVET PERMiT project is undergoing progress every day. During the month of December and early January the focus was on finalizing Intellectual Output 3 – Curriculum Mapping within the ECVET Framework at National and Transnational Level.

MCAST, being the organisation leading Intellectual Output 3 presented to the Steering Committee a Synthesis Report as the final deliverable for this output. The Synthesis Report was built following the input of each partner involved in the project. For this Intellectual Output the partners were required to prepare a report which details two study programmes. In order to achieve this aim the partners had to reflect upon ECVET related terms such as Curriculum, Learning Outcomes, Knowledge, Skills and Competences.
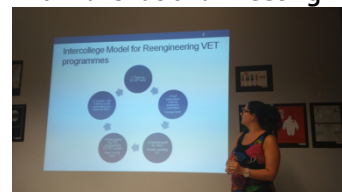
PHOTOS

2nd Transnational Meeting

EfVET Conference

Moreover, the study programmes needed to be mapped to occupational standards or job profiles in order to appropriately establish their level on the European Qualifications Framework.

The curriculum mapping within the ECVET framework is an essential aspect of this project as it aims to generate in-depth understanding of the study programmes, whilst in the process translate the varying programmes into a transparent and compatible model of describable learning outcomes. Hence the starting point for Intellectual Output 3 was the analysis of different study programmes as currently implemented by the VET providers. These programmes have, throughout Intellectual Output 3, been analysed through a rigorous process upon which the learning outcomes could be established. This is of outmost importance as it is the learning outcomes and the subsequent breakdown into the related knowledge, skills and competences that provides a basis for transferability and transparency.

Learning outcomes are central to the proper implementation of ECVET towards achieving permeability and transferability. Therefore, the process which guides the mapping of curriculum within the ECVET framework to identify the actual learning outcomes is of critical importance. It is fair to say that curriculum mapping, based on the analysis of the content standards along with the alignment of curriculum resources and carefully linked assessment, is an ongoing exercise that leads to further examination and improvement. The focus during the process is on the complexities of student learning as the learners acquire the knowledge, skills and competences related to each learning outcome.

The first step to be undertaken in this process is the introduction of common terminology to describe learning outcomes and qualifications, referred to as the classification of different domains of learning. This initial development needs further reinforcement towards achieving transferability and permeability through the use of a shared format for presenting learning outcomes. This is also tackled in the development of a partner report through the preparation, distribution and use of the templates provided by MCAST. Learning outcomes should be measurable and meaningful, whilst related to the target audience and written at the appropriate level for the learners; as determined by the occupational standards or job profiles and aligning these to the official Referencing Report being used by each country.

The learning outcomes are subsequently further refined by categorizing its aspects into three distinct categories. In essence learning outcomes are statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process. One of the main advantages of focusing on knowledge, skills and competences is that these relate to learning outcomes; hence to the outputs of the unit rather than the input. Consequently, this is focused on the learning involved, rather than on teaching inputs. Such development is also important in promoting mobility in three ways: career progression; movement between sectors; and mobility within the EU. This also allows for integrating formal education and training with informal and experiential development. The challenge is the development of consistent and coherent knowledge, skills and competences.

Through the use of curriculum mapping ECVET PERMiT achieves various objectives: the learning outcomes identify the unit where particular learning is expected to be delivered and

assessed. This leads to a better understanding of the unit's nature, goals and pre-requisites. Moreover, alignment is achieved both within a program as well as between institutional goals and various VET partners. Consequently, permeability and transferability, as required by this project is not only made possible but it is also documented and made quantifiable for quality assurances purposes.

The general approach adopted in order to develop the synthesis report was based on a three stage process. This first stage involved the preparatory work carried out by MCAST in order to develop the necessary guidelines to be followed by the partners. This involved the creation of a framework report, action plan, timeframes and guidelines for the National Advisory Group (NAG).

The second stage was involved with the creation of the national reports by the partners. This stage followed a ten step process, detailed below, at the end of which the national report would be completed and sent to MCAST for evaluation into the synthesis report.

1. Setup National Advisory Group (NAG)
2. Present brief profile of partner
3. Gain a better understanding the ECVET Framework
4. Describe the national qualification system
5. Present the current profiles of 2 study programmes
6. Gain a better understanding of Learning Outcomes
7. Acquire the study programmes objectives
8. Establish learning outcomes
9. Present report to NAG for feedback
10. Finalise report and send to Intellectual Output 3 leader

The National Advisory Group (NAG), setup for each country served an important role during this second stage. The overall role of NAG is to operate as a critical guide during the preparation of the partners' national reports. Furthermore, the NAG also served as a complement to the effectiveness of the partner as it carried out the specific tasks of re-writing programmes around the ECVET framework. The main aims of the NAG are to: make recommendations to partners on the development of the study programmes; make recommendations to the partners on the learning outcomes; review of policies relating the study programmes; provide a forum for sharing best practice and discussing development needs; identify support needs for the implementation of the programmes being developed; reflect on the applicability of the presented materials with respect to the national occupational standards; contribute up-to-the-minute knowledge, skills and competences required by the students who are expected to perform efficiently at their tasks.

Preparatory work has also started for the completion of Intellectual Output 4 - Conversion of VET Study Programmes into the ECVET System as well as Intellectual Output 5 – Common Assessment and Validation Process for Credit Transfer between the Formal and non-Formal VET System. Following the establishment of the learning outcomes, Intellectual Output 4 aims to build upon this process by the introduction of various elements such as content, learning frameworks and credit points. The final intellectual output is subsequently involved in the development of a common assessment and validation process for credit transfer at both national and transnational level. Intellectual output 5 is related to the assessment and validation processes which will involve the pilot delivery of the ECVET curricula and the testing

of the process of credit transfer based on a common assessment and validation process for credit transfer designed specifically for this project.

OTHER NEWS: ECVET PERMiT @ the EfVET INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

During the 24th EfVET International Conference which took place in Paphos Cyprus, between 21st-24th of October 2015, the ECVET PERMIT was one of the selected European projects which were presented during the round table sessions. The 2 sessions had the tittle "ECVET and Learning Outcomes for Formal and Non-Formal VET: Basic Principles" and in total more than 25 people attended the sessions. One of Intercollege's ECVET Experts, Ms. Yianna Orphanidou led the sessions in which key principles about the ECVET implementation in formal and non-formal VET sector were discussed. The participants, representing VET institutions from a number of countries such as Netherlands, UK, Finland, Austria, Poland, Spain etc. participated in the sessions.

Most of the questions focused around the different national contexts for categorizing formal and non-formal VET, as well as the benefits and challenges of the ECVET tool. The programme of the round tables projects presented can be accessed here:
http://www.efvet.org/images/stories/efvet2015/efvet-roundtable2015b.pdf

Overall more than 200 VET representatives participated in the EfVET Conference, during which the ECVET PERMIT project leaflet and 1st Newsletter were disseminated to all. For more information about Intercollege's presentation at this event please contact Yianna Orphanidou at orphanidou.y@intercollege.ac.cy