Quality Assurance in Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVE)

Synthesis Report from the EQAVET Peer Learning Activity

7-8 October 2021

Prepared by the EQAVET Secretariat, 28-10-2021

Table of Contents

1. Policy Context

The Council Recommendation of 24 November 2020 on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience (VET Recommendation)[1] promotes **Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVE)** as world-class reference points for training in specific areas for both initial training and continuing up-skilling and re-skilling. It also calls for the **EQAVET National Reference Points** (NRPs) (among other activities) 'to inform and mobilise a wide range of stakeholders, including Centres of Vocational Excellence, to contribute to implementing the EQAVET framework.'[2]

Excellence in VET has a close relationship to the new and emerging challenges Europe faces in its economies and societies, driven by environmental crises and technological developments (the green and digital transitions). These forces are setting new requirements for VET to step up its game, to look beyond itself to wider engagement, broader partnerships, and internationalisation. The Commission first announced the CoVE initiative in the Communication on Building a Stronger Europe: the role of youth, education and culture policies (European Commission 2018)[3].

Vocational excellence is characterised by a holistic learner-centred approach in which VET:

- Is an integrated part of skills ecosystems,[4] contributing to regional development, innovation, smart specialisation, clusters strategies, and social inclusion, as well as to specific value chains and industrial ecosystems[5];
- Is part of knowledge triangles, working closely with other education and training sectors, the scientific community, the creative sector, and business;
- Enables learners to acquire both vocational (job specific) as well as key competences through high-quality provision that is underpinned by quality assurance;
- Builds innovative forms of partnerships with the world of work and is supported by the continuous professional development of teaching and training staff, innovative pedagogies, learner and staff mobility and VET internationalisation strategies.

So far, a total of 12 CoVE pilot initiatives were supported through Erasmus+ calls launched in 2019 and 2020. While most of the 2019 pilot initiatives are reaching their final stage (first call in 2019 had a contract duration of two years), the seven CoVE Networks selected in 2020 started their work in late 2020 and will run for a total of four years.[6] Each CoVE Network consists of at least eight full partners. The multiannual financial framework 2021-2027 includes a further €400 million for up to 100 additional networks of CoVE. The funding stream is inscribed as a 'permanent action' in the Erasmus+ programme.

At the event, DG EMPL emphasised that Centres of Vocational Excellence contribute to the establishment of **skills ecosystems for innovation, regional development, and social**

---

[1] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32020H1202(01)&from=EN

[2] ibid

[3] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0268&from=EN

[4] **Skill ecosystems** are defined as regional or sectoral social formations in which human capability is developed and deployed for productive purposes (Finegold 1999). Their basic elements are business settings and associated business models, institutional/policy frameworks, modes of engaging labour, the structure of jobs, as well as the level of skills and systems for their formation (Buchanan et al. 2001). See https://strathprints.strath.ac.uk/58001/26/Buchanan_etal_OUP_2016_Skills_ecosystems.pdf and https://www.voced.edu.au/content/ngv%3A12460

[5] See **14 industrial ecosystems** as described in Commission Communication on Updating the 2020 New Industrial Strategy https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/communication-industrial-strategy-update-2020_en.pdf, as well as the SWD(2021) 351, Annual Single Market Report 2021 https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/annual-single-market-report-2021.pdf

[6] The maximum EU grant for one project for 4 years is 4 million € (80% co-financing).

inclusion. CoVE can act as catalysts for local business investment, supporting reCoVEry, green and digital transitions, European and regional innovation and smart specialisation strategies. They are instrumental in the development of high-quality vocational education and training (EQF level 3 and 4), including at higher qualification levels (EQF levels 5-8). Moreover, they can provide innovative services such as business incubators for start-ups for their learners, as well as innovative reskilling solutions for workers at risk of redundancy. CoVE can act as knowledge and innovation hubs including the engagement in applied research with companies (particularly SMEs), while working with centres in other countries through EU-wide collaborative networks.

According to DG EMPL, a key success factor for CoVE is the emergence of 'collaborative creativity', based on

- **Strategic frameworks for regional development** that allow for the identification of synergies between policies and amongst stakeholders
- **Strong and enduring partnerships** between VET providers (including VET at tertiary level), higher education institutions, and businesses, in which interactions are reciprocal and mutually beneficial
- **Integration of activities:** CoVE achieve more than the sum of the parts.

CoVE are most successful when the education and training sector works together with a wide range of local partners such as employers, chambers, research centres, development agencies, employment services, and social partners, to co-create the above mentioned 'skills ecosystems'. There is great potential in CoVE to achieve more than the sum of the parts, in particular where CoVE build reflexive relationships between education and training, labour market and research.

2. Objectives of the PLA

The joint Peer Learning Activity of the EQAVET Network and representatives of CoVE Erasmus+ funded projects, provided an opportunity to share and discuss concepts of quality assurance in CoVE. According to a pre-event survey, CoVE representative consider that quality assurance concerns at least three dimensions of their work:

- Excellence in VET teaching and training at all levels;
- National collaboration with stakeholders to establish skills ecosystems and industrial ecosystems;
- International (EU-wide) collaboration through CoVE Networks.

The EQAVET framework contains several indicative descriptors in all four quality areas of the EQAVET cycle that specifically relate to the key CoVE objectives. CoVE were invited to explore how the EQAVET framework can be used for the quality assurance related to all three dimensions.

Guiding questions for discussion included

- What are the plans and intentions of CoVE Networks in relation to quality assurance?
- What are the main challenges related to QA in CoVE / CoVE Networks?
- What work and results of the EQAVET network are useful for CoVE / CoVE Networks?
- What other QA instruments can be used to support a QA approach in CoVE?

By bringing the two networks together, the PLA gave an **impulse for further collaboration between EQAVET NRPs and CoVE**. Further considerations for Quality Assurance for CoVE, including the EQAVET framework, should be discussed in-depth at national and EU level, to reflect on mutually beneficial aspects and possible future developments.

3. Discussion, case studies and reflection

3.1 The case studies

To stimulate the discussion on the plans and intentions of CoVE Networks in relation to quality assurance, three Networks of CoVE presented their approaches.

3.1.1 European Centre of Vocational Excellence in Microelectronics (ECoVEM)

Initial VET (IVET) and continuing VET (CVET) providers from eight countries established the European Centre of Vocational Excellence in Microelectronics (ECoVEM)[7], to create a European Cooperation Platform of Vocational Excellence in Microelectronics together with national and regional authorities, key industry stakeholders, and organisations working on social inclusion and reintegration. The Network of CoVE started their joint work in 2020, coordinated by the *Technical University of Sofia* (Bulgaria).

The objective is to tackle the challenges of digitalisation, artificial intelligence, green technologies, gender equality in technology, and the integration of migrants. ECoVEM implements innovative instructional approaches towards life-long capacity to self-regulate learning, hard skills and soft skills using the ecosystems-based theoretical models and performance support systems. ECoVEM aims to contribute to the European Education Area by developing transnational VET curricula with common learning outcomes and shared Open Educational Resources to support the mobility of learners and staff. ECoVEM also works towards business-science-education cooperation through integrated programmes of study, training and research.

The ECoVEM consortium uses a multitude of QA instruments, depending on the specific objective. The box below gives an overview.

ECoVEM Quality Assurance instruments in relation to specific objectives

Objective 1: Agile VET in adapting to labour market changes

- Skills/needs analysis of labour market;
- Collaborative development and implementation of courses: involvement of professionals from enterprises in teaching; work-based training Instruments

QA instruments: continuous survey and analysis of job offers in the sector – results analysed every six months, skills analysis survey, interviews, peer review by industrial partners, feedback from alumni of VET providers.

Objective 2: Lifelong Learning Culture - Relevance of CVET and Digitalization

- Implementing new teaching methods: project-based learning; internet-based performance support systems; life online teaching for interactivity;
- Tackling non-discrimination and social inclusion in CVET focusing on the gender dimension of employability in the sector and VET for immigrants;
- Motivation and regular re-training of teachers and trainers.

QA instruments: expert review of pedagogical aspects, peer review of contents, questionnaires for measuring satisfaction of trainees, teachers, employers, and social partners.

---

[7] https://ecovem.eu/

> **Objective 3: Sustainability – a Green Link in VET**
>
> ■ Training module in green and circular economy for each VET curriculum in microelectronics:
> ■ Entire curriculum in 'green microelectronics'.
>
> QA Instruments: expert review of contents, peer review by stakeholders as green organisations, questionnaires for measuring satisfaction of trainees, teachers, employers and social partners.
>
> **Objective 4: European Education and Training Area - international dimension of VET**
>
> ■ Database of best practices from all participating countries;
> ■ ECoVEM platform – European platform for VET in microelectronics;
> ■ Mobility of VET students and teachers.
>
> QA Instruments: analysis of the exchange of best practices and their implementation rate, peer review by external to ECoVEM VET centres, questionnaires and interviews for measuring satisfaction of trainees, teachers, employers and social partners.

3.1.2 European Platform for Urban Greening (EPLUG)

A second example came from the [European Platform for Urban Greening](#)[8], coordinated by *Stichting Wellant* (The Netherlands). Starting in 2020, the six countries involved in the European Platform for Urban Greening work together with 16 partners from the education and training sector and the world of work, to increase the knowledge and skills required to address biodiversity, climate adaptation and well-being in the urban green living environment, and to broaden the expertise among professionals in Europe.

The European Platform for Urban Greening involves a wide range of stakeholders, including high schools and educational NGOs, businesses and business associations, local and central authorities. The platform specifically addresses the development of innovative curricula and teaching methodologies in the field of urban green landscaping, to raise the quality and adaptability of the skills ecosystem. The project's quality assurance approach is based on a coherent quality assurance strategy, internal feedback loops and a Board of Advisors.

> **European Platform for Urban Greening Quality Assurance strategy: Measuring adjusting progress**
>
> The project developed its own quality assurance strategy with specific QA tools and indicators for each of their nine Work Packages (WP). The strategy follows the Deming circle logic: plan/do/check(study)/act(adjust) at the level of outputs/deliverables (set in the project application) but also focuses on outcomes (intermediate to long term effects at the target groups levels) and processes (how the outputs lead to outcomes).
>
> ■ **Outputs measurement** (deliverables, immediate results of our actions = effects that are in the direct control of the project partners)
>   – related especially to efficiency & efficacy at the project management level;
>   – should be set up early on - in the project development phase
> ■ **Outcomes measurements** (intermediate to long term effects = effects that can be influenced by the project but not controlled)
>   – related especially to relevance & coherence at the target group level;

---

[8] https://www.platformurbangreening.eu/

> - should be set up early on (in the planning phase), and refined in the implementation phase (specific to each work package).
> - **Process measurements** (methods used to influence how outputs lead to relevant outcomes
>   - especially related to premises for sustainability & impact;
>   - mostly defined with the team, in relation to other WPs.
>
> Each WP team (under the coordination of a WP leader, and supported by central project management team) uses specific indicators for the planning, implementation, and evaluation, to assess progress and success and make adjustments, where needed.

3.1.3   Excellent Advanced Manufacturing 4.0 (EXAM 4.0)

A third Network of CoVE, Excellent Advanced Manufacturing 4.0 (EXAM 4.0)[9], coordinated by *TKNIKA* a Basque (Spain) VET research and innovation centre, presented an approach to quality assurance that is not project-specific: TKNIKA implements the QA system developed for VET in the Basque country. Through a process started in 1994, the Basque country succeeded to adopt a common QA system across its VET centres based on ISO standards and EFQM excellence standards. Based on its own management excellence framework (HOBBIDE), the VET Vice Ministry, through the Continuous Improvement department at TKNIKA, can issue EFQM awards in VET (EFQM-HOBBIDE) to those VET centres that exceed the levels of requirement. The Basque Government was the first government at European level to be able to grant EFQM recognition. The main quality assurance measures include a) working in networks of VET centres that support each other in QA, b) designating a responsible person for QA in each VET centre, c) supporting their work through public entities organically attached to the Basque VET Vice Ministry, d) conducting internal and external evaluations, and e) ISO 9001 certification of the organisations involved.

EXAM 4.0 shared the process of QA based on ISO and EFQM, and led the participants through a series of steps to implement the method (see box below)

> **Four steps to implement QA in an organisation, based on ISO/EFQM**
>
> The four steps should be preceded by a discussion on **'What is quality'** among all parties concerned. This should lead to an agreement on a) the understanding of quality and b) the interpretation of quality assurance in an educative environment. The process is based on a 'Deming cycle': Information/Analysis, Planning, Action, Evaluation and Review.
>
> **Step 1: Products and services:** The first step focusses on identifying the products and services provided, through the following sub-steps:
>
>   a. Identify the services (courses and others);
>
>   b. Establish the specifications, quality requirements and acceptance criteria for each service. Assess whether the product has met the requirements;
>
>   c. Analyse the causes of deviations when the results have not been adequate;
>
>   d. Design and implement actions to avoid deviations in the future.
>
> **Step 2: Processes:** The second step defines the objective and the organisation of the process on how to get there.
>
>   e. Identify the activities of the process;
>
>   f. Establish the quality requirements of the process;

---

[9] https://examhub.eu/

> g. Assess whether the process has met the requirements;
>
> h. Analyse the causes of deviations when the process has not performed adequately;
>
> i. Design and implement actions to improve the process in the future.
>
> **Step 3: Improvement:** The third step is related to establishing a structure that crates the preconditions for the organisation of improvements
>
> a. Establish control points;
>
> b. Develop a process for the management of non-conformities;
>
> c. Collect examples of good practice.
>
> **Step 4: Management**: The fourth step is related to the institutional management of quality Assurance that feeds into a strategy of continuous improvement and innovation.

3.2 The main challenges faced by CoVEs in QA

CoVE have multiple goals related to multidimensional objectives that concern the individual institutions involved, but also their collaboration and the added value and synergies they create together through 'collaborative creativity'. This is a challenging setting for quality assurance.

Following the presentations, the PLA participants discussed the following main challenges related to quality assurance in CoVE:

■ Working on CoVE topics' is already a quite challenging endeavor and QA work takes time as well. Developing a monitoring and evaluation strategy that takes account of the entire range of goals and challenges of CoVE, including the different levels of collaboration, was regarded as a challenge.

■ The CoVE concept allows for a high level of flexibility. Looking at the implementation in practice, it appears that the emerging CoVE take on very diverse formats. The question was raised whether the CoVE concept needs to be further developed to achieve a clear and common understanding of what a CoVE is. This would include an elaboration of the distinguishing features of CoVE in relation to other VET providers.

■ Stakeholders (including those outside a VET provider) play a crucial role in the establishment and implementation of CoVE. It is important to involve, inform and coordinate a wide range of stakeholders. It is also necessary to raise awareness and create shared responsibility for quality assurance among stakeholders. This is a major challenge in general and especially in a (currently mainly) virtual environment. Moreover, it is challenging to discuss the outcomes of the project with regional stakeholders as it is difficult to implement this phase of evaluation of the project.

■ Quality assurance of CoVE is a very complex undertaking, as different regulations and cultures have to be considered. For example, different regulations in the education sectors involved (e.g. IVET, CVET, HE: different ministries, different approaches) need to be taken into account, and companies and VET providers may have different rules and approaches to quality assurance and it is important to take all of them into account. However, it can be underlined that quality assurance is of interest in every sector and also in companies and that one of the most important common goals is to have well-trained employees for companies.

- Quality assurance of CoVE requires bottom-up and top-down approaches: Building their own QA approach ('bottom-up') requires autonomy at VET provider level. Certain activities, such as international relations, also require a 'top-down' approach to some extent.

3.3 Applying the EQAVET framework in CoVEs

The EQAVET framework is based on a quality cycle with four phases and contains several indicators and indicative descriptors related to those phases. An introductory presentation by the EQAVET Secretariat gave an overview on how the indicators and indicative descriptors relate to the CoVE context and the key CoVE objectives.

EQAVET indicative descriptors

The EQAVET framework includes a series of 'indicative descriptors' describing 'quality areas' that are relevant for vocational training education and training in each of the four phases of the EQAVET cycle.

3.3.1 The planning phase

In the **planning phase**, an EQAVET indicative descriptor calls for *'Participation of or consultation with 'social partners and all other relevant stakeholders' for identifying needs and setting goals and objectives.* This is in line with the CoVE goals at national and international level:

- National: CoVE include a wide range of local stakeholders, strong partnerships at local or regional level;
- International: cooperation with CoVE from other countries based on common interest.

Another EQAVET descriptor related to the planning phase calls for the *'Establishment of mechanisms and procedures to identify the training needs of the labour market and society.'* Equally, this reflects some of the CoVE objectives at national and international level:

- National: CoVE are firmly anchored into the frameworks of regional development, innovation and smart specialisation, they mobilise partners in co-creating solutions for local social and economic development and their VET offer is informed by skills (labour market) intelligence;
- International: cooperation for jointly identifying training needs across countries and learning from each other's approaches; development of joint programmes, micro-credentials and 'European Vocational Core Profiles'.

3.3.2 The implementation phase

In the **implementation** phase, there is an EQAVET indicative descriptor that calls for *'Continuous development of teachers' competences, partnerships between teachers and trainers, promotion of innovation in teaching and learning methods'.* This is in line with the CoVE dimension of establishing excellence in teaching and learning:

- National level:
    - teachers can update their technical competences by doing internships in companies or in joint research hubs;
    - innovative learning methods (including MOOC's, simulators, virtual reality, Artificial Intelligence) can be developed in cooperation with partners (e.g., HE institutions);

- teachers can update their pedagogical competences and in particular their digital skills including those necessary for online and distance learning.
- International level:
  - digital technologies and online-learning tools support the international cooperation in CoVE Networks;
  - they also offer the opportunity for international (virtual or personal) mobilities of students and teachers.

3.3.3 The evaluation phase

In the **evaluation** phase, the EQAVET framework calls for *'Evaluation of processes and results of education and training, including learner satisfaction as well as staff performance and satisfaction'*. For CoVE, this entails

- Including various stakeholders at national and international level in the evaluation processes;
- Having effective feedback loops and graduate tracking systems in place.

3.3.4 The review phase

In the **review** phase, EQAVET asks for the *'Definition and use of procedures, mechanisms and instruments for undertaking reviews and improve the quality of provision at all levels'*. For COVE this means that

- CoVE have procedures in place to rapidly adapting skills provision to evolving needs (e.g. evolution of technologies in industry, demands for new competences or professional profiles);
- CoVE involve the stakeholders of their network in the strategic learning process for developing appropriate action plans and putting them in place.

3.4   The EQAVET indicators of high relevance for COVE

The EQAVET Framework includes ten indicators that can be used to measure quality of VET. Out of the ten EQAVET indicators, three seem to be of particular relevance in the context of CoVE.

*Indicator 5: **Placement rate in VET programmes**: a) destination of VET learners at a designated point in time after completion of training, according to the type of programme and the individual criteria; b) share of employed learners at a designated point in time after completion of training, according to the type of programme and the individual criteria.*

As part of their QA arrangements, CoVE could explore:

- To what extent does the CoVE approach (collaborating with a wide range of local stakeholders in co-creating skills ecosystems for local innovation, regional development, and social inclusion) support VET graduates in finding a job?
- What is the concrete impact of their approach and how can this be measured?

*Indicator 6: **Utilisation of acquired skills at the workplace**: a) information on occupation obtained by individuals after completion of training, according to type of training and individual criteria b) satisfaction rate of individuals and employers with acquired skills/competences.*

As part of their QA arrangements, CoVE could:

- develop and apply measures to monitor this over time;

- investigate the extent to which graduates have acquired the necessary competences to identify any upskilling needs themselves.

*Indicator 9: **Mechanisms to identify training needs in the labour market**: a) information on mechanisms set up to identify changing demands at different levels b) evidence of the use of such mechanisms and their effectiveness.*

As part of their QA arrangements, CoVE could:

- develop and apply in collaboration with their national and international partners skills intelligence methods that continuously support them in keeping their VET offer responsive to changing demands.

3.5   Key points from the discussion

Discussion in working groups showed that the EQAVET framework is indeed useful for CoVE, but it is very general and therefore consideration could be given to 'translating', operationalising or contextualising it to support CoVE / CoVE networks in a more specific way. For example, more specific descriptors related to concepts like 'skills ecosystems', indicators on the collaboration with other institutions and businesses could be useful. Furthermore, additional tools adapted to their specific needs could be developed.

More detailed information on good practice in applying the EQAVET Framework could be useful, and possibly the development of a guide or a webinar to create greater awareness of the key concept of QA and EQAVET.

Peer review (for example within the COVE Community of Practice) could also be used as a quality assurance tool as it helps to disseminate good practices and improve the self-assessment process. However, as the instrument presented is a manual developed for VET providers, adaptation for CoVE (reaching beyond VET provider levels and include different stakeholders and collaborations) might be necessary.

3.6   Other QA instruments relevant for CoVEs

Besides EQAVET, there are other Quality Assurance frameworks, labels and instruments that can be useful in the context of CoVE. Three QA instruments were discussed: Commercial labels like ISO and EFQM, a Network-specific quality label developed by the European Vocational Training Association, EVTA; and peer review.

3.6.1 Other international QA instruments in CoVEs

Many VET providers have ISO (21001 and/or 29990) or EFQM certifications in place. International or company quality labels and instruments like ISO and EFQM offer certifications which can be used to assess the 'management quality' of VET organisations. Both ISO and EFQM have been recently updated to include changing cultural values.

ISO 21001 and 29990 standards are specifically targeting educational organisations, by broadening the focus and including indicators for the quality of the training and the learning outcomes. Both instruments include standards that look 'beyond the organisation' and could therefore be interesting for application by CoVE (for supporting the creation of a 'quality culture'). Both ISO and EFQM include tools that allow an organisation to examine and improve how they create value for stakeholders.

As the example of the Basque country showed (see section 3.1.3), in some countries ISO and EFQM are part of the system level quality assurance arrangements for VET. Due to the high level of brand awareness of these quality labels, they can be instrumental for VET providers to promote their commitment to quality and excellence to a broader public.

3.6.2 The EVTA quality label

In the context of their own discussion around VET excellence, EVTA (a European VET Association) has developed a 'Quality Label' that is based on a concept for "VET Centres of Excellence"[10]. EVTA VET Centres of Excellence are VET providers that commit to ongoing innovation, including to ensure

■ Ongoing update and upgrade of facilities, structural organisation and acquisition of technologies
■ Close relationships with the most innovative companies in the field of reference, for trainings and for job placements
■ Regular updates of job profiles, curricula and training programmes
■ Further training of trainers regarding technological, methodological and pedagogical skills.

The EVTA Quality Label is awarded to centres that can prove they work in line with these principles. The process is based on the following steps:

■ Identification of candidates within the EVTA (and EVBB) networks
■ Online survey in VET Centres of Excellence based on standards and indicators
■ Mapping and analysis of excellence elements and check versus standard 'quality frames'
■ Creation of the Catalogue of VET Centres of Excellence for trainers and professionals in the EVTA (and EVBB)[11] networks.

EVTA sees the VET excellence concept and the Quality label as 'a path towards excellence' for the network: With more and more EVTA members acquiring the label, the Network would expand to a Network of Vocational Excellence.

3.6.3 The EQAVET peer reviews

Through two Erasmus+-funded projects (2017-2019/2019-2021), the EQAVET NRPs from Austria, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, and Slovenia developed and road-tested a methodology for peer review at VET provider level.

What is a peer review?

A peer review is a form of external evaluation that supports the reviewed VET provider in its quality assurance efforts through a dynamic and motivating process of mutual learning that benefits both VET providers and peers. During peer reviews colleagues from other VET providers (called peers) assess and provide feedback on the quality of VET provision to the reviewed provider.

Peer review are useful for VET providers that focus on internal quality assurance procedures and self-assessment, and who want to obtain feedback from colleagues on the quality of certain aspects of VET provision or the VET provider. VET providers participate in peer reviews voluntarily.

Peer Reviews can be carried out with national and transnational peers. Transnational peer reviews involve international peers that assess VET providers alongside national peers.[12]

The five partner countries developed an analytical framework with fifteen VET provider-relevant quality areas, for instance, *strategic planning and development, knowledge*

---

[10] The EVTA concept of 'VET excellence' was developed earlier than the DG EMPL CoVE concept. Hence, while there are strong similarities, the concepts are not identical.

[11] European Association of Institutes for Vocational Training, EVBB, https://evbb.eu/

[12] https://www.eqavet-nrp-slo.si/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Peer-review-QA-Criteria-for-VET-leaflet.pdf

management, management and leadership, external relations, work-based learning (WBL) outside the school, and others.

At the PLA it was discussed that peer reviews might be an interesting instrument for transnational CoVE partnerships to provide feedback to each other and to support each other with their self-assessment against the COVE objectives.

4. Lessons learnt and next steps

It was discussed that due to the complexity of the CoVE concept, setting up QA in CoVE projects and networks is multi-layered:

- Firstly, CoVE consist of individual organisations (organisation level). Each organisation will need to have a quality management system in place that CoVErs their services and processes.
- Secondly, CoVE are networks with local regional, and international partners. These networks can be viewed a new 'supra-organisation' that can be quality assured as well (project level).
- Thirdly, CoVE goals include concepts like innovation, regional development, and skills ecosystems, that might require further operationalisation, e.g., by developing specific quality descriptors as well as indicators to measure progress. Most QA concepts and tools in the education and training context (including the EQAVET Framework) do not yet include such descriptors and indicators: they could potentially be introduced as new standards of excellence in VET.

The participants identified the following activities that may potentially be of common interest and mutual benefit for both CoVE and the EQAVET Network:

- It was suggested that feedback from CoVE on the use of the EQAVET framework should be collected more systematically. This should help to find out what is useful, what is less useful and what is missing to best meet the needs of the CoVE.
- Experiments and pilot tests (e.g. with instruments specifically designed for CoVE) could also be conducted to better understand what works well and where the challenges are and what needs to be improved.
- Networking and mutual learning have already started with this PLA. Sharing and exchange of experiences should continue at national level (between EQAVET NRPs and local CoVEs) and at transnational level (between CoVE projects, e.g. led by the COVE Community of Practice).
- Continuous exchange of information and experiences should take place. This could include Peer Reviews among CoVE, exchange of good practices, instruments, results, lessons learned, updates; using synergies; possibly through the CoVE Community of Practice, as well as the future CoVE Support services.