

Internal Evaluation

ECVET Tour II

1st project year, 11/2012 – 11/2013

Wolfgang Schäffner / Barbara Buchsbaum
Studien und Management Center Saalfelden gGmbH
office@smc-info.at
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Quality assurance and evaluation according project application:

Application form, Page 12:

...SMC will furthermore be in charge of internal evaluation of the project implementation, which will be part of Workpackage 1 (Management and coordination) and which will ensure feedback and quality assurance of core activities carried out mainly within Work package 3 and Workpackage 4. SMC will also provide necessary assistance to an external evaluator that will be contracted out.

Application form, Page 52:

Quality management plan

The quality management plan ensures the procedures which are obligatory for all activities undertaken within the project, it will specify control metrics designed for measuring the progress of the work. The quality assurance activities will be developed during the whole project activities as a parallel activity to project management implementation. There will be a constant relation between internal evaluation and project management, in order to calibrate actions of the project.

The quality management plan has the following objectives:

- Applying systematic activities for monitoring the project implementation, recording deviations and shortcomings
- Set quality assurance procedure for review and approval of deliverables
- Introducing a formal and systematic testing to measure the effectiveness of the project

The quality plan for the ECVET Tour II project takes as a reference the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQARF). It is the Reference Model for VET quality assurance described in a Recommendation approved by the Parliament and the European Council.

Quality management will cover internal and external evaluation activities. Internal evaluation will be performed by SMC and will be continuous. External evaluation will be contracted out and will be carried out by an external subject in the middle and at the end of the project implementation, within the process of internal and external evaluation. Evaluation questions will be formulated and on the basis of this framework project implementation will be quantitatively and qualitatively evaluated in terms of meeting in the set aim, deliverables, timeframe, outcomes, results and impacts. If necessary, adjustments of the project will be proposed.

The role of evaluation in a multilateral project¹

Evaluation in a multilateral project could be defined as the systemic application of empirical methods which aims to assess and improve the planning, implementation and impact of the project.

Common terms in connection with evaluation are formative / summative / internal and external evaluation.

Formative evaluation aims to ensure that the project progresses as planned. It is an ongoing task throughout the whole life-cycle of the project. Formative evaluation is not only carried out by the "evaluation-party" but also by the whole project team in the form of a constant dialogue.

Summative evaluation usually takes place at the end of the project. Outcomes and lessons learnt are assembled and made available to public.

Internal evaluation is carried out by one or more project partners and therefore is, in a manner of speaking, self-evaluation. The benefits of internal evaluation are high learning potential for involved persons, thematic expertise and a contribution to team-building.

External evaluation is – as the term implies - executed by an external person / organisation. Its advantage over an internal evaluation is a higher degree of objectivity and expertise in the field of evaluation.

Evaluation

- supports the project and acts as check, if targets have been met
- allows results to be improved
- simplifies decision making, assists with fundamental changes if necessary
- involves all project partners, provides context for open discussion
- reveals strengths and weaknesses, identifies obstacles

Evaluation focuses on the quality of all projects processes, outputs and outcomes. A comparison of target and actual result of a project is carried out.

Within the actual project ECVET Tour II, so far formative and internal evaluation was implemented. It shall be seen as an ongoing process, which is intertwined with all work packages and goes hand in hand with project management. An external evaluator will be involved at a later stage of the project.

¹ "die Berater" Unternehmensberatungsgesellschaft mbH, Holger Bienzle, Eerika Hedman et al; survival kit. Managing Multilateral Projects in the Lifelong Learning Programm. Vienna 2010. ISBN 978-3-9502772-3-4. <http://www.european-project-management.eu>, downloaded 24th Sept. 2012.

Evaluative tasks carried out in year 1 of project management:

Time covered by internal evaluation: 12.2012 – 11.2103

Methodologies used: mix of qualitative and quantitative instruments (collection of qualitative data at review meetings via minutes of the meeting, quantitative data was gained by sending out questionnaires after meetings)

- **Qualitative data** collected at review meetings (Project consortium board meetings)

Evaluation of the project by updating all partners to the current status of the project, discussing timelines and milestones of the project, financial status, status of outcomes of various products, work packages by all partners, definition of to-do´s including responsible person and deadline

Outcomes: updated project plan, minutes to each meeting

Review-meetings in the first project year:

- 12.2012: Kick-off-meeting in Bratislava / SK
- 04.2013: Workshop with experts for setting up of competence matrices with subsequent, extraordinary PCB meeting in Bratislava / SK
- 07.2013: PCB in Prague / CZ

- **Quantitative data** collected via two questionnaires, sent out to participants of the Kick-Off-meeting in Bratislava and the PCB-meeting in Prague. Outcomes were presented orally to all partners at PCB-meeting in Prague (07/2013) and PCB-meeting in Saalfelden (01/2014); summary please see on following page

Other instruments used for quality assurance:

- Continuous supervision and e-mail reminders for keeping of deadlines and deliverance of products, based on project plan.
- Constant feedback-loops in setting up of products. Products delivered so far:
 - country comparison grid
 - competence matrix
 - reports from workshops in CZ / SK
 - needs analysis
 - methodology for the transfer of innovation process
- Use of modern IT-technologies such as google-docs, doodle in order to ensure quick and uncomplicated setting up of meetings and sharing documents.

Outcome questionnaire 1) Kick-off-meeting 12.2012

- Aims and objectives of the project:
 general aims are clear
 most of the aims can be reached within the project period
 single work packages are clear, role of project partners is clear
 some details of the project are not fully clear
- Project management:
 deadlines should be followed more closely
 steps and milestones could have been available in more detail
 improvement of time management needed
- Organization Meeting (travel arrangements, agenda, structure, topics):
 very good
- Atmosphere in group:
 very good
- Remarks:
 dates for meeting should be scheduled as soon as possible

Outcome questionnaire 2) PCB Meeting Prague 07.2013

- Progress of project:
 good progress, minor deviations
 most of the aims can be reached within project period
- Quality of work, keeping of deadlines:
 overall mark 2 (on a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 being best, 5 worst)
- Project management (punctuality, communication):
 overall mark 2 (on a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 being best, 5 worst)
- Organization Meeting (travel arrangements, agenda, structure, topics)
 very good
- Atmosphere in group:
 overall mark 2 (on a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 being best, 5 worst)

Conclusion after first project year:

Team spirit:

The project team started out with a very good spirit, which seemed to deteriorate a little in the course of the project, maybe due to communicative problems and time-pressure. Nevertheless, team spirit after one year of working on the project is still good and it can clearly be stated, that face-to-face meetings contribute to a better understanding within the team.

Aims and objectives:

There were some objections to the question, if all aims and objectives of the proposal could be met within the project period, in the beginning of the project, since the content of the project proposal seemed to be very ambitious.

The fact, that the person who set up the project proposal never was part of the project team did not contribute to make the job easier. Certain passages of the project proposal were left open to interpretation and speculation.

In the course of the first project year, decision was taken that there will be no assignment of ECVET-points to the mobilities. The duration of the mobilities will be too short to introduce learning units which are complex enough to assign credit points. Also, a realization of assignment of points is not realistic due to lack of time within the project period.

Additional objectives, not defined in project proposal:

Another obstacle which has to be overcome is the fact, that a realization of mobilities with Austria was not part of the project proposal. Only after project start and the strong recommendation of the Slovak national agency, decision was taken to also send students to Austria. A partner in Austria (hosting school) had to be found, financial and timely adaptations also had to be considered. After a meeting of the working group in October to Tourism School in Klessheim, soon it became clear that each participating school in CZ and SK would like to send students to Austria. The problems we are facing now are mostly from the financial point of view. First of all, no mobilities were contained in the original budget of the project proposal at all, secondly costs for living in AT are much higher than in CZ and SK. Currently, the project leader APEL is trying to figure out if, how many and for which time mobilities to Tourism School in Klessheim can be realized.

Project progress:

All milestones and products (various reports and methodologies) of the project proposal have been delivered. The deadlines set in the project proposal were not exactly met, but altogether the "late" deliverance of products is no threat towards a finalization of the project.

To-do's:

For the 2nd half of the project, an emphasis has to be set on strict meeting of deadlines and a clear communication by all team-members (reading e-mails properly, no mixing of topics in e-mails enough, not too many topics on single mails).