



**Leonardo da Vinci**

2013-1-FR1-LEO05-48134 AGROSKILL

*“Transferring methods for validation of informal learning to VET institutions in the field of sustainable agriculture”*

# **National strategy for converting informal to formal education and the accreditation of prior learning**

Suggestions for the Croatian Strategy

Language Version: English



**Index:**

.INTRODUCTION.....3

2.CONVERTING NON-FORMAL COURSES IN FORMAL COURSES.....3

    2.1.The aim of course.....3

    2.2.Split up the different knowledge parts of the current course into units/elements/learning objects.....3

    2.3.Define the average needed time for achieving knowledge to fulfil the requirements.....5

    2.4.Define exam/assignment for each unit/element.....6

    2.5.Calculate the given ECVET points according to country specific standards.....7

    2.6.Prepare a document for participant that show exactly what learning objects / elements / units are fulfilled and what are not fulfilled .....7

3.VALIDATION OF NON FORMAL PREVIOUS LEARNING KNOWLEDGE.....8

    3.1.Searching for proper authority to contact and check for requirements.....8

    3.2.Steps of Validation/Accreditation.....8

        3.2.1.Counselling (help of advisors to collect documentations).....8

        3.2.2.Evaluation (help of committee).....9

        3.2.3.Accreditation/Certification.....9

4.VALIDATION OF INFORMAL PREVIOUS LEARNING KNOWLEDGE.....10



## . INTRODUCTION

Converting of non-formal education in formal education (courses), as well as the recognition and accreditation of prior knowledge and skills acquired through formal and informal learning should follow a certain, predetermined procedure.

The following describes the procedure that would be suitable for converting informal forms of education in sustainable / organic agriculture in formal courses, and procedures for the accreditation of knowledge and skills on sustainable / organic agriculture acquired through formal and informal learning.

## 2. CONVERTING NON-FORMAL COURSES IN FORMAL COURSES

### 2.1. The aim of course.

Define the goal of the course which should be linked to specific tasks, and with the level of knowledge as defined by the National Qualifications Framework.

Analyze the objectives of the course and learning outcomes which should be achieved within the framework of the course. Analyze the knowledge level that the course is designed for. The basic idea of the course should be, that the participants get easier an adequate job in the EU Member states after passing the exams, which is based on the proven knowledge (achieved by the exams).

*For example, the goal of the course "Organic vegetable production" designed for future organic vegetable producers is to gain specific knowledge about the organic production of vegetables.*

### 2.2. Split up the different knowledge parts of the current course into units/elements/learning objects

- defining of every knowledge - and learning object



- grouping of learning objects together to several elements
- grouping of several elements together to units

While analysing the original information within the course it is (according to the NQF) helpful to split up the course into smaller parts of information that can be grouped together. Whilst doing so topics will be grouped together from Learning objects to elements and elements might be grouped together in Units. The elements can be seen as equivalents of courses in Universities, while the units can be seen as Modules. This makes accreditation/validation of courses easier later. Each of these parts of the course must be defined at the level of learning goals, as well as this objective can be checked, in the form in which evidence can be provided here.

*For example, attendees of course "Organic vegetable production" could be farmers who are already engaged in vegetables production, but they want to gain specific knowledge about organic vegetable-growing and get certified "organic vegetables producer." It is not necessary to teach such participants about production of vegetables in general, but the course should be organized in the following units / elements:*

*-The basic principles of organic farming*

- *definitions of organic agriculture*
- *terminology in organic farming*
- *basic principles of organic farming*
- *importance of organic farming for people and the environment*

*-Production technology in organic vegetable production*

- *Soil fertility, tillage and preparation of the soil*
- *Fertilization*
- *Crop rotation*



- *Seeding*
- *Crop protection*

*-Legislative framework and eco-certification*

- *The legal framework in Croatia / EU*
- *Rules on control and certification*

*-Marketing of organic vegetables*

- *Organic vegetables market*
- *Segmentation of organic consumers*
- *Elements of the marketing mix for organic vegetables*

### **2.3. Define the average needed time for achieving knowledge to fulfil the requirements**

When defining formal courses it is necessary to determine the average time needed for the acquisition of competences. It is necessary to:

- Define a time for learning and for practical work
- Calculate the total learning/exercise time per individual units
- Calculate the time needed for whole course (split up in manageable time slots)

Usually in Universities the workload of courses is given in ECTS (European credit transfer system) points with a clear explanation on how to calculate the number of credits (university courses + individual work of students expressed in hours).

In a vocational education are used ECVET points, where 1 ECVET point represents 25 to 30 hours of overall time needed to acquire certain competences, including organized classes, self-study and evaluation of acquired competences. However, the conversion into corresponding ECVET points is not that simple, since the knowledge that is required for a participant to follow a course, can/should be credited. Therefore it is quite possible that a



course with a duration of 2-3 months has the same amount of ECVET points as a course, without required previous knowledge, which lasts a year.

*In the case of education: "Organic vegetable production" enrollment in the course assumes previously adopted general knowledge (and experience) in the production of vegetables. The above mentioned teaching units/elements include three weeks of teaching / practical work:*

- Basic Principles of Organic Agriculture: 8 hours*
- Production technology in organic vegetable production: 60 hours*
- Legislative framework and eco-certification: 6 hours*
- Marketing of organic vegetables: 16 hours.*

#### **2.4. Define exam/assignment for each unit/element**

Checking the knowledge and skills is usually done for individual units/ elements of the course. Possible forms of testing knowledge and skills, e.g. competencies of participants are:

- oral exam
- written exam
- practical exam
- supervision at work.

Depending on the content of individual units / elements, institution for vocational education that organizes a course determines a form of assessment. It is possible to organize oral / written exam, practical exam, or acquired knowledge and skills could be tested in the workplace.

*U slučaju edukacije: „Ekološki uzgoj povrća“ provjera znanja za svaku nastavnu jedinicu bi bila organizirana na sljedeći način:*



*In the case of education: "Organic production of vegetables" assessment for each teaching unit would be organized as follows:*

- The basic principles of organic production - a written exam with multiple choice*
- Production technology in organic vegetable production - an oral exam with practical examples*
- Legislative framework and eco-certification - a written exam with multiple choice*
- Marketing of organic vegetables - seminar with practical examples*

### **2.5. Calculate the given ECVET points according to country specific standards**

As only accredited Universities normally are allowed to use the official ECTS system, ECVET system is used to describe the acquired knowledge. The ECVET system aims at the European Quality Framework Levels and applies some guidelines in the calculation how many ECVET points have to be calculated for a given knowledge.

Allocation of ECVET points to a qualification is based on using a convention according to which 60 points are allocated to the learning outcomes expected to be achieved in a year of formal full time VET.

One ECVET point represents on average 30 hours workload.

*Since the average time for **mastering** the course "Organic vegetable production " is 90 hours it equals 3 ECVET points.*

### **2.6. Prepare a document for participant that show exactly what learning objects / elements / units are fulfilled and what are not fulfilled**

Prepare a detailed certificate that describes all the skills and competences the participant gained from the course.



### **3. VALIDATION OF NON FORMAL PREVIOUS LEARNING KNOWLEDGE**

#### **3.1. Searching for proper authority to contact and check for requirements**

Some countries have competent institutions that organize validation and accreditation of prior learning and institutions for testing existing documents and for validation and accreditation of prior learning. Competent authorities could be: government, chambers, universities, accreditation institutions and others.

Since there is no fully defined process of validation and accreditation of prior learning in Croatia, so far there is no institution responsible for this process in Croatia. It is therefore necessary to define, as soon as possible, the institutions responsible for the process of accreditation of previously acquired qualifications.

#### **3.2. Steps of Validation/Accreditation**

The evaluation process of previously acquired knowledge and skills through non-formal learning consists of the following steps:

##### **3.2.1. Counselling (help of advisors to collect documentations)**

During the evaluation process and the accreditation of previously acquired knowledge and skills it is necessary to provide consultants who will help candidates when applying and collecting the necessary documentation (portfolio of candidates). Consulting consists of the following stages:

- Collect documentation (evidences)
  - Description of achieved learning objects (when, how, by whom...)



- Evidences of applied work
- Documents (hours of teaching, certification, experience...)
- Assignment templates
- Exam templates
- Discuss about possible achieved learning outcomes
- Prepare documentation for possible evaluation

### 3.2.2. Evaluation (help of committee)

The evaluation of presented competences of candidates consists of the following stages:

- Review of the submitted documents
- Decision about proper method of evaluation (interviews, exam, evidences, tests at a workplace...)
- Implementation of selected methods of evaluation
- 

### 3.2.3. Accreditation/Certification

Candidates who fully meet the conditions prescribed standards for selected qualifications get certificate / diploma, which accredits previously acquired competences. If a candidate has competence only for part of the adopted standards, he/she will receive a description of the competencies as well as a list of competencies to be acquired in the future to get a diploma / certificate. I.e. two scenarios of accreditation are possible:

- Partly accreditation (defined additional knowledge and skills to be adopted in future development)
- Total accreditation - the issuance of the certificate / certificate recognized qualifications
-



#### 4. VALIDATION OF INFORMAL PREVIOUS LEARNING KNOWLEDGE

The validation of previously acquired knowledge and skills through informal forms of learning is identical to the validation of previously acquired knowledge and skills through non-formal forms of education (Chapter 3).