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2013-1-FR1-LEO05-48134 AGROSKILL

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

R_19:

**National implementation strategy for converting
current non-formal courses into formal courses and
validating the previous learning.**

Proposal for Hungarian Strategy

Language version: English

1. Content

1. CONVERTING NON-FORMAL COURSES	2
1.1. The aim of course	2
1.2. Split up the different knowledge parts of the current course into units/elements/learning objects ...	4
1.3. Define the credit points and the average needed time for achieving knowledge to fulfil the requirements.....	6
1.4. Define exam/assignment for each unit/element	7
1.5. Calculate the given ECVET points according to country specific standards	7
1.6. Prepare a document for participant that show exactly what learning objects / elements / units are fulfilled and what are not fulfilled.....	10
2. VALIDATION OF NON FORMAL PREVIOUS LEARNING KNOWLEDGE	10
2.1. Searching for proper authority to contact and check for requirements	10
2.2. Steps of Validation/Accreditation.....	11
2.2.1. Counselling (help of advisors to collect documentations)	12
2.2.2. Evaluation (help of committee).....	12
2.2.3. Accreditation / Certification	13
3. VALIDATION OF INFORMAL PREVIOUS LEARNING KNOWLEDGE.....	14

1. CONVERTING NON-FORMAL COURSES

1.1. The aim of course

The aim of the Hungarian pilot course was to create a personalized, module-based course system (topic: organic horticulture), using *self-evaluation of the participants*.

The main approach of the Hungarian experiment based is on the ECVET principles on the transformation of non-formal and informal learning in ECVET units.

The Recommendation states that:

- ECVET facilitates the development of flexible and individualized pathways and also the recognition of those learning outcomes which are acquired through non-formal and informal learning.
- For applying ECVET to learning outcomes achieved in a non-formal and informal learning context or outside the framework of an MoU¹, the competent institution which is empowered to award qualifications or units or to give credit should establish procedures and mechanisms for the identification, validation and recognition of these learning outcomes through the award of the corresponding units and the associated ECVET points.

The validation process for non-formal and informal learning in view of achieving a qualification typically follows these phases:

- Identification of knowledge, skills and competences developed during voluntary activities, in a family or work environment or during leisure.
- Documentation of these learning outcomes through the collection of evidence such as descriptions of previous working activities, development of a portfolio or assessment.
- Validation of these learning outcomes against standards, referential or list of expected learning outcomes.
- Award of a qualification or part of a qualification (recognition of learning outcomes).

ECVET facilitates this process because it:

¹ Memorandum of Understanding

- Describes the knowledge, skills and competence required for a qualification and the associated units. *This makes it easier for the competent institution to identify what learners' have already achieved in comparison to what is required in view of a qualification.*
- Can be used to enable learners to achieve some units through validation of non-formal and informal learning and others through formal learning.
- Facilitates the documentation of learning outcomes achieved through the use of tools such as personal transcripts.

ECVET therefore enables learners to achieve qualifications partly by having non-formal and informal learning validated and recognized and by achieving the remaining units through formal learning.²

In Hungary at present only the steps for formal training regulation is set. This method is described underneath:

The steps of formal training

The Government Regulation No. 393/2013. (XI. 12) and National Economy Ministry Regulation No. 56/2013. (. 4 XII) are presently only developed for the steps of formal training:

1. Proof of availability on personnel, material, financial guarantees
2. Preparation of training program
3. Application upload to <https://felnottkepzesiengedely.munka.hu/> , also attach the appropriate documents.
4. The training program shall be pre-qualified by adult education or adult program education expert (hereinafter referred to as the experts) who is in the Referral list maintained by the NSZFH (National Vocational and Adult Education Office).
5. Request for payment of the fee and fee for certification to NSZFH.
6. If all documents are correct and has been approved by experts and program commissioners and the quality system is certified, an institutional license will be issued, which applies to the specific training in question.

² Source: <http://www.ecvet-team.eu/en/faq-page#t6n984>

The documents in this system do not give the possibility for permitting a non-formal training.

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

In the actual pilot course on organic horticulture TREBAG prepared a competence catalogue to assess the prior learning expertise of the participants. TREBAG as an adult education institution, could be assumed that the participants are highly motivated to make an authentic self-assessment. TREBAG expected a credible SWOT analysis and an authentic completed competency catalogues from the participants.

The competence catalogue represents the main content of the course.

The competence catalogue, based on the requirements of the Hungarian National Qualifications Framework (NQF).³

Competence catalogue to fulfil by participants				
I am able to: (1: not at all, 2: I have some ideas, but it is not my practice, 3: There is some practice at me, but should be expanded my knowledge, 4: I am fully capable of it)	1	2	3	4
Carry out soil preparation				

³ See the Hungarian National Qualification Requirements Framework, Ecological Horticulture, No 11088-12.

Carry out the tasks related to the maintenance of soil fertility				
Carry out ecological plant care				
Carry out produce estimate				
Determine what pesticides can be used in the own vegetable and fruit growing				
Use the proper production technique of vegetables production (e.g. crop rotation, mulch technique)				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In case of cabbages 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In case of carrot and parsley 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In case of solanaceae (potato, paradise, ground paprika) 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In case of honeydew melon, water melon, cucumber 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In case of leguminous (green peas, French beans) 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In case of crops (onion, garlic) 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In case of most important fruit species (apples, stone fruits, bacciferous) 				
Establish orchards				
Establish a vine plantage				
Choose the appropriate vine sort				
Use the appropriate method of cultivation (e.g. pruning)				

Apply the appropriate organic soil improvement methods (e.g. nutrients) and suitable methods for fertilization				
Management actions				
Organize a transition of conventional farming to organic garden management				
Be up to date in organic farming legal frameworks				
Carry out weather forecast and biological pest control				
Organize the harvesting, storage and marketing of organic products				
Cognitive level				
Define, interpret, put into context the main ideas of organic horticulture (e.g. permaculture, slow food approach, biodynamical farming)				
Download special expert materials from Internet and establish a well-proportioned own database				
Write professional texts				
Take part in communication at special professional networks				
Hold professional presentations				

1.3. Define the credit points and the average needed time for achieving knowledge to fulfil the requirements

For the Hungarian horticulture accreditation (based on NQF) the participants need 64 theoretical and 192 practice hours. In the pilot phase of the project TREBAG planned a theoretical preliminary course with the aim to try out the measuring and recognition methodology.

A realistic long-term aim could be an introductory course for all managers, marketing, logistics, market, accounting, business and organic farming issues. On the other hand, the organization a special hobby-course without formal accreditation (for example on the production and use of paint plats). TREBAG tried with this course and successfully applied this area with PLA experimental methods (see the competence catalogue in the annex).

What kind of training schedule is possible? 2x2 weekend, a total of $2 \times 12 = 24$ F2F courses, 40 hours by e-learning tutoring. On this way TREBAG can fulfil the theoretical introductory part of the training.

1.4. Define exam/assignment for each unit/element

TREBAG has got 3 accredited adult educational course at the time of this proposal, and plans adult training courses on management level and on hobby level in the above mentioned field. For the possible NQF accreditation participants must verify all of the required 60 ECVET credit points, the starting (hobby level) participants only 30 credit points. TREBAG also plans to obtain the institutional permission for adult education in the future.

TREBAG recognize the competences on the basis of self-assessment. TREBAG offers an additional training to complete the competences and to set additional credit points both on the manager and the hobby level. (TREBAG as an adult education institution, could be assumed that the participants are highly motivated to authentic self-assessment (competence catalogue, SWOT analysis).

A catalog of competence catalogue is also filled in at the beginning and at the end of the course. Development path between the two measuring can be controlled by an oral exam.

1.5. Calculate the given ECVET points according to country specific standards

Based on ECVET principles and relevant Hungarian present regulations, we propose the following credit system. Two levels are described: hobby level with 30 credit points and manager level with 60 credit points. The hobby level credits are part of the manager level credit points.

Learning outcomes	Credit points
Carry out soil preparation	1
Carry out the tasks related to the maintenance of soil fertility	2
Carry out ecological plant care	2
Carry out produce estimate	2
Determine what pesticides can be used in the own vegetable and fruit growing	2
Use the proper production technique of vegetables production (e.g. crop rotation, mulch technique)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In case of cabbages 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In case of carrot and parsley 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In case of solanaceaes (potato, tomato, ground paprika) 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In case of honeydew melon, water melon, cucumber 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In case of leguminous (green peas, French beans) 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In case of crops (onion, garlic) 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In case of the more important fruit arts (apples, stone fruits, bacciferous) 	1
Establish orchards	3
Establish a vine plantage	3
Choose the appropriate vine sort	2

Use the appropriate method of cultivation (e.g. pruning)	2
Apply the appropriate organic soil improves methods (e.g. nutrients) and suitable methods for fertilization	4
Subtotal for the hobby level	30
Management actions (- only for the manager level)	
Organize a transition of conventional farming to organic garden management	4
Be up to date in organic farming low frameworks	4
Carry out weather forecast and biological pest control	4
Organize the harvesting, storage and marketing of organic products	4
Cognitive level (- only for the manager level)	
Define, interpret, put into context the main ideas of organic horticulture (e.g. permaculture, slow food approach, biodynamical farming)	4
Download special expert materials from the Internet and establish a well-proportioned own database	2
Put professional texts	3
Take part in communication processes in special professional networks	3
Hold professional presentations	4
Sum for the manager level	60

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

This document shall be based on the learning outcomes of the competence catalogue described above.

2. VALIDATION OF NON FORMAL PREVIOUS LEARNING KNOWLEDGE Searching for proper authority to contact and check for requirements

In the project consortium the following possibilities were indicated as authority for validation of non formal previous learning knowledge:

- Government
- University
- Expert
- Accreditation authority

In Hungary, vocational knowledge and recognition of the organizations in the institutional accreditation process is the following: the regulation of adult education was removed in 2013 from the Ministry of Human Resources to the Ministry of National Economy. The new National Labour Office was appointed as an oversight body, and also as the body to manage the authorization process in adult education. This National Labour Office is responsible for the newly introduced 'Licencing' system. Licensing procedure for adult training institutions and requirements are in place from 1st January 2013.

To improve effectiveness and labour market relevancy, the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and the Chamber of Agriculture has got also important role in the regulation of adult education. Their responsibilities are the following: adopt and register adult training program requirements, record and register program experts for adult education, organize further training for them, and supervise the realization of practical parts of the training. (The Chamber of Agriculture plays role in agricultural trainings with the same tasks.)

Licensing procedure for adult training institutions and requirements are the following:

The basis of the legislation is the No. 393/2013 Government. Regulation (XI. 12.) on Adult Education.

According to the law, the best category should be selected based on the specific activity for A, B, C, D, training circles.

To obtain a permission these features are examined: financial security, personnel and material conditions, qualified program shall be insured for A, B, C area, and also program requirements system should be available for areas B, C, and quality assurance system should be operated.

A: NQR training – training in the National Qualification Register

B: is training for a professional qualification that is not state-acknowledged, training for occupations, job skills or job activities, to obtain or develop competences - it is licenced / permitted only on the basis of the professional program requirements.

C: Group of language training program based on only program requirements.

D: Other training - training that increase general knowledge, connected to named qualification, professional qualifications or qualifications are not aimed at the development of language-related skills, and contribute to the development of the adult personality, social equality and civic competence.

Recognition of non-formal knowledge on organic farming system fits only to type A, B or D at present, the development of type B professional system requirements are necessary, which is currently not included in the measurement and validation of non-formal learning elements. D type of training, however, does not involve a formal qualification recognition certificate.

Based on the above described Hungarian situation, in this document the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and the Chamber of Agriculture (in case of agricultural issues) is proposed as an accreditation authority for validation of non-formal previous learning knowledge.

2.2. Steps of Validation/Accreditation

The accreditation of competencies and professional qualifications is done as a result of the four methods (oral exam, written exam, practical exam, supervision at job) to identify the quantity and type of competencies acquired by the candidates.

Under the new Adult Education Act, motivation for the training institutions can be the following: by measuring the corresponding prior knowledge of vocational qualifications in the new OKJ, number of

training hours can be reduced. Detailed rules for the PLA will be regulated by a ministerial decree, also detailed methodological guidelines will be established.

The validation procedure of prior knowledge can be divided into the following phases:

- counselling (help of advisors to collect documentations)
- evaluation (help of committee)
- accreditation/certification

2.2.1. Counselling (help of advisors to collect documentations)

This part is phase 1. in the validation process with these components:

PHASE 1: Identification of knowledge, evidence collection

- Submission of an application by the applicant,
- Registration of the application by the authority. Online registration is advised to make the process more effective.
- Compilation of supporting evidences on knowledge (Possibilities: self-evaluation process, based on a detailed competence catalogue / The 'portfolio' method consisting on a detailed EUROPASS portfolio.)
- Extra possibility: discussion about possible achieved learning outcomes. ,This shall be offered only if resources are available for it.

The choice of diagnostic methods is determined by the currently available resources.

2.2.2. Evaluation (help of committee)

This evaluation part is phase 2. in the validation process with these components:

PHASE 2: Evaluation

- Comparison
- Evaluation of results
- Decision on method of evaluation
- Run the decided activities - Knowledge test in case of knowledge items not documented.
- Decision - justification (accept / reject)

2.2.3. Accreditation / Certification

This final part is phase 3. in the validation process with these components:

PHASE 3: Accreditation/Certification

- Partial or total accreditation (or rejection)
- Define what this means to applicant
 - exemption
 - compensation
 - awarding qualification
- Issuing a certificate

3. VALIDATION OF INFORMAL PREVIOUS LEARNING KNOWLEDGE

Since the knowledge parts are more or less similar only the source are different (non-formal or informal), the same method can be used as part 2. Validation of non-formal previous learning knowledge. See steps and phases 2.1 – 2.2.
