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

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

Suggestions for the Austrian Strategy

Language of this Version: English

## Index:

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 ...	2
1.3.	Define the average needed time for achieving knowledge to fulfil the requirements .....	2
1.4.	Define exam/assignment for each unit/element .....	3
1.5.	Calculate the given ECVET points according to country specific standards .....	3
1.6.	Prepare a document for participant that show exactly what learning objects / elements / units are fulfilled and what are not fulfilled.....	4
2.	VALIDATION OF NON FORMAL PREVIOUS LEARNING KNOWLEDGE .....	4
2.1.	Searching for proper authority to contact and check for requirements .....	4
2.2.	Steps of Validation/Accreditation .....	4
2.2.1.	Counselling (help of advisors to collect documentations) .....	4
2.2.2.	Evaluation (help of committee).....	5
2.2.3.	Accreditation/Certification.....	5
3.	VALIDATION OF INFORMAL PREVIOUS LEARNING KNOWLEDGE.....	5
3.1.	Searching for proper authority to contact and check for requirements .....	5
3.2.	Steps of Validation/Accreditation .....	5
3.2.1.	Counselling (help of advisors to collect documentations) .....	5
3.2.2.	Evaluation (help of committee).....	6
3.2.3.	Accreditation/Certification.....	6

## 1. CONVERTING NON-FORMAL COURSES.

### 1.1. The aim of course.

Define the aim of course (embedded in proper Job roles) (Level of achieved knowledge within NQF)  
*Make sure to analyse the aim of the original course and the learning outcome that should be achieved by the course. Analyse the knowledge level that the course is designed for. The Idea behind 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 that has been achieved by the exams.*

### 1.2. 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 equivalent 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.*

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

- Define learning time and time needed for carrying out proper work (reading about driving doesn't qualify for "good" driving)
- Calculate the total learning/exercise time of 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. Every ECTS usually stands for 25 hours of workload. So the course can be calculated (in university level) for a total of*

ECTS. Normally a typical course with 14 hours of attendance and 2 ECTS (=50 hours of workload) means that besides the attendance additional 36 hours of workload are expected (in average) by the participants to achieve the learning outcome of this course. The conversion into corresponding ECVET points here is not quite that simple, since the knowledge that is required for a participant to follow the course at all, can/should be with 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 previous knowledge, which lasts a year. In our particular case would, because of the mechanical and training technical need for prior knowledge probably correspond to a price of about 1 week and it 40h a ECVET points system of 2-3 points (in general it is assumed that a basic training of 1 year includes 60 ECVET points).

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

- oral exam
- written exam
- practical exam
- supervision at job

*In the original course by the VET institution, what is the content of proofing the knowledge gained in the course? Is there an oral/written exam at the end, is there a practical exam or is the VET institution asking for an assignment that shows the applied knowledge at the workplace of the participants?*

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

*As only accredited Universities normally are allowed to use the official ECTS system, the ECVET system was introduced within Europe to make prior learning “comparable” in Europe. ECVET points are used to describe the gained 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. For a given qualification, one formal learning context is taken as a reference and on the basis of 60 points per year of*

formal full time VET, the total number of points is assigned to that qualification. In a number of European countries qualifications' descriptions are independent of the education and training programme preparing for these qualifications. Furthermore, it is also possible that the same qualification can be prepared through various programmes. Therefore ECVET allocates points to qualifications and not to education and training programmes. However, to decide on the number of ECVET points allocated to a qualification, one formal learning programme is chosen as a point of reference. It is up to the competent institutions in charge of designing qualifications to decide which specific programme will be chosen as a point of reference (e.g. the initial VET or the most common programme). The duration of the selected reference programme together with the ECVET convention on ECVET points will give the number of ECVET points allocated to the qualification.

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

*(e.g. detailed certificate)*

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

- Government
- University
- Expert
- Accreditation authority

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

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

- 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

#### 2.2.2.Evaluation (help of committee)

- Viewing of handed in documentation
- Decision about proper method of evaluation (interviews, exam, evidences, check for competency at workplace...)
- Run proper activities

#### 2.2.3.Accreditation/Certification

- Partly accreditation (additional needed objects are defined -> future training objects)
- Total accreditation -> certificate or accreditation document to be handed out by Authority

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