

ECVET-STEP NEWSLETTER 9



Testing, testing... can you hear us?

In our previous Newsletter (October 2014) we introduced closer the idea behind RULOs. These will continue to live in an online form “for eternity”. However, there is another big online tool which forms a cornerstone of the project—online toolkit for step-wise quality assured path to adopting ECVET.

Any online tool, before being officially launched,

must of course go through vigorous testing phase, to prove that it is not only “pretty”, but also *useful*.

The ECVET-STEP team can boast of plethora of experts on high quality-implementation of the testing procedures and evaluation of the feedback received. This Newsletter explores in greater depth the testing phase of ECVET-STEP online tools.

ECVET-STEP



Strengthening Training to Employment Pathways



Any online tool must be, above all, *useful*. How do we test?

One of prime considerations that any online tool designer must bear in mind is the ever faster passage of time in the modern age. Communities evolve over-time, needs and models of use change. For example, the interface to old digital libraries cannot easily match current search interfaces of contemporary digital resources; these, in turn, will also be surpassed, no doubt. For that reason systems researchers have augmented the design and development measures with the factor of “usefulness”. These above all need to be tested and evaluated during any testing phase.

The following 5 usability measures are central to practical evaluation:

What does testing actually evaluate?

- 1. Time to learn** How long does it take for typical members of the community to learn relevant task?
- 2. Speed of performance** How long does it take to perform relevant benchmarks?
- 3. Rate of errors by users** How many and what kinds of errors are made during benchmark tasks?
- 4. Retention over time** Frequency of use and ease of learning help make for better user retention
- 5. Subjective satisfaction** Allow for user feedback via interviews, free-form comments and satisfaction scales.

Highlights

- There are two main online tools that ECVET-STEP implements:
- Reusable Units of Learning Outcomes, and toolkit for adopting ECVET
- Testing for usability of these tools is key

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What online tools is ECVET-STEP creating?

Education and training systems have to be able to support and equip EU citizens with knowledge, skills, and competences to fulfil 3 core objectives:

- 1) meet the challenges of globally increasing competition;
- 2) generate new skills, to respond to the nature of new jobs;
- 3) improve adaptability and employability of adults already working

In addition to other outlets, ECVET-STEP augments the EU systems with **two main online tools**. These two online tools will continue to serve all VET stakeholders long into the future and provides the main sustained long-run impact.

Online repository of RULOs

A metadata-driven repository of agriculture related content, that allows users to

1. define units of learning outcomes,
2. search for relevant units of learning outcomes in the agriculture domain.

An online interface will be offered at the user browser as well as a web-service gate that other online systems can use to directly integrate resources and metadata.

The basic quality of this repository and its associated user interface is that it is simple and easy to use for end users.

The target audience of this repository is any organisation, professional or researcher who is interested in the agri domain.

Online Toolkit for the adoption of ECVET

This is a software toolkit (set of informative and interactive webpages) that will be available for the use of interested organisations, helping them in assessing their ECVET level of maturity and understanding which ECVET principles and instruments fit better their operational model and workflows.

The first version of the toolkit will be a demonstrator during the pilot testing phase.

For Whom?

Primary audience:
Host institution,
Home institution,
Learner.

Secondary audience:
Aggregators
of data

Primary audience:
Host institution,
Home institution.

Secondary audience:
learners, job
agents, parents

What we are not doing:...

“Usability” as defined by ISO 9241-11:
“the extent to which a product can be used by specified users to achieve specified goals with effectiveness, efficiency and satisfaction in a specified context of use”



Preparing for our next Consortium Meeting! All call at Alcalá!



Our 3rd full Consortium Meeting is now fully planned for December 1st -3rd. It will take place in the beautiful Spanish university town of Alcalá de Henares and we'll be hosted by our partner University of Alcalá.

The programme will be a standard fare of reviewing issues in individual work packages and bringing matters forward in an even more coherent way than we've been doing during our Flash meetings online.

Indeed, direct physical presence of all partners is ideally suited for brainstorming sessions and dealing with matters that span across individual work packages, so we are all looking for university-style vigorous activity!



ECVET-STEP at National Day for Green Education

On the 12th of November the ECVET-STEP consortium member AOC Raad organised National Day for Green Education in the Netherlands. The focus was on green sustainable education, an absolute must in the modern day of pressures of population, climate change, and growing incomes often demanding "more" than products of industrialised agriculture. Innovation in such field is key, and ECVET needs to be the key that will unlock the innovative potential, all over Europe.

Utilising the presence of educational experts, therefore, ECVET workshop took place with the ECVET expert group where we presented the principles of ECVET and ECVET-STEP.

The good news is that . Also here, participants (mostly teachers and mobility coordinators) were convinced that international mobility is important for VET and that recognition of learning results is essential. Many teachers heard about ECVET, but...

The less good news (but one which proves the importance of ECVET-STEP work) is that the image of ECVET was not all that positive. "Bureaucracy from Brussels" was a frequent verdict.

The National Day increased everyone's motivation for further work. AOC Raad will continue hosting ECVET workshops in schools, while the ECVET-STEP project will continue working on minimizing the perceived costs of adopting ECVET.

...“teachers and mobility coordinators) were convinced that international mobility is important for VET and that recognition of learning results is essential. “...

Take the ECVET step!

This Newsletter's mission is to inform general and professional public about proceedings of the ECVET-STEP project
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ECVET-STEP aims in making the best value of the ECVET system, facilitating the transfer, accumulation and recognition of credits and learning outcomes or competence acquired otherwise between countries, thus promoting mobility and lifelong learning.

ECVET-STEP's mission is to support European citizens and industry to "take the ECVET STEP": adopt and use ECVET through a stepwise, quality-controlled framework and online services for building knowledge-based employment for the 21st century... And beyond!

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Strengthening Training to
Employment Pathways



Lifelong
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