



Evaluation of pilot Peer Reviews (WP 5)

Final Report

Project Europeerguid-RVC

2013-1-PT1-LEO05-15739

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IMPULSE – Research and International Development

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Evaluation Europeerguid-RVC 2015

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Fotos: Project partners

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I. Background and aims of the project Europeerguid-RVC

I.1 European Peer Review

A Peer Review is a form of external assessment that combines internal assessment with external evaluation done by Peers. i.e. "persons of equal standing", who visit the reviewed institution during the evaluation process. Peer Review builds upon the professional expertise and knowledge of Peers and encourages a learning process between Peers and the reviewed institution.

Peer Review as an external evaluation methodology that is rooted in higher education was adopted for use in vocational education and training through three large-scale European projects between 2004 and 2009:

- Peer Review in initial VET (the "mother" of all projects) 2004-2007, AT/04/C/F/TH-82000,
- Peer Review Extended (2007), LE-78CQAF, EAC/32/06/13
- Peer Review Extended II (2007-2009), LLP-LdV/TOI/2007/AT/0011.

The first round of projects was complemented by Peer Review Impact (2009-2011, 2009-1-FI1-LEO05-01584). This project evaluated the institutional follow-up and effect of the pilot Peer reviews in the first three projects (i.e. the 4th phase of the Peer Review) and developed guidelines on how to ensure the impact of Peer Review.

During the project Peer Review Extended II, some first attempts were made by SIAE – Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (Andragoški centre Republike Slovenije) to use the European Peer Review procedure also for guidance and counselling in a national setting.

The project EuroPeerGuid (2010-2011, 2010-1-PT1-LEO05-05185) adapted the European Peer Review Manual and the Peer Review Tool-box for use in guidance and counselling in adult vocational education and training (hereafter: guidance and counselling). The quality areas, criteria and indicators for guidance and counselling had to be developed from scratch.

I.2 The project Europeerguid-RVC

The project EuroPeerGuid-RVC is based on the results of the four previous projects: "Peer Review in initial VET", "Peer Review Extended", "Peer Review Extended II" and "EuroPeerGuid". In these projects, the European Peer Review methodology – defined in the "European Peer Review Manual for VET" – was developed and tested within vocational education and training (VET) and guidance and counselling.

The EuroPeerGuid-RVC project gathers 4 European countries – Austria, France, Holland and Portugal (→ For a list of partners please consult the Annex). Several countries have Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competencies RVC in their public systems, but don't use Peer Review as a quality assurance methodology. This project responds to the priorities of the Leonardo Call for 2013, which aims to "develop strategies for lifelong learning and mobility and to encourage cooperation between the worlds of education, training and work".

The main aims of the Europeerguid-RVC project are to

- extend the Peer Review methodology to Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competencies (RVC) having as partners public, semi-public, and private organisations
- establish Peer Review as a complement to the usual quality assessment systems in RVC
- promote professional development of RVC practitioners and
- enhance quality and visibility of RVC provision.

In particular, the project

- investigated the state of application of quality assessment and development systems in RVC in the partner countries and summarised the findings in a report; this was the basis for the elaboration of the “European Manual of Peer review in RVC in VET of adults”
- tested the methodology described in the Manual and in the Toolbox in RVC providers; debated the results of this test with the local networks of the centres and evaluated the results
- assessed the applicability of the methodology to RVC
- disseminated the results of the project to the authorities and RVC providers in the partner countries, in other European countries and internationally.

The Europeerguid-RVC aims at the following target groups:

- Guidance Centres with Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competencies RVC
- RVC Professionals
- National and local authorities and decision-makers concerned with RVC
- European Networks.

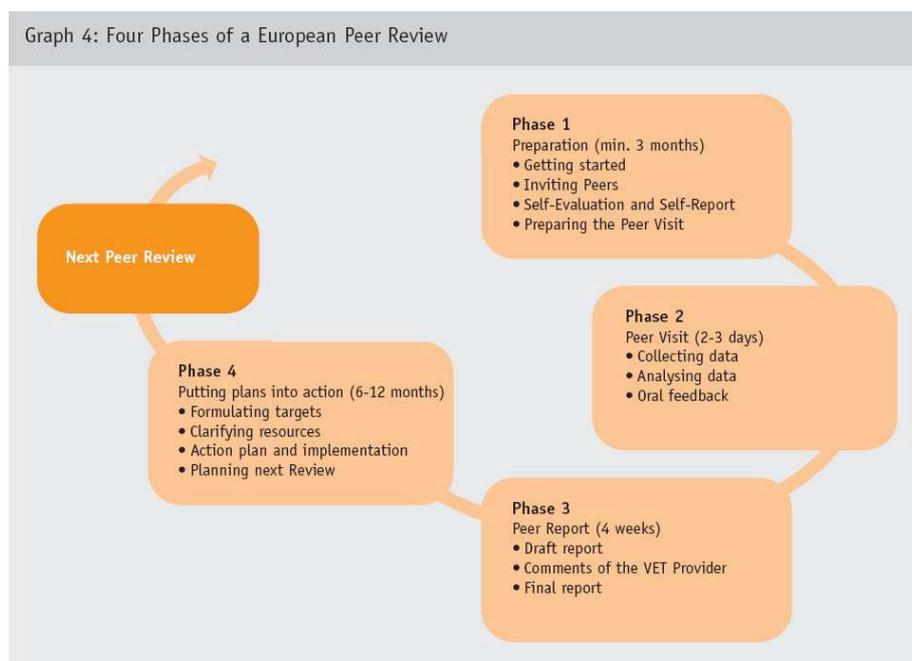
II. Aims, topics and methods of the evaluation

II. 1 Aims and evaluation questions

The main aim of the evaluation was to appraise the feasibility and suitability of the use of the European Peer Review procedure in RVC with a view to possible expansion to other RVC institutions. In addition, the added value of Peer Review for Peers and the institutions involved was assessed.

The process evaluation concentrated on the six pilot Peer Reviews. It followed the phases of the Peer Review as described in the Manual.

Graph 1: Phases of the European Peer Review



Source: European Peer Review Manual for Vocational Education and Training

Assessing the success of the transfer of Peer Review to RVC was the *summative part of the evaluation*. Apart from the main evaluation questions, implementation fidelity in terms of adherence to the procedure as laid down in the manual, the toolbox, the training programme and other pertaining documents had to be checked.

Additionally, since project development was still under way during experimentation, the evaluation also followed a *formative approach*: It strived to discover new elements in the pilot implementation and to give recommendations for further improvement.

Evaluation questions were:

- Is the Peer Review methodology suitable for RVC?
- Did the pilots comply with the process described in the Manual? If not, why?
- How can the Peer Review methodology be improved and fine-tuned to RVC?
- Is the Manual practical and user friendly? How can the Manual be improved according to the perspectives of different users, i.e. facilitators, Peers, RVC providers?
 - Should the Manual be more specific? Or should it be more flexible?
- Is the training programme appropriate? How well prepared did the Peers feel? What kind of adjustments is needed?

- Was the European training useful and sufficient?
- What were the benefits of the European vs. the national training? How did they fit together?
- Are the quality areas and indicators suitable for RVC providers? If not, how could they be improved?
- What kind of impact did the Peer Reviews have on the institutions and on the Peers?

II. 2 Design and methods

The evaluation included an expert analysis of process and results as well as feedback from stakeholders involved. It followed a mixed-method design with a triangulation of different stakeholders, sources and methods including both quantitative and qualitative elements. A wide range of data and sources were used:

Monitoring data on the pilot Peer Reviews

- Peer Review database: overview of pilot Peer Reviews
- Peer applications (online application open March - Aug. 2015)
- Peer database containing all information from Peer applications
- Information on national and European training: Training programme in English (aims, contents, agenda/schedule, methods), list of participants
- Peer Review documents (Tool-box)
 - Self-reports
 - Peer Review Agenda
 - Meta-evaluation of Peers
 - Peer Review Report
 - Other documentation of Peer Review, if possible: presentations, documentation of feedback session, interview and observation guidelines, interview protocols, photos

Online questionnaires for participants in pilot Peer Reviews

From July to August 2015 an online survey (using LimeSurvey) was conducted encompassing quantitative and qualitative questions. They included questionnaires for

- Peers and
- RVC providers (Peer Review facilitators/coordinators, managers of reviewed centres).

Participants were directly invited to participate.

A survey of interviewed counsellors and other staff from RVC providers could not be conducted because only one pilot site furnished the necessary contact details.

II. 3 Available documentation and response rates

The evaluation was due to be conducted between April and June 2015. Due to delays in the pilot phase (see chapter III), the evaluation had to be postponed to July and August 2015.

Database and documentation

The documentation of the Peer Reviews and the establishment of a pilot database should have supported the planning, monitoring and steering of the pilot Peer Reviews. The documentation was only available very late in the process, so it could not be used for monitoring, coordinating and supporting the Peer Reviews.

Documentation of the pilot phase is also an important pillar for the evaluation. All through summer, missing information and documents were gleaned from partners in a joint effort by WP4 (pilot phase) and WP5 (evaluation) leaders. By the end of August 2015, monitoring data (database, peer

applications) and process documentation on the Peer Reviews (documents) were by and large available. The most important items of process documentation existed (self-reports, agendas) and could be used for the evaluation. Information in the pilot database was checked and verified again by the evaluation against documents and survey data in order to correct inaccurate and misleading data. Given the low survey response rates (see below), the evaluation relied heavily on an expert analysis of monitoring data and documents.

Table 2: Overview of documents delivered by RVC providers

Code	Initial information sheet	Self report	Agenda for Peer Visit	Other documentation Peer Visit	Meta evaluation of Peers	Peer Review Report	Photos from Peer Review	Peer Applications	Sub-contracts
15_01_PT	--	PT	PT	--	PT	EN	--	EN	--
15_02_PT	--	PT	PT	--	PT	EN	--	EN	--
15_03_PT	--	PT	PT	--	PT	EN	--	EN	--
15_04_NL	EN	NL	EN	ample	NL	--	--	partly	partly
15_05_NL	EN	NL	EN	ample	NL	EN	--	partly	partly
15_06_FR	EN	EN	EN	--	--	FR	--	EN	--

Source: Europeerguid-RVC pilot database; "Other documentation" in the Dutch Peer Reviews also included Interview guidelines

PT: Portuguese, NL: Dutch, FR: French

Many documents were in languages other than English – for the Portuguese and French documents also versions of the forms in the Tool-box in these languages exist. The Dutch report forms were English but partly filled in in Dutch. Dutch Peers also used the planning tool provided during the European training (see below). Almost all Peer Review Reports were done in/translated into English. Unfortunately, the meta-evaluation of the Peers were done in the mother tongues and could therefore not fully be used. All English documents and all agendas (whatever the language) were used.

Online questionnaires

The questionnaires were online from July 4, 2015 to August 31, 2015. Response rates for both the questionnaires for RVC providers and Peers were low. Just five out of ten Peers responded (50%). Only one third of the Peers from Portugal answered the questionnaire. None of the RVC providers from Portugal responded to the questionnaire. One person from the Netherlands answered both questionnaires as s/he worked in multiple roles.

Table 3: Survey responses

<i>Country</i>	<i>RVC providers</i>		<i>Peers</i>	
	<i>total number</i>	<i>responses</i>	<i>total number</i>	<i>responses</i>
Portugal (PT)	3	0	5	2
Netherlands (NL)	2	1	3	2
France (FR)	1	1	2	1
Total	6	2	10	5

Source: Europeerguid-RVC online survey of RVC providers and Peers

Note: The figure in brackets is the total number of questionnaires sent out for that country

Two of the Peers, one from Portugal and one from the Netherlands, were involved in 2 Peer Reviews, this is why the total number of persons invited to participation in the survey was 10 instead of 12.

All in all, three direct reminders were sent to respondents via LimeSurvey during the online period. In addition, emails were sent about twice a week during August to respondents and to people (presumably) responsible for the pilot phase. Individual support was given to respondents and the deadline was extended twice to encourage participation.

The low response rate is a limitation to the validity of the findings from the surveys.

III. Peer Review Pilots

III.1 Organisation of pilots

Organisational structure

The partner responsible for the management of the pilot phase was Fundação Alentejo (leader WP4), testing partners originally were:

- Escola Profissional de Rio Maior
- Escola Profissional de Salvaterra de Magos - Instituto de Educação e Formação do Sorraia, Lda
- Escola Secundária de Peniche
- CIBC Bourgogne Sud
- ErikKaemink C.V.

General management and support lay with the project coordinator. WP5 leader IMPULSE was responsible for preparing the evaluation.

An online platform (Podio) was installed for the project and managed by ErikKaemink C.V. It was not widely used in the pilot phase since finding material as well as uploading/downloading documents was not as easy as the partners had expected. IMPULSE provided a Dropbox folder for sharing training material which was then also used to collect information on the pilot phase.

During the pilot phase it became apparent that two additional Dutch institutions would be sought to test the Peer Review with help of partner ErikKaemink C.V. Apparently also the French partner was looking for another institution to conduct the Peer Review with. One of the Portuguese testing partners had been replaced before the pilot phase. For the final list of piloting institutions see Table 2.

The structure of support for national testing and the responsibilities and tasks of partners could have been better clarified. A proposal for “ways of cooperation” was made by the evaluator, but the communication between partners remained fragmented. This was due to a missing overall agreement on communication procedures but also induced by the complex division of labour between partners in the pilot phase. There was very little direct communication between partners, at least in terms of coordination on the European level. The “coordinating” role as recommended in the Manual was only partly fulfilled; especially in the preparation phase for the pilots and in the constant monitoring of progress, a stronger coordination would have helped the piloting partners and the evaluation.

Process

The pilots in the project Europeerguid RVC were scheduled for January – March 2015. The necessary material – the Manual and the Tool-box – was finalised in the third transnational meeting at the beginning of January 2015.

A detailed process description had been drawn up in advance by the evaluator who recommended to start preparation ahead of time, since according to experiences of the past 10 years at least 6 months are needed to complete a pilot phase. Due to the fragmented communication during the pilot phase, it is not entirely clear how much the process description was used by the people involved.

Training preceded the pilot Peer Reviews: A European Peer Training was held on Jan 19-21, 2015 in Vienna, national trainings followed (cf. III.6) The toolbox was available sometime in January/February 2015 and the online peer application tool at the beginning of March 2015. Monitoring activities did not start before the final stages which was sufficient for the evaluation but precluded using monitoring information to steer and support the pilot phase.

III. 2 Participation in Peer Review pilots

The following overview shows the participating institutions and the timetable for the Peer Reviews:

Table 4: Participating RVC providers

<i>Code</i>	<i>RVC provider</i>	<i>Date</i>
15_01_PT	Rio Maior Professional School	April 1-2, 2015
15_02_PT	Salvaterra de Magos Professional School - Institute of Education and Training Sorraia, Lda.	February 16-17, 2015
15_03_PT	CEARTE-Vocational Training Centre for Craft sector	April 13-14, 2015
15_04_NL	VIGOR Centre for RVC	April 26, 2015
15_05_NL	Libereaux Centre for RVC	April 16, 2015
15_06_FR	CIBC Bourgogne Sud	August 10-11, 2015

Source: Europeerguid-RVC pilot database

The Peer Reviews were carried out in Portugal, the Netherlands and France. The Dutch Peer Reviews had one-day-visits, the others took 1.5 to 2 days.

Due to the late start of the pilot phase, only one Peer Review observed the March deadline. 4 Peer Reviews took place in April. The French Peer Review was carried out in the partner organisation and postponed to August since an earlier attempt to conduct it in another centre had failed.

One Peer Review was conducted in a team of three Peers (whereby one of them was a guest from another institution and not a “real” Peer), the other five in groups of two. Two Peers participated in two Peer Reviews, all others in one.

In France the Peers came from an RVC provider within the same network of RVC providers.

The Dutch Peer Reviews were (partly) mutual Peer Reviews with one Peer coming from the respective other RVC Provider, in the Portuguese Peer Reviews partner institutions sent Peers, though there was no systematic exchange of Peers (the institutions themselves ticked “single” Peer Review). The French Peer Review was a “single” Peer Review.

None of the Peer Reviews was carried out in a transnational manner, i.e. with one Peer coming from another country. However, three of the five Peers who answered the questionnaire showed an interest in participating in transnational Peer Reviews.

III.2.1 Short description of participating RVC providers

The following short descriptions of the institutions paraphrase or quote descriptions given in the Peer Review reports or other documentation provided by the RVC providers.

Escola Profissional de Rio Maior (EPRM)/Rio Maior Professional School annually offers 11 professional courses of a duration of three years to 257 students. The main reason for the creation of the school in 1992 was “to respond to problems faced by companies in the region regarding the level of intermediate technical staff.” The Initial Training of Young is the main focus of EPRM. The school has a strong connection with the local business sector (industrial and agricultural) as well as the municipalities that build the majority of the board.

Escola Profissional de Salvaterra de Magos/Salaterra de Magos Professional School was established in 1990. The main purpose was to contribute to the socio-economic development of the region through training of highly qualified intermediate technical staff. “The School is for those seeking a qualification in order to pursue their studies and/or a transition/conversion to the labour market. The Centre is also geared to respond to citizens with disabilities and incapacities in order to ensure their integration into active and professional life. Young people under the age of 15 or, regardless of age, attending the last grade of primary school and adults aged over 18 years, with needs of developing and strengthening knowledge and skills are direct beneficiaries of CQEP.¹”

CEARTE - Centro de Formação Profissional do Artesanato/Vocational training Crafts centre CEARTE “is a centre to support young people and adults (active and unemployed) in the selection and monitoring of a personal project of academic and vocational qualifications for (re) integration into the labour market and / or professional development. [...] The CQEP² aims to be the response in identifying concrete needs of qualification and finding solutions in education / vocational training through information, disclosure, orientation and guidance for young people and adults and the development of RVCC PRO and intended for artisans.”

VIGOR Centre for RVC is a centre for the Valuation of Prior Learning (VPL). “VPL Centre Vigor positions the skills, attitudes and knowledge of its VPL-clients in an outside-in manner, from the perspective of their stakeholders. VIGOR offers the following services: Validation of prior learning, Supra Professional competences, Vocational competences, Competence rating, Career prospect, Consultancy on talent management. VIGOR is co-developer of the Dutch qualifications framework.”

Libereaux Centre for RVC “is a company with a focus on labour mobility. It motivates employees to take responsibility of their own career. It facilitates them through the execution of VPL-procedures (validation of Prior Learning) and the use of an e-portfolio. Furthermore it develops educational content for in company educational programmes. Libereaux has over four years of experience in the field of VPL and is one of the market leaders in The Netherlands.”

CIBC Bourgogne Sud “was created within the frame of experimentation of the competence-based career guidance methodology in France in 1986. CIBC Bourgogne Sud is a well-known actor of public policies for employment and guidance for labour insertion. Since 1995, CIBC Bourgogne Sud has been directly involved in transferring methodologies and/or creating centres of guidance either for EU or non-EU partners. CIBC Bourgogne Sud is an information and counselling contact point for VAE (Point Relais Conseil VAE / PRC-VAE) - a local organisation dedicated to counselling and information on the VAE.³”

¹ Centro de Qualificação e Ensino Profissional, english: Centre for qualification and vocational training. – CQEP are part of the National Qualification System and bridge education, training and the economy. More details at <http://cqep.anqep.gov.pt/cqep.html>.

² See Footnote 1.

³ VAE = validation des acquis de l'expérience, engl. RVC.

III. 3 Aims and purposes of the pilot Peer Reviews

The involved RVC providers reported the following aims and purposes of the Peer Review process for their institutions (cf. esp. self-reports):

Institutional aims and purposes

- receive advice and an external view from Peers
- detect strengths and weaknesses as well as identifying improvement actions
- engage in mutual learning and discovering/sharing good practice with Peers
- provide an enabling environment for the Peer Review process for the involved stakeholders
- establish cooperation networks with other RVC providers
- promote the creation of internal organisational mechanisms to facilitate the technical integration and practice of results from participation in the project.

Europeerguid-RVC aims

- test the European Method of Peer Review in the field of validation of competencies
- promote the applicability of Europeerguid-RVC project recommendations for the chosen quality areas
- ensure the knowledge transfer of the Europeerguid-RVC project to internal and external stakeholders
- increase the transparency and comparability of quality in RVC.

In the Dutch “Initial Information sheets” the aims of the Peer Review as formulated in the Manual were provided to choose from and tick, whereas the original intention of this question in the initial information sheet and the self-report was for the reviewed institutions to formulate and document their own goals for the Peer Review.

III. 4 Quality Areas

In all pilot Peer Reviews, the European Quality Areas were used. As recommended in the Manual all pilots reviewed two quality areas.

Except for one case, all Peer Reviews also covered one “core” quality area (i.e. one of QAs 1, 2, 3, 4) and one optional quality area. Quality area 7 (Staff) and quality area 10 (Evaluation) were not chosen by any institution. All other quality areas, and esp. all core quality areas, were selected by one or two institutions. This constitutes a good coverage of the quality areas given the limited number of Peer Reviews carried out.

All but one reviewed institution took advantage of the possibility to pose special evaluation questions to the Peers, in some instances those were one or two short and concise questions, in other self-reports a list of very detailed questions was put to the Peers.

Table 5: Quality areas chosen

Code	No. of QAs	QA 1 Attracting	QA 2 Guidance	QA 3 Recognition	QA 4 Validation	QA 5 Results	QA 6 Organisation	QA 7 Staff	QA 8 Partnership	QA 9 Resources	QA 10 Evaluation	Special evaluation questions
15_01_PT	2					1			1			?
15_02_PT	2		1							1		?
15_03_PT	2			1	1							-
15_04_NL	2	1					1					?
15_05_NL	2		1				1					?
15_06_FR	2			1	1							?
Total		1	2	2	2	1	2	0	1	1	0	

Source: Europeerguid-RVC pilot database

III. 5 Peers – application, selection and background

Online applications

In total 22 people applied online as Peers, 13 women and 9 men. The majority were from Portugal (16), 4 from France and 2 from the Netherlands with varying institutional backgrounds. One third of the applicants (8) came from RVC providers, another 6 from vocational education and 4 from schools (general education), 73% with experience in RVC. (→ *For more details on Peer Applicants, see tables in Annex*).

Active Peers

Ten Peers became active during the pilot Peer Reviews: 5 from Portugal, 2 from France and 3 from Netherlands. One of them did not submit an online peer application, one was only partly filled out.⁴

The table below shows the different institutional backgrounds of the selected Peers:

Table 6: Institutional backgrounds of Peers

Type of institution	No. of Peers
RVC provider	3
Guidance centre	1
School (general education)	2
Higher education/ research institution	1
Non-profit organisation	1
Consulting firm	1
Total	9

(→ *For more details on profiles of selected Peers, see tables in Annex*)

⁴ Two Peers filled out the application form twice, but with differing information in some parts so that not all parts of the applications could be used for analysis.

Six of the nine Peers had prior experience in Peer Review or evaluation according to the information in the peer application. All but one had ample experience in RVC, with years of experience ranging from 5 to 15 years. Evaluation/review expertise was not so widespread: only 3 Peers had prior experience in this area. Two Peer Reviews were thus carried out with a team of Peers with expertise in evaluation, all other did not have this expertise. Four Peers had experienced a review of their own institution, this makes three Peer Reviews with a team of Peers with some (active or passive) experience in review work.

III. 6 Trainings and preparatory meetings

III.6.1 Trainings and preparatory meetings held

European Peer Training

From 19-21 January 2015 a European Peer Review training with seven participants was held in Vienna. It followed the European Peer Training curriculum that had been developed in an earlier project and had subsequently been adapted to RVC.



European Peer Training Vienna, Jan 19-21, 2015

During project implementation it became apparent that not the Peers would be trained directly, but people from the project who in turn would train national Peers. So a Peer Training cum Train-the-Trainers programme was required. Yet, the training duration of two days was the minimum for peer trainings and there was not extra time for a sound training of trainers. In addition, the participants did not meet the specified requirements for becoming a trainer (expertise in Peer Review, personal experience of at least one Peer Review prior to training). The Manual was available only at the training date and the tool-box was not yet ready to be used during training. Trainer and participants tried

to make the best of the situation. Aspects of training national Peers were discussed in the last part of the training.

Since none of the active Peers had attended the European training, no feedback on the training could be gleaned through the Peer survey.⁵ There is information regarding the satisfaction with the training in Vienna from one RVC provider. For these participants the training was very helpful in “getting to know the fundamental Peer review principles in details and being able to transmit them to others”. They imparted what they learned to their colleagues. A detailed agenda, a powerpoint presentation and other material was made available for the national trainings (on Dropbox, see above).

National Training in Portugal

The national training in Portugal was carried out with 22 participants on February 2-3, 2015. The training is fully documented. All Portuguese Peers took part in this training.

The training followed the European format both in terms of contents and methods. Every participant had the possibility to take on several roles and to learn by doing. The access to the Peer Review Manual and Toolbox prior to the training session contributed to a successful training. According to the documentation at the end of the training all participants showed their motivation to apply the Peer Review methodology at national level in the RVC context.



National Peer Training Portugal, Paço de Arcos, February 2-3, 2015

National Training in the Netherlands and France

No documentation regarding the trainings in France and Netherlands was available. In the RVC providers reports, national trainings are mentioned. In the Netherlands, the Dutch participant in the European training provided some training for the two facilitators of the Dutch RVC centres, who also acted as Peers for each other. The trainer “explained the process behind peer review and together we filled in some of the necessary forms. It was good to learn about the principles of peer review.”

⁵ One European training participant was subsequently involved in Peer Reviews as “evaluation expert” but did not fill out the questionnaire, perhaps wrongly assuming the evaluation expert is not part of the Peer Team.

III.6.2 Feedback from RVC providers and Peers

Feedback available on support during preparatory phase

Three Peers (two from Portugal, one from the Netherlands) said they participated in a national training provided in the project Europeerguid-RVC, one (the Netherlands) did a training with an education and HR consultant, one (France) had no training at all.

Those who participated in national trainings or a preparatory meeting considered them very helpful (2 answers) or helpful (1 answer). They pointed out the importance of the training/preparatory meetings for understanding the methodology and for immediate preparation of the Peer Review: One participant appreciated the support for the choice of quality areas as well as questions and instruments: “during the training we chose our quality areas and we defined some of the questions and instruments”. For another participant the training was “very important to understand the general principles of this methodology and to share ideas among stakeholders”. Besides some time pressure, which apparently had to do with the particular setting for the training, those who responded did not mention any issues to be changed concerning training and preparation.

Both of the RVC providers who responded to the questionnaire received extra support from within the project. One facilitator was trained (together with the facilitator from the other piloting institution in the country) by a person who had received European training (and subsequently also participated in two Peer Reviews, 15_04_NL, 15_05_NL). The training was helpful to “learn about the principles of Peer review”.

Level of preparation of RVC providers and Peers

Of those who responded to the survey, one RVC provider felt well prepared for the Peer Review, the other one very well prepared.

The same answer was given for the Peers who participated in the online survey. Four out of five Peer respondents felt that they were well prepared, one even very well. Three of five participated in a national training, including the one who felt very well prepared for the Peer Review. One respondent from an RVC provider answered that s/he had the impression that the Peers were very well prepared, for the other they were well prepared.

Recommendations for future Peer Trainings

Only two Peers answered the questions regarding the national training in the survey. One wrote that nothing was missing, but made a comment concerning the training programme: “A lot of information about ‘Peer review’ wasn’t new. A lot of aspects are also known in RVC.” Another Peer asked to dedicate more time “on content (and shorten procedural issues)”.

Due to the low response rate no general conclusions can be drawn from this feedback. Looking at details and reported experiences from the pilot Peer Reviews, it is however doubtful if training programmes can be shortened, since some important basic information and principles of the methodology had obviously not been imparted. More than 10 years of experience with Peer Review has shown that reducing treatment of procedural issues in preparation usually leads to problems during implementation. In addition, RVC (esp. the assessment part) and institutional external evaluation may have some similarities, but do not constitute the same type of evaluation.

III. 7 Preparation of the Peer Review (Phase 1)

III.7.1 Preparation of the RVC Providers

The documents provided do not give comprehensive information on how RVC providers prepared for the process. From the survey we know that one RVC provider felt very well prepared for the Peer Review and the other one well prepared after the training they participated in (see above).

From those who responded to the questionnaire we received some information on the internal preparation: In one case the Peer Facilitator informed all involved staff about the forthcoming Peer Review. However, no details of the kind and extent of information are known. In the other case an email was sent around to the staff and a preparatory meeting with director, counsellor and quality manager was organised.

III.7.2 Self-Report

The self-reports followed the given format. They were very concise, additional information was annexed. Judging from the available documentation there were obviously no problems in completing the reports. The Peers who answered the questionnaire considered the self-report a good basis for starting the Peer Review process (5 of 5 respondents). It was comprehensible and provided all the necessary information.

III.7.3 Preparation in the Peer Teams

The respondents did not give a full description of the whole process. However, in those cases where we have information from the survey, the Peers read the self-reports and at least in two cases, they read also all other documents provided by the RVC Provider (Annual plans or reports, Annual Training plans, Quality manuals, etc.). Peers engaged in a fair amount of email communication prior to the pre-meeting of the Peers res. the Peer Visit; meeting in person before the visit was not possible in all pilot Peer Reviews. Peers worked together mostly through email and skype.

For five of the six Peer Reviews we also know that the Peers had some preparatory time together, in at least three cases also face-to-face and directly before the Peer Visit.

The preparatory meeting was important for the Peers to define a common strategy. One Peer Team defined the quality areas and indicators during the training, developed some questions and instruments and discussed the feasibility and relevance with the RVC provider present at the training.

Overall, too little is known about the preparation in the Peer Teams to draw conclusions.

III. 8 Peer Visit (Phase 2)

III.8.1 Agenda

The structuring of the agendas of the Peer Visits largely followed the recommendations of the Peer Review Manual, most adapted the model agenda from the Tool-box. The following analysis draws on the agendas used for the Peer Reviews.

The Peer Visits varied in length and intensity: Three Peer Reviews took 2 full days, one 1.5 days and two only 1 day. Most had a very full schedule with 4 to 5 data collection sessions per day. This is the maximum from an expert point of view. Only one Peer Review had a “lighter touch” with 5 sessions in two days and a whole day for analysis and preparation of the feedback.

Overall, Peers and facilitators managed very well to include all important stakeholders. Only in one Peer Review (15_03_PT) management/coordinators were not interviewed, an omission that does not seem warranted by the quality areas chosen. However, in this Peer Review a maximum number of sessions with RVC professionals – counsellors, assessors, trainers – was conducted. In another Peer Review it is not clear how “people results” could be covered without talking to counsellors or other staff (15_01_PT).

The main interview groups were RVC professionals and managers/coordinators. The “other stakeholders” (15_01_PT) were e.g. representatives of an entrepreneur association, of a company, and other RVC professionals. Candidates or former candidates were only involved in 3 Peer Reviews. This is clearly not satisfactory, given that candidates are the primary beneficiaries who should always be included in the Peer Review. This was also recognised by the RVC providers who responded to the survey and who said that candidates were not fully represented in the Preview Process. In one case

they were not at all represented. For one RVC provider who stated a sufficient, but not full representation of the candidates, the reason was that it was “difficult to persuade them to participate”. For the RVC provider who did not include them at all it is not clear from the data if this was a deliberate decision or if there were other reasons for it. Including candidates seems a key point which in future Peer Reviews should be highlighted during preparation and also supported by a coordinating body (if existent).

Table 7: Peer Visit Agendas: Number of sessions, number of interviews with different interview groups

Peer Visit	N° of interviews									Observations	Tour premises	Document analysis	Total n° of sessions	Overall time for analysis (hours)	Quality Areas
	Code	Duration days	Preparation days	Management/coordinators	Counsellors/Assessors (Trainers)	Candidates	Former candidates	Other stakeholder	Other staff						
15_01_PT	2	0.25	1			1	2		4		1		5	6	5 ; 8
15_02_PT	2	0.5	1	2	1	1			5	2	1		8	5.5	2 ; 9
15_03_PT	1.5	0.5		6					6		2		8	3.5	3 ; 4
15_04_NL*	1	0.25	1	2				2	4		1		5	3	1 ; 6
15_05_NL*	1	0.3	2	2				1	4		1		5	2.8	2 ; 6
15_06_FR	2	0.5	2	2		1			5	2	1	1	9	2	3 ; 4
Average	1.6	0.4	1.2	2.3	0.2	0.5	0.3	0.5	4.7	0.7	1.2	0.2	6.7	3.8	2

Source: Europeerguid-RVC pilot database, information from pilot documentation, esp. Agendas, Reports

*One interview was a mixed group

The most frequent data collection method was interviews. Yet, contrary to the typical focus group interviews in Peer Review, these were mostly interviews with only one person. There is no information why almost no group interviews were conducted. One explanation could be the limited personnel of RVC providers and the effort involved in organising candidates. In one Peer Review this meant that overall only 4 people were interviewed. While a qualitative evaluation does not require “large numbers”, the sample of interviewees should be representative of the respective stakeholder group (see Manual). For candidates and other larger stakeholder groups, one interviewee cannot cover the breadth of experiences of the group. This was also recognised by one of the Peers in his/her feedback.

In two Peer Visits observations of guidance processes were included which is rather rare in these kinds of Peer Reviews. In one Peer Visit, also documents were reviewed on site, this is quite unusual for a Peer Review – but not without merits in terms of triangulation and validation of findings. Unfortunately, there is no focused feedback on how these two elements – the observations and the document analysis – “worked” in the Peer Review and what their added value was.

From an expert point of view, the time allotted to analysis in the Peer Team was comparably very (too?) short in all but one of the Peer Visits where, however, analysis was condensed in the second day and no analysis was carried out right after the interviews. Alteration between data collection and immediate analysis was practised in all other Peer Reviews. In two Peer Reviews lunchtime was also used for internal analysis⁶. In one two-day Peer Visit no analysis of the first day was conducted at the end of the first day. The one-day Peer Reviews were under special time pressure concerning analysis and preparation of feedback, but also in other Peer Reviews there was no time reserved for an in-depth analysis and time for preparation of the feedback was extremely limited. Again, there is no information on the effect the very reduced time for analysis had for the Peers, the process and its

⁶ It is not realistic that analysis would proceed fully during lunch. Hence half an hour was deducted from analysis time to calculate the “overall time for analysis” (see Table 7).

results. From past experiences with Peer Review, durations of at least 1.5 days are advisable as well as sufficient time for common analysis at the end of the first day and before the feedback session (at least 1.5 – 2 hours to prepare the feedback).

The proposal to make enough time for analysis in the Peer Team is also supported by the little feedback we have from RVC providers and Peers: The agenda was considered by RVC providers as an important guideline. The Peer Visits were conducted with only minor changes to the agenda, like the order of the interviews. However, suggestions have been made by Peers to leave more space for Peer discussions.

Most of the Peers who answered the questionnaire (3 of 5 respondents) felt under some time pressure during the Peer visits, not surprisingly especially those who did it in only one day. Peer Visits are always under a tight schedule, so this is in itself is nothing unusual. The question is whether one-day Visits actually are too short for a sound review of two quality areas. In one of the Dutch meta-evaluations the Peers state that one day for two quality areas and 4 criteria is very tight (“1 dag voor 2 QA en 4 criteria is erg krap”). In previous Peer Review pilots the experience had been that Peer Visits should not be overburdened and realistic planning is also recommended in the Manual. For future Peer Reviews in RVC the balance between time available and the number of Quality Areas should be observed. This also means that the current provision in the ready-to-test Manual for RVC to allow one-day Peer Visits needs to be revised.

III.8.2 Experiences during Peer Visits

Time pressure also seems to have had effects on the data collection. Some Peers reported that they had to rush or skip topics – this should not happen in an ideal Peer Review since it may reduce the quality of the results. It can be attributed to planning (too many questions per interview in the first place) or to the way the interview was conducted (not keeping focus, not managing the interview properly). Thus careful and realistic preparation can help on the one hand. Since, on the other hand, interviews can never be completely planned and controlled, it is also advisable to plan longer interviews or time buffers between interviews in order to prevent “rushing and skipping topics” (cf. Manual IV.5.4).

One Peer suggested reserving more interview time as it is necessary to create trust at the beginning of the interview. This can only be underlined from the part of the expert analysis.

In one case the facilitator was present in the same room when the Peer Team discussed first findings. This made the Peers feel uncomfortable as one Peer pointed out. S/he experienced “this [the presence of the facilitator] as less effective for generating ideas. In some way you are limited and don't feel 'free to speak'.” This practice is clearly antithetic to the European Peer Review methodology as an external evaluation and points to an implementation problem (cf. also the clear provision in VIII.9 in the Manual).

One Peer stressed the importance of previous Peer Review experience of at least one Peer in the team: “One of the Peers should have previous experience in the methodology to do a better job.”

Not only the experience with the methodology is important, but Peers must also know the quality areas in order to be able to ask the right questions. One statement underlined the importance of the Peers to be familiar with the quality areas in order to enhance the relevance of the Peer Review: “It's important to keep emphasising that it is important that the Peers are familiar with the chosen quality area. If the Peers aren't familiar with the subject, you see that the follow-up questions aren't that relevant.”

These two statements underscore the importance of current quality standards for Peer Teams and the preparation of the Peer Visits as specified in the Manual.

III. 9 Peer Review Report (Phase 3)

III.9.1 Feedback session and usefulness of feedback

According to the two RVC providers who responded the questionnaire the feedback they received from the Peers during the feedback session was useful. One RVC provider summed up the experience: “We heard some new and usable ideas. It was not only the feedback after the visit that was useful. The conducted interviews on its own [...] were also useful to gain information and feedback.”

They did not comment on the usefulness of the feedback in the report as they had not yet received the report at the time of answering the questionnaire.

III.9.2 Timeliness

Timeliness of reporting is an important factor for the usefulness of the report. In at least two cases (i.e. the RVC providers who answered the questionnaire) the Peer Review Report was not known to the RVC providers when they answered the survey questions on the whole Peer Review process. As some questions are directly related to it they could not answer them properly. This rather leads to the conclusion that Peer Review Reports were not always in time.

III. 10 Putting plans into action (Phase 4)

For phase 4, no documentation is available, the following analysis therefore relies solely on the survey responses.

III.10.1 Communication of results

In one RVC provider, one Peer and a quality coordinator were present at the feedback session. The feedback was verbally communicated to the director and the interviewed staff. The other employees were informed through the enterprise social network Yammer, a tool for team collaboration, about the feedback and the follow up.

There was no information available about how the results of the Peer Review Report were communicated as both responding institutions had not yet received the report at the time of answering the questionnaire.

III.10.2 Follow-up

One respondent of the RVC providers answered that the institution will act upon the feedback from the Peer Review. The feedback of the Peers constitutes an input into the institute’s PDCA cycle⁷. In addition, the feedback gave rise to the plan “to write a policy on how to deal with privacy and security of data”.

In the other case the answer on the use of the feedback for improvements was negative without mentioning the reason for that. One possible explanation could be that the negative answer is due to the fact that the respondent had not yet received the Peer Review Report with its results.

III. 11 Effects

From the available data we do not know much about the effects of participation in the Peer Review process on both RVC providers and Peers. In the RVC provider survey the respondents did not report any particular effects on the institution apart from the plans to follow-up from the feedback and Peer Review report. However, one Peer reported that Peer Reviewing could become a standard quality assurance instrument in her/his institution:

“We consider to apply Peer reviewing as a standard quality assurance instrument for our organisation.”

⁷ Plan – Do – Check – Act Cycle, the quality cycle underlying quality management.

IV. Cooperation

The online survey for RVC providers and Peers provide information on the quality of cooperation during the whole Peer Review process.

Cooperation within RVC institutions during preparation and execution of the Peer Review for both respondents was very good.

One respondent reported an initial reservation within the staff regarding the fact that someone from another RVC provider would observe the processes in their institution. When they got more information on the process and learned that they could participate in the decision on what they wished the Peer Team should focus on they became open to the process. In addition, the possibility of cross-Peer reviewing between the two involved institutions (the reviewed one and the institution where the Peers came from) contributed to creating a positive attitude among staff.

How Peers presented themselves and related to the involved stakeholders was important to reduce potential fears as expressed by one respondent in the RVC survey: "It was unusual for them to be evaluated, but the friendly and professional attitude of the Peer was reassuring." (RVC provider)

Cooperation of RVC providers with Peer teams for one RVC provider was very good, for the other it was good. For the latter more time to discuss would have improved the cooperation.

Cooperation with RVC providers as well as within the Peer Teams was considered good or very good by the Peers (2 very good, 2 good, 1 no answer). For the Peers RVC providers were very cooperative in making the Peer Review run smoothly and according to plans. The nomination of a facilitator and the clarity of the roles of the persons involved were considered helpful.

In both reviews [revisions] although it is also the first time for the providers, they have always been available. They gave us all the information we requested without problems or questions. They were involved in the review and concerned that everything was running as expected. (Peer)

Cooperation has always been good, we worked together. The first review [revision] was more difficult because it was a new experience for them, but the second has been easier because I already had experience and could help the other Peer in order to clarify the doubts, especially in how to operationalise the work on the ground. It is always important that at least one has already had previous experience in the methodology. (Peer)

Neither RVC providers nor Peers reported any conflicts or negative experiences in the Peer Review process.

V. Dissemination and valorisation

V. 1 Portugal

The available data of Portuguese RVC providers do not report dissemination and valorisation issues.

V. 2 France

The RVC provider from France is not sure if it will use the Peer Review method again despite showing interest in it. The reason is mainly a financial one:

The approach is certainly interesting, but very expensive (2 days with two Peers). Although the professionals from RVC are eager for this kind of evaluation, financing institutions have difficulties to perceive the added value of the Peer review. We think that there is an opportunity in the state funded network of PRC VAE (Point relais conseil VAE), where we started an interregional cooperation with the CIBC Rhone Alpes. There are possibilities to extend this within the CIBC network in France. (RVC provider)

V. 3 Netherlands

Following the survey answers one RVC provider is planning to use RVC again. The involved institution in the Pilot Peer Reviews informed other RVC providers in the Netherlands about this project. The Peers explained the Peer review procedure; the RVC providers shared the practical experience of the process.

VI. General assessment of Peer Review

The most positive experience of Peer Review for the *RVC providers* was to

- look differently on processes
- create trust
- to get an external view
- to share experiences.

RVC providers would recommend other RVC providers to use Peer Review.

Peers gave similar answers. Here a list of what Peers considered as their strongest and most positive experience:

- mutual learning between the different stakeholders
- see that the same goal can successfully be achieved in various ways
- share experiences
- give suggestions for improvements for the reviewed institution and receive it for the own institution by reflecting on the experience
- contribute to knowledge transfer between own and reviewed institution.

Almost all Peers (4 of 5 respondents, 1 did not answer the question) would suggest other professionals from RVC providers to become Peers. One Peer expressed why s/he would recommend others to become a Peer: "It helps you a lot about being aware of the contexts you work in."

VI. 1 Added value of Peer Review

Peers are very convinced about the added value of Peer Reviews for various reasons:

There are fewer fears of being assessed than with other kinds of assessment. The sharing and learning of approaches and methods between Peers is at the centre:

"Sharing experiences among Peers and providers is much more objective and clearer than other assessments, mainly because all developed similar work, and we break barriers without fear." (Peer)

"You may learn from each others' best practices at one hand and it helps you in fine-tuning your unique selling points on the other hand. Value is added!" (Peer)

For one RVC provider the added value of Peer Review lies in the 'insider position' of the Peer that makes it easier for RVC providers to carry out and accompany Peer Reviews as the Peer is 'one of them' while with an external evaluator or auditor more explanation is needed: "When I compare this to the regular audit we have every year, you don't need to explain so much. Processes and content is clear"; the same person who had the roles of Peer and Peer coordinator continued that a "Peer knows how RVC works, you don't have to explain the basics. The starting point is different. When we have an audit, you always have to explain the basic principles of RVC."

The other respondent positively stressed the different atmosphere and attitude of the involved stakeholders compared to audits:

"It is an evaluation by a friendly expert and the atmosphere is very different compared to audit process - there is a time for discussions and no need to present things in favourable light." (RVC Provider)

VII. Assessment of Manual, Quality Areas and Tool-box for Peer Reviews of RVC and recommendations for finalisation

VII. 1 Manual

There was little direct feedback to the Manual and some of the implementation problems actually suggest that it was not read too closely. The responding RVC Providers were satisfied with the Peer Review Manual which they thought was “very useful” and “complete and [it] covers all important information about the Peer Review”.

Concerning adaptations to the Manual, the pilot phase showed that one-day Peer Visits had very tight schedules with very reduced time for analysis. It should be discussed whether one day as recommended minimum time for a Peer Visit in RVC (cf. Ready-to-Test-Manual for RVC) is advisable or whether this minimum should be expanded to 1.5 days.

There were clearly too few persons involved for certain stakeholder groups in some of the pilot Peer Reviews. Yet, the number of interviewees foreseen for a Peer Review should not be fixed in the Manual. It must remain flexible in order to ensure that the data collection remains appropriate for the scope of the Peer Review and the institutional setting. The Manual stipulates a “representative choice” (IV.2.1), this should be adhered to during the implementation process: What a representative choice means in a given context should be dealt with in the Peer training or also in a preparatory meeting. If a coordinating body exists and fulfils its role, it also could monitor the agendas and the methodological choices (type of data collection, stakeholder groups, number of interviewees) made.

VII. 2 Quality Areas

The Quality Areas and indicators were used successfully during the pilot phase. There were no indications of problems or requests for changes.

One RVC provider from the Netherlands would prefer to use the indicators of the Dutch Quality Code. This can be done in a national Peer Review, where it is usually advisable to refer to the national quality framework (for the relation between the European Quality Areas and national frameworks cf. Manual VII.2). For transnational Peer Reviews a common quality framework is necessary to ensure transparency and support cooperation.

For the other RVC-responder the quality indicators given in the Peer Review Manual were very suitable even for national use.

From the point of view of an expert analysis – also considering similar frameworks and the usability of the quality areas – the Quality Area 5 “Results” should be restructured: It should be renamed to include “outcomes” and should only deal with results and outcomes for the candidate and society. Staff and business results should be moved to the respective Quality Areas (7 and 8). “Society results” would have to be screened to see where individual indicators best fit into (e.g. “number of staff” would be moved to organisation or staff).

Another feedback from the Netherlands pointed out that “the current areas and indicators are very much from the perspective of education. It would be an improvement to look at indicators that would fit our business propositions as 'Live Long Learning', Employability etc.” Since this is a general statement no direct recommendations can follow. It would also be important to know more about the kind of indicators that may be missing since lifelong learning and employability are clearly included in the Quality Areas. It is recommended to collect some concrete feedback on this before making decisions on whether to include additional indicators or not.

VII. 3 Tool-box

The documentation of the pilot phase showed that all forms provided in the Tool-box could be filled out and were used successfully.

Two out of five Peers made comments on the satisfaction with the Tool-box. They criticised the amount of information to be filled in which seemed partly redundant to them. Concerning the self-report one Peer suggested that the report should only give a short written introduction and that verbal information given by the RVC provider at the beginning of the process is fundamental: "They [the self-report] could be less elaborate. During the Peer visit you'll need some time to learn about the processes of the RVC provider. The self-report can (of course) help a little but a verbal explanation is always needed. In my opinion, the self-report should be a short introduction." Thus there was also a suggestion of reducing the amount of documents in the Toolbox by merging some forms. Another Peer underlined this general impression of being "too much". The same Peer suggested the creation of "a database to prevent typing redundant information".

While it is true that during the whole process additional questions arise and the self-report usually needs to be complemented by some additional, often verbal information by the reviewed institution (there should be some time reserved for this according to the Manual), the self-report cannot be replaced by a "short introduction" (whatever this introduction would look like). This would run counter to the European Peer Review methodology which foresees a prior self-evaluation and assessment of the chosen quality areas by the reviewed institution as a first step. Documentation therefore is necessary to ensure that this self-evaluation/assessment can be used by the Peers. There are also other reasons for providing a self-report: Without it, a tailored Peer Review cannot be prepared in advance and the Peer Review itself would take longer. It would also curtail synergies between internal and external evaluation and jeopardise transparency of the process. Documentation is an important part of quality assurance of the Peer Review itself. Merging of forms is not possible because they document different stages of the process.

During years of experimentation and revision of all forms, a balance was struck between documentation needs and an approach that would not burden institutions and Peers inappropriately. The three main forms were designed in a way that the most important facts concerning the Peer Review would only need to be copied and pasted from one form to the next (with slight adaptations if necessary). This is also explained in the forms itself and there has not been any critical feedback concerning documentation in previous pilot Peer Reviews.

Obviously the underlying quality principles requiring documentation were not clear to all Peers and RVC providers involved. On a practical level perhaps the possibility of copying and pasting was overlooked.

VIII. General conclusions and recommendations

Successful transfer to RVC and added value of Peer Review

The European Peer Review has successfully been transferred to RVC. It “works” very well. It is suitable and feasible and provides the same added value as in other sectors: the friendly and non-threatening atmosphere, the “insider position” of the external Peers and the knowledge and experience they bring to the process as well as the opportunity for mutual learning. The benefits of the procedure depend on the quality of the evaluation process. This is set out in the European Peer Review Manual, which needs to be followed.

Strong coordination necessary for implementation in a network

The pilot Peer Reviews have shown that communication between partners is pivotal for a joint implementation in a partner network. Organisation in a larger network requires an active coordinating body as asked for in the European Peer Review Manual. The coordinating body should

- manage the whole process of conducting the Peer Reviews,
- ensure a coherent approach,
- provide support and guidance to Providers and Peers,
- check implementation fidelity
- conduct constant monitoring
- and support evaluation.

Coherent training for Peers, longer training for Peer Trainers

The European Peer Review procedure is designed as a useful and friendly but also rigorous external evaluation. Knowledge of the procedure must thus be ensured. All participants (Peers, Providers) must be familiar with the Manual, the Quality Areas and the Tool-box.

- Training(s) must be better coordinated and a coherent approach ensured.
- If possible, trainings should be used to prepare the Peer Reviews and also work hands-on with the Quality Areas and indicators.
- So far, there assumption that RVC professionals as experienced evaluators need less training in Peer Review has not proved true in practice. This should be investigated further in the next project.
- If Peer Trainers are trained, trainings must be longer and a special section developed which covers didactical and methodological issues. If possible, a Train-the-trainer programme should be developed for Peer Trainers. As stipulated in the European Peer Training programme, experience in Peer Review as a Peer should be a prerequisite for attending a Train-the-trainer programme.
- Some kind of training for the Providers could be envisaged for the future.

Peer Visits longer and central stakeholder groups included

Peer Visits should be scheduled for at least 1.5 days. One-day-visits have proven to be too short. Sufficient time should be accorded for analysis and for preparing the feedback session, the recommendations from the Manual concerning timing should be followed.

Representation of stakeholders during data collection should be ensured, this also includes making sure that different perspectives are captured within important stakeholder groups like candidates, counsellors, other staff, external stakeholders etc. Interviewing only one person from a stakeholder groups is permissible if the group itself is very small (e.g. management), otherwise at least 2 or 3 people should be interviewed. Candidates should be put at the centre of data collection during the visit

Manual, Quality Areas and Tool-box suitable

Manual, Quality Areas and Tool-box are useful and comprehensive, only marginal changes concerning length of peer visits and representation of primary target groups are necessary in the Manual. Feedback asking to reduce documentation cannot be heeded since documentation is already reduced to the minimum that is required for a sound and transparent evaluation process.

Outlook

Further development of Peer Review in RVC will be possible on the European level through the project Peer Review VNFIL Extended in the future⁸. This follow-up project is one of the outcomes of the Europeerguid-RVC project. Peer Review VNFIL Extended will provide the opportunity to widen the experience to additional European countries and to test transnational Peer Reviews, i.e. Peer Reviews with one Peer coming from another country. This should enhance the cross-border learning between VNFIL providers. The Quality Areas will need to be revised in the light of the requirements of the “new” countries. A pilot phase will provide further experimentation of Peer Review and an investigation of issues that could not be solved in the Europeerguid-RVC project, i.e. the question of evaluation competencies of VNFIL counsellors and assessors. Last but not least, the next project will also support the development of strategies for sustainable implementation of Peer Review in the partner countries and on the European level.

⁸ Transnational Peer Review for quality assurance in Validation of Non Formal and Informal Learning (VNFIL) Extended, Erasmus+, Strategic Partnerships for adult education, No. 2015-1-NL01-KA204-009004

IX. Documents and (re)sources

IX. 1 Documents and monitoring data

Products

European Peer Review Manual for Educational and Vocational Guidance for Adults (Oct. 2012)

Peer Review Tool-box

Documents and monitoring data

- Peer Review database: overview of pilot Peer Reviews
- Peer database containing all information from Peer applications
- Information on national training: Training programme in English (aims, contents, agenda/schedule, methods), list of participants
- Peer Review documents (Tool-box)
 - Self-reports
 - Peer Review Agenda
 - Meta-evaluation of Peers
 - Peer Review Report
 - Other documentation of Peer Review, if possible: presentations, documentation of feedback session, interview and observation guidelines, interview protocols, photos

<http://www.europeerguid-rvc.eu>

X. Annex

X. 1 List of Europeerguid-RVC partners

11 partners / 4 countries

Core partners

ISAL Santarém, Portugal (Coordinator) www.santarem.unisla.pt

IMPULSE – Forschung und internationale Kooperation, Austria, www.impulse.at

CIBC Bourgogne Sud, France, www.cibc-bourgognesud.fr

ErikKaemingk C.V., Netherlands

CITEFORMA, Portugal, www.citeforma.pt

Fundação Alentejo, Portugal, www.fundacao-alentejo.pt

Associated partners

AEPA – Agrupamento de Escolas de Paço de Arcos, Portugal, www.aepa.pt

Escola Profissional de Rio Maior www.eprm.pt

Escola Profissional de Salvaterra de Magos, www.epsm.pt

CEARTE - Centro de Formação Profissional do Artesanato, www.cearte.pt

Partnerhotel Lda, Portugal, www.partnerhotel.net

X. 2 Peer Applications

Table 8: Type of institutions

Type of institution	No. of applicants
RVC provider	8
Guidance centre	1
Vocational Education	6
School (general education)	3
Higher education/research institution	1
Non-profit organisation	2
Consulting firm	1
	22

Source: Peer database

Table 3: Experience in RVC

Experience in RVC	No. of applicants
with experience	16
without experience	6
	22

Source: Peer database

Table 5: Gender

Gender of applicants	No. of applicants
Female	13
Male	9
	22

Source: Peer database

Table 2: Countries

Country of origin	No. of applicants
France	4
Netherlands	2
Portugal	16
	22

Source: Peer database

Table 4: Review experience

Prior review/evaluation experience	No. of applicants
yes	10
no	12
	22

Source: Peer database

X. 3 Profiles of selected Peers

Table 6: Country of origin

Country of origin	No. of Peers
France	1
Netherlands	3
Portugal	6
	10

Source: Pilot database

Table 7: RVC experience

Experience in RVC	No. of Peers
yes	8
no	1
	9

Source: Peer Database

Table 8: Review experience

Prior review/ evaluation experience	No. of Peers
yes	5
no	4
	9

Source: Peer database

Table 9: Gender

Gender of selected Peers	No. of Peers
Female	6
Male	4
	10

Source: Pilot database

One of the selected Peers did not send an application form. Therefore her/his RVC and Peer Review experience is not documented.