



ECVET system for no borders in the Green Economy sector
 supporting Employability, Adaptability and European Mobility in VET systems and Labour Market

COMPARATIVE SWOT ANALYSIS - EN
R.4.4

Project title	ECVET system for no borders in the Green Economy sector supporting Employability, Adaptability and European Mobility in VET systems and Labour Market
Project Acronym	ECOVET
Agreement number	2013-1-IT1-LEO05-04065
CUP	G63D13000380006
Result title	COMPARATIVE SWOT ANALYSIS - EN
Result number	11
Related Work Package	4
Date of delivery	31/10/2014
Date of delivery (last update)	
Partner Author	P1 - P2

ECoVET

**ECVET SYSTEM FOR NO BORDERS IN THE GREEN ECONOMY SECTOR, SUPPORTING
EMPLOYABILITY, ADAPTABILITY AND EUROPEAN MOBILITY IN VET SYSTEMS AND
LABOUR MARKET**

COMPARATIVE SWOT ANALYSIS

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The Partners results of the SWOT Analysis

In the light of the full presentation of the project development and characteristics in this project output, we are reporting what has emerged from the single partners S.W.O.T. Analysis, and derive a general comparative analysis in terms of expected sustainability and portability of the project results and outputs in possible future experimentations.

In the National reports, the partners were asked to briefly and descriptively list Strengths and Weaknesses of the profile identified and the related VET and certification systems, providing also their own considerations in relation to the opportunities and threats that can be related to these system structures also in the light of the application of the ECVET system for the specific sector and profiles selected to their National reference system.

National data elaborated at transnational level, has produced these results:

TABLE 1 - SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IDENTIFIED AT NATIONAL LEVEL

Referring Country	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
ITALY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Educational and vocational training pathways are clearly structures ▪ Certification and qualification modalities are defined ▪ The system has been structured in compliance with the European recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In general the Regional System of Certification is too regionally structured ▪ There is not enough dialogue/correspondence with certifications and qualifications regarding the Energy Manager and auditors profiles that today are outside the European standards (EQF and ECVET)
AUSTRIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Differentiation: the VET system provides wide and differentiated opportunities for students to select from among a variety of specialist areas and training focuses in accordance with their abilities and interests. This is accompanied by a wide autonomy of Schools and VET providers to offer new subjects, or specify training focuses and area specialisations. ▪ VET content and methodology: BHS curricula provide for a combination of general education and intensive specialisation training in theory and practice; the work in workshops, laboratories, kitchens, practice firms, etc. and mandatory work placements in business constitute is part of training. ▪ Curriculum development: The objectives and content of education and training at BHSs are laid down in framework curricula. They are regulated by the Federal Ministry for Education and Women (Bundesministerium für Unterricht und Frauen BMBWF). In the implementation of the framework curricula, schools are entitled to change the number of lessons of individual subjects autonomously or develop their own focuses, taking account of (regional) economic requirements. ▪ Key skills: Entrepreneurial competence is both an interdisciplinary principle and the subject of special focuses. Depending on the school type, up to three foreign languages, but at least one, are compulsory. The foreign language is also used increasingly as the working language. Computer literacy and skills are a condition sine qua non in all BHS forms; a number of programmes and focuses target the information and communication technology sector. ▪ Business projects: When working on projects or diplomatheses with specific tasks from the business sphere or technology (also as a part of final exams), 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Education/training contents: Despite general education subjects and foreign language classes, there is less emphasis on these subjects than in academic secondary schools, for example ▪ Teachers: BHSs employ teachers with practical experience and practice orientation for occupation-related practical subjects. Since these people receive a higher wage in the private sector than in the college, however, there are often difficulties recruiting teachers for a BHS. ▪ Curriculum: BHS courses represent very time-consuming education/training with a total of around 7,137 hours (or 4,095 hours for specialist education/training in environmental technology).

Referring Country	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
	<p>students gather fundamental subject-related experiences and learn to apply project management methods. They test their key skills and set up initial contacts for their later entry into the world of work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teaching staff with business experience: For a number of subjects, BHS teachers are required to prove subject-relevant business practice. 	
GREECE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The learning outcomes are well structured ▪ The level of the profiles is appropriate for the aims of the project ▪ The profile is valid at national level ▪ The certification process is well explained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is not enough dialogue between the certification bodies and the companies in the labour market
SPAIN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In Spain, VET is coherent with the ECVET philosophy in relation with credit arrangements (ECTS) ▪ The VET system is based on modular learning programmes. ▪ All the diplomas from initial VET within the education system are 2000 hours in duration, both intermediate diplomas (3B ISCED level) and higher level diplomas (5B ISCED and higher) are expressed in learning outcomes and permit acquiring professional competences following established standards in response to production sector needs. ▪ All the diplomas support acquiring and improving personal and social competences and exercising active citizenship. ▪ The new system for validation of professional competences acquired through professional experience establishes the assessment and partial accreditation of units of competence of professional qualifications (established standards) included in VET diplomas or on certificates of professionalism. ▪ The competence units thus accredited can result in the validation or exemption of the corresponding modules included in either the VET diplomas or in the certificates of professionalism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The validation procedure is only used for vocational education and training at both levels, intermediate and higher (referring to ECTS) ▪ The actual Ministry of Education of Spain Decrees (385/2011, of 18 March & 1538/2006, of 15 December) do not mention the level of Diplomas according to the European Qualification Framework EQF and the credits for professional modules are not expressed in terms of EQF.

Referring Country	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
ROMANIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is a variety of subjects which can be chosen by the pupils among different economic areas; ▪ The number of students for the vocational education shall be established annually based on the employment market needs and the development trends, according to the planning documents, namely the Regional Action Plan for Education (REAPE) at regional level and the Local Action Plan for Education (LAPE) at local level, as well as based on the economic operators requests; ▪ Recently, several ESF projects have been established partnership between VET schools-companies- parents in order to enforce the involvement of the employers in the practical training of the students and to open the labour market for the VET graduates; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The ECVET system is not in force from the legal point of view; ▪ Low involvement of the employers in the curricula development and furthermore in the VET system reform due to the fact that the companies are still struggling with the economic crisis; ▪ There is no other pathway to obtain a recognised certificate for the VET qualifications (by the nonformal or informal way, for example); ▪ There is a shortage of teachers/trainers coming from the employers side, with a practical background.
SLOVENIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The ratio between theoretical education and work based learning is well balanced and gives students opportunity to be trained in companies ▪ The majority of teachers come from the labour world, they have professional experience from practice. ▪ The final diploma is prepared in cooperation with companies, so the students have good possibilities to get a job after finishing the programme, ▪ National curriculum enables the schools to plan the so called open curricula, which should be developed in cooperation with local bussinesses and as such enables the programme to be more flexible and adjusted to the needs of companies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Entry requirements for students are very flexible. In these type of programmes the students from general secondary education or from the VET side of secondary education can be enrolled. But these two groups have different level of professional knowledge, skills and competence. ▪ At the end of the programme these two groups of students have different levels of professional learning outcomes developed. Students from VET secondary education have better results in work based learning and at the end have more practical skills and knowledge compared to those which originate from general secondary education.

From **transnational comparative analysis of strengths and weaknesses** identified by the partners, the following issues have emerged:

- concerning **strengths**, there are evident these main issues:
 - the systems have, in different ways and at different levels, worked in order to be structured in compliance with the European recommendations, and this is the first necessary steps for being able to compare profiles and standards;
 - the systems are, in different ways and at different levels, structured on the labour market requirements and to do this in some countries it has been reached a great level of integration of basic and practical/vocational training. To reach these

- levels, VET providers and schools can count on wide margins of autonomy to organize the training hours and curricula;
- key competences and personal skills are included and developed within the different curricula, although with different focuses and degrees in the different national systems;
 - there are still persisting differences in the structures of VET systems that should be overcome in order to have the possibility of strengthening future mobility efforts.
- concerning **weaknesses**, the following issues have emerged:
- there is not enough dialogue between the certification bodies and the companies in the labour market, in some of the country partners;
 - there are still persisting barriers and difficulties in applying the ECVET system in those contexts where VET systems and qualification descriptions/standards are not yet based on units and/or learning outcomes, or wherever training pathways are not the result of a joint national effort between the VET providers and the companies.

TABLE 2 - SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS IDENTIFIED AT NATIONAL LEVEL

Referring Country	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
ITALY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Possibility of dialogue with other European systems built on EU model ▪ Possibility of building a ECVET compatible referencing system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Difficulties in the implementation of policies and actions of mutual trust toward the recognition of the certification itself ▪ On the one hand overlays and on the other lack of coverage of all the skills
AUSTRIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BHS education/training is equivalent to a college education when measured by the learning outcomes. ▪ The shortage of skilled labour in Austria can also be counteracted with education/training at a BHS. BHS graduates – depending on professional practice – can be used both operatively as skilled labour and also in management. ▪ BHSs also offer greater opportunities for women to learn a technical profession. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BHS qualifications are not always recognised as a “college” education abroad. ▪ With a BHS course, young people choose their career direction at a very early age of around 15.
GREECE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The profile has similar learning outcomes with the profiles of other countries and it is possible to define common learning units ▪ ECVET points could be allocated to specific learning units and students could use them when go abroad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is no justified connection with the labour market needs ▪ There could be overlapping with other national profiles
SPAIN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Spain, has long been used credits or units in education and training. ▪ The development process of all Educational Royal Decrees created by the Ministry of Education of Spain, is consulted with the Autonomous Communities and have issue report by the General Council of Vocational Training, the State Board of Education and the Ministry of Territorial Policy and Public Administration. This procedure facilitates the implementation at national and regional level (autonomous communities) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The most important threat is that Spain’s Educational Vocational Training has not implemented the EQF in its educational offer. If the government wants to promote mobility among people who can access to it and according to the strategic framework –education & training 2020, it would be mandatory for the government to work on the implementation.

Referring Country	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
ROMANIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Several needed technical instruments for implementing ECVET have been developed both at the national level or school level; ▪ A range of Phare and ESF projects have been implemented in order to support the development of the VET system according to the European Union objectives and programmes; ▪ A National Strategy regarding the reform of VET system has been established within the Operational Program for Human Capital 2014-2020; the strategy is targeting the development of the green economy through appropriate skills and competences . 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 3 years of VET school are time consuming and too theoretical; ▪ Parents/family/society are considering VET schools not enough honourable for theirs children – a mentality hard to be changed; ▪ VET graduates cannot go directly to the universities level: they need one more year to the general high school and to pass the Baccalaureate exam; ▪ Competences acquired during a VET qualification are not recognised at the Higher education level.
SLOVENIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The age group of students enrolled in these programmes is higher (18 years or more) therefore many of them already have some previous work experience which can be validated and the programme itself can be accordingly shortened, ▪ Since the students are adult the mobility is easier to execute and also they are more interested to have this experience in training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Even though the programme has ECTS points the transition to higher education is not automatic and the modules are usually not recognised in HE ▪ The programme was classified in short cycle post-secondary education and is in EQF level 5 which is the same as four year VET programmes in Slovenia. This could mean that on the labour market outside Slovenia the students are equated with the other VET students. In Slovenias' labour market however they are competing with students from HE. ▪ In practice it happens that the so called open curriculum is adapted to professional competences of teachers employed at the school and not to the needs of local industry.

From **transnational comparative analysis of opportunities and threats** identified by the partners, the following issues have emerged:

- concerning **opportunities**, there are evident these main issues:
 - the systems have, in different ways and at different levels, worked in order to be structured in compliance with the specific ECVET recommendations, and most commonly several needed technical instruments for implementing ECVET have been developed both at the national level or system level;
 - this provides some possibilities of dialogue with other European systems built on EU model, and, consequently, some possibilities of building a ECVET compatible referencing system
 - the profile selected has similar learning outcomes with the profiles of other countries and it is possible to define some common learning units;

- the profile selected found a common reference level in the 5th level of the European Qualification Framework;
- concerning **threats**, the following issues have emerged:
 - there are still persisting difficulties in the implementation of policies and actions of mutual trust toward the recognition of the certifications
 - although there are some overlays in the selected profile, there is still a lack of coverage of all the competences and skills included in the referring professional profiles in the different partner countries
 - the selected profiles highlighted a lack of justified connection with the labour market needs;
 - there are still persisting barriers and difficulties in applying the ECVET system in those contexts where VET systems and qualification descriptions/standards are not yet based on the EQF level, as highlighted in Spain.

Comparative SWOT Analysis

As a result of the SWOT analysis provided by the project partners, this final conclusive paragraph is conceived in order to derive an overall transnational comparative analysis which could take in account, for the successive project steps and development, these focus points:

- the national VET systems concerned in the partner countries, and therefore the opportunities and threats deriving from systems conditions that can affect the project development
- the level of integration of EU recommendations and devices for the VET area in the partner countries that can have an influence on the processing of ECVET compatible tools for the specific profiles selected in the project
- the characteristics of the profiles selected, their correspondence and the differences that should be taken in account for the project development.

As a result of this process, the partnership have derived a summative final SWOT analysis, taking in consideration all the relevant issues emerged in the single analysis.

Transnational Comparative S.W.O.T. Analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The VET systems of the partner countries have, in different ways and at different levels, worked in order to be structured in compliance with the European recommendations, and this is the first necessary steps for being able to compare profiles and standards; - The VET systems of the partner countries are, in different ways and at different levels, structured on the labour market requirements and to do this in some countries (Austria, Spain, Slovenia) it has been reached a great level of integration of basic and practical/vocational training. To reach these levels, VET providers and schools can count on wide margins of autonomy to organize the training hours and curricula (Austria, Slovenia); - Key competences, personal and social skills are included and developed within the different curricula, although with different focuses and degrees in the different national systems; - Availability of homogeneous EQF levels of the VET pathways related to the selected profiles (EQF 5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is still not enough dialogue between the certification bodies and the companies in the labour market, in some of the country partners; - There are still persisting barriers and difficulties in applying the ECVET system in those contexts where VET systems and qualification descriptions/standards are not yet based on units and/or learning outcomes, or where they are not formally referred to the EQF (as in the case of Spain) or wherever training pathways are not the result of a joint national effort between the VET providers and the companies. - There are still persisting differences in the structures of VET systems that should be overcome in order to have the possibility of strengthening future mobility efforts.

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The VET systems of the partner countries have, in different ways and at different levels, worked in order to be structured in compliance with the specific ECVET recommendations, and most commonly several needed technical instruments for implementing ECVET have been developed both at the national level or system level; - This provides some possibilities of dialogue with other European systems built on EU model, and, consequently, some possibilities of building a ECVET compatible referencing system - The profile selected has similar learning outcomes with the profiles of other countries and it is possible to define some common learning units; - The profile selected found a common reference level in the 5th level of the European Qualification Framework - There is a richheterogeneousness of the education and training systems - There is an interesting possibility in the project for laying the foundations for geographical and professional mobility between systems 	<p>ON AN OPERATIONAL LEVEL:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Difficulties in the comparison of professional standards, training standards, evaluation standards and recognition/certification standards among systems - Although there are some overlays in the selected profile, there is still a lack of coverage of all the competences and skills included in the referring professional profiles in the different partner countries - The selected profiles highlighted a lack of justified connection with the labour market needs; - The inexistence of actual mobility experiences in progress or that could be activated during the testing phase. - Application and testing only of competences gained in a formal way <p>ON A LEVEL OF VET SYSTEMS GOVERNANCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are still persisting difficulties in the implementation of policies and actions of mutual trust toward the recognition of the certifications - There are still persisting barriers and difficulties in applying the ECVET system in those contexts where VET systems and qualification descriptions/standards are not yet based on the EQF level, as highlighted in Spain. - In some national contexts work on the national qualifications framework and on adaptation to EQF standards and levels is still in the planning phase and has not been assimilated at an operational level - There are still persisting difficulties in integrating the operational plan with the system plan - There are still persisting difficultieswith the recognition of individual competences, especially those acquired in informal/non formal contexts.