



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

ECVET TC NET

European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training Network for Tourism and Catering

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POLICY PAPER

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN TOURISM AND CATERING

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1 Introduction

This Policy Paper for Vocational Educational Training for Tourism and Catering is written for the multilateral network project “*ECVET TC NET – ECVET Network for Tourism and Catering*” (142847-LLP-1-2008-1-AT-LEONARDO-LNW) funded by the action *Leonardo da Vinci – Network* within the framework of the *Lifelong Learning Programme*.

The network partnership discussed seven suggestions for a VET policy for the tourism and catering sector in Europe during the transnational meeting in Wales, UK in February 2011 reflecting the experiences from the common network activities as well as current developments in the tourism and catering sector and its effects on the training programmes.

The policy paper could be regarded as a supporting document for policy development on European level (especially related to the work group for education and training in the tourism sector), on national- and on regional level. It describes the actual situation and makes some suggestions and claims for the future development of the educational policy in the sector.

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September 2011

2 Background objective and aims of the ECVET TC NET project

The Leonardo da Vinci ECVET TC NET (European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training – Tourism and Catering Network) is a three-year Leonardo da Vinci network project for the development of the ECVET system for the tourism- and hospitality industry in Europe (www.ecvet-tc.net).

Tourism and hospitality is one of the most important economic sectors in Europe and provides more than 7 million jobs. This sector relies heavily on a flexible and mobile workforce.

This was the rationale for the development of an ECVET model in order to establish the basis for the mutual recognition and transparency of competences in measuring learning outcomes in the tourism- and catering sector in Europe.

The main target groups of this project are tourism and catering schools in Europe and vocational education providers in tourism and catering. The tourism sector and industry has some peculiarities, which were must be taken into account in the ECVET TC NET project: vocational education and training in the tourism sector is like in no other sector to a large extent also provided by tourism companies such as hotels, spas, clubs etc. Therefore the main target group took into account tourism companies as well as other institutions that were part of the target group and also potential stakeholders. On a long term perspective the beneficiaries of the ECVET TC NET project are the people working in the tourist and catering sector and tourists themselves.

ECVET TC NET developed as its main aim an ECVET based model for mutual recognition and transparency of learning outcomes and competences in the tourism and catering sector in Europe. To achieve this overarching project aim ECVET TC NET envisaged the following detail aims:

- European survey “Competences and skills in the tourism and catering sector in Europe”: The aim of the survey was to get a detailed perspectives of the different competences and job profiles needed in the tourism and catering sector in Europe as a basis for the development of the ECVET model
- Development of a competence description grid: The competence description grid provides a description basis for all deducted competences in the tourism and catering sector

- Elaboration of the ECVET model for the tourism and catering sector in Europe: out of a multistakeholder perspective with a strong focus on the companies and service providers included in the partnership the ECVET model for the sector was developed and documented in a comprehensive way
- Development of guidelines how to work with ECVET in the tourism and catering sector in practice: Additionally to the model description we elaborated some concrete guidelines and a step by step approach how to work with ECVET in practice.
- Development of guidelines how to develop ECVET compliant training programs: For the training organizations in the tourism and catering field it is important also to have proper guidelines on how to develop ECVET compliant training programs in the future.
- Test implementation of the ECVET model: Training organizations and companies involved in the ECVET TC NET tested also the developed approaches and instruments to receive feedback on practical implementation and feasibility for the sector needs
- Policy development: the ECVET TC NET developed further the VET policy for the tourism and catering sector out of a high quality multistakeholder perspective by developing a policy recommendation paper for vocational education and training in the tourism and catering industry in Europe

3 The characteristics of the Tourism and Catering Industry

The sector of tourism and catering is without no doubt europeanwide one of the strongest driving forces for the economic marked and this applies for older and new as well as future member states of the European Community.

The European industry is besides other trends facing more and more the demand for high quality tourism which closely related to high quality employees with excellent competencies and skills. Furthermore if the real potential of the tourism and catering sector related to the employment possibilities should be exploited to full extension mobility of workers is one of the core issues.

There is nearly no other economic sector where flexibility and mobility of workforce has such an importance.

Mobility is still heavily hindered by the lack of transparent and recognisable qualifications and competences and there is Europe wide a huge need for models to allow mutual recognition of competences and skills.

It is very difficult to find an industry with the characteristics of the Tourism and Catering with such great levels of employee rotation and the necessity of flexibility. We are talking about people that work for people starting with the intention to satisfy the customer. Qualified Professionals are required to cover all the fields of the industry of food and hospitality which has been so important for some many years. Some of the clues of the Hospitality Industry are internationalization, the ability to follow new trends, own initiative and flexibility.

Basic Training must give the tools to complete the main duties of the industry. The European Hospitality Industry is now facing with high standard tourism, which is related with high standard employees with excellent competences and abilities.

There is no other sector with the rotation and flexibility of employment as this one. The problem is that sometimes the lack of capacity and competences of the employees as well as the no recognition of the knowledge and capacities-to along Europe. There is a remarkable necessity of Models that could mutually recognize all this capacities, knowledge and abilities.

To face this problem the ECVET TC NET (European Credit System for Vocational Education Training Tourism and Catering Network Model) was developed to give recognition and transparency of capacities, as well as to the products of knowledge of the Hospitality and Tourism Industry.

4 The network partnership

ECVET TC NET is a multi-stakeholder ECVET network for tourism and catering, involving tourism schools and colleges, vocational training centers, universities as well as tourism organizations, hotels, cruise ship companies, spas and other relevant institutions to achieve well-conceived and accepted results.

Due to this wide range of institutional categories, lots of aspects of tourism and catering representatives could get highlighted within this project. In the below chart you can see all participating institutions from 11 European countries:

Partner number	Country	Name
P1	AT	Tourismusschulen Bad Gleichenberg
P2	AT	Berufsförderungsinstitut Steiermark
P3	CZ	Tempo Training & Consulting
P5	DE	Baltic College- University of Applied Sciences
P6	DE	Mikro Partner GmbH
P7	ES	Escuela de Hosteleria de Sevilla
P8	FI	Porin Aikuiskoulutuskeskus / Winnova
P9	HU	Spirit Hotel Thermal Spa, Sarvar
P10	SL	Vocational College for Catering Maribor
P13	TR	Selcuk University, Department of Tourism and Hotel Management
P14	UK	Coleg Llandrillo
P15	RO	Universitatea Stefan cel Mare, Suceava
P16	RO	Bucovina Tourism Association
	CH	Swiss Occidental Leonardo

The main target groups of this project are tourism and catering colleges in Europe and vocational education providers in tourism and catering. The tourism sector and industry have some peculiarities, which have to be taken into account: vocational education and training in the tourism sector is to a large extent also provided by tourism companies such as hotels, spas, clubs etc. Therefore the main target group has to take into account tourism companies as well as other institutions that are part of the target group and also potential stakeholders.

5 Recommendations for VET in Tourism and Catering

In this paper, we are going to talk about the following seven recommendations for VET providers on the European field, based on the ECVET TC NET Model. These seven recommendations were discussed amongst the ECVET TC NET partnership in the transnational partnership meeting in Wales, UK in February 2011:

1. Clarification of professional profiles European wide
2. International minimum standards for the hospitality industry.
3. The ECVET system should be able to allow the flexibility and authenticity of the local tourism providers for the sustainability of the local tourism.
4. Transparency, Comparability and recognition of European standards
5. Quicker decisions on national level within the ECVET introduction process
6. Suggestions to the tourism industry which creates more and more own academies to train the needed stuff: use the public national and international standards and systems from VET providers
7. Bodies regulating international workforce mobility should take into account the minimum competence standards set up by this project and by ECVET



5.1 Clarification of professional profiles European wide

One of the first and most important things to be done is to explain and clear up each professional profile of the Tourism and Catering Industry European wide.

In this case, based on surveys done in 11 different countries with 17 different partner institutions, the professional profiles that the ECVET TC NET Model has chosen are: cook, cook assistant, waitress/waiter, waitress/waiter assistant, sales and mark, bartender, receptionist, room maid and guest relations assistant.

Project partners agreed to implement the EQF (European Qualification Framework for Lifelong Learning) to develop competence grids on different levels of education. The core of the EQF are eight reference levels describing what an alumni should know, understand and is able to do (learning outcomes). The EQF applies to all types of education, training and qualifications, from school to academic, professional and vocational education. The system shifts the focus of the traditional approach, which emphasizes on learning inputs such as the length of a learning experience, or type of institution. It also encourages lifelong learning by promoting the validation of non-formal and informal learning. With implementing that project also follows European lifelong learning strategy.

The Descriptors defining levels in the EQF are:

LEVEL	KNOWLEDGE	EXAMPLE
1.	Basic general knowledge	Vocational high school
2.	Basic factual knowledge of a field of work or study	Vocational high school
3.	Knowledge of facts, principles, processes and general concepts, in a field of work or study	Vocational college diploma
4.	Factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study	Higher diploma
5.	Comprehensive, specialized, factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work or study and awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge	Bachelor of Arts
6.	Advanced knowledge of a field of work or study, involving a critical understanding of theories and principles	Honors Bachelor Degree
LEVEL	KNOWLEDGE	EXAMPLE
7.	Highly specialized knowledge at the forefront of knowledge in a field of work or study, as the basis of original thinking and/or research , critical awareness of	Masters

	knowledge issues in a field and at the interface between different fields	
8.	Knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of work or study and at the interface between fields	Doctorate

The comparability of the traditional A-D level system and the EQF shows the following results:

A-D LEVEL SYSTEM	EQF SYSTEM	PROFESSIONS
A1	EQF 1	COOK & WAITRESS/WAITER ASSISTANT; BARTENDER; ROOM MAID
A2	EQF 1/2	COOK & WAITRESS/WAITER ASSISTANT; BARTENDER; ROOM MAID
B1	EQF 2	COOK; WAITRESS/WAITER; BARTENDER; RECEPTIONIST; SALES & MARKETING ASSISTANT; GUEST RELATIONS ASSISTANT
B2	EQF 2/3	COOK; WAITRESS/WAITER; BARTENDER; RECEPTIONIST; SALES & MARKETING ASSISTANT; GUEST RELATIONS ASSISTANT
C1	EQF 3	
C2	EQF 3/4	

Based on these occupational activities and tasks, the project described the qualification units (and sub-units). The units are clearly related to the key activities. The sub-units refer to distinct working methods, activities or products that form the activity. Each unit describes the learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills and competence necessary to carry out the activities at the level of A1 which represents EQF Level 1 which is not an experienced professional.

For the translation of the traditional qualifications system to the EQF system, Andersons and Krathwohl's Taxonomy, was implemented in the project, giving each profile a deep description of:

- Field of Work
- Competences
- Indicators
- A- D Level System describing the specific functions.

5.2 International minimum standards for the hospitality industry

The sector of tourism and catering is without no doubt European-wide one of the strongest driving forces for the economic development and this applies for older and new as well as future member states of the European Community.

According to data from the EC DG Enterprise and Industry, tourism generates about 4% GDP of the EU; with about two million companies, it provides employment for about 4% of the total workforce (meaning 8 million jobs). When other sectors are included in the calculation, it is estimated that tourism contributes to the EU GDP with about 11% and provides employment for more than 12% of all employed persons (24 million jobs).

Tourism vigorously helps towards achieving the goals of the Lisbon strategy that refer to boosting employment. Tourism is a powerful engine for creating jobs in other sectors of the EU's economy: the number of people employed in the Hotel, Restaurant and Cafe (HORECA) sector is growing at a rate faster than the rate of employment of the entire workforce in EU countries. Employment in HORECA contributes to an increase in the employment of young people, in particular. The 15-24 age group in HORECA is twice as large (22.4%) than in all other sectors of the economy (10.3%). The share of temporary employment is significantly higher in the HORECA sector in comparison with both the overall EU economy and the entire service sector. Some of the factors influencing this higher portion of temporary employment are the seasonal character of employment in tourism, as well as a high turnover of workers – in particular, those belonging to younger age groups – because of low wages, unsatisfactory working conditions and limitations to career development.

5.3 The ECVET system should be able to allow the flexibility and authenticity of the local tourism providers for the sustainability of the local tourism

Together with the developed European Credit Transfer System for Vocational Education and Training we now have the possibility to establish a model and system to allow mutual recognition of competences. The ECVET based model would for the first time provide a system for transparency of learning outcomes together with an approach for the concrete implementation in the sector, however the tourism sector and industry has some further peculiarities, which must be taken into account: vocational education and training in the tourism sector is like in no other sector to a large extent also provided by tourism companies, hotels, spas, clubs etc. When developing an ECVET based model for recognition and transparency of competences and learning outcomes the development must reflect this in a proper way. Therefore ECVET TC NET involves high class tourism schools, vocational training centers, universities, hotels, cruise ship companies, holiday clubs, spas and other relevant institutions to achieve a well thought and well accepted result.

ECVET works also to give the local tourism providers the right tools against the trend of the large international hotel chains taking the market.

The work and professional experience, as well as the recognition of European standards, gives more value to the employee and to the local tourism itself.

Involving the local VET providers into the ECVET they get an extra in the formation process as well as flexibility for the rest of employees and authenticity to the place, acquiring a new member to the work team that will need to be formed as he/she receive a professional formation in a real environment.

5.4 Transparency, Comparability and recognition of European standards

The ECVET TC NET model is a tool for the credit transfer process: validation and recognition of learning outcomes. It is a concrete model and tool for implementation of the ECVET system; a model to describe entire qualifications or their studies of different scopes in terms of field of work, competences and indicators. The project put forward a proposal to determine credit points and the level of studies within the EQF. The proposal suggests that one year of study and a three-year qualification would equate to 60 and 180 credit points respectively. This is also the solution which the European level is favoring.

Assessment of learning outcomes should be based on descriptions of learning outcomes in terms of competences and indicators. If assessment is carried out according to another country's practices, it is necessary to establish the criteria on which the grades are based and how assessment is to be documented. The assessors should be individuals/bodies competent under the statutes of the sending or receiving country. Decisions on validation and recognition of studies completed abroad will be taken by individual education providers. In order for a decision-making process to be systematic, official and conforming to the requirement of students' legal protection, the process should be outlined in the provider's curriculum.

The ECVET TC NET model can be used for different purposes where the transparency of competence profiles is highly important e.g. for transferring and recognizing competences acquired within the official VET system as well as competences achieved through non-formal or informal learning, developing qualifications or training programmes and curricula and enhancing the visibility of differences in qualifications. It is characteristic for the tourism and hospitality industry that a significant proportion of training programmes are undertaken at the workplace, through corporate training and apprenticeship systems.

The ECVET TC NET model can be used for:

- the transfer of vocational competences acquired abroad (mobility in VET)
- the transfer and recognition of competences acquired within the official VET system as well as competences achieved through non-formal or informal learning
- the development of qualifications
- composing job profiles as well as personnel (human resources) planning
- enhancing the visibility of differences in qualifications, therefore for use in the development of the EQF.

The credit transfer process in the ECVET system consists of validation and recognition. Validation refers to the evaluation of equivalent learning outcomes, i.e. ensuring that the assessed learning outcomes achieved by a specific student are equivalent with the learning outcomes required in specific individual units of qualifications. Recognition of

learning outcomes refers to a process in which the validated learning outcomes are given the official status of a credit for the individual unit. Principally, the student applies for the recognition of his/her competences before studies begin and acquires all necessary documents. ECVET rises up the question of what these documents should include.

Certifications signed by teachers can be approved as documents, for example. Mutual recognition and formalization of qualifications are usually done according to the practices of each country. In each country, credits are determined according to the rules and regulations in force, and they should be validated by the respective education provider, drafted according to the documents guiding the student assessment and documented to a sufficient degree. For simplifying the credit transfer process, the official documents of each education provider should be modified. For this reason, the education provider should oversee that the curriculum includes decisions on the principles of the credit transfer. In order for a decision-making process to be systematic, official and conforming to the requirement of students' legal protection, the process should be outlined in the provider's curriculum. For decision-making purposes, national guidelines and a process flowchart should be drawn up for different education providers. Education providers, as part of their curricula, should decide on the procedure of approving studies completed in another country as credits (validation and recognition).

5.5 Quicker decisions on national level within the ECVET introduction process

The introduction of the ECVET system in the different sectors of VET is a core demand for the qualitative development of the training systems in Europe. The ECVET TC NET network has its main aim in developing the ECVET model for the tourism and catering industry in Europe, which is one of the most important economic factors for most of the European countries and has a huge demand in work force and work force mobility which can be fostered through the ECVET system.

An European area for lifelong learning is only possible if there is the possibility for transparency and recognition of learning outputs and competences throughout Europe. Especially for the tourism and catering sector the need for these systems is even clearer as the work force mobility according to tourism flows and seasons is so evident. The ECVET TC NET realizes a well substantiated approach for the harmonization of learning outcomes and the realization of the European area for lifelong learning.

The tourism and catering industry is heavily relying on a good workforce mobility due to a strong demand and supply flow in different European regions. The development and introduction of the ECVET model for this sector significantly supports the possibilities for workers to find work in other European countries in the tourism and catering enterprises as their competences and learning outcomes are recognized in a proper way. The fact that ECVET TC NET partnership consists of a number of tourism service providers shows the big need of these organizations in a better work force mobility and the trust in the result of the network activities to reach these goals.

5.6 Suggestions to the tourism industry which creates more and more own academies to train the needed stuff: use the public national and international standards and systems from VET providers

The European credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET), which aims to allow trainees to build upon their achievements when moving within national systems or from one national VET system to another, was adopted by the Council and the European Parliament in June 2009 and it is in its first phase of implementation and development. It will facilitate the accumulation, exchange and transfer of learning outcomes in any context, thus enabling citizens to pursue lifelong learning and to achieve qualifications by taking all learning contexts into account.

VET is crucial for Europe's aim to re-position itself in the global economy through well qualified human capital equipped with the skills needed in the future. In March 2000 in Lisbon European Council set strategic goal to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world and be capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better job opportunities and greater social cohesion by 2010. Since 2002, European VET policy has been reviewed every two years, most recently in Bordeaux in November 2008. Following the adoption of the Conclusions of the Council, the ministers from the EU Member States, candidate and EEA countries, the European Social partners, and the Commission adopted a Communiqué which sets out the VET priorities for 2008-2010. The development of high quality vocational education and training is crucial to achieve the strategic goal, in particular to improve social cohesion, mobility, employability and competitiveness and lifelong learning has an important role as well.

In this context, we would like to suggest to the Tourism Industry in general that are investing in creating more and new academies for the formation of learners, to stop doing that and better to look out for the VET providers.

As we have said before: hotels, spas, schools, restaurants and any other VET provider that are part from the project are looking forward to receive more and more learners to form them, while they also learn how to work in a real professional environment.

5.7 Bodies regulating international workforce mobility should take into account the minimum competence standards set up by this project and by ECVET

“Competent institution” means an institution which is responsible for designing and awarding qualifications or recognizing units or other functions linked to ECVET, such as allocation of ECVET points to qualifications and units, assessment, validation and recognition of learning outcomes, under the rules and practices of participating countries.

The main challenge for the introduction of a common methodological framework like ECVET in the European VET environment is the broad range of bodies involved with the different functions of qualifications systems. Depending on the system, the same function (e.g. design of qualifications and units) may be the responsibility of different types of actors (e.g. national or regional ministries, social partners, VET providers).

To overcome this complexity, ECVET refers to the different functions of a qualifications system rather than to the types of institutions involved. Institutions involved in implementing and running ECVET are referred to competent institutions.

Users of ECVET therefore need to first clarify their role(s) with regard to their own qualifications system. They have to reflect on their competences in their qualifications system and how these relate to the main functions of ECVET. It is important to note that one institution can be competent for more than one function in the qualifications system as well as in ECVET, depending on the set up of the particular qualifications system.

However, it is essential for the international bodies regulating workforce mobility to take part in the process and integrate the minimum competence standards given by ECVET in their own processes.

6 Conclusion

The European tourism- and hospitality industry is increasingly being faced with the demand for high quality tourism, which is closely related to mobile workers and high quality employees with excellent competencies and skills. There is hardly any other economic sector where the flexibility and mobility of the workforce is so important. At this stage, mobility is still heavily hindered by the lack of transparent and recognizable qualifications and competences, and throughout Europe there is a need for programmes to allow the mutual recognition of competences and skills.

The European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET), which is aimed at facilitating the accumulation, transfer and recognition of knowledge, skills and competences gained by individuals towards a qualification, is applicable to learning outcomes gained in different learning environments or through periods of vocational education and training abroad.

ECVET TC NET was a three-year network project embedded in the design of concrete responses to the questions of developing ECVET in the European member states. Its main objective is to develop an ECVET based model for the mutual recognition and transparency of learning outcomes and competences in the tourism- and catering sector in Europe, which is particularly reliant on a flexible and mobile workforce and on the transparency and recognition of the individuals' learning outcomes.

From a long term perspective, the beneficiaries are the people working in the tourist- and catering sector and the tourists themselves.

The ECVET TC NET project developed a set of approaches and an ECVET model for the tourism and catering industry in Europe. This will have, as a long term target, clear effects on the workforce mobility and on the transparency of qualifications gained in vocational training and especially also in corporate training which is at very high importance in this sector. By providing highly qualified and flexible staff and human resources for this sector there will be an obvious impact on the services offered which has a direct impact on the long term target group.

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