

Quality Indicators Bank



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1. Introduction

European Common Reference Framework on Quality in VET provides a common core of criteria and set of indicators for quality development at European level, thus increasing transparency and consistency with other policies, initiatives and actions in the field of quality assurance and enhancement in different Member States.

According to “Quality assurance for VET providers” handbook, *“indicators reflect the measures that need to be taken in order to verify the existence and extent of quality criteria. They can provide important data, proof or signs of the existence of quality criteria. Quality indicators must be representative of quality criteria, both observable and objective.”*

In order to find some quality indicators that could be used to identify the strong and weak points in organisations, as well as the improvement tasks to work with, the questionnaire was prepared by the European project “Training in Quality: VET and Enterprises” to be implemented in 6 countries.

The main objective of the questionnaire was to find-out objective information on the current situation regarding the quality management ensured by organisations. It was also aiming at establishing the groundwork for a discussion on quality in VET and helping to identify proper quality assessment indicators.

The questionnaire had 3 parts (basic information, work description and self-evaluation). The main emphasis was put on getting information about experiences of organisations with securing the quality management and self-evaluation in order to get an objective view on the scope of indicators development for quality assessment.

2. Questionnaires research

From “Work description” part we could conclude that for organisations is very important to do regular planning. For some it is important to do it on a monthly basis, for others it is done once a year. When the activities are planned in advance it is easier for organisations to avoid unexpected situations that could lead to decreased quality of work.

Of course, planning is not the only important definition of quality. Quick adaptation to up-to-date situations is also very important in good organisation of work and time. In terms of competences it is desirable to provide counselling and consultations. We could not forget about research and education, which is essential in being informed and have up-to-date knowledge. Still a bigger importance is assigned to innovation, which is quite a crucial factor that should be present in every organisation.

What are the criterions of quality? Questionnaires showed that there is a wide variety of quality criteria that could be expected form a service, product or process. Service, product or process should be precise, reliable and economically advantageous. Its content should be suitable to objectives and target groups and appropriate means, didactic materials and methodology should be used. Training curriculum should be flexible, based on results of scientific researches and be adapted to learners’ and labour market needs. We should not forget that teaching staff should be technically and pedagogically qualified and that appropriate facilities, information and literature should be widely available.

It is good to know that all questioned organisations provide the feedback and improvement procedures through evaluation questionnaires, team discussions or search for improvements. This is significant for the remedies that are provided to make the service, product or process even better and to maximise

the performance. There are several way how to provide for remedies. One of the most common is the analysis of evaluation questionnaires and implementation of corrective actions. These actions could be summed in modules based on the learners' needs. Their curriculum could be refined and renewed on the basis of the learners' feedback and new training modules could be introduced upon the learners' demands. There could be issued also some kind of procedure manual to avoid future mistakes.

However, there are several obstacles that organisations need to solve in the working process. Probably the most common is the funding problem that could be partly solved through projects (European social funds, national and other projects). Another very common problem is a lack of time. Here is important to prioritize the activities and also a better distribution of work could help. There is also a problem with not officially recognised certificates. A solution here could be the process of establishment of the specialised service of the recognition of competencies gained after CVT that has been started in LT. Lots of efforts is being put to work out the procedures to ensure the recognition of the provided certificates.

There are also several challenges that organisations do face when identifying gaps. For organisations that are part of the public administration it is necessary to follow specific administrative regulations that make the process less effective. Very common is a problem with space and with lack of quality educators. The training is often more accidental than systematic. This is basically due to applied project approach, as training courses are usually arranged in the framework of one or another project. Moreover, the training costs have been increasing recently in turn influencing the increase of training module price per person and creating competition challenges with other CVT providers.

Very important here is the process of need analysis. What could make it more effective? One suggestion could be to use the quality tools, such as a SWOT

analysis. Another one could be to use research and proactive analysis of customers and training needs, including the application of qualitative research methods. Very useful could be also to develop cooperation with different specialised institutions.

3. Quality indicators

To measure quality you need to define the set of quality indicators. Indicator should be clear with no possibility of different interpretation and should be defined for the needs of each specific user.

To set a quality indicator you need to think about these steps:

- selection of indicators
- name of indicator
- specification of indicator
- definition of targets and goals
- presentation of results

3.1. Selection of indicators

Which indicators are worth to be established? Interesting indicators for each organisation are those, which have an information that benefit is bigger than the effort needed to obtain it.

To determine, which indicator is more important than the other is important to use the following criterions:

- level of achievement of intended goals and related activities
- development of critical factors for each organisation (satisfaction of clients, economic results, productivity, etc.)
- development of processes and parameters
- information about expenditures necessary for establishment of system of indicators, gathering of information
- credibility of gathering of information and its analysis

3.2. Name of indicator

Name of indicator is related to its definition. For example: number of new clients, satisfaction of clients, monthly productivity, etc.

These indicators should produce profit and should not be surplus.

3.3. Specification of indicator

Quality indicator has to be specified. It is important to define it, set how it should be calculated and very important is also to set its periodicity.

Indicator could be for example: conversion, percentage, share, etc.

Except of the name of indicator, it should also be specified in a way that it could not be misinterpreted. Therefore, it is necessary to precisely define each indicator, how should this indicator be calculated and the sources of information that will be used for this calculation.

3.4. Definition of targets and goals

It is necessary to present targets and goals, which should be met or boundaries by which should the indicators be assessed.

Boundaries for indicators could for example represent: respected minimum or maximum necessary for processes to be changed, what is necessary to be achieved, etc.

3.5. Presentation of results

Only the most important information should be presented in a simple, effective way. The emphasis should be put on those information that are relevant for organisation and that are not evolving as expected. You should also simplify the presentation of results and show the tendencies and differences in comparison to established boundaries by using different forms of presentation:

- graphs
- diagrams, histograms
- tables
- colours
- symbols
- pictures, etc.

3.6. Bank of indicators in the field of VET

Indicator 1: Qualification of teachers and trainers

Definition: Level of qualification (formal – certification, informal - practice) in respective field of training

Indicator 2: Investment in training of teachers and trainers

Definition: Total amount of funds annually invested per teacher/trainer in teachers'/trainers' further education and training

Indicator 3: Number of participants trained

Definition: Total number of participants that finished one of VET programmes

Indicator 4: Completion rate in VET programmes

Definition: Percentage of those completing VET programme, compared to those entering VET programme

Indicators 5: Placement rate in VET programmes

Definition: Percentage of VET programme completers who are employed one year after the end of training

Indicator 6: Capacity of VET programme to respond to the labour market needs

Definition: Percentage of VET programme completers working in relevant occupations

Indicator 7: Satisfaction of participants with the teaching being provided

Definition: Percentage of programme completers who are satisfied with the quality of the teaching being provided

Indicator 8: Satisfaction of participants with the learning environment

Definition: Percentage of programme completers who are satisfied with the learning environment including the equipment in class rooms

Indicator 9: Relevance of acquired qualification for the workplace

Definition: Percentage of programme completers who find the VET programme relevant for their current occupation

Indicator 10: Utilisation of acquired skills at the workplace

Definition: Percentage of employers who are satisfied with the programme completers

Sources:

EQARF indicators, reviewing and agreeing definitions; ENQA - VET;

<http://www.engavet.eu/documents/TGReportEQARFIndicators.pdf>

Quality indicators in vocational education and training, NCVET;

<http://www.ncver.edu.au/research/proj/nr0026.pdf>