



## Testing a joint ECVET-ECTS Implementation

Progress Report

Public Part

## Project information

Project acronym: Be-TWIN  
Project title: Testing a joint ECVET-ECTS Implementation  
Project number: 147825-LLP-1-2008-1-FR-ECVET  
Sub-programme or KA: Leonardo da Vinci  
Project website: [www.betwin.eu.com](http://www.betwin.eu.com)

Reporting period: From 01/03/2009  
To 31/08/2010

Report version: 1  
Date of preparation: September 2010

Beneficiary organisation: Chambre de commerce et d'industrie de Paris

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This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.

This publication [communication] reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

## Executive Summary

This report is aimed at any institution or private person involved in the field of education and training and interested in the latest and future developments of the European Union in the field of mobility, transparency, recognition of qualifications and credit systems.

The ECTS (European Credit and Accumulation System) has become one of the main pillars of the Bologna process towards a common European Higher Education Area. More recently, ECVET (European Credit for Vocational Education and Training) is being designed as a response to the specificities of vocational education and training (VET). A central issue is to define the connections between these two instruments. Indeed, higher education (HE) and VET are often interconnected and, in the context of lifelong learning and in order to favour vertical mobility, especially for those shifting from VET to HE, this connexion has to be explored.

The Be-TWIN project aims at tackling this issue by testing a common implementation of both credit systems to achieve the following objectives:

- improve learners' and workers' horizontal and vertical mobility
- foster a common approach to education and training in Europe and the realisation of a European area for lifelong learning, thus linking the benefits of both systems and enhancing mutual understanding,
- develop transferability, integration and recognition of qualifications in Europe.

In order to address the need for a dialogue between higher education and VET, the project proposes to put in place innovative translation tools between both systems, which will help reaching common goals of transparency, mobility and recognition:

First of all, a common methodology and a matrix linking ECVET and ECTS has been shaped, using the expertise and experience of the consortium partners in the field of higher education, VET, lifelong learning and credit systems. This first stage has been successfully completed in July 2010 with the publication of the Methodological Guide: "ECVET-ECTS: Building bridges and overcoming differences".

In parallel, the developed model is being applied on existing training programmes. This trial implementation phase proposes to experiment the ECVET-ECTS matrix in three case studies throughout Europe in the field of Plastics Industry, Hospitality Management and Training of trainers. The proposed implementation, which will be finalised in September 2011, wishes to go beyond sheer dichotomies and to contribute to favouring the geographical and horizontal mobility of learners across Europe.

Using the outputs of the methodology and of the trial implementation, the project will finally produce a "tool kit for trainers", which aim is to disseminate the developed model to potential users across Europe and to communicate a workable and transferable model for those encountering the same challenges as met within the Be-TWIN partnership.

A large consortium of 14 partners from 8 EU countries has been put together to achieve these objectives. It includes representatives from all spheres of education and training: universities, VET providers, certifying authorities, chambers of commerce and business representatives.

The partnership is a very important dimension of the project, since it constitutes a unique occasion to foster dialogue and mutual understanding between segments from education and training that are not necessarily used to working together. This dimension constitutes an added value of the project, since, in the long term, all institutions dealing with ECVET and/or ECTS will have to cope with the issue of their linkage. Be-TWIN thus opens up the way for a broader dialogue Europe-wide, which consequently goes ahead with a number of challenges and uncertainties.

Further details on Be-TWIN will be shortly available on the project's website: [www.betwin.eu.com](http://www.betwin.eu.com).

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# 1. Project Objectives

Whereas the lifelong learning programme and the European Qualification Framework promote a unified approach to education and training in Europe, integrating higher education and vocational education and training, two credit systems will coexist in 2012, when ECVET will be officially implemented by the EU member states. Although each credit system is based on a specific methodological approach, both pursue the same objectives, namely credit transfer, accumulation and recognition, students' and workers' mobility, lifelong learning, transparency and recognition of qualifications across Europe. This necessity to address the need of a comprehensive area of education and training in Europe has also been stressed in the Recommendation on ECVET itself, which suggests to the member states to *“facilitate the compatibility and comparability between credit system used in VET and the ECTS, which is used in the higher education sector, and thus [to] contribute to greater permeability between levels of education and training.”*

As the slide below highlights, both the ECTS and the ECVET systems pursue the same objectives, however, the ways they intent to achieve their purposes of transfer, accumulation and recognition differ:

## ECTS and ECVET: Main features:

ECTS : European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System	ECVET: European Credit for Vocational Education and Training
<p><b>Historical context:</b> First experimented 1989 in the framework of the Erasmus programme, then incorporated into the Bologna Process</p>	<p><b>Historical context:</b> Experimented since 2009 in the framework of pilot projects. Incorporated into the Copenhagen Process through a Recommendation of the EP and Council</p>
<p><b>Field of application:</b> Higher education institutions</p>	<p><b>Field of application:</b> VET, including continuing education and informal learning</p>
<p><b>Objectives :</b> the recognised mobility of students within the European Higher Education Area</p>	<p><b>Objectives :</b> putting in place a credit system compatible and in line with the specificities of VET</p>
<p><b>Methodological approach:</b> based on learning content and student workload (input oriented)</p>	<p><b>Methodological approach:</b> based on learning outcomes (output oriented)</p>
<p><b>Limits:</b> Not applicable to vocational education at tertiary level, nor to alternative learning pathways (continuing education, informal learning, etc.)</p>	<p><b>Limits:</b> So far, no connection with ECTS has been defined</p>

Based on a presentation made at a conference on mobility in VET in Brussels (“MOVET, the VET skills and mobility day”) on June 22, 2010.

In order to facilitate a common implementation of ECTS and ECVET, Be-TWIN proposes to develop innovative tools and methodologies linking both credit systems. The project's objective is not to revise the existing credit systems or the methodology they are based on, but to find solutions to coordinate them in order to:

- favour the vertical (from VET to HE and vice versa) and horizontal (i.e. recognition between countries) mobility of learners and workers across Europe as well as their employability,

- foster a common approach to education and training in Europe and the realisation of a European area for lifelong learning, linking the benefits of both systems and enhancing mutual understanding,
- develop transferability, integration and recognition of qualifications in Europe.

By proposing this new, innovative approach to education and training and encompassing the challenges of both the higher education and the VET sectors, Be-TWIN will have an impact on several target groups. Thus, all of them have been included in the project as partner institutions and/or beneficiaries:

- **Competent bodies** in charge of the design and certification of training programmes, such as ministries of education, ministries of labour, universities, chambers of commerce, etc. They are represented in the Be-TWIN partnership, since a joint ECVET-ECTS implementation might have as a consequence the reshaping of some training programmes; certifying bodies will thus have a key role to play if some changes have to be integrated in the existing training offer.
- **Education and training institutions** in charge of the provision of education and training: VET providers, universities, higher education institutions. They constitute the heart of the Be-TWIN partnership and are the key player to put in place a coordinated ECVET-ECTS implementation.
- **Educational staff**: professors, trainers, training programme managers, persons in charge of the international development within their educational institution. The experts working on the project represent all these categories of educational staff. In the future, the pedagogical staff will need to be trained in order to make the methodology a reality within their training institutions. Also, the ECVET-ECTS matrix will hopefully enable to put in place new international partnerships and favour mobility periods abroad, which will concern the staff in charge of the European and international development within the training institutions.
- **Learners**: students, VET learners, apprentices, adult learners. They are directly concerned by the methodology proposed by the project and will be involved in the process through the three case studies, which target three different types of learners: apprentices, students and adult learners. The Be-TWIN philosophy, which aim is to make the training offer more transparent, is clearly addressed to them as end-beneficiaries, since it will enable them to better identify their gained knowledge, skills and competences, and thus to integrate more easily the job market.
- **Companies**: One of the benefits of the matrix will be to link the educational content with identified learning outcomes, thus favouring the adequacy between the provision of education and training and the labour market's needs. The key is to foster the employability of learners and workers and to contribute to the economical growth Europe-wide. Furthermore, one of the project's main objectives is to make geographical mobility easier. It has been proven that learners' mobility is one of the best ways to improve employability by reinforcing the ability of beneficiaries to work in different work and cultural contexts.

## 2. Project Approach

Be-TWIN is the only ECVET pilot project that has decided to deal with the issue of the correspondences with ECTS. By doing so, it is clearly at the front line of the future developments of the EU towards an integrate approach of education and training.

However, this added-value also represents some challenges in terms of:

- **Pedagogical and methodological approach**, the ECVET/ECTS model being developed by experts from both the higher education and the VET spheres, which are not necessarily used to working together.

- **Internal organisation and management**: Regarding the high amount of partners involved in the project (14 partners), a lot of managerial work has to be invested and tools developed to ensure the project's objectives are being met.

- **Visibility**: the issue of linking ECVET and ECTS is controversial and the outputs of the project are crucial regarding the future developments of EU policies in the field of education and training.

### Methodological approach

Roughly the first half of the project's duration has been dedicated to putting in place methodological tools while in parallel the implementation phase was starting. The project has benefited from the expertise of a very diverse and numerous working group, 11 of the 14 project partners being involved in this work package. The balanced representation of the VET, university and business representatives was considered a necessity in order to produce a well documented and referenced document. Each partner institution has sent at least one expert to the working group's meetings and the lead partner of this work package, UNICA (the Network of the Universities from the Capitals of Europe), played a key role as it made available three experts to coordinate the work on the methodology.

The working group's approach was, from the beginning, to focus on the similarities and common features of the two credit systems, rather than to insist on their differences and inconsistencies. Indeed, although these aspects needed to be tackled as well, it was crucial to first identify a common ground to build upon a shared methodology and create a space for mutual trust and understanding among very diverse and numerous partners.

In order to explore how these two devices can be brought closer and to bridge the gap between higher education and VET, a state of the art of the existing methodologies regarding ECVET and ECTS was made. It became obvious that, although the two credit systems do not share the same historical and methodological backgrounds, they both pursue the same goals of credit transfer and accumulation, mobility of learners and workers, lifelong learning and transparency of national systems within a common European Education Area.

The group working on the elaboration of the methodology thus first focused on identifying the main commonalities between ECVET and ECTS. Since, as stated in the Methodological guide, "*the project strives to be instrumental for a dialogue between higher education and vocational education and training*", their common features needed to be put forward in the first place.

However, the two credit systems have very distinct backgrounds. They have developed in very different historical, institutional and methodological backgrounds. To start with, one, the ECTS, is 20 years older than the second, ECVET. Also, their theoretical and methodological bases differ to some extent: the ECTS, although it has been reshaped in 2009 and now includes the learning outcomes approach, is historically an input based system which takes into account the learning content and the student's workload to allocate credit points to courses and modules. The new ECVET system, on the other hand, was shaped according to

an output based model which takes into account the results of the learning process (the “learning outcomes”) for allocating the credit points. **Whereas the ECTS is a quantitative mean of expressing an amount of time invested to obtain defined outcomes, ECVET is a qualitative mean of defining the relative importance of learning outcomes within a given qualification.**

The workload for ECTS and the relative importance of the units of learning outcomes within the qualification for ECVET have thus been identified as the main inconsistencies between the two credit systems. Having acknowledged this, the challenge remained to build a common matrix, despite the fact that the methodological ground of the two credit system differ to some extent. Thus, **learning outcomes have been identified as the only possible translation device between the two credit systems**: they comprise the driving force behind contemporary higher education reform and constitute the very core of the VET philosophy.

The adoption of learning outcomes shifts the focus on the learner, the role of a teacher shifts towards that of a facilitator of the learning process. It furthermore recognises that many activities can take place outside the classroom, based on learners’ own independent activities. This approach has influenced significantly the latest developments at EU level: it stands behind the elaboration of the European Qualification Framework and of ECVET and has also transformed the ECTS towards an output based approach as well.

The result of these considerations, to be found in the Methodological Guide, is a double entry table (the “matrix”), which common denominator is the learning outcomes, but which also takes into account the specific characteristics of ECTS and ECVET, namely the workload for the former and the relative importance of the units of learning outcomes for the latter.

### **Management and evaluation**

The project management relies on a clear delegation of responsibilities between the project coordinator and the “work packages” coordinators, who are in charge of important implementation and reporting tasks within their working groups. The project is organised in six “work packages”, namely overall management, design of the methodology, operational testing, evaluation and quality assurance, exploitation of results and dissemination strategy.

### **Be-TWIN: Managerial structure**



Based on a presentation made at the project’s kick-off meeting in Paris on March 6, 2009.

In order to ensure the project’s quality assurance and continuing improvement, Be-TWIN benefits from an internal and external evaluation process.

Internally, four partner institutions have constituted the Evaluation Board, which is in charge of the day to day monitoring and evaluation of the project's management and main results. In order to perform these tasks, the Evaluation Board has put in place evaluation procedures and developed evaluation templates. Thus, each meeting of the partnership is being evaluated thanks to a meeting evaluation form, which has to be filled in by each participant following the meeting. The forms are then compiled by the Evaluation Board which produces an evaluation report. This good practice has enabled the partners to improve the meetings' practical organisation and content. Secondly, the main deliverables issued by the project are also being evaluated by the partnership through a deliverable evaluation form. So far, this has concerned both the Methodological Guide and the password protected area on the internet, which has been created to enable the partners to post documents and information and to discuss the project's main issues.

The project is also being evaluated externally. The external evaluator of the project, who was selected for his experience in the evaluation of EU funded projects, has produced a mid-term evaluation report of the project activities, based on his reading of the project materials and on his meeting with three project partners. The point of view of a person external to the project constitutes a real added value and helps improving the project's quality, in particular the managerial and organisational aspects. In the second half of the project, the external evaluator is also expected to attend one of the partnership meetings, so that he can meet the entire partnership and receive input from a wider range of sources.

#### **Exploitation and dissemination strategy:**

Regarding exploitation and dissemination, the project plans the following activities:

- Exploitation: In order to raise awareness of appropriate decision-makers and to convince end-users to adopt and apply the project's results, the project has prepared an exploitation plan which will be launched in October 2010.

The main activities foreseen are first of all the organisation of Info sessions by the partners, which should take place from December 2010 onwards. The purpose of these Info sessions is to present Be-TWIN to appropriate key actors of education and training and to convince them to adopt and apply these results. The partners will organise these Info sessions using their networks at local, regional, national and European level. They will be addressed to organisations the partners usually cooperate with and to new stakeholders.

Secondly, the partners will produce a tool kit for trainers, which will be edited in three EU languages (English, French and German). The findings of the Methodological Guide and the results of the trial implementation will be taken into account to produce a user friendly tool kit used to promote the project to appropriate decision-makers in regulated local, regional, national and European systems and to convince individual end-users to adopt and apply the results of Be-TWIN to their own degrees/qualifications.

- Dissemination: Creating a graphic design that is representative of the aims and objectives of the project and communication supports (a powerpoint presentation template and a headed paper) has been taken care of at the beginning of the project, in order to ensure that the partners all communicate about the project using the approved visual identity.

#### **Be-TWIN logo:**



The next step is to launch the project's website [www.betwin.eu.com](http://www.betwin.eu.com), which is expected to take place in the autumn of 2010.

The dissemination will also be supported by publishing results in newspapers and other journals and through the use of national and international forums, as has already been done by some partners. For example, an article about Be-TWIN has been published in the French National Agency's (Agence Europe Education Formation France) magazine *Soleo* in June 2010, and the project has been presented on several occasions in the framework of national and international seminars in the UK, in France, in Belgium, in Greece, and at the ECVET launching conference which took place in Brussels in November 2009. In the future, dissemination will continue to include the use of the available dissemination channels and tools to promote the project, and it is anticipated that these methods, together with the end conference, which is scheduled in December 2011, will achieve large-scale dissemination of the Be-TWIN results.

Finally, the Be-TWIN project is inserted in a broader dynamic to develop, implement and disseminate ECVET throughout Europe. Indeed, the ECVET pilot projects are all engaged in a joint initiative to exchange about the methodologies they develop. This overall coordination is ensured through the consulting firm GHK, which organises regular seminars in order to enable the projects to share their good practices and to avoid that they work in isolation. Be-TWIN contributes to these activities on a regular basis.

Also, the European Commission has selected a consortium, ECVET Synergie, which is in charge of supporting, accompanying and training the member states in putting in place ECVET. The ECVET pilot projects, including Be-TWIN, will be members of the ECVET user's group, which will be shortly put in place by ECVET Synergie.

### 3. Project Outcomes & Results

#### Methodological Guide - *published in July 2010*

The first deliverable produced in the framework of Be-TWIN is the Methodological Guide: “ECVET-ECTS: Building bridges and overcoming differences”, which was finalised in July 2010. The methodology strives to suggest a possible approach to coordinate ECVET and ECTS.

A first theoretical part presents the main historical developments of the Bologna and Copenhagen processes and the philosophy behind both credit systems. Then, the guide proposes a “face to face” comparison of the credit systems’ consistencies and inconsistencies. The last and most innovative part is the matrix, which works as a double entry table articulating both ECTS and ECVET, and can serve as a transparency tool and a translation device in that it asks qualifications from both systems to apply identical and thus comparable information parameters. As a common interface it emphasises learning outcomes and the systems’ secondary layers of information, namely the workload and the relative importance of the units of learning outcomes within the qualification. It is important to stress that this methodology does not propose a completely new model of curriculum development or the revision of the presentation of qualifications in general, but strives to help presenting the training offer more easily and to link the learning content with the learning outcomes.

#### Methodological Guide: The matrix 1/2:

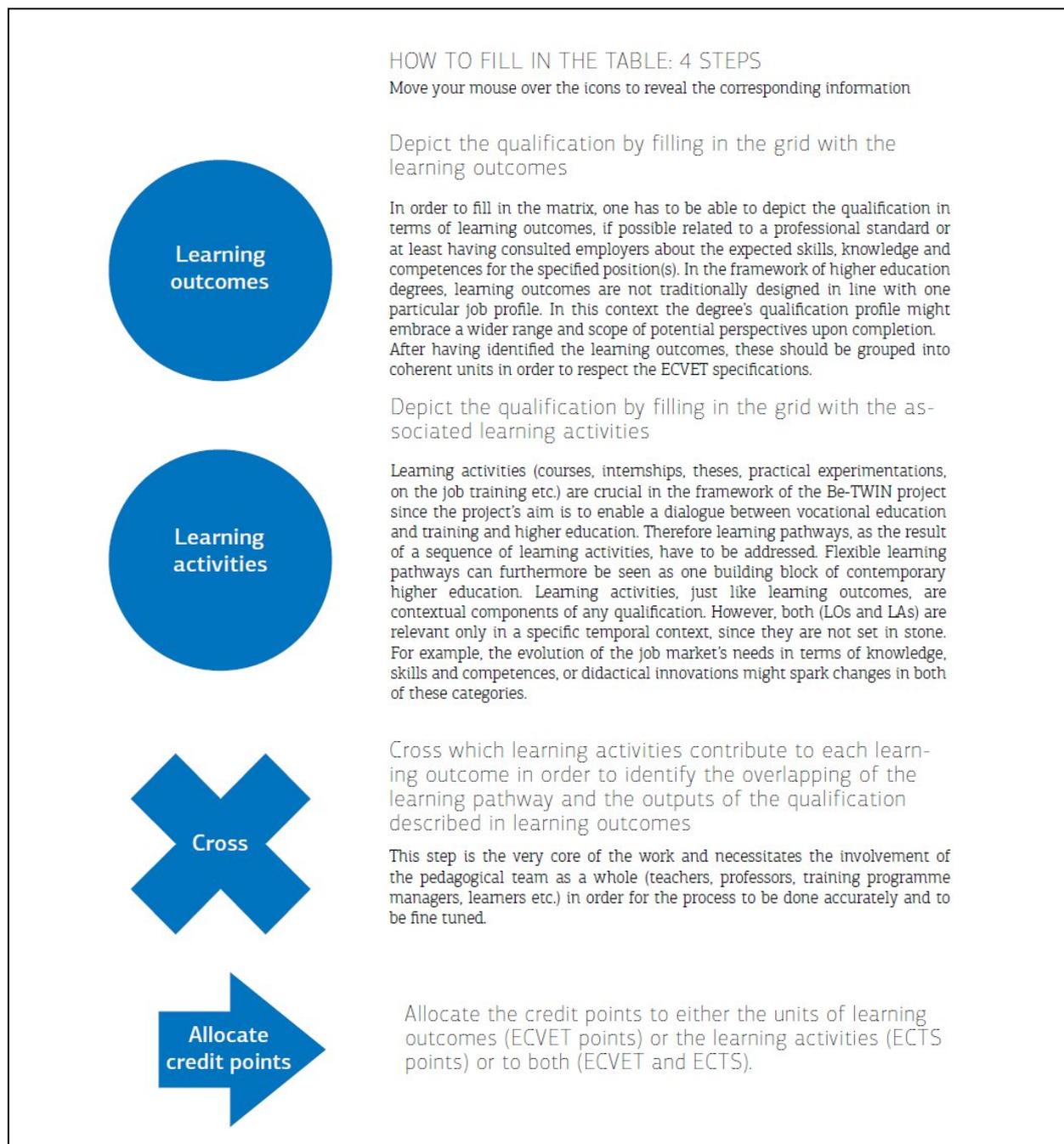
A simplified model –  
the matrix step-by-step

The model can be used from different entry points and is compatible with the specificities of higher education and of vocational education and training. The only pre-requisite is to start with an existing qualification, possibly referenced to an EQF/QF-EHEA level (depending whether the national framework has been referenced to the EQF already).  
The matrix is a double entry table, which enables to better depict and present a given qualification, by detailing the learning outcomes and the learning activities (curriculum).

	LEARNING ACTIVITIES						ECVET credit points
	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5	Ln	
UNITS OF LEARNING OUTCOMES	<b>U1</b>						...
	L01	*		*	*		
	L02			*			
	L03		*		*		
	<b>U2</b>						...
	L04		*				
	L05	*			*		
	L06						
	<b>U3</b>						...
	L07	*	*		*		
	L08						
	L09			*			
	<b>U4</b>						...
L010	*			*			
L011							
L012							
<b>Un ...</b>						...	
<b>ECTS credit points</b>	...	...	...	...	...		<b>Total</b>

Extract of the Methodological Guide: “ECVET-ECTS: Building bridges and overcoming differences”, page 26.

## **Methodological Guide: The matrix 2/2:**



Extract of the Methodological Guide: "ECVET-ECTS: Building bridges and overcoming differences", page 27.

### **Case studies - work in progress to be continued until September 2011**

In order to put into practice the methodology, the partnership has chosen three qualifications at different EQF levels (5 and 6). These qualifications are situated at the junction of VET and higher education as they are designed according to the learning outcomes approach, favour on-the-job training and respond to a professional standard needed by the labour market. Three sectors have been selected: plastics industry, hospitality management and training of trainers.

1) Case study 1 will apply the developed model on a French diploma, the BTS (Brevet de technicien supérieur) in the field of plastics industry. The BTS is a vocational qualification at higher educational level (it should be referenced at EQF level 5). It is a national diploma of the Ministry of Education, the training being delivered in several training centres in France.

The degree has been designed according to the labour market needs with a strong focus on developing technical skills. The case study is coordinated by the Fédération de la Plasturgie, which represents the 1 500 French companies working in this economic sector. The French ministry of education, which is the certifying body for the BTS, is a partner of this case study as competent institution. The training centre involved in this case study is one of the Paris chamber of commerce and industry's technological schools, the CFI, (Centre des formations industrielles). It delivers this training programme in apprenticeship, which means that the students spend half of the time in the company and the other half at school. The feasibility of the developed methodology in this case study will be tested through a mobility scheme between the CFI and the BASF's training centre in Germany. The two training centres have been cooperating for some years and the apprentices' exchange has already taken place a few times, although the mobility periods were never recognised before. The German apprentices will come three weeks in France in the autumn of 2010 and the French apprentices will spend three weeks in Germany in the spring of 2011. For the purpose of the case study, a Memorandum of Understanding will be signed among the institutions involved and Learning Agreements and Personal Transcripts prepared for each learner. The objective is to enable the learning outcomes gained abroad to be recognised and capitalised through the ECVET and ECTS credit systems. The results of this case study, whose implementation phase will take place in 2010-2011, will be possibly extended to other training centres delivering the BTS in Plastics Industry in France.

2) Case study 2 will apply the developed methodology to a Foundation Degree (FdA) and a Bachelor Degree (BA) in Hospitality Management in the UK. The FdA is a vocational qualification at higher educational level (it should be referenced at EQF level 5). It is a vocational higher education award, designed with employers, which aim is to develop technical and work specific skills underpinned by rigorous and broad-based academic learning. With the emphasis on work experience, Foundation Degrees are a two-year route to a degree and are highly valued in the job market. The BA in Hospitality Management can be taken after the FdA as a one year top-up, and it is referenced at EQF level 6. The FdA in Hospitality Management is delivered at the Stratford-upon-Avon College in the UK and at the Ecole de Savignac in France. The students can choose to either take the first year of training in France or in the UK. The Bachelor training programme, however, can only be followed at the Stratford-upon-Avon College. Both the FdA and the BA degrees are delivered by the Thames Valley University in the UK, which uses the UK credit system. The objective of this case study will not be to test the methodology in the framework of a geographical mobility as in case study 1, but to apply the matrix to a vertical mobility scheme between the Foundation Degree and the Bachelor Degree. Indeed, the training is delivered in two different countries, but as part as one and only training programme. Thus, recognition and transfer of the learning outcomes achieved between the two countries are already ensured and guaranteed through a formal agreement between the two institutions (the Stratford-upon-Avon College on the one hand and the Ecole de Savignac on the other hand). The ECVET/ECTS implementation in this case study thus concerns the reshaping of the training offer thanks to the learning outcomes' approach. UK credit points will be as previously allocated to the modules of learning activities and ECVET credit points to the units of learning outcomes. The Stratford-upon-Avon College will apply the ECVET/ECTS matrix to both the FdA and the BA, thus enabling a better understanding and transparency of the job profile and associated learning outcomes. This case study will also help facilitating the recognition of the vertical mobility between the Foundation Degree towards a Bachelor Degree. The partners plan the drafting of a "Progress Agreement", which will contain strong arguments in favour of the adoption of the ECVET in the British system and include the application of the developed ECVET/ECTS methodology in the given field of study. The ECVET credits attributed to the units of learning outcomes will be integrated in the agreement to ensure the quality assurance of the "ECVETisation process" of the FdA.

3) Case study 3 will apply the methodology to a degree in the field of adult education, namely training of trainers. The training programme, CDAF EDA COURSE was designed by the

Ministry of education of the Veneto Region (Ufficio Scolastico Regionale per il Veneto) and the Education Faculty (Dipartimento di Scienze dell'Educazione) of the University of Padua.

This training programme has been launched three years ago and 75 teachers have attended it so far. The assessment was positive since innovative training practices were introduced and applied in the schools after the teachers have followed this specific training path. The objectives of the case study, which will be further defined in the coming months, is to cross the teacher's professional profile, which has been defined in terms of expected learning outcomes, and the training content, thus applying the Be-TWIN matrix. This will hopefully enable to ensure that the training programme and the learning outcomes are better recognised on the labour market and thus to valorise the teachers' continuing learning experience.

### **Tool kit for trainers - to be issued in June 2011**

Taking into account the methodology as well as the results of the three case studies, a practical device, namely a "tool kit for trainers", will be issued in three EU languages: English, French and German.

The objective is to produce a user friendly guide which should promote the results of Be-TWIN to appropriate decision-makers (ministries of education and any other relevant certifying and/or competent body) in regulated local, regional, national and European systems and convince individual end-users (teachers, trainers, training programme managers) to adopt and apply the results of Be-TWIN to their own training systems and training programmes. A working group will define and elaborate the main objectives and the content of the tool kit during a seminar in Venice in October 2010. The tool kit as such will be released in June 2011.

## 4. Partnerships

Our consortium gathers 14 partners from 8 countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland and the United Kingdom. Also, through one of the partners (UNICA, the Network of the Universities from the Capitals of Europe), the project benefits from the expertise of two other member states, namely Austria (University of Vienna) and the Czech Republic (Charles University Prague).

In addition to respecting the EU geographical diversity, our partnership building also had to respond to three challenges, regarding the issues being tackled by the project:

- We had to achieve a **balance between VET representatives and higher education representatives**, in particular universities.
- We had to combine partners fulfilling the **ECVET and ECTS pre-requisites**.
- Last but not least, the team building also had to cope with the **constraints and feasibility of the case studies**, since the ECVET call for proposals specified that the selected project must test and implement ECVET within existing training programmes. We had to bear in mind that the project's objective would be to test ECVET and ECTS in real life. Therefore, we decided that the case studies should as much as possible build upon existing partnerships and even on running mobility projects. Since the project is a rather ambitious one, we found that we should be working on pre-existing partnerships. This explains why the case studies all have associated partners we collaborate with, which also constitutes a great opportunity to target institutions which are not directly involved in the project.

### Partnership typology

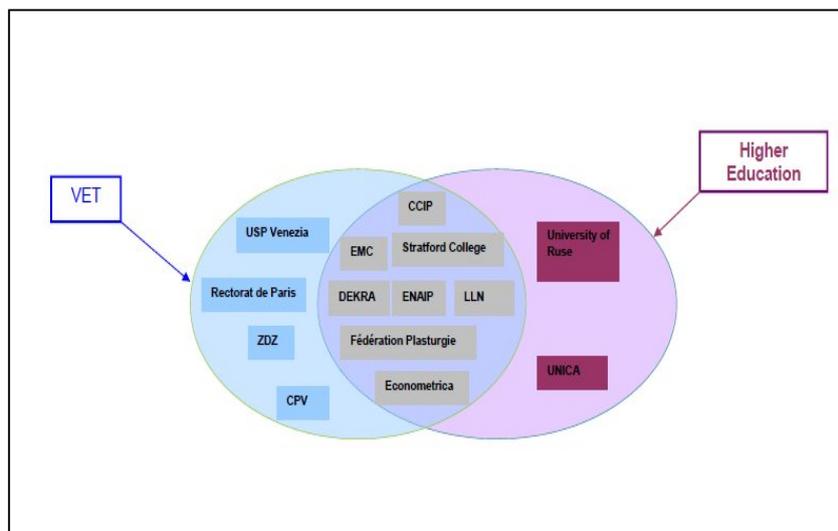
We have worked on elaborating a consortium which would be representative of the diversity of the education and training community in Europe. All sectors concerned by ECVET and ECTS are represented, academic as well as non-academic partners. Some of the partners are even competent in more than one field related to ECVET and ECTS. The consortium includes namely:

- **VET providers** from France, the UK, Italy, Poland, Germany and Greece: Paris chamber of commerce and industry (11 schools); Stratford-upon-Avon College; CPV - Fondazione Giacomo Rumor Centro Produttività Veneto; ZDZ; DEKRA Akademie GmbH; Econometrica.
- **Universities and higher education institutions** from Bulgaria, the UK, Italy, Austria and the Czech Republic (through the UNICA network): University of Ruse; Stratford-upon-Avon-College and Thames Valley University as associated partner for the purposes of the case study; University of Padua as associated partner of USP Venezia for the purposes of the case study; UNICA, the Network of the Universities from the Capitals of Europe (University of Vienna and Charles University Prague).
- **Ministries of education** from France and Italy: Rectorat de Paris (Paris Regional Ministry of Education); Ufficio scolastico provinciale di Venezia (Venezia Regional Office of the Ministry of Education).
- **Professional federations** from France, Belgium (European Confederation) and Italy: Fédération de la Plasturgie; European Marketing Confederation; Fondazione Gicomo Rumor - Centro Produttività Veneto (association promoted by Business associations: industrial association of Vicenza and Small Business Association).
- **Chambers of commerce** from France and Italy: Paris chamber of commerce and industry; Fondazione Gicomo Rumor - Centro Produttività Veneto (association promoted by the Chamber of commerce of Vicenza in collaboration with 4 other Chambers of commerce: Verona, Venice, Padova and Treviso).

- **SME** from Greece: Econometrica.

- **Networks active in the field of education, training and lifelong learning** from the UK and Italy: Lifelong Learning Network Staffordshire, Stoke on Trent, Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin; ENAIP (Ente Nazionale ACLI Istruzione Professionale).

**The VET and HE balance in the Be-TWIN partnership:**



Based on a presentation made at the ECVET Launching Conference in Brussels on November 17-18, 2009

**Typology of partners involved in the Be-TWIN project:**

Categories \ Partners	Training provider	Certifying body	Business representative	Network (support)
CCIP				
Stratford College				
Univ. Rousse				
Rectorat de Paris				
Fédé. Plasturgie				
CPV				
USP Venezia				
UNICA				
LLN				
ZDZ				
EMC				
ENAIP				
DEKRA				
Econometrica				

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**Lessons learnt**

The great diversity (geographical and sectoral) and the large amount of partners is one of the most striking characteristics of the Be-TWIN project. It constitutes an added value, since the project brings together representatives from very different spheres of education and training, who are not necessarily used to working together.

Creating a space for debate, dialogue and mutual trust is one of the project's key objectives, and makes us at the front line of the future developments of the European education and training area towards an integrate approach. Indeed, all institutions dealing with ECVET and/or ECTS will have to cope with the issue of their linkage at some point, so we are opening up the way for a broader dialogue Europe-wide.

However, coordinating such a composite partnership is not an easy task, and goes along with a number of challenges and difficulties.

To start with, there is a certain heaviness of having to deal with such a large amount of partners, which implies that it takes time to get to know each other and to achieve results that would be more easily realised in the context of a smaller partnership. For instance, regarding the trial implementation, the high number of partners and the difficulty to set up good working, efficient case studies with institutions capable of testing both ECVET and ECTS within training programmes, has had the consequence that some of the partners that were involved in the testing phase couldn't actually provide the required time, resources and expertise and were thus replaced by other partners. This paradoxically revealed one of the major added-values of having a wide partnership: the partners that couldn't be involved in the case studies could easily be replaced by others.

Secondly, it is more difficult to build a zone of mutual trust among such a wide partnership, composed of very diverse stakeholders not having neither the same cultural and methodological backgrounds, nor the same objectives in a joint ECVET-ECTS implementation. For example, in the framework of the work package dedicated to the methodology, more time and additional meetings than originally planned were needed to learn to work with each other and to understand the other's points of view.

The Be-TWIN partnership illustrates both the high interest and potential of such a project and the difficulties to achieve results in real life and to succeed in bridging ECVET and ECTS, VET and higher education.

## 5. Plans for the Future

In its second phase, the project will mainly concentrate on dealing with the following topics:

### **1) The trial implementation of the methodology on the three case studies:**

The case studies will be further implemented in accordance with the following road maps:

- Case study 1: In the autumn of 2010, the Memorandum of Understanding between the two training centres, the Centre des formations industrielles (CFI) and the BASF, will be finalised and signed. The Learning Agreements and Personal Transcripts for each learner will be issued.

The mobility scheme will take place as follows: The German apprentices will come to France in the autumn of 2010 and the French apprentices will go to Germany in the spring of 2011. Their evaluation and the allocation of the ECVET credit points will be carried out by the pedagogical team involved both in France and in Germany.

- Case study 2: In the autumn of 2010, the Progress Agreement between the Stratford-upon-Avon College and the Ecole de Savignac will be finalised and signed by both parties. The ECVET/ECTS matrix will be further developed and tested on the students through a focus group to take place in the winter of 2010-2011.

- Case study 3: In the autumn of 2010, the application of the matrix on the training programme will be finalised. Afterwards, a MoU between the Regional Office of the Ministry of Education and the University of Padua for credit transfer between labour market and VET will be prepared.

For each of the case studies, the grid of comparison between ECVET and ECTS will be updated further to the results of the trial implementation. This visual summary of the case studies will describe the different training programmes in terms of allocation of ECVET and ECTS points.

### **2) The valorisation and exploitation of the Be-TWIN results through the dissemination of the Methodological Guide**

From September 2010 onwards, the Methodological Guide will be widely disseminated and promoted to relevant stakeholders (competent bodies, training providers, universities, training programme managers, teachers, European stakeholders...).

This will include the presentation of the Guide whenever possible (meetings, conferences, internal working groups, written articles...), the mailing of the Guide to all potential interested stakeholders, and the posting of the Guide on relevant websites such as the project's website, the ECVET pilot project's website, the CEDEFOP virtual community dedicated to ECVET, the ADAM database, etc.

### **3) The elaboration of the tool kit for trainers as the main exploitation tool as well as the organisation of Info sessions to convince end users of the relevance of the project's findings**

The Info sessions will be organised by the partners from December 2011 onwards and be as inclusive as possible in terms of participating institutions. The tool kit for trainers is planned to be issued in June 2011. It will be produced in three EU languages (English, French and German).

#### **4) The dissemination and communication strategy**

The project's public website [www.betwin.eu.com](http://www.betwin.eu.com) will be launched in the autumn of 2010.

The project's end conference is scheduled at the third year of the project. It will take place in Paris in December 2011 and present the project's main results and findings. It will involve approximately 150 persons, representatives from educational institutions, competent bodies, the industry sector and any other relevant stakeholders within Europe which may be affected by the dissemination of the processes, outcomes and impact of the project.

Finally, a specific budget has been attributed to some of the partners in order to disseminate the project's results in the other languages of the partnership, namely Italian, Polish, Bulgarian and Greek.

## 6. Contribution to EU policies

In tackling the pending issue of the ECVET and ECTS coexistence within a unified education and training area in Europe, Be-TWIN contributes to several EU key policies and objectives:

### **Support the realisation of a European area for lifelong learning**

Be-TWIN brings along partners from different spheres of education in Europe to work together: training providers from HE and VET, national authorities, professional associations, European federations, etc. The project acts as a facilitator of dialogue and has set up a common space of mutual trust between various partners in the field of lifelong learning. This complies with the Lifelong Learning Programme's objective to "permit greater synergies between the different fields of action and [to] support developments in the lifelong learning".

### **Support the realisation of the Copenhagen Process and the implementation of ECVET**

The strategy for improving the performance, quality and attractiveness of VET, commonly referred to as the "Copenhagen process", is being tackled by the project. By putting in place an innovative matrix, Be-TWIN proposes to help VET providers to better connect the job profile and the qualification to the training offer and pedagogical investment, thus improving their attractiveness, quality and the mobility of VET learners.

Also, the project will implement the ECVET technical specifications by redefining qualifications in terms of units of learning outcomes and associated ECVET credit points and furthermore explore its connexion with the ECTS.

### **Support the realisation of the Bologna Process and the implementation of ECTS**

One of the major objectives of the Bologna Process in recent years has been to promote the modernisation of higher education and the shift towards student-centredness. This has among others included the redesigning of the ECTS system according to the learning outcomes approach, as the "ECTS user's guide 2009" highlights.

By proposing a new, innovative matrix that can be easily used by higher education institutions already using ECTS, Be-TWIN proposes to help them making the learning content more transparent and linked with identified learning outcomes, in line with the new "output oriented" ECTS system.

### **Learning mobility**

Although only one of the project's three case studies will include a period of geographical mobility, the methodological tools developed by Be-TWIN should enable enhanced and more recognised mobility schemes in the future. Also, by addressing the issue of the vertical mobility (case study 2) and the recognition of learning outcomes in the case of continuing training (case study 3), the project offers a diversified approach to the challenges aroused by the ECVET implementation.

### **"Youth on the Move"**

The recent Communication of the European Commission on "Youth on the move" has set the following priorities:

– Modernising education and training so that it is more relevant to the needs of young people and employers. Actions will target schools, apprentices and better recognition for skills gained outside formal education. They also aim to make higher education more attractive to increase the proportion of young people with high-level qualifications.

- Supporting learning and job mobility.
- Providing a new EU framework for youth employment, including recommendations to Member States on labour market reform and more help for public employment services to improve support for young people.

Be-TWIN will contribute to this initiative by promoting a unified approach to education and training and of the possibilities for learners to move from one learning context to another while having his/her learning outcomes recognised (vertical mobility).

The matrix developed by Be-TWIN should also help training providers presenting their training offer in accordance with the labour market's needs, thus improving the relevance of the training programmes. It should also support the recognised learning and job mobility of learners and workers across Europe thanks to the transparency introduced by the matrix.

### **“New Skills for New Jobs”**

By promoting a learning outcomes based approach and the identification of the knowledge, skills and competences needed by the companies to design training programmes, the matrix is clearly in line with the Commission's initiative on “New Skills for New Jobs” and its willingness to bridge the gap between the world of education and training on the one hand and the labour market on the other hand.

### **EUROPE 2020 - A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth**

As stated in the European Commission's Communication “Europe 2020”, three priorities stand ahead the member states:

- Smart growth: developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation.
- Sustainable growth: promoting a more resource efficient, greener and more competitive economy.
- Inclusive growth: fostering a high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion.

In order to contribute to a high-employment economy, Be-TWIN will test its methodology on three economic sectors: the plastics industry, the hospitality sector and the continuing training of trainers.

The European plastics industry makes a significant contribution to the welfare in Europe by enabling innovation, creating quality of life to citizens and facilitating resource efficiency and climate protection. More than 1.6 million people are working in about 50,000 companies (mainly small and medium sized companies in the converting sector).

The hospitality management sector is also a strategic segment of the European labour market. Around 1.7 million enterprises, employing some 9.5 million workers, make up the European hospitality industry. They represent an essential part of our society's cultural and social landscape and form the backbone of European tourism. It is crucial to enhance the quality of the training programmes leading to these occupations and to integrate the European dimension in those training programmes, since this industry requires its workers to be mobile and to experience different types of national cuisines and services in order to progress in their careers.

Finally, regarding training of trainers, we made the choice of adult learning since it is crucial to invest in continuing training to avoid workers being downgraded and their knowledge, skills and competences no longer in line with the labour market's needs.

