



Quality-Certified Training of Farmers on Organic Agriculture

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CerOrganic QA Process

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List of Definitions, Acronyms and Abbreviations:

Term/Acronym/Abbreviation	Description
COAF	Common Quality Assurance Cycle
E	Excellency criterion
EC	European Commission
EFQM	European Foundation for Quality Management
EQARF	European Quality Assurance Reference Framework
ICT	Information and communications technology
M	Minimum criterion
OA	Organic Agriculture
Open ECBcheck	Accreditation and quality improvement scheme for <u>E</u> -Learning programmes and institutions in international <u>C</u> apacity <u>B</u> uilding
PDCA	plan-do-check-ac
QA	Quality Assurance
ToT	Training of Trainers
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VS	Validation Seminar

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1. Executive Summary

This document provides the final CerOrganic Quality Assurance Process (QAP), i.e. the validated methods, procedures, and benchmarking criteria for certifying the CerOrganic training of trainers (ToT). On the one hand this deliverable is based on the results of Workpackage 4 "Training Programme Implementation and Evaluation", i.e. the evaluation results of the pilot training of trainers (ToT) and the validation seminars (VS) and on the other hand on WP 5 "Quality Assurance and Certification".

This deliverable constitutes a detailed description of the quality assurance process of the CerOrganic training of trainers for use by VET providers, trainers and public service institutions which is easily applicable to further VET trainings in the field of OA or VET trainings in general.

2. Introduction

The overall aim of CerOrganic was to develop and test a quality assurance procedure for the vocational education and training of agricultural advisors/trainers, based on the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQARF). Existing OA trainings for young and / or unemployed agricultural experts have been incorporated into a quality-certified blended learning training of trainers (ToT) programme. The qualified organic agriculture trainers will facilitate conversion by conventional farmers to organic cultivation and support the activities and productivity of existing organic cultivators, as required by The European Action Plan for Organic Food and Farming, and EC consumer demands for increased food quality and safety. The CerOrganic Quality Assurance Process (QAP), based on the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQARF), will be made available for application to other vocational education and training programmes in OA, to increase their quality and attractiveness, and stimulate agricultural extension service employment.

The CerOrganic QAP builds upon the quality specification Open ECBcheck and combines it with the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQARF) in order to show the completeness of the quality specifications for all EQARF phases. This development of the Open ECBcheck, the concepts, and its combination with the EQARF phases have been presented in D5.1 and have been used to draft the CerOrganic Quality Assurance Process (D5.2). Following application of the draft QAP to the pilot ToT and the Validation Seminars (VS), this deliverable defines the final CerOrganic Quality Assurance Process.

The CerOrganic Quality Assurance Process consists of:

- a) A set of processes(procedures?) and instructions on how to self-assess and peer-review trainings at each of the four stages defines by EQARF. The process is described in this document.
- b) A set of materials to be used for self-assessment and peer-review in order to evaluate and validate the training programme, the “CerOrganic Quality toolkit”, which is provided as an annex to this document.

In Chapter 2 the EQARF requirements for the CerOrganic QAP as outlined in D5.1 are summarized and adapted, based on the experience of the pilot training and the validation seminars.

Chapter 3 briefly presents OPENECBcheck, the quality specification that is used for evaluation of the CerOrganic Training of Trainers Programme.

In Chapter 4 the detailed CerOrganic Quality Assurance Process with its respective steps, and the CerOrganic QA tools are outlined.

2.1 Scope

This document provides a description and guide for the use of the quality criteria during the four EQARF phases as well as for self-evaluation and peer-review.

2.2 Audience

This report is addressed to the CerOrganic project partners and the Commission. The suggested self-assessment and peer-review framework however is addressed to the wider OA community and specifically all actors within that community interested in using ICT to support learning and training activities.

3. The EQARF Requirements for the CerOrganic Quality Assurance Process

The European Quality Assurance Reference Framework and its corresponding requirements for the CerOrganic Quality Assurance Process (QAP) have been presented in detail in deliverable D5.1 “EQARF Requirements for the CerOrganic QA Process”.

The European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQARF) was adopted by the European Parliament and by the Council through the “Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training” on the 18th of June, 2009.

The EQARF is a reference instrument which shall help Member States to document, develop, monitor, evaluate and promote their Vocational Education and Training (VET) systems. The EQARF as well as other European initiatives as Europass and the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) aim to facilitate the recognition of qualifications and competences received by learners across different countries or learning environments. They are thus global framework architectures for comparison of member states’ VET quality systems, but cannot be used to either develop or evaluate e-learning programmes or courses.

The EQARF, as well as the Common Quality Assurance Framework for VET (CQAF) follow a standard design cycle, derived from the Deming-Cycle (PDCA-Cycle). The reference indicators in both cases are ‘System Indicators’, the procedures are directed to the assurance rather than the development of quality. The indicators were created with the aim of collecting data to assess and shape VET policy. The EQARF sets out the following four interrelated stages within a quality assurance cycle (www.eqavet.eu):

1. Purpose and Plan: This phase comprises the setting up of clear, appropriate and measurable goals and objectives in terms of policies, procedures, tasks and human resources.
2. Implementation: In this phase the procedures ensure achievement of goals (e.g. development of partnerships, involvement of stakeholders, allocation of resources and organization or operational procedures) are established.
3. Assessment and Evaluation: This phase “includes evaluation of VET provision and assessment of “outcomes” at a system and an individual level. They normally include two

components: 1. Collection and processing data; 2. Discussion, evaluation and assessment based on this data.”

4. Feedback and Procedures for Change: This phase applies to the development of operations in order to achieve the targeted outcomes and/or setting new objectives, after discussions and analyses have been completed.

These stages can be illustrated by the following scheme:

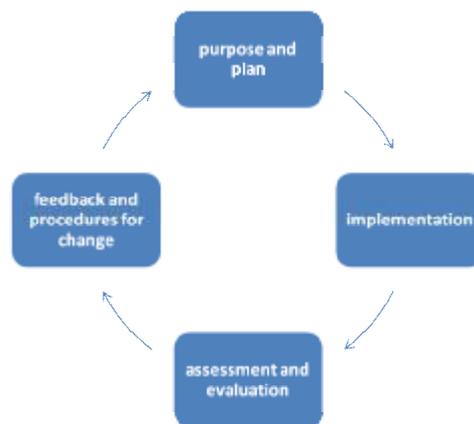


Figure 1 The European Quality Assurance Reference Framework

As the EQARF is directed towards QA of VET systems at Member States system levels, the CerOrganic quality assurance process for the ToT will therefore only be based on four stages of the EQARF quality cycle. The EQARF will be adapted to the operational quality model of Open ECBcheck in order to produce a combined model which will help course developers and providers to determine the quality criteria to be considered at a programme or at a course level. The four stages from EQARF will be merged with criteria from the Open ECBcheck, to be presented in the next chapter. The respective criteria for each phase can be found in the annex to document D5.1.

During the implementation the pilot ToT it became apparent that it is not possible to apply a certain criteria at a single phase, but that every criterion must be considered in every phase. How this can be achieved will be described in the next chapter.

4. OPEN ECBcheck

The CerOrganic quality assurance process will be based on the four EQARF stages merged with quality criteria taken from a quality assurance specification for professional training, called OpenECBcheck.

OpenECBcheck is a new quality improvement specification for E-Learning programmes and institutions in the field of professional training developed by InWent – Capacity Building International, Germany and the European Foundation for Quality in E-Learning (EFQUEL) officially released on the 15th of February, 2010. Open ECBcheck provides quality criteria to educational opportunities relating to “further education for individuals to empower them to shape and take part in their living spaces as well as giving them the chance to develop competencies that are needed at their workplace. It refers likewise to the empowerment of organizational learning, the development of management structures as well as the design of legal and political frameworks, to strengthen the capacity for independent advancement.” (Ehlers, 2010). OpenECBcheck was developed through a collaboration between 25 international agencies and their partners, amongst them 8 UN agencies including the FAO (see www.ecb-check.org for the list of members).

The OpenECBcheck quality concept supports the measurement by organizations of how successful their e-learning programmes are and allows for continuous improvement through peer collaboration. The participating organizations thus become part of an open peer-review community in which tools and guidelines may be shared, and which serves as a source of peer-review partners.

Open ECBcheck has elaborated quality criteria applicable to programmes and courses. According to Ehlers (2010, p. 34) the Open ECBcheck criteria are rooted in the following four best practice labels: UNIQUE, EFMD CEL, D-ELAN DELZert as well as ISO/IEC 19796-1 as shown in the following figure:

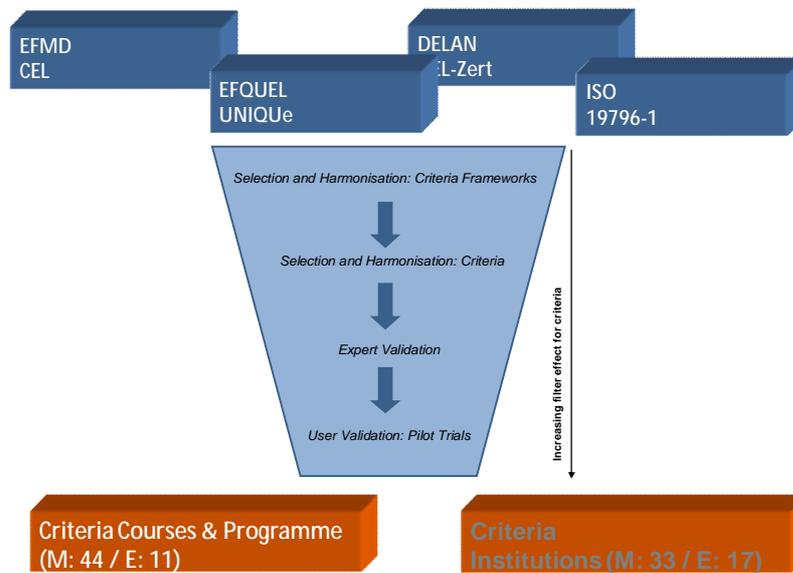


Figure 2: Criteria development based on international specifications

According to Open ECBcheck “programme” refers to a “training/learning offer that consists of several modules, which may be composed of a number of lessons, and comprises a workload of at least 100 hours. The workload includes participation in tasks/activities; self-study; preparation for assessments whenever applicable; and assessments. At least 20% of the programme must be technology enhanced for it to fall within the scope of the Open ECBcheck”. Whereas “courses” are defined as “shorter learning unit with less than 100 hours workload.” Usually a course is composed of only one unit, which takes several hours and covers one complete topic. At least 20% of the course must be technology enhanced for it to fall within the scope of the Open ECBcheck.” (see Open ECBcheck, 2010).

The quality of a course or a programme is evaluated by a predefined set of criteria, divided into “Minimum” and “Excellence” criteria. Minimum criteria are those which are absolutely necessary for a positive quality evaluation of a course and/or programme. Excellence criteria are those which characterise high achievements in the field of *E-Learning* quality. They evaluate the special strength and the individual profile of the organization. It is important to note that the quality framework is designed in an open way, so that each organization may adapt the configuration of minimum and excellence criteria to the needs of their specific context.

The quality criteria for programmes and courses cover the following seven distinct areas (Ehlers, 2010):

A) Information about and organization of the programme: The area "Information about and organization of the e-learning programme" is concerned with the basic information provided to learners about the programme. It is divided into : A.1 General Description, Objectives and Programme Organization and; A.2 Technical and Organizational Requirements.

B) Target Audience Orientation: "Target Audience Orientation" highlights the importance that the learners' perspective be considered at all times during the development, running and evaluation/ improvement of a programme.

C) Quality of Content: The area "Quality of the Content" is concerned with the quality of the materials provided. It also encompasses aspects of gender and cultural diversity.

D) Programme/Course Design: Programme/Course Design focuses on the quality of the learning experience based on: the overall course layout and presentation; instructional design (learning strategies, learning objectives); learning materials for the support of learners; the quality of eTutoring (learner support); as well as how assignments and knowledge assessment tests are designed and used. It is divided into: D.1 Learning Design and Methodology; D.2 Motivation; D.3 Learning Materials; D.4 eTutoring; D.5 Collaborative Learning, D.6 Assignments & Learning Progress; and D.7 Assessment & Tests.

E) Media Design: This area focuses on the accessibility and usability of the media provided to learners.

F) Technology: The area "Technology: Equipment & Infrastructure" considers how technology is used to support an optimal learning experience. It also considers the reliability of all systems.

G) Evaluation and Review: This section reviews factors that ensure a continuous improvement of a programme. It also examines whether learners have met the desired learning objectives.

The Open ECBcheck Quality framework foresees 5 different elements:

1. The criterion: the criterion is formulated in a definite and unambiguous way. Open ECBcheck releases an updated/improved version of revised criteria each year.
2. The description: Open ECBcheck criteria are described as to their coverage, their purpose and definition.

3. The guiding questions: The guiding questions are designed to indicate the themes to be reviewed for a complete assessment.
4. The weighting function: Each criterion can be assigned a specific weight. Thus the tool can overall be configured to meet the specific conditions of an individual training programme or institution.
5. The evidence logic: For some of the criteria documenting evidence is asked for. The candidate organization is required to provide (by uploading into the tool) documentary evidence of compliance with a respective criterion for consideration by the reviewers.

5. The CerOrganic Quality Assurance Process

The CerOrganic Quality Assurance Process is based on the EQARF and incorporates the criteria from OPEN ECBcheck.

As the EQARF is directed towards the field of QA at Member State system levels, the CerOrganic Quality Assurance Process for the ToT will therefore be based on only four stages of the EQARF quality cycle. The EQARF was adapted to the operational quality model of Open ECBcheck in order to produce a combined model to help course developers and providers to determine the quality criteria to be considered at a programme or course level. The four stages from EQARF were merged with criteria from Open ECBcheck. As explained in chapter 2, the EQARF sets out the four interrelated stages of purpose and plan, implementation, assessment and evaluation, and feedback and procedures for change within a quality assurance cycle: In order to supply the CerOrganic training programme with a quality approach to be used throughout development and implementation, as well as subsequently for certification, the Open ECBcheck process perspective was added to the specification. This was achieved by merging the model with the four steps suggested by the EQARF cycle, which were derived from the Deming-Cycle, and also used in CQAF.

It is foreseen that the quality development instruments will be used at five points during the training programme development:

1. Purpose and plan phase: The quality specification will be presented to the programme development team in order to orient programme development towards the quality benchmarks.
2. Implementation phase: The quality specification will be used by the programme development team to assure realisation/implementation of the quality benchmarks during the training.
3. Assessment and evaluation phase: The quality specification will be used by the QA team to assess and evaluate the implementation of the quality benchmarks during the training.
4. Feedback and procedures for change phase: The quality specification will be used by the feedback team to set up procedures for change after the training.
5. Certification phase: After the training programme has been implemented, the training will be self-assessed by the programme developers and then peer-reviewed.

The different steps needed for each phase are described in the next subchapters.

5.1 CerOrganic QA process in the Purpose and Planning Phase

During the purpose and planning phase, the CerOrganic criteria are used as benchmarks for the programme development. The CerOrganic Quality toolkit, provided in Excel format provides a detailed description for each criterion with guiding questions to assist the programme developers to design the specific aspects according to the given specification. The CerOrganic QA excel toolkit comprises a column with guidance on how each specific criterion should be applied during the EQARF purpose and planning phase.

For example, for criterion A1: "Does the description of the programme/course (brochure/flyer/webpage etc.) provide all relevant information for potential learners" becomes: "Draft a description of the programme/course (brochure/flyer/webpage etc.) providing all relevant information for potential learners on programme/course goals and overall learning objectives; methodological approach; target group; prerequisites for participation; selection process (if applicable); technical requirements; and fees. Information on knowledge assessment tests, timetable and workload; a calendar/timetable with details duration of learning phases (or modules) and dates of assessments". Where applicable such information may be divided into that to be provided to prospective participants before registration (information related to candidates' decision-making) or after registration as shown in the following figures:

Open ECB Check Quality Criteria			EQARF phases	
Criterion	programme (P) and/or Course (C) related	Description	Guidance how to apply during the EQARF purpose and planning phase	Guid
A.1.1 All information potential learners need to orient their decision about taking the course is available.	P/C	Objective and clear information is available to orient/facilitate decision making of interested candidates: Course/programme goals and overall learning objectives; methodological approach; target group; prerequisites for participation; selection process (if applicable); technical requirements; and fees . Information on knowledge assessment tests, timetable and workload is also available. A calendar/timetable details duration of learning phases (or modules) and dates of assessments. Whenever applicable such information may be divided to be provided before (information that orients candidates decision-making) and after the registration (information that further details course/programme organization).	Draft a description of the programme/course (brochure/flyer/webpage etc.) providing all relevant information for potential learners Course/programme goals and overall learning objectives; methodological approach; target group; prerequisites for participation; selection process (if applicable); technical requirements; and fees . Information on knowledge assessment tests, timetable and workload; a calendar/timetable with details duration of learning phases (or modules) and dates of assessments. Whenever applicable such information may be divided to be provided before (information that orients candidates decision-making) and after the registration	Make progr learn on Ot avail: of int: cours learn apprc partic appli: fees . asse A cal: learn asse inforr befor decis

Figure 3: Guidance for criterion A1 in the purpose and planning phase

5.2 CerOrganic QA process in the implementation phase

The CerOrganic criteria are used as benchmarks during the course implementation. Each criterion is described in detail and the guiding questions have been designed to assist the programme/course developer to operate specific aspects of the course according to the given specifications. The CerOrganic QA Excel toolkit comprises a column with guidance on how to implement each specific criterion during the EQARF implementation phase.

Following the example for criterion A1: "Does the description of the programme/course (brochure/flyer/webpage etc.) provide all relevant information for potential learners" becomes: "Make the description of the programme/course available to potential learners providing the relevant information on Objective and clear information is available to orient/facilitate decision making of interested candidates: course/programme goals and overall learning objectives; methodological approach; target group; prerequisites for participation; selection process (if applicable); technical requirements; and fees. Information on knowledge assessment tests, timetable and workload; a calendar/timetable detailing the duration of learning phases (or modules) and the dates of assessments. Where applicable such information may be divided into that provided before (information that orients candidates decision-making) and after the registration."

5.3 CerOrganic QA process in the Assessment and Evaluation Phase

The CerOrganic criteria are used as benchmarks during the course assessment and evaluation. Each criterion is described in detail and the guiding questions will assist the course developer to evaluate the specific aspects of the course according to the given specification. The CerOrganic QA excel toolkit comprises a column with a guidance how to assess and evaluate every specific criterion during the EQARF implementation phase.

Following the example for criterion A1: "Does the description of the programme/course (brochure/flyer/webpage etc.) provide all relevant information for potential learners becomes": "Check if the provided description of the programme/course provided the learners with the relevant information to orient/facilitate decision making of interested candidates: course/programme goals and overall learning objectives; methodological approach; target group; prerequisites for participation; selection process (if applicable); technical requirements; and fees. Information on knowledge assessment tests, timetable and workload; A calendar/timetable details duration of learning phases (or modules) and

dates of assessments. Whenever applicable such information may be divided to be provided before (information that orients candidates decision-making) and after the registration.”

5.4 CerOrganic QA process in the Feedback and Procedures for Change Phase

The CerOrganic criteria are used as benchmarks during the Feedback and Procedures for Change Phase. Each criterion is described in detail and the guiding questions will assist the course developers to set up appropriate procedures for change based on the collected feedback. The CerOrganic QA excel toolkit comprises a column with a guidance how to deal with every specific criterion during the EQARF Feedback and Procedures for Change Phase.

Following the example for criterion A1: "Does the description of the programme/course (brochure/flyer/webpage etc.) provide all relevant information for potential learners?" becomes: "Develop operations in order to achieve clear information on Course/programme goals and overall learning objectives; methodological approach; target group; prerequisites for participation; selection process (if applicable); technical requirements; and fees . Information on knowledge assessment tests, timetable and workload; a calendar/timetable with details duration of learning phases (or modules) and dates of assessments. Whenever applicable such information may be divided to be provided before (information that orients candidates decision-making) and after the registration”.

5.5 CerOrganic QA process in the Certification Phase

After the course has been completed, the programme/course will be self-assessed and peer-reviewed. Each criterion is described in detail and the guiding questions will assist the reviewers responsible for the self-assessment or the peer-review to evaluate the respective criterion. Furthermore, following the successful implementation, evaluation and certification of the CerOrganic Pilot ToT and the Austrian Horizontal Validation Training (see: D2.3, D4.2, D4.3 and the relevant sections of D4.4 and D4.5) it is recommended that the self-assessments of these trainings be made available to interested stakeholders, as both can be used as examples of best practise for successful certification of a training. Interested stakeholders should contact EFQUEL to get access to the certification of the two CerOrganic trainings.

The final process of self-evaluation and peer review of a training programme has seven distinct steps, in three stages, as outlined below.

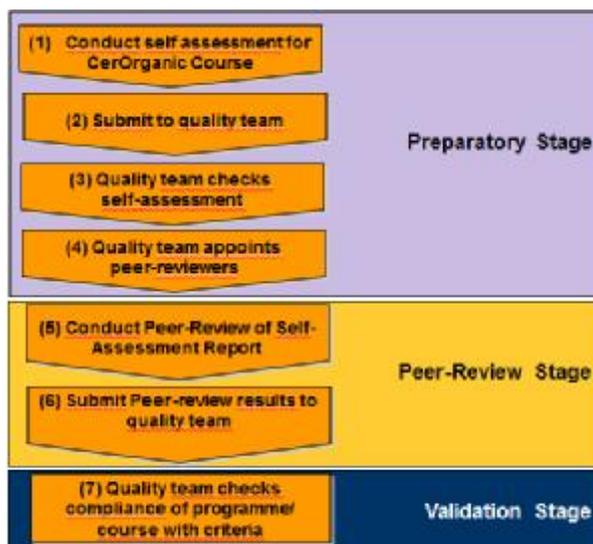


Figure 4: CerOrganic Validation Steps

In the following, the seven CerOrganic validation stages and steps are described in detail:

1. Preparatory Stage

Steps 1-3: The preparatory stage foresees that a valid self-assessment is put in place and is submitted to the CerOrganic quality team.

Step 4: The quality team will suggest and appoint two peer-reviewers.

2. Peer- Review Stage

Steps 5-6: After the materials have been received, the peer-review is conducted.

Step 7: The quality team then receives the peer-review reports and checks the reviewers' judgments.

5.5.1 Conducting a Self-Evaluation

Self-assessment is an important methodology in the quality development process. Every quality development process will start with a self-assessment in order to make sure the course has been checked against the criteria prescribed by the specification. In order to perform self-assessments, the Excel quality tool is used. A self-assessment requires one or more self-evaluator to follow through the list of criteria, and to record their judgement for each of the criteria.

Example: For several of the criteria, the tool requires that the assessor attach justifying evidence, e.g. in form of a document. If the criteria about learning design are assessed, the tool would require attachment of the learning design concept which the course follows.

The tool differentiates between courses and programmes. Courses refer to smaller learning units usually conducted as self-study phases and without tutor support. Programmes are larger learning units, consisting of several modules and are typically supported through tutors. Often programmes are blended learning scenarios. The CerOrganic ToT was a typical example of a programme and thus all criteria which are marked with “P” in the respective column of the quality toolkit were applied.

To conduct a self-assessment the following sequence of steps has to be conducted:

Step 1: Opening Excel file in order to start and display the quality tool. The quality tools consist of several pages. Whereas the first pages introduce the tool, section three contains the actual list of quality criteria and is referred to as the “Quality toolkit”.

Step 2: Familiarization with the information given in the introductory pages.

Step 3: Opening of Section 3 “Quality Toolkit”. The quality toolkit is shown in Figure 5 (below).

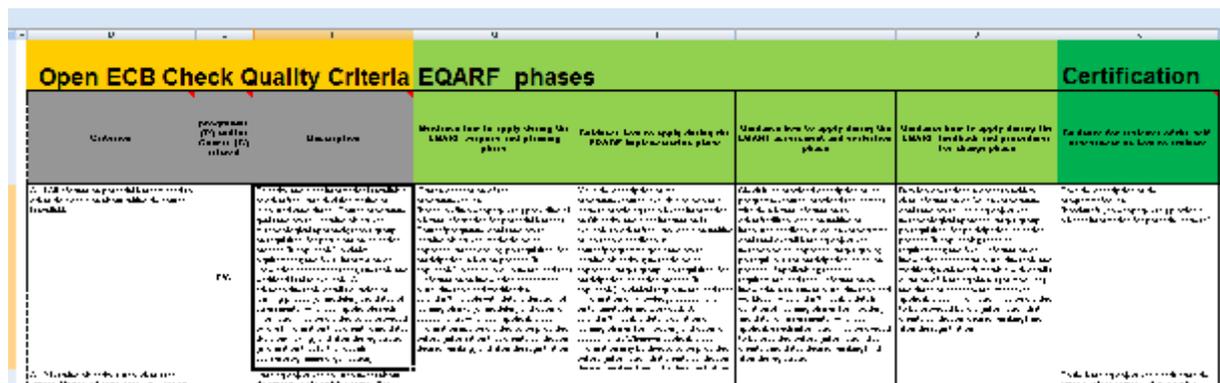


Figure 5: CerOrganic Quality Toolkit

Each column is specified (there are Tooltips behind each column caption which state the purpose of the column):

- **Criterion:** In this column you will find all Open ECBCheck Quality Criteria sorted into different categories.
- **Programme/ Course:** This column indicates whether a criterion is applicable for programmes (P) or Programmes and Courses (P/C). If a course is being evaluated, it is not necessary to cover the criteria that are only marked by P.
- **Description:** This column provides a more detailed description for each criterion to make the criteria more clear.

- Guidance on how to evaluate: This column should provide assistance for the evaluation of each criteria. It provides statements, hints and questions to assist discernment of the relevant information for the evaluation of each criterion.

For CerOrganic, all criteria marked with “P” for programme” were relevant.

Step 4: The quality criteria list is divided into “Minimum” and “Excellence”. Initially evaluation is made of all criteria marked as mandatory / minimum criteria (Criterion level “M”). Minimum criteria have to be met in order for the programme to meet with the necessary level of quality. Minimum criteria can only be evaluated through “Yes” or “No” – the criterion is either met or not met. Excellence criteria, on the other hand may be evaluated in several degrees, using the scale 0 = not met, 1 = partly met, 2 = met adequately, 3 = met excellently. They are designed to allow the candidate programme to express a certain strength and profile.

For each criterion please document why it was considered felt that the criterion is met and attach evidence to justify the judgement, if it is required, in the column “documentation”.

Step 5: The excellence criteria (Criterion level “E), are then considered. For each criterion it should be stated why it is considered that this criterion has been met and, where required, evidence to justify this judgement must be provided.

Step 6: By pressing the “results” tab of the Excel tool the overall score is provided, together with the strength and weakness profile of the programme/course.

5.5.2 Conducting the Peer-Review

The peer-review is used in this case to externally validate the previously conducted self-assessment. It does not constitute a peer-review of the programme/course directly but rather a peer-review of the self-assessment of the programme/course.

The peer-reviewers are presented with the self-assessment which contains three types of information:

1. The evaluation and judgement of the criteria
2. The comments and explanations of the self-assessment candidate
3. The attached documentary evidence for the judgments concerning the criteria where this additional documentation has been explicitly requested.

As a first step, the peer-reviewer must examine the programme/course itself. S/he will receive an access to the learning platform where course learning materials and assignments can be viewed. In this phase s/he can familiarize him/herself with the course and can later refer back in case the documentation of the self-assessment does not provide clear explanations.

Secondly the peer-reviewer walks through the criteria framework which is containing the self-evaluation. For the peer-review s/he an additional column in which the reviewer evaluates each criterion examined by the self-assessors previously. In case the judgement of the peer reviewer deviates from that of the self-assessment, an exact description as to why the decision has been reached must be provided.

It is essential that the peer reviewer provides clear justification of their conclusions, and also recommendations for improvement. All explanations and recommendations for those criteria for which the assessment of the peer-reviewer deviates from the self-assessment will be provided to the candidate and form the learning report from which it will become apparent how the course or programme may be improved in order to (better) comply with the quality criteria. The peer-review is thus not only a formal exercise but also an opportunity for learning and for the improvement of the training.

Therefore: In case you deviate from the self-assessment please a) identify the reason why and b) try to give recommendation(s) how to improve the course/programme in this specific aspect. Please use the column next to the evaluation column entitled "Review comments"

Some examples reasons for deviation and the corresponding recommendations are given below:

<i>Criteria Example</i>	<i>Identified Reason</i>	<i>Recommendations</i>
A.1.1. All relevant information on the programme is available to potential learners	In the information leaflet provided to the learners for the course, there is no indication of technical requirements which are necessary to participate in the course.	Please give technical requirements to participate in the course in your information leaflet.
C.1 The contents are aligned with the learning objectives and are presented in a	There is no clear structuring of the overall course into modules, units or lessons. All seems to be	Please structure your course into clear modules, units and/or lessons.

clear and logic sequence.	one and learners cannot orient themselves as to where they are currently.	
D.1.2 The learning design facilitates the learning process and supports learners' development of the skills and competencies, as described in the learning objectives.	Although the course objectives state that learners should develop an intercultural awareness and competence for intercultural dialogue there is only one single information text in which the topic is shortly brushed. No experience driven possibility to make experience with intercultural dialogue. Too theoretical to develop a true competence	Please include into the course an assignment in which learners have to interact about intercultural differences. Afterwards they should reflect on their experiences and perceived difficulties and differences.

Table 1: Examples for identified reasons for deviation and recommendations

In essence, the peer-review serves two purposes:

- **Fulfillment:** The peer-review will result in an overall appraisal and recommendation for certification (if all criteria have been met) of the candidate course or programme.
- **Learning & Improving:** The peer-review is important to provide the team with a learning opportunity based on the peers' experience and suggestions. During the peer-review, a number of possibilities for improvement will most likely be identified. These improvement possibilities will be enriched with suggestions by the peer reviewer and be included in a learning report containing all of the suggestions and comments from the peer-review.

The peer-review of the self-assessment (including the supporting evidence provided) is of central significance within the quality review process. Hence, it is important that the peer-review be conducted thoroughly and fairly, and value the achievements of an organization. Furthermore, it should lead to clear recommendations and highlight areas requiring improvement, together with suggestions for these improvements. In order to conduct a peer-review the following requirements must be met:

Guidelines for the peer-reviewer

- q Go through the peer-review criteria in sequence
- q Judge the criteria using the dropdown menu in the upper right hand corner
- q Use the submitted documents to find further evidence and background information in case of insecurity about a judgment.
- q Is the judgment previously given the self-assessor be justified? Then select the same judgment!
- q Do you disagree with the self-assessor's judgment? Then select a different judgment from the Menu to indicate your evaluation!
- q In the case that you disagree with the self-assessor's judgment please supply

Figure 6: Guidelines for the peer-reviewer from the CerOrganic QAP

6. Conclusion and Recommendations for the Future

This document outlines the methods, procedures, and benchmarking criteria of the final CerOrganic Quality Assurance Process based on the four EQARF stages merged with Open ECBcheck.

The described Quality Assurance Process was successfully applied to two CerOrganic Trainings developed by the CerOrganic Project Consortium, and held in 2011, the Pilot CerOrganic ToT held between the 8th of May to the 15th of June (D4.2), with the presential training element being held at MAICh, Chania, Greece, and the Austrian Validation Training “CerOrganic: The use of Blended Learning Tools in Organic Agriculture Advisory Services”(D4.4a), held 18th October (D4.4), at the University College for Agrarian and Environmental Pedagogy in Vienna, Austria. The reviewers considered these CerOrganic trainings to be compliant with all essential quality criteria and many excellence criteria, and have therefore granted them certification, allowing the consortium licence to offer these certified CerOrganic training programmes until December 2014.

The developed CerOrganic Quality Assurance Process is a generic quality framework not only applicable to VET trainings in the field of Organic Agriculture but is also easily transferable to VET trainings in other fields, across Europe.

In addition, the following recommendations for the future development of the CerOrganic QAP were made by stakeholders during the CerOrganic European Conference on Organic Agriculture and Education, held the 6th December, 2011, in Athens:

1. First recommendation: Future full alignment of the CerOrganic QA Process with the international ISO quality standard ISO/IEC 197961-1 and its reference process model RFDQ. Especially from the point of view of the stakeholders from the Greek inspection and certification organization DIO, a more recognised Quality label would be useful and facilitate the dissemination of the certified training within and beyond the European Union.

2. Second recommendation: Differentiation between CerOrganic QA Process and ECBcheck by more and better sector and branch focus. The generic framework of Open ECBcheck doesn't provide criteria specific to the OA training sector, therefore the CerOrganic training is also fixed in additional documents like the CerOrganic Curriculum (D2.2), the CerOrganic

Training Description (D4.1), the CerOrganic Portal Description (D3.3), etc. In a long term view, it is recommended that the characteristics of a CerOrganic training in the field of OA be included into the CerOrganic QAP.

3. Third recommendation: Improvement of CerOrganic QA Process towards process orientation in compliance with international ISO standards in the long-term perspective: Currently the CerOrganic QA Process with its self-assessment and certification is only based on and refers to course and content, but not to the organizational processes. Therefore only products can be self-assessed, evaluated and certified by the CerOrganic QA Process until now. The additional evaluation and certification of organizational processes would help organizations to improve their internal procedures and programme/course development processes, and ultimately lead to improvement of the quality of the programmes/courses.

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Project Information

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