



## **Europeanisation of the National Pilot Initiative for Quality Development and Assurance in Company- Based vocational Education and Training**

## Project information

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# Executive Summary

The target audience of this process report coincides with the target groups of ENIQAB (see below) and involves anyone interested in quality assurance in vocational education and training (VET).

In line with the Bruges-Copenhagen process ENIQAB contributes to creating a European education area and to embed a culture of European cooperation amongst educational institutions. It is against this background that ENIQAB links the European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training EQAVET initiative to the ten national pilot projects focusing on quality assurance and quality development. ENIQAB consequently integrates instruments and procedures developed by the pilot projects into the European process. Furthermore, the European EQAVET initiative is transmitted into the national pilot projects. ENIQAB familiarizes the participating projects of the national initiative with the European strategy on quality assurance and development in VET.

The aim of these activities are transnational synopses of quality development and assurance, from which different target groups can benefit: European partners are enabled to transfer impulses to their countries. Beyond that, the actors of the pilot projects receive information about relevant European strategies and feedback from the European partners. Last but not least the apprentices should be mentioned in this context of beneficiaries. Generally speaking, the efforts of ENIQAB to contribute to the European quality assurance and development in VET proves to be advantageous to a large number of actors interested and involved in high quality in VET. Guidelines/examples of good practice and a checklist will be developed to support this process.

The partners of ENIQAB all possess a broad expert know-how:

The consortium leader of ENIQAB, the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB), is recognised as a centre of excellence for vocational research and for the progressive development of vocational education and training in Germany. BIBB identifies future challenges in VET, stimulates innovation in national and international vocational systems and develops new, practice oriented solutions for both initial and continuing vocational education and training. The Institute's mandated tasks include conducting research on vocational education and training, developing vocational education and training, serving in an advisory capacity and providing services. The work done by the Institute currently revolves around five focal areas: the training place market and the employment system; updating vocational training and improving the quality of vocational training; life-long learning, the permeability and equivalence of training paths; vocational training for specific target groups; the internationality of vocational training. In relation to the latter point, BIBB is also responsible for the national implementation of the European initiatives as EQF, ECVET, EUROPASS and EQAVET. Furthermore the National Agency Education for Europe and the national bodies of ReferNet and TTnet are located at BIBB.

ENIQAB can therefore benefit from the broad knowledge and extensive experiences of BIBB employees in the field of vocational education and training. Moreover, the embedment of ENIQAB in section 3.3 of BIBB, which deals with development programmes and pilot projects, ensures a close link to the expertise in the area of quality. The pilot projects on quality development and assurance in company-based

initial vocational education and training are also based in the same section. The expertise in the field of quality assurance and development and in the field of European processes is furthermore reinforced by the National Reference Point for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training, DEQA-VET. DEQA-VET supports the promotion of quality assurance at national level as well as the strengthening of cooperation on the European level.

One of the three project partners is the Austrian Agency for International Cooperation in Education and Research (OeAD-GmbH). It is the central Austrian service point for European and international mobility and cooperation programmes in education, science and research. The agency supports strategic development and accompanies implementation measures. Furthermore OeAD analyses international developments and works out recommendations and measures.

The Austrian Reference Point for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training, ARQA-VET, is established at the OeAD-GmbH. It sees itself as a service institution that wants to serve the actors in vocational education and training in Austria by means of providing services and know-how in the fields of quality assurance and quality development. The objective of ARQA-VET is to cross-link stakeholders and to play an active role as a mediator from and to the European level.

A further partner in the project ENIQAB is the Polish Foundation for the Development of the Education System (FRSE). Its main aim is to support, in its broad sense, activities serving the development of education in Poland. The FRSE realises its aim through the coordination of educational programmes of the European Union, among others. One of the most important tasks as a National Agency is the coordination and implementation of the European programmes Lifelog Learning and Youth in Action. FRSE hosts also the national contact point of the EU programmes ERASMUS MUNDUS and TEMPUS IV as well as the national office of EURO-PASS, EURODESK, SALTO-YOUTH for Eastern Europe and Caucasus and for Bologna ECVET experts. FRSE is furthermore responsible for the implementation of the European Language label Initiative and eTwinning. More than 20 projects in the field of quality assurance were so far supervised by FRSE.

The Portuguese Directorate General for Employment and Industrial Relations (DGERT) is also partner of ENIQAB. In the field of employment and VET DGERT is responsible for the preparation of policies and legislation. It represents the Portuguese government in the board of Cedefop and in the Advisory Committee for Vocational Training and is the national authority for the accreditation system of VET. Moreover, DGERT represents the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity in the field of VET, in the EQAVET process, as the national reference point for quality in VET, in the ECVET network, in ReferNet and in the supervision of the national agency for LLP.

As previously disclosed, all partners possess extensive expertise in the fields of vocational education and training, quality development and assurance in VET and relevant European processes. This allows a constructive and efficient cooperation based on the peer-learning process approach.

In the preparation phase of the pilot projects the Institute of Technology and Education of the University of Bremen identified fields of action in connection with the promotion of quality assurance and quality development in VET. This conception was used as the foundation for the development of the pilot projects, which ENIQAB links to the European process.

ENIQAB applies the peer-learning process approach. The European partners transfer their experiences on the key themes of the pilot projects to the German system of vocational education and training. Experiences of the national pilot projects, in turn, are transferred into the European area. The experts involved in ENIQAB therefore learn with and from each other by sharing their experiences, asking for support and by giving mutual feedback and advice. The pilot projects, in turn, apply a workplace-based approach and focus on the process quality of VET.

In the project ENIQAB an important realized result so far is the exchange between the European partners and the stakeholders of the pilot projects. In addition, different products have furthered the dissemination: A flyer, a website, newsletters and further information material inform about the pilot projects as well as on quality assurance in European VET systems.

The above mentioned activities have already initiated transnational synopses of quality development and assurance and a mostly practice oriented exchange. In the further course of the project this will be intensified.

Everything relevant to ENIQAB can be found on the website <http://www.deqa-vet.de/de/ENIQAB.php>. In German as well as in English you can find detailed information on the objectives and the method of ENIQAB, on project partners, products, documentation and the advisory group.

The next steps of ENIQAB will be the publication of an English-language brochure on the pilot projects. This will allow the partners a more intense involvement in the projects and the developed tools and a further possibility to give their feedback. Subsequently we considered to offer the partners a visitor's programme at a project they are especially interested in.

The partners will continue to achieve newsletters about the projects. Parallel to this, German-language newsletters will further inform the stakeholders of the pilot projects about European initiatives in quality assurance and development.

Furthermore we are organizing two more ENIQAB workshops. Exchange and networking will be promoted by these meetings. In addition, the project representatives will participate in dissemination seminars organized in the partner's countries.

An important result of the project ENIQAB will be the assessment of a checklist and guidelines/examples of good practice referring to the pilot projects and the tools they developed.

The ENIQAB meetings will be documented and all the information about the project will be accessible on the internet. Lastly a final report will be provided.

In order to achieve sustainable results beyond the duration of the project, the information on ENIQAB is provided for enduring usage on the DEQA-VET website and on ADAM, the project and product portal for Leonardo da Vinci. This allows a long-term inclusion of the findings in the international quality debate, in which the European partners of ENIQAB will continue to be involved in and act as multipliers. The integration of the results into the national (German) discussion on quality in VET is furthermore assured by the close cooperation of DEQA-VET and the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research and by the integration of the Advisory

Group. In addition, the dissemination of the information on the project will be supported by the publication on TTnet.

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# 1. Project Objectives

The overarching goal of ENIQAB is to contribute towards enhancing the European culture of quality in VET. It is against this background that ENIQAB links the European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training EQAVET initiative to the ten national pilot projects focusing on quality assurance and quality development.

ENIQAB pursues the goal of transferring the findings and results of the pilot projects into the European area. It consequently integrates instruments and procedures developed by the pilot projects into the European process. In the course of this process guidelines/examples of good practice and a checklist will be developed. Three key themes, the foci of the pilot projects, come to the fore: the development of instruments of in-company quality assurance and development; the development of communication and cooperation structures and the development of a qualification concept for the training personnel.

Beyond that, ENIQAB also aims to support the transfer into the opposite direction: The European EQAVET initiative is transmitted into the national pilot projects. ENIQAB familiarizes the participating projects of the national initiative with the European strategy on quality assurance and development in VET.

The linkage of national and European initiatives and of their actors results in synopses of quality development and assurance. ENIQAB serves as a catalyst for a transnational and mostly practice oriented exchange.

Different target groups benefit from ENIQAB. The project reaches and involves the following people: The work which the partners from Austria, Poland and Portugal carry out within the German pilot projects provides an opportunity for them to gain impulses for corresponding measures within their own national context and to transfer such measures to their countries.

At the same time, the German pilot projects benefit from the exchange of experiences with the European partners. The discussion of prospects, the advice of the partners and the information about other European VET systems enrich the pilot projects and support them in the assessment and progression of their tools. In addition, the pilot projects avail themselves of the information they receive of the EQAVET process and strategy.

As ENIQAB spreads the information about the German pilot projects and their tools into the European area, the target groups largely overlap (naturally ENIQAB focuses on accordant actors in the other European countries). The pilot projects include a multitude of actors and institutions relevant to VET (301 institutions and 1.394 actors participate in the pilot projects). Involved are, among others: in-company training personnel (training supervisors, in-company trainers and employees who conduct training), vocational schools, chambers, social partners, training providers and education service providers.

Furthermore, scientists are included in the project by promoting the exchange between science and practice. The accompanying research of the pilot projects analyses and evaluates them. They disseminate and transfer the results into the scientific context. ENIQAB spreads their results (through information material and the meetings) into the European area.

The Advisory Group of ENIQAB comprises representatives from the Federal Government, the federal states and the social partners. It acts as a vehicle for linking the project to national developments/debates relating to the topic of quality in VET.

## 2. Project Approach

The pilot projects, which ENIQAB links to the European approach on quality assurance and quality development, are funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). In the preparation phase of the model initiative the Institute of Technology and Education of the University of Bremen identified fields of action in connection with the promotion of quality assurance and quality development in VET. Special focus was placed on the conditions of small and medium-sized enterprises. Regional workshops and company surveys were conducted for this purpose.

On behalf of BMBF the resulting conception was used as the foundation for the development of pilot projects. The projects should meet the following requirements:

- the main emphasis will be put on the training process
- the projects will focus on quality development rather than on quality assurance
- measures and approaches will be build on existing structures
- bottom-up approaches for the development of instruments for quality development will be compiled
- all relevant stakeholders of vocational training should possibly be involved
- a quality concept should be communicated

The following three fields of action/research foci were revealed by the study of the Institute of Technology and Education of the University of Bremen as worthy of improvement and are implemented by the pilot projects:

### 1. Development of instruments of in-company quality assurance and development

Proven instruments of quality management in vocational training in major enterprises are not directly applicable to other company sizes. Especially small and medium-sized enterprises need flexible instruments which fit their specific needs. It is against this background that the pilot projects develop and test adapted and refined instruments of quality assurance and development. The main focus lies on the promotion, evaluation and controlling of the formative process. Particular consideration is given to the learning progress, the acquisition of competences of the trainees and to the quality of the training organization.

### 2. Development of communication and cooperation structures

The optimal fit of content and time in the process of training is crucially important for the quality of a dual education approach. Accordingly, the cooperation and communication of institutions involved in VET are of central significance. Several pilot projects direct these issues. They develop and test instruments and measures for cross-company networking and the exchange of information on quality assurance and development. Furthermore they focus on methods which intensify learning venues. This includes the establishment of joint projects with regional partners, especially SME.

### 3. Development of a qualification concept for the training personnel

The training personnel (including training supervisors) equally take a key role in the direct educational process. In addition to the professional competence, the

pedagogical qualification of the training personnel is a main element for quality development in the educational process. Several pilot projects therefore develop and test concepts of training and continuing training along with concepts of process-oriented accompaniment for the educational personnel. They relate to the transmission of instruments, methods and procedures for the improvement of the quality of the training process. This also includes the exchange of experience among each other.

The pilot projects all refer to at least one of the mentioned research foci. During the whole time span of the programme the scientific support evaluates each pilot project in two sessions: The first session will be of supportive character and mainly formative, while the second will be of a concluding nature and will apply a summative evaluation method. Initially, the focus of the evaluation is directed at the processes and results of innovation. In addition, the projects will be examined with regard to their contribution to the objectives of the programme and with respect to a permanent and large-scale anchoring of the innovation.

ENIQAB furthermore creates references between the quality Indicators of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET and the pilot projects. A precise classification though is partially not possible yet,

The substantiated foundation of the pilot projects, as described above, can be interpreted as a significant indicator for the relevance and importance of the projects for quality development in VET. The multitude of stakeholders and multipliers involved in the different projects is definitely a significant asset. In addition, ENIQAB can make use of the widespread distribution list and of the networks of the pilot projects. As a further advantage the scientific support is to be mentioned. Members of the Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training (f-bb) and the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) scientifically analyze and process the findings of the pilot projects. Furthermore they conduct extensive evaluations of the projects. Another distinguishing added value of ENIQAB is the access to all these structures and results of the pilot projects and the possibility of a continuing exchange.

The workplace-based approach is also a special characteristic of the pilot projects. The exemplary testing at the workplace enables the development of practice-oriented and transferable instruments and methods. In consideration of the interaction of input process, output and outcome quality, the focus of the pilot projects lies on the process quality of VET. This is legitimate regarding the fact that the latter usually receives comparatively little attention. The dimensions of output and outcome are taken into account to be able to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the developed instruments.

It is furthermore advantageous that ENIQAB involves partners of different European countries, as national perceptions and knowledge can be linked and shared. This is reflected by the peer-learning process approach, which ENIQAB applies. The European partners transfer their experiences on the key themes of the pilot projects (see above) to the German system of vocational education and training. Experiences of the national pilot projects, in turn, are transferred into the European area. The experts involved in ENIQAB therefore learn with and from each other by sharing their experiences, asking for support and by giving mutual feedback. The basis for this approach is the "European Peer Review Guide" published by the European Science Foundation. This procedure enables an optimal connection of national and European initiatives.

Specifically, the peer-learning process looks as follows:

1. The German pilot projects are informed about the European quality assurance approach (EQAVET, EQAVET) and about quality assurance measures in the partner countries.
2. The partner countries receive information about the approaches of the German pilot projects and about quality assurance in vocational education and training in Germany. They may use this information for appropriate measures in their own national context and to transfer “good practice”.
3. Specialist transfer of information takes place between the German stakeholders and the partner countries at project meetings. The aim here is to provide mutual feedback on the quality assurance instruments.

Significant milestones are the jointly developed project planning matrix and the participation of the European partners in workshops, where also representatives of the pilot projects take part in. These meetings offer the possibility of direct feedback. Furthermore the creation of newsletters, information material, reports and the distribution of good practice are important steps of the project.

In order to achieve sustainable results beyond the duration of the project, the information on ENIQAB is provided for enduring usage on the DEQA-VET website and on the project and product portal for Leonardo da Vinci, ADAM.

This allows a long-term inclusion of the findings in the international quality debate, in which the European partners of ENIQAB will continue to be involved in. The integration of the results into the national (German) discussion on quality in VET is furthermore assured by the close cooperation of DEQA-VET and the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research and by the integration of the Advisory Group. In addition, the dissemination of the information on the project will be supported by the publication on TTnet.

### **3. Project Outcomes & Results**

In order to achieve the goal of ENIQAB, the creation of a link between the European initiative EQAVET to the ten national pilot projects focusing on quality assurance and quality development, the following activities have been carried out:

Through the organization of meetings the exchange between the European partners and the stakeholders involved in the pilot projects has been promoted. The participants had the opportunity to get to know each other in person and to discuss about different approaches on quality development. Furthermore, they learned more about the pilot projects and the EQAVET process. In addition, the participation of the ENIQAB partners at other relevant meetings has also spread the information on the project and promoted the exchange with stakeholders.

The dissemination is being furthered by different products: A project flyer (in English and German) provides a short overview on the most important information about ENIQAB. Furthermore two German-language newsletters have informed the national pilot projects about European activities in the field of quality development and assurance in VET. For this purpose ENIQAB can use the distribution list of the pilot projects. Through an English-language newsletter the project partners have had the possibility to learn more about the pilot projects and their tools. For this purpose the descriptions of all pilot projects have been translated into English.

Everything relevant to ENIQAB can be found on the website <http://www.deqavet.de/de/ENIQAB.php>. In German as well as in English you can find detailed information on the objectives and the method of ENIQAB, on project partners, products, documentation and the advisory group.

The above mentioned activities have already initiated transnational synopses of quality development and assurance and a mostly practice oriented exchange. In the further course of the project this will be intensified.

The brochure on the pilot projects, which should have been printed according to the project schedule, is being edited at the moment. At present we are also writing a newsletter behind schedule. The time delay has been caused by a staff change.

## 4. Partnerships

ENIQAB clearly benefits from the different partner and colleagues, that is the European partners, the numerous actors of the pilot projects and DEQA-VET.

The added value of the multi-country partnership especially lies within the possibility of mutual exchange of experiences and ideas. All European countries have different experiences with their VET system and initiatives for quality assurance and development. By bringing together experts of different European countries, national perceptions and knowledge can be linked and shared. This allows a broad spectrum of perspectives, from which all partners benefit. In addition, it is very useful for the project to be able to use the different networks of the partners for the dissemination of the findings of the project. European multi-country partnerships therefore support, in line with the Copenhagen Process, European cooperation in vocational education and training.

The experience of working together in a European partnership is positive. In the project ENIQAB we notice that it is very useful to exchange considerations and impressions concerning the national pilot projects. Besides that, it is interesting and helpful to expand the own horizon through getting to know VET systems and experiences in quality assurance and development of other European countries better. Against this background it is also useful that some of the partners have dual VET systems, others a mostly school-based system. The described exchange certainly provides new impulses for the national context.

The benefit of partnerships established with groups outside of the direct project, e.g. with target users, is certainly very valuable. Target groups can judge best if the developed tools are really of advantage or where the problems lie. This led the pilot projects to include their target groups, the apprentices, the trainers etc. into the projects.

## 5. Plans for the Future

In order to achieve the aims of ENIQAB, the following measures are planned:

The next step will be the publication of an English-language brochure on the pilot projects. This will allow the partners a more intense involvement in the projects and the developed tools and a further possibility to give their feedback. Subsequently we considered to offer the partners a visitor's programme at a project they are especially interested in.

Obviously the partners will continue to achieve newsletters about the projects. Parallel to this, German-language newsletters will further inform the stakeholders of the pilot projects about European initiatives in quality assurance and development.

Furthermore we are organizing two more ENIQAB workshops. The next one will take place on 13th/14th September together with the DEQA-VET Annual Conference. There the European partners will – apart from an internal section – have the possibility to learn more about the current status and concepts of quality assurance and to meet different stakeholders. The last ENIQAB workshop will take place in January or February. Exchange and networking will be promoted by these meetings. In addition, project partners will organize dissemination activities (conferences and seminars) to present project results and discuss the concepts of QA.

An important result of the project ENIQAB will be the assessment of a checklist and guidelines/examples of good practice referring to the pilot projects and the tools they developed.

The ENIQAB meetings will be documented and all the information about the project will be accessible on the internet. Lastly a final report will be provided.

All results will be accessible on the ENIQAB website.

In summary:

- further information material (English-language brochure on pilot projects, newsletters, guidelines/examples of good practice, checklist, etc.)
- feedback of the partners on usefulness of developed tools (for national and international context)
- further ENIQAB Workshops in order to exchange and spread findings of the pilot projects
- dissemination of findings by European partners participating at meetings and presenting ENIQAB
- continuous updating of ENIQAB website, providing all products, documentations etc. on ENIQAB

## 6. Contribution to EU policies

In line with the Copenhagen process ENIQAB enhances the cooperation in VET in Europe. It supports quality development and assurance in VET and consequently helps to provide the skills, knowledge and competences needed in the labour market. ENIQAB contributes in the spirit of the Bruges Communiqué to a high quality education and training system which responds to the needs of today and tomorrow.

The project ENIQAB achieves an optimum integration of European and national resources. It accomplishes the internal and external Europeanization of a national activity that would have been carried out in any case. In line with the objectives of the Lifelong Learning Programme, ENIQAB encourages the best use of results and the European exchange of good practice.

The in-company training personnel is a key resource for high-quality vocational training and an important issue of the Lisbon Education & Training Progress Indicators. A qualification of trainers can increase the number of qualified instruction personnel and contemporarily raise the ratio of pupils to teaching staff. ENIQAB refers to the accordant Lisbon indicators as one of the foci of the pilot projects is the development of qualification concepts for the training personnel.

Lisbon key competences as “Learning to learn” and “Interpersonal, intercultural and social competences and civic competence” are also promoted by ENIQAB. The in-company training and the identification with the work motivates many apprentices to learn how to learn. Studies have also shown that the transition from pupil to employee often increases the willingness to deal with social and political questions.

In addition, the project is complementary with the European policy of employment. The European employment policy raises high expectations regarding the in-company training and its potential to reduce unemployment. By promoting the high quality of in-company training, ENIQAB supports the achievement of this objective.

Moreover, ENIQAB addresses the following two objectives of the Lifelong Learning Programme: Firstly, the cooperation in quality assurance in Europe and secondly the best use of results and the exchange of good practice. The latter is done by the transfer of the findings of the national pilot projects into the European area. The focus on small and medium-sized enterprises facilitates the compatibility of the developed tools with other European countries.

Furthermore ENIQAB alludes to Lifelong Learning horizontal policies as making provision for learners with special needs. The learning in the workplace context represents a great potential for the integration and motivation of youths with learning difficulties.