

PART D. PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

Promotor: EVTA

D.1 WHY DOES THE CONSORTIUM WISH TO UNDERTAKE THIS PROJECT?

Rationale of and background to the project

Please outline the motivation behind your project, clearly identifying the specific needs or problems/challenges which it intends to solve. Explain why these needs/problems were selected over others, and how the project proposal fits within the development strategies of the partners involved. Please include references to any declared regional, national, EU or international political priority in this area.

Also, please describe briefly how your project proposal was prepared (e.g., capitalising on previous experiences, based on achieved outcomes in former projects, following previous cooperation amongst the consortium members, etc.) (limit 6000 characters).

Why ECVET?

In these times of economic depression and ageing population, (especially the last one will lead to huge shortages of quality personnel on the European labour market in the next few years), the quality and quantity of skilled employees is of high importance. One of the solutions in improving the quality of personnel and overcoming shortages on the European labour market is mobility. Studying or working abroad enables individuals to acquire new skills in a context abroad during their training programme or work and to develop themselves professionally and personally. It increases the employability of people and it helps to close the gap between offer and demand on the labour market. Besides, mobility makes people less vulnerable on the labour market: they can more easily work in another context when there is no work anymore in their own region or country or shortages in another region or country.

On the other hand, we can only speak from successes and an added value in mobility in vocational training when we manage to recognize and valorize these competences of individuals! This implies collaboration at national and European level between the competent bodies, more transparency of qualifications via the EQF, units and learning outcomes and quality assurance in assessment and validation methods (ECVET).

In the EVTA network the members agree that they have to deal with the problems on the European labour market as described above. It is also agreed that European cooperation is not longer a desire or a mean in European projects, but it is necessary on daily basis to "survive". Therewith, ECVET is seen as a valuable tool which can help members when facing labour market problems in the next coming years. Consequently, the experimentation and implementation of ECVET is included in the three year working programme of EVTA (2010-2012).

EVTA is already working on ECVET the last years: in working groups within the EVTA network; in a partnership project "PEP"; and as expert in the scientific committee and workshops for the users group of the European ECVET network.

The needs within the EVTA network on ECVET: a needs analysis

In 2008 EVTA has set up a technical working group on "qualifications", with a focus on ECVET. ECVET was (and is still) part of the three year working programme of EVTA. In order to define the specific activities for this working group, a needs analysis on ECVET was carried out in 2008. One of the conclusions was, that there is an interest in developing and testing the ECVET principles starting from their particular

situation in their own (mobility)context. From this inventory we could also conclude that almost all the project partners are dealing with mobility and the development of their national qualifications in terms of LEARNING OUTCOMES (knowledge, skills and competences). At the same time, the inventory showed also that there are students and adults going abroad to work or study, but that the recognition of these competences is still a weakness.

This first inventory showed that for all the participating organisations there is an interest in finding and implementing solutions for the recognition of competences which are required in another context, in which ECVET might be a solution. This was exactly the starting point of the LdV partnership project "PEP" : Using existing mobility cases and using existing European tools (ECVET) to find solutions.

The partnership project "PEP": "Partnership for Experimenting with ECVET in a Practical context"

Based on the experiences of this working group and analysis as described above, in 2009 a LdV partnership project was set up with 10 partners, to experiment with ECVET in a practical context. This means that at the end of the project, the outputs of this project have to contribute to the establishment of a sustainable mobility network at European level and the start of the development of a memorandum of understanding for ECVET(mutual trust!) As none of the partners had concrete experiences in working with ECVET, this meant that we the project was based "learning by doing". Learning from each other, exchanging knowledge & experiences trying each others experiences in own context were key principles in the partnership project.

Main results achieved in the partnership project:

The approach of the partnership project was innovative, but at the same time complex: the starting point was a concrete situation in their own country where ECVET could/ should be applied. This means with 10 partners, 10 different contexts! (different target groups, different sectors, different learning situations etc.) This made the project complex, but also realistic: it is of course easier to apply ECVET in a situation where organisation have developed a common competences profile in terms of units and learning outcomes, but this will not be the reality in the majority of the situations.

"PEP goes local":

In the PEP project we have seen that collaboration with all the stakeholders in VET is necessary to implement ECVET. Applying the technical specification of ECVET is not enough: it is also about flexibility and permeability in training centres: is the training centre able (do they have the autonomy) to offer flexible training pathways? Do they accept parts of qualifications which are validated in another context (permeability has all to do with quality assurance and mutual trust)? In other words, national and European collaboration is a must in order to use and implement ECVET.

In the PEP project a start is made to make an inventory of the most important stakeholders in their "ECVET arena": With who do you have to collaborate in order to use ECVET and to implement ECVET in your context? The problem is, that it is impossible to involve all these partners in a European project and besides not all these partners are already up to date about ECVET.

This argues for an approach which if focussed on the national levels: in the "PEP goes local" project, the experiences of the partners in the PEP project will be used in national workshops for the relevant stakeholders. These workshops are focussed on their national/ regional/ local/ sectoral context and focussed on how ECVET could/ should be used and how possible obstacles can be overcome and what the first next steps could be in their context. There is a need for a more practical approach, rather than more information on ECVET. The partners will use each others experiences of the PEP project to see if it can work also in their context.

If your proposal is based on the results of one or more previous projects / networks, please provide precise references to this / these project(s) / network(s) in the table below.

Please add tables as necessary.

Reference number	NL/09/LLP-PS/LDV/013		
Project / network dates <i>(year started and completed)</i>	01-08-2009 31-07-2011	Programme or initiative	LdV partnership
Title of the project / network	PEP: Partnership for Experimenting with ECVET in a Practical context		
Coordinating organisation	EVTA/ KCH International		
Website	http://www.evta.net/html_pc/pep.htm		
Password / login if necessary for website			
<i>Please summarise the project / network outcomes and describe (a) how the new proposal seeks to build on them and, (b) how ownership / copyright issues are to be dealt with (limit 1000 characters).</i>			
<p>The main objective of the PEP project was to experiment with ECVET and to see in which context ECVET could be useful in each of the partnercountries. It started from a bottom up approach: from the needs of the target group and not the offer side (a common qualification).</p> <p>In this project "PEP goes local" the experiences of the PEP project will be used to contribute to the use and the implementation at <u>national level</u>. One of the conclusions of the partnership project was that partners in the partnership project cannot implement ECVET by themselves: it requires a close collaboration with other stakeholders in their national/ regional and/or local context. Therefore, a European conference will be too general (and costly due to the translations and travel) and besides, there is a need for more context linked solutions within the partnership: partners would like to discuss how ECVET could work in their context, what they have to face and to overcome these obstacles. So no general framework, but practical solutions and experiences.</p> <p>The most important part of the PEP project that will be used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working methods and pedagogical approaches used during the PEP meetings, will be transferred to the national workshops; • The experiences in the field of comparison of learning outcomes and qualifications (as practical exercises during the workshop); • Practical cases of each partner as an example of possible ECVET applications (for the content); • The way of setting up a SWOT and analysis (definition of obstacles) will be used (for the methodology); 			

Rationale for the setting-up of the consortium

Please explain why the selected partners are best suited to participate in this European project. Describe complementary skills, expertise and competences within the consortium directly relating to the planned project activities (limit 3000 characters).

All the partners are EVTA members. The advantage of including EVTA members in the partnership is the following:

- Most of these partners also participated in the PEP project and thus contributed to concrete experiences, which are the basis for the national workshops in the PEP goes local project;
- Working within the EVTA network will lead to a sustainable ECVET partnership, even after the project duration, as ECVET is part of the working programme and the partnership will remain after the project duration (they gather 2/yr, during the EVTA general assemblies);
- The partners already worked with each other in the field of transparency of qualifications and mobility and there is already a certain basis of mutual trust. It always takes a lot of time to get to know each other in a EU project. In this project, partners already know each other for more than 10 years.

All the partners are acting in vocational training, but all from different perspectives: adult education, employment services for unemployed, young people, sectoral oriented, responsible for qualification structures, regional/ local oriented etc. This implies a rich diversity of actors in vocational education and training and thus a valuable exchange of experiences from different perspectives.

For the implementation of ECVET, it is necessary to involve both actors in the design of qualifications, as policy makers, training providers, certification bodies etc. All different types of actors are present in the EVTA network, which makes exchange of experiences and expertise in the field of ECVET implementation valuable.

The next step is now in the "PEP goes local" project, to bring together all these different stakeholders in each country. As it is not possible to involve all these actors in the project consortium, national workshops will be organized.

All the partners in the "PEP goes local" project have the ability to contact these stakeholders at national level and to bring them together for the national workshops (they work closely with ministries of education, or with other competent bodies).

The partners in the PEP goes local project are not representing the users group members of the European ECVET network (the official mandates per country to promote the implementation of the ECVET recommendation in their country), but they all work already closely with these organisations (for example in the NL, SE, FR, GR, IT...). In this way, the users group members can be involved in the project in an efficient way.