



**VETWORK - Network to strengthen the relation
between VET and the world of work at the
governance and implementation level**

Final Report

Public Part

Project information

Project acronym:	VETWORK
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Executive Summary

VETWORK is a Network, which has been approved within the Leonardo da Vinci Programme. The project started up on October 1st 2012 and will last for three years.

The partnership is composed of key stakeholders of the VET system: two major networks representing VET at EU level and guaranteeing an EU-wide coverage - EVTA (BE) and EVBB (DE). A third network, MENON (BE), is involved and made responsible for dissemination given its solid networking capacity. The Chamber of Commerce of Granada (ES) represents the world of work. Scierter (IT) represents the world of research and brings in its long-lasting experience in policy analysis in the field of VET and its experience in benchmarking design in the field of learning. FiatEst (RO) is a training and consultancy company focused on quality management and Quality Assurance for VET.

The VETWORK project aims to contribute to innovate and improve the integration between VET and the workplace by providing benchmarking systems, guidelines, recommendations and suggestions on the design, implementation, assessment and certification that will address methodological, functional, content and organisational innovation in line with the priorities and strategic objectives of the Bruges Communiqué for new skills for new jobs.

The project foresees the establishment of a multi-stakeholders' network as a necessary condition for sustainability of project outcomes and results at two levels:

- 1) The governance level through stakeholders' systematic collaboration (on e.g.: identification of new skills for learners, VET and in-company trainers, definition of agreed quality criteria and processes, etc.) and;
- 2) The implementation level to maximise effectiveness and impact of mixed/blended VET/workplace training paths. To do so, the project implies three main components: research, development and networking. The focus area of the project will be the area of training integrating WBL and VET providers training and support services.

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1. Project Objectives

VETWORK aims to contribute to innovate and improve the integration between VET and the workplace by providing benchmarking systems, guidelines, recommendations and suggestions on the design, implementation, assessment and certification that will address methodological, functional, content and organisational innovation in line with the priorities and strategic objectives of the Bruges Communiqué and new skills for new jobs.

The **specific objectives** are:

- to provide a set of **success stories of integration between VET and the world of work** focusing combined VET/workplace training for young people and adults to reduce the implementation gap existing between what is learnt through VET and what is applied (and needed) at the workplace;
- To design, **develop and test a benchmarking system** matching the micro-meso needs of companies, employers and VET providers (measuring effectiveness in reducing the implementation gap and assisting them in strategy redefinition for performance improvement) and the macro-needs of European VET as expressed in the Bruges Communiqué (methodological and organisational innovation, excellence, quality assurance, assessment and certification of formal and informal learning, mobility);
- To launch, maintain and make sustainable a **consensus building exercise** through an on-line Learning Community involving networks representing relevant stakeholders in VET and the world of work on challenges and recommendations for the innovation of European VET (representatives of social partners, enterprises, education and training providers, trainers, employment services, public authorities, research organisations, learners and will contribute) through thematic discussions on: methodological and organisational innovation, excellence, quality assurance, assessment and certification of formal and informal learning, mobility;
- To provide of a **set of recommendations and guidelines to policy and decision makers for VET innovation** in a more integrated perspective between VET and the world of work addressing the policy as well as the implementation dimension.

2. Project Approach

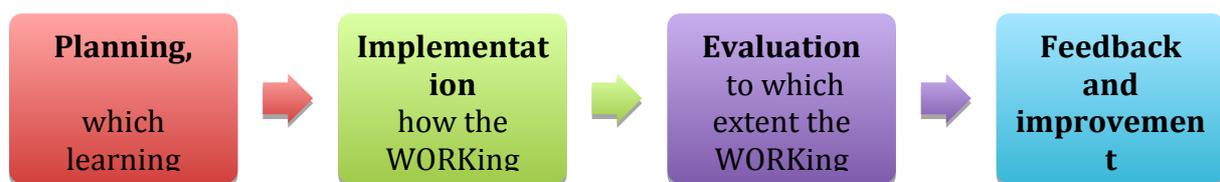
VETWORK is a EU network to strengthen collaboration between VET providers and the world of work. Although the project is expected to last for three years, the objective is to create a dynamic network, which can keep collaborating in the future.

VETWORK aims to offer a larger initiative where different actors involved in VET, employment and territorial strategies can work together in a sustainable perspective to ensure a strong impact to their common actions, in line with the priorities and strategic objectives of the Bruges Communiqué for new skills for new jobs and as a necessary condition for sustainability of project outcomes and results at two levels:

1) The governance level through stakeholders' systematic collaboration (e.g.: identification of new skills for learners, VET and in-company trainers, definition of agreed quality criteria and processes, etc.) and;

2) The implementation level to maximise effectiveness and impact of mixed/blended VET/workplace training paths. To do so, the project implies three main components: research, development and networking. The focus area of the project will be the area of training integrating Work Based Learning (WBL) and VET providers training and support services.

The project builds on previous work done in the field of quality assurance in vocational training. In particular the overall approach integrates the previous experience of BEQUAL project, which allowed practical application of the CQAF in VET through the use of online benchmarking tool and best practice database, whereas VETWORK project aims at quality in VET-WORKing world relationship. The VETWORK benchmarking system has been therefore based on Deming's quality approach and translates on four operations related to quality processes, namely:



The VETWORK methodology is thus threefold and based on:

1. Analysing previous experience in the field

50 cases have been collected at EU level responding to the main following criteria: 1) to represent one of the geographical cluster areas identified (northern, eastern, southern Europe); 2) to show potentially interesting elements concerning the integration of VET/workplace training. Out of the 50 identified cases, 20 have been selected that show particularly interesting, transferable and innovative elements for practices integrating VET/workplace training and thereby reducing the so called “implementation gap” and have been analysed in depth through desk research and questionnaires.

2. At defining the benchmarking system

The focus areas, criteria and indicators have been defined; thanks to the partners experiences integrated with the good practice analysis results. These are: methodological and organisational innovation, excellence, quality assurance, assessment and certification of formal and informal learning, mobility and will imply for instance analysis of: the role of mentor/tutor at the workplace; the contribution of a better integration between VET and the world of work to the attractiveness of VET systems; the contribution of a better integration between VET and the world of work to workers' productivity; the role of mobility in enhancing a better integration between VET and the world of work.

3. At connecting the VET and the WORKing world

The third step is the one to be implemented in during the incoming months. Building on the results of good practice analysis and of benchmarking and integrating these with the discussions held within the Stakeholders Roundtable on challenges related to increasing integration between VET and the workplace a set of guidelines will be produced for integrated VET/workplace training planning, implementation, assessment and certification. Along this, a set of recommendations will be produced for policy and decision makers to facilitate the connection between VET and the world of work.

The innovating elements of this approach are:

1. The provision of a benchmarking system and tool (validated by educational institutions and companies) measuring the effectiveness of integration between VET, in-company training and WBL;
2. The provision of practical guidelines and policy recommendations jointly developed with the direct beneficiaries to support the training sector; educational institutions, companies and decision makers in effectively improving the levels of integration, with positive effects on individual empowerment and mobility of learners, as well as on VET attractiveness and innovation closer to the world of work.

3. Project Outcomes & Results

During its 38 months of activity, VETWORK has produced several relevant outputs:

- A. A **Good Practice Report (D.2.1)** highlighting success stories of integration between VET and the world of work. The aim of the Good practice collection was to select and analyse in depth a set of good practices in the field of combined VET/workplace training for young people and adults, with specific focus on how VET contents are applied at the workplace. The analysis covered continuous training and apprenticeship and was related both to several sectors. As concerns geographical coverage, analysis covered EU member states and practices were gathered from Northern, Southern and Eastern European countries. From a methodological point of view, both desk and field research were implemented. The Report focuses and report a set of Good Practices on combined VET/workplace training for young people and adults, highlighting the most common joint activity areas between the two worlds (VET and WORK): // the joint identification of the learning needs; // the joint identification of the competences to be achieved; // established dialogue between VET and employers; // the elaboration of joint qualifications; // the provision of joint support to the learners. The report was an instrument designed to help the elaboration of the benchmarking system (D.3.1) in order to offer especially to VET providers the possibility to compare their results on integration with the world of work with the best performers, and to plan and implement improved or corrected actions. Indeed, the Good Practice Report will stay available through the project website and will constitute a knowledge base for future improvements and research.
- B. The **VETWORK website (D.6.2)** as the main portal for communicating project activities and results to the public. The VETWORK website was created and extensively updated throughout the entire project life. The web site hosts the link to the Benchmarking Tool (D.4.2) and link to the Online Learning Community (D.5.4) as a dedicated space for target users and stakeholders collaboration. In addition, on the website there are references to the Good Practice research (D.2.1) conducted by the Partners at the beginning of the project, as well as it is possible to download the Guidelines and Recommendations (D.5.1) as they have been developed at the end of the project. After the contractual end of the project, the web site will be kept alive and managed by the involved networks in the Consortium. The website worked as the main dissemination tool (providing information on project objectives, activities and results as well as providing access to the main results of the project) and as a mainstreaming tool. It is accessible in all Partners languages here:
- <http://vetwork.eu/>
- C. The **VETWORK Benchmarking Tool**, a self-assessment and measurement instrument of the integration effectiveness between VET and the world of work. The tool helps VET providers to self-assess and to compare the extent and the concrete ways through which they collaborate with the world of work. The Benchmarking Tool is meant to measure the

effectiveness of integration between training as provided by VET specialized institutions and organizations, and training as provided in the workplace. Building on the results of the good practice comparative analysis, the Benchmarking Tool helps companies, employers, VET institutions and other organizations to evaluate and reduce this learning gap, increasing collaboration between best and least performers to develop strategies for improvement. The Benchmarking Tool specifically measures features such as: methodological and organizational innovation, excellence, quality assurance, assessment and certification of formal and informal learning, mobility, role of the tutor at the workplace, the degree of integration between VET and the world of work. To facilitate the benchmarking exercise, the Tool is available in several languages: English, German, Spanish, Italian, French and Rumanian. It is accessible through the project website at the address <http://vetwork.eu/benchmarking-tool/> or with the following direct link <http://www.vetbenchmark.com/en/>. The benchmark is subdivided in four sections analysing the INPUT, the PROCESS, the OUTCOMES and the CONTEXT criteria with regard to the VET organization. By simply replying to the questions posed by the Benchmarking Tool, especially if the exercise is conducted collectively by a working team including the main management positions, the VET provider is stimulated to reflect on its performance as well as to recognize the weak areas that shall be addressed to enhance VET- Work integration.

D. The stakeholders' engagement process led to to set up of an **Online Learning Community** (D.5.4). Whilst the online benchmarking tool was undergoing piloting and validation, activities under the WP5 led to the creation of the so-called Online Learning Community, a mean to involve actors - VET providers and VET learners, social partners, trainers and trainees, employers and job-seekers - in benchmarking and bench-learning exercises, engage in thematic discussions, use the Benchmarking Tool and share their experience. The Online Learning Community has been built as a social networking platform (in the form of a Facebook open group) allowing interaction among participants, sharing of documents and project outcomes, inputs for discussion and reflection. The Community was meant to be a meeting and virtual discussion place addressing stakeholders, learners, VET trainers and trainees, and Benchmarking users. The Community will also act as a mean granting the sustainability of VETWORK and the ongoing involvement of target users and stakeholders. Keeping results available free-of-charge on the project website as well as keep feeding the Online Community with content and inputs, even after the end of the project, is one way of ensuring they stay alive beyond the funding period and engage new potential actors. The Online Learning Community can be accessed here:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/843931942352196/>

E. A set of **Guidelines and Recommendations for integration** (D.5.1), building on the results of the piloting and aiming at increasing integration between VET and the workplace, through joint training planning, implementation, assessment and certification.

The document has two main parts: **Part I - Guidelines**, addressing primarily the main target users of the project results (VET institutions and organisations providing training for the workplace and companies); **Part II - Recommendations**, addressing all relevant stakeholders (policy and decision makers, national qualification agencies, quality agencies, social partners, chambers of commerce, confederations of industry etc).

The **Guidelines** are elaborated based on the results of the benchmarking and benchlearning exercise conducted on the VETWORK Project and provide hands-on suggestions on how to improve and make more effective the integration between VET and workplace training workplace, so to allow a reduction of the so-called learning and implementation gaps. At every section of the Guidelines, some relevant practices/initiatives are presented, collected from the 50 European projects, representing companies which display interesting elements, innovative concepts and strategies to integrate the VET provider and the work world. The 50 projects describe practices in the field of VET and the World of Work coming from Austria, Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Hungary, Romania, Belgium, Spain, Germany, Bulgaria, Lithuania and Poland.

On the other hand, the **Recommendations** are based on EU-level documents, agreed by Member States and the European Commission in the Bruges Communiqué. Policies for WBL in CVET are influenced by various actors at different levels. European Union (EU) policy gives orientation and inspiration for national policies; it fosters cooperation and can have an impact through the provision of specifically targeted funding, for example through the European Social Fund. Social partners and other stakeholders, such as professional bodies or sector organisations, can also influence policies for WBL in CVET and foster this form of learning, for example through promotional activities. The document highlights that policy-makers at national, regional and local level need to make CVET an integral part of relevant policies, combining different policy measures, incentives and support services for both individuals and enterprises to encourage CVET provision and participation and to ensure high quality CVET. Regarding the integration of VET and WORK, some of the Key policy challenges are: // provide the right mix of skills for the labour market; // ensure teachers and trainers are well-prepared with industry experience; // make full use of workplace learning; // strengthen links between VET institutions and industry; // ensure quality in workplace learning; // develop appropriate incentives for employers and trainees; // make careful use of qualification frameworks.

Apart from these major results, the project has reached other achievements, namely:

- **The Methodology Report (D.1.1)**. VETWORK as an integration between VET and WORK strategy project aimed to provide the stakeholders in the sector with a clear guidance to the best practices in order to foster cooperation between the two worlds. The VETWORK methodology describes the different steps and tools in order to achieve this. The Report gives an overview on current knowledge and practices, thus building the knowledge bases for the selection of the most effective approaches and tools for improving the integration between VET and work. This has constituted for example the basis for building the benchmarking tool,

together with the Good Practice Report. All VET systems need mechanisms to make sure that the number of people trained in different occupations matches labour market needs. Employee preferences are relevant, but such preferences on their own are usually not enough. And while employer needs are important it is not always easy to establish what those needs are, or how they will evolve. Therefore, the VETWORK Methodology Report was indeed the first step in the process of identification of the best practices, indicators, criteria and critical elements characterising the VET and WORK integration process.

- A **Quality and Evaluation assessment** (D.8.2) that identifies strengths and weaknesses, as well as risks and opportunities, of the VETWORK approach. Both internal and external evaluation contributed to assess the effectiveness of the VETWORK proposal, the possibilities opened for the future, the criticalities to be faced and the outcomes achieved by the VETWORK Partners.
- A miscellaneous of **Dissemination materials** (D.6.3), among which it is worth to mention the VETWORK Identity Card, as it was published on the Online Learning Community. Moreover, the project Guidelines and Recommendations have been published on the EPALE platform (<https://ec.europa.eu/epale/en/resource-centre/content/vetwork-guidelines-and-recommendations-integration>)

VETWORK

IDENTITY CARD OF GOOD PRACTICE

Aims to provide preliminary qualitative information on:

- the initiative features
- the implementation context
- the level of VET-workplace integration within the initiative

GOOD PRACTICE NAME:

GOOD PRACTICE ACRONYM:

COUNTRY:	SECTOR:	COMPANY TYPE(S) / Large/ Public/ Multinationals/ other	LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION: (managerial/ operational/ production/ administrative/ other)	MAIN STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED	STARTING DATE and DURATION

The Respondent coordinates (name, institution, function, email, tel., fax, Skype, website):

GOOD PRACTICE SUMMARY (maximum 100 words) WHY THE PRACTICE HAS BEEN CHOSEN:

GOOD PRACTICE DESCRIPTION:

(Policy tags of the practice (making reference to the B. C.): Youth unemployment, Mobility, Attractiveness, Gender equality, VET modernisation, Social inclusion, Transparency and permeability, Active ageing)

a) Objectives:

b) Main features:

c) Impact on employees (level of awareness; employability; satisfaction; engagement and involvement; competency and career development; motivation; training needs development):

VETWORK

d) Impact on companies (productivity increasing; use creativity to design and develop new and innovative products and technologies; quality management and improvement system; financial outcomes; key process performance indicators):

e) Impact on company customers (customer satisfaction; company reputation and image; product and service value; customer loyalty and engagement)

f) Impact on the organization's societal and environmental responsibilities (environmental impact; societal impact; workplace impact; health and safety performance; social responsibility)

AREAS OF JOINT ACTIVITY:	ATTRIBUTES:
<input type="checkbox"/> Joint quality assurance	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy of bridge the VET - Work market gap
<input type="checkbox"/> Joint learning needs	<input type="checkbox"/> Relational quality VET-WORK
<input type="checkbox"/> Joint qualifications	<input type="checkbox"/> Documented results
<input type="checkbox"/> Joint competences	<input type="checkbox"/> Coverage of the four areas (dual system - training practice in enterprises and practice in classes, initial training, apprenticeship, continuous training) and other (for unemployed)
<input type="checkbox"/> Joint learners support	<input type="checkbox"/> Scalable (minimum consolidation level)
<input type="checkbox"/> Joint assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> Originality
<input type="checkbox"/> Joint monitoring employability outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/> Coverage
<input type="checkbox"/> Established dialogue, communication practice between VET providers and employers	<input type="checkbox"/> Stimulating policy (policy relevant)
<input type="checkbox"/> Trainers exchanges	<input type="checkbox"/> Involve many stakeholders
<input type="checkbox"/> Respective roles in innovation policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Cost effective
<input type="checkbox"/> Respective roles in employment policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Innovative mature
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

TARGET GROUPS:

Relevant results:

Features of the monitoring system in place:

FisTest
 Bucharest, Armeneasca 23
 2nd District, Romania
 Phone number: +00 21 312 13 47
 Email: office@fis-test.ro
www.fis-test.ro

4. Partnerships

The composition of the Consortium was specifically designed to ensure the representation of the key stakeholders and target groups involved for the success of the VETWORK idea. The presence of key networks played a strategic role in terms of dissemination, valorisation and exploitation, guaranteeing indeed a EU-wide coverage: EVTA – the European Vocational Training Associations based in Belgium and EVBB - the Europäischer Verband Beruflicher Bildungsträger (European Association of Institutes for Vocational Training) based in Germany. Among the other Partners, the Tavistock Institute provided its experience as a research and evaluation organisation; the Chamber of Commerce of Granada (Spain) represented the world of work; SOPHIA R&I based in Italy, represented the world of research and brought in its experience in benchmarking design in the field of learning and training; Fiatest brought instead its expertise as a Romanian training and consultancy company focused on quality management and Quality Assurance for VET.

In details:

EVTA www.evta.eu

is the largest vocational training European Community that supports the networking of labour market actors and includes experts in the field of mobility, lifelong learning strategies and specialists in different professional sectors. EVTA members include public and private institutions and organisations in the field of vocational training and of integrated vocational training and employment services. It includes members from 12 EU countries. In line with its mission and networking capacity, it will coordinate consensus building and mainstreaming.

SOPHIA Research & Innovation www.sophiari.eu/

SOPHIA is a not for profit Association which was created in 2009 in Rome to promote the participation of Italian public and private organisations in R&D and Innovation programmes, mainly supported by the European Union. In this respect SOPHIA provides consulting and management services to both the public and private sectors, and more importantly it participates in real projects in order to keep the pace with technological and methodological innovation especially, but not exclusively, in the area of Education and Training. All the founding partners are senior professionals with decades of experience in such fields as European Programmes, IT applications, Education and Training, Innovation at large. SOPHIA is involved in a number of financed projects, contributing to the project funded research activities, involved in the development of innovative learning platforms, methodologies, and training approaches or in the project's quality and evaluation activities.

EVBB www.evbb.de/

EVBB is an European umbrella association of independent and non-profit vocational training institutes. Its aim is the qualitative improvement of Vocational Education and Training (VET) in European countries. 42 vocational training institutes and associations from 22 European countries are members of the EVBB. In total the EVBB oversees more than 35.000

employees in more than 1.500 vocational training institutions. Given its networking capacity and target groups' outreach it will coordinate the benchmarking piloting and validation.

BFI www.bfi-ooe.at

Berufsförderungsinstitut Oberösterreich – Institute for Vocational Advancement (BFI OÖ) is an Upper Austrian vocational training institution that meets the new requirements of labour in the 21st century. Since 1960 BFI offers VET-courses, seminars, formal education at secondary and third level, trainings for the reintegration into the Labour Market, Special measures for disadvantaged youth and migrants at 5 Regions of Upper Austria with 45 Locations. For continuous quality assurance and development of innovative vocational training and educational programs BFI OÖ works together in close cooperation with many companies in different sectors and is involved in the National Union of workers (Founding member).

BFI OÖ also has become a market leader in all forms of re-entry into the job market, second-chance education and vocational qualification in health, social and other service jobs with 60.000 participants per year. The educational and occupational schemes are designed and organised in close co-operation with the Austrian Public Employment Service (AMS) – which is a main source of financing of the organisation - and companies. Since 2004 BFI Upper Austria IB is member at EVBB (European Association of Institutes for Vocational Training) and has a close working cooperation with EVBB.

IB www.internationaler-bund.de

The Internationaler Bund (IB) is one of the largest Training Provider Organisations in Germany. More than 12.000 people work for the IB in 700 facilities and branches in 300 locations, helping 350.000 people and citizens every year all over Germany.

The purpose of the IB is to help people develop in a spirit of freedom, to shape their own lives, to integrate into society mainly in the labour market, to take on personal responsibility and to participate actively in the development of the civil society. One main field of the IB activities is in Education and Vocational Training (VET), working in more than 100 professions. IB is the largest member in EVBB (Europäischer Verband Beruflicher Bildungsträger), working very close together with EVBB.

Tavistock Institute of Human Relations www.tavistock.org

Tavistock Institute is an independent social science research, evaluator, consultancy and training organisation. It was established in 1947 with its founding and continuing purpose of applying social sciences to contemporary social problems. We conduct research and evaluations and work to develop the theory, methodology and practice of review, assessment, research and evaluation studies.

FiaTest www.fiatest.ro/

has implemented over 50 projects internationally and nationally funded, out of which the majority was related to adult education, QAVET, quality and information safety management systems implementation. FiaTest is operating on the Romanian and European VET market, offering training programs and consultancy focused on Quality Assurance in education.

Given its experience in the field of benchmarking for VET (through the BEQUAL project), it will coordinate WP1 (methodology) and WP2 (good practice analysis) and ensure that the approach adopted has an impact on qualifications frameworks.

Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Navigation of Granada www.camaragranada.org offers activities and services that promote the management of companies, technical assistance, training, internationalisation, employment opportunities for professionals. It will coordinate WP8 quality and evaluation to make sure an industry perspective is incorporated in assessing impact and effectiveness of the project.

5. Plans for the Future

Now that the VETWORK project has been successfully completed, the main plans for the future are those related to the exploitation of the VETWORK results, which have been described in the Exploitation Plan (D.5.3) developed both at the Consortium level and at the level of each individual partner. Activities run during the last year of the project were mostly directed in two different directions: **implementation** of the foreseen results, such as the benchmarking tool piloting and validation, and the drawing of the guidelines for integration; and **mainstreaming**, both vertically and horizontally, promoting the use of the tool through the networks of stakeholders and the on-line community and aiming at encouraging debate and further promotion of VET/workplace integration also among decision-makers.

Along with mainstreaming and dissemination, VETWORK Partners committed to focus on an **exploitation strategy** in order to:

- maintain and enlarge Stakeholders' involvement and keep it active beyond the contractual end of the project, so to allow periodic provision of recommendations from stakeholders on a continuous basis. Involving representatives from VET providers and companies is meant to propose suggestions and strategies for an improved integration between VET and the world of work;
- keep the learning community alive, as a networking, discussion and dissemination space easily accessible to all;
- support transferability and adaptation of the Benchmarking system and on-line tool to educational sectors other than VET.

Awareness raising and mainstreaming activities

The VETWORK team has organized an **international Conference** as the final project event in Brussels (EVTA premises, November 2015) which represented a key “public moment” of the project and the launch of the validated Benchmarking tool and approach. In parallel, a number of dissemination activities were carried out to make sure that the results of the project were broadly known to the following stakeholders groups: VET providers, companies/employers, social partners, chambers of commerce, confederations of industries, quality assurance agencies, trainers, trainees, public authorities.

Additionally, all the activities both at the research and implementation level implied a direct involvement of target users and stakeholders' representatives. This has shown a positive, cascade effect on dissemination and exploitation. Project partners acted as “valorisation facilitators” of the VETWORK outputs and tools and communities by promoting the innovative cooperation models between VET and the world of work as developed during the project life, and discussing adaptation of the benchmarking system and guidelines to national and sector specificities even beyond the project end.

Stakeholders' Involvement

The first step in fostering mainstreaming and Stakeholders Involvement was the attempt to involve stakeholders on a periodic basis, in key moment of the project life, to provide support to key steps in the production of deliverables and project results. Given the focus of the project, networking and organizational involvement served the need of representing enterprises, VET providers, quality agencies, chambers of commerce and others during the process of integration.

Secondly, the involvement of the stakeholders was meant to collect feedback and suggestions about how to proceed and how to transform the process put in place by the project in a long-lasting and more stable process in the field of VET and WBL.

Lastly, the involvement of stakeholders helped Partners to collect a report of Best Practices which constitute a reference for future research and improvement; and allowed interaction among participants fostering virtual discussions, enhancing the benchmarking exercise, promoting reflection on key themes such as training methodologies and quality assessment. Stakeholders involvement happened during face to face events, such as EVBB and EVTA General Assemblies, with the Online Community living through a FB Group, with the participation of stakeholders to key events (such as the VETWORK Final Conference) and through general dissemination activities and networking. Indeed, Partners contacted key stakeholders from our target groups to organize interviews, workshops, mainstreaming and dissemination actions.

Online Learning Community - the Facebook Group

As a bridging tool between the implementation steps and the mainstreaming ones, the partners started up an **Online Learning Community**. It allow experts and practitioners to interact “around” the VETWORK results. The VETWORK project therefore has its own page for disseminating events on Facebook, where documents and products of the Project are uploaded: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/843931942352196/>. We thus exploited the possibility offered by Facebook allowing all users - as for example Partners, stakeholders, benchmarking users – to upload and download files sharing them instantly with other European partners, associations, National and International organizations and stakeholders. The Online Community built though the Facebook social platform will stay alive as a networking space, where users become part of a learning community, enhancing benchmarking and sharing of good practices, ensuring sustainability beyond the project end, maintaining the discussion on the integration of VET and work animated and effective.

Facebook was a useful tool of dissemination and exploitation because it allows to:

- have a space where documents and files are widely accessible in addition to the website;
- make public and easily accessible VETWORK results and contents;
- a quantitative evaluation of the interest of people about the content of the Project.

Transferability and adaptation of results

Free use by others - Content available through the VETWORK website

Sharing information on the Internet has become increasingly popular. Content and research has also become more and more accessible. Making project results freely available, which has been ensured through the Online Community and the VETWORK website, is essential to create discussions among the key themes of the project and ensure they will be available also after the project has finished. This may also generate feedback on the project work from a wider audience than our target groups. Indeed, also the Benchmarking Tool developed by the Consortium is freely available to all through the website.

Mainstreaming

For a more long-term future, mainstreaming can be the best way to guarantee that our VETWORK project maintains its impact. The European Commission defines this as 'the planned process of transferring the successful results of programs and initiatives to appropriate decision-makers in regulated local, regional, national or European systems'. By influencing policy and practice, with VETWORK exploitation and valorization activities, Partners have attempted to embed project outcomes in training methodologies, or into the practices of relevant VET organizations, therefore securing their longevity and the longevity of the effects produced by VETWORK.

Transfer of outcomes

Transferring project outcomes to different contexts is a good way to make the most of VETWORK results. Our target groups have been involved in the project activities along the whole project life, consulting them in our best practice analysis, in piloting and validating the benchmarking, in defining guidelines and recommendations for the integration of VET and the world of work. Feedback from our target groups were used to tailor the outcomes of the project to the objectives set at the beginning. This is a route for multiplication, a term used by the European Commission to describe 'the planned process of convincing individual end-users to adopt and/or apply the results of programs and initiatives'. Wide dissemination and stakeholders involvement during the project had guaranteed that outcomes are in line with stakeholders' interests and future perspectives.

Sustainability

Making our results sustainable is another route for exploitation. Keeping our results on a website after our project has finished, free-of-charge, is one way of ensuring they stay alive beyond the funding period. In addition, Partners commit to keep alive the Benchmarking Tool. Mainstreaming is a more long-term approach to embed results into local, regional, national or European provision. That is why representatives of wide European networks as well as representatives of the European Commission itself have been involved during the project implementation.

6. Contribution to EU policies

The project is relevant to the overall modernisation agenda of European VET, by analysing and providing good practice collections, instruments for benchmarking and collaborative environments for VET providers and representatives of the world of work. It is particularly coherent with the employment policy of the EU and the European Alliance for Apprenticeship, due to its focus on collaboration (including joint design, delivery and assessment of training programmes) between VET and enterprises. It also specifically addresses the theme of validation and recognition of learning outcomes acquired in non-formal learning, one of the pillars of EU recent policy in the field of Lifelong Learning. Finally and more specifically, it helps to address several of the areas for EQAVET further development as identified by the recently published evaluation of EQAVET implementation (January 2014). The Bruges Communiqué on enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training for the period 2011- 2020 issued a set of current and future challenges to be addressed to respond to the emerging and future economic and social needs of Europe. Particular emphasis is put on individual development and empowerment, in a Lifelong Learning perspective. **A well performing VET, which enables learning on and off-the job on a part-time and full-time basis can thereby also strongly contribute to social cohesion in our societies**". In this context, the Communiqué calls for "cooperation models [between VET and] companies and professional branch organisations" and states that "work-based learning carried out in partnership with businesses and non-profit organisations should become a feature of all initial VET courses.

On the governance side, recognising the achievements of the Copenhagen Process in raising awareness on the importance of VET at national and European level and in developing tools (Europass, EQF, ECVET and EQAVET), principles and guidelines that are helping to increase transparency and transferability of qualifications and to improve the flexibility and quality of learning, the Communiqué calls for a better and more intense communication "to involve the stakeholders: social partners, VET providers, civil society and learners" in the innovation and upgrading process of VET. In relation to this issue, one of the key strategic objectives set is to "**promote partnerships between social partners, enterprises, education and training providers, employment services, public authorities, research organisations and other relevant stakeholders** in order to ensure a better transfer of information on labour market needs and to provide a better match between those needs and the development of skills, knowledge and competence (...). The development of a common language aimed at bridging the world of education and training (..) and the world of work (...) should be continued (...)".

The VETWORK system has been designed to address the above-mentioned challenges as set out in the Bruges Communiqué and to contribute to the above mentioned strategic priorities. **VETWORK addresses both the implementation and the governance dimensions related to the relation between VET and the world of work focusing on the area of training integrating work-based learning (WBL) and VET providers teaching and support services.**

