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IMPLEMENTATION
OF QUALITY ASSURANCE
IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET)
INSTITUTIONS

A MANUAL FOR VET PROVIDERS

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ABBREVIATIONS LIST

CVET	Continuous Vocational Education and Training
EU	European Union
EQAVET	European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ITS	Institute of Tourism Studies
IVET	Initial Vocational Education and Training
MCAST	Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology
MFHEA	Malta Further and Higher Education Authority
PDCA	Plan-Do-Check-Act
QA	Quality Assurance
QAS	Quality Assurance System
QMS	Quality Management System
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WBL	Work-based Learning

INTRODUCTION

This document is a result of the process initiated by the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority on the updating of the 2013 Implementation of Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (VET) Institutions Manual, which was produced as a result of the EQAVET Malta Project “Quality Assurance tool for Vocational Education and Training”.

Its primary users are VET providers in Malta and their staff working on implementing internal quality assurance procedures.

Quality Assurance has become one of the key elements of VET policy, both at the EU level and national level, as well as provider level. On the EU level, this was confirmed in the 2020 *Council Recommendation on VET for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience* which emphasised that VET should be underpinned by a culture of quality assurance. On the national level, the *Framework for the education strategy for Malta 2014-2024: Sustaining foundations, creating alternatives, increasing employability and Malta’s National Strategic Action Plan for Further and Higher Education 2022-2030* lists quality assurance as one of its strategic pillars.

Throughout the past decade, the focus on quality assurance in education has increased, and this is expected to continue, especially in VET where there is a growing demand from stakeholders for transparency, better communication of the outcomes of the teaching and learning process, and monitoring and evaluation. This should be implemented at the provider level as well as in the work-based learning environment.

This document is foreseen as a guideline for VET providers taking them through the process of implementing QA indicators as a part of their internal quality assurance system to support evidence-based decisions and a holistic quality culture approach.

This Manual is a GUIDELINE on how to collect data and monitor quality assurance indicators and use them as a part of internal QA systems. The Manual is not prescriptive in any way. Its key principle is flexibility in responding to the needs of VET providers, expressed during the 2022 review process.

The Manual contains a tool for monitoring eight indicators which are linked to and based on the EQAVET Framework. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of continuous improvement of QA and foresees the process of preparing a QA Report, as a part of the quality cycle. Furthermore, it establishes a strong link with EQAVET, since the eight indicators are based on the revised 2020 EQAVET indicators that can be implemented at the provider level.

How is the Manual divided?

This Manual is divided into four main sections.

- The first section provides background information on quality assurance and related developments at both the national and European levels. It introduces the revised EQAVET (European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training) Framework and highlights the quality culture.
- The second section describes the process of preparing a QA Report, as a part of the quality cycle, and focuses on how the indicators can be used for both the implementation and development of a VET provider's quality assurance system.
- The third section introduces quality assurance indicators which have been agreed to be relevant for Malta. It describes a tool that VET providers can use to carry out a stocktaking exercise of agreed QA indicators as a part of their internal quality assurance system.
- The fourth section presents a number of national (prepared by the Malta VET providers – MCAST and ITS) and international (from European countries) good practice examples which illustrate the work with the EQAVET indicators and give inspiration to the Manual users.

SECTION 1

QUALITY ASSURANCE IN VET

1.1. Basic issues about quality assurance in VET

VET institutions are facing increasing demands to be resilient and react swiftly to the rapid changes in skills required by the labour market, to use new technologies, to meet stakeholders' needs, to learn from others and to be visible and competitive, etc. It is important that VET providers get information and feedback, on a regular basis, about how they respond to the challenges facing them.

Quality assurance in VET means, therefore, the evidence-based and continuous monitoring, evaluation, and improvement of how efficiently and effectively VET institutions react to and meet the ever-changing, evolving demands of society, the economy, and individuals, and how they balance the present and future needs of their relevant stakeholders with the available resources.

Quality assurance is to everyone's advantage (students, teachers and trainers, employers, and governments), including VET providers. Your institution will benefit too, as it is the mechanism through which you can show that you provide good quality education and training services. However, the approaches, methods and tools applied at the institutional-level quality assurance system can only promote and support the continuous and sustainable development of VET providers if they are adapted to the specific nature and features of vocational education and training.

Quality assurance can help you attract more students, funds and better teachers and trainers, helping you grow, both nationally and internationally.

Aspects which are to be considered when implementing quality assurance in a VET institution include:

- Commitment to quality assurance and quality improvement:

Quality assurance is an ongoing and cyclical process. It is to be kept in mind that implementing a quality assurance system is just a first step. It is the mechanism which ensures that you are providing quality training. But it is also the tool which will allow you to improve your practice as it indicates your areas of weakness and problems which may arise, and thus you can take action and intervene to improve further. Therefore, you must commit yourself not only to setting up a QA system but also to continuous quality improvement.

- Satisfying key stakeholders:

As a VET provider, you have a vested interest in ensuring that you provide quality education and training and that learners, employers and the regulator are all satisfied with the level of competences reached by your graduates.

By monitoring quality constantly, quality assurance systems can assure current and prospective students that they are engaged in meaningful learning. Employers will know that certified personnel have the competences stated in their certification. Other VET institutions would know what graduates from your VET institution have learnt and that they have achieved the standards

that you strive for. The national government will know the standard of quality of VET courses in the country.

- Need for formal mechanisms and evidence:

You need to have formal mechanisms and provide evidence of quality to prove that your training courses are relevant to the labour market. Success is measured by indicators such as completion rate, and you must collect, analyse, and publish completion rates in your courses regularly, and also show what action has been taken to counteract dropouts or people not turning up for courses. Likewise, if you need to show that you have quality teaching staff; besides their curriculum vitae, you have to show how your institution is investing in their professional development.

- Transparency in processes:

An important aspect of quality assurance is to make sure that all the processes and mechanisms developed and used are transparent. This implies that different stakeholders are involved, and that results and outcomes are made known, both internally and externally.

- Learning outcomes-based approach:

Learning outcomes specify the result (skills and competences to be achieved by the end) of the learning process and can be measured concerning the targeted learning. Learning outcomes describe what a learner should know, understand and be able to do by the end of the course.

Learning outcomes are essential in a VET QA system as:

- *Learning outcomes provide a tangible description of the learning which is to be achieved:* Learning outcomes enable course designers to identify tangible learning achieved during training courses. When the different (quality assurance) stakeholders get together in the process of planning course content and modes of training, learning outcomes provide the common language for and facilitate the understanding of what learning is to be achieved and thus also evaluate the relevance of such learning. It is worth investing in writing good quality – SMART (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ligned, **R**elevant and **T**ime-framed) – learning outcomes, thus ensuring that the QA mechanisms are effective.
- *Learning outcomes reflect pedagogies used during the learning process and facilitate the assessment process:* Learning outcomes also include the context within which the learning can be demonstrated. Assessment must measure whether these outcomes have been achieved and that students can demonstrate that they can perform the actions which are specific to the learning outcomes.
- *Learning outcomes make it easier for employers to review course content:* Since one of the characteristics of learning outcomes is that of providing a tangible outcome of the learning that has taken place, it is easier for employers to assess the relevance and adequacy of the learning to the labour market needs.
- *Learning outcomes play a central role in evaluation:* Learning outcomes are central to the evaluation processes as the main questions relate to the relevance of the learning, the degree to which the learning outcomes have been achieved, how well the learning outcomes have been assessed, etc.

The use of learning outcomes can also challenge existing methods of quality assurance that depend on the evaluation of the education-training process rather than on the outcomes of learning that actually takes place.

Internal QA and quality culture

The final aim of this Manual is to bring added value to the Malta VET providers' internal QA systems by developing and enhancing the culture of continuous quality improvement in their organisations.

A quality culture can be considered as the most effective and meaningful way in which existing quality assurance mechanisms can systematically ensure and improve quality as well as support procedures for change in VET institutions.

The crucial success factor for establishing an internal quality culture is the personal engagement and commitment of individuals within the organisation in assuring and improving the quality of VET. The role of leadership, their involvement in the QA processes and their true commitment to quality enhancement are crucial. However, the leadership's commitment cannot be developed without a quality culture. A top-down approach alone is not sufficient here: a quality culture emphasises that quality assurance is a shared responsibility and therefore also implies the intensive participation of the whole community of staff and students.

A quality culture builds on a commonly accepted, improvement-oriented internal quality assurance system and the commitment of all staff members with ownership, shared values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour towards quality.

Systematic operations with closing the QA (PDCA) cycle to achieve organisational learning include:

- defining clear, commonly accepted goals/objectives, setting targets, and allocating measurable indicators to them for evaluating their attainment,
- elaborating and carrying out the implementation plan,
- evaluating the implementation by involving the appropriate internal and external stakeholders and providing feedback to them,
- providing both to the internal and external stakeholders/partners,
- defining and launching improvement actions,
- evaluating the implemented improvement actions.

A quality culture has also soft elements such as embedding mutual trust and respect, involvement, communication, dialogue, teamwork, team spirit, motivation, and recognition within the VET provider's organisation.

For the quality culture, a certain degree of maturity of the quality assurance system is required. A professional quality assurance system should be in place where the everyday operation of the institution fully complies with the processes of internal quality assurance. On the other hand, it is important to link the results and outcomes of QA with the development of a quality culture in the institution.

1.2 Malta context of QA

Further and higher education, including VET, in Malta is regulated by the revised Education Act, which came into force on 1st January 2021. Quality assurance of further and higher education falls within the remit of the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA), whose aim is to establish and maintain standards in the context of the National Qualifications Framework. The Malta Qualification Framework (MQF) was launched in 2007 and established a set of descriptors indicating the learning outcomes relevant to qualifications at that level in any system of qualifications across Europe.

Quality assurance aims to safeguard the quality of further and higher education, including VET, within an internal and external framework of accountability at national, European, and international levels. The quality assurance in Malta was strengthened through the establishment of the National Quality Assurance Framework for Further and Higher Education (NQAF), which was launched in 2015. The Framework is based on European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area and enriched by the EQAVET perspectives and establishes the parameters for a national external quality assurance (EQA) audit system.

In accordance with subsidiary legislation 607.03 FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION (LICENSING, ACCREDITATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE) REGULATIONS, the accredited further and higher education institutions shall have the primary responsibility for the quality of their provision and quality assurance, meaning that they shall have in place an internal quality assurance system which is fit for purpose, both institutional wise and programme wise.

The accreditation of educational entities providing accredited or recognised further and/or higher education courses is a legal requirement as per subsidiary legislation 607.03. Courses are referred to as 'accredited' when they have been evaluated by the MFHEA and accredited or pegged to the MQF, unless they are self-accrediting institutions.

In accordance with subsidiary legislation 607.03 (Article 37), an external quality assurance audit is a legal obligation and conducted for the purpose of confirming or revoking the license previously granted by the MFHEA. The MFHEA manages a pool of external quality assurance peer reviewers, who are eligible to be appointed as a panel to conduct external quality assurance audits. Reports are published on the MFHEA's website together with an action plan from the institutions outlining how they will implement the recommendations of the said audit.

The Malta Qualifications Recognition Information Centre (MQRIC) is the competent body within the MFHEA that recognises qualifications against the MQF. It provides recognition and comparability of academic and vocational qualifications, using both the MQF and the EQF to provide recognition advice on local and international qualifications. It also assists in the recognition of Maltese qualifications abroad. MQRIC forms part of the European Network of Information Centres in the European Region (ENIC) and the National Recognition Information Centres in the European Union (NARIC) as the local official ENIC-NARIC centre in Malta.

1.3 EU policy context of quality assurance in VET

1.3.1 Introduction of the EQAVET Framework

Policy background

The main European tool for quality assurance in VET is the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET (EQAVET), which was formally established through the 2009 Recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council¹ with the aim to improve the quality of VET. This piece of legislation formalised the agreed European standards of QA in VET and asked the EU Member States to implement the *Recommendation* at the national level.

The importance of improving quality in VET was already included in the 2000 Lisbon Strategy stating that increased employability and competitiveness, and transition to a knowledge-based economy, require a modern and adaptable VET. The systematic work in the field of QA in VET at the European level began in 2002 with the adoption of the Copenhagen Declaration and since then it has been an important policy priority. The work was built on the enhanced European cooperation in quality assurance of vocational education and training (VET) to increase and support transparency and mutual trust.

¹ Recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (2009/C 155/01)

During the ten years of its implementation, EQAVET has proved to be an effective tool in stimulating reforms, and in promoting and supporting the development, review, and continuous improvement of the national VET quality assurance systems in the Member States.

Since 2021, the development of VET and the modernisation of the VET systems takes place in a renewed, modernised EU VET policy environment, the strategic directions and priority (focus) areas of which are defined by the Council Recommendation (of 24 November 2020) on vocational education and training for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness, and resilience. The fact that "Vocational education and training is underpinned by a culture of quality assurance" is one of the priority areas of the new EU VET strategy under which the Recommendation integrates the EQAVET Framework proves that quality assurance in VET continues to be in the focus of the EU VET policy in the years to come.

What is EQAVET?

The European Quality Assurance Reference Framework in VET (EQAVET) is one of the EU transparency and recognition tools supporting lifelong learning which reflects standards developed at the European level.

The primary aim of EQAVET is to contribute to the continuous quality improvement of VET at both EU and national levels as well as at system and provider levels. As a reference instrument, EQAVET helps Member States to promote and support the development, monitoring, and reform of their national VET QA systems based on common European references. The gains from the use of EQAVET are effectiveness, transparency, and mutual trust in VET systems within and across countries, and increased mobility of workers and learners.

The EQAVET Framework as described in Annex II of the Council Recommendation on VET is (to be) used in national quality assurance systems for both initial and continuing vocational education and training delivered by both public and private providers, in all learning environments (such as school-based provision and work-based learning, including apprenticeship schemes) and all learning types (digital, face-to-face, or blended). EQAVET can be applied at both the VET system and VET provider levels.

This EQAVET Framework 2020 is adapted to the emerging policy developments and priorities and complemented with new content elements addressing the quality assurance of work-based learning, learning outcomes, certification and assessment, stakeholders' consultation, the role of teachers and trainers in QA, the flexibility of learning pathways, digitalisation of teaching and learning, digital readiness, and environmental sustainability.

Operational features of the EQAVET Framework

The EQAVET Framework provides a systematic approach to quality assurance and comprises:

- a quality assurance and quality improvement cycle to facilitate planning, implementation, evaluation, and review of QA systems at the appropriate levels in the Member States,
- monitoring mechanisms for assessment and review of systems: the emphasis has been given to self-assessment, combined with external evaluation,
- a measurement tool: a set of reference indicators aiming at facilitating Member States to evaluate and improve their systems at national and provider levels.

What is the Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement Cycle?

The QA Cycle involves the following four interrelated elements and phases:

- **Planning:** Clear purpose and consistent planning addressed to achieve the set aims.

Set up clear, appropriate, consistent, and measurable goals and objectives in terms of policies, procedures, tasks, and human resources.

- **Implementation:** Existence of an implementation plan.

Establish procedures to ensure the achievement of goals and objectives (e.g., development of partnerships, involvement of stakeholders, allocation of resources and clear responsibility, organisation/operational procedures).

- **Evaluation:** Existence of a well-described assessment system and a systematic evaluation strategy.

Design mechanisms for the evaluation of achievements and outcomes by collecting and processing data to make informed assessments.

- **Review:** Visible and documented connection between feedback mechanisms (evaluation results) and the planning process.

Develop procedures to achieve the targeted outcomes and/or new objectives. After processing feedback, key stakeholders conduct discussion and analysis to devise procedures for change.

Quality assurance is continuous, systematic, and cyclical. The review leads to the planning and implementation of new actions and improvements, which then need to be evaluated and reviewed again. As the cycle goes on, the provision of VET improves in quality.



Figure 1:
The EQAVET Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement Cycle

The added value of EQAVET relies on focusing the work on quality assurance in VET on a small number of *indicative descriptors* – common core quality criteria – agreed upon at the European level and allocated to the four phases of the QA Cycle. These common core criteria are quality criteria against which any policy or process, procedure, practice, tool, etc. can be measured for its expected effectiveness. The indicative descriptors also facilitate the implementation and in-practice use of EQAVET as they provide an overview of the key elements of quality assurance in VET that should be considered when designing, implementing, operating, evaluating, reviewing, and improving any quality assurance system in VET at system and provider/institutional level alike.

What is the Measurement Tool?

The EQAVET Framework is underpinned by a set of common *indicators* for quality assurance in vocational education and training, applicable both at system and provider levels, as listed in Annex II of the Council

Recommendation on VET. Some of the indicators have also changed as a result of aligning the EQAVET Framework with the new EU VET policy priorities.

The 10 system-level indicators (see in the table below) are context, input, process, output, and outcome indicators that help to assess, evaluate, and underpin by evidence the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of VET, based on common qualitative and quantitative references.

No.	Indicator
Indicator nr. 1	Share of VET providers applying (EQAVET-based) quality management systems
Indicator nr. 2	Investment in the training of teachers and trainers Change in 2020: Indicator 2b) amount of funds invested, including for digital skills
Indicator nr. 3	Participation rate in VET programmes
Indicator nr. 4	Completion rate in VET programmes
Indicator nr. 5	Placement rate in VET programmes
Indicator nr. 6	Utilisation of acquired skills at the workplace
Indicator nr. 7	Unemployment rate
Indicator nr. 8	Prevalence of vulnerable groups
Indicator nr. 9	Mechanism to identify training needs in the labour market
Indicator nr. 10	Change in 2020: Schemes used to promote better access to VET and provide guidance to (potential) VET learners

Table 1: The reference set of EQAVET indicators

This set of reference indicators can also be used to support the development of an evaluation and quality-improvement culture within VET providers when implementing the EQAVET Framework as the majority of the indicators (except nr. 1 and nr. 7) are meaningful and can be generated and measured also at the institutional level.

Organisational features of the EQAVET Framework

The EQAVET Network, established in 2010, is a community of practice bringing together the representatives of the European Union Member States, Candidate Countries and European Economic Area countries, social partners, scientific advisers (as CEDEFOP and ETF) and the European Commission, with the aim to promote European collaboration in developing and improving quality assurance in VET by using the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework. Over the past 12 years, the network has become a role model for European cooperation among the member countries and contributed – by developing common principles, reference criteria and indicators, guidelines, and tools for quality improvement in VET – to the enhancement of a culture of quality assurance and quality improvement and an improved status and attractiveness of vocational education and training, both within national VET systems and at a European level.

The Quality Assurance National Reference Points for VET (QANRPs) bring together, inform, and involve all the relevant bodies and stakeholders concerned with the QA of VET at the national level. The reference points take concrete initiatives to implement and further develop the EQAVET Framework in the national context, participate actively in the implementation of the network's work programme, support self-evaluation and engage in EU-level peer reviews of quality assurance.

The work of the EQAVET Network and the QANRPs is supported by the EQAVET Secretariat.

1.3.2. Key principles on which to base an EQAVET-based internal QA system

EQAVET Building Blocks for VET providers

The development of an internal QA system based on EQAVET should be based on a number of key principles that need to be instilled within VET providers.

The EQAVET Network has identified six principles known as the 6 Building Blocks for VET providers, which can enable the achievement of an effective quality assurance system aiming to ensure and improve the quality of both the provision of education and training as well as the quality assurance system itself.

The 6 Building Blocks are:



Building Block	What does the Building Block mean?	What does the Building Block mean in practice?
1. Ensure there is a management culture which is committed to quality assurance.	Central to the implementation of the EQAVET Framework is a culture which supports and values quality assurance.	If management does not believe in and support quality assurance within the institution, it is not worth investing in mechanisms. The message needs to be loud and clear from those managing the VET institution that quality assurance is part of the institution's culture of doing work and that this culture is (to be) promoted in all of the institution's activities.
2. Develop approaches which reflect the provider's circumstances.	The EQAVET Framework covers all aspects of VET provision. VET can be enhanced by building on existing quality assurance arrangements.	Implementing EQAVET is meant to build on already existing structures within the VET institution. So, when working on your quality assurance system, first ask yourself if you can improve the processes which you already have, and only if this is not possible would you set up new structures.
3. Develop a culture of self-assessment.	A culture which encourages reflection and self-assessment will lead to improved quality of provision.	It is important to reflect and learn from shortcomings. This is best done through the process of self-assessment which is a comprehensive, systematic and regular review of the institution's and the individual's (teacher, trainer, school leader) competencies, activities and results, and allows for identifying the strengths and the areas in which improvement is necessary. Self-assessment should cut across all levels of training. Staff, both academic and non-academic, are to be encouraged to develop forms of assessing their work through an internal exercise of self-evaluation, involving tools such as questionnaires with students and focus group interviews/meetings with the relevant stakeholders.

4. Support staff training in relation to quality assurance.	VET is dependent on the knowledge, skills and competences of staff. VET can be enhanced if staff have an increased awareness of quality assurance.	Investing in training of your staff about quality assurance can make a great difference. Such training can help your staff develop a quality culture as well as be committed to quality assurance structures.
5. Use data and feedback to improve VET.	VET has to meet the needs of both employers and learners. The key to any quality assurance system is the way data on performance is systematically collected and used by VET providers to modify and improve provision.	It is useless to collect data about the quality of the training that you provide and then not use it for informing further improvement actions. When problems and issues arising from, for example, self-assessment or student feedback, training institutions must take action to rectify and ensure that such issues do not repeat themselves. It is thus important that you make sure that you use any data about students, training, labour market needs, etc. in your quality assurance system to ensure better planning, implementation, evaluation, and review within your institution.
6. Ensure VET is based on the involvement of external and internal stakeholders.	VET is based on effective partnerships between government, social partners and national stakeholders, employers and VET providers, and learners and society. They create the foundation stone of the VET system, which gives it strength, relevance, and acceptability.	The optimal way to know what training is best to offer, how to tailor courses to reflect labour market needs, and how much employers value your trained students' skills and competences is through the involvement of the different stakeholders. Internal and external stakeholders include the management, the teachers and trainers, the students, the employers, trade unions, sectoral representatives, etc. Thus, when setting up mechanisms as part of the programme planning, implementation, evaluation, and review, make sure that there are representatives of the different internal and external players in each of the processes. This way, you can ensure that the best decisions are taken.

Table 2: EQAVET Building Blocks for VET providers

These 6 Building Blocks for VET providers show that there is a need to invest in changing the culture within the institution to one which values quality assurance as well as develop mechanisms which can help to improve the education and training provided by each VET provider. They provide guidance by identifying key activities (e.g., defining clear roles and responsibilities, developing communications strategy, utilising feedback, establishing a management culture and a self-assessment culture, involving stakeholders and staff training) which could be undertaken to develop and improve a quality assurance approach and/or processes in line with the EQAVET Framework.

These 6 Building Blocks support and complement each other; VET providers can use one or more of them when devising their approach to quality assurance.

The Building Blocks build on the EQAVET indicative descriptors and indicators and are also linked to the EQAVET QA Cycle. Their relationship to the four phases of the EQAVET Quality Assurance Cycle is shown in the table below.

Building Blocks	Planning	Implementation	Evaluation	Review
1. Ensure there is a management culture which is committed to quality assurance	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. Develop approaches which reflect the provider's circumstances	✓	✓		
3. Develop a culture of self-assessment			✓	✓
4. Support staff training in relation to quality assurance	✓	✓		
5. Use data and feedback to improve VET			✓	✓
6. Ensure VET is based on the involvement of external and internal stakeholders	✓	✓	✓	

Table 3: The relationship of the 6 Building Blocks for VET providers to the four phases of the EQAVET Quality Assurance Cycle

EQAVET Building Blocks for Work-based Learning

Vocational Education and Training programmes and curricula at all levels comprise work-based learning (WBL) components which involve the acquisition of knowledge and skills through carrying out and reflecting on tasks in a vocational context in the workplace or a VET institution. Therefore, the EQAVET Network has put an increasing emphasis on the importance of quality-assuring work-based learning and identified another set of 6 Building Blocks specifically developed for the practice-oriented work-based VET.

These 6 Building Blocks for Work-based Learning are:

Building Block	What does the Building Block mean?	What does the Building Block mean in practice?
1. Design	Work with partner organisations to ensure the relevance of learners' training during periods of work-based learning.	<p>Quality assurance should be a shared responsibility of partner organisations and is strengthened if it is planned from the start and responsibilities for each stage of work-based learning are clarified.</p> <p>It is important to ensure that each partner organisation link the content of their training to the learner's qualification.</p> <p>Cooperation between VET teachers and trainers and company tutors helps establish close connections between work-based and school-based provision.</p>

2. Improve	Agree with partner organisations when the quality of training will be monitored and how improvements will be made.	<p>The quality of training is improved when it is monitored and reviewed on an ongoing basis (not only when the learners have finished their course or qualification).</p> <p>Employers, VET providers and other stakeholders are increasingly designing agreements for work-based learning which set clear expectations for training and clarify how, when and by whom improvements will be made.</p>
3. Respond	Continue to be aware of the specific needs of learners throughout their work-based learning.	<p>Being aware of the individual needs of learners which are matched to the needs of employers brings benefits to everyone.</p> <p>Work-based learning enables VET providers and employers to design more individualised approaches to learning.</p> <p>Learner and employer feedback is part of a systematic approach to quality assurance during work-based learning. This feedback is being used during training and at the end of the courses to improve quality.</p>
4. Communicate	Ensure learners and partner organisations are kept well informed and receive frequent updates on all aspects of training.	<p>The quality of training is enhanced when communication between partner organisations is effective. Learners should be as well informed as the organisations that are managing their learning.</p> <p>Formal agreements between VET schools, employers and other stakeholders strengthen communication during work-based learning.</p>
5. Train	Ensure staff is well prepared for their training role which includes a quality assurance.	<p>Training of company-based staff in pedagogy and assessment is important.</p> <p>Staff training should include guidance on how to manage a quality assurance process.</p>
6. Assess	Work with partner organisations to review the work-based training programme, and assess and certify individual learners' achievement, where appropriate.	<p>The quality of the learners' experiences and the accuracy and validity of their assessment is strengthened when there is a clear statement of which learning outcomes, standards or competences need to be demonstrated.</p> <p>Employer involvement in the assessment of learners' practical skills and professional competences which are relevant for a VET qualification is an essential part of work-based learning.</p>

Table 4: EQAVET Building Blocks for Work-based Learning

The Building Blocks methodology is more useful for those VET providers that are still developing their approach. Those with more established quality assurance systems may find the Building Blocks a useful check which supports their improvement.

The Building Blocks can be used by all VET providers, including those that offer initial VET, continuing VET, work-based learning, apprenticeships, in-company training, and non-formal and informal learning.

SECTION 2:

IMPLEMENTING THE EQAVET INDICATORS-BASED INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

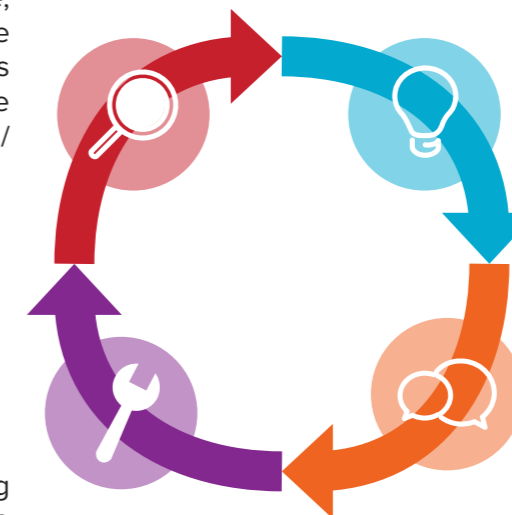
PROCESS

EVALUATE

As a part of the QA cycle, review and evaluate and initiate new process and if needed prepare an improvement action/project plan.

QA REPORT

Based on the monitoring and analysis of the indicators, VET providers prepare a short QA report.



QA POLICY STATEMENT AND QA PLAN

Agree and prepare an official commitment to quality assurance.

A short-term action plan which defines the period, a list of indicators they intend to implement, monitor and report on and who will participate in the process.

WORK ON INDICATORS

The VET providers should start with the implementation of the 4 mandatory indicators.

Prioritisation of the (implementation of the) remaining 4 indicators is the choice/ decision of the provider.

Figure 2: The process of working with the indicators – Overview

2.1. Principles underpinning the approach

The approach is based on several principles. **First, commitment to quality assurance.** The first thing that you need to have is a policy statement which reflects your institution's commitment to quality assurance. This means that if you do not have a quality assurance policy, then you need to draw one up based on your quality work, and especially on how you define and achieve quality. What should be included in the quality assurance policy?

The QA policy document does not need to be long. However, it must state the following concerning QA:

1. The commitment to quality assurance in ensuring that the VET institution provides training which is of high quality. If possible, this should be tied to the institution's mission statement.
2. The QA policy should be committed to being in line with EQAVET standards, endorsing the use of the quality assurance cycle (planning, implementation, evaluation, and review) and the indicators.
3. Identify those who are responsible for the implementation of the QA system and who have the remit to develop the indicators and the responsibility to draw up any additional policies considered necessary.

This policy document then allows the VET institution to implement its QA system. It is also linked with the 6 EQAVET Building Blocks for VET providers (see chapter 1.3.2. above) since it should reflect the following:

A. Commitment to quality assurance:

The VET institution commits officially to quality assurance. In practice, quality assurance should form part of the institution's ethos. Official commitment usually refers to an official declaration of this commitment such as a policy or a mission statement.

B. Commitment to the quality assurance cycle and the indicators:

The official commitment to quality assurance needs to be translated into actions and mechanisms through the quality assurance cycle and indicators. Institutions need to develop official documentation, often in the form of policies, which state that the QA system is built on the quality cycle, and how the indicators feed into each phase of this quality assurance cycle. Small institutions providing training in a limited number of sectors can have one framework, but larger institutions may have one central institutional document which is then translated and adapted to the individual sectoral training provided. VET institutions need to develop policies which describe their institution's ways of working and ensure that staff (both teaching and management) within the institution follow the procedures in these policies.

Second, flexibility, since it is designed to match both small and large VET providers, those experienced and newcomers, those with well-established QA systems and those that are in the process of setting it up.

Third, fit for purpose. It is designed to be fit for purpose of the internal QA systems and recognises that purpose may differ among providers and leaves it to the provider to decide on their own QA purpose.

Fourth, indicator based. The approach is based on EQAVET indicators applicable at the provider level. During the process of revision of the Manual, from among the ten EQAVET indicators, eight have been selected that are relevant to the Malta context and should be used in the next period of application of this Manual. These eight indicators are:

- 2. Investment in the training of teachers and trainers
- 3. Participation rate in VET programmes

- 4. Completion rate in VET programmes
- 5. Placement rate in VET programmes
- 6. Utilisation of acquired skills at the workplace
- 8. Prevalence of vulnerable groups
- 9. Mechanisms to identify training needs in the labour market
- 10. Schemes used to promote better access to VET and provide guidance to (potential) VET learners (The numbering of the indicators follows those in the EQAVET Framework.)

Fifth, quality culture. It contributes to the development and enhancement of the culture of continuous quality improvement of VET providers.

Sixth, linked with the EQAVET. The approach embeds EQAVET indicators and the QA cycle in the national context.

2.2. The process of working with the indicators

For the purpose of this Manual, the QA process is divided into four phases. These phases are linked with the QA Cycle as well and they are:

- **Planning** – development of the QA Commitment and QA Plan
- **Implementation** – working with the QA indicators
- **Evaluation** – development of the QA Report
- **Review** – review of the process and results, implement changes, improvements

Planning phase

At the beginning of the process, each VET provider should plan the process of working with this Manual and the QA indicators. Management of the provider should make several decisions:

- **Selection and implementation of indicators** that will be monitored.

In accordance with the MFHEA regulations, each provider should monitor, every year as a minimum, the following indicators: 3, 4, 5 and 8. Regarding remaining indicators, here there can be several scenarios. Some providers (e.g., larger and experienced ones) will be able to immediately implement monitoring of all eight indicators every year. For those with limited capacities or new and small providers, full implementation will be gradually built. These VET providers should plan, gradually build their capacities, and work towards inclusion of the monitoring of the remaining four indicators (2, 6, 9 and 10) in their internal QA procedures. This can be done in phases, for example, in the first year the minimum four indicators + one more, in the second year the minimum four indicators + three more, and in the third year all eight. Therefore, the full cycle of implementation of all eight indicators is three years.

- In what **period** will the process be implemented?
 - Here there can be several scenarios as indicated above. For example,
 - one VET provider may decide that they will only work with minimum indicators in the first year and with the remaining ones from year two.

- another provider will decide to work with the minimum indicators in the first year and every next year with two more in addition to the minimum ones.
- the third provider will decide to work with all indicators every year.
- etc.
- **Who** will implement the process?
 - Selection and, if needed, the appointment of a QA team that will implement the process. Its composition will reflect the capacities and interests of each provider. For larger ones and more experienced ones, this team will be larger and more diverse and even include students and other stakeholders. For others, it will be much smaller and include only management.
- QA Commitment
 - The QA team together with the management should draft their QA policy document.

The above decisions should be written down in a simple QA Plan that each provider should prepare at the beginning of each academic year. A proposal for the QA Plan template is in Annex I of this Manual.

Implementation phase

This is the key phase of the approach in which VET providers will work on selected indicators. An Indicators toolkit has been developed and is included in Section 3 of this Manual. The toolkit provides a detailed description and **purpose** of each indicator and, if relevant, its sub-indicators. It explains which **data elements** are needed to generate each indicator. Here it is important to note two types of indicators: quantitative (that can have numerical value) and qualitative (that is descriptive). Each indicator includes **important remarks** as well as possible sub-groups of data that must be taken into account, and each provider will have to think about these and discuss them internally before deciding on how they will monitor each indicator. The toolkit table has a **formula** for quantitative indicators which explains how to calculate them. To work with indicators, it is necessary to have data, therefore the toolkit table foresees a description of **data sources** that each provider has to generate indicators as well their **availability**. This will be more relevant for larger providers where various data may be maintained by different departments/internal units. When it comes to availability, here it will be necessary to investigate if some data are protected (i.e., GDPR implementation is required). Finally, the whole process of working with each indicator should be explained in the Comments section description of the main findings, including indicator values, as well as possible obstacles observed, etc. From this section of the toolkit table, the scope of the indicator that was monitored should be clear (i.e., does it include IVET and/or CVET, type of teachers monitored, definition and understanding of terms, e.g., vulnerable groups, etc.), what data was used, how the indicator was calculated, lessons learnt, etc.

Evaluation phase

This phase of the process should result in the preparation of a simple **QA Report** (template can be found in Annex II of this Manual). The Comments section of the Indicators toolkit will feed into the QA Report and should reflect the internal QA process as a whole. It is advised that the QA team that was selected in the planning phase works on the whole process and prepares the Report as well. Results of monitoring of selected indicators, and most importantly main findings, will be reflected in this phase. The main focus of this phase is not just the development of a QA Report but also strengthening the **quality culture** and continuous quality improvement in line with the EQAVET Framework, as well as supporting evidence-based decision making.

Review phase

The final phase of the process should also be encompassed in the QA Report. In it, providers should internally review the whole process and identify areas for improvement and further development as well as make decisions that will be reflected in a new QA Plan. Therefore, this phase closes the cycle and makes ground for a new cycle. As an option, an improvement action/project plan can be prepared (a template can be found in Annex III of this Manual).

SECTION 3

INDICATORS TOOLKIT

3.1. Indicators toolkit with description and explanation of the calculation

The indicators identified for use in the internal quality assurance system of Malta VET providers (see chapter 2.1. above) are based on the ten quality assurance indicators developed at the European level as part of EQAVET. These indicators will provide a measure of the degree of quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of VET provision within your institution. The indicators have meaning mainly in how they are used within the quality assurance cycle.

No.	Indicator	Links with other indicators
2.	Investment in the training of teachers and trainers:	4
	a) share of teachers and trainers participating in further training	
	b) amount of funds invested, including for digital skills	
<p>I. The purpose of the policy is to promote teachers' and trainers' ownership of quality development in VET, to improve the responsiveness of VET to changing demands of the labour market, to increase individual learning capacity building and to improve learners' achievement. It may assist the national competent authorities in ensuring focus on investments in the development of teachers' and trainers' further training and qualifications.</p> <p>II. Which data elements are needed to generate this indicator?</p> <p>A: <u>Numerator:</u> Number of teachers and trainers (by age and gender) participating in further training. <u>Denominator:</u> Total number of registered teachers and trainers.</p> <p>B: <u>Numerator:</u> Total amount of funds annually invested in the further training of trainers/trainers. <u>Denominator:</u> Total number of teachers and trainers participating in further training.</p> <p>Important:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Teacher/trainer demographics (age, gender) may affect the value of this indicator. ✓ Teachers'/trainers' training costs might be covered (partly or fully) by a various range of financing sources, e.g., public budget, European programmes, companies' investment, individual teachers' and trainers' self-funding or a combination of different financial sources. ✓ At the policy level, particular attention should be paid to the public investment in teachers' and trainers' training and/or incentives in supporting teachers' and trainers' training. <p>III. Formula</p> <p>A: Number of teachers and trainers (by age and gender) participating in further training divided by the total number of teachers x 100.</p> <p>B: Total amount of funds annually invested in the further training of teachers and trainers divided by the total number of teachers and trainers participating in further training.</p> <p>IV. Possible sub-groups of data: IVET, CVET, age, gender, type of teachers and trainers</p>		
Data sources (type, ownership - institution)		
A)		
B)		
Data availability (available, limited, not available)		
A)		
B)		
Comment, evaluation:		

No.	Indicator	Links with other indicators
3.	<p>Participation rate in VET programmes:</p> <p>Number of participants in VET programmes², according to the type of programme and the individual criteria³</p>	1, 4, 5, 7
<p>I. The purpose of the policy is to obtain basic information at system and provider levels on the attractiveness of VET and to target support to increase access to VET, including for disadvantaged groups.</p> <p>II. Which data elements are needed to generate this indicator?</p> <p>A: <u>Numerator:</u> Number of participants in IVET programmes at the upper secondary level. <u>Denominator:</u> Number of learners (including by age, gender or other factors in which you are interested) who have completed lower secondary/ compulsory education in a given year.</p> <p>B: <u>Numerator:</u> Number of participants (including by age, gender or other factors in which you are interested) in a CVET programme aged between 15 and 64 years. <u>Denominator:</u> Number of the population aged between 15 and 64 years.</p> <p>Important:</p> <p>✓ Pre-set requirements (a period of 6 weeks of training is needed before a learner is counted as a participant. For lifelong learning: percentage of the population admitted to formal VET programmes).</p> <p>III. Formula</p> <p>A) Number of participants in IVET programmes at the upper secondary level divided by the number of learners (including by age, gender or other factors in which you are interested) who have completed lower secondary/compulsory education in a given year x 100.</p> <p>B) Number of participants (including by age, gender or other factors in which you are interested) in a CVET programme aged between 15 and 64 years divided by population aged 15-64 x 100.</p> <p>IV. Possible sub-groups of data: IVET, CVET, age, gender, vulnerable groups (e.g., early school leavers, people with disabilities)</p> <p>Data sources (type, ownership - institution)</p> <p>A)</p> <p>B)</p> <p>Data availability (available, limited, not available)</p> <p>A)</p> <p>B)</p> <p>Comment, evaluation:</p>		

2 For IVET: a period of 6 weeks of training is needed before a learner is counted as a participant. For lifelong learning: percentage of population admitted to formal VET programmes.

3 Besides basic information on gender and age, other social criteria might be applied, e.g., early school leavers, highest educational achievement, migrants, persons with disabilities, length of unemployment.

No.	Indicator	Links with other indicators
4.	<p>Completion rate in VET programmes:</p> <p>Number of persons having successfully completed/abandoned VET programmes, according to the type of programme and the individual criteria</p>	3, 6, 8, 9 and 10
<p>I. The purpose of the policy is to obtain basic information on educational achievements and the quality of training processes, to calculate drop-out rates compared to the participation rate, and to support successful completion and adapted training provision, including for disadvantaged groups.</p> <p>II. Which data elements are needed to generate this indicator?</p> <p>A: IVET programme completers attaining a formal qualification. <u>Numerator:</u> Number of successful IVET programme completers (by age and gender). <u>Denominator:</u> Total number of participants entering IVET courses.</p> <p>B: CVET programme completers attaining a formal qualification. <u>Numerator:</u> Number of successful CVET programme completers (by age and gender). <u>Denominator:</u> Total number of participants entering CVET programmes.</p> <p>Important:</p> <p>✓ The calculation of dropout rates varies according to how the concept is defined and the type of dropout statistic used, i.e. a) the proportion of learners who drop out in a single year without completing the programme (the event rate), b) the proportion of learners who have not completed the programme and are not enrolled at one point in time, regardless of when they dropped (the status rate) or c) what happens to a single group or cohort of learners over a period of time (the cohort rate).</p> <p>✓ Variation in the age of learners who can be classified as dropouts, variation in the length of time for programme completion before a learner is considered a dropout.</p> <p>✓ A good completion rate does not automatically prove the quality of education.</p> <p>III. Formula</p> <p>A) The number of successful program completers (by age and gender) divided by the number of those who entered the IVET programme x 100.</p> <p>B) The number of successful CVET completers (by age and gender) divided by the number of those who entered the CVET programme x 100.</p> <p>IV. Possible sub-groups of data: IVET, CVET, age, gender</p> <p>Data sources (type, ownership - institution)</p> <p>A)</p> <p>B)</p> <p>Data availability (available, limited, not available)</p> <p>A)</p> <p>B)</p> <p>Comment, evaluation:</p>		

No.	Indicator	Links with other indicators
5.	<p>Placement rate in VET programmes:</p> <p>a) destination of VET learners at a designated point in time after completion of training, according to the type of programme and the individual criteria</p> <p>b) share of employed learners at a designated point in time after completion of training, according to the type of programme and the individual criteria</p>	3, 6, 7, 8 and 9
<p>I. The purpose of the policy is to support employability, to improve the responsiveness of VET to the changing demands in the labour market and to support adapted training provision, including for disadvantaged groups.</p> <p>II. Which data elements are needed to generate this indicator?</p> <p>A: <u>Numerator</u> Number of VET programme completers (by age and gender) who, within 12-36 months of the day they received their training credentials, obtained employment, enrolled in further education or training or any other destination. <u>Denominator</u>: Total number of VET programme completers.</p> <p>B: <u>Numerator</u>: Number of VET programme completers (by age and gender) employed one year after the end of training. <u>Denominator</u>: Total number of programme completers.</p> <p>Important:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Proportion of VET programme completers who are placed either in the labour market, further education or training (including university) or other destination within 12-36 months after the end of the programme). ✓ This indicator may require a commissioned survey. ✓ Need to consider relevance exclusively to IVET and/or CVET. <p>III. Formula</p> <p>A: Number of VET programme completers (by age and gender) who, within 12-36 months of the day they received their training credentials, obtained employment, enrolled in further education or training or any other destination to the total number of VET programme completers.</p> <p>B: Number of programme completers (by age and gender) employed one year after the end of training divided by the total number of programme completers x 100.</p> <p>IV. Possible sub-groups of data: IVET, CVET, gender, age, programme type and duration</p> <p>Data sources (type, ownership - institution)</p> <p>A)</p> <p>B)</p> <p>Data availability (available, limited, not available)</p> <p>A)</p> <p>B)</p> <p>Comment, evaluation:</p>		

No.	Indicator	Links with other indicators
6.	<p>Utilisation of acquired skills at the workplace:</p> <p>a) information on occupation obtained by individuals after completion of training, according to the type of training and individual criteria</p> <p>b) satisfaction rate of individuals and employers with acquired skills/competences</p>	5
<p>I. The purpose of the policy is to increase employability, improve the responsiveness of VET to changing demands in the labour market as well as support adapted training provision, including for disadvantaged groups.</p> <p>II. Which data elements are needed to generate this indicator?</p> <p>A: <u>Numerator</u>: Number of VET completers (by gender, education/qualification levels and training domains) of a given sector who, within 12-36 months from completing the VET programme, find a relevant occupation. <u>Denominator</u>: Total number of VET programme completers.</p> <p>B: <u>Numerator</u>: Number of individuals (by gender, education/qualification levels and by training domains) and employers who are satisfied with the acquired skills/competences. <u>Denominator</u>: Total number of VET programme completers and employers of that given sector.</p> <p>Important:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ There may be difficulties in finding a one-to-one correspondence between training domains/ qualifications attained and sectors of economic activities (e.g., a secretary or an IT operator might work in any sector; a cook usually works in restaurants but also might work in hospitals or a school's canteen, etc.). ✓ a) Percentage of VET programme completers working in relevant occupations. ✓ b1) Percentage of employees of a given sector who, within a period of 12-36 months from completing the VET programme, find that their training is relevant to their current occupation. ✓ b2) Percentage of employers of a given sector who are satisfied to find VET programme completers with relevant qualifications and competences required for the workplace. ✓ b3) Percentage of employers of a given sector who are satisfied with programme completers. ✓ This indicator requires a mixture of both quantitative and qualitative data. ✓ This indicator may require a commissioned survey. ✓ Tracer studies are needed based on two kinds of surveys: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tracer studies of IVET completers to explore their performance in the labour market. ○ Reverse tracer studies of CVET completers in companies to explore how they entered certain occupations and what role VET providers and enterprises played in the process. ✓ Surveys of employer satisfaction provide measures of the relevance of courses (or VET institutions) for their own particular skills needs. 		

<p>III. Formula</p> <p>A: Number of IVET programme completers (by age and gender) who, within 12-36 months from completing the VET programme, find a relevant occupation divided by the total number of VET programme completers x 100.</p> <p>B: b1) Number of VET programme completers, employees (by gender, education/qualification levels and by training domains) of a given sector who, within a period of 12-36 months from completing the VET programme, find that their training is relevant for their current occupation divided by the total number of VET programme completers, employees of that specific sector x 100.</p> <p>b2) Number of employers of a given sector who are satisfied to find VET programme completers with relevant qualifications and competence required for the workplace divided by the total number of employers of that given sector x 100.</p> <p>b3) Number of employers of a given sector who are satisfied with programme completers divided by the total number of employers of that given sector x 100.</p> <p>IV. Possible sub-groups of data: Subgroups of IVET completers by education/qualification level and by training domains.</p>
<p>Data sources (type, ownership - institution)</p> <p>A)</p> <p>B)</p>
<p>Data availability (available, limited, not available)</p> <p>A)</p> <p>B)</p>
<p>Comment, evaluation:</p>

No.	Indicator	Links with other indicators
8.	<p>Prevalence of vulnerable groups:</p> <p>a) a percentage of participants in VET classified as disadvantaged groups (in a defined region or catchment area) according to age and gender</p> <p>b) success rate of disadvantaged groups according to age and gender</p>	3, 4, 5, 6 and 7
I.	<p>The purpose of the policy is to give background information for policy decision making at the VET system level, to support access to VET for disadvantaged groups as well as adapted training provisions for disadvantaged groups. It may be used for planning at the system level, budgetary target setting and the assessment of the attractiveness and suitability of VET for vulnerable groups. It may also indicate the capacity of VET providers to deal with those groups.</p> <p>II. Which data elements are needed to generate this indicator?</p> <p>A: <u>Numerator:</u> Number of participants and of programme completers (by age and gender) from disadvantaged groups, defined at European and national levels. <u>Denominator:</u> Total number of participants and VET programme completers.</p> <p>B: <u>Numerator:</u> Number of programme completers (by age, land, gender) from disadvantaged groups, defined at European and national levels. <u>Denominator:</u> Total number of programme entrants from disadvantaged groups.</p> <p>Important:</p> <p>✓ Definition of “vulnerable group” at the national level (e.g., people with low educational level, students with learning difficulties or learners with special educational needs; imprisoned persons, migrants; early school leavers (dropouts); long-term unemployed; young unemployed people (under 25 years of age), older people (over 55 years of age); disabled people, etc.).</p> <p>✓ Useful for IVET and CVET programmes, excluding informal but including non-formal VET.</p>	
III.	<p>Formula</p> <p>A: Number of participants and of programme completers (by age and gender) from disadvantaged groups, defined at European and national levels divided by the total number of participants and VET programme completers x 100.</p> <p>B: Number of programme completers (by age and gender) from disadvantaged groups, defined at European and national level, divided by the total number of programme entrants from disadvantaged groups x 100.</p>	
IV.	<p>Possible sub-groups of data: Gender and age; people with low educational level, students with learning difficulties or learners with special educational needs; migrants; early school leavers; long-term unemployed; young unemployed people (under 25 years of age), older people (over 55 years of age); disabled people</p>	
	<p>Data sources (type, ownership - institution)</p> <p>A)</p> <p>B)</p>	
	<p>Data availability (available, limited, not available)</p> <p>A)</p> <p>B)</p>	
	<p>Comment, evaluation:</p>	

No.	Indicator	Links with other indicators
9.	Mechanisms to identify training needs in the labour market: a) information on mechanisms set up to identify changing demands at different levels b) evidence of the use of such mechanisms and their effectiveness	3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8
I.	The purpose is to improve the responsiveness of VET to changing demands in the labour market and to support employability.	
II.	Which data elements are needed to generate this indicator? Information on approaches a) to identify skill needs, and b) to link training provision to the needs of the economy. Evidence is likely to include reports from the organisation(s) responsible for this activity. Evidence of the effectiveness of mechanisms is related to other indicators, e.g., indicator 5.	
	Important: ✓ This is a qualitative indicator. ✓ Focus on both IVET and CVET. ✓ In order to measure the effectiveness, this indicator/descriptor refers not only to the schemes themselves (how they are planned and implemented) but also to the capacity of the VET system to increase access by evaluating them and by deciding further action. ✓ Consider the types of mechanisms in place at the national level, e.g., a forecasting system focusing on labour market/occupations, a tracking system monitoring VET programme completers, workforce projections, labour market analysis, econometric investigations, and procedures for updating professional profiles.	
III.	Formula No formula Consider the types of mechanisms in place at the national level, e.g., a forecasting system focusing on labour market/occupations, a tracking system monitoring VET programme completers, workforce projections, labour market analysis, econometric investigations, and procedures for updating professional profiles. It may be helpful to distinguish between immediate and longer-term labour market needs. The distinction between filling immediate skills needs and planning long-term for strategic changes.	
IV.	Possible sub-groups of data: Consider relevance exclusively to IVET and/or CVET, e.g., at the national, regional and local levels, economic sectors, unemployment rates, and labour demand/supply	
	Data sources (type, ownership - institution) A) B)	
	Data availability (available, limited, not available) A) B)	
	Comment, evaluation:	

No.	Indicator	Links with other indicators
10.	Schemes used to promote better access to VET and provide guidance to (potential) VET learners: a) information on existing schemes at different levels b) evidence of their effectiveness	4 and 8
I.	The purpose is to promote access to VET, including for disadvantaged groups, and to support adapted training provision.	
II.	Which data elements are needed to generate this indicator? Requires investigation on which schemes/measures, both at the system level and provider's level, are capable of addressing the issue of improving access and equity in VET. A valuable element to generate this indicator is to demonstrate how VET provision links to improved employment and individual and societal development outcomes.	
	Important: ✓ This is a qualitative indicator. ✓ Flexibility of education and training in responding a) to group and individual needs, and b) to labour market needs. ✓ The existence (or the planned establishment) of system-level mechanisms for ongoing advice and direction to guide the VET (sub) system's response to the needs and aspirations learners may need to move down to the level of VET providers. ✓ Partnerships with employers are crucial since pathways from VET into meaningful work and employment are not always clear.	
III.	Formula No formula Schemes used to promote better access to VET: a) Type of scheme (e.g., plans, policies, programmes): planning, implementing, evaluating and informed decision making put in place to promote better access to VET, especially for disadvantaged groups. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Scope: policies, processes, procedures; medium or long term interventions; national and European levels, IVET and CVET, excluding informal but integrating non-formal VET. ■ Coverage: disadvantaged groups (as defined at the European level). ■ Suitability of training for the demands for actual and future needs of specific disadvantaged groups and individuals. ■ Flexibility: how fast education can respond to group and individual specific needs. 	
b)	Evidence of their effectiveness: to measure the effectiveness, this indicator/descriptor refers not only to the schemes themselves (how they are planned and implemented) but also to the capacity of the VET system to increase access by evaluating them and by deciding further action. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Share of the population from disadvantaged groups entering VET related with the majority share. ■ Need to correlate with indicators 4 (Completion rate in VET programmes) and 8 (Prevalence of vulnerable groups). ■ Employability: effects on unemployment by disadvantaged groups and employability after the introduction of a specific scheme. ■ Individual and group satisfaction related to the access to the VET system. 	
IV.	Possible sub-groups of data: Society at large and VET stakeholders, in particular (e.g., learners, employers, social partners); vulnerable groups	

Data sources (type, ownership - institution)
A)
B)
Data availability (available, limited, not available)
A)
B)
Comment, evaluation:

Developing additional indicators

In addition to the above eight indicators listed in this Manual, each provider can develop and use a number of indicators that they find relevant and that contribute to their own purpose of the internal QA system. These can be either quantitative or qualitative. In doing so, it is important to make sure that additional indicators are evidence-based, meaning that they can be supported by evidence in data.

3.2. Linking the indicators to the EQAVET Quality Assurance Cycle

The use of quality assurance indicators included in the Indicators toolkit is important in each of the four phases – Planning, Implementation, Evaluation, and Review – of the EQAVET QA Cycle. Therefore, the operational understanding of the linkage between the set of indicators and the phases of the QA Cycle facilitates the process of implementing the indicators.

The figure below shows one possibility of how to link the set of indicators to the phases of the EQAVET Quality Assurance Cycle.

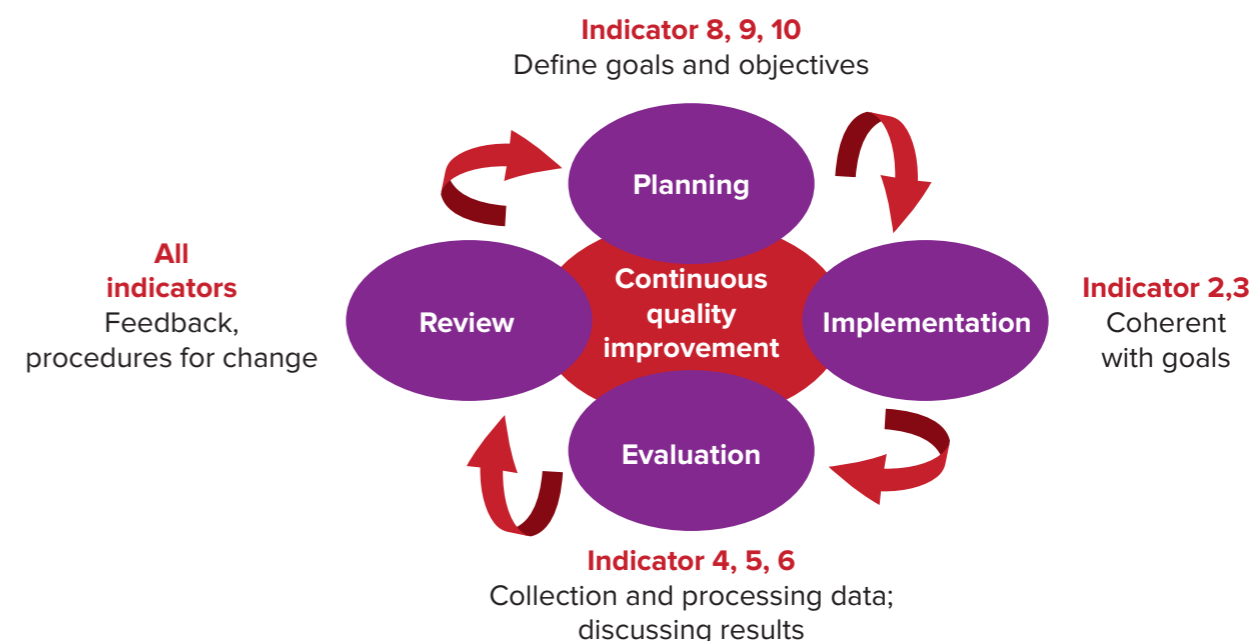


Figure 3: Linking the indicators to the QA Cycle

The indicators cover the different steps of the QA Cycle. One indicator can be used in more than one phase of the cycle.

Phase 1 - Planning

There are a number of indicators which the institutions may use to help them with the planning of their training programmes and courses and which ensure that they are planning quality training. The training needs to be relevant to the sector targeted and the learners must acquire those skills which are required by the sector. For example, indicator 9 “Mechanisms for identifying labour market needs” plays an important role in the planning stage as the information provided by these mechanisms – e.g., by skills forecasting – can be used to develop the training offer of the institution in line with the relevant needs of the labour market.

Phase 2 - Implementation

This phase refers to the actual delivery of the training to students. It is important that the training which students receive, whether as IVET or CVET, is of quality.

Monitoring participation rates (indicator 3) helps in the implementation activities as VET institutions can quickly identify dropouts and obtain trends in the types of students attracted.

Giving attention to the learning needs of teachers and trainers (indicator 2 “Investment in the training of teachers and trainers”) also affects the implementation of programmes as the quality of human resources is considered one of the most crucial factors for assuring and improving the quality of VET provision.

Phase 3 - Evaluation

If the institutions want to be sure that they have designed and implemented high-quality training, they need to evaluate the outcome of the training taking place. Evaluation can be carried out during and after the training has taken place, and there are a number of aspects which have to be taken into consideration when carrying out the evaluation. Achievements are to be measured and evaluated in comparison to the indicators previously set, thereby enabling the evaluation of the fulfilment of goals.

In the Evaluation stage, for example, indicator 4 “Completion rate in VET programmes” gives information on the number and ratio of students who have successfully completed their VET training. This indicator also provides input data to the graduate tracking analysis (indicator 5).

Indicator 5 “Placement rate” provides feedback and information on the quality and effectiveness of a training programme by showing the destination and ratio of VET graduates who became employed at a specific point in time after completing their studies.

Indicator 6 “Utilisation of acquired skills at the workplace” provides insight from the perspectives of both the employer and the employee into how much the education and training provided equipped students with the skills and competences required by the labour market.

Phase 4 - Review

This phase involves the action which is taken following an evaluation exercise. Too many times an evaluation of a training course or an institution is carried out, but no concrete action is taken to remedy any shortcomings. This phase is crucial as it is the mechanism which pushes the quality improvement of the VET provision forward.

In the last phase, all indicators have to be taken into consideration as practical consequences might be drawn from each of them.

The institutions are free to decide how to best use the indicators in each phase of the QA Cycle as a measurement instrument for the improvement of the quality of their VET provision.

SECTION 4

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES ON THE USE OF THE INDICATORS

4.1. Malta: MCAST – QA policy document

Based on the PDCA cycle, MCAST has devised a Quality Assurance Framework (QAF), built on leadership and strategy, teamwork, customer focus, systems, processes, and procedures, that strives to inculcate a quality culture in all. Every student and member of the staff owns the processes and the quality that is integral to them. Policies and procedures, including their updates, originate from them. The QAD role is that of a facilitator and, in certain instances such as internal or corporate audits, operational reviews and due diligence tasks, a risk assessment analyst. The QAF follows guidelines, indicators and criteria established by institutions such as EQAVET, the National Quality Assurance Framework issued by the MFHEA, and best practices as mandated by international quality management system standards, including ISO 21001 (Management systems for educational organisations).

Over the years, MCAST has developed an Integrated Quality Management System that is supported by two main Manuals of Procedures (MoPs):

- MoP Academic: a comprehensive set of academic policies, regulations, and procedures.
- MoP Administrative: a detailed manual of administrative policies and procedures.

Apart from these, MCAST has drafted and abides by its Internal Quality Assurance Manuals: while one is generic, some IQAMs have been specifically drafted for specific areas of study, such as aviation maintenance operations (AMTC) and maritime studies (CMS).

There are two main repositories for dissemination to intended users:

- MCAST Website – for documents that are student-centred
- MCAST Intranet – for documents intended for use by MCAST staff only

4.2. Hungary: Quality Policy

In the newly developed EQAVET-based quality management system for formal VET providers in Hungary, the Quality Policy – which is one of the main components of the QMS – is understood and used in a broader sense.

The Quality Policy incorporates the institution’s mission (expressing why the institution exists and what the core values and the guiding principles of its operation are) and vision (stating what the institution desires to achieve and wants to become in the future, in a timeframe of seven to ten years) and, together with the corresponding strategic goals, they constitute the institution’s strategy.

It means that within the framework of the Quality Policy, to assure and improve the quality of VET provision, the VET institution shall establish its mission and vision as well as define/set the corresponding strategic goals and quality objectives together with the related indicators (success criteria). The goals, objectives and targets set should be SMART, meaning **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant and **T**ime-bound.

The definition of the quality strategy and the aims of the quality management system, as well as the formal declaration of commitment towards quality management by the leadership of the institution, also form essential parts of the Quality Policy.

Furthermore, the Quality Policy is also complemented by the regulation of the organisational framework/setup of the quality management system and the necessary conditions for its operation. In every institution, Quality Management Teams, who manage and coordinate the quality management and self-assessment-related tasks and activities within the institution, are to be established. Depending on the size of the institution, the teams consist of 3-5-7 competent staff members (representatives of the leadership, teachers and trainers, and other staff members). The staff is widely involved in quality management through Process Control Teams, Self-evaluation Teams, and Improvement Teams.

4.3. Slovenia: QA Report

The Vocational Education Act of 2006 and the 2007 Organisation and Financing of Education Act identified the importance of quality assurance and self-evaluation as an obligatory and crucial method for quality assurance and quality development (QD), while it strengthened the autonomy and the developmental role of IVET.

The EQAVET indicators are part of the national QA framework and their use in the self-evaluation of VET schools is obligatory. The self-evaluation of VET providers is complemented by two types of external evaluation - one which is voluntary and one which is obligatory.

Schools are required to establish a quality committee (Quality Team, consisting of a minimum of a chairperson plus five members, from the representatives of teachers and other professional members of school staff, employers, students, and parents). The Quality Team and school management lead the process of quality assessment and quality assurance with self-evaluation at the school level and are also responsible for the establishment of a functional quality system/framework in a school. The committee is obliged to prepare and publish an annual quality report on the school website. The structure and content of the report are up to the school.

VET providers have to monitor national quality indicators (10 EQAVET indicators + 1 national) and, upon request, they have to send the data to the Institute for VET (CPI), which is EQAVET NRP in Slovenia. The national VET institute is obliged to regularly prepare and publish a national quality report on VET.

Since 2006, the QA and QD processes used by VET providers have been periodically monitored by national education institutions and universities. The findings from this monitoring show that, increasingly, VET providers are improving their internal quality assurance systems even though more than half of the VET providers report that they need regular professional support. This support is particularly needed to develop planning for QA and QD, identify the best methodology and tools to use, and report on QA and QD.

4.4. Malta: ITS – Indicator 2: Investment in the training of teachers and trainers

ITS promotes the participation of its lecturing staff in different forms of training. The different forms vary from continuing professional development (CPD) short courses to full qualifications and also Erasmus mobility. The COO-Academia organises general CPDs once every semester, and there are two semesters in an academic year. General refers, for example, to Health and Safety, First Aid, and general CPDs on quality assurance. Then there are more specific CPDs that apply to the lecturers' area. In this case, these can be achieved either through Erasmus mobility or through the financial package given to lecturers that can be used to attend courses, conferences, seminars, etc. of specific interest to the lecturer.

ITS had financed around 100,000 euros to upgrade lecturers to a master's level, especially in the Food Preparation and Food Beverage service, because there were no such levels in Malta at the time. Now, the ITS itself has these levels and can offer them to those coming from industry and want to be recruited as lecturers.

But most important is that in the recruitment agreement all lecturers not having pedagogy as a qualification are required to do so within 5 years of being employed and this is a plus because this is the art of teaching and not simply knowing about the required content. ITS has taken great care to have all lecturers plan their lessons in a learner-centred way wherever this is possible.

Therefore, this indicator has shown that it is important to plan up front due to logistics and financial connotations. This translates into the value of quality, as quality requires competent lecturers, and they should be one level up from the level they are teaching.

ITS also carried out CPDs, especially for Moodle and Teams, the latter used during COVID-19 times but still stands today. The lecturer has the academic freedom to use whichever one they want. This can give rise to some student complaints that they need to know both and that, therefore, there is no consistency in the tools used. However, the students can cope, and the learning outcomes are achieved.

4.5. Malta: ITS – Indicator 3: Participation rate in VET programmes

Participation rate comes from data which is kept on a student's lifecycle.

Collection of data of students, both full-time and part-time, falls under the responsibility of the Registrar and the Registrar's Department. ITS uses a central IT system, better known as SITS, which is a complex, multi-purpose, powerful database platform that can tackle anything related to school administration.

Over the past years, ITS has been developing software to meet its specific needs, firstly through an external programmer and through a (software company) consultant and, in the past months, ITS has employed two developers that are making notable inroads in the area. This effectively means that ITS has moved away from the rigid timetable to a more dynamic and live environment whereby all stakeholders can update themselves accordingly, across the whole academic year, with any statistical data they require. Further to the above, this is the main timetable ITS adheres to report participation from A to Z.

4.6. Croatia: Indicator 5: Placement rate in VET programmes and indicator 6: Utilisation of acquired skills at the workplace

VET graduate tracking in Croatia, as a part of the EQAVET NRP project, was developed in two levels. One of them was activity at the national level and the other at the transnational level. The first starting activities were conducted at the national level in the EQAVET NRP project cycle 2017-2019. In that cycle, a graduate tracking model was piloted in three Croatian schools with the aims of including all VET schools in Croatia and developing a graduate tracking model in line with the EQAVET quality cycle and the EQAVET Framework. VET graduate tracking was seen as a good method for tracking EQAVET indicators, particularly indicators 5, 6 and 9. The methodology for implementing graduate tracking was published in a handbook, and based on that methodology, the tracking system was divided into two questionnaires, the so-called "Exit survey" and the "Graduate tracking survey". First, the "Exit survey" was conducted in which a tracking group of students was defined. At this phase, students were still in school in the last year of their programme and, through this questionnaire, needed data was collected (e.g., e-mail addresses and consent for tracking) for the "Graduate tracking survey". The second questionnaire was then filled out a year later (but could have been done after another specified time), in which students answered different questions. The answers were then manually analysed, and the results were shown in a chart/diagram. For the following cycle (EQAVET NRP 2019-2021) more goals were defined, some of which were: review of previous work, feedback and report from the first graduate tracking, production of a handbook, preparing of additional schools, and others. Because of extensive preparation done with

the schools that were conducting the tracking of their students, the response rates in this cycle were very high. They ranged from 70% to 30%, averaging 50%. Also, more emphasis was put on the review part of the EQAVET QA cycle, meaning the schools that successfully participated in this activity made improvement plans based on the findings of the tracking. Online workshops were organised in which the national Agency for VET and Adult Education (AVETAE) provided constant support to the schools. In the current EQAVET NRP project cycle 2021-2023, the main objective is to further increase the response rate of graduate students. The main activity of the current cycle is to develop an IT solution which would automatise the entire process of tracking, making it easier for both schools and students in conducting the VET graduate tracking. The software would automatically analyse findings and, with an intuitive approach, encourage more graduates to answer the questionnaires; and, for schools, it would be a place where all the information would be stored. The entire process would be made easier for schools, making only one person from the schools the administrator who would handle the entire operation. The AVETAE would have access to some cumulative parts of the analysis which it would use for the development of VET at the national system level.

In the cycles 2017-2019 and 2019-2021, several activities at the transnational level were conducted with other NRPs. Mostly conferences and workshops were held in which different approaches and experiences regarding graduate tracking were exchanged between countries. In the current cycle, there were no plans for transnational collaborations with other NRPs, but because of extensive development in the past cycles, some of the NRPs have already contacted AVETAE regarding the VET graduate system tracking.

4.7. Malta: MCAST – Indicator 5: Placement rate in VET programmes

MCAST experiences led to the decision that the gauging of the utilisation of acquired skills at the workplace would, apart from the monitoring and mentoring, best be served by conducting Tracer Studies, as a mechanism to identify training needs in the labour market and promote better access and guidance to (potential) VET learners.

This type of study aimed to analyse and attempt to obtain a better understanding of the path taken by these students within a year following the conclusion of their studies. It identified whether the participants were in employment or not, in which sector they were employed, whether their employment was directly related to their studies, and whether skills obtained during their studies at MCAST were relevant to the practical skills employed at their place of work.

The Tracer Study offers an original and, eventually, iterative opportunity to analyse and act upon the data gathered, as opposed to merely hoarding it, to inform management decisions. In the spirit of PDCA, the areas of concern were identified, the low scores (ratings/percentages) were presented in the findings of the Tracer Study report, and the relative issues deemed worthy of further analysis, as well as derivatives of these issues, were extracted. In turn, this exercise was transcribed into a corrective action plan, indicating areas of improvement. The methodology proposed included:

- Secondary research, i.e., via the Tracer Study report, the results generated and the contents of the press release in this respect, and
- Primary research, i.e., via, at a minimum, two key informant meetings/discussions.

Hence, the output of this exercise was a consolidated quality assurance action plan, which involved monitoring/review on a periodical basis and a written report outlining Key Performance Indicators. Since Key Performance Indicators are only as valuable as the actions they inspire, the MCAST Quality Assurance Department facilitated this process covering pedagogical and policy issues.

MCAST uses Tracer Studies as a mechanism to identify training needs in the labour market and promote better access and guidance to (potential) VET learners. To this end, over the past years, a number of such studies were carried out, the most recent being that of 2020.

In this Study, the target group was MCAST students who finished their studies, graduated from their course in 2019 and left the College. 894 graduates were contacted by telephone by MCAST interviewers during the seven weeks from 1st June 2020 to 22nd July 2020. 339 could not be reached or declined to be interviewed. Nonetheless, the participation rate was deemed high, based on the following:

- Each interviewer attempted to contact those who could not be reached at least five times over different times and days.
- Another possible hypothesis about this rate of availability of respondents could be related to the timing of the data collection period. This occurred concurrently with the COVID-19 pandemic period. Both the interviewers and the respondents might have been working from home in a more flexible environment, which, in turn, could have facilitated more active participation.
- Yet another reason for such a high participation rate could be the tendency for a cohort to collaborate more the earlier the Tracer Study is conducted following the termination of studies. Graduates are easier to trace, and due to the strong labour market conditions of the country, most would already have succeeded in their switch to employment.

The number of actual participants in this Tracer Study was 62% of the total number of graduates who left the College. This response rate is certainly considered to be a very high one when compared to other tracer studies carried out in various institutions around the world. This high participation rate enhances the validity, usability, and quality of this Study. The Study indicated to what extent MCAST courses are related to the needs of industry and other places of work.

4.8. Malta: ITS – Indicator 5: Placement rate in VET programmes

ITS conducts a Tracer Study amongst its graduates every two years; the last one was in 2020 and another is currently being carried out in 2022.

The study is designed to trace and collect data on the employment status of ITS graduates, which includes their working industry, position, location, further career orientation, etc. The main purpose of this study is to analyse and identify the employability of these graduates in certain industries. The statistics of mismatching, unemployment, and promotion in graduates' employment before and after taking academic programs will provide a set of fundamental evidence in presenting the relevance between graduates' employability/promotion and their work values/skills provided by ITS, which is beneficial for program promotion externally as well as curriculum development internally. This information will also provide a better picture of how ITS programs are related to the tourism industry and to what extent ITS graduates can benefit from their studies.

Study results are documented in a report that presents a holistic framework of the study, including background, methodology, final findings, and analysis results. From five different perspectives, namely personal information, current employment, courses and work nature, program relevance and capacity and future career orientation, raw data are analysed and presented in different types of charts so that a clearer picture can be provided. The interconnection between each aspect is also analysed and stated as the source for recommendations.

4.9. Finland: Indicator 9: Mechanisms to identify training needs in the labour market

Tampere Adult Education Centre, TAKK, is a multisectoral vocational educator and working life developer. Annually, there are over 11,000 adult students, and the number of employees is around 250. TAKK is owned by Tampere Adult Education Foundation FR. TAKK offers vocational qualifications, further vocational qualifications, specialist vocational qualifications and vocational further education in over 20 vocational fields. Education, operations and learning environments are developed in close cooperation with working life and companies.

TAKK quality assurance is based on the ideology of continuous development, peer support and exchange of good practices.

TAKK has developed different tools to monitor the needs of the labour market:

1. Different kinds of publications and statistics
 - They monitor and gather data from national and regional levels:
 - the Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI)
 - Statistics Finland
 - The Pirkanmaa Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (ELY Centre)
 - The Council of Tampere Region
2. Business Services Unit in TAKK, networks
 - The Business Services Unit contacts companies (over 1,000 yearly) and organises meetings with them. Their task is to find out each company's needs for training, recruiting and development and to fulfil them. The needs of working life and the labour market are also monitored in many networks. They have developed a document called "TAKK's networks" in which they describe their partnership.
3. Collaboration groups in different training fields
 - TAKK listens to the needs of business life regularly in collaboration groups. Developing the groups is a part of TAKK's quality work. They have set up 11 groups. Members represent companies, other organisations, and labour market authorities. Groups have an annual plan, and they gather together 3-4 times a year. They plan, innovate, and discuss the current and future needs of working life. Together, they develop new training and pilot them or develop new events, for example, events where companies can hire students.
4. Teachers and other personnel
 - TAKK's instructors and teachers encounter representatives of working life in various contexts every day, which is why natural cooperation with working life is part of their daily business. Teachers, for example, meet workplace instructors during training at workplaces.

The Tampere Adult Education Centre, TAKK, has won the quality award two times in the competition organised by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture.

4.10. Malta: MCAST – Indicator 9: Mechanisms to identify training needs in the labour market

As per College policy and procedure, the design, development and approval of new accredited programmes and the review of existing programmes are key processes at MCAST. As a Self-Accrediting Institution, MCAST follows the rules stipulated in the National Quality Assurance Framework. As indicated in Internal Quality Assurance Standard 3 'Design and Development of Programmes', self-accrediting institutions shall have suitable processes that incorporate key characteristics, including the process of the identification of training/programme needs involves the participation of external stakeholders who are likely to benefit from the outcomes of such provision; programmes that are employment-oriented involve stakeholders from the world of work in their design and review; institutes and other programme proposers need to submit a form that indicates key information that is required to be submitted in the proposal. This includes internal and external stakeholder feedback, for example from students, alumni,

industry, employers, NGOs, etc. This process involves collaboration between institutes, the Education and Training Programmes Department, the Office of the Registrar, the respective Deputy Principal, and top management. All the latter are final approvers of each course proposal.

As part of a dedicated budgetary measure, MCAST implemented an initiative aimed at further involving industry partners in the design, development, and review of education and training programmes. The idea behind this initiative is to create different fora whereby key stakeholders in education and training work together to develop programmes that are relevant and sustainable and that recognise the input from the industry. This initiative is implemented through a series of events with different stakeholders from different sectors together with other promotional activities to attract students to key sectors. Expressions of interest were issued for companies and other organisations to nominate employees to participate in such initiatives. During the above events, stakeholders were given feedback sheets whereby they can provide feedback on the level of the programme, content, learning outcomes, delivery approach, relevance, and other general comments. These sheets are compiled together by the Education and Training Programmes Office and are duly submitted to the respective Institute to be used as input for subsequent programme development and review. Each event is also attended by a rapporteur appointed by MCAST. A report is prepared for each event to record key insights from presentations and panel discussions. These reports are also forwarded to the respective Institute.

4.11. Hungary: The VET institutions' indicator system

In Hungary, since 2000, there has been a systematic quality assurance and quality improvement activity in formal VET (IVET) with the aim of better serving the demands/needs of the labour market/economy, improving the quality, attractiveness and effectiveness of VET, and transferring VET institutions into learning organisations.

Recently, Hungary has introduced changes to quality assurance, which have been based on the European Reference Framework for Quality Assurance in VET (EQAVET Framework).

A new, common quality management system (QMS) was designed and developed and is currently under implementation in formal VET institutions in Hungary. The main components of this QMS are Quality Policy, comprehensive institutional self-evaluation, VET teacher-trainer evaluation, and external evaluation. Supporting elements, such as the VET institutions' process model, the partners' needs and satisfaction surveys, and the VET institutions' indicator system, facilitate the implementation of the QMS and the self-evaluation.

The VET institutions' indicator system contains the indicators which are necessary to carry out the quantitative/numerical evaluation of the (performance of) VET institutions, to measure outcomes, and demonstrate the improvement achieved over a specific period and in comparison with other VET providers.

In our understanding, the indicator is a specific, observable, and measurable characteristic that can be used to show changes or progress toward achieving a specific objective/outcome/target.

Like the goals and objectives, the indicators must also be of good quality, i.e., SMART, meaning

- **Specific:** it is clear, and all parties have a common understanding of what is being measured.
- **Measurable:** capacity to be counted, observed, and analysed to know if the outcome has been achieved.
- **Achievable / Attainable:** the target attached to the indicator is realistic and achievable.
- **Relevant:** a valid and reliable measure of the result/outcome.
- **Time-Bound:** progress to be tracked cost-effectively for a set period.

In the VET institutions' indicator system there are 24 indicators defined that are mandatory to be measured in all formal VET institutions every year. The indicators integrate all the EQAVET indicators which are applicable on the VET provider level (they are marked in *italics* in the table below).

Nr.	Name of the indicator	Indicator to be measured
1.	<i>Number of students</i>	by institution type, by sector, by profession
2.	<i>Number and share of students applying for the 9th grade of the VET institution and of those who have been admitted</i>	by institution type, by sector
3.	Number of students per one teacher-trainer in the VET institution	
4.	Share of students with a VET employment contract in the VET institution relative to the total number of learners participating in dual VET	by institution type, by sector, by profession
5.	Share of participants in VET with adult learner status relative to the total number of learners of the institution	
6.	Results of the national competence assessment	
7.	Results of specific competence assessments carried out by NOVETAL	
8.	Results achieved in the field of vocational and general education subjects, culture and sports	at international, national, county, and municipality levels
9.	<i>Placement rate</i>	
10.	<i>Satisfaction of graduates and employers with the acquired skills and competences</i>	
11.	<i>Examination results (secondary school leaving exam, sectoral basic exam, vocational exam)</i>	
12.	<i>Share of students having successfully passed their vocational exam relative to the number of candidates in a given examination period</i>	in total, and by profession
13.	Recognitions received by the institution	at the organisation, group, and individual levels
14.	Professional/skills demonstrations, conferences, and professional events organised by the institution	
15.	<i>Dropout rate</i>	
16.	<i>Results of satisfaction measurements (among parents, teachers and trainers, students, dual training providers, and labour market actors)</i>	
	Attainment of educational objectives (number of disciplinary cases, unjustified absence, praises)	
17.	<i>Share of disadvantaged students relative to the total number of students</i>	
18.	<i>Share of SEN students relative to the total number of students</i>	
19.	<i>Share of students participating in the "Springboard" basic competences development programme relative to the total number of pupils</i>	
20.	<i>Share of students who have obtained a partial vocational qualification in a school workshop/catch-up programme relative to the total number of training participants</i>	
21.	<i>Share of teachers and trainers participating in continuing professional development, in-service training and the amount invested</i>	
22.	Share of teachers and trainers pursuing activities as experts, educational advisors and examiners relative to the number of the whole teaching-training staff	
23.	Number of successful applications of the VET institution and the amounts obtained	

Table 5: The set of VET institutions' indicators

The above indicators are of different types as input indicators, e.g., number and share of students applying for the 9th grade of the VET institution and of those who have been admitted; output indicators, e.g., share of students having successfully passed their vocational exam; outcome indicators, e.g., placement rate; and efficiency indicators, e.g., the amount invested in the CPD per teacher/trainer.

These indicators can underpin the continuous quality improvement work of the institutions objectively to support decision making at different management levels. The results are compared to the previous year, and, in case of necessity, measures/actions are taken.

An Interpretation and Calculation Guide helps the use/implementation of the above 24 indicators as it ensures that the institutions understand, measure, and calculate the indicators in the same way.

The institutions are free to include other institutional indicators depending on their specific goals, objectives, processes, improvements implemented, etc.

In their QMS, the institutions have to define how they work with the indicators and elaborate a written procedure in which they specify the following items

Indicator	Where will the data be collected from? (data sources)	How will the data be collected? (method)	When and how often will the data be collected?	Who will collect the data?	Who will analyse the data and how?	Who will report the information and to whom?	Who will use the information and how, for what purpose?
1							
2							

ANNEX I

QA PLAN TEMPLATE

QA PLAN

Period of validity:

I. Institution data

II.

Name of the institution:	
Address:	
Telephone:	
E-mail:	
Website:	
Responsible person:	

III. QA Team

IV.

Members of the QA Team and their roles:	
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V. QA Commitment

VI.

Description of the institution's QA policy:	
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VII. Indicators

VIII.

List of indicators the institution will monitor:	<input type="checkbox"/> 2. Investment in the training of teachers and trainers <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Participation rate in VET programmes <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Completion rate in VET programmes <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Placement rate in VET programmes <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Utilisation of acquired skills at the workplace <input type="checkbox"/> 8. Prevalence of vulnerable groups <input type="checkbox"/> 9. Mechanisms to identify training needs in the labour market <input type="checkbox"/> 10. Schemes used to promote better access to VET and provide guidance to (potential) VET learners <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Elaboration of the decision:	
Period of QA Plan validity period:	

Date of approval of QA Plan

Responsible person

ANNEX II

QA REPORT TEMPLATE

QA REPORT

Period of validity:

I. Institution data

II.

Name of the institution:	
Address:	
Telephone:	
E-mail:	
Website:	
Responsible person:	

III. QA Team

IV.

Members of the QA Team that participated in the monitoring of indicators and prepared the report:	
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V. The process

VI.

Description of the process of collecting data and monitoring indicator (e.g., how was it organised, consultations with stakeholders, etc.):	
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VII. Indicators toolkit

VIII.

Name of the indicator:	
Data used:	
Results:	
Comment, evaluation and main findings:	

*Copy for each indicator

V. Conclusions and follow-up measures

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ANNEX III

TEMPLATE FOR IMPROVEMENT ACTION/PROJECT PLAN

The objective of the improvement action:

Target:

How to measure the attainment of the target set:

Project leader:

Start of the project:

End of the project:

Improvement action/project plan							
Task / Activity	Person responsible for the task	Participants, contributors	Resources	Deadline	Method	Date of checking/ milestone	Expected result

