



**Implementation of the  
Recommendation of the European  
Parliament and of the Council of 18  
June  
2009 on the establishment of a  
European Credit System for  
Vocational Education and Training  
(ECVET)**

*Final report*

*4 July 2014*

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## Glossary and abbreviations

ACVT	Advisory Committee on Vocational Training
Assessment of learning outcomes	The process of appraising knowledge, know-how, skills and/or competences of an individual against predefined criteria (learning expectations, measurement of learning outcomes). Assessment is typically followed by validation and certification
Awarding body	A body issuing qualifications (certificates, diplomas or titles) formally recognising the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills, competences) of an individual, following an assessment and validation procedure
Cedefop	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
Comparability of qualifications	The extent to which it is possible to establish equivalence between the level and content of formal qualifications (certificates or diplomas) at sectoral, regional, national or international levels
Competence	The proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities in work or study situations and in professional and personal development
Credit	Set of learning outcomes of an individual which have been assessed and which can be accumulated towards a qualification or transferred to other learning programmes or qualifications
Credit system	A system of credits makes it possible to break down a qualification or the objectives of a programme of vocational education and training into units. Each unit is defined in terms of knowledge, competences and skills. It may be characterised by its size and relative importance, expressed in general by credit points (or credits) or other factors. Each unit can be validated and awarded separately
DG EAC	Directorate General for Education and Culture
DGVT	Directors General for Vocational Education
EACEA	Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency
EASQ	European Area of Skills and Qualifications
EC	European Commission
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System within higher education
ECVET	The European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training, a device in which qualifications are expressed in units of learning outcomes to which credit points are attached, and which is combined with a procedure for validating learning outcomes
ECVET Network	A communication platform set up for dissemination of information about ECVET within participating countries

as well as stakeholders.

ECVET points	Numerical representation of the overall weight of learning outcomes in a qualification and of the relative weight of units in relation to the qualification
ECVET Team	A body providing technical support for the Commission and to the stakeholders involved in ECVET implementation.
<b>ECVET Users' Group</b>	A governing body ensuring the quality and overall coherence of ECVET coordination, cooperation and implementation.
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
EQAVET	European quality assurance reference framework for vocational education and training
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ESCO	European Skills, Competences and Occupations Classification
ET 2020	Education and Training 2020
Europass Mobility	A standard European document, which records details of the contents and the results - in terms of skills and competences or of academic achievements - of a period that a person of whatever age, educational level and occupational status has spent in another European country (UE/EFTA/EEA and candidate countries) for learning purposes.
Formal learning	Learning that occurs in an organised and structured environment (in a school/training centre or on the job) and is explicitly designated as learning (in terms of objectives, time or resources). Formal learning is <b>intentional from the learner's point of view. It typically leads to certification</b>
HE	Higher education
HEIs	Higher education institutions
ICT	Information and communication technologies
Informal learning	Learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support. Informal learning is in most cases unintentional from the <b>learner's perspective. It typically does not lead to certification</b>
IVET	Initial vocational education and training
LA	Learning agreement
Learning agreement	Individualised document which sets out the conditions for a specific mobility period. It specifies, for a particular learner, what learning outcomes s/he should achieve and how they will be assessed, validated and recognised
Learning outcomes	Statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence
LLL	Lifelong Learning
LLP	Lifelong Learning Programme

LO	Learning outcomes
Memoranda of understanding	An agreement between competent institutions which sets the framework for credit transfer and accumulation. It formalises the ECVET partnership by stating the mutual acceptance of the status and procedures of competent institutions involved. It also <b>establishes partnerships'</b> procedures for cooperation
Mobility	The ability of an individual to move and adapt to a new occupational environment
Module	A self-contained, formally structured learning experience. It should have a coherent and explicit set of learning outcomes, expressed in terms of competences to be obtained, and appropriate assessment criteria
MoU	Memoranda of understanding
MS	Member State
NARIC	National academic recognition information centres
NCP	National Coordination Point
NetECVET	A thematic network funded between 2011 and 2013, which connected 14 LLP National Agencies in order to support geographical mobility practitioners.
Non formal learning	Learning which is embedded in planned activities not explicitly designated as learning (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support), but which contain an important learning element. <b>Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view.</b> It normally does not lead to certification
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
PIAAC	Programme for the international assessment of adult competencies
PISA	Programme for international student assessment
Qualification	Formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent institution determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to a given standard
Qualifications framework	Qualifications Framework means an instrument for the classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for specified levels of learning achieved, which aims to integrate and coordinate national or sectoral qualifications subsystems and improve the transparency, access, progression and quality of qualifications in relation to the labour market and civil society
Recognition	The process of attesting officially achieved learning outcomes through the awarding of units or qualifications
Skills	The ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems
Steering Committee	<b>The ECVET Users' Group body which fulfils coordination function and supervises the Working Group</b>
ToR	Terms of Reference



Transparency of qualification	The degree to which the value of qualifications can be identified and compared on the (sectoral, regional, national or international) labour and training markets
UG	<b>Users' Group</b>
Units of learning outcomes	Component of a qualification, consisting of a coherent set of knowledge, skills and competence, which can be assessed and validated
Validation	The process of confirming that certain assessed learning outcomes achieved by a learner correspond to specific outcomes which may be required for a unit or a qualification
VET	Vocational education and training
WG	Working Group
Working Group	<b>The ECVET Users' Group body responsible for the production of user guides and support documents.</b>
Workload	The workload includes all learning activities required for the achievement of the learning outcomes (i.e., lectures, practical work, information retrieval, private study, etc.)

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## Summary statement

ECVET was meant to facilitate the transfer, recognition and accumulation of assessed learning outcomes, to support citizens move across and within countries and build their flexible learning pathway. At this stage, shortly after the testing phase, no impact that ECVET may have had with reference to its objectives has been detected. Conclusions based on largely qualitative judgements can be drawn on whether the implementation of ECVET seems to be moving towards these objectives, and what can be done to this purpose.

During the evaluation period of 2009-2013 the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) had limited progress at the national level. While it remained pertinent to the changing EU policy objectives in the field of vocational education and training (VET), it was not considered by all EU Member States to be equally useful, with commitment to it depending largely on the their VET and credit systems. Countries with already functioning credit systems and those with VET systems dominated by workplace-based training saw less added value in ECVET than those without a credit system or units/modules and/or those predominantly school-based.

The most valuable elements of ECVET as perceived by stakeholders were the (units of) learning outcomes and the ECVET documents (Memoranda of Understanding and Learning Agreements), but there was no particular relevance or demand for credit points due to their unclear technical specifications. There is considerable potential and support for greater integration of these elements of ECVET with other EU tools in the context of the European Area of Skills and Qualifications.

ECVET had a comparatively complex and unclear (to its stakeholders) governance, communication and support structure, although its separate bodies performed their respective functions well. The monitoring of national level progress and ECVET pilot projects was performed strongly, but the Leonardo da Vinci transfer of innovation and mobility projects with ECVET element were not sufficiently followed up.

The ECVET projects strongly increased the quality of mobility and developed awareness and understanding of learning outcomes approach, but were unable to increase the political commitment at the national level, or to bring stronger permeability of any kind between VET and higher education.

The recommendations of the evaluation followed these lines, calling for: a greater focus on the benefits and elements seen as most relevant, particularly learning outcomes; linking with other tools, particularly Europass, EQF and ECTS; making the EU level governance structure lighter and clearer; better monitoring of all projects using ECVET so that lessons can be learned and effectively disseminated; further consolidation and improvement of the targeting of support actions to users of ECVET and NCPs and a stronger focus on quality to promote development of long term partnerships and trust.

## Executive summary

### Purpose of the evaluation

The external evaluation of the Implementation of the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) was conducted in accordance with the clause set out in the said Recommendation that the Commission intends to report (within 5 years following the Recommendation) to the European Parliament and the Council on the experience gained in its implementation and implications for the future. The evaluation closely follows the monitoring of ECVET implementation conducted on an annual basis by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), but is the first external evaluation related to the initiative and covered the period from the outset of the implementation of the ECVET Recommendation in 2009 to the summer of 2013 when the evaluation contract was signed. However, as ECVET was under policy discussion at European level prior to the Recommendation and has also been undergoing certain developments during the evaluation period, these timelines were also taken into account. The evaluation strongly focused on relevance of ECVET and its overall objectives and principles to the related EU policy framework, stakeholders and other European transparency and recognition tools and initiatives. It also considered the effectiveness and implementation as well as governance and European support issues.

### ECVET

The idea of a European credit system for VET as a tool to promote transparency, comparability transferability and recognition of competences and/or qualifications across countries and levels of education and training was raised in the 2002 Copenhagen Declaration on the future priorities for enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training (VET). The system set up by the 2009 Recommendation was based on learning outcomes, recording what an individual has actually learned and is qualified for, rather than calculating the workload or time spent on educational or training activities. The main principles and elements of ECVET, according to the Recommendation, include:

- The description of learning outcomes in terms of units (coherent sets of knowledge, skills and competence that can be assessed and validated with a number of associated ECVET points);
- A transfer and accumulation process, as well as ECVET partnerships. The transfer and accumulation largely depends on national/regional regulatory framework, whereas the ECVET partnerships can be facilitated by Memoranda of Understanding (MoU);
- ECVET documents – in addition to MoU these include learning agreements between the learner, home and hosting institutions, and transcripts of records **recording the results of learner's assessment in terms of achieved learning outcomes**;
- Credit points, which provide complementary information for reference about the potential value of certain units of learning outcomes. Conventionally it is held that 60 points correspond to one year formal full time VET.

The generic objective of the initiative is the promotion of lifelong learning and employability, openness to mobility, and social inclusion. ECVET should contribute to this overarching objective by facilitating transfer, recognition and accumulation of

assessed learning outcomes, which would support citizens' mobility and flexible learning pathways. This links ECVET to other European transparency and recognition tools, including Europass, the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), European quality assurance in VET (EQAVET), the European credit transfer and accumulation system for higher education (ECTS) as well as validation of non-formal and informal learning. At the moment of evaluation, however, there was no evidence that ECVET had already significantly contributed to the achievement of these objectives.

## Methodology of the evaluation

The data collection and analysis methods used during the evaluation include desk research, interviews, surveys, and focus groups. Desk research included EU policy documents relevant for ECVET, studies produced by Cedefop or other actors, outcomes of events, various information and guidance documents at both European and national level, publications in ECVET magazine, and outputs of ECVET pilot projects and Leonardo da Vinci projects with an ECVET element. A meta-synthesis of outputs of Leonardo projects with an ECVET element was further carried out in four selected countries (Finland, France, Hungary and the United Kingdom) and complemented by findings from best practice ECVET projects identified by Cedefop as well as ECVET pilot projects. Over seventy interviews were conducted with national ECVET actors in the same four countries as well as at EU level. The groups interviewed included all types of ECVET governing and support actors, social partners, education and training providers at various levels, ECVET project managers and participants, European Commission and EU agencies (Cedefop, ETF) as well as stakeholders of related initiatives. Three surveys – of ECVET stakeholders and governing/support actors, institutional ECVET project participants, and final beneficiaries, including teachers, learners, and guidance services/mobility promoters – formed the quantitative as well as qualitative basis of the analysis, gathering opinions of almost 4000 respondents in total. The findings are reinforced with the validation focus group involving representatives of social partners, training providers, and national public actors implementing ECVET.

## Relevance

The public consultation and impact assessment carried out by the Commission before launching the Recommendation were decidedly positive towards ECVET. However, at the time when this report was written most of the EU countries were still to define their national ECVET objectives and the progress of the initiative at the political level was limited. The countries with units/modules and credit systems already in place considered a stronger push was needed towards implementation of ECVET at national level, whereas other countries preferred a gradual progress starting with awareness raising, clarification of terminology and closer integration of ECVET with other tools.

In the new European education and training policy framework following the **establishment of the Europe 2020 strategy, ECVET's objectives remained highly pertinent**, due to their focus on mobility, on the creation of flexible learning pathways and on closing the gap between the worlds of education and training and employment. ECVET is also very strongly embedded in the Copenhagen process and is directly related to 4 of 22 short-term deliverables of the Bruges communiqué.

However, ECVET was not equally useful to all EU Member States. The level of commitment to ECVET in different countries strongly depends on the features of the existing VET and credit systems. Countries with units, modules and functional credit systems, as well as those with VET systems dominated by workplace-based training saw lower added value in ECVET implementation than those which lacked credit

system or had no units/modules and were predominantly school-based. The rigidity of national VET systems and the continuing lack of political commitment and argumentation at the national level shows that a genuine European credit system for VET (including all Member States) may not be feasible in its current form and could either be applied only in those countries where the demand and theoretical compatibility exists, or its objectives could be revised.

The main three strands of benefits of the initiative identified were its contribution to the implementation of a learning outcomes approach, to increased mutual trust, and to better quality of mobility experiences (better understanding of competences gained, sharing experiences about methods, management competences). All of these benefits were also partially supported by other EU transparency tools – EQF, EQAVET and Europass (particularly its Mobility document). The ECVET tools which contributed the most to the benefits were the Memoranda of Understanding and Learning Agreements, and there was no other EU initiative in place which would actively support the development of units of learning outcomes at the grassroots level. However, there was no particular relevance or demand for credit points among the stakeholders, particularly because of their technical specifications making their operability difficult. There was an identifiable lack of clarity in the ECVET Recommendation on how the points can be allocated to units and how they can be used in the process of accumulation. Moreover, the ECVET practitioners and academia alike considered that the current understanding of ECVET points as a proportion of units within a certain qualification made it logically not possible to use points for automatic transfer, as the same unit could have a different numerical value within another qualification.

As the relevant elements and benefits of ECVET were also provided by related European initiatives, the forthcoming review of transparency tools and instruments under the European Area of Skills and Qualifications will be an opportunity to reflect whether any of ECVET principles should be rather taken up by other initiatives. The system for promotion of learning outcomes among training providers could potentially become a spin-off of EQF initiative, and the units of learning outcomes as well as ECVET documents could be used following the ECTS principles without the workload-based element of credits. However, as ECVET is a grassroots-based initiative and EQF is centralised, their closer synergy becomes problematic. The more advanced links between ECVET and ECTS are limited by the fact that ECTS falls under Bologna process and is therefore focused on higher education as well as more difficult for the Commission to steer.

The ECVET stakeholders were in favour of the forthcoming European Area of Skills and Qualifications and saw it as an opportunity to bring ECVET and the other European tools for transparency and recognition closer together via more integrated governance, search for synergies, and stronger status for learning outcomes across all related tools (most importantly EQAVET). At the time of evaluation, the ECVET stakeholders were well aware of and familiar with Europass and EQF but less familiar with ECTS and EQAVET, although they have significant coherence potential with ECVET.

EQF and ECVET shared openness to all forms and levels of learning (although in ECVET a vocational element was necessary), a focus on transparency, comparability and portability, the importance of a learning outcomes approach, and mutual reinforcement in enabling flexible learning pathways. The diverging points were their centralised (EQF) vs. local/partnerships (ECVET) approach, as well as somewhat higher relevance to learners and providers (ECVET) vs. employers or awarding/regulating bodies (EQF).

ECVET and ECTS had weak compatibility in terms of their approach towards credit / credit points, but the learning outcomes approach could facilitate a two-way conversion between the systems. There were also indications that keeping separate tools was a viable option, as the workload element was much more important in higher education due to the stronger need to structure the curricula and schedules of lecturers and students, and meet student expectations in terms of workload offered by university courses.

The discussions on ECVET in the framework of validation of non-formal and informal learning were scarce and there were very few examples where ECVET was already being used for this purpose. Learning outcomes were considered to be the major relevant element of ECVET for validation of prior learning, whereas the ECVET documents and credit points were theoretically tied to the formal context of learning. ECVET also led to better structuring of VET, making it more favourable for taking into account learning outcomes gained outside the formal environment.

ECVET had a mutually reinforcing relationship with Europass, with ECVET providing actual content to Europass documents and Europass being able to present the individual ECVET results in a clear and consistent way. The most important Europass document in this regard was the Europass Mobility which very often acted in ECVET projects as a tool for recording learning outcomes and was reported to have acted as transcript of records in some projects.

Both ECVET and EQAVET strongly contributed to the development of mutual trust among training providers in Europe. However, they did this in different ways – ECVET contributed to mutual trust by increasing the capacity of training providers to develop learning outcomes in a way which can be trusted by the project partners, whereas EQAVET looked into the process and quality of VET provision. As a result, at the time of evaluation the EQAVET cycle of planning, implementation, evaluation/assessment and review/revision was not applied for (units of) learning outcomes.

ECVET and ESCO shared basic terminological principles by focusing on knowledge, skills and competences. The intention of ESCO was to describe relevant skills, competences and qualifications for a variety of occupations in a standardised language, which could contribute to a common language in organising mobility experiences with an ECVET element, but at the moment ESCO is at too early a stage of development to have had any significant impact.

### **Effectiveness: governance and outputs**

The ECVET governance, support and technical assistance structure was complex compared to the structures of similar initiatives such as EQF, and the ECVET stakeholders found it difficult to identify where the decisions concerning ECVET were being taken and who put forward which proposals.

**The ECVET Users' Group fulfilled its purposes of developing Users' Guide and ensuring the quality and coherence of ECVET cooperation process well. The Users' Guide was written in a professional manner and included high level of detail. However, the Users' Guide could only be used as an information dissemination tool only after simplification and explanation in national languages to potential project participants. The availability of simple ECVET explanatory documents was often the most convincing means to encourage institutions and organisations to join ECVET projects.**

The ECVET Network was successful among the stakeholders in disseminating the information at the national level and in providing a platform for exchange of information, particularly in terms of training provided and connections established with other actors involved in ECVET.

Although the ECVET Recommendation did not foresee neither contact nor reference points, the Member States have established twenty-seven national coordination or contact points (NCPs) for coordination of ECVET within national bodies involved in the implementation of the initiative. While it signals a certain level of commitment at national level, there was a lack of a clear strategy how to direct their actions and how to adjust support to their particular needs. A wide spectrum of types of bodies acting as NCPs led to uncertainty about their exact role and objectives. The potential of NCPs could be better utilised if the coordination and information activities of NCPs were more targeted according to the national context and needs. More coherence in activities of NCPs could be achieved either by making an agreement on common tasks to intensify coordination which would not require any changes in the existing legislation, or by foreseeing a more explicit role for NCPs in the ECVET Recommendation.

ECVET underwent two main monitoring efforts during the evaluation period. Cedefop monitored the ECVET implementation process in different EU countries and prepared detailed annual reports. EACEA, supported by an external contractor, also analysed the experimentation efforts conducted via ECVET pilot projects, producing synthesis reports, reporting on the key findings in ECVET magazine and presenting these findings in dissemination events. However, this in depth monitoring mostly concerned 19 pilot projects specifically organised to support ECVET, excluding some other 300 pilot projects that also included an ECVET element, though often as a secondary feature. The reports of these projects were not always accessible in electronic version. Besides, mobility projects have only been monitored by the national LLP/Erasmus+ agencies from the administrative point of view and did not have their content analysed or monitored using quantitative or qualitative indicators.

The best practice examples of using ECVET which could be used by potential future users were abundant online. However, at least three different websites / online access points existed for this purpose, complicating the clarity for stakeholders about where to look for relevant information.

Various types of support actions, such as the ECVET Magazine, peer learning activities, targeted seminars, training and information sessions, European level events and publications were all very well known among the ECVET stakeholders. ECVET Team and Cedefop were the most active actors providing various support actions. The ECVET project participants were often further supported by national LLP/Erasmus+ agencies. The project participants however considered the targeted seminars and other tailored support actions provided by ECVET Team as the most useful support.

### **Effectiveness: results and impacts**

During the period of evaluation, the level of trust in quality and consistency of qualifications was high between initial VET and continuing VET, but at a very low level between VET and higher education. Whereas ECVET was effective in increasing the level of trust across borders, it was unable to increase trust among different levels of education and training. The approaches considered by ECVET stakeholders to further increase the mutual trust among project partners included a micro-level approach (managing partnerships by getting to know the partners), organising the partnerships

among clusters of providers, unified international skills measurement system for VET and focusing the EQAVET quality cycle on learning outcomes.

Enhanced national level guidance and support for ECVET as well as further progress in implementing national and European qualifications frameworks (NQF/EQF) and other European transparency tools (ECTS, Europass, EQAVET) were identified as the main ways to build trust in the quality and consistency of qualifications between stakeholders.

The results of Leonardo da Vinci (pilot, mobility or transfer of innovation) projects with ECVET element were regarded to be very useful and sustainable by their participants. Such projects were the most effective in developing awareness and understanding as well as gaining the acceptance of learning outcomes approach, which is one of the most basic necessary conditions for implementation of ECVET. However, the projects were not effective in creating the other basic level necessary conditions, most importantly political commitment in countries which had slower progress towards implementation of ECVET.

The mobility projects with ECVET element found that the main obstacles for transferring learning outcomes included different terminology used to describe units of learning outcomes, modules, credits, credit points and other relevant elements, the incompatibility of the national credit systems with ECVET (leading to inability to use credit points to transfer learning outcomes), and the heterogeneity of the quality of training provision and assessment. The lack of orientation of national education and training systems towards ECVET, an underdeveloped national level legal framework (e.g. towards recognition), the administrative burden and difficulties in applying ECVET methodology were also the key issues which hindered the willingness of project participants to use the ECVET element in mobilities in the future. The units of learning outcomes achieved in ECVET mobility projects were more likely to be recognised and awarded where the concept of units also existed in the home system.

For the short-term mobility projects, the supporting documents of ECVET - Learning Agreement, Transcript of Records, and Memorandum of Understanding were the most important element of the initiative. In particular, these documents helped to increase mutual trust between sending and receiving institutions which could afterwards potentially result in longer-term mobility.

The approach of giving additional points for Leonardo applications with ECVET element boosted the take up of the initiative, but there was no evidence on the level of success of these projects in applying ECVET and the quality of the outputs they produced.

As ECVET was not yet implemented in practice in most of the EU Member States, it did not contribute significantly to permeability between VET and higher education. The providers offering VET qualifications at tertiary level continued to prefer ECTS due to easier methodology, better establishment and longer history of the instrument as well as clearer links to academic strand of higher education.

## **Main recommendations**

The main recommendations of the evaluation identify the following directions for the ECVET initiative in the future:

- 1. Focusing on the relevant benefits:** The implementation of ECVET should directly focus on mainstreaming of learning outcomes approach, increased mutual trust and increased effectiveness of VET mobility. In consultation with all relevant



stakeholders, the Commission should consider to what extent the relevant elements of ECVET could be carried out in the context of other initiatives such as EQF, EQAVET and Europass, which may result in a revision of the structure and implementation of ECVET as well as its positioning in the context of European transparency instruments.

- 2. Finding the relevant elements:** The implementation of ECVET should focus on credit as assessed learning outcomes and units of learning outcomes, and it should be made clear to all stakeholders that credit points are a supplementary and secondary element of ECVET rather than its main focus. The Commission, in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, should consider whether the name of the initiative (for instance "European Credit for VET") should refer to elements recognised as beneficial (learning outcomes) rather than refer to "credits" (often mistaken as "credit points").
- 3. Linking with other tools:** ECTS and ECVET have different purposes and cater for the needs of different stakeholders, therefore the priority would be not to merge those instruments but promote their interrelation with particular reference to learning outcomes rather than credit points. The Commission should promote the use of Europass Mobility in the context of ECVET, namely as a transcript of records for mobility experiences, if necessary adapting the Europass Mobility. The Commission should ensure cooperation between ECVET and EQAVET, in particular to support mutual trust among learning providers in the quality of learning outcomes developed and assessed.
- 4. Making the EU level governance structure lighter:** in particular, the governance and technical assistance bodies should have very clear division of roles and responsibilities, and this division should be well communicated to stakeholders.
- 5. Better monitoring of ECVET projects:** The Commission should monitor not only the content of the ECVET pilot projects, but also the other Leonardo transfer of innovation and mobility projects with ECVET elements. Such monitoring should concern both quantitative data (such as the number of memoranda of understanding and learning agreements signed) and qualitative information on the outcomes. The Commission should also ensure that all such information can be accessed online and is appropriately disseminated by project promoters.
- 6. Further consolidating and improving the targeting of support actions:** The practical guidance for users of ECVET on how to write, record, assess and validate learning outcomes could be further supported by a single access point for best practices in using ECVET and a web-based interactive tool for writing learning outcomes. **The Users' Guide should be revised to present the same main ideas in a simpler language.** The NCPs could be supported by assisting them in obtaining simpler promotion material and promoting experience sharing among NCPs e.g. via peer-learning activities.
- 7. Focusing on quality:** The Commission should further promote the development of long-term partnerships based on trust between providers, foster clusters of providers, and explore further ways to ensure stronger mutual trust and quality assurance of learning outcomes, including through cooperation with EQAVET. It should also promote the take up of ECVET in EU funded mobility projects not by giving straightforward priority to projects with ECVET element, but rather, for example by easing the administrative burden and making clear that the use of points is only advisable where this is seen necessary by the participating parties.

Finally, the future ECVET projects should include stronger links with the policy making and/or implementing actors (e.g. ministries, national agencies) to make sure that the outputs created by the projects are purposefully used for strengthening the national dimension of ECVET.

## Introduction

The evaluation of the Implementation of the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) was conducted in accordance to the clause set out in the said Recommendation that the Commission intends to report to the European Parliament and the Council on experience gained in its implementation and implications for the future. This report should be prepared after an assessment and evaluation carried out in cooperation with Member States. This evaluation could result in a review and adaptation of the Recommendation as well as its annexes and guidance material.

In the light of the requirements set out for the final report in the Terms of Reference of this assignment, the current report is divided into the following parts:

- Part 1 “Intervention logic”, which presents the evaluation team’s understanding of the intervention logic of ECVET, which is further used as a basis for the whole design of the evaluation exercise;
- Part 2 “Methodology and status of evaluation” which reviews the data collection and analysis methods employed, status and progress of the evaluation project to date and further steps foreseen, describes the encountered problems and solutions found, quality of the obtained data, and informs about the required changes in the work plan;
- Parts 3-4, which summarise the key preliminary findings related to relevance and effectiveness (including governance and outputs, as well as immediate, intermediate, and long-term results and impacts) of the initiative;
- Part 5 which presents the conclusions and recommendations.
- Annexes, which include the findings of the surveys of ECVET stakeholders and governing actors, institutional project participants, teachers and learners, interview guidelines, and the questionnaires of all surveys conducted under the scope of this evaluation.

The evaluation follows the guiding questions set out below in:

**Table 1: Evaluation questions**

Chapters in the report / evaluation issues	Evaluation questions
Relevance of overall objectives and	1. To what extent does the credit system contribute to the goals set by E&T 2020, Europe 2020 and the Copenhagen

Chapters in the report / evaluation issues	Evaluation questions
principles	<p>Process?</p> <p>2. To what extent are the principles and features of the ECVET system compatible with the other tools in this regard? To what extent have synergies been developed during the implementation, in particular with ECTS? How could synergies be further improved? To what extent do national qualifications frameworks and the EQF facilitate the full implementation of ECVET?</p> <p>3. What are the benefits of ECVET for the learner? What are the benefits for the various stakeholders (national authorities, competent institutions, social partners, training providers and VET schools, VET teachers and trainers, companies, sector associations, chambers and branch organisations, LLP National Agencies)?</p>
Effectiveness and implementation	<p>4. As it appears that the target date has not been fully met by all countries, why is this the case and to what extent may this present a challenge to the overall and long-term objectives of the initiative? What measures could support progress in this direction at national and regional level?</p> <p>5. To what extent do the users' guide documents fulfil their role of explaining ECVET and giving guidance, advice and support to stakeholders concerned? What is the scope for improvement?</p> <p>6. To what extent do individuals and stakeholders have access to and can rely on support while using ECVET? To what extent does Europass carry information considered necessary? What is the scope for improvement?</p> <p>7. What are the most striking test results and outcomes at European, national and regional level? To what extent have the outcomes of these projects provided input for the implementation of ECVET?</p> <p>8. Procedures for describing qualifications in terms of units of learning outcomes (design, number, size, points allocated), their assessment, validation and recognition call for an easily understandable set of rules and indicators to generate mutual trust among partners. While quality assurance helps in this regard, to what extent are additional quality standards needed? To what extent is European guidance and support needed?</p> <p>9. The Recommendation focuses on increasing the quality of geographical mobility. Nevertheless, monitoring results show that many VET providers and competent institutions still use non-ECVET mobility instead. What conditions are needed for them to carry out their projects as ECVET mobilities?</p> <p>10. Is it suitable to apply the entire set of the principles of the ECVET system to shorter mobility projects? If not, what</p>

Chapters in the report / evaluation issues	Evaluation questions
	<p>principles could be identified as useful? What would, conversely, these projects need in terms of guidance and support to fully use the ECVET system?</p> <p>11. To what extent do ECVET credit points reinforce geographical VET mobility?</p> <p>12. To what extent and how do competent institutions and stakeholders exploit ECVET at national or regional level in this regard?</p> <p>13. The Recommendation aims to facilitate the compatibility, comparability and complementarity of both ECVET in VET and <b>the European Credit Transfer System ('ECTS') in the higher education sector</b> in order to contribute to greater permeability between levels of education and training. To what extent does ECVET support the cooperation of VET and higher education institutions in this respect? What are the challenges the learner faces while exploiting his or her assessed learning outcomes for further learning purposes in higher education? Do ECVET credit points ease the learner's progression route to higher education?</p> <p>14. Conversely, university graduates should be able to complement academically oriented study with high level vocationally-based learning post-graduation. What is needed to overcome major hurdles in this regard? Equally, can a student that drops out of higher education gain exemption based on previous experience when entering higher VET training by using ECVET? What lessons can be learnt from best practice in this regard and what is the scope for improvement?</p> <p>15. To what extent is the potential of ECVET applicable at national level to validate prior learning? What is the scope for a wider use of ECVET in this regard?</p>
Governance and European support	<p>16. Are the governance and monitoring arrangements at European level - in particular the work of the ECVET Users' Group and the ECVET Network - fulfilling their purpose? Is there adequate coordination at European level? How efficient and effective are the structures put in place at the EU level for implementing ECVET?</p> <p>17. Which support actions have proved to be useful at national or regional level and which ones less useful? To what extent could they be fine-tuned and/or modified to increase efficiency and lessen the burden on actors and stakeholders?</p> <p>18. In contrast to the EQF and the EQAVET Recommendations, ECVET does not foresee either contact or reference points. Nevertheless, MS have established twenty-seven national coordination or contact points. How can these initiatives be best supported and further developed?</p> <p>19. What are the critical issues to address to ensure high</p>

<b>Chapters in the report / evaluation issues</b>	<b>Evaluation questions</b>
	commitment and ownership by MS, social partners and relevant stakeholders in the future and what are the key actions that will need to be addressed at European level? What are the key factors of a sustainable use of ECVET?

Source: Terms of Reference

## 1 Intervention logic

The idea of a common European credit transfer system for VET is closely related to the **functioning of the European Union's internal market and particularly its principle** of the free movement of people, contributing to competitiveness and social cohesion within the Community. This principle implies the borderless lifelong learning area and the recognition and transparency of the knowledge, skills, and competences of individuals.

This was developed within the Copenhagen Declaration of 30 November 2002 on the future priorities for enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training (VET), which emphasised that giving priority to such a system was one of the common measures needed to promote "the transparency, comparability, transferability and recognition of competence and/or qualifications, between different countries and at different levels".

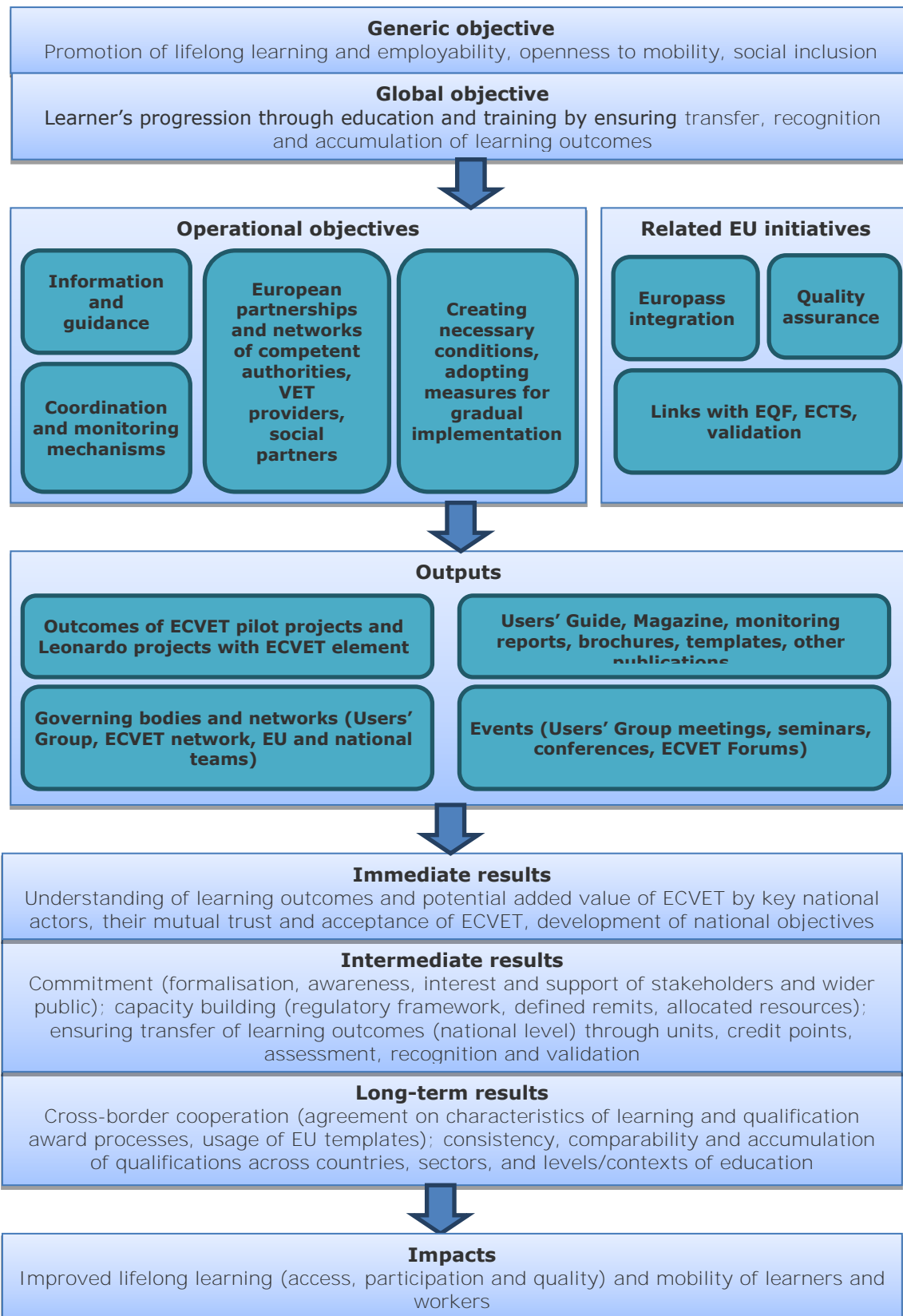
The European credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET) **Recommendation adopted on 18 June 2009 encourages Member States to 'create the necessary conditions and adopt measures so that as from 2012 it is possible for ECVET to be gradually applied to VET qualifications at all levels of the EQF'**. The recommendation describes ECVET as a credit system which has as its aim the facilitation of transfer, recognition and accumulation of learning outcomes by individuals while working towards a qualification. The approach based on units of learning outcomes defined as **'a coherent set of knowledge, skills and competence that can be assessed and validated with a number of associated ECVET points'**, allows gaining a qualification both in formal and non-formal settings and records what an individual has actually learned and is qualified for rather than calculating the time spent on educational or training activities. The ECVET Recommendation also mentions a number of aspects important for the implementation of ECVET, which could be understood as operational objectives of the initiative.

The creation of necessary conditions for ECVET has been mentioned in the ECVET recommendation as an operational objective which could allow the functioning of ECVET. Such conditions were further defined by Cedefop, in close cooperation with the European Commission, the members of the ECVET users group, and supporting organisations such as the ECVET secretariat and the network of European agencies for lifelong learning, and their achievement was monitored in 2012. Cedefop identified 15 conditions and clustered them into six areas – argumentation, understanding qualifications, ensuring transfer of learning outcomes, cross-border cooperation, capacity building, and commitment.

The evaluation team agrees that the existence of the conditions would signify the good functioning of the initiative, and that their monitoring would assist in the evaluation of progress towards its full implementation. However, not all of necessary conditions fall in the same place in the ECVET intervention logic – some fall under outputs or results, and some (qualifications frameworks, quality assurance) are outside ECVET intervention logic.

The figure below presents the objectives (in several levels), outputs, results and impacts of the initiative.

**Figure 1: Intervention logic**



Source: compiled by authors

## 2 Methodology

The following recognised data collection methods were applied to obtain data, which was used to produce the findings of the evaluation:

- Desk research;
- Interviews;
- Surveys;
- Focus group (findings validation method).

Below the key methods used are described in more detail, along with their strengths and weaknesses.

### 2.1 Desk research

Desk research in the context of this evaluation consisted of a review of relevant literature and analysis of statistical and monitoring data.

The literature review carried out focused on policy documents relevant to ECVET, such as Europe 2020, its flagship initiatives and ET2020, the documents produced under the Copenhagen process, and the documents governing both ECVET and other related transparency tools and initiatives. Additional focus was also paid to reviewing the studies produced by Cedefop or other actors, outcomes of events, various information and guidance documents at both European and national level, publications in ECVET magazine, and outputs of ECVET projects.

The evaluation team also examined ECVET project reports and other outputs in four selected countries: Finland, France, Hungary, and the United Kingdom. However, the analysis of the outputs of 49 identified projects was hindered by a number of factors. In many cases, particularly older projects, the project websites were not accessible. In most cases no further evaluation material or reflection on the results was published. Furthermore, the national LLP/Erasmus+ agencies responsible for keeping the monitoring data of the projects were unable to produce electronic versions of the reports.

Aside from the project outputs, access to other relevant literature sources was not difficult. Many relevant sources were easily available online. The information sources were used for both the retrospective and prospective analysis. The focus was also put on more specific and contextual sources, as identified by the interviewees.

The evaluation took into account the monitoring data offered by Cedefop in the 2012 and 2013 monitoring reports.<sup>1</sup> The country fiches for the 4 selected countries were used to direct the national level interviews, and the data analysis, where necessary, followed the country clustering devised by Cedefop. The evaluation reports have been made available for a number of other initiatives related to ECVET, such as EQF and EQAVET, and were taken into account in the evaluation. The external evaluations of Europass and Cedefop, both conducted by PPMI, were also used to obtain relevant data.

### 2.2 Interviews

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<sup>1</sup> Cedefop, Monitoring ECVET implementation strategies in Europe, 2012; 2013.



Interviews were the key tool for developing an in depth understanding of the performance of the ECVET initiative and functioning of its implementation network. The data collected during interviews showed opinions and perceptions of the governing actors, developers, users and researchers of ECVET. All interviews were semi-structured and adapted to the specificities of the interviewee. The interview programme was mostly conducted using telephone or internet telephony services.

The evaluation team drafted elaborate interview guidelines, based on the operationalised evaluation questions and the initial findings of the survey of stakeholders and governing actors. The guidelines were modified for each separate group of interviewees. The full version of the guidelines (not tailored to specific groups) is provided in Annex 2.

73 interviews were conducted in the context of this evaluation. Of them, 49 interviews were conducted with the national stakeholders in four selected countries – Finland, France, Hungary, and the United Kingdom. 20 interviews have been carried at the European level with the Commission staff, social partners, representatives of governing actors of ECVET, associations of training providers and other actors. The remaining 4 interviews were conducted for the purpose of piloting the survey questionnaires.

The table provided below summarises the interview programme. The interviewees were selected based on their willingness to be contacted which they expressed in the survey of ECVET stakeholders and governing actors, their membership in ECVET Network, and using the snowball method where some interviewees recommended others.

**Table 2: The interview programme**

	Target	Number of interviews conducted	FI	FR	HU	UK
<b>Piloting interviews</b>	5	4	-	-	-	-
<b>National interviews</b>	48	49	11	14	11	13
<b>Interviews at the EU/ international level</b>	~20	20	-	-	-	-
<b>Total:</b>	<b>~65-70</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>3</b>

Source: compiled by authors

The evaluation team was also aware of the need to focus the interviews based on the sectors of the economy to which ECVET is the most relevant as well. Based on the ECVET projects (both pilot ECVET projects and mobility projects with ECVET element as identified in ADAM database), the focus was set on the sectors of information and communication technologies (ICT) as well as social and health care. These sectors are prominent users of ECVET in all four selected countries.

The interview programme was implemented without any significant obstacles. The identification of interviewees was not problematic. The majority of invited interviewees agreed to assist the evaluation team.

### 2.3 Survey programme

The survey programme was the key tool which the evaluation team used to gather data for answering some of the evaluation questions and to provide quantitative illustrations. The survey programme included three surveys:

- *Online survey of stakeholders and governing actors;*
- *Online survey of institutional ECVET project participants;*
- *Online survey of teachers and learners.*

The survey of stakeholders and governing actors, which targeted the members of the **European ECVET network, users' group, LLP agencies participating in NetECVET**, stakeholders of other related EU initiatives (e.g. EQF, Europass, EQAVET), members of ACVT, DGVT, Bologna experts, national ECVET experts and other key groups of stakeholders was launched on 18 October and closed on 8 November 2013. A total of **837 respondents** answered the call to fill out the survey. Having in mind that the total number of invitations sent was 3785, this constitutes **a response rate of 22,11%**, which is very strong and sufficiently high for a valid analysis. The full results of the survey are presented in Annex 1; the interpretation of the data collected and the discussion of key findings is presented in the following chapters of the report; and the survey questionnaires are provided in Annex 3.

The table below provides more details about the profile of the respondents in the stakeholder survey: the governmental actors of Member States, as well as schools and other VET providers dominated the survey.

**Table 3: The respondents of the survey of ECVET stakeholders and governing bodies by type of respondent**

Type of organisation represented	Proportion of total responses
Ministry or governmental agency	31%
School, other VET provider	27%
Other (private companies, universities, LLP agencies, NGOs etc.)	19%
Research or consultancy organisation	10%
Employer organisation	5%
Trade union	4%
Other EU organisation (EU agencies (Cedefop, ETF, Eurofound), Committee of the Regions, ECOSOC, etc.)	3%
EU institution (European Commission, Council and Parliament)	1%

Source: compiled by authors

The table below represents the distribution of respondents of the survey by country to which their work was mostly related. Quite predictably, the respondents from France, Italy and Germany were the most active.

**Table 4: The respondents of the survey of ECVET stakeholders and governing bodies by country to which their work was mostly related**

Country	Proportion of total responses
France	9%

Italy	8%
Germany	6%
Not relevant, international/EU organisation represented	5%
Belgium	4%
Hungary	4%
Netherlands	4%
Portugal	4%
Romania	4%
Spain	4%
United Kingdom	4%
Austria	3%
Bulgaria	3%
Czech Republic	3%
Estonia	3%
Finland	3%
Croatia	2%
Cyprus	2%
Denmark	2%
Ireland	2%
Latvia	2%
Malta	2%
Norway	2%
Poland	2%
Slovenia	2%
Sweden	2%
Turkey	2%
Greece	1%
Iceland	1%
Lithuania	1%
Luxembourg	1%
Slovakia	1%
Switzerland	1%
Other	1%
Serbia	0%
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	0%

Source: compiled by authors

The evaluation team also asked the respondents to identify the sector to which their work was the most closely related – however, 67% of respondents did not identify any specific sector. Tourism with 4% of respondents had the largest representation; ICT sector was represented by 3%, and construction, care and automotive sectors – by 2%.

The institutional project participants' survey suffered significant delays due to problems in obtaining the contact details of the project participants. Whereas the contact details of ECVET project coordinating institutions are widely available online,

this was not the case for people involved in the projects from other partner organisations. The evaluation team was informed by the Commission that the full list of such persons was not readily available. The approach taken by the evaluation team was to act in two main directions: contacting the project coordinators and asking for contact details of their partners, and in parallel web-searching the contact details of these persons using the keywords related to the name of the project and the organisation involved. This method finally proved successful, and at the end the survey had 1126 replies. The survey was launched before the holiday period in December 2013 and continued after the break in 2014. The data collection was undertaken in a continuous manner by contacting potential respondents without a fixed date set for the survey deadline.

The survey responses covered a wide geographic range. Romania was the most active country in the survey, followed by Germany and Poland. However, in terms of countries involved as partners in the projects, Germany, Italy, Spain, United Kingdom and France were most highly represented.

**Table 5: Geographic coverage of respondents in institutional project participants survey**

Country	Proportion of total responses	Proportion of projects with partners from this country
Romania	20%	13%
Germany	11%	49%
Poland	10%	16%
Finland	7%	14%
Italy	6%	27%
United Kingdom	5%	26%
France	4%	24%
Lithuania	4%	6%
Portugal	4%	15%
Spain	4%	33%
Hungary	3%	13%
Netherlands	3%	15%
Austria	2%	17%
Belgium	2%	13%
Norway	2%	7%
Slovakia	2%	6%
Bulgaria	1%	10%
Czech Republic	1%	9%
Greece	1%	10%
Iceland	1%	3%
Ireland	1%	5%
Luxembourg	1%	2%
Slovenia	1%	10%
Sweden	1%	8%
Turkey	1%	12%

Croatia	0%	1%
Cyprus	0%	4%
Denmark	0%	8%
Estonia	0%	7%
Liechtenstein	0%	0%
Latvia	0%	4%
Malta	0%	7%
Switzerland	0%	7%

Source: compiled by authors

The survey responses of project participants also covered a number of sectors in which ECVET has been particularly active. Tourism was the most prominent sector in the survey, followed by care and ICT (see table below).

**Table 6: Sectoral division of institutional project participants survey respondents**

Sector	Proportion of total
Tourism	24%
Care (including healthcare)	18%
Information and communication technology (ICT)	16%
Construction	15%
Automotive	14%
No specific sector	8%
International trade	6%
Chemical	3%
Other	48%

Source: compiled by authors

Upon agreement with the Steering Group, the initially planned survey of learners was transformed into an integrated survey of teachers and learners. With the support from the Europass platform, the survey link was published on Europass website and was accessible to the wide population. 904 teachers and 949 learners provided their responses to the survey. Germany, Italy and Spain were the most represented countries among respondents. The responses also covered different types/levels of education (see table below).

**Table 7: Level/type of education attended/taught by teachers and learners survey respondents**

Level/type of education	Learners	Teachers
Upper secondary vocational education in school	16%	24%
Upper secondary vocational education with in-company training elements	10%	18%
Vocational education without upper secondary element	4%	10%
Tertiary education (e.g. professional college, university, technical university etc.)	59%	27%
Other post-secondary education	4%	6%
Other	7%	15%

Source: compiled by authors

All the survey questionnaires were first piloted with potential respondents. Their reactions and suggestions for changes were collected and taken into account as long as they did not interfere with other aspects of the evaluation design. The questionnaires were additionally sent out to Cedefop staff members who are directly working with ECVET to check for inconsistencies and potential overlaps with the ECVET monitoring exercise conducted by Cedefop. The questions of the survey were filtered according to the type of respondent or their previous answers.

With the assistance of the Commission and ECVET Team, the populations of the survey target groups were identified from publicly available sources or databases to which the evaluation team was given access. The surveys were put online and launched using the FluidSurveys online survey tool (version 4.0), with either personalised invitations or a common survey link sent out. The evaluation team maintained a personal approach to contacting the respondents and provided an email address which the respondents could use to express any questions or comments. All the questions received were promptly answered. The respondents were also encouraged to recommend their acquaintances who they think would be important respondents to the evaluation team, and did so quite actively. The anonymity of the responses is in any case ensured in that none of the personal data, except the **respondent's country or professional background, is mentioned** in any of the evaluation reports.

To enhance the response rates of the surveys, reminders were sent out each week to those potential respondents who had not provided their answers.

## 2.4 Focus group

To validate the findings of the evaluation effort, a small focus group, with participants representing social partners, training providers, and national public actors implementing ECVET, was organised in Brussels.

The focus group was moderated by senior members of the evaluation team. The discussion focused on the most outstanding issues related to ECVET identified during the evaluation, including:

- Influence of ECVET towards national policy agendas of Member States;
- The interplay of ECVET and related European transparency and recognition tools, such as EQAVET and EQF;
- Potential for links between ECVET and ECTS;
- Dissemination of the results of ECVET pilot projects, other Leonardo pilot projects with ECVET element, and mobility projects using ECVET;
- Governance framework of ECVET.

The discussion was recorded with the permission of the participants, and its minutes were used to support the evaluation conclusions and recommendations.

## 2.5 Validity, strengths and weaknesses of methodology

The methodological design of this evaluation is both internally and externally valid. Internally, the evaluation was tailored to the specificities of ECVET and designed to incorporate data from a wide variety of qualitative and quantitative sources in order to provide sufficient breadth and depth to the evaluation, as well as to triangulate all findings.

While the nature of ECVET precludes absolute external validity (as direct causation with impact cannot be established), steps were taken to ensure that effects of ECVET could not be attributable to other related initiatives or factors. Triangulation of findings helped to ensure that the effects were evident from numerous angles and therefore attributable to ECVET.

**Table 8: Validity of the methodology**

Evaluation Area	Types of evidence obtained so far	Assessment of validity of conclusions
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Documentary analysis;</li> <li>▪ Surveys;</li> <li>▪ Interviews.</li> </ul>	Very strong validity
Governance and outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Documentary analysis;</li> <li>▪ Surveys;</li> <li>▪ Interviews;</li> <li>▪ Analysis of monitoring data.</li> </ul>	Very strong validity
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Documentary analysis;</li> <li>▪ Surveys;</li> <li>▪ Interviews;</li> <li>▪ Analysis of monitoring data.</li> </ul>	Very strong validity

Source: compiled by the authors.

The following aspects of methodology could be seen as its key strengths:

- The interviewees were highly knowledgeable and could provide valuable information and insights from European, international, and national, as well as governmental, employer and employee perspectives. The interviews covered all countries selected for in-depth focus, ensuring that the set of national perspectives is representative.
- The response rate of the survey of ECVET stakeholders and governing actors **was higher than response rates in PPMI' s experience with similar evaluations** of EU policy initiatives and fully able to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings. The surveys of institutional project participants, teachers and learners due to their nature did not have an exact response rate, but the sample size of a few hundred respondents was already significant to draft strong conclusions. The respondents reflected various national, sectoral and organisational contexts. The data gathered included particularly strong in-depth comments about evaluation questions in addition to strong quantitative results. The number of respondents who expressed their strong willingness to provide more in-depth opinion was exceptionally high, showing strong sense of involvement in ECVET among the respondents.
- The sources selected for desk research offered a wide variety of information useful both for formulation of preliminary findings and for feeding into the creation of research tools (interview guidelines as well as survey questionnaires).

The weaknesses of the methodology included the unplanned difficulties in:

- Obtaining the project reports and related data from relevant databases or national LLP/Erasmus+ agencies.

### 3 Relevance

#### Summary of findings

- A number of countries have not yet been able to define the national objectives for ECVET, limiting further progress of the initiative. Majority of stakeholders across all groups (public actors, social partners, providers, researchers / academia were not satisfied with ECVET progress at the national level.
- The stakeholders' perception of ways to speed up ECVET development differed according to the VET systems already in place at the national level. The countries with units/modules and credit systems in place considered communication and stronger push towards implementation were the ways to speed up, whereas other countries considered more that awareness raising, clarification of terminology and integration with other tools could be beneficial.
- This slow implementation pointed to inherent issues related to benefits of ECVET. The main three strands of benefits of the initiative were its contribution to the implementation of a learning outcomes approach, to increased mutual trust, and to the optimisation of mobility (better understanding of competences gained, sharing experiences about methods, management competences). All of these strands of benefits were partially shared by other EU transparency tools – EQF, EQAVET and Europass (particularly Mobility).
- The elements of ECVET seen as most relevant included in particular the learning outcomes approach, as well as the documents – Memorandum of Understanding and Learning Agreement. The ECVET credit points, conversely, were considered to be the least relevant element of ECVET for the beneficiaries. This was the case particularly due to lack of clarity in the ECVET Recommendation on how the points can be allocated to units and how they can be used in the process of accumulation, as well as a theoretical consideration that it is logically not possible to use points for automatic transfer, as the same unit could have a different numerical value of points within another qualification.
- The integration of all relevant elements of ECVET into other EU transparency tools under the forthcoming European Area of Skills and Qualifications was a viable option, though not easy because of, among other reasons, the specific governance structure of each tool.
- ECVET, although set up under previous policy framework, remained highly pertinent to the goals under Europe 2020 strategy, its flagship initiatives and the Education and Training 2020 framework. The most relevant aspects of ECVET in this regard were its focus on mobility, its contribution to creation of flexible learning pathways and a closing of the gap between the worlds of education and training and employment.
- ECVET is very strongly embedded in the Copenhagen process and an important integral part, directly related to 4 of the 22 short-term deliverables under the Bruges communiqué.
- ECVET stakeholders well recognised the forthcoming developments of EASQ and were in favour of the trends bringing the European tools for transparency and recognition closer together.
- The ECVET stakeholders and governing actors were highly familiar with and involved in a number of related initiatives, particularly Europass and EQF. The familiarity and involvement was somewhat lower with ECTS and EQAVET, although these tools have been widely understood to be among the most important for ECVET to take into account.
- EQF and ECVET share a large number of principles: openness to all forms and levels of learning (although in ECVET a vocational element is necessary), a focus on transparency, comparability and portability, the importance of a learning outcomes approach, and mutual reinforcement in enabling flexible learning pathways. The diverging points were their centralised (EQF) vs. local/partnerships (ECVET) approach, as well as somewhat higher relevance to learners and providers (ECVET) vs. employers or awarding/ regulating bodies (EQF).
- ECVET and ECTS were considered by the stakeholders to be poorly compatible in terms of their approach towards credits / credit points, but the learning outcomes



approach is able to facilitate a two-way conversion between the systems. There were also considerations that keeping separate tools was a viable option. Workload-based elements were more important for HE than VET because of student expectations that tertiary education institutions will provide them with certain amount of class hours as well as individual workload, especially where tuition fees are involved.

- The most important policy documents for validation of non-formal and informal learning recognised the role ECVET could play in identification, documentation, assessment and certification of learning outcomes. Learning outcomes were considered to be the major relevant element of ECVET for validation of non-formal and informal learning, whereas the ECVET documents and credit points could not be held relevant due to their relation to formal context of learning.
- ECVET held a mutual reinforcement relationship with Europass, with ECVET providing actual content to Europass documents and Europass being able to present the individual ECVET results in a clear and consistent way. The most important Europass document in this regard was the Europass Mobility which very often acted as a tool for recording learning outcomes.
- Both ECVET and EQAVET contributed strongly to the development of mutual trust among training providers in Europe. EQAVET however did this without focusing on learning outcomes approach.
- ECVET and ESCO shared basic terminological principles by focusing on knowledge, skills and competences. The intention of ESCO was to describe relevant skills, competences and qualifications for a variety of occupations in a standardised language, which could contribute to common language in organising mobilities with ECVET element, but the timing of ESCO was too early to bring impacts in this regard.

The purpose of this section is to discuss the relevance of ECVET in two perspectives – how well it has been able to respond to the changing policy context at European level, and how well it has been able to respond to the needs of its intended beneficiaries. The section then discusses the coherence, compatibility and complementarity issues between ECVET and other initiatives. The findings in this section are based on desk research, surveys of institutional project participants, teachers and learners, national and European level interviews, as well as focus group outputs and discussions in the **ECVET Users’ Group meetings**, and information on the policy relevance from interviews with high level European officials.

### **3.1 Relevance of ECVET to the needs of beneficiaries**

This section discusses the extent to which ECVET has been relevant to the needs of its beneficiaries, including such groups as VET learners (especially those participating in mobility), training providers (as institutions and as individual teachers), and social partners.

#### *The original intentions of ECVET process and the current progress*

The Recommendation on the establishment of ECVET, which is the object of the present evaluation, was issued following the impact assessment procedure carried out in 2008<sup>2</sup>. This impact assessment mentioned that ECVET was primarily foreseen to be a device to facilitate the transparency, comparability, transfer and accumulation of learning outcomes between different learning contexts, and, as a secondary goal, to assist reforms of national vocational education and training systems and the

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<sup>2</sup> Accompanying document to the proposal for a Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET). Impact Assessment [SEC(2008) 443 COM(2008) 180 final].

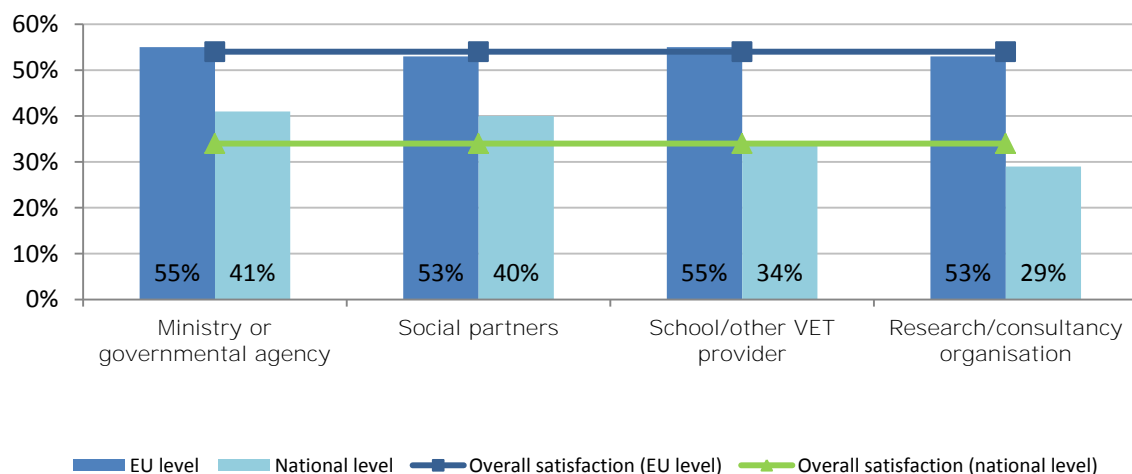
achievement of genuine lifelong learning. This facilitation would be based in particular on a description of qualifications in terms of learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competences), the expression of these qualifications in units of learning outcomes, and the attribution of ECVET points as a numerical representation of each unit, defining its weight and its value relative to the qualification as a whole.

The public consultation carried out by the Commission prior to this impact assessment was decidedly positive towards ECVET, with most of the stakeholders consulted stating it was a necessary and relevant initiative. At the time, the credit points associated with skills units and certification were seen as potentially able to provide additional information about the skills gained, thereby making them easier to transfer, but from the very beginning of ECVET implementation there were concerns about their unclear role in the process of accumulation and the arrangements for allocating points to units.

Based on the ECVET necessary conditions as developed by Cedefop in 2012<sup>3</sup> and **reflected in the current evaluation's intervention** logic, the understanding of potential added value of ECVET by key national actors, their mutual trust and acceptance of ECVET, as well as the development of national objectives are the first step towards the implementation and functioning of ECVET. The Parliament and Council Recommendation as a legal instrument for ECVET was chosen primarily to ensure the stronger political commitment from the Member States than that which could be expected if the status quo were maintained or if the legal basis for ECVET were provided by the Commission unilaterally.

However, a majority of countries under the scope of ECVET have not yet managed to define the national objectives for ECVET, limiting the progress towards implementing other necessary conditions (related to intermediate or long-term results). The figure below shows that according to the stakeholders' survey the satisfaction with the national progress of the initiative is at a low level across all stakeholder groups.

**Figure 2: Satisfaction with the progress of ECVET initiative**



Source: survey of stakeholders and governing actors, 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Cedefop. Necessary conditions for ECVET Implementation. Available at: [http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/4113\\_en.pdf](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/4113_en.pdf)

This continuing lack of national level take-up of ECVET five years into the implementation of the Recommendation and more than a decade since the idea of ECVET was launched in the Copenhagen declaration, points to some inherent issues within the concept of ECVET which were not originally foreseen in the public consultation prior to the launch of the initiative.

The 2013 Cedefop monitoring report of ECVET revealed that the approach towards ECVET highly depends on the national systems already in place, and developed four key clusters of countries in this regard, based on whether or not these countries have units/modules and credit systems already in place and whether or not these countries have predominantly apprenticeship-based or school-based VET. The findings of the **stakeholders’ survey show that the perception of the most important ways to speed up** the implementation of ECVET is also related to these clusters. The table below provides a description of the most important ways to foster implementation of ECVET by country cluster.

**Table 9: Ways to speed up ECVET implementation by country cluster**

Cluster	Predominant ways to speed up ECVET implementation
<b>Cluster 1 (units/modules and credit systems exist): FI, IS, IE, LU, RO, SI, ES, SE, UK</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication with VET providers and other national stakeholders/more practical bottom-up approach;</li> <li>• More push for implementation from EU level;</li> <li>• More individualised support.</li> </ul>
<b>Cluster 2 (units/modules exist, but no credit systems): BE (DE), HR, EE, FR, HU, NL, PL, PT, RS, TR</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness raising, information and promotion, lobbying activities (particularly strong);</li> <li>• Clarify/simplify ECVET terminology, methodologies and guidance documents/translate documents into national languages;</li> <li>• Integrate with other EU transparency tools.</li> </ul>
<b>Cluster 3 (no units/modules, apprenticeship-based IVET): AT, DK, DE, LI, NO, CH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarify/simplify ECVET terminology, methodologies and guidance documents/translate documents into national languages;</li> <li>• Develop toolkits.</li> </ul>
<b>Cluster 4 (no units/modules, school-based IVET): BE (FL), BE (FR), BG, CY, CZ, MK, EL, IT, LV, LT, MT, ME, SK</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness raising, information and promotion, lobbying activities;</li> <li>• Integrate with other EU transparency tools;</li> <li>• More push for implementation from EU level.</li> </ul>

Source: survey of stakeholders and governing actors, 2013.

To understand the issues hindering the progress of ECVET, it is useful to look into the benefits that the initiative has been actually able to bring to its intended beneficiaries so far.

*The benefits of ECVET for the training providers, learners and other stakeholders*

The evidence gathered<sup>4</sup> points out that ECVET process has in fact brought some significant benefits to various groups of intended beneficiaries, particularly the training providers, but also the learners, public authorities and other VET actors. The most relevant and clearest benefits of ECVET, as identified by various groups surveyed and interviewed, included:

- **Contribution to the implementation of learning outcomes approach** by offering the training providers an opportunity to develop examples of (units of) learning outcomes which can be understood across countries and across contexts of education and training. Such benefits included, in particular, the ability of staff of training providers to describe learning outcomes in a clearer way and to develop learning outcomes based curricula, as well as fostering the debate on learning outcomes in political circles. This relates to the benefits brought by **EQF** as evidenced by the recent EQF evaluation.<sup>5</sup>
- **Contribution to mutual trust** in the quality of learning outcomes and qualifications in mobility projects and between different contexts of education and training. This is closely related to the issues of quality assurance in VET tackled by **EQAVET**, but particularly focuses on the quality assurance of learning outcomes, which is at the moment absent from the EQAVET framework.
- **Optimisation of mobility** carried out, including better understanding by both training institutions and learners about competences gained, e.g. how they are linked with labour market, sharing of experiences among teachers about assessment and teaching methods, better structured curricula, stronger mobility management and improved administrative competences of provider staff and teachers involved. These relate to those benefits brought by the **Europass** initiative, particularly the **Mobility** document, which was the tool used in the vast majority of ECVET projects.

The other types of benefits more specific to ECVET mentioned by the VET actors in the surveys and interviews were much less pronounced. They included:

- For the VET providers – awareness of international opportunities, lowering dropout rates, competitiveness in the eyes of the learners;
- For social partners – better ability to assist their members by providing information about the training market and the opportunities for upskilling, transfer of knowledge about the work of social partners on skills issues in other Member States.

Importantly, the surveyed higher education providers and the employers did not perceive any strong ECVET benefits and they remained potential rather than supported by concrete evidence. Possible benefits for such groups were considered to depend on stronger sectoral approaches, or higher activity among the social partners or provider associations on ECVET.<sup>6</sup> This is strongly supported by the institutional ECVET project participants survey data, which pointed out that in 87% of cases sectorally based projects brought large or moderate benefits to the VET providers, in

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<sup>4</sup> Surveys of stakeholders, institutional project participants and final beneficiaries; interviews and focus groups with stakeholders; desk research, Cedefop monitoring data.

<sup>5</sup> Evaluation of the Implementation of the European Qualifications Framework Recommendation. Final report, 17 October 2013.

<sup>6</sup> ECVET Magazine, No. 11.

76% of cases to the individual learners, and in 71% to the individual teachers or trainers, whereas the benefits for other groups such as social partners, public authorities or higher education providers were less frequent.

The benefits of ECVET mobility projects for the learners, as identified by the stakeholders and institutional project participants in the survey were not markedly different from those derived from mobility projects in general (without any ECVET element). Both learners (69%) and teachers (87%) participating in mobility projects in general identified an increase in confidence in applications for a job, for volunteering or for further education as benefits. However, neither the specific ECVET projects nor the general mobility projects were seen to provide the benefits of assisting in obtaining invitations for job interviews/traineeships, admission to higher education or improvement in job positions, as the proportion of respondents who agreed with this was low.

The previous evaluations of European mobility programmes - the interim evaluation of LLP (conducted in 2010), and the joint ex-post evaluation of Socrates II, Leonardo and eLearning Programme (conducted in 2008)<sup>7</sup> – all showed that even in pre-ECVET period mobility projects were already able to yield some impacts closely related to the actual goals of ECVET. In addition to numerous individual and organisation gains these included greater transparency of curricula and qualifications issued by the education providers and also some limited impact on the improvement of transparency and recognition of qualifications nationally. This was predominantly achieved as a result of greater focus on learning outcomes – the approach championed by, but clearly not confined to the ECVET initiative.

At the same time, the evaluations of pre-ECVET EU mobility programmes revealed serious obstacles faced by those taking part in such programmes, including the discouraging administrative burden of participation, the lack of recognition of skills and competences, and the lack of control of the quality of mobility. All these issues were addressed by the relevant elements of ECVET and/or other related EU initiatives.

### *The relevant elements of ECVET*

According to the impact assessment of ECVET Recommendation, the original conception of ECVET had the following main elements:

- The description of qualifications in learning outcomes;
- Expressing the learning outcomes in units;
- Attributing credit points to those units for facilitation of understanding of qualifications and units.

Additionally, the documents to be used for mobility purposes, such as Memoranda of Understanding, Learning Agreements and transcripts of records, are considered to be its integral parts.

ECVET so far has been implemented mostly by testing it through the project-level activity. The opinions of institutional project participants who have tested ECVET in the context of cross-country mobility or national qualifications systems show that the units of learning outcomes were by far the most relevant element of the initiative (55% of respondents reported it was useful to a large extent and 27% - to a moderate extent). Learning agreements, assessment criteria and memoranda of understanding were also

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<sup>7</sup> Public policy and management institute "Interim evaluation of LLP (2007-2013)", Ecotec "Joint report on the evaluation of the Socrates II, Leonardo da Vinci and eLearning programmes".

considered to be useful, whereas the credit points were useful to a large extent for only 17% of the ECVET project participants.

This is also clearly supported by the interview findings and open answers in the **stakeholders' survey, as well as by the** results reported in the recent Cedefop monitoring. The weak competences of teachers in describing learning outcomes, lack of very easily accessible examples how to write them and even the different definitions on what can be regarded as learning outcomes remained the most pressing issues rather than the attribution of weight (credit points) to learning components (units of learning outcomes).<sup>8</sup>

The data collected by the evaluation team shows that ECVET is able to achieve its goals by providing the three main strands of benefits (fostering learning outcomes approach, increasing mutual trust and optimising mobility) detailed above without pushing on the usage of credit points. This points to the development of (units of) learning outcomes being the major added value of ECVET initiative.

Despite the findings of public consultation carried out in 2008 prior to set up of the ECVET Recommendation, the data from both the recent Cedefop monitoring and the current evaluation does not support the notion that there is currently an actual need acknowledged by the stakeholders for a European credit system based on points or that the ECVET element usefully meets that need. There is no convincing evidence from evaluation surveys that credit points are useful. Indeed this is understandable since credit points are an expression of the relative weight of a unit of learning outcomes within the totality of a qualification so they can only be accumulated within that qualification and are not necessarily transferable to other qualifications within the same country, or across different economic sectors, and even less so across different countries or between different educational sectors (VET/HE) therefore their relevance for mobility and/or validation is extremely limited. The credit points are perceived to have been developed via a top-down approach.

Our conclusion is that credit points in the future could remain at best as a secondary supporting tool for those who find it easier to estimate the weight of learning outcomes transferred using the numerical values.

A number of interviewees from both academia and training providers side considered that there is no direct link within ECVET between the learning outcomes approach and the quantification of competences gained in terms of credit points (in other words, assessing the workload). In their opinion, there is also no need to identify the proportion of a VET qualification which a certain unit of learning outcomes represents, as this will anyway vary once the learner moves to a different qualification. The credit points are inextricably linked to a specific qualification because by definition they represent a proportion of that whole so it is logically impossible to transfer the numerical points to another qualification. The preferable approach would rather be to determine the achievement of a certain unit of learning outcomes as a yes or no question and then carefully compare that to the units/learning outcomes in a different qualification.

The Cedefop monitoring report 2013 also shows that there are no significant hopes that the credit systems being developed at the national level in countries such as Italy, Poland, Estonia or Lithuania can achieve convergence taking into account the ECVET approach. The countries such as Finland which did introduce ECVET principles in their VET credit systems were able to do so because their national systems were

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<sup>8</sup> Interviews with EU level VET provider representatives, DGVT members, Commission staff.

already highly compatible with ECVET. The added value of ECVET, especially the allocation of credit points according to the ECVET Recommendation, is not perceived as particularly useful in terms of transfer and accumulation in the countries with fixed, well established credit systems for VET (e.g. Finland, Ireland, Spain, Sweden, and United Kingdom). With the exception of Finland, such countries are therefore not likely to “jump aboard” ECVET as they have their own systems which are functioning as they wish and are unlikely to change. The countries which do not have their own mechanisms are more likely to become interested in ECVET approach to credits. However, their chosen policy approach to achieving the EU objective of greater transparency and mutual recognition of VET qualifications needs to take into account the specific national or regional circumstances.

*Potential integration of ECVET elements with other initiatives*

The relevant elements and benefits of ECVET are catered by other related European initiatives, as discussed above. Upon further consultation with all relevant stakeholders, potentially the current elements of ECVET could be integrated into the frameworks of the other European transparency tools. The table below presents a framework for such integration as envisaged by the evaluation team.

Under the European Area of Skills and Qualifications, the review of all relevant transparency tools and instruments is likely to be carried out at the European level, and this is an important opportunity to consider the suggested changes.

**Table 10: Potential integration / additional synergies of ECVET elements with other initiatives**

Relevant ECVET element	Europass	EQF	EQAVET	ECTS
<b>Learning outcomes (LO)</b>	<p><b>State of play:</b> Most Europass documents (but not the Diploma Supplement) focus on competences, but only the Certificate Supplement and to some extent the Europass Mobility include a structured description of learning outcomes.</p>	<p><b>State of play:</b> The LO approach is strongly promoted under EQF, but there is no grassroots (training provider level) practical exercise on their development</p> <p><b>Possible changes:</b> introducing a provider-level learning outcomes promotion dimension.</p>	<p><b>State of play:</b> ECVET promotes mutual trust via quality of learning outcomes, and EQAVET does not.</p> <p><b>Possible changes:</b> application of EQAVET cycle for quality assurance of learning outcomes</p>	<p><b>State of play:</b> ECTS is strongly moving towards LO approach and while retaining the workload-based element</p> <p><b>Possible changes:</b> Common definition of LO with ECVET (in the new version of UG, if approved)</p>

<b>Units of learning outcomes</b>	<b>State of play:</b> Europass documents refer to competences, but not expressly to units of learning outcomes.	No relevant synergies possible	No current synergy links established	<b>State of play:</b> Credits can be allocated to units/modules in ECTS. <b>Possible changes:</b> applying ECTS (without the workload-based element of credits) principles for transfer of units of learning outcomes (now defined in the same way) in VET
<b>Documentation (MoU, LA, transcript of records)</b>	<b>State of play:</b> Europass Mobility is reported to be used as transcript of records <b>Possible changes:</b> Upon review, Mobility could act as the transcript of records	<b>State of play:</b> Each qualification should be described in terms of learning outcomes	No current synergy links established	<b>State of play:</b> LA and transcript of records are used in ECTS and are in fact reported by stakeholders to have originated in ECTS <b>Possible changes:</b> integrating the documents used for mobility in HE and VET into a toolkit based on similar definitions

Source: compiled by authors

A number of aspects of integrating ECVET elements into the other initiatives would however remain problematic:

- The new dimension of promoting learning outcomes at the **providers'** level would most likely mean a new governance strand in EQF which would be somewhat detached from the rest of the EQF processes. This dimension would also not be VET-specific.
- ECTS is a tool of the European Higher Education Area, thus embedded in the Bologna process, with a broader geographical scope. This needs to be taken into account when considering the integration of elements of ECVET into ECTS.
- Integrating ECVET elements into non-VET-specific initiatives could potentially both harm the networking of VET actors and lead to dissatisfaction among stakeholders of VET and HE (especially in case of HE-specific initiative, ECTS).



### 3.2 Relevance of the initiative to the European policy context

According to the ECVET Recommendation (2009)<sup>9</sup>, ECVET is intended to facilitate transfer, recognition and to the extent it is possible accumulation of learning outcomes of individuals with a view of achieving a qualification, and in accordance with legislation, rules and regulations applicable in Member States. A particular importance in this regard is paid to the competences gained during transnational mobility. This is understood as the global objective of the initiative in the intervention logic developed by the evaluation team. On a more generic level, ECVET aims to promote lifelong learning and employability, openness to mobility, and social inclusion. These goals of the initiative are highly pertinent to various levels of European policy context.

#### *Europe 2020 and Education and Training 2020*

The timing of the ECVET Recommendation coincided with EU actions to overcome an economic and financial crisis as well as long term challenges, namely globalisation and internationalisation of the education and training, pressure on resources and an ageing population. A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in the EU (Europe 2020)<sup>10</sup> was set up to replace the previous Lisbon strategy. Accordingly, the Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in education and training (ET2020) was developed from the earlier ET2010 version. Nevertheless ECVET remained highly pertinent to the Europe 2020 strategy, ET2020 and two of the flagship initiatives which are closest to education and labour market.

**ECVET's intended impact would contribute particularly to ET2020 framework's first priority of making lifelong learning and mobility a reality, which calls for expansion of mobility opportunities and increasing the number of flexible learning pathways. Improved possibilities to compare the learning outcomes gained in different countries and contexts are also pertinent to the ET2020's call to improve the quality and efficiency of training.** The 2012 Joint report of the Council and the Commission on the **implementation of ET 2020 "Education and training in a smart, sustainable and inclusive Europe"**<sup>11</sup> proposed new working priorities for the period 2012-2014, namely: making lifelong learning the reality (lifelong learning strategies, European reference tools and learning mobility); improving the quality and efficiency of education and training (basic skills and languages, professional development of teachers, trainers and school leaders, modernising higher education and increasing tertiary attainment levels, attractiveness and relevance of VET and efficient funding and evaluation); promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship (early school leaving, early childhood and care, equity and diversity) and enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training (partnerships with business, research, civil society and transversal key competences, entrepreneurship education, e-literacy, media literacy, innovative learning environments). The goals of ECVET remain compatible with these revised priorities.

The **'Youth on the move' flagship** initiative<sup>12</sup> is specifically directed at encouraging the mobility of young people via EU grants, measures simplifying the transition from education to work and making education and training more relevant to the needs of young people. **ECVET's intention to facilitate the transfer and recognition of learning outcomes** contributes to attractiveness of mobility. ECVET can be used to define units

<sup>9</sup> Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) (2009/C 155/02).

<sup>10</sup> **Communication from the Commission „Europe 2020: a strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth", COM(2010)**

<sup>11</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2012:070:0009:0018:EN:PDF>

<sup>12</sup> See description on <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=950&langId=en>

of learning outcomes in terms of work processes or complete work assignments, which is pertinent to the goal of smoother transitions from education to work.

Another flagship initiative, 'An Agenda for new skills and jobs'<sup>13</sup> mentions equipping people with the right skills for jobs as one of its concrete actions. ECVET fosters the application of learning outcomes approach which increases the transparency of national education and training systems. The standards that both clearly state the expectations which the learner needs to meet but also allowing them to be met via different pathways make education and training more flexible. This theoretically should lead to fostering the dialogue on learning outcomes, better design and delivery of programmes, and in turn indirectly better matching of the obtained skills and jobs available on the labour market.<sup>14</sup>

The 2010 Communication "A new impetus for European cooperation in VET"<sup>15</sup> calls for maximisation of access to all levels of training and more flexible acquisition and assessment of learning outcomes, including opening up of tertiary VET pathways and making mobility periods a norm. The role of ECVET in this regard is to ensure the recognition of the learning outcomes achieved in mobilities and facilitate the permeability between VET and higher education. This is also seen as a way to **contribute to Europe 2020's** headline target of boosting the share of tertiary or equivalent graduates to 40%.

The new Communication "Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes"<sup>16</sup> released in 2012 mentioned that ECVET, along with the other common European tools, was improving transparency by making qualifications more comparable, and the skilled work force more mobile. This was identified as particularly important for sectors requiring a better skilled workforce and large growth potential, such as ICT, health and social care, low carbon technologies, personalised services, business services, the maritime economy and green sectors. Some of these sectors (e.g. ICT and care) were among the ones where ECVET has been the most popular.

### *Copenhagen process*

ECVET is closely embedded within the Copenhagen process. The 2002 Copenhagen Declaration<sup>17</sup> set out four priorities on enhanced European cooperation in VET, namely: strengthening the European dimension, improving transparency, information and guidance systems, developing tools for the recognition of competences and qualifications, and the promotion of quality assurance. The need to establish a credit transfer system for VET was explicitly mentioned in the declaration and further reiterated in follow-up communiqués.

At present, the Copenhagen process is guided by the 2010 Bruges communiqué<sup>18</sup>, the first to be adopted in the context of Copenhagen process after the ECVET Recommendation. It recognised the significance of European tools, including ECVET, in triggering the reforms and shifts towards learning outcomes approach, but noted the need to link VET to other policies to make mobility and lifelong learning a reality. The lines of action for European education and training systems to respond to current and

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<sup>13</sup> See description on <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=958&langId=en>

<sup>14</sup> New Skills for New Jobs: Action Now. A report by the Expert Group on New Skills for New Jobs prepared for the European Commission, February 2010

<sup>15</sup> See [http://ec.europa.eu/education/education\\_training\\_youth/vocational\\_training/ef0023\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/education_training_youth/vocational_training/ef0023_en.htm)

<sup>16</sup> See [http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/com669\\_en.pdf](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/com669_en.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> See [http://ec.europa.eu/education/pdf/doc125\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/pdf/doc125_en.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> See [http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/vocational/bruges\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/vocational/bruges_en.pdf)

future challenges were also named, including flexibility and high quality, understanding of emerging sectors and skills, provision of tailored and easily accessible education and training, as well as facilitation and encouragement of **transnational mobility of VET learners and teachers**. ECVET’s objectives were strongly in line with these challenges.

The Bruges Communiqué set up 22 national short-term deliverables to be monitored closely while following up on the progress towards 2020 strategic objectives. The short-term deliverables which are the most relevant to ECVET are related to realisation of lifelong learning and mobility. Deliverable 11 specifically calls for progress in and testing of ECVET. Deliverable 12 calls for appropriate measures to boost mobility in VET, including promotion of mobility to VET learners and professionals, development of internationalisation culture and strategies in local and regional authorities and VET providers, as well as guidance and technical support for ECVET implementation, its periodic review and thematic networking of ECVET projects. Additionally, to promote equity, social cohesion and active citizenship, deliverable 17 proposes the consideration of **specific measures for groups “at risk”, including development of flexible pathways**. The transversal deliverable 20 stresses the need for better communication strategies focused on implementation and added value of tools for different stakeholder groups.

### 3.3 Compatibility and complementarity with other European initiatives and tools promoting the transparency and recognition of qualifications, skills and competences

#### *European Area of Skills and Qualifications and general coherence trends*

The 2012 Communication “Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes” **stated the need to create a European Area of Skills and Qualifications (EASQ)**, which should promote coherence between and simplification of existing EU transparency and recognition tools (including ECVET) to ensure the recognition of skills and qualifications across borders. To pave the way for this overarching framework of tools, a public consultation is currently being conducted. This process should also lead to an impact assessment which is likely to produce a legal document for establishment of this initiative.

In this context, the ECVET Users’ Group has already discussed the ways in which ECVET developments could be arranged to better fit the EASQ. The table below summarises the most important ideas raised in the meeting.

**Table 11: Issues tackled by EASQ and considerations offered by ECVET Users’ Group**

<b>EASQ issue</b>	<b>Considerations for ECVET</b>
1. Higher and more relevant skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater employer involvement ;</li> <li>• Idea of reference frameworks for competences perceived as unattractive due to burdensome support which they would require.</li> </ul>
2. Links between education/training, mobility and the labour market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sectoral skills passports seen as incompatible with units of learning outcomes;</li> <li>• Stronger connection with Europass Mobility would be welcome;</li> <li>• Strong need to make recognition of learning outcomes more objective and less dependent on</li> </ul>

	goodwill of institutions.
3. Adapting to internationalisation trends	No specific considerations.
4. Coherence of tools and policies and implementing learning outcomes approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Systematic definition of qualifications and programmes in learning outcomes was needed;</li> <li>• Common definition of learning outcomes between ECVET and ECTS was considered to be more likely than a common definition of credit;</li> <li>• Single Europass supplement for diplomas and certificates was considered to be useful;</li> <li>• There was an understanding that EQAVET needed to take into account the learning outcomes approach to enhance the quality assurance process of ECVET.</li> </ul>
5. Clarity of rules and procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As concerns recognition, outcomes developed through digital learning were not seen to be particularly different from those obtained via traditional means.</li> </ul>
6. Quality assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No need to develop new credit systems associated with new technologic and methodological developments in training.</li> </ul>
7. Single access point for EASQ services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaison among policy officers for different tools already reported at national level;</li> <li>• Better coordination of information for learners and employers would be useful.</li> </ul>

Source: ECVET Users' Group meeting, March 2014.

Taking these discussion outcomes in the light of evidence from the surveys and interviews with stakeholders of ECVET and institutional project participants, it is clear that the opinions concerning the coherence of European tools for transparency largely also reflect the consensus of other ECVET actors at the national and European level. In general the ECVET stakeholders fully accept and are in favour of the strong trends in the various European transparency and recognition tools coming together and the continuing push for synergies and simplification. At the same time, there is some evidence from the interviews and surveys of the stakeholders, particularly in larger countries, that the national level governance structures of the different tools could collaborate more effectively not only in supporting learners and employers, but also in sharing the information gained particularly at the European level that could be relevant to agencies responsible for other tools.

ECVET already has some strong points of coherence with the other transparency and recognition tools and initiatives, as evidenced particularly by the relation of its benefits to those brought by EQF, EQAVET and Europass (Mobility document), discussed in the previous sections.

The stakeholders and governing bodies of ECVET who responded to the evaluation survey were well aware of the initiative's links with other tools. However, the level of knowledge was not equal for all tools - Europass was the best known tool by the ECVET stakeholders, and EQAVET was the least known. The involvement of ECVET stakeholders and governing actors in the development and implementation of other initiatives was the highest in the case of EQF/NQFs (36%), closely followed by validation of non-formal and informal learning (34%). The respondents were less involved in Europass (21%) and in ECTS (15%) and EQAVET (22%). The deficiency of coordination between governance structures of different tools was also stated by

Cedefop in its 2010 study on linking the credit systems and qualifications frameworks.<sup>19</sup> For ECTS this is more understandable due to different timing and geographic as well as political context of the credit systems and their traditional association with different levels of education and training. However, contribution to the mutual trust remains one of the most important perceived benefits of ECVET, and the quality assurance dimension in definition of learning outcomes particularly for VET could be strengthened by involving more of the same stakeholders in ECVET and EQAVET processes.

The ideas of ECVET stakeholders (training providers, public authorities, academia, social partners) expressed **in interviews support the evaluation team's findings that the initiatives closest to ECVET in terms of their function were EQF and EQAVET.** The efforts have been made to better connect these three initiatives through joint seminars. These seminars were considered to be beneficial by the stakeholders in raising awareness but not having significant added value in terms of creating more synergy either at EU or at national level.<sup>20</sup> The interviewed stakeholders noted that **the participants in such events often "represented" their respective transparency tools too much,** there was little contribution to mutual understanding and even shared definition of key.

### *Coherence with ECTS*

**ECVET's compatibility, comparability and complementarity with ECTS is foreseen in the ECVET Recommendation.** The 2006-2007 public consultation on ECVET showed that this was in particular necessary taking into account the potential for learning progression routes combining VET and higher education.

**Cedefop's study (2010) on links between credit systems and qualifications frameworks** devised potential future scenarios for the convergence of four existing tools (EQF, QF-EHEA, ECVET and ECTS) – their further separate development, creation of a single qualifications framework and a single credit system, and a creation of unified credit and qualifications framework. The actual future convergence of the tools was found to depend on a number of factors, including the embedding of the tools in national legal frameworks and practices, the dominance of national vs. transnational usefulness of the tools (e.g. whether the label of ECVET is used only for transnational credit transfer or also in national credit systems), the popularity of mobility as an element of VET pathways, the perceived benefits of separate exercises, as well as the adaptability and discrepancy-solving potential of EU governance structures.<sup>21</sup>

ECTS was originally focussed on student workload but has increasingly been moving towards a learning outcomes approach. According to the Bologna Process Implementation report in 2012<sup>22</sup> (based on the state of play in the Spring of 2011), 25 MS had in place national steering towards learning outcomes for curriculum development and student assessment, either through legislation or through guidelines/recommendations. Of the remaining 3 MS, 2 reported preparing major projects on the issue and only in 1 country was there no central encouragement. In addition, among the 28 MS, 11 had linked all parts of their HE programmes to learning outcomes, 9 had linked between 50% and 99%, 6 had linked between 5 and 49% and only 2 had linked none. Thus although there is clearly a considerable way to go to

<sup>19</sup> Cedefop, Linking credit systems and qualifications frameworks (2010).

<sup>20</sup> External EQF evaluation, 2013.

<sup>21</sup> Cedefop, Linking credit systems and qualifications frameworks (2010).

<sup>22</sup> Available at:

[http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/\(1\)/Bologna%20Process%20Implementation%20Report.pdf](http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/(1)/Bologna%20Process%20Implementation%20Report.pdf)

achieve the full implementation of learning outcomes, the process is well under way. However, the qualitative data collected in the surveys (and confirmed by interviews with Bologna experts) suggests that ECVET stakeholders still see ECTS as insufficiently including learning outcomes and focussing primarily on the notion of workload. There seems to be a lack of mutual understanding and/or communication between the two systems or two sets of actors, further confirmed by the fact that only a minor proportion of ECVET stakeholders (15%) were also in any way involved in the ECTS process.

In the terms of the definitions of learning outcomes there is no problem of compatibility between ECTS and ECVET. According to the Bologna report in 2012, most countries follow two well-known and non-antagonistic patterns of definitions of learning outcomes. **One comes from the EHEA overarching framework: 'what the student is expected to know, understand and be able to do';** the other is drawn from the EQF for LLL – **'knowledge, skills and competences'**. The current work on the revised guidelines for users is **adopting the EQF definition. In ECVET Users' Guide the definition combines these two elements: 'statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competences'**. So the two systems are compatible in this respect and the transfer of learning outcomes between them is therefore in principle possible.

However, the concept of credit is different in the two systems. In the Bologna process for HE, 1 ECTS credit represents 25-30 hours of student workload and as stated above is increasingly being linked to learning outcomes. It is a measure designed to give learners and stakeholders a sense of the total amount of work involved in achieving the stated learning outcomes; it is also notional rather than real time since it includes private study of various kinds which may take more or less real time according to the individual. The Bologna process has agreed that 60 credits represent a typical academic year (usually of 1500 or 1800 hours) so that while the length and/or workload and/or level of a qualification may vary, the notional value of a credit remains the same. Thus credits are designed to be used as a guide, as supplementary information to promote an understanding of the amount of work involved in different elements of a programme (modules/courses/units) and to give an indication of the significance of those elements in the totality of the programme. In ECVET, credit represents a set (unit) of learning outcomes that have been assessed but the set/unit is fixed only within a specific qualification; it may be different in other qualifications. Similarly ECVET credit points are a numerical representation of the relative weight of a set (unit) of learning outcomes within a specific qualification and have no absolute value outside that qualification. Thus while specific credits are inextricably linked to a specific qualification in both systems, ECTS credit is a standard measure, in the sense that it always represents 25-30 hours of workload, while ECVET credit is a relative measure in that reflects the proportion of the whole qualification represented by a specific set of learning outcomes. This shows that the concepts of credit points in the two systems are not compatible and therefore there is no potential for the transfer of credit points between them. It is therefore not surprising that a number of interviewees doubted the compatibility of ECVET and ECTS at least in terms of the potential for any kind of direct transfer of credits either from VET to HE or vice versa.

Nevertheless in both systems when credits/credit points are linked to learning outcomes they can be a supplementary guide to VET and HE providers, to those who award the qualifications and to employers to help them understand the volume/significance of specific learning outcomes within the context of the whole formal learning process and qualification. Their usefulness relates primarily to mobility and transfer between formal learning activities and between formal qualifications.

The working group on the revision of the ECTS Users Guide has been set up to fully reflect the state of ongoing work on learning outcomes and recognition of prior learning, as mandated by the Bucharest Communiqué<sup>23</sup>, and should produce the planned revision by mid-2015. Among other issues, this revision is planned to better link the ECTS credit points both with student workload and with learning outcomes. The introduction of workload-independent learning outcomes approach into higher education is not considered due to remaining need to estimate workload needed to complete learning activities and designing higher education programmes (dealing with expectations of students about the components of their studies).<sup>24</sup>

As stated both by **the ECVET Users' Group and the interviewees**<sup>25</sup>, the joint understanding of learning outcomes is more likely to create convergence between the two credit systems rather than a joint understanding of credits or credit points. And this will be assisted by the **new edition of the ECTS Users' Guide using the EQF** definition of learning outcomes. The two-way conversion between ECVET and ECTS could be achieved via learning outcomes, but it would not be based on credits/credit points. Several stakeholders<sup>26</sup> considered that keeping two separate tools was more beneficial than trying to find the point of integration for ECVET and ECTS. The two systems could be used in parallel depending on the needs and focus of the different training providers, but the search for synergies should in any case be continued.

### *Coherence with validation of non-formal and informal learning*

The EU level policy documents on validation of non-formal and informal learning suggest that learning outcomes were the most important element of ECVET which was considered as able to bring added value to the validation processes. The 2004 European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning stated that despite the fact that ECTS and the (then only planned) ECVET were primarily relevant to formal learning, they also had potential to allow transfer of informal and non-formal learning if essential elements of comparability and trust (particularly definition of learning outcomes) were in place. It was also argued in the guidelines that on the other hand ECVET could benefit from assessment methodologies commonly used in validation of non-formal and informal learning.

The 2012 Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning again mentions ECVET as a tool to be used for the transfer and accumulation **of individuals' learning outcomes achieved in formal, and, where appropriate, non-formal and informal contexts** and states the following elements (closely related to the potential use of ECVET) which should be included in the national systems for validation of non-formal and informal learning:

- **Identification of individual's learning outcomes;**
- Documentation of those learning outcomes;
- Assessment of the said learning outcomes;
- Certification of the results of assessment.

<sup>23</sup> [http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/\(1\)/Bucharest%20Communique%202012\(1\).pdf](http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/(1)/Bucharest%20Communique%202012(1).pdf)

<sup>24</sup> Interviews with HE providers and Commission staff.

<sup>25</sup> Interviews with national ECVET experts, institutional project participants from higher education providers, Commission staff.

<sup>26</sup> Interviews with ECVET NCPs, higher education providers, open survey answers.

The links with validation of non-formal and informal learning were also well recognised from the ECVET side. The ECVET Recommendation and its annexes on definitions, principles and technical specifications state that:

- The validation of assessed non-formal and informal learning outcomes should be promoted following the Council Conclusions of 28 May 2004;
- For ECVET to be applied to learning outcomes achieved in a non-formal and informal context or outside the framework of a Memorandum of Understanding, the competent institution which is empowered to award qualifications or units or to give credit should establish procedures and mechanisms for the identification, validation and recognition of these learning outcomes through the award of the corresponding units and the associated ECVET points.

Credits/credit points, however, have little or no significance in the recognition and/or validation of informal and non-formal learning since such learning cannot be measured in terms of workload (ECTS) or proportions of units/qualifications (ECVET); such learning can only be assessed in terms of learning outcomes. Similarly, the documents of ECVET are not relevant for purposes of validating non-formal and informal learning as there is no formal ECVET/Leonardo mobility in place. The potential for ECVET to assist the validation of prior learning lies in application of learning outcomes approach and, where the legal basis allows this, creation of units of learning outcomes for individual learners and thus facilitating the certification of those outcomes. Additionally, according to the interviews with training providers and EU-level officials, ECVET leads to a better structuring of VET, which makes it more favourable for taking into account outcomes gained outside the formal context.

In practice, however, the surveys and interviews revealed no concrete examples at the national level where ECVET had a particular added value to validation of non-formal and informal learning. Some of the training providers having participated in ECVET projects who responded to the survey specifically stated that better inclusion of learners gaining their learning outcomes in non-formal or informal contexts remained an issue. The representatives of EU institutions involved in the process also agreed that the discussions on links between the two initiatives were not sufficiently discussed among stakeholders. The overall discussions on validation were also at the moment more focused on validation in the context of higher education rather than VET.

### *Coherence with EQF*

The major source for relating ECVET and EQF instruments is the ECVET technical specifications, which in particular focus on using EQF levels as a reference for deciding on comparability of qualifications and the possibility to transfer credit. The work carried out through EQF and ECVET included the same general objectives of improving mobility through recognition of (components of) qualifications, as well as contribution to lifelong learning and development of human capital across Europe. EQF and ECVET also shared openness to all forms of learning (formal, non-formal and informal) and the distinction between qualifications and education and training programmes.

Learning outcomes are the shared defining principle of both EQF and ECVET. However, the functions of EQF and ECVET are separate – whereas EQF focuses in particular on levels of acquired qualifications (assisting the judgment on complexity of learning outcomes), ECVET puts emphasis on the process of achieving those qualifications by facilitating the transfer, recognition and accumulation of learning outcomes.<sup>27</sup> The development of national qualifications frameworks has been named by Cedefop as one

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<sup>27</sup> ECVET Recommendation, recital 12.



of the necessary conditions for implementation of ECVET, and EQF in general is often seen as a basis for establishment of ECVET, as it leads to application of learning outcomes approach and in turn enables the combination of learning outcomes into units used in ECVET.<sup>28</sup>

The combinations of units (feature of ECVET) and levels (EQF) of learning outcomes have also been found to theoretically enable awarding bodies to design learning pathways with multiple entry and exit points, although in such cases the proximity between institutions delivering the education and training, and in some cases the integration of the full offer within a single institution was crucial. This is an area of mutual reinforcement between ECVET and EQF. However, the evaluation team was unable to identify such arrangements functioning in practice so far.

The different focuses of EQF and ECVET also has led to different implementation approaches. EQF is based on centralised management and administration, whereas ECVET, partly due to its stage of implementation, is much more local and based on partnerships, although functioning within broad national rules. According to Cedefop (2010), ECVET is more directly relevant to learners and training providers, while qualification classification through frameworks is of more concern for employers and awarding or regulating bodies.<sup>29</sup>

### *Links with Europass*

The Europass initiative is aimed at helping citizens to present their qualifications and experience. For ECVET, the most relevant Europass documents are the Europass Certificate Supplement, which provides a description of learning outcomes acquired by the holder of a VET certificate, and the Europass Mobility, which is a document recording the knowledge and skills acquired by a person outside of the home country. The function of ECVET in relation with Europass concerns provision of content to Europass documents, whereas the role of Europass is to present the ECVET outputs in a way which would be the most clear and understandable to various potential beneficiaries across national systems. The survey of national Europass centres in the 2012 Europass external evaluation showed that ECVET was seen as more pertinent and complementary to Europass than ECTS.

The Europass Mobility document was particularly important to the implementation of ECVET, as 3,5 times more of the surveyed institutional project participants (managers and coordinators of ECVET projects) reported having used it rather than the certificate supplement for reflecting (units of) learning outcomes transferred through ECVET. This is natural as Europass Mobility was in fact the only Europass tool designed to specifically record the results of mobility whereas the certificate supplement only reflected the learning outcomes/credit points after the full qualification was obtained, which could be significantly later than the mobility experience. Of those participants who used certificate supplement, 78% recorded learning outcomes, and 60% recorded credit points. In the case of the Mobility document, these proportions were 91% and 51% respectively. This shows that for the most relevant ECVET element (learning outcomes), the Europass Mobility was a suitable recording tool.

The Mobility document was described as a very useful tool in the context of ECVET by the project participants and national stakeholders alike. As with ECVET itself, this tool contributed to optimisation of mobilities – e.g. improved understanding of qualifications and learning outcomes, and better management skills. The suggestions

<sup>28</sup> Cedefop annual report 2012. Analysis and overview of NQF developments in European countries, 2013.

<sup>29</sup> Cedefop, Linking credit systems and qualifications frameworks (2010).

for further integration of Europass Mobility with ECVET included using it more often as a transcript of records as well as including a more explicit field for recording credit points if they are used. The single most popular answer why the credit points were not recorded however was that they were simply not used.

The institutional project participants also identified the reasons why they did not record units of learning outcomes or credits in the Europass documents for their ECVET projects, including lack of demand from the learners/ partners, lack of information from the national LLP/Erasmus+ agency, and lack of perceived added value for the learners or institutions. Some of the project participants reported that they did not consider it a possibility to record units of learning outcomes in the Europass Mobility simply because of lack of awareness that this was an option.

The Europass initiative additionally has developed a number of best practices which could be further used in implementing both ECVET and the other European transparency and recognition tools. The EASQ initiative states as one of its key principles the establishment of a single access point to obtain information and services for facilitation of mobility and recognition of skills and competences, including those brought by ECVET. The current Europass / European Skills Passport portal has a particularly strong popularity among various groups of stakeholders, education and training providers and the public at large. This asset could be used to kick-start the planned single access point. Additionally, the Europass portal includes very practical and well-developed web-based tools for creating transparency documents online and storing them in a freely accessible portfolio (European Skills Passport).

### *Links with EQAVET and the issue of mutual trust*

Both EQAVET and ECVET are focusing on the issue of mutual trust among various contexts in which VET is provided, but they do so in different ways. The EQAVET framework in particular does not currently take into account the learning outcomes approach nor the design of qualifications. It looks more into the process and quality of provision of VET – **first at the systems level, then at the VET providers' level and finally at the work based learning.** Meanwhile, ECVET is more a tool structuring the qualification and, as mentioned in the section on its relevance, contributed to mutual trust by increasing the capacity of training providers to develop learning outcomes in a way which can be trusted by the project partners.<sup>30</sup> Additionally, the support to increasing mutual trust and partnership was ensured by ECVET via its main documents, the Memoranda of Understanding and Learning Agreements.

There is a wide agreement among the national and EU level stakeholders that there is a need to develop a stronger EU-level quality assurance framework for learning outcomes. ECVET has been able to already provide a substantial input into this by fostering the mutual trust among training providers via pilot projects. In the future, such a system supporting the development of trusted units of learning outcomes could remain either as part of ECVET framework or be integrated into EQAVET taking into account its general quality assurance and improvement cycle of planning, implementation, evaluation/assessment and review/revision. In any case, the future steps in this regard would require stronger guidelines and principles on how the quality of learning outcomes can be assured.<sup>31</sup>

### *Links with ESCO*

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<sup>30</sup> Interviews with Commission officials, EQAVET stakeholders.

<sup>31</sup> Interviews with Commission officials, EQAVET stakeholders.

The first trial version of ESCO, a taxonomy of skills / competences, qualifications and occupations, was launched recently. As a standardised terminology, it will ease the description how occupations, skills, competences and qualifications are linked and interact with each other. The 22 languages of ESCO will facilitate cooperation between countries and will support the mobility of learners between countries and systems. Once again, the learning outcomes approach is the linking point of ECVET and ESCO. As learning outcomes are commonly defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competences, they share the basic terminological principle with ESCO. This should facilitate the compatibility of the two initiatives. ESCO should contribute to a common language in organising mobilities with ECVET element. ESCO also has a goal to become particularly useful for jobseekers in describing their skill sets, which is also **one of the concerns of ECVET. Given the early stage of ESCO's implementation, the actual future relation of the two initiatives remains to be seen.**

## 4 Effectiveness

### 4.1 Governance and outputs

#### Summary of findings

- **The Users' Group** has fulfilled both of its purposes well – to contribute to the **development of the Users' Guide and to the quality and coherence of ECVET** collaboration. The same applies to the European ECVET Network, which has disseminated the information at national level well and has provided a strong platform for exchange of information.
- The division of responsibilities between the governing actors was not clear to stakeholders. There was a lack of understanding of the Users' Group's exact role as it was difficult to identify where the decisions concerning ECVET were being taken.
- The lack of common guidance and monitoring of mobility projects with ECVET element weakened the experimental and learning purpose of this action.
- Although the fact that many countries voluntarily appointed national coordination / contact points for ECVET signals a certain level of commitment at national level, there was a lack of a clear strategy how to direct their actions. At the same time NCPs needed more targeted and country-specific support for their efforts at national level from the EU-level ECVET support actors.
- **Users' Guide was** at the core of ECVET support actions and received positive assessments from its users among the ECVET stakeholders and governing actors on many counts. However, only a small share of surveyed stakeholders that used ECVET had used the Users' Guide in their work. The practical use of the document was limited by the complexity of its language.
- The support actions to implementation of ECVET were numerous, provided by a wide variety of actors and generally highly appreciated by the ECVET stakeholders at all levels and the participants of Leonardo mobility projects alike. At the same time there was some evidence of fragmentation, e.g. in ECVET information being provided on three different European ECVET websites or similar support being available from more than one access point. At the same time there were gaps in targeting ECVET support actions for greater impact, e.g. in reaching out to the policy officers in countries that were willing to implement or implementing different elements of ECVET.

The evaluation of governance and outputs includes the analysis of setting up ECVET governance structures, implementing its key governance functions, division of responsibilities among different bodies implementing ECVET, and ensuring the availability of support necessary for implementing this complex European initiative. ECVET is a new initiative, therefore, creation of an effective governance structure is one of its initial outputs.

The topic of the governance of ECVET was one of the most prominent in the 2012 monitoring report.<sup>32</sup> The report presented the governance framework of the initiative, but did not attempt to evaluate its activity in terms of fulfilling its function. It also provided information on the key national actors in ECVET. It was noted that the ministries of education played a role in all countries, whereas 37% of the countries reported involvement of other ministries. 66% of surveyed VET providers and social partners, and 37% of experts or research bodies also reported involvement in ECVET governance.

All the countries except three (LI, ES and IE) implemented ECVET-related information and communication activities in 2012. The most common activities were the organisation of events, producing publications and creating websites. The other activities, such as advertising, were less popular. Practitioners and policy-makers were identified as the key target groups of information and communication activities in 2012, but for 2013, a shift of focus towards practitioners was predicted.

The survey and interview programme conducted in the context of this evaluation encompassed the assessment of European and national level ECVET governance as well as implementation of different ECVET support actions. The findings showed that the initiative was effective in setting up its governance structures and achieving planned outputs. The key weaknesses of ECVET governance were the multitude of actors involved at European level and the absence of systematic monitoring of ECVET pilot projects.

#### **4.1.1 Management and co-ordination**

The ECVET Recommendation foresaw the establishment of the *Users' Group* for the implementation and coordination of ECVET, chaired by the European Commission. **The Users' Group was set up in addition to such pivotal advisory bodies as ACVT and DGVT, which were being used also for discussion of the key issues around the implementation of ECVET. The Users' Group was in particular responsible for the development of the Users' Guide and the quality and coherence of ECVET cooperation process, conducting consultation at working level between the Commission, the EU Member States and other key stakeholders. Within the User's Group the coordination function is fulfilled by the Steering Committee which supervised the Working Group responsible for the production of user guides and support documents.**

**The User's Group was seen by over 80% of surveyed stakeholders to have fulfilled both of its purposes well.** The interviewed stakeholders told the Users' Group was effective in sharing knowledge about the developments of ECVET in different countries. It provided for an intensive exchange of information between the Commission and the Member States.

The Users' Group was also performing well in promoting **the Users' Guide** and the templates to the certain tools in the ECVET process. However, some concerns were raised by interviewed designated members of the national teams of ECVET experts regarding its mandate which was not clear enough to the stakeholders and therefore,

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<sup>32</sup> Cedefop, Monitoring ECVET implementation strategies in Europe. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2013.

some doubts were expressed concerning its exact role. The interviews revealed that the members of the **Users' Group** did not consider themselves sufficiently involved in the decision-making which was distinctly steered by the Commission.

To ensure the technical support for the Commission, **ECVET Team** coordinated major meetings, and helped the Commission perform consultations with the Advisory Committee for VET (ACVT) and the Group of Directors General for VET (DGVT). Furthermore, the Commission benefited substantially from the expertise of **Cedefop** in designing and monitoring the implementation of ECVET.

Both surveyed and interviewed stakeholders agreed that at the EU level the implementation structure of ECVET was rather complex with a large number of players. Therefore, for many actors it was quite difficult to see where the decisions were actually taken and who was actually putting forward which proposal. Only 37% of the surveyed stakeholders agreed with the statement that the division of responsibilities between the Commission, **ECVET Users' Group**, ECVET Network, ECVET Team, Cedefop and EACEA was clear to them. As a result of desk research and interviews the evaluation team identified the division of responsibilities among the different actors in ECVET initiative (see the table below).

**Table 12: The main organisations and governance bodies of ECVET, their roles and activities**

Organisations and governance bodies		Role in ECVET or activity relevant for ECVET
<b>Governance role</b>	Commission (DG EAC)	Responsibility to implement the ECVET Recommendation
		Overall management and co-ordination of the initiative
		Organising Users Group (UG) meetings
		Management of ECVET-related grants
	ECVET Users' Group	Contribute to the coherence of ECVET implementation
		Developing Users Guide documents
	ECVET Team	Organising UG workshops
		Organising the ECVET Forum
		Organising peer learning activities for ECVET stakeholders
		Co-ordinating ECVET Network (accepting new members, maintaining constant contact with them)
		Disseminating information on ECVET through ECVET Team website(www.ecvet-team.eu) and (in cooperation with EACEA) the ECVET magazine
	EACEA	Running the www.ecvet-toolkit.eu (as of 2014)
		Management of ECVET-related grants (as delegated by the Commission)
		Disseminating information on ECVET through ECVET project website (www.ecvet-projects.eu) and (in cooperation with the ECVET Team) the ECVET magazine
	Cedefop	Organising ECVET projects conferences
Providing expertise and policy advice to the Commission on the implementation of ECVET		
		Monitoring the implementation of ECVET necessary conditions

Source: compiled by authors

#### 4.1.2 Monitoring of the implementation

Monitoring of policy initiatives is an important management tool that helps policy makers learn and take corrective actions while the initiatives are still being implemented. ECVET was meant to have a two-level monitoring. Most of the ECVET monitoring support to the Commission came from Cedefop, which focused on the ECVET implementation at policy level and published the annual monitoring reports. **Cedefop also provided support and technical advice to the Users' Group** by producing relevant studies and publications, as well as contributed their expertise in the different events.

Another important area for monitoring the implementation of ECVET was at project level. The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) and the national LLP/Erasmus+ agencies monitored the Leonardo da Vinci mobility and transfer of innovation projects with ECVET element. EACEA was supported by an external contractor that analysed the experimentation efforts conducted via the 19 ECVET pilot projects, producing synthesis reports, reporting on the key findings in ECVET magazine and presenting these findings in dissemination events.

However, the EACEA or the national LLP/Erasmus+ agencies monitored over 300 other pilot projects with an ECVET element funded under Leonardo da Vinci (either as mobility or transfer of innovation projects) mostly in terms of administrative compliance and sound financial management. Their ECVET-relevant information was not provided in a structured way and for many projects not provided at all.

Although mobility projects with an ECVET element funded under Leonardo da Vinci produced a number of positive effects for the participants and in some instances good practices were learned from in subsequent projects or influenced national policies (see section 4.2.1 on Immediate results for specific evidence), the lack of common guidance and monitoring of these mobility projects weakened the experimental and learning purpose of this action. For example, the basic facts about the overall number of learners that took part in ECVET mobilities, the overall number of memoranda of understanding and learning agreements signed, and other key elements of ECVET implementation through these projects were not available in the aggregate form to the evaluation team. The evaluators have also faced difficulties in accessing some of the national reports as national agencies were not able to deliver them in a timely manner or electronic versions of the reports were not available.

### **4.1.3 ECVET support actions**

#### **4.1.3.1 Dissemination of information and networking**

As foreseen in the ECVET Recommendation, a European **ECVET Network** was set up for dissemination of information about ECVET within participating countries as well as providing a wider platform for exchange of information and experience among a wide range of stakeholders. The work of the ECVET Network was known by a significant share (76%) of the surveyed stakeholders involved in the development and implementation of ECVET. The Network was successful in disseminating the information at national level and provided a strong platform for exchange of information. This opinion was shared by a large majority of the surveyed stakeholders (over 85%). Interviewed stakeholders appreciated the training provided within the **European ECVET Network's activities, in particular promoting the common approach** towards learning outcomes, mobility, units and credit points. It was also mentioned to be effective in establishing connections between those involved in ECVET.

For the exchange of experiences, the ECVET Support Team introduced the **Community of Practice**, another medium for coordination between actors directly involved in the implementation of ECVET.

Further improvements for a more effective dissemination of information could be the set-up of a single access point for information. Although the examples of how ECVET could be used were available online via various websites (such as ECVET Toolkit, ECVET pilot projects website, ADAM database and others), there was still a lack of awareness among potential institutional project participants about how to access the examples which were the most relevant for their particular needs.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, three different websites ([www.ecvet-team.eu](http://www.ecvet-team.eu), [www.ecvet-projects.eu](http://www.ecvet-projects.eu), and [www.ecvet-toolkit.eu](http://www.ecvet-toolkit.eu)) existed which were all meant to inform about ECVET, therefore, a single website could make the navigation easier.

#### **4.1.3.2 Supporting and developing national ECVET contact points**

The Member States have established twenty-seven national coordination or contact points (NCPs) for coordination of ECVET within national bodies involved in the implementation of the initiative although this was not required by the ECVET Recommendation. It signals a certain level of commitment at national level and reflects the awareness among the Member States of the complexity of ECVET which has to be linked to other EU tools for transparency of skills and qualification. However, the diversity of NCPs reveals the lack of a European approach on how the initiative should be co-ordinated at the national level and what the objectives of such an effort should be in relation to the different elements of ECVET.

The mapping of the ECVET NCPs indicates very different types of institutions which act as NCPs: ministries, LLP agencies, awarding institutions, umbrella organisations, national institutes for VET and/or qualifications, recognition and validation centres, etc. On the one hand this variety indicates different national approaches towards ECVET, which is related to different levels of take up of the initiative. On the other hand, this wide spectrum of type of bodies acting as NCPs leads to uncertainty about their exact role and objectives. For example, as evidenced by several interviewed national stakeholders, many countries integrated only some elements of ECVET which were compatible with the existing education and training systems. Therefore, the potential of NCPs could be better utilised if the coordination activities of NCPs were clearly defined in relation to the different elements of ECVET, while taking into account the national institutional and policy context. More coherence in the activities of NCPs could be achieved only after a revision of the ECVET Recommendation, which could also foresee a more explicit role for NCPs.

At institutional level, a room for more synergies between NCPs of related initiatives existed as the involvement of ECVET NCPs in the development or implementation of other transparency tools remained sporadic. As previous evaluations of EU initiatives have shown, the placement of national contact points of the related European initiatives for transparency of skills and qualification in the same national bodies, their cross-representation in the coordination committees of the related initiatives, the pooling of resources in dissemination of information on the related initiatives and other joint efforts resulted in the important synergies at national level<sup>34</sup>. Most of the surveyed and interviewed representatives of ECVET NCPs mentioned their involvement

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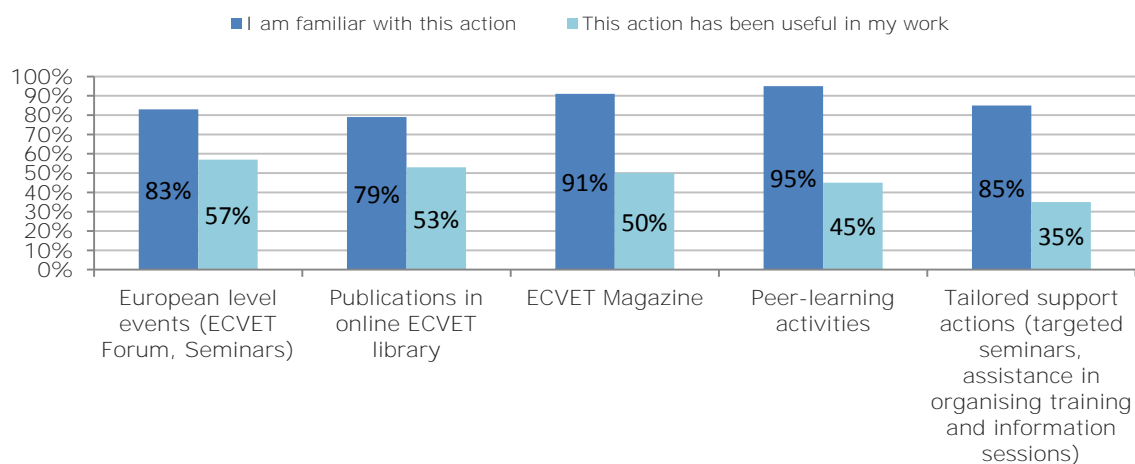
<sup>33</sup> Interviews

<sup>34</sup> E.g. this came through very clearly in the report from the second external evaluation of Europass initiative.

in EQF, but the involvement in EQAVET, Europass or validation of non-formal and informal learning was less frequent.

The NCPs were well familiar with the various support actions available for them. They considered that the European level events and publications, such as ECVET Magazine, were the most useful in their work. The peer-learning activities and the targeted seminars organised by the ECVET Team were considered less useful by the NCPs. This result might be due to a smaller number of NCP representatives involved in such activities and due to the type of groups targeted which often were the practitioners. The interviewed NCPs considered that the more targeted and country-specific support was needed, therefore, it should be considered to provide this kind of targeted support for NCPs.

**Figure 3: Usefulness of ECVET support actions for NCPs**



Source: Survey of stakeholders and governing actors, 2013.

The ECVET Team was the most important support actor for the NCPs – about two thirds of NCPs who answered the survey mentioned that they have received such support. About half of NCPs also received support from the national LLP/Erasmus+ agencies. About a quarter of NCPs mentioned they received support from Cedefop or the other NCPs. The NCPs identified that in particular the support from NCPs in other countries was the most useful, which points to significant peer learning potential that needs to be further exploited in the future. In general, NCPs were highly satisfied with all support they could get.

#### 4.1.3.3 The utility of Users' Guide documents

The Users' Guide was found to be at the core of ECVET support actions as evidenced by the evaluation team's surveys and interviews. However, the document could be used effectively only after simplification and explanation in national languages to potential project participants.<sup>35</sup> As ECVET is a complex initiative with a number of different elements, their proper understanding among national level stakeholders was lacking.<sup>36</sup>

The survey of stakeholders revealed that the Users' Guide documents were familiar to more than a half of respondents (65% in 2011 and 57% in 2012)<sup>37</sup>. The levels of

<sup>35</sup> Survey of and interviews with institutional project participants.

<sup>36</sup> Interviews with members of DGVT, training providers.

<sup>37</sup> Get to know ECVET better. Questions and Answers (2011); Using ECVET for Geographical Mobility (2012).



familiarity with the documents varied across different respondent groups, and social partners reported that only a minority (43%) of them knew the 2012 edition of the **Users' Guide**.

The surveyed stakeholders (government officials involved in implementation of ECVET, **LLP agencies, members of Users' Group**) **positively evaluated Users' Guide** according to most of the criteria, i.e. in terms of user-friendliness, clarity of terminology, usefulness for dissemination of ECVET and support purposes, improvement of the understanding of the aims and objectives of ECVET. However, at the same time the majority of them (52%) also reported not using the document in their work at all or using it only to a small extent, which was also confirmed by the findings of the interview programme. Many interviewees claimed that while **the Users' Guide** documents were clear to officials and ECVET promoters who have high level of knowledge about credit systems, at the project level they were too difficult to read and use on a daily basis by the practitioners. For example, it was found that difficulties existed in understanding unitisation and modularisation.<sup>38</sup> **'Modules' and 'units' are the fundamental concepts for the synchronisation of different VET systems and ECVET.** In some cases they were used synonymously.<sup>39</sup> This indicates that the implementation of ECVET might be hindered in the early stages of adjusting VET systems to ECVET. In this regard, some initiatives at national level were launched in order to make ECVET easier to understand. For instance, in the UK the national ECVET expert team produced easy to read materials to explain ECVET in a simple way and to provide step-by-step guidelines for the sending institutions. Similar initiatives were carried out in Denmark, Ireland, and as reported by the stakeholders, a clear and simple explanation was often the most convincing means to encourage institutions and organisations to join ECVET projects.

Survey findings also revealed that schools were among those groups using the Users' Guide in their work less often<sup>40</sup> (see figure below). Surprisingly, over 50% of schools **involved in ECVET reported that they used the Users' Guide to a small extent or not at all.** Schools are a particularly important target group in this regard as they are the end-users of ECVET. This suggests there might still be room for further review and **simplification of language of Users' Guide documents.**

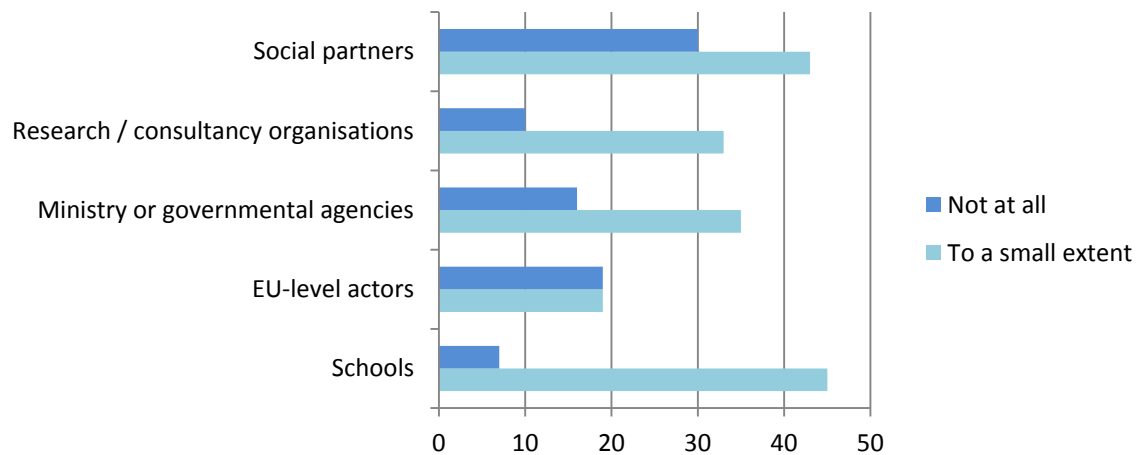
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<sup>38</sup> Preliminary findings of Cedefop study 'Unitisation and modularisation for flexibility and mobility in VET'.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Excluding social partners – only 20% of them used the documents in their work.

**Figure 4: Usage of ECVET Users' Guide in work context by different stakeholder groups (%).**



Source: Survey of stakeholders and governing actors, 2013.

#### 4.1.3.4 Other support actions

Other ECVET support actions were also well known by the surveyed stakeholders. On average, 80% of them were familiar with ECVET Magazine, peer-learning activities, tailored support actions (targeted seminars, assistance in organising training and information sessions), European level events (ECVET Forum, seminars) and publications in online ECVET library.

Just as in case of NCPs, the ECVET Team was most frequently mentioned as providing necessary guidance for the stakeholders. The NCPs themselves and the LLP/Erasmus+ agencies were also among the major support and guidance providers. Overall the satisfaction with the support provided by all the relevant bodies<sup>41</sup> was very high among the stakeholders (90%). Interviewees also mentioned other actions to be particularly supportive, namely the templates of Memoranda of Understanding and Learning agreements, as well as the training events. Particular satisfaction was expressed with **Cedefop's work** (surveys, publications on necessary conditions, etc.) which was evaluated most positively by the survey participants, as well as the interviewees who **often praised agency's support for the initiative. Despite this general satisfaction of all** the stakeholders, the connections between the providers of ECVET support and the policy officers, who played a crucial role in placing the elements of ECVET on the national policy agenda and later implementing them, remained limited in a number of countries.<sup>42</sup>

The most extensive support to institutional participants of Leonardo projects with ECVET element was provided by the national LLP/Erasmus+ agencies – 55% of survey respondents mentioned that they received such support. About a quarter of the respondents mentioned having received support for their projects from the NCPs and ECVET Team, 23% of respondents reported they did not receive any support at all. Over two thirds of project participants who received support from these actors were satisfied with it.

A majority of project participants (64%) agreed that targeted seminars, assistance in organising training and information sessions organised by the ECVET Team were the most useful support actions in their work. The online publications on ECVET as well as

<sup>41</sup> ECVET Team, Cedefop, NCPs, LLP agencies, other actors in ECVET.

<sup>42</sup> Interviews with members of DGVT

the EU level events were also considered to be useful by slightly more than a half of project participants. The ECVET Magazine was estimated to be useful by slightly less than a half of respondents.

When asked what improvements in national level support actions would be the most useful, the institutional project participants mentioned the need for strong web-based tools available in national languages (similarly to Europass portal) which could facilitate the ECVET process and the definition of units of learning outcomes. Similarly, the need for a single portal for accessing best practices of all countries was expressed. A stronger sectoral presence and more intensive grassroots-level collaboration among the different stakeholders were considered to be beneficial for developing a better understanding of ECVET and making better use of its different tools.

## 4.2 Results and impact

### Summary of findings

- The level of argumentation and commitment to ECVET strongly depends on existing VET systems. Countries with units, modules and functional credit systems see less added value in ECVET implementation than those which lack credit system or have no units/modules and are predominantly school-based.
- The highest current level of trust in quality and consistency of qualifications was reported between initial VET and continuing VET and the lowest level of trust was between VET and HE. ECVET was considered the most effective in increasing the level of trust across borders.
- Enhanced national level guidance and support for ECVET and further progress in implementing national and European qualifications frameworks (NOF/EOF) and other European transparency tools (ECTS, Europass, EQAVET) could strongly add up to building trust between stakeholders in quality and consistency of qualifications.
- The central and most important element of ECVET was considered to be the learning outcomes approach. The initiative was acknowledged to be the most effective in developing awareness and understanding as well as gaining the acceptance of learning outcomes approach.
- The activities supported under ECVET were considered least effective in gaining the acceptance for the need of national credit system compatible with ECVET in countries where the existing VET system did not have units and modules and/or where IVET was predominantly apprenticeship-based.
- The main obstacles for transferring learning outcomes were different terminology used to describe units of learning outcomes, modules, credits, credit points and other relevant elements, the resistance of national stakeholders to making national credit systems compatible with ECVET, and **the** heterogeneity of the quality of provision and assessment.
- The most useful elements of ECVET for short-term mobility projects proved to be its supporting documents - Learning Agreement, Transcript of Records, and Memorandum of Understanding which also helped to increase mutual trust between sending and receiving institutions.
- The results of Leonardo (mobility or transfer of innovation) projects with ECVET element were regarded to be very useful and sustainable by their participants, but the usability of these results by other actors was hindered by the problems in their dissemination and the lack of a single access point for best practices, including those in each participating country.

- The approaches considered by ECVET stakeholders to increase the mutual trust among project partners included a micro-level approach (managing partnerships by getting to know the partners), organising the partnerships among clusters of providers, unified international skills measurement system for VET and focusing the EQAVET quality cycle on learning outcomes.
- The approach of giving additional points for Leonardo applications with ECVET element boosted the take up of the initiative, but there is no evidence about the success or otherwise of these projects in applying ECVET and the quality of the outputs they produced.
- The lack of orientation of national education and training systems towards ECVET, underdeveloped national level legal framework (e.g. towards recognition), administrative burden and difficulties in applying ECVET methodology were the key issues which hindered the willingness of project participants to use the ECVET element in mobilities.
- ECVET did not contribute significantly to permeability between VET and higher education. The providers offering VET qualifications at tertiary level continued to prefer ECTS due to easier methodology, better establishment and longer history of the instrument as well as clearer links to academic strand of HE.

In this section the evaluation of effectiveness relies particularly on the understanding on ECVET intervention logic.<sup>43</sup> Immediate results, intermediate results, long-term results and impacts are discussed through the analysis of Cedefop's monitoring data on ECVET implementation and other relevant documentary sources as well data from surveys conducted by the evaluation team and interviews with ECVET experts and other relevant actors. The analysis includes various factors that might hinder the timely implementation of the initiative.

According to the ECVET Recommendation, by 2012 the Member States should have been ready for gradual implementation of ECVET at all levels of EQF.<sup>44</sup> It appears that the target date has not been fully met by all countries. From 13 Member States which have already signalled the commitment to implement ECVET only 6 started gradual implementation. Due to different starting positions determined by domestic VET systems, the level of preparation for ECVET application highly varies among countries.<sup>45</sup> The issue of timing is controversial. On the one hand the initiative seems to be late according to its original timeline, on the other hand many stakeholders agree that compared to ECTS which has been implemented for 25 years already, the target dates have been too ambitious. There is evidence from the interviews with policy implementing actors at national level that many countries saw the development of national qualifications frameworks as the priority, as they saw that such frameworks would actually ease the development of ECVET in their countries.

#### 4.2.1 Immediate results

The necessary conditions for ECVET implementation suggest that the implementation of ECVET at national level should start from evidence based argumentation and goal setting taking into account the national and European context. The Member States should also consider the potential added value of ECVET in addressing shortcomings of existing national VET systems.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>43</sup> For more detailed results on ECVET intervention logic, see section 1.

<sup>44</sup> Necessary conditions for ECVET implementation, 2012.

<sup>45</sup> Cedefop, Monitoring ECVET implementation strategies in Europe in 2013.

<sup>46</sup> 'Necessary conditions for ECVET implementation', Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2012.

Our analysis showed that the level of argumentation for ECVET depends strongly on the national VET systems already in place. In its monitoring report on ECVET implementation Cedefop has divided 38 European countries/regions into two categories: those with modules/units already in place and those without modules/units. The two categories were divided into four clusters of countries/regions as follows:<sup>47</sup>

- Cluster 1: countries with units/modules and credit systems (FI, IS, IE, LU, RO, SI, ES, SE, UK);
- Cluster 2: countries with units/modules and no credit systems (BE (DE), HR, EE, FR, HU, NL, PL, PT, RS, TR);
- Cluster 3: countries without units/modules and predominantly apprenticeship-based IVET (AT, DK, DE, LI, NO, CH);
- Cluster 4: countries without units/modules and predominantly school-based IVET (BE (FL), BE (FR), BG, CY, CZ, MK, EL, IT, LV, LT, MT, ME, SK).

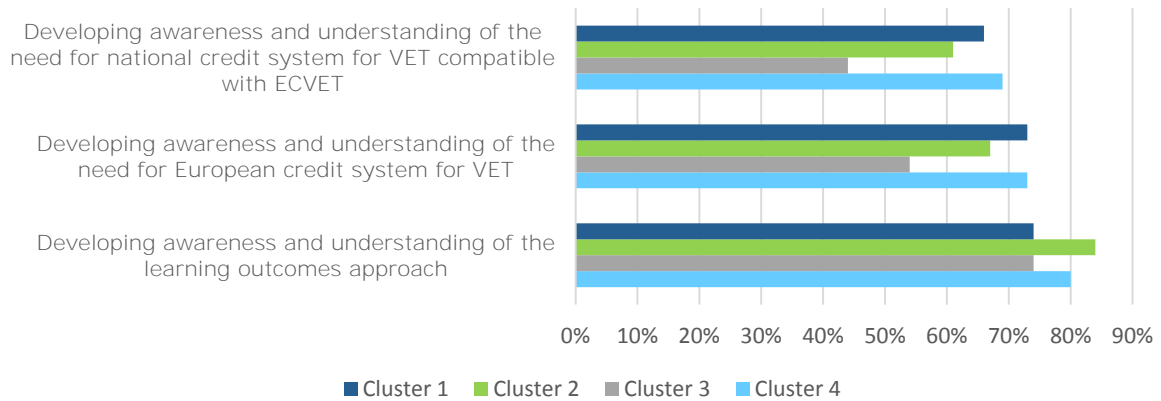
Monitoring results revealed that the highest potential added value of ECVET was seen in cluster 2 countries, which already have units and modules but lack credit transfer system. In such context ECVET could add up to already existing units/modules and stimulate the establishment of a credit transfer system. In countries without units/modules and predominantly school-based IVET (cluster 4) ECVET was also perceived as a potential trigger for VET reforms. However, countries, which had already developed VET systems with units, modules and credit transfer, saw little added value in units of learning outcomes and transfer arrangements suggested by ECVET. Cluster 3 countries without units/modules and predominantly apprenticeship-based IVET saw the potential of ECVET in improving the flexibility of national VET system by increasing transfer.<sup>48</sup> All the countries agreed the strongest element of ECVET was its learning outcomes approach and its role in fostering cross-country mobility.

The achievements of ECVET in developing awareness and understanding of learning outcomes approach were also acknowledged by stakeholders. Nearly 80% of surveyed stakeholders in all country clusters believed that ECVET was effective in this regard. **Consistently with Cedefop's monitoring results, the pattern was more pessimistic regarding ECVET's effectiveness in developing awareness and understanding of the need for national credit systems for VET compatible with ECVET (see figure below).**

#### **Figure 5: Effectiveness of activities supported under ECVET**

<sup>47</sup> Source: Cedefop, Monitoring ECVET implementation strategies in Europe in 2013.

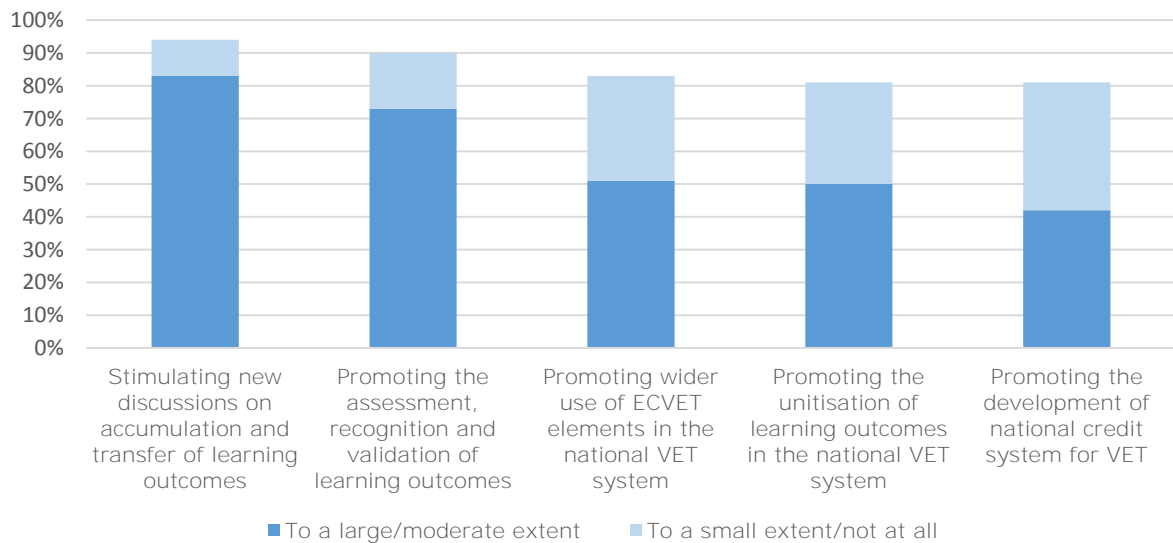
<sup>48</sup> Cedefop, Monitoring ECVET implementation strategies in Europe in 2013.



Source: survey of stakeholders and governing actors, 2013.

Similar trends appear at the micro (project) level. Institutional ECVET project participants reported that the most significant effects of ECVET projects in terms of argumentation were related to promoting learning outcomes approach (see figure below). However, the considerations concerning the effects of ECVET projects in terms of adjusting national credit systems were rather mixed (see figure below).

**Figure 6. Wider effects of ECVET projects.**



Source: survey of institutional project participants, 2014.

The ECVET projects were not of uniform quality. Those which could be described as best practice projects were able to develop valuable outputs e.g. in terms of description of learning outcomes or practices of assessment, but this did not translate well into the developments at national level. This was a result of weak dissemination of the project outputs, the sustainability of their results, as well as the lack of access by the project participants to the policy makers responsible for development of VET systems.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Interviews with institutional project participants, ECVET NCPs.

Targeted ECVET piloting was financed in two stages - the first generation pilot projects (2008-2011) were aimed at testing technical specifications of ECVET, while the second generation pilot projects (2011-2014) were more specifically targeted at ECVET implementation at the national level. 19 pilot projects and a wide variety of other European and national projects with ECVET element generated a great variety of good practices and less positive experiences in practical application of ECVET principles.

The project-level developments contributed to implementation of the necessary conditions for ECVET implementation at different levels. Even though the majority of ECVET projects were targeted at supporting the understanding of qualifications, ensuring transfer of learning outcomes and strengthening cross-border cooperation, the piloting practice showed that despite wide variations in ECVET application, the success of certain elements depended highly on the national contexts of the project partner organisations. The results and impact of ECVET projects tended to be more sustainable in the contexts where the necessary conditions related to capacity building and commitment had already been achieved.

PRO CARING project partners developed two units/modules for care sector students even though not all partner countries had units/modules in their VET systems. The units were based on curricula in partner countries and developed according to the feedback from stakeholders. The learning outcomes in the units were described as knowledge, skills and competences following the EQF levels. The units were used for ECVET mobility purposes, mainly for agreeing on the

The main common denominator of the projects in the context of mobility and lifelong learning was learning outcomes which were easily accepted and understood by the stakeholders. Despite the differences in grouping learning outcomes into units, partners in ECVET projects managed to find a common ground in creating specialised units for certain sectors. In the systems where units of learning outcomes did not exist, it was still possible to use the concept of unit for mobility purposes and validate a coherent set of learning outcomes.

Approaches to assessment procedures varied highly among the projects depending on their aims and objectives. Some of the projects were aimed at credit transfer, other projects concentrated on supporting national VET reforms. The questions of what, how and when will be assessed were the matter for discussion among project partners. An important element in developing assessment procedures was mutual trust. ECVET pilot projects accommodated a variety of practices to establish trust among partners, from visiting each other personally to getting familiar with the conditions or sending home institution teachers to attend assessment in a host institution, or developing joint quality standards for the assessment.

The project HIGHLIGHT THE COMPETENCES developed the European cooperation process based on ECVET. The project established correspondence for the professional qualification "Site Supervisor in Cleaning Services" and for the learning outcomes concerned by transfer, evaluation, and validation processes through signature and enforcement of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The project developed models for ECVET Learning Agreements, learning outcomes certification. Regional adhesion to the MoU enabled including the concerned professional qualification into the Regional Qualification Framework and formal recognition of learning outcomes.

Validation and recognition procedures proved to be the most dependent on the rules of home VET system. The scope of recognition depended on whether VET providers were able to recognise learning outcomes assessed abroad and the system enabled accumulation of learning outcomes. Most projects found learning outcomes as the common denominator for transfer and accumulation. Documents enabling recording of assessed learning outcomes were seen as the main evidence base for validation and recognition. Many projects developed Memoranda of Understanding to establish sustainable partnerships and develop the common

framework for validation and recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad.

Using ECVET for lifelong learning also strongly depended on national conditions and regulations. The second generation of ECVET projects offered good practice examples of supporting the development of national VET systems. As mentioned above, the latter aspect was highly dependent on the starting position of the initiative – i.e. whether the national system was already compatible with ECVET principles. In most cases, however, the dissemination and use of the results and products of ECVET projects was limited to project partners. Project reports offered examples that the mutual trust built during the projects was exploited in further collaboration and contributed to the increased quality of mobility and exchange of knowledge among partners. On the other hand, projects which were specifically targeted at supporting ongoing national reforms developed useful inputs for ECVET implementation at national level.<sup>50</sup> Projects developed various manuals, qualification description grids, handbooks, information packages intended to be used by national competent authorities and practitioners.

**The project “Health Tourism: An ECVET process to put in transparency and recognize across Europe the learning outcomes and the qualifications of the professional figures in the health tourism sector” can be referenced as the good practice of collecting good practices. The third work package of the project aimed at defining a coherent ECVET activation action plan for health tourism sector based on collection, analysis and adaptation of experiences and best practices on transparency and recognition of competences and qualifications in other successful ECVET projects. The overall project aimed at formalising and enforcing the MoU among key actors in participating countries concerning the European health tourism professional figures.**

A number of good practices developed in the first generation ECVET projects were accumulated and successfully used in developing the second generation projects.

The added value of ECVET was mostly visible in improving the quality of mobility and cross border cooperation. The majority of ECVET projects included transnational mobility of individuals and the results showed a variety of positive effects on quality of mobility. Due to practical application of ECVET documents such as MoU, learning agreement and transcript of records, it was possible to define, record and recognise learning outcomes acquired during mobility periods and integrate the mobility into individual learning pathways.

The sustainability of the project results as reported by the participants themselves in the survey was quite strong, as two thirds of respondents mentioned that the ECVET-related products were still used by the project partners. The same share of respondents also agreed that their project contributed to further mobility of learners after the closure of the project. However, the potential for wider use of these products by the actors outside of the project participants themselves was hindered by the issues of dissemination, the project participants struggled to find best practices of ECVET applicable directly to their situations.

The issue of mutual trust in the quality and consistency of qualifications is one of the most influential factors in the success of the implementation of ECVET, and it has been recognised as such by a variety of stakeholders, experts and VET practitioners, as identified in the outcomes of first generation ECVET pilot projects.<sup>51</sup> The surveys carried out in the context of the current evaluation, further confirmed this.

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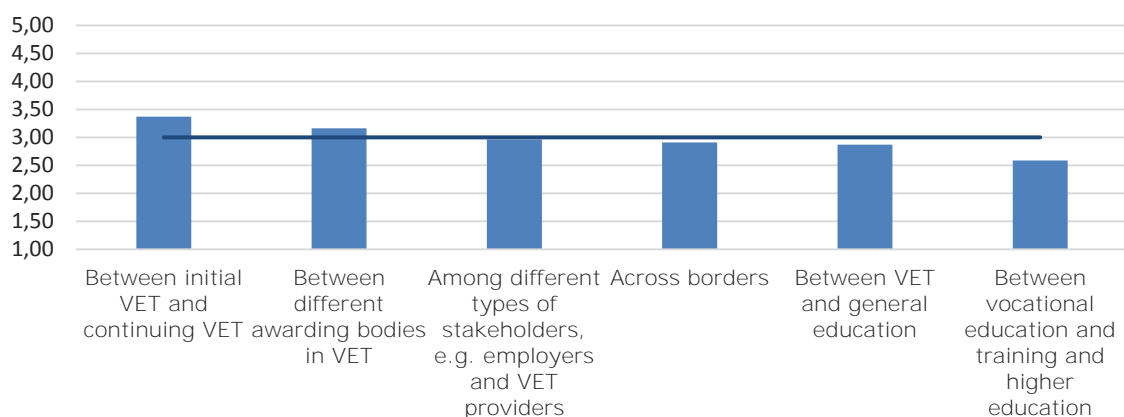
<sup>50</sup> VETC project contributed to VET credit conversion system in Malta. The project developed a National template for qualifications description to be used also as the template for the accreditation of courses. The project also created an ECVET conversion manual to be intended to be used at a national level and beyond.

<sup>51</sup> We have tried ECVET: Lessons from the first generation of ECVET pilot projects, 2012.



According to the stakeholder survey, among all four country clusters the highest trust was between initial and continuing VET stakeholders followed by that between the different awarding bodies in VET. The lowest trust was between stakeholders from the different levels of education, particularly VET and HE. The low level of trust in quality and consistency of qualifications between VET and higher education might be explained by remaining beliefs that the two systems are not comparable due to substantial differences in organisation of education and assessment procedures.

**Figure 7: The level of trust between stakeholders in the quality and consistency of qualifications.**



Note: 1=no trust/5=total trust; solid line represents average level of trust=3. Source: survey of stakeholders and governing actors, 2013.

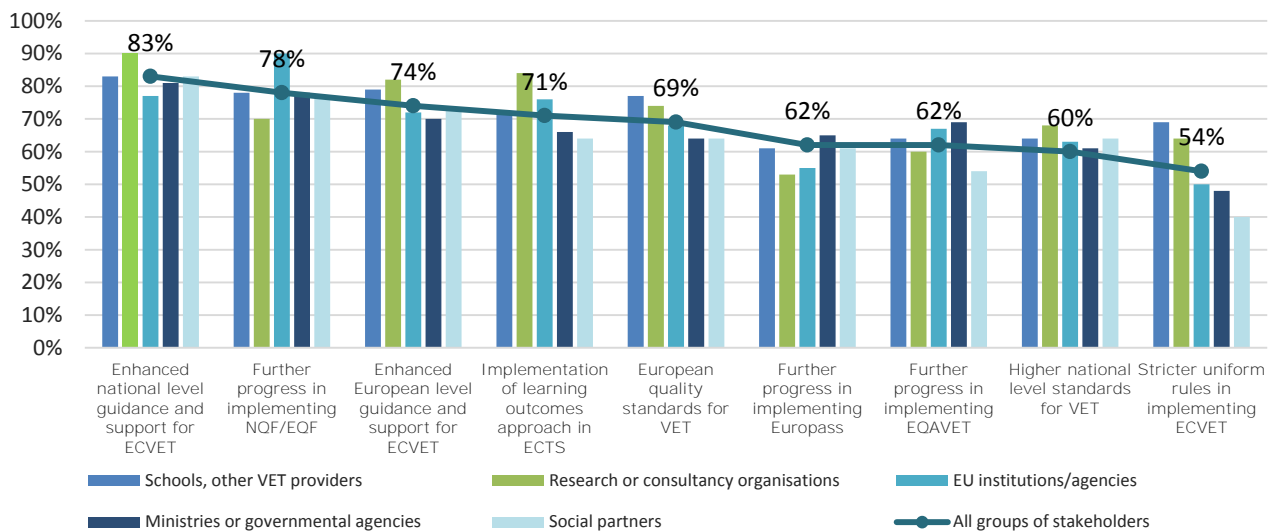
Respondents were also asked to assess the extent to which the overall level of trust between stakeholders (national and European) in the quality and consistency of qualifications could be improved by certain means/conditions (see figure below). The enhanced national and European level support for ECVET were rated among the top highest, but the respondents ruled out stricter uniform rules in implementing the initiative (see figure below).

The need for more guidance and support for quality assurance is also evident from the fact that in the pilot projects it was rarely clear for the promoters which of the ECVET aspects needed to be quality assured and how this could be done. A significant support to the common understanding of quality assurance is the updated version of **ECVET’s Guide on Mobility, adopted by the ECVET Users’ Group. It identifies quality assurance issues which support geographical mobility.**<sup>52</sup>

The results of the survey also indicate that stakeholders see ECVET in a wider context of transparency tools rather than a single initiative. Survey respondents believed that further progress in implementing national and European qualifications frameworks (NQF/EQF) as well as further development of other European transparency tools (ECTS, Europass, EQAVET) could strongly add up to building trust between stakeholders in quality and consistency of qualifications (see figure below).

<sup>52</sup> Quality Assurance and ECVET The results from pilot projects, ECVET Magazine (10), 2012.

**Figure 8: Means/conditions further supporting the overall level of trust between stakeholders (national and European) in the quality and consistency of qualifications**



Source: survey of stakeholders and governing actors, 2013.

The European VET stakeholders, recognising the importance of mutual trust not only for ECVET, but also for EQF, organised joint ECVET, EQF and EQAVET seminars every year since 2011.<sup>53</sup> The first joint seminar concluded that the establishment of so-called *zones of mutual trust* (agreements between individuals, enterprises and other organisations on the delivery of learning outcomes (LOs) based on agreed descriptions of abilities and activities, to ensure credible referencing of qualifications). The higher involvement of labour market actors and the sectoral qualifications frameworks were crucial for the future development of all three initiatives. Quality standards are closely related to their context and are thus not easily transferable.<sup>54</sup> The main method to ensure the trust in VET qualifications is the judgement of standards by sectoral specialists, coming from the world of work. The trust could be increased if the learning outcomes accumulated were referenced to the quality standards determined for the full qualification and were based on defined work processes.<sup>55</sup> The importance of European and national quality standards for VET was also highly recognised by the stakeholders surveyed by the evaluation team; more than 60% of the respondents agreed that European VET quality standards and higher national quality standards for VET could increase trust in the quality and consistency of qualifications (see the figure above).

The second joint seminar included the representatives from higher education. The key solution proposed in the event to increase the mutual trust between VET and HE was to ensure that both ECTS and ECVET are linked to the qualifications frameworks. Quality assurance, a focus on the learner, simplification and a sectoral/branch approach (leading to better exchange of knowledge about labour market needs) were also regarded as the key pillars for the higher mutual trust in any context. The need for further support and guidance in quality assurance was identified, including information in plain language on the benefits of using units to design qualifications, peer learning activities and workshops.<sup>56</sup> The case studies presented in this event

<sup>53</sup> Minutes of ECVET Users Group

<sup>54</sup> Report of 2011 joint EQAVET / ECVET / EQF Seminar

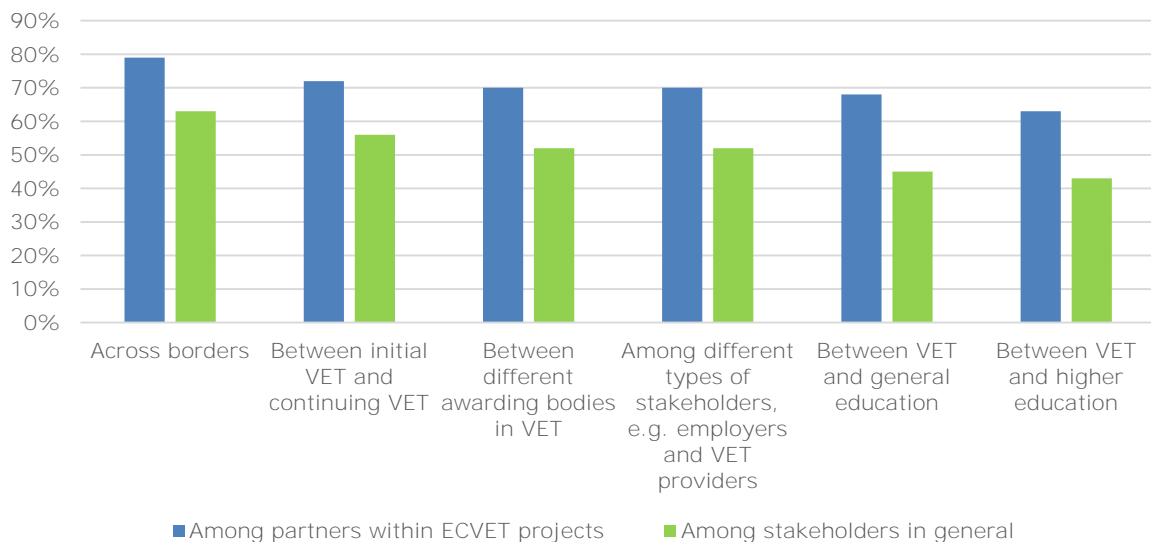
<sup>55</sup> Policy brief for 2011 joint EQAVET / ECVET / EQF Seminar

<sup>56</sup> Minutes of ECVET Users Group

proposed to increase the trust through better promotion of learning agreements, preferably the ones which are based on learning outcomes and not credits or points.<sup>57</sup> The evidence was presented that some sectors (e.g. automotive) were already developing frameworks of quality standards based on work processes. It was also pointed out that better monitoring of quality assurance by different stakeholders was needed to assess the extent to which understanding is shared, practice trusted and quality assurance policy and practice permeate the VET system. The findings of this event were supported by the pilot projects which also put emphasis on the need for the quality assurance approaches and procedures to be transparent and reviewed by experts or highly acknowledged institutions, such as the chambers.<sup>58</sup>

ECVET has been more successful in increasing the mutual trust in quality and consistency in qualifications at project level rather than across the whole systems (see figure below).

**Figure 9: Effectiveness of activities supported under ECVET in increasing the level of trust in quality and consistency of qualifications.**



Source: Survey of stakeholders and governing actors, 2013; Survey of institutional project participants, 2014.

Stakeholders and institutional project participants surveyed by the evaluation team agreed that ECVET was most effective in increasing the level of trust across borders and least effective in increasing the trust between VET and higher education. Although the opinions of stakeholders and institutional project participants were rather similar, the project participants were more convinced by ECVET’s effectiveness in increasing trust in quality and consistency of qualifications. Institutional project participants identified mutual exchange of knowledge in how other education systems operate as one of the major effects of ECVET projects and such practical approach might have had an actual impact in increasing trust among different levels of education. However, those who did not have a chance to participate in ECVET projects might have a more theoretical approach.

The question of mutual trust is central for the success of the mobility projects and the good recognition of learning outcomes. There were a few key approaches to increasing

<sup>57</sup> ECVET Magazine, December 2012.

<sup>58</sup> Background document for the ECVET conference, 24-25 October 2013.

the trust among providers considered by the institutional project participants and stakeholders in the interviews<sup>59</sup> and the open responses to the surveys:

- The micro-level approach. This way to ensure mutual trust can take a number of forms, e.g. the long-standing partnerships and knowing each other well, trusting those providers which the other long-standing partners trust, or getting as much information as possible about potential partners prior to application – e.g. on their quality assurance systems, certification, opinions of learners and other actors. It is also useful to communicate with the partner to see their approach and the quality of their communication. This approach is the most valuable in ensuring the quality of partnerships, but it is inefficient in the significant amount of work necessary at the provider level.
- Organising the partnerships among clusters of providers trusting each other by default – such approach increases the efficiency for ensuring mutual trust but introduces a stronger risk element.
- A unified international skills measurement system for VET similar to the approaches of PISA or PIAAC. However, this could only be done if the sectoral actors are able to agree what are the basic skills for different vocations. The sectoral networks could also be used to develop common reference points, but this idea is regarded by the stakeholders as creating significant administrative **burden, as evidenced by the interviews and discussions in ECVET's Users' Group.**
- Application of the EQAVET quality cycle to ensure the quality of learning outcomes transferred.

#### 4.2.2 Intermediate results

The next step after evidence-based argumentation in ECVET implementation is formalising the commitment to ECVET by various implementation documents, such as work programmes.<sup>60</sup>

From 38 monitored countries only 13 have already established formal commitment to ECVET.<sup>61</sup> When looking further into four country clusters, the reasons for the lack of commitment in most of the countries are in line with those mentioned above for the lack of argumentation.

Countries in cluster 1, which have already developed units/modules and credit systems for VET, reported the lack of commitment to ECVET due to already well-functioning domestic systems established prior to ECVET recommendation. Such systems might be fully compatible with ECVET thus there was no need to proceed with the reforms.<sup>62</sup>

In this category only Finland has already prepared the documentation package to fully implement ECVET by 2015. Finland as almost all other countries in cluster 1 already had a functioning system with units, modules and transfer arrangements. Finnish stakeholders realised that ECVET could be useful not only for mobility purposes, but

<sup>59</sup> Interviews with DGVT members, Commission staff, institutional project participants.

<sup>60</sup> Cedefop, 'Necessary conditions for ECVET implementation', Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2012.

<sup>61</sup> Cedefop, Monitoring ECVET implementation strategies in Europe. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2014.

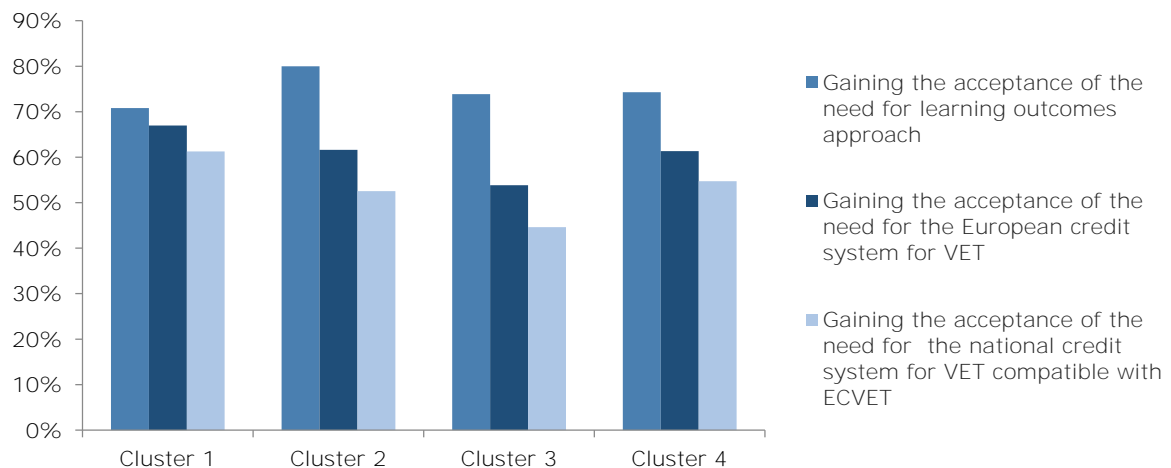
<sup>62</sup> Cedefop, 2014.

also for further strengthening learning outcomes approach, which was very high on the national agenda, and introducing learning-outcome based credits instead of time-based ones. Finland also saw ECVET’s potential in strengthening the assessment, recognition, validation and quality assurance arrangements. Even though Finland’s VET system was already strong before ECVET recommendation, it has been seen as an opportunity to make the system even more flexible, transparent and comparable with other European systems.<sup>63</sup>

The decisions of other countries to commit themselves to the implementation of ECVET were in line with their perception of added value. Countries with units/modules and no credit transfer systems (cluster 2) saw ECVET’s potential in increasing transfer at national level while those which were school-based and lacked units/modules (cluster 4) saw ECVET as a model for reform.<sup>64</sup>

The majority of respondents in the survey of stakeholders believed that the activities supported under ECVET initiative were the most effective in gaining the acceptance of a learning outcomes approach. Fewer respondents were convinced that ECVET was effective in gaining the acceptance of the need to make existing national credit systems for VET compatible with ECVET. Such results show that one of the fundamental principles of ECVET – the learning outcomes approach is already widely accepted throughout all country clusters, while on the other hand, the lower acceptance of the need for adjusting national credit systems indicates the lack of commitment, especially in countries without units/modules and predominantly apprenticeship-based systems (cluster 3).

**Figure 10: Effectiveness of activities supported under ECVET**



Source: survey of stakeholders and governing actors, 2013.

When the respondents of the survey of stakeholders were asked to elaborate on the obstacles to implementing ECVET, the most common problems related to commitment were the lack of communication and information about the initiative and also little interest and support from the national governments as well as VET providers.

<sup>63</sup> Interviews with ECVET experts and national authorities in Finland.

<sup>64</sup> Cedefop, 2014.

As observed in Cedefop's<sup>65</sup> and national reports<sup>66</sup>, VET systems with strong traditions and well-established structures were more resistant to implement ECVET, while remaining more accepting of the general idea of a European credit system for VET. It was explicitly mentioned by German VET providers that dual VET system in Germany was being 'protected' by some interest groups who considered ECVET as a risk to the character of the national system. Similarly in other countries the unitisation was linked to the fear that learners would leave the system with only partial qualifications (which are not necessarily needed or recognised by the labour market).

The findings of several national surveys of the stakeholders involved in the mobility projects (in Germany, Italy, Denmark, Estonia)<sup>67</sup> suggested that the information and practical support for the implementation of ECVET was needed often at the national level. In Denmark, for instance, although the majority of institutions were already using elements of ECVET, only a small part of international coordinators were aware of it. The case was also similar in Finland a few years ago – due to strong traditions of describing qualifications in terms of learning outcomes, many VET providers were already applying principles very close to ECVET, while not being aware of the actual ECVET initiative.<sup>68</sup> VET providers in Germany observed that their partners in European countries had little knowledge about ECVET and therefore it was difficult to negotiate with them when initiating an ECVET project.

The commitment and capacities for the ECVET implementation have been slightly growing during the last years, however, Cedefop has reported that only six countries from those with formal commitment have actually started implementing ECVET. Consistently, the majority of respondents in stakeholder survey representing clusters 1, 3 and 4 indicated that ECVET hardly contributed to promoting the development/establishment of national credit systems (see figure below). Also the lack of legislative and regulatory framework was indicated by the respondents as one of the main obstacles hindering the successful implementation of ECVET at national level.

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<sup>65</sup> Cedefop, Monitoring ECVET implementation strategies in Europe. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2013.

<sup>66</sup> Juraj Vantuch and Dagmar Jelínková, European credit system for vocational education and training. Feasibility study for the Slovak Republic. Bratislava, 2012.

André Huigens, State of the art concerning the implementation of ECVET in the Agricultural education in Europe. Report of the results of the ECVET meeting in COPCHAVETE Nova Mesto, Slovenia, 20-21 March 2013.

Louisa Pace Kiomall and Matthew Angius, Implementing ECVET in Malta: A New European Tool for Promoting, Facilitating and Enhancing Lifelong Learning and Mobility.

We have tried ECVET: Lessons from the first generation of ECVET pilot projects. GHK Consulting, 2012.

Online survey: ECVET from the perspective of the end-users. ECVET NCP in Germany, 2012.

<sup>67</sup> ECVET Magazine. June 2013, (15).

ECVET Magazine. April 2013, (14).

Online survey: ECVET from the perspective of the end-users. ECVET NCP in Germany, 2012.

<sup>68</sup> Interview with ECVET experts in Finland.

**Figure 11: ECVET’s contribution promoting the development of national credit systems.**



Source: survey of stakeholders and governing actors, 2013.

The initial results of Cedefop’s study revealed more factors that could impede the faster implementation of ECVET. It was common that stakeholders associated the use of ECVET with additional expenses, namely financial and human resources. While most of the ECVET funding comes from the EU<sup>69</sup>, still, more than half (58%) of the surveyed ECVET stakeholders stated that their organisation contributed its own resources and efforts to support the development or implementation of ECVET.<sup>70</sup> Such a situation could indicate a certain level of commitment already in place, but it could also signal that ECVET implementation lacks funding at national level.

The full implementation of ECVET requires that qualifications are described in terms of learning outcomes which are grouped into units that might provide credits and credit points. Such description of qualifications were often triggered by the development of the European qualifications framework (EQF) and the national qualifications frameworks (NQF). Cedefop reported that all the monitored countries have been already developing NQFs. However, the readiness to accommodate ECVET very much depends on the traditions of VET qualification arrangements. Countries having strong traditions of qualifications described in terms of learning outcomes need less modifications before accommodating ECVET than countries without such characteristics.<sup>71</sup>

The transfer of learning outcomes is mainly hindered by factors not influenced by particular credit systems or the absence of such arrangements. According to Cedefop’s monitoring, almost every country had different descriptions of units and modules and often those were not in line with ECVET recommendation. The survey of stakeholders showed that differences and misunderstandings across borders in using terminology (e.g. units of learning outcomes/unitisation, modules/modularisation) together with difficulties of applying ECVET methodologies (e.g. calculating credit points) can be identified as obstacles to application of ECVET principles at practical level. In the case of credit points, many respondents expressed doubts about the need of ECVET credit points in general, especially in systems that did not have the tradition of any points related to credits (e.g. in Germany with dual education system).

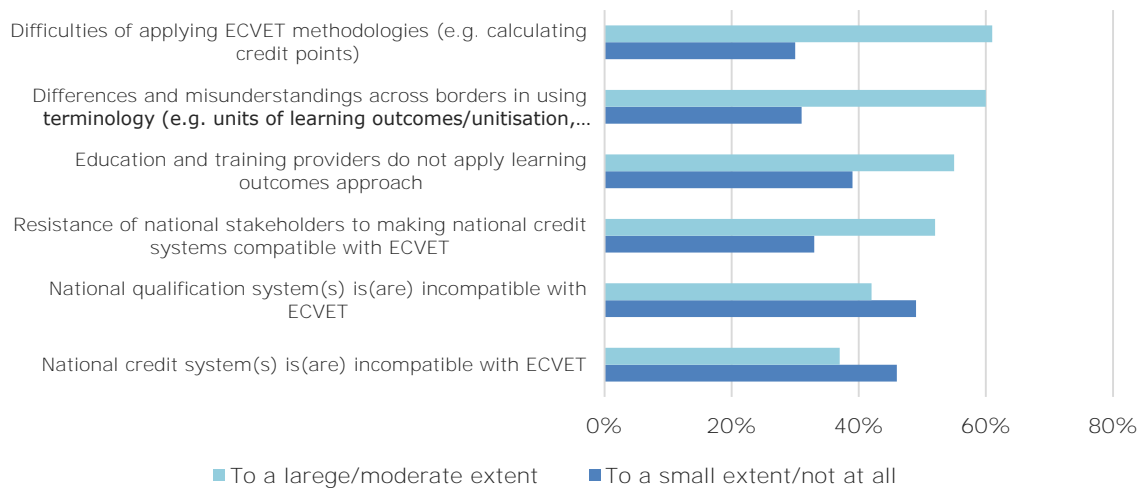
<sup>69</sup> Monitoring ECVET implementation strategies in Europe, 2013, Cedefop.

<sup>70</sup> Survey of stakeholders and governing actors, 2013.

<sup>71</sup> Monitoring ECVET implementation strategies in Europe, 2013, Cedefop.

The resistance of national stakeholders to making national credit systems compatible with ECVET was also among the obstacles to proceeding with the initiative (see figure above). The respondents of ECVET stakeholder survey reported that in the countries where learning outcomes approach was already developed, the big obstacle to further developments might be the lack of its actual implementation.

**Figure 12: Obstacles to implementing ECVET**



Source: survey of stakeholders and governing actors, 2013.

Heterogeneity in the quality of provision and assessment was the main barrier to transfer of learning outcomes irrespective of the existing credit systems or the absence of them.<sup>72</sup> The focus group discussion conducted by the evaluation team suggested some interesting insights about the heterogeneity across borders. The lack of common quality assessment arrangements was seen as the main obstacle to transfer. Quality assurance should cover the provision of training and the assessment of learning outcomes. Some participants also suggested that the lack of awareness about what was actually happening in other VET systems was also adding up to misconceptions across borders.<sup>73</sup>

The results signal that even though ECVET has a high profile on the EU agenda, countries do not seem enthusiastic to take up one more top-down initiative. The stakeholder focus group discussion expressed the common approach that currently the focus is on the learning outcomes rather than on ECVET in particular. Countries are willing to head towards learning outcomes through various transparency tools suggested by EU and ECVET is mainly perceived as only one of the options together with EQF, EQAVET, Europass and other tools.

### 4.2.3 Long term results and impact

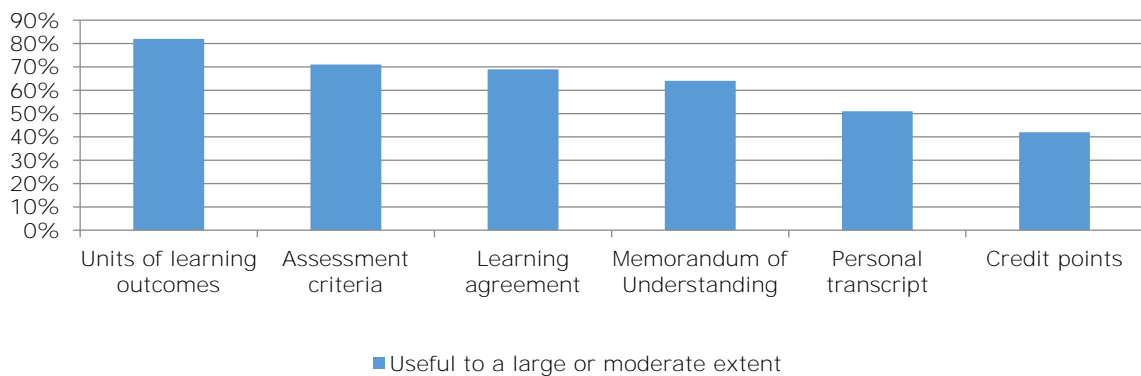
Learning outcomes remain not only the most useful element of ECVET (see figure below) but also one of the most complicated concepts in terms of cross-border cooperation.

<sup>72</sup> Cedefop, 2014.

<sup>73</sup> Focus group discussion of ECVET stakeholders, 2014.



**Figure 13: Usefulness of ECVET elements**



Source: Survey of institutional project participants, 2014.

While stakeholders and ECVET project participants report difficulties in applying ECVET methodologies they also agree that European as well as ECVET templates are more attractive than national alternatives.<sup>74</sup> The problem arises when partners need to find the common ground between the description and recording of learning outcomes across different VET systems. Stakeholders report the lack of practical examples on how to write actual learning outcomes. Suggested solutions head towards more practical guidance and examples rather than harmonisation across borders. Pilot projects is a useful practical source for more clarity and mutual trust in description and transfer of learning outcomes, however, there is a need for a more structured guidance for countries struggling with documentations full of complicated terms in foreign language which lead to different perceptions of what is a learning outcome and how to describe it. As discussed earlier, quality assurance is seen as one of the main solutions to avoid such misconceptions leading to lack of trust and transparency.<sup>75</sup>

The results of the survey of institutional project participants indicate the following main factors which were the obstacles for application of ECVET:

- Lack of orientation of national education systems towards ECVET – 51% mentioned it was an obstacle to a large or moderate extent;
- Additional administrative and financial burden – 49%;
- Difficulties in applying ECVET methodology – 48%
- Underdeveloped legal framework for recognition of learning outcomes - 48%;
- Lack of specific competences to manage ECVET elements – 47%.

The approach of giving additional points to Leonardo mobility and transfer of innovation project applications including an ECVET element has increased the take up of ECVET. In fact, there is strong evidence both from the institutional participants survey and the interviews carried out at the national level with project applicants that in a number of cases the sole reason for including the ECVET element in a certain project was due to the higher chance of the application being selected.

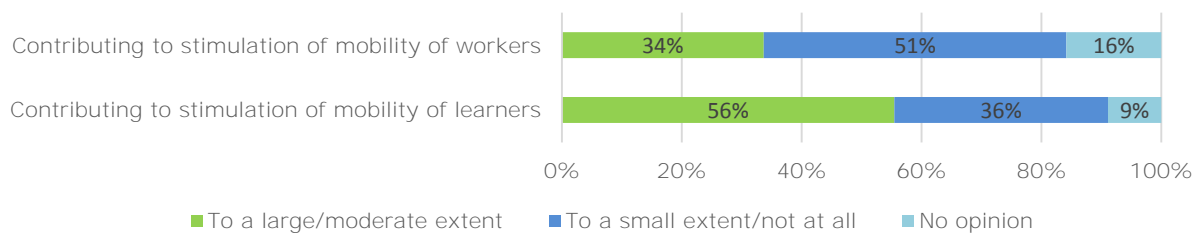
<sup>74</sup> Survey of stakeholders and governing actors, 2013, Survey of institutional project participants, 2014.

<sup>75</sup> Interviews with stakeholders and governing actors, 2014.

However, such approach to increase the usage of ECVET cannot guarantee that this usage will be of high quality. While the quantity of ECVET projects is important, the quality of reporting and dissemination of project outcomes remained unequal in various Leonardo projects with ECVET element (except ECVET pilot projects).

One of the main roles as well as added value attributed to ECVET is mobility of learners and workers. Although more than half of the respondents claimed that ECVET largely contributed to the mobility of learners, they were **doubtful about ECVET's** contribution to stimulation of mobility of workers (see figure below).

**Figure 14: ECVET's contribution to stimulation of mobility**



Source: survey of stakeholders and governing actors, 2013.

Consistently with the intermediate results of the initiative, ECVET was the most useful for mobility purposes in contexts where skills and competences were already described in terms of learning outcomes. Teachers who were sending their students to international mobility reported that even though ECVET was causing a lot of additional paper work, development of units of learning outcomes often enabled the recognition and transparency of learning outcomes acquired abroad.<sup>76</sup>

The majority of mobilities with ECVET element can be considered short-term (up to three weeks). Shorter mobility periods allow inclusion of more diverse learning providers (e.g. small institutions struggling with the need to replace their staff, and non-formal education institutions) and learners (e.g. those with care responsibilities or special needs, non-EU citizens subject to visa/ residency requirements, etc.). The short term mobilities are also preferred by the partners when they lack trust in each other and are uncertain of the benefits of mobility, as well as learners who are older or have full-time employment. However, such short-term projects face challenges in making use of ECVET.

**The ECVET pilot projects showed that learner's achievements acquired abroad could be successfully recorded using ECVET regardless of the duration of the mobility.** A number of pilot projects however mentioned that some existing units of learning outcomes may be too large for shorter mobility periods due to the coherent set of knowledge, skills and competences acquired progressively through several successive learning activities. The projects created methodologies suggesting an approach enabling learners to achieve only a part of an existing unit in the host institution abroad when it is not possible to achieve the full unit due to the time constraints. If the unit is considered to be too large to be validated as a whole during a mobility period it is suggested to break it down into several learning outcomes that do not lose their meaning if taken separately. A different approach suggests defining specific mobility units for each qualification including the aspects that are best suited for short

<sup>76</sup> Survey of teachers and learners, 2014.

mobility periods. Such units should be designed to be completed as independently as possible of other units in the certain qualification.<sup>77</sup>

Although these approaches were recognised by the providers participating in shorter mobilities, their application was not always easy. The project partners reported struggling to divide comprehensive larger sized units and modules into specific units manageable in shorter term, decide upon feasibility of achieving certain learning outcomes in two or three weeks, as well as to attribute credit points to smaller units.<sup>78</sup> The overall usefulness of credit points was questioned in the case of shorter-term mobilities. Dividing larger units or describing new mobility units require a lot of additional inputs from the sending institution and the work might not always be worth the result of the short-term mobility. Often the main benefits of shorter term mobilities were regarded as soft or cultural skills which were hard to record or recognise compared with professional competences.<sup>79</sup>

The most useful elements of ECVET for short-term mobility projects proved to be its supporting documents - Learning Agreement, Transcript of Records, and Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The Learning Agreement and MoU are particularly useful in definition of units and learning outcomes for mobility periods as well as the commitment and obligations of the learner. The documents inform the learner on how the mobility contributes to the overall learning path and also enables the host organisation to organise learning accordingly. The learning agreement ensures that the assessment acquired abroad is recorded in the transcript and learning outcomes can be successfully validated. The mobility period, despite its duration, becomes integrated into the training pathway.

**The interest of higher education institutions in ECVET and in turn the initiative's** impact to permeability between VET and HE has remained at a low rate. In half of the cases, the institutional ECVET project participants did not regard the increase of mutual trust between sectors of education as at least a partly relevant goal of their projects. Although 38% of respondents agreed that among the wider effects of their projects was the opening of flexible learning pathways between VET and HE, this was the smallest share among all the choices given. The surveyed teachers who sent out or received learners in ECVET-related projects also mentioned the increased chance of their learners to be admitted to higher education as the least likely benefit of their mobility (22% agreed).

The general rule of thumb is that providers offering VET qualifications at tertiary level tend to prefer ECTS to ECVET (including in mobility projects). The reasons for this mentioned by the providers in the interviews vary, but the most important include the well-established nature of ECTS, easier methodology for calculating points, stronger relation with academic strand higher education. ECVET can however be interesting to providers looking for interesting elements to offer to students or those HE schools which are smaller and aimed at regional skills needs. The universities which are popular, elitist and/or do not need to invest significantly in attracting students are not interested in better links with VET.

There was so far little evidence that ECVET credit points could help the progression of learners into higher education. There is an incorrect assumption reported in some of the national interviews that one ECVET credit point would be equal to one ECTS credit point and some of the providers become disappointed when they see this is not the

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<sup>77</sup> We have tried ECVET: Lessons from the first generation of ECVET pilot projects, 2012.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Focus group discussion organised by the evaluation team, 2014.

case. At the same time, ECTS remains the credit system used in higher education institutions.

The overarching trend in the qualitative replies of the institutional project participants and stakeholders as well as the interviews was that the learning outcomes description based on the same principle rather than the credit points could be helpful in increasing the permeability of VET and higher education.

## 5 Conclusions and recommendations

Areas for further development	Relevant conclusions	Recommendations
<b>Relevance</b>		
<p><b>Focusing on the relevant benefits</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The slow implementation pointed to inherent issues related to benefits of ECVET. The main three strands of benefits of the initiative included its contribution to the mainstreaming of the learning outcomes approach, to the increased mutual trust, and the increased effectiveness/quality of mobility (better understanding of competences gained, sharing experiences about methods, management competences). All of these strands of benefits were partially shared by other EU transparency tools – EQF, EQAVET, ECTS and Europass (particularly Mobility).</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Commission should ensure that the implementation of ECVET directly focuses on the three strands of benefits most important to the stakeholders (mainstreaming the learning outcomes approach, increased mutual trust, and increased effectiveness of VET mobility).</li> <li>The Commission, in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, should consider to what extent action carried out in the framework of the implementation of ECVET might be carried out in the framework of the implementation of other initiatives such as the EQF, EQAVET and Europass, also taking into account their possible developments. This might result in a radical revision of the structure and implementation of ECVET and its positioning in the context of European transparency instruments.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Finding the relevant elements</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The elements of ECVET seen as most relevant included in particular the learning outcomes approach, as well as the documents – Memorandum of Understanding and Learning Agreement. The ECVET credit points, conversely, were considered to be the least relevant element of ECVET for the beneficiaries. This was the case particularly due to lack of clarity in the ECVET Recommendation on how the points can be allocated to units and how they can be used in the process of accumulation, as well as a</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Commission should ensure that the implementation of ECVET focuses on credit as assessed learning outcomes and units of learning outcomes, rather than credit points. Credit points should be left as a secondary and marginal element of ECVET to be used only where they are considered to be useful by the beneficiaries. Additionally, the Commission should develop new clear rules for allocation of credit points to units and their use in the process of accumulation, and clarify them to key stakeholders and final</li> </ol>

	<p>theoretical consideration that it is logically not possible to use points in their current technical configuration for automatic transfer, as the same unit could have a different numerical value of points within another qualification.</p>	<p>beneficiaries, including training providers.</p> <p>4. The Commission, in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, should consider whether the name of the initiative (for instance <b>“European Credit for VET”</b>) should refer to elements recognised as beneficial (credit as learning outcomes) rather than refer to <b>“credits” (often mistaken as “credit points”)</b>.</p>
<p><b>Linking with other tools</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ECVET and ECTS were considered by the stakeholders of the initiatives to have weak compatibility in terms of their approach towards credits / credit points, but the learning outcomes approach could ensure a two-way conversion between the systems.</li> <li>• ECVET held a mutual reinforcement relationship with Europass, with ECVET providing actual content to Europass documents and Europass being able to present the individual ECVET results in a clear and consistent way. The most important Europass document in this regard was the Europass Mobility which very often acted as a tool for recording learning outcomes.</li> <li>• ECVET and EQAVET both contributed strongly to the development of mutual trust among training providers in Europe. EQAVET however did this without focusing on learning outcomes approach.</li> </ul>	<p>5. The Commission should not consider merging ECTS and ECVET as a priority, as they have different purposes and cater for the needs of different stakeholders.</p> <p>6. The Commission should however promote the interrelation of ECTS and ECVET, with particular reference to their use of learning outcomes rather than focusing on credit points.</p> <p>7. The Commission should promote the use of Europass Mobility in the context of ECVET, namely as a transcript of records for mobility experiences, if necessary adapting the Europass Mobility. This would contribute to reduction of transcripts and other administrative documents existing in different instruments.</p> <p>8. The Commission should ensure cooperation between ECVET and EQAVET, in particular to support mutual trust among learning providers in the quality of learning outcomes developed and assessed.</p>
<p><b>Governance and outputs</b></p>		
<p><b>Making the EU level governance structure lighter</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although the stakeholders saw the bodies of ECVET to be performing their functions well at the European level, the division of responsibilities between all governing and supporting actors was not clear to them as there was a</li> </ul>	<p>9. The Commission should ensure that the ECVET governance structure at the EU level is as light as possible; the Commission should also provide stakeholders with clear communication about the ECVET governance structure</p>

	<p>lack of understanding of the Users' Group's exact role as it was difficult to identify where the decisions concerning ECVET were being taken.</p>	<p>and the role of technical assistance bodies.</p>
<p><b>Better monitoring of ECVET projects</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The lack of common guidance and oversight of Leonardo da Vinci transfer of innovation or mobility projects with ECVET element undermined the experimental and learning purpose of this action.</li> </ul>	<p>10. The Commission should monitor the content of pilot projects related to ECVET and seek information on mobility projects making use of ECVET. The latter should concern both quantitative data (such as the number of memoranda of understanding and learning agreements signed) and qualitative information on the outcomes.</p> <p>11. The Commission should ensure that information on the outcomes of projects related to ECVET can be accessed online and is appropriately disseminated by project promoters.</p>
<p><b>Further consolidating and improving the targeting of support actions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Users' Guide was at the core</b> of ECVET support actions and received positive assessments from its users among the ECVET stakeholders and governing actors on many counts. However, only a small share of surveyed stakeholders that used ECVET had used the Users' Guide in their work. The practical use of the document was limited by the complexity of its language.</li> <li>The support actions to implementation of ECVET were numerous, provided by a wide variety of actors and generally highly appreciated by the ECVET stakeholders at all levels and the participants of Leonardo mobility projects alike. At the same time there was some evidence of fragmentation, e.g. in ECVET information being provided on three different European ECVET websites or similar support being available from more than one access point. At the same time there were</li> </ul>	<p>12. The Commission should ensure that more practical guidance is made available to users of ECVET on how to write, record, assess and validate learning outcomes. To this purpose, the Commission could develop a web-based interactive tool for writing learning outcomes and a single access point for best practices in using ECVET.</p> <p>13. The Commission should support NCPs in a more targeted and country-specific way, e.g. by assisting in developing simpler promotion material which can be offered to national level stakeholders, and promote experience sharing among NCPs, e.g. via peer-learning activities.</p> <p>14. The Commission should <b>revise the ECVET Users' Guide</b> and present it in a simpler language, to better support the various stakeholders.</p>

	gaps in targeting ECVET support actions for greater impact.	
<b>Results and impact</b>		
<b>Focusing on quality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The approaches considered by ECVET stakeholders to increase the mutual trust among project partners included a micro-level approach (managing partnerships by getting to know the partners), organising the partnerships among clusters of providers, unified international skills measurement system for VET and focusing the EQAVET quality cycle on learning outcomes.</li> <li>The approach of giving additional points for Leonardo applications with ECVET element boosted the take up of the initiative, but there is no evidence whether these additional mobilities had sufficient quality. The lack of orientation of national education and training systems towards ECVET, underdeveloped legal framework, administrative burden and difficulties in applying ECVET methodology were the key issues which hindered the willingness of project participants to use the ECVET element in mobilities.</li> </ul>	<p>15. The Commission should further promote the development of long-term partnerships based on trust between providers, foster clusters of providers, and explore further ways to ensure stronger mutual trust and quality assurance of learning outcomes, including through cooperation with EQAVET.</p> <p>16. The Commission should promote the take up of ECVET in EU funded mobility projects, for instance by easing the administrative burden and making clear that the use of ECVET credit points – a demanding exercise – is not compulsory. When selecting mobility projects, the Commission should not give a higher score to applications simply because they declare using ECVET.</p>



## **Annex 1: Findings of the surveys**

1. Survey of stakeholders and governing actors
2. Survey of institutional project participants
3. Survey of teachers
4. Survey of learners

<Provided as separate Excel files>

## Annex 2: Interview guidelines

The questions concerning the achievement of necessary conditions were checked with the latest information available from Cedefop and formulated accordingly.

1. How well are you familiar with ECVET? Please explain how and when you got to know this initiative.
2. What sector of the economy, if any, is your work mostly related to?
3. What, in your opinion, would be the key benefits of ECVET for your organisation?
4. Similarly, what benefits for the learners/employers/training providers and teachers/public authorities have you already noticed?
5. Are you aware of the necessary conditions for ECVET implementation as defined by Cedefop? Do you think they are well defined and user friendly? Are they monitored and implemented in your country or sector by relevant public actors? Are they useful to any other actors and, if so, in what ways?
6. <Check with Cedefop monitoring for status quo of the necessary condition> Do you feel that the objectives of ECVET are well reflected in the national policy framework? If not, what are the main reasons for this?
7. <Check with Cedefop monitoring for status quo of the necessary condition> Why do you think there has been no formal commitment (in case of success – success in achieving formal commitment) to ECVET in your country or sector yet? What were the factors which fostered or limited your own interest in ECVET? What were the factors which fostered or limited the interest of other stakeholders in ECVET in your country or sector?
8. <Check with Cedefop monitoring for status quo of the necessary condition> Why do you think the legal / regulatory framework for the implementation of ECVET objectives has not been set (in case of success – successfully set) in your country or sector? Why the resources for implementation of ECVET have not been allocated?
9. <Check with Cedefop monitoring for status quo of the necessary condition> What are the reasons why learning outcomes have not been developed (in case of success – successfully developed) in your country or sector? What are the reasons why credit points have not been developed (in case of success – successfully developed) in your country or sector? Why have they not started to be assessed, recognized and validated?
10. <Check with Cedefop monitoring for status quo of the necessary condition> What are the challenges and success factors for usage of European ECVET templates (MoU, LA) in your country or sector? What were the factors which fostered or limited your own interest in templates and documents offered by ECVET?
11. **Do you use the two ECVET users guide documents (“Get to know ECVET better: Questions and Answers” and “Using ECVET for Geographical Mobility”)? To what extent are they useful for your work on ECVET? Do you think they are user friendly?**

12. Is the information and guidance you receive (e.g. information and marketing campaigns) about ECVET sufficient? What would be the key ways to improve it? Are you aware of Europass documents (Certificate Supplement and Mobility) related to ECVET? Do you use them in relation to ECVET?
13. Could you provide some specific examples of how the outcomes of ECVET projects in your country or sector have been able to facilitate ECVET implementation?
14. In your opinion, what is the current level of mutual trust between the ECVET partners in the quality of the training provided during the exchange? What ways would you see to increase this trust? Do you use quality standards in applying ECVET? What are their key advantages and drawbacks? Are you aware of EQAVET? If yes, to what extent is it helping or able to help increase the mutual trust?
15. Are credit points, units of learning outcomes, documents (learning agreements, memoranda of understanding), accumulation and transfer of credit suitable for short-term mobilities? What are the challenges arising in this regard? What would encourage the usage of ECVET in short term mobility?
16. Does your organisation and/or your ECVET project partners use the ECVET credit points? What is the value of using credit points (if any)? What are their drawbacks (if any)?
17. In your opinion, do ECVET credit points stimulate the mobility of VET learners across borders?
18. Is it possible for the learners to accumulate learning outcomes acquired through ECVET in your country or sector? If yes, what is the mechanism for doing this?
19. In general – do VET and higher education institutions in your country or sector collaborate on increasing the transfers from one system to another? What are the reasons for this collaboration (or non-collaboration)? Is ECTS, ECVET or the national credit system more popular for vocational training at HE level?
20. Is it common for VET graduates to access higher education in your country/sector? Do you have any examples where ECVET credit points have assisted this?
21. Are there any examples of transfers in your country/sector from higher education to VET (e.g. after studies or after dropping out)? What are the possibilities of HE students to transfer to VET, what are the key challenges?
22. Have you encountered any examples in your country/sector where ECVET is being used to validate prior learning?
23. To what extent is the implementation structure (e.g. the responsibilities of different actors) of ECVET clear to you? Do you think it is efficient and effective?
24. **Are you a member of ECVET Users' Group? If not, are you aware of its work? If yes, what were its greatest achievements and/or failures?**
25. Are you a member of ECVET Network? If not, are you aware of its work? If yes, what were its greatest achievements and/or failures?

26. Which of the ECVET support actions (events, supporting publications, tools) have been the most useful to your organisation? Which were less useful? What further support would you need in the future?
27. Are the national ECVET governing actors also working on other EU initiatives, such as EQF, Europass or others? If not, are these actors collaborating, in what ways?
28. In general, what is the level of support to ECVET in your organization? Does it contribute to implementation of ECVET, in what ways? What are the most important factors for the success of this initiative?

## **Annex 3: Questionnaires of surveys:**

1. Survey of stakeholders and governing actors
2. Survey of institutional project participants
3. Survey of teachers and learners

## Survey on development and implementation of the European Credit System for VET (ECVET)

(ECVET stakeholder survey)

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for agreeing to provide your opinion for the Survey on development and implementation of European Credit System for VET (ECVET) conducted in the context of the External evaluation of ECVET initiative on behalf of the EU Commission DG Education and Culture. This survey is extremely important in assessing the relevance of ECVET to the needs of its intended beneficiaries and stakeholders as well as its effectiveness in the changing economic and political context. It will help to formulate the recommendations for the future development of the initiative.

You may complete the survey at once or choose to finish it later. Please note that every link to the survey is individual. If you would like to recommend the survey to your colleagues, please contact the evaluation team at [ecvet.survey@ppmi.lt](mailto:ecvet.survey@ppmi.lt).

The information you provide on voluntary basis will be kept confidential and will be provided to the European Commission only in aggregate form as part of the evaluation findings (no individual opinions will be disclosed).

If you have any questions about this survey please contact us at [ecvet.survey@ppmi.lt](mailto:ecvet.survey@ppmi.lt).

Thank you in advance for your co-operation!

### **1. Are you familiar with ECVET initiative?**

- Yes
- No

### **2. What type of organisation do you work in (or mostly work for if you are self-employed)?**

- EU institution (European Commission, Council and Parliament)
- Other EU organisation (EU agencies (Cedefop, ETF, Eurofound), Committee of the Regions, ECOSOC, etc.)
- Ministry or governmental agency
- Employer organisation
- Trade union
- Research or consultancy organisation
- School, other VET provider
- Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

### **3. Which country is your work mostly related to?**

- Not relevant, I represent international/EU organisation
- Austria
- Belgium
- Bulgaria
- Croatia
- Cyprus
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- ... 17 additional choices hidden ...
- Serbia
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
- Turkey
- United Kingdom
- Other

#### **4. Is your work particularly related to any of the following sectors of economy?**

- No specific sector / combination of sectors (e.g. work with education related to many sectors)
- Automotive
- Tourism
- International trade
- Chemical
- Care (including healthcare)

- Information and communication technology (ICT)
- Construction
- Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Are you currently:**

Please choose all that apply

- A member of ECVET Users’ Group**
- A member of ECVET Network
- A member of NetECVET
- Representative of National/regional agency for Lifelong Learning programme
- Representative of National/regional ECVET contact point
- A member of national ECVET expert team
- A member of ECVET Community of Practice
- A member of other ECVET bodies/networks
- A member of ECTS ad-hoc Working Group
- A member of Structural Reforms Working Group
- A member of EQF Advisory Group
- A member of EQAVET Network
- Representative of National Europass Centre
- National Bologna expert
- A member of Directors-General for Vocational Education (DGVT)
- A member of Advisory Committee for Vocational Education (ACVT)
- A member of ESCO sectoral referencing group
- None of the above

**6. In addition to ECVET, which of the following tools are you familiar with, or have been actively involved in development or implementation of?**

	I am familiar with this instrument	I have been involved in development or implementation of this instrument
ECTS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
EQF / NQFs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Europass	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



EQAVET

Validation of non-formal and informal learning

**7. Are you satisfied with the progress of the ECVET initiative?**

Yes No Do not know / cannot answer

At EU level

In your country

Please provide any comments you may have

**8. Are you familiar with the following ECVET Users’ Guide documents?**

Yes No

Get to know ECVET better. Questions and Answers (2011)

Using ECVET for Geographical Mobility (2012)

You can find the documents here: [http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/ecvet/faq\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/ecvet/faq_en.pdf)  
[http://www.ecvet-projects.eu/Documents/ECVET\\_Mobility\\_Web.pdf](http://www.ecvet-projects.eu/Documents/ECVET_Mobility_Web.pdf)

**9. To what extent do you agree with the following statements on ECVET Users’ Guide documents**

	To a large extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Do not know/cannot answer
I use ECVET Users’ Guide in my work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ECVET Users’ Guide is user-friendly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The terminology used is clear	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ECVET Users’ Guide is useful for dissemination of ECVET and support purposes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ECVET Users’ Guide is useful for delivering support to stakeholders of ECVET	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The document facilitates ECVET mobility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The document improves understanding of the learning outcomes approach	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The document improves the understanding of the aims and objectives of ECVET	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The document is helpful in developing national objectives for implementation of ECVET	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**10. Have you been involved in the development and implementation of ECVET?**

- Yes
- No

**10.1. Have you received support for development and implementation of ECVET from:**

Please select all that apply

- ECVET TEAM
- Cedefop
- National ECVET contact points
- National LLP implementing agencies
- Other actors in ECVET (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**11. To what extent were you satisfied with the support?**

	To a large extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Do not know / cannot answer
By ECVET TEAM	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
By Cedefop	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
By national ECVET contact points	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
By national LLP implementing agencies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

By other actor in ECVET

**12. Are you familiar with Necessary Conditions for ECVET implementation specified in Cedefop publication Necessary conditions for ECVET implementation, May 2012?**

Please find the summary graph of the necessary conditions here: /media/assets/user/2279/storage/Necessary%20conditions%20(1).png

- Yes
- No

**13. To what extent do you agree with the following statements:**

	To a large extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Do not know/cannot answer
I find the way necessary conditions for ECVET implementation are defined to be understandable and user-friendly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find the description of necessary conditions for ECVET implementation useful in my work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe that all the necessary conditions are realistic enough to be implemented in my country in upcoming five years	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please provide your opinion on why some of the necessary conditions are rather unrealistic to implement in upcoming five years?

**14. To what extent are the following factors obstacles to implementing ECVET, including EU-supported mobility programmes (the use of units, credit points, Memoranda of Understanding, Learning Agreements and transfer of learning outcomes)?**

To a large extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Do not know/cannot answer
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National education policies are not oriented towards the implementation of ECVET	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
National qualification system(s) is(are) incompatible with ECVET	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
National credit system(s) is(are) incompatible with ECVET	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficulties of applying ECVET methodologies (e.g. calculating credit points)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Underdeveloped legal framework for validation and/or recognition of competences acquired abroad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Education and training providers do not apply learning outcomes approach	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Education and training providers lack specific competences in managing ECVET mobilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of sustainable partnerships between training providers across countries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ECVET templates and learning agreements are less attractive than national alternatives	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unfavourable cost-benefit ratio of applying ECVET in short-term mobilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of trust among stakeholders in different VET systems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Insufficient information and guidance about ECVET	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Additional administrative and financial burden involved in implementing ECVET	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Resistance of national stakeholders to making national credit systems compatible with ECVET	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Differences and misunderstandings across	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

borders in using terminology  
(e.g. units of learning  
outcomes/unitisation,  
modules/modularisation)

Other (please specify in the box       
below):

**15. In your view, what is the level of trust between stakeholders in the quality and consistency of qualifications:**

Please assess in the scale from 1 to 5 1 - no trust 5 - total trust

	1	2	3	4	5
Across borders	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Between VET and general education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Between vocational education and training and higher education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Between initial VET and continuing VET	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Between different awarding bodies in VET	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Among different types of stakeholders, e.g. employers and VET providers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**16. To what extent, in your opinion, could the overall level of trust between stakeholders (national and European) in the quality and consistency of qualifications be further supported by:**

	To a large extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Do not know/cannot answer
Enhanced European level guidance and support for ECVET	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Enhanced national level guidance and support for ECVET	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Stricter uniform rules in implementing ECVET	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Further progress in implementing EQAVET	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Further progress in implementing NQF/EQF	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Further progress in implementing Europass	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Implementation of learning outcomes approach in ECTS	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Higher national level standards for VET	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
European quality standards for VET	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other means (please specify in the box below)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**17. To what extent have the activities supported under ECVET initiative been effective in:**

**Developing awareness and understanding of:**

	To a large extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Do not know / cannot answer
Learning outcomes approach	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The need for European credit system for VET	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The need for national credit system for VET compatible with ECVET	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Gaining the acceptance of:**

	To a large extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Do not know / cannot answer
Learning outcomes approach	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The European credit system for VET	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The national credit system for VET compatible with ECVET	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Increasing the level of trust between stakeholders in quality and consistency of qualifications:**

	To a large extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Do not know / cannot answer
Across borders	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Between VET and general education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Between vocational education and training and higher education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Between initial VET and continuing VET	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Between different awarding bodies in VET	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Among different types of stakeholders, e.g. employers and VET providers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### 17.1. To what extent ECVET has contributed to the following:

	To a large extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Do not know / cannot answer
Stimulating the national capacity to implement learning outcomes approach	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Promoting the development of national credit systems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adjustment of existing credit systems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supporting permeability between VET and HE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Promoting the assessment, recognition and validation of learning outcomes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Contributing to improvement of lifelong learning (access, participation and quality)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Contributing to stimulation of mobility of learners	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Contributing to stimulation of	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

mobility of workers

Strengthening cross border co-operation in understanding and measurement of learning outcomes

○                      ○                      ○                      ○                      ○

**18. Are you familiar with the work of the ECVET Users’ Group?**

- Yes
- No

**19. To what extent, in your opinion, is the Users’ Group fulfilling the following purposes?**

	To a large extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Do not know/cannot answer
Contribution to the development of Users’ Guide	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Contribution to the quality and coherence of ECVET cooperation process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify in the box below)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**20. Are you familiar with the work of the ECVET Network?**

- Yes
- No

**21. To what extent, in your opinion, is the ECVET Network fulfilling the following purposes?**

	To a large extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Do not know/cannot answer
Dissemination of information about ECVET within participating countries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provision of platform for exchange of information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



and experience between countries

Other (please specify in the box below)                             

**22. To what extent would you agree with the following statements:**

	To a large extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Do not know/cannot answer
The ECVET initiative has clear objectives	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The division of responsibilities between ECVET Users' Group, Steering committee, User's Guide WG, Network, Team and Cedefop is clear to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The co-ordination of ECVET initiative at EU level is functioning well	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The co-ordination of ECVET initiative at national level is functioning well	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The monitoring of ECVET by Cedefop provides sufficient basis for informed decision making at EU level	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The allocation of ECVET resources at EU level reflect well the priorities of ECVET initiative	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The resources put into implementation of ECVET at European level are proportionate to timing and scale of expected impact	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**23. Please tick the relevant statements about the following ECVET support actions:**

I am familiar      This action has been useful in my

	with this action	work
ECVET Magazine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Peer-learning activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tailored support actions (targeted seminars, assistance in organising training and information sessions)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
European level events (ECVET Forum, Seminars)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Publications in online ECVET library	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify in the box below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="text"/>		

**24. Has your organisation contributed any of its own resources and efforts to support the development and/or implementation of ECVET beyond the participation in EU-funded ECVET actions?**

- Yes
- No
- Do not know / cannot answer

**25. In your opinion, what could EU institutions and EU level organisations do to accelerate the implementation of ECVET?**

**Please provide your comments on any of the above questions or ECVET here:**

Please provide your email address if you would agree to be further contacted by the evaluation team for additional information

## Survey of coordinators and partners in ECVET-related projects

(ECVET survey of institutional project participants)

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for agreeing to provide your opinion for the Survey of coordinators and partners in ECVET-related mobility and transfer of innovation projects conducted in the context of the External evaluation of ECVET initiative on behalf of the EU Commission DG Education and Culture. This survey is extremely important in assessing the extent to which ECVET initiative has been relevant to the needs of its intended beneficiaries and stakeholders as well as effective in the changing economic and political context. It will also help to formulate recommendations for the future development of the initiative.

How long will it take?

The estimated survey time is 20-30 minutes. You may complete the survey at once or choose to finish it later. Please note that in the latter case, you should submit your final responses by January 31 at the latest. What happens to the results?

The information you provide on voluntary basis will be kept confidential and will be provided to the European Commission only in aggregate form as part of the evaluation findings (no individual opinions will be disclosed).

If you have any questions about this survey please contact us at [ecvet.survey@ppmi.it](mailto:ecvet.survey@ppmi.it).

Thank you in advance for your co-operation!

### **1. Have you participated in project(s) that involved ECVET elements (e.g. units of learning outcomes, credit points, assessment criteria, Memorandum of Understanding, Learning Agreement, Personal Transcript)?**

Please choose the most suitable option

- Yes, ECVET transfer of innovation project(s)
- Yes, Leonardo da Vinci mobility project(s) with ECVET elements
- Yes, projects of both types
- Yes, other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- No

### **2. Which country is your organisation based in?**

Please choose one most suitable option

- Austria

- Belgium
- Bulgaria
- Croatia
- Cyprus
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- France
- ... 18 additional choices hidden ...
- Slovenia
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
- Turkey
- United Kingdom
- Other
- None
- Not relevant, I represent international/EU organisation

### **3. Which other countries have been involved in your project(s)?**

Please tick all that apply

- Austria
- Belgium
- Bulgaria
- Croatia
- Cyprus
- Czech Republic
- Denmark

- Estonia
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Hungary
- Iceland
- Ireland
- Italy
- Latvia
- Liechtenstein
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- Malta
- Montenegro
- Netherlands
- Norway
- Poland
- Portugal
- Romania
- Serbia
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
- Turkey
- United Kingdom
- Other, please specify... \_\_\_\_\_
- Do not know/cannot answer

#### 4. Has (any of) the project(s) you participated in been completed already?

- Yes
- No

#### 5. What type of organisation do you work in?

Please choose one most suitable option

- Vocational education and training provider
- Higher education provider
- Other education provider (secondary, non-formal)
- Employer organisation
- Enterprise/company providing apprenticeships
- Trade union
- Consultancy organisation
- Ministry or governmental agency
- Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 6. Has your project(s) been related to the skills and training needs of any of the following specific sectors?

Please choose all that apply

- Automotive
- Tourism
- International trade
- Chemical
- Care (including healthcare)
- Information and communication technology (ICT)
- Construction
- No specific sector
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

#### 7. What kind of IVET systems (if any) have been involved in your project?

Please choose all that apply

- Dual
- Alternating
- School-based
- None

**8. In your project(s) has your organisation been:**

- Coordinator of the project
- One of the non-lead partners of the project
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**9. Has your project(s) included transnational mobility of individuals?**

Please choose all that apply

- Mobility of learners
- Mobility of teachers/trainers
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- No

**10. What has been the most common duration of learners' mobility in your project(s)?**

- Three weeks or less
- More than three weeks
- No mobilities have taken place so far

**11. To what extent did the following groups benefit from your project(s)?**

	To a large extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Do not know/cannot answer
Vocational education and training providers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Higher education providers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other education providers (secondary, non-formal)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- |   |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Individual learners                             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Individual teachers / trainers                  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Employer organisations or enterprises/companies | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Trade unions                                    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Ministries or governmental agencies             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Other (please specify in the box below)         | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

**Please name the main benefits of your project(s) to the following groups:**

- |   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| Vocational education and training providers       | <input type="text"/> |
| Higher education providers                        | <input type="text"/> |
| Other education providers (secondary, non-formal) | <input type="text"/> |
| Individual learners                               | <input type="text"/> |
| Individual teachers / trainers                    | <input type="text"/> |
| Employer organisations or enterprises/companies   | <input type="text"/> |
| Trade unions                                      | <input type="text"/> |
| Ministries or governmental agencies               | <input type="text"/> |
| Other   | <input type="text"/> |

**12. Are any ECVET-related products of your project(s) being further utilised by the project partners?**

- Yes
- No

Please explain your answer



**13. Are you satisfied with the progress of the ECVET initiative?**

Yes No Do not know / cannot answer

At EU level

In your country

Please provide any comments you may have

**14. Are you familiar with the following ECVET Users' Guide documents?**

Yes No

Get to know ECVET better. Questions and Answers (2011)

Using ECVET for Geographical Mobility (2012)

You can find the documents here: [http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/ecvet/faq\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/ecvet/faq_en.pdf)  
[http://www.ecvet-projects.eu/Documents/ECVET\\_Mobility\\_Web.pdf](http://www.ecvet-projects.eu/Documents/ECVET_Mobility_Web.pdf)

**15. To what extent do you agree with the following statements on ECVET Users' Guide documents**

	To a large extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Do not know/cannot answer
I use ECVET Users' Guide in my project(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ECVET Users' Guide is user-friendly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The terminology used is clear	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ECVET Users' Guide is useful for dissemination of ECVET and support purposes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The document facilitates ECVET mobility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The document improves understanding of the	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

learning outcomes approach

The document improves the understanding of the aims and objectives of ECVET

**16. To what extent have the following ECVET elements proved to be useful in your project(s)?**

	To a large extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Not applicable/this element was not used	Do not know/cannot answer
Units of learning outcomes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assessment criteria	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Credit points	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Memorandum of Understanding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learning agreement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personal transcript	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify in the box below)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Why did you find credit points not useful or useful only to small extent?**

**To what extent have the credit points helped learners to:**

To a large extent    To a moderate extent    To a small extent    Not at all    Do not know/cannot

	extent	extent	extent	all	answer
Accumulate competences within the same qualification in your country;	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Accumulate competences within the same qualification including transnational mobility;	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transfer between vocational courses;	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transfer from vocational training to higher education;	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transfer from higher education to vocational training;	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Validate non-formal/informal competences;	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify in the box below)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 150px; height: 20px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>					

**17. Have you received support for development and implementation of the ECVET elements in the Project(s) from:**

Please select all that apply

- National ECVET contact point
- National LLP agency
- ECVET TEAM
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- None of the above

**17.1. To what extent were you satisfied with the support?**

To a large extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Do not know / cannot answer
-------------------	----------------------	-------------------	------------	-----------------------------

- |                                     |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| By national ECVET contact point     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| By national LLP implementing agency | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| By ECVET TEAM                       | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| By other actors in ECVET            | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

**18. Please tick the relevant statements about the following ECVET support actions:**

	I am familiar with this action	This action has been useful in my work
ECVET Magazine	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Peer-learning activities	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Tailored support actions (targeted seminars, assistance in organising training and information sessions)	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
European level events (ECVET Forum, Seminars, etc.)	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Publications in online ECVET library	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Other (please specify in the box below)	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No

**19. Which of the following Europass documents have been used/are planned to be used to record learning outcomes of the project(s)?**

Please choose all that apply

- Europass Certificate Supplement

Please choose the most suitable option for the Europass Certificate Supplement:

	Yes	No	Do not know/cannot answer
The units of learning outcomes have been/are planned to be recorded in the document(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The credits have been/are planned to be recorded in the document(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>			Europass Diploma Supplement

Please choose the most suitable option for the Europass Diploma Supplement:

	Yes	No	Do not know/cannot answer
The units of learning outcomes have been/are planned to be recorded in the document(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The credits have been/are planned to be recorded in the document(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>			Europass Mobility

Please choose the most suitable option for the Europass Mobility:

	Yes	No	Do not know/cannot answer
The units of learning outcomes have been/are planned to be recorded in the document(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The credits have been/are planned to be recorded in the document(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>			None of the above

**Please provide the reasons why the units of learning outcomes or credits have not been recorded in the Europass document(s)?**

**20. What has been the level of trust in quality of qualifications between partner organisations and other stakeholders at the end (or the current stage) of the Project(s):**

Please assess in the scale from 1 to 5 - 1 - no trust, 5 - total trust

	1	2	3	4	5	not applicable
Across borders	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Between VET and general education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Between VET and higher education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Between initial VET and continuing VET	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Between different awarding bodies in VET	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Among different types of stakeholders, e.g. employers and VET providers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**21. To what extent has the level of trust in quality of qualifications between partner organisations and other stakeholders increased as a result of implementing the Project(s):**

	To a large extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Do not know/cannot answer
Across borders	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Between VET and general education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Between VET and higher education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Between initial VET and continuing VET	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Between different awarding bodies in VET	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Among different types of stakeholders, e.g. employers and VET providers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Please explain in more detail how the project(s) contributed to increasing the level of trust**

**22. To what extent has your project(s) had wider effects in terms of:**

To a large extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Do not know/cannot answer
-------------------	----------------------	-------------------	------------	---------------------------

Stimulating new discussions on accumulation and transfer of learning outcomes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Development of new collaboration frameworks in accumulation and transfer of learning outcomes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strengthening the national capacity for accumulation and transfer of learning outcomes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bringing new elements into the national VET policy agenda	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Promoting the unitisation of learning outcomes in the national VET system	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Promoting the development of national credit system for VET	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Promoting wider use of ECVET elements in the national VET system	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adjusting ECVET elements to suit the needs of national VET system	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adjusting the national VET system to make use of ECVET elements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opening new learning pathways between VET and HE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Promoting the assessment, recognition and validation of learning outcomes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify in the box below)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Please explain in more detail the most important wider effects of your project(s):**

**23. To what extent are the following conditions obstacles for applying ECVET (the use of units, credit points, Memoranda of Understanding, Learning Agreements and transfer of learning outcomes) in your project(s)?**

	To a large extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Do not know/cannot answer
National education policies are not oriented towards the implementation of ECVET	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
National qualification system(s) is(are) incompatible with ECVET	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
National credit system(s) is(are) incompatible with ECVET	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficulties of applying ECVET methodologies (e.g. calculating credit points)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Underdeveloped legal framework for validation and/or recognition of competences acquired abroad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
National VET system does not foresee learning outcomes approach	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	To a large extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Do not know/cannot answer
Education and training providers do not apply learning outcomes approach	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Education and training providers lack specific competences in managing ECVET mobilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of sustainable partnerships between training providers across countries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of trust among stakeholders	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



in different VET systems

	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	To a large extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Do not know/cannot answer
Resistance of national stakeholders to making national credit systems compatible with ECVET	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Little/low quality assurance of the assessments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ECVET templates and learning agreements are less attractive than national alternatives	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unfavourable cost-benefit ratio of applying ECVET in short-term mobilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Insufficient information and guidance about ECVET	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Additional administrative and financial burden involved in implementing ECVET	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Differences and misunderstandings across borders in using terminology (e.g. units of learning outcomes/unitisation, modules/modularisation)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify in the box below)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**24. Did your project(s) contribute to further mobility of apprentices (after the project closure)?**

- Yes
- No

Please explain your answer in the box below

**25. In your opinion, what could EU institutions and EU level organisations do to accelerate the implementation of ECVET?**

**Please provide your comments on any of the above questions or ECVET here:**

Please provide your email address and the title(s) of the project(s) if you would agree to be further contacted by the evaluation team for additional information

Email

Project(s)

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## Survey on international mobility

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(Survey of teachers and learners)

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for agreeing to provide your opinion for the Survey on international mobility conducted in the context of the External evaluation of ECVET initiative on behalf of the EU Commission DG Education and Culture. This survey is extremely important in assessing the extent to which international mobilities have been relevant to the needs of their intended beneficiaries and stakeholders. It will also help to formulate recommendations for the future development of the ECVET initiative.

How long will it take?

The estimated survey time is 20-30 minutes. You may complete the survey at once or choose to finish it later.

What happens to the results?

The information you provide on voluntary basis will be kept confidential and will be provided to the European Commission only in aggregate form as part of the evaluation findings (no individual opinions will be disclosed).

If you have any questions about this survey please contact us at [ecvet\\_survey@ppmi.lt](mailto:ecvet_survey@ppmi.lt).

Thank you in advance for your co-operation!

### **1. Are you a:**

Please choose the most suitable option

- Teacher or trainer
- Current student or pupil
- Former student or pupil (2009 or later)
- None of the above

### **2. What is your country of nationality?**

Please select one answer

- Austria
- Belgium
- Bulgaria
- Croatia
- Cyprus
- Czech Republic

- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- France
- ... 16 additional choices hidden ...
- Serbia
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
- Turkey
- United Kingdom
- Other

### **Question set for learners**

#### **3. What is the level / type of education / training you are currently attending or the highest level that you have attended?**

Please choose one most suitable option

- Upper secondary vocational education in school
- Upper secondary vocational education with in-company training elements
- Vocational education without upper secondary element
- Tertiary education (e.g. professional college, university, technical university etc.)
- Other post-secondary education
- Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **4. Are you currently employed / looking for job?**

Please choose one most suitable option

- Employed and not looking for a job
- Employed, but looking for another job

- Not employed, but looking for a job
- Not employed and not looking for a job
- Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

## 5. While in education or training, have you spent a period learning abroad?

Please choose all that apply

- Yes, a school-based mobility
- Yes, a work placement (e.g. internship, apprenticeship, traineeship)
- Yes, another type of mobility (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- No

### 5.1. How long did your (longest) learning mobility take?

Please select the most suitable option

	3 weeks or less	More than 3 weeks
A school-based mobility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A work placement (e.g. internship, apprenticeship, traineeship)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Another type of mobility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### 5.2. Why did you not take part in any mobility during your education and training?

please choose all relevant options

- I did not know it was possible
- I did not want to
- I applied but was not selected
- I wanted to but was not able to (e.g. due to family reasons, other obligations)
- I did not have enough financial resources
- I thought/knew that I would need to repeat the courses or retake exams when I come back
- I did not know any foreign language
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

## 6. Have you ever heard about ECVET (European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training)?

- Yes
- No
- Do not know/cannot answer

### 6.2. Was your mobility related to ECVET (European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training)?

- Yes
- No
- Do not know/cannot answer

## 7. Was it clear to you before the mobility what you were expected to learn abroad?

- Yes
- No

### 7.1. Were these expectations expressed in terms of:

Please choose all that apply

- Course content
- Learning outcomes
- ECVET credit points
- ECTS credits
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- Do not know / cannot answer

## 8. Did the mobility meet your own learning expectations?

- Yes, I learned everything what I expected to
- Yes, I learned even more than I expected to
- No, I learned less than I expected to
- No, I did not learn anything new

## 9. In your opinion, has the mobility experience helped you in any of the following ways?

Please choose all that apply

- To have more confidence in applications for job, volunteering or further education
- To be invited to job, traineeship or volunteering interviews / be pre-selected to job, traineeship or volunteering positions
- To be admitted to higher education institutions
- To improve your position in your current job
- To get a (better, new) job
- The mobility experience has helped me in other ways
- The mobility experience has not helped me in any ways

## 10. When you came back from the experience abroad, which of the following situations occurred?

Please choose all that apply

- I had to repeat the same learning at home (e.g. course, subject, company placement etc.)
- I had to catch up with the learning I missed while abroad (e.g. take exams or complete other assignments missed)
- I was able to continue without the requirement to catch up or repeat any of the course elements (all the learning outcomes or/and credit points were transferred to my home course/diploma)
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

## Question set for teachers

### 3. What is the level / type of education / training you have been teaching during the last 5 years?

Please choose one most suitable option

- Upper secondary vocational education in school
- Upper secondary vocational education with in-company training elements
- Vocational education without upper secondary element
- Tertiary education (e.g. professional college, university, technical university etc.)
- Other post-secondary education

Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Have you ever heard about ECVET (European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training)?**

- Yes
- No
- Do not know/cannot answer

**4.1. Did ECVET have any benefits for your work?**

- Yes
- No

**4.2. To what extent did you find the elements of ECVET listed below useful for your purposes?**

Please select the most suitable option for each element

	To a large extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Do not know/cannot answer
Units of learning outcomes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assessment criteria	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Credit points	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Memorandum of Understanding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learning agreement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personal transcript	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify in the box below)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**5. Have you assisted any of your home country or foreign pupils/students to participate in an international mobility?**

Please select in which of the mobilities listed below you helped your students/pupils and select the common period of the mobilities



	I have assisted students/pupils going abroad	The average duration of the mobility was	I have assisted foreign students/pupils coming to my institution	The average duration of the mobility was
In a school-based mobility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 3 weeks or less <input type="radio"/> More than 3 weeks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 3 weeks or less <input type="radio"/> More than 3 weeks
In a work placement (e.g. internship, apprenticeship, traineeship)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 3 weeks or less <input type="radio"/> More than 3 weeks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 3 weeks or less <input type="radio"/> More than 3 weeks
In another type of mobility (please specify in the box below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 3 weeks or less <input type="radio"/> More than 3 weeks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> 3 weeks or less <input type="radio"/> More than 3 weeks
<input type="checkbox"/>			I did not have any students participating in mobilities	

### 5.1. Why did you not assist any of your home country pupils or students to participate in an international mobility?

Please choose all that apply

- I did not know mobility opportunities were available
- I did not have the competences to assist them
- My pupils/students sought mobility but were not funded
- None of the pupils/students were interested in mobility
- My pupils/students did not have sufficient foreign language skills
- I did not have enough time to provide assistance
- It was hard to find partners abroad
- This is not a part of my work

- Mobility is not part of the school's strategy
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

### 5.2. Was the mobility which involved your pupils/students related to ECVET (European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training)?

If you are not able to select answers for this question, please skip to the next page

	Yes	No	Do not know/cannot answer
A school-based mobility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A work placement (e.g. internship, apprenticeship, traineeship)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Another type of mobility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### 6. Was the purpose of the mobility clear to you?

	Yes	No
Before home country pupils/students went abroad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Before foreign pupils/students came to your institution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### 7. Was the learning programme of the mobility experience clearly expressed in terms of course content, learning outcomes, ECVET credit points, ECTS credits or other means?

Please choose all that apply according to the mobility type

	Course content	Learning outcomes	ECVET credit points	ECTS credits	Other means (please specify in the box below)	Do not know / cannot answer
In a school-based mobility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In a work placement (e.g. internship, apprenticeship, traineeship)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In another type of	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

mobility

### **8. Did the mobility meet your expectations?**

- Yes, my pupils/students learned everything what I expected them to
- Yes, my pupils/students learned even more than I expected them to
- No, my pupils/students learned less than I expected them to
- No, my pupils/students did not learn anything new
- Do not know / cannot answer

### **9. In your opinion, has the mobility experience helped your pupils/students in any of the following ways?**

Please choose all that apply

- To have more confidence in applications for job, volunteering or further education
- To be invited to job, traineeship or volunteering interviews / be pre-selected to job, traineeship or volunteering positions
- To be admitted to higher education institutions
- To improve their position in their current job
- To get a (better, new) job
- The mobility experience has helped them in other ways
- The mobility experience has not helped them in any ways (unique)
- Do not know / cannot answer

### **10. When your home country pupils/students came back from the experience abroad, which of the following situations occurred?**

Please choose all that apply

- They had to repeat the same learning at home (e.g. course, subject, company placement etc.)
- They had to catch up with the learning missed while abroad (e.g. take exams or complete other assignments missed)
- They were able to continue without the requirement to catch up or repeat any of the course elements (all the learning outcomes or/and credit points were transferred to their home course/diploma)

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Please provide your comments on any of the above questions or  
ECVET in general here:**

Please provide your email address if you would agree to be further contacted by the  
evaluation team for additional information

Email

## Annex 4: References and sources

### ECVET INITIATIVE DOCUMENTS AND WEBSITES

- Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and training (ECVET)
- Get to know ECVET better. Questions and Answers;
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- Adam database, Leonardo da Vinci ECVET projects, May 2009.
- Tip Toe, Final Report for WP 4, "**Rea**researching trade qualifications and training from an educational point of view", 2010.

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- Innovet, Final Report, 2010.
- An innovative way towards European competence based entrepreneur qualifications – entrepreneur diploma EuropaPreneur, Final Report, 2010.
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- Pro Caring, Final Report, 2013.
- HŽilbar utveckling inom frisčrbransch, Final Report, 2014.
- Innovative Student Evaluation in Work Based Learning, Interim Report, 2013.
- Northern Clay Plaster Project, Professional Qualification for Working with Natural and Sustainable Building Materials, Interim Report, 2013.
- Perfect Match - Tools for High Quality Mobility Experiences, Interim Report, 2013.
- SIMPLE - Sharing the best International Mobility Practices Learned, Interim Report, 2013.
- Health Tourism: An ECVET process to put in transparency and recognize across Europe the learning outcomes and the qualifications of the professional figures in the health tourism sector, WP3, WP7 2013.
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## **Annex 5: Terms of Reference**

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