

**Analysis of expert training
for external institutional quality
assessment of European VET institutions
and recommendations for using
the best practice**



Education and Culture

Leonardo da Vinci

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for external institutional quality
assessment of European VET institutions
and recommendations for using
the best practice**

Curriculum development
for external quality assessment
experts training

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INTRODUCTION

Human resources are becoming an increasingly important and urgent issue in Europe, and it is covered in many essential documents. One of them is the Lisbon Summit, which recognizes the significant role of education as an integral part of economic and social policies in the European Union.

The objective set in **the Lisbon Summit** (2000) to make Europe “the most competitive area based on innovation, knowledge and social cohesion” has given a new impetus to the role and contribution of education and training to economic growth, as well as the development of European society. The described areas to be developed are the following: improving the quality and effectiveness of education and training systems in the European Union, facilitating access for all to education and training, and opening up education and training systems to the wider world.

The quality issue is emphasized in most European documents. Documents on the quality of higher education have been presented earlier than ones on quality of VET. The most important documents on higher education are the following:

The Bologna declaration (1999) by which the signatory states have agreed to act in concert to increase the competitiveness of Europe creating a European Higher Education Area. It means including the adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees, a system of credits and co-operation in Quality Assurance at a European level. In different countries participating in the Bologna process the level of quality is different. In most of them quality assurance systems have been established for improving and assuring quality. The ministers commit themselves in the communiqué of this conference “to support the further development of quality assurance at institutional, national and European level”.

In the Bologna declaration important actions for the development of a coherent and cohesive European Higher Education Area by 2010 have been agreed. The first follow up conference was held in Prague on 2001. In 2003 Ministers responsible for higher education from 33 European countries met in Berlin in

order to review the progress achieved, and to set priorities and new objectives for the coming years.

The Salamanca Convention (2001) of European higher education institutions considers quality as the basic foundation of the European Higher Education Area, and has made it the underlying condition for trust, relevance of degrees, mobility, compatibility and attractiveness.

Similarly, **the Prague Communiqué** of the European education ministers (2001) regards quality as a grand factor in determining the competitiveness and attractiveness of European higher education. Following this concept the ministers “recognized the very important role that quality assurance systems play in ensuring high quality standards and in facilitating the comparability of qualifications throughout Europe”. Accreditation as an important component of quality assurance should not only meet national needs but could be rather effective in consolidating mutual and cross-border recognition of courses and degrees if decisions are taken following comparable quality standards.

Continuing the Bologna Process, Berlin Communiqué (2003) was signed where the quality of higher education has proven to be at the heart of the setting up a European Higher Education Area. Ministers committed themselves to support improving of quality assurance at institutional, national and European level. They identified the need to develop mutually shared criteria and methodologies on quality assurance. Consistent with the principle of institutional autonomy, the responsibility for quality assurance in higher education lies with each institution itself and this provides the basis for real accountability of the academic system within the national quality framework.

It has been agreed by 2005 national quality assurance systems should include:

- A definition of responsibilities of the bodies and institutions involved.
- Evaluation of programmes or institutions, including internal assessment, external review, participation of students and the publication of results.
- A system of accreditation, certification or comparable procedures.
- International participation, co-operation and networking.

The most important documents on vocational education and training are the following:

The Barcelona European council (2002) set the objective to make European education and training systems a world reference by 2010.

Vocational education and training is analysed in Copenhagen declaration most. This document on quality of VET is the most important among all the others, and gave the beginning for many continuous reports signed by various working groups.

The Copenhagen Declaration (2002) sets out the policy agenda in the field of quality assurance in VET: “promoting co-operation in quality assurance with particular focus on exchange of models and methods, as well as common criteria and principles for quality in vocational education and training”.

The main priorities of the Copenhagen declaration are the following:

- European dimension.
- Transparency, information and guidance.
- Recognition of competencies and qualification.
- **Quality assurance.**

Some tasks on quality assurance in VET need to be stressed:

- To identify a common core of criteria for quality development at European level;
- To develop an operational approach based on the common core of criteria and the set of indicators, to outline a proposal for a co-operation framework in order to develop common activities between countries on specific issues;
- To promote the exchange of good practice and the use of voluntary peer review at different levels (Copenhagen process. The first report of the technical Working group “Quality in VET”, 2003).

Trust is the basic principle of quality improvement. Institutions are now responsible for the improving internal quality assurance systems. The role of an external agency should be mainly recommending and supporting, and the periodic (not annual) quality audits should mainly have the function of helping institutions to improve their internal systems and support them.

Describing the future of quality assurance systems development and improvement in Europe as in a common space for vocational education and training, the Commission of the European Communities wrote in its draft report (“Education & Training 2010”, 2003) “A framework of this kind of Europe must naturally be based on the national frameworks which themselves must be

coherent and cover the various levels of initial and continuing training. The necessary mutual trust can only stem from quality assurance instruments, which are appropriately compatible and credible so that they can be mutually validated. In this connection, the “common framework” for the development of quality vocational training (as part of the follow-up to the Copenhagen Declaration) and the creation of a platform for quality assurance or accreditation in higher education (in conjunction with the Bologna process) should be top priorities for Europe.”

Over the past few years, the understanding of the importance of internationalisation strategies and activities in quality assurance has increased in a number of countries. The progress in this area will converge at a point where both the scope and the methodology of quality assurance will be international. This would mean an approach to quality assurance that takes the international dimension and elements of education explicitly into account, that is internationally applicable, and of which the outcomes (students) can be internationally recognised (Marijk van der Wende, 2003. <http://www.ipv.pt/millennium/wende11.htm>). Quality assurance system will be based on the commonly agreed standards, procedures and guidelines. European dimension should achieve transparency of quality assurance systems, but not replace them. Co-operation among institutions should be established for seeking this goal.

The development and improvement of quality assurance systems is a continuous process. At present both institution and state are involved in quality assurance development. An education institution develops the internal quality assurance system, and the external quality assessment system is framed by a state. The goal of the internal quality assurance system is to identify strengths and weaknesses of the school work, and to design a plan for improvement. The goal of the external system is to promote the development of a school as well as of the whole education system. The opinion of competent and independent experts and consultants is important in the external quality assessment.

The use of peer reviews in quality assurance and improvement, as an instrument based on various activities of quality assurance at provider level, is turning out to become an important instrument in VET. Organisations that are responsible for quality assessment should focus on supporting and advising institutions on quality assurance rather than policing. In addition, as an expert in the field of vocational education and training or higher education the agency should be able to advise the government on vocational education and training or higher education policy.

GLOSSARY OF MAIN TERMS

(According to “Glossary of Labour Market Terms and Standard and Curriculum Development Terms”, ETF, 1997)

Continuing (Education & Training). Education and training, which updates or enhances the knowledge and skills learned in basic education. The emphasis is on the idea that education in its true form proceeds throughout life.

Higher education. Tertiary education that is of a higher academic level than secondary education, usually requiring a minimum level of admission and successful completion of secondary education.

Indicate, Indicator. An indicator is an observation, or a composite of observations, or a series of observations of a variable or variables, which is taken to represent the behaviour of a specific phenomenon or series of phenomena. For example, the level of unemployment may be used to indicate the excess supply of labour, or the retail price index to indicate the general level of prices in shops.

Initial Vocational Education And Training. Is education and training undertaken before or upon first entering an occupation or job.

Quality Assessment. The way in which one attempts to identify whether the characteristics of what is thought to be “quality” are present in a person, their performance, a system or a thing.

Quality Assurance. The establishment and maintenance of documented procedures designed to ensure that the design, development and operational activities result in products or services, which meet customers’ stated or contracted requirements.

Quality Standards. In its literal sense, this simply means “measures of quality”, but the term is popularly used to refer to those measures adopted to determine whether a product or service – or the process used to produce goods and services – meets what is required of it. Quality standards often have two components – a specification of the function of the product or service (its intended use and operation), and its form (the appearance and presentation of the product or service).

I.

STATE OF QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS

1. EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN EUROPE

A year ago the European Council set five concrete benchmarks for the improvement of education and training systems in Europe. The five adopted benchmarks, which can be found at the commission's website, are the following:

1: by 2010, the EU average rate of no more than 10 % early school leavers should be achieved;

2: by 2010, at least 85 % of 22 year olds in the European Union should have completed upper secondary education;

3: the total number of graduates in mathematics, science and technology in the European Union should increase by at least 15 % by 2010 while at the same time the level of gender imbalance should decrease;

4: by 2010, the percentage of low-achieving 15 year olds in reading literacy in the European Union should have decreased by at least 20% compared to the year 2000;

5: by 2010, the European Union average level of participation in lifelong learning should be at least 12.5% of the adult working age population (25–64 age group).

The current EU average rate of early school leavers is 19 % but in the acceding countries only 8,4 % of the population aged 18–24 years leave school with only lower secondary education. In many countries the percentage of early school leavers has been decreasing steadily since early 1990's. Unfortunately there are countries where illiteracy is a big problem among young peoples due to the fact that even drop out from basic education is too usual.

If young people don't complete or even attend secondary level education, they will lack capabilities to learn how to learn. This results a serious lack of formal qualifications at the European labour markets, and this lack will be an obstacle to the birth of better jobs.

The need to have more technological and scientifically qualifications relates to industrial needs. If Europe wants to keep industrial production and research and development, we must develop technological and scientific competencies.

These benchmarks give one answer to the question, who is the customer of the education system. It is the society in a general sense. If the benchmarks are achieved, the development of education and training will increase social cohesion in European countries.

The European Employment Taskforce looked for means to achieve the ambitious goals set at Lisbon in 2000. The target is that by 2010 Europe will be the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world.

The target itself means that education and training has a vital role in the development of Europe. It has also meant that education policies have become more important in the European Union.

The employment task force has recognised the fact that the birth of new jobs and better jobs depends on the availability of skilled work force (P. Lempinen. Trade unions' point of view to quality in education and training, 2003).

Taskforce urges the member states to:

- Give everyone the right of the access to secondary education and a minimum level of basic skills;
- Cut the number of early school drop outs;
- Promote the access by a larger share of young people to universities;
- Increase the access to lifelong training with the attention for low-skilled and other disadvantaged people;
- Better anticipate future skills needs.

2. EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSTITUTIONS IN EUROPE

Vocational education and training is organised in a number of organisations: national training authorities, regional and local organisations, sector organisations, firms and private and public consulting bodies. However, vocational education and training is mainly concentrated in IVET and CVET institutions.

VET institutions are divided into the following two main types:

- IVET (Initial vocational education and training) – pre-employment training for an occupation. It is generally divided into two parts: basic training followed by specialisation. (ILO Thesaurus 1995);
The first complete course of training for an occupation. It is often divided into two parts: basic training followed by specialisation (CEDEFOP, 1996).
- CVET (Continuing vocational training) – vocational training supplementary to initial training that is a part of the ongoing process designed to ensure that a person's knowledge and skills are related to the requirements of his/her job and are continuously updated accordingly (CEDEFOP, 1996);

Further vocational training undertaken by those who have already completed basic or initial training in order to supplement acquired knowledge or skills (ILO Thesaurus, 1995).

VET systems in Europe differ considerably the most important difference being caused by the relation between the education system and the world of work. Three types of national settings for relating education and work are usually introduced. Their definitions are given in the table below and in the third column of the table the allocation of different countries to these types is shown:

Model	Setting	Country
I – close	Close relationship between education system and labour market, including a traced system of education and a qualification structure, which has direct relevance for occupational entry.	Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Netherlands, Hungary
II – loose	Loose relationship between education system and labour market, with a flexible match between qualifications and occupations or jobs, allowing for predominant school-based, broad vocational education and subsequent on-the-job training.	Australia, Canada, Japan, USA
III – varied	Varied relationship between education system and labour market, with close matching confined to apprenticeship or specialized VET and loose matching related to predominant full-time education; calling for coherent education and qualification framework across all sections.	England, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Norway, Portugal, Scotland, Spain, Sweden

* Lasonen J., Manning S., 2002

VET systems of Latvia and Lithuania should be allocated to the type III.

In most European countries there are two types of higher education institutions:

- Universities;
- Non-university higher education institutions.

There are some 3300 higher education establishments in the European Union, approximately 4000 in Europe as a whole, including the other countries of Western Europe and the candidate countries.

3. DEVELOPMENT OF EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS IN EUROPE

3.1. Types of external quality assessment: inspectorate, quality audit, evaluation, accreditation, benchmarking

There are five most popular types of external quality assessment: *inspectorate; quality audit; evaluation; accreditation; benchmarking*. The Inspectorate is the most popular for IVET and CVET institutions. Quality audit, assessment and accreditation are more popular in higher education.

The inspectorate is a quality assessment type for institutional and programme evaluation. It is most popular in VET sector, but the inspecting exists in HE sector too (e.g. in England).

The overall aim of inspection is to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the provision of education and training in meeting the needs of students (Office for standards in Education, 2002).

IVET and CVET institutions, sometimes all other types of institutions (in the Netherlands, Slovenia) are regularly visited and evaluated. The inspectorate has exactly the same remit for schools with a public and schools with a private board. The inspectorate conducts a periodical assessment of the quality of each educational institution. The schools' own evaluation is an important input for the external evaluation by the Inspectorate. The results of these inspections are often published and discussed with the school.

An example of good practice of inspection can be found in the Netherlands. The way the Inspectorate performs its task of quality inspections has to be laid down in a framework for inspection, the law states. For this framework to be effective, it has to have the full commitment of those who are concerned with the work of the Inspectorate. For this reason, the Inspectorate consults with representatives of the educational field and other stakeholders and takes their

opinions very seriously. The Inspectorate remains, however, responsible for the decisions about its own framework for inspection. Parliament has created the procedure that the Senior Chief Inspector has to decide upon the framework and forward it to the minister for approval, who in turn sends it to parliament. This enables, where appropriate, a debate on important matters in parliament.

Quality audit is an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the quality mechanisms established by an institution itself to continuously monitor and improve the activities and services of either a subject, a programme, the whole institution or a theme (The Danish Evaluation Institute, 2003a).

Quality Audit is the process of examining institutional procedures for assuring quality and standards and whether the arrangements are implemented effectively and stated objectives are achieved. The underlying purpose of Audit is to establish the extent to which institutions are discharging effectively their responsibilities for the standards of awards granted in their name and for the quality of education provided to enable students to attain standards. Quality audit can be of two types: institutional audit and audit at programme level.

Quality audit is used in Austria, Finland, Italy, Sweden and UK.

Evaluation when someone evaluates (makes an evaluation of) a situation (system) or actions intended to change that situation (system), they make judgements about the operation of the system and/or about the operation of actions intended to change the system and about their effects.

Evaluation is often used as a general term for the procedure of quality assurance. This type is parallel to other types, such as audit. Evaluation is the method mainly used by the Nordic, Dutch or English-speaking agencies. There are few basic types of evaluation: evaluation of an institution; evaluation of a programme; evaluation of a subjects; evaluation of a theme. There are a few important aspects for evaluation of institutions, i. e. organisation, financial matters, management, facilities, teaching and research.

Accreditation is an official recognition that an individual or institution meets required standards.

Accreditation is another widely used method in the European quality assurance environment.

There are three basic types of accreditation:

1. Accreditation of institution;
2. Accreditation of programme;
3. Accreditation of subjects (not popular).

An accreditation process builds on the same methodological elements as the other types of assessment, but differs from the other procedures by the judgment, which is provided according to predefined standards to decide whether a given subject, programme, institution or theme meets the necessary level.

Accreditation, defined as the public confirmation by an external body that certain standards of quality are met, is not a tradition in Europe (The Danish Evaluation Institute, 2003a). Many countries in Central and Eastern Europe established accreditation agencies after the political changes and transformations in education in the region. These agencies differ from each other in several aspects. Their status and composition reflect various degrees of independence from the ministry, government or parliament that they advise. In most cases their prime mission has been to “accredit” new programmes or institutions, in particular the private ones. In this case accreditation is rather an authorization to set up an institution or a programme based on a former evaluation of the components presented. In its broader, more widespread definition accreditation refers to a cyclical process (e.g. every 5 to 6 years) of certification of the quality of a program (sometimes a whole institution) based mainly on outcomes rather than on inputs.

Benchmarking is a comparison of results between subjects, programmes, institutions or themes leading to an exchange of experiences of best practice.

Benchmarking is not a popular type of evaluation. It may be discussed as a method or an element of evaluation. A lot of countries use benchmarking elements in an assessment process, but some countries have different levels of benchmarking, and it is the basic method of quality evaluation (The Netherlands, Romania). The tendency has been observed that this type of evaluation is becoming more frequent in VET sector. Benchmarking procedures are typically based on excellence criteria. The main outcomes of benchmarking are the following (Copenhagen process, 2003):

- To compare results against others, on the basis of common reference points, to be able to identify good practices.
- To identify benchmarking partners on the basis of methods, processes, educational programs and services; to provide evidence of recognised experience and high level of achievements.

- To learn from experience and “good practice” procedures and adapt them for implementation into the organisation or system.

In various Evaluation Institutions the following levels of benchmarking can be found: benchmarking of subjects, benchmarking of programmes, benchmarking of institutions and benchmarking of themes.

3.2 Types of quality assessment: self-assessment and external assessment

Self-assessment is the prime and key element of a good quality assurance system. It is applicable for all learning institutions. Self-assessment has also been described as one of the major factors to improve the quality control of learning processes. Self-assessment is a central element of all the institutional and programme evaluations. The prescriptiveness of the parameters for the self-study as set out by the evaluation agency – either in its handbook or through other guidelines – varies. Sometimes the self-evaluation document, especially for study programmes, is predicated on legislation and designed to show how the programme achieves not only the aims and purposes established by the institution offering the programme but also provisions in appropriate legislation, *e.g.*, the FH Council, Austria.

The five stages are very important for a successful self-assessment quality process (Self-assessment practices in VET institutions, 2002):

1. Analysis of the outcomes.
2. Corrective measures.
3. Definition of goals.
4. Action plan.
5. Assessment of the process itself.

External assessment is usually under the responsibility of those organizations which award certificates and/or provides education and training leading to certification. External assessment is done by a group of evaluators, called panel group, expert group or commission. The evaluation processes are organised by an implementing body. It can be a state or private institution, corresponding to the country. Every assessment can have two stages: assessment of documents and site visit.

Widespread scopes (levels) of external quality assessment are theme, subject, programme and institutional assessments (Annex 1).

1. Theme assessment examines the quality or practice of a specific theme within education *e.g.* ICT or student counselling.
2. Subject assessment focuses on the quality of one specific subject, typically in all the programmes in which this subject is taught.
3. Programme assessment focuses on the quality of one specific programme.
4. Institutional assessment is an examination of the quality of all the activities within an institution, *i.e.* organization, financial matters, management, facilities, teaching and research.

In external assessment an important element is the cycle of external assessment. It means how often and regular is evaluation done, for how many years is accreditation valid and how often is assessment repeated. The cycle of external assessment can be different: from 2 years to 10 years or even more specific. The cycle for external assessment can be for institutions and for programmes. For example 2–4 years are in Latvia (2 years for institutions), 2–5 years in Poland, 3 years in Sweden, 1–3 years in Bulgaria (if assessed as „satisfactory”), 7 years (if assessed as „full accreditation”) and 2 years (if assessed “conditional accreditation”) in Estonia, 5 years in Ireland and Austria, 6 years in Slovakia, 8 years in Hungary and France.

Sometimes the cycle of assessment is not set. Such practice is in Slovenia and Iceland, but a more preferable case is a set cycle.

3.3. Quality assessment aspects (dimensions) for institutional assessment in VET

Self-assessment of VET institutions has been grouped to the dimensions under the two headings: dimensions of ‘internal self-assessment’ and dimensions of ‘external self-assessment’. The first group of dimensions are linked mainly to the VET provider’s internal self-assessment policy, whereas the second group of dimensions is linked to the external systems of regulation/control of VET provisions.

Dimensions of internal self-assessment	Dimensions of external self-assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design of VET programmes • Identification and selection of trainees • Learning outcomes/results • Examination and certification procedures • Recruitment/selection of (teaching) staff • Management of human resources • Internal communication • Facilities, equipment and tools • Internal policy on self-assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benchmarking • Professionalisation of the VET sector • Contribution of the VET provision to local/regional development • Research and development function • Following the evolution of qualification needs • Legitimacy of the VET institution • Accuracy and relevance of information

* Self-assessment practices in VET – institutions, CEDEFOP, 2002

VET institutions operate within a certain geographical and sector-based context. The geographical area could vary from a purely local to an international one. Most of the VET provision is local and regional. New technologies may offer possibilities to go beyond the traditional territorial frontiers of an institution and reach other targets.

VET institutions cannot ignore these external environments and should have a strategy to respond to external developments, for instance by concluding partnership agreements or establishing expert networks.

CEDEFOP Technical working group on quality in VET have designed *The model derived from the European Common Quality Assurance Framework for self-assessment with the core quality criteria*:

Core Criteria for step 1 <i>Purpose and plan</i>	Core Criteria for step 2 <i>Implementation</i>	Core Criteria for step 3 <i>Assessment and evaluation</i>	Core Criteria for step 4 <i>Feedback and procedures for change</i>
1.1. Leadership; 1.2. Aims and values; 1.3. Strategy and planning; 1.4. Partnerships; 1.5. Finance and resources.	2.1. Management of teachers and other staff; 2.2. Process management.	3.1. Teaching and training results; 3.2. Staff oriented results; 3.3. Labour market and societal results; 3.4. Financial results.	4.1. Planning and implementation of actions for improvement; 4.2. External verification.

* An European Guide on Self-assessment for VET providers. *Final version*, CEDEFOP, 2003

Many factors contribute to the quality of a VET provision, as illustrated by the comprehensive coverage of themes found in the existing quality management systems based on self-assessment and reference frames such as EFQM, ISO 9000, AFNOR norms on services, etc.

The comparison between the European Common Reference Framework, ISO and EFQM:

The European Common Reference Framework on Quality in VET	ISO	EFQM
Purpose and plan	Management responsibility	Policy and strategy
Implementation	Contract review Purchasing Purchaser – supplied product Product identification and traceability Handling, storage, packaging and delivery Training Servicing Statistical techniques.	People, partnerships and resources, and processes.
Assessment and evaluation	Design control Document control Process control Inspection and testing Inspection, measuring and test equipment Inspection and test status Control of non-conforming product Quality record Internal quality audits	Leadership, results with respect to performance, customers, people and society
Feedback and procedures for change	Corrective action	Leadership and the processes
Methodology (self-assessment)	Quality system	People

*A European Common Quality Assurance Framework. *Final version*, CEDEFOP, 2003

3.4. Quality assessment indicators for institutional evaluation in VET

The European Commission Working Committee on Quality indicators identified 16 quality indicators in its report on the quality of school education. It selected the following four main groups of quality indicators:

- Attainment indicators;
- Success and transition indicators;
- Monitoring of school education indicators;
- Resources and structures indicators (European Commission, 2000).

The OECD launched the Information on National Education Systems project to develop a set of international education indicators. The initial set of 43 indicators was revised in 2000 to 31 indicators, which are grouped into the following six categories:

- Context of education (2 indicators);
- Financial and human resources invested in education (7 indicators);
- Access to education, participation and progression (7 indicators);
- The learning environment and organisation of schools (7 indicators);
- Individual, social and labour market outcomes of education (5 indicators);
- Student achievement (3 indicators).

More than one third of the indicators relate to the outcomes of education, and this represents a shift away from the focus on the control of resources and education content to the focus on results. Almost a half of the indicators provide a perspective of «in-country variation», which gives the opportunity to analyse issues of equality of education provision and outcomes. (OECD, 2000)

The countries included in the study employ a diverse range of quality indicators to monitor quality within their VET systems. Some quality indicators occur almost universally (high frequency), others occur in many of the VET quality frameworks but are not applied universally (medium frequency), while other occur infrequently and typically address issues that are specific to particular systems.

The table below presents the quality indicator groups into those that occur with high (12 – 23 occurrences), medium (6 – 11 occurrences) and low (5 or fewer) frequencies, respectively.

Quality indicator group	Frequency	Quality indicator group	Frequency
High frequency quality indicators			
1. Educational attainment	16	2. Progression	13
3. Human resources	12	4. Learning environment	12
5. Learner support	12	6. Demographics and inclusiveness	12
Medium frequency quality indicators			
7. Assessment processes	11	8. Financial resources	11
9. Physical resources	10	10. Course documentation	10
11. Quality assurance systems	10	12. Quality of teaching	10
13. Quality of courses	9	14. Stakeholder satisfaction	9
15. Training cost effectiveness	9	16. Access and equal opportunity	9
17. Employment outcomes	7	18. Management of training provision	7
Low frequency quality indicators			
19. Effectiveness of training	5	20. Collaboration and cooperation	5
21. Occupational health and safety	3	22. Innovation and development	2

* K. Bloom. D. Meyers. Quality indicators in vocational education and training. International perspectives; Australian National Training Authority, 2003.

3.5. Set of coherent quality indicators for VET in Europe

Technical Working Group “Quality in VET” has developed a limited set of coherent quality indicators for VET at system level, on the basis of good practice.

Two rationales have guided the selection of adequate indicators: the first one was to support the application of quality management system at both VET provider and systems level. The second rationale was to link quality management activities to objectives agreed at European level for the VET systems. They are meant to increase the employability of the workforce, to improve access to VET, especially for the vulnerable groups of the labour market, and to improve the match between VET supply and demand.

Indicators for quality assurance are:

- Share of VET providers applying QM systems with respect to the Common Quality Assurance Framework, by type of approach used;

- Investment in training of trainers;
- Unemployment according to groups;
- Prevalence of vulnerable groups;
- Participation rates in Initial Vocational Training (IVT) and lifelong learning (LLL), by types of VET courses;
- Percentage of participants who started and successfully completed VET (by types of VET courses);
- Destination of trainees sixth months after training;
- Utilisation of acquired skills at the workplace from the perspective both of the employer and the employee;
- Existing mechanisms to adapt vocational education and training to changing demands in the labour markets;
- Existing schemes to promote better access including orientation, guidance and support schemes.

Future work with the proposed set of indicators should give statistical evidence of the current state of data on the quality of VET systems across Europe. Once the relevant data for the proposed indicators is prepared, and a baseline for improvements towards in European policy objectives is available, progress could be measured and comparison between systems would be possible (*Copenhagen Process. First report of the Technical Working Group "Quality In VET", European Commission, 2003*).

3.6. Quality assessment aspects (dimensions) for institutional assessment in HE

Evaluation of higher education institutions in Europe became more common in the mid – 1980s. France was the first country to initiate comprehensive university evaluations in 1984. Another countries, which carry out institutional evaluation, are Finland, Ireland, Norway, Sweden and United Kingdom.

The target of institutional evaluation includes all the activities of a higher education organisation. The aim of institutional evaluation is usually development: feedback to the management of the higher education institution on the strengths and weaknesses of the organization in order to help them improve the institution's performance. Sometimes the goal set may be accountability and

transparency, in other words, to make operations more visible and efficient. In some countries institutional evaluations are used for getting information for national use.

In institutional assessment many countries use similar assessment dimensions/aspects, which include the management of an institution, planning, resources and their allocation, staff, student support, external communication and internal quality assurance mechanisms.

The table below presents aspects of quality assessment, which are important in higher education of many European countries at *institutional level*. The lines in the shade mark the aspects analysed in most countries.

Aspects	England	Czechia	Estonia	Cyprus	Latvia	Lithuania	France	Finland
Mission statement		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Institutional management		X	X	X	X		X	X
Policy and decision making processes			X	X			X	X
Quality of staff	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Students	X		X	X	X	X		X
Funding				X	X	X		X
Development and management/organization of teaching/learning process	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Quality of educational activities	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Research policy and organisation		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Quality of research		X	X	X		X		
Community services			X		X		X	X
Quality assurance mechanisms	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Realisation of mission and achievement of goals			X	X	X	X	X	X
Stakeholder satisfaction	X			X	X			X
External communication						X		

The source: Pukelis, Savickienė. A Comparative analysis of study quality assessment systems: Worldwide Experience, VDU, 2003.

Summarising quality assessment dimensions/aspects in some European countries at institutional level it is possible to affirm that the most relevant ones are the mission statement, management, policy and decision making processes, quality of staff, students, development and management/ organisation of teaching/ learning process, quality of educational activities, research policy and organisation, community services, quality assurance mechanisms, realisation of mission and achievement of goals.

4. DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITIES AND IMPLEMENTING BODIES

Responsibility for external quality assessment in all investigated countries depends on Ministry, except in Ireland The Government is responsible for external quality assessment.

For comparison of the independence of implementing bodies, more characteristic examples are:

In Denmark – EVA is an independent institution formed under the auspices of the Ministry of Education. It is required by law to cooperate with the two ministries in charge of education.

In Hungary – The accreditation committee was given the legitimacy to accredit higher education institutions and, in general, it was established for the ongoing supervision of the standard of education and scientific activity in higher education, and for the perfecting of evaluation there.

In France (the Ministry, The Inspectors and the High Council) – Three different institutions within the school education sector carry out evaluation procedures: two are responsible for actually organizing and conducting evaluations, while the third reviews evaluation findings and methodology.

In The Netherlands / the inspectorate of education – the Inspectorate of Education is a semi-independent organization, formally part of Ministry of Education and Science.

In The Netherlands / VSNU (the peer review organization) the peer review organization of the Dutch universities branch group. It is founded through the university and government (though indirectly).

Perceived level of independence: from high to low (er): Denmark – France – Netherlands / Inspectorate – Hungary – Netherlands / VSNU.

It means that there are differences in the institutional position and autonomy of the organizations. Denmark, France and Netherlands – Inspectorate are more autonomous than the organizations of Hungary or Netherlands (VSNU) (Education Evaluation around the world, 2003b).

Information about implementing bodies in investigated countries is presented in Annex 2.

Short description of activities providing by implementing bodies in investigated countries is presented in Annex 3.

II. EXPERTS

What is more important: to strengthen responsibility or enhance improvement? This issue constantly appears when the purpose of external quality assessment in VET institutions is questioned irrespective of a European country or the type of the institution assessed. Having evaluated the current strategy of human resource development in the European Union, this double purpose of external quality assessment is understandable. From one side, accountability is essential to assure the creation of the common VET area in Europe and enhance the mobility of labour, following the Bologna and Copenhagen processes. Accountability with an appropriate organisation enables to guarantee equal level of qualifications in the state. This is an urgent issue in the Candidate countries where the reform of VET system is going on without the appropriate experience in the field, human or financial resources. That is why the progress achieved in different schools contrast, and the information gathered by external evaluation should help to eliminate the differences in VET. From another side, the Bologna and Copenhagen processes declare quality assurance of education as one of the priorities to guarantee mutual trust, provide favourable conditions for recognition of qualifications and credits obtained abroad. In this case the problem of comparability of education and training quality in different countries emerges. It is not a secret the quality in the Candidate countries, because of the valid reasons, is of a lower level than in the member states. That is why it is necessary for candidate states to enhance the development of VET in every possible way.

The competence of external experts takes a great importance in these processes. They are ones who give information to politicians on VET quality at national level and in a certain VET institution. Experts also should advise institutions

how to improve the quality of education and training, and to disseminate the best practice for other establishments.

Having analysed the practice of quality assessment in VET in different European countries, it is possible to formulate several general tendencies to choose experts for external evaluation visits:

1. In VET system it is a common case that external evaluation is carried out by inspectors to whom this work is permanent. On the contrary, teams for external evaluation of higher education are composed for a short period, under contracts.
2. In the case of inspectors the experience in the field of education is usually emphasised, but inspecting and managerial experience is stressed more seldom. The requirements for inspectors in the Czech Republic could be used as an example. In this country a **school inspector** must be a university graduate with a relevant educational qualification. He/she must have at least 7 years of teaching experience, including at least two years as an educational manager. He/she has to be acquainted with all factors influencing the effectiveness of education (e.g. practical experience of a multicultural environment; the integration of pupils with special needs; the causes of socio-pathological effects at schools, their identification and treatment). He/She has to be familiar with the bases of psychology, the social sciences, rhetoric, law and school management. He/she has to be skilled in the use of ICT. And one of most recent requirements is a basic knowledge of at least one foreign language. There is also a category of a **school inspector-methodologist**. One can be appointed to this function after at least three years of experience as a school inspector on the basis of excellent results during of his/her work. Sometimes when selecting and appointing new inspectors such personal competencies as independence, flexibility, cooperation, communication and result orientation play an important role (The Netherlands).
3. In higher education sector the scientific degree of experts is usually emphasised. E.g., in Estonia experts used in higher education are minimum with scientific degree and with 5 years experience in the area. Very often international experts are included in the expert panel.

4. The four-stage model developed initially for higher education is today in fact widely accepted also in the VET sector. According to this model the following four elements are foreseen in the process of external evaluation (The Danish Evaluation Institute, 2003a):

- Autonomy and independence in terms of procedures and methods concerning quality evaluation both from government and from institutions to be evaluated;
- Self-assessment;
- External assessment by peer-review group and site visits, and
- Publication of a report.

Consequently, the contemporary methodology for teaching/study quality evaluation describes many different functions for experts:

- To analyse the self-assessment report of the VET school identifying activities, which need to be reviewed in more detail;
- To analyse different documents representing the quality of the VET school (graduation works, statistical information, etc.);
- To carry out interview and discussions with the school administration, teachers, students and social partners (employers, representatives of other educational institutions, etc.);
- To observe teaching/study process;
- To work in the team during the site visit where the competency to hear different opinions is crucial;
- To keep to ethics standards required in all the visits;
- To evaluate the quality of teaching/studies and to make the assessment report.

Moreover, it is necessary to advise institutions what and how should be improved to enhance the quality of teaching/studies. It is also required to recommend for national structures, which are responsible for VET, what actions should be taken to develop a certain part of the VET system. All these matters need to be solved with regard to the current situation and development tendencies in the country and Europe. The mentioned issues demonstrate what high requirements must be set for the competence of external assessment experts to make the assessment effective.

By this time a general picture about experts for external assessment has been described with the assumption all of them have similar education and experience. However, expert groups are composed from individuals with different background. ENQA [9] has carried the research, which shows the difference of people participating in the assessment of higher education institutions:

- National experts representing areas at focus;
- National experts representing institutions;
- International experts;
- Students;
- Graduates;
- Employers;
- Staff members of QA agencies;
- Professional organizations.

Analysing the experience of different countries in higher education assessment, the necessity to involve students into the expert group is stressed. Meanwhile, it is less often mentioned that representatives of other VET institutions and employers should belong to expert groups (for example, Latvia, the Netherlands, Germany). In Lithuania, when non-university higher education institutions (colleges) are being assessed, expert groups always involve representatives from universities, colleges or employer organisations. In order to assure quality assessment of VET schools, which would meet economics demands, the participation of representatives from the world of work is essential. It means the team of experts could be various, and to assure its effective work, a special training for them is necessary.

It is rather difficult to decide from the collected material, to which level different countries have developed experts' competencies. Most probably official databases of external quality assessment experts for VET in many countries do not exist. The cases of Bulgaria and Spain are exceptions, and it is known that national databases of experts for higher education have been developed. The UK is the country where national databases of inspectors exist. However, in many cases institutions responsible for quality assessment have their own local databases of experts. E.g., in Latvia the expert bank is available for Higher Education Quality

Evaluation Centre use only as a part of integrated accreditation data electronic database internally developed in the HEQEC, in Lithuania experts for the evaluation of the quality of labour market training courses are selected from the pool of experts approved by the director of the Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority, etc.

III.

TRAINING OF EXPERTS

The analysis of the literature and the collected material allows to declare the problem of the training of external quality assessment experts has not been either solved or discussed at international level. The two examples have been chosen to illustrate this statement.

In the report of the project “Towards accreditation schemes for higher education in Europe” funded by SOCRATES Programme (Sursack A., 2001) there is a sub-section “Recruitment, selection, training of evaluators”. In the sub-section the only words that may be considered to be linked with training are as follows: “The initial briefing materials include the criteria and guidelines for their application; the self-evaluation; and a criteria-based checklist to guide assessments of the self-evaluation and inquiries during the visit. A reporting format is provided to help the evaluators produce appropriate report statements.”

In the report “Educational evaluation around the world” (The Danish Evaluation Institute, 2003b) the situation of educational evaluation in 7 countries (Canada, Denmark, France, Hungary, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Northern Ireland) was reviewed. Both school and higher education sectors were considered, and only once, when considering the situation in The Netherlands in the school sector, training of evaluators was mentioned. It is stated that “... there is much investment in training of inspectors and other staff, for the sake of comparability of inspections and, in particular, the use of indicators and criteria.”

The research carried out in the framework of our project confirmed that the common system of the training of experts had not been developed in Europe. The majority of answers to the question on the training of evaluators could be divided into two groups:

- There is no formal training of inspectors/experts (Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Ireland, Poland, Romania);
- Evaluation team members meet beforehand and get instructions (Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Slovak Republic).

Only several countries mentioned more or less systematic training of evaluators. The following information was received.

Latvia. Higher education experts get written information beforehand, significant part get external training before being appointed as a member of team. Evaluation team meet beforehand and receive instructions. Training of experts has been organised in 1997 according to agreement with the British Council. The one week study course of HEFCE has been used. Shadowing for the training of experts in HE is used from time to time.

Lithuania. Before the external assessment of advanced VET schools, which were pretending to become colleges, the two days' training of experts was organised. The training was informal because the experts, who participated in the process, did not receive any official certificates. However, the trained persons were involved in the database of experts, and the minister of education and science confirmed them. The first cycle of the training was carried out by visiting experts from the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, and the subsequent training was done by the trained experts. The training consisted of two parts: theoretical and practical. The later one was aimed at the imitation of the external visit and the evaluation of an institution.

The Netherlands. Some inspectors from the Netherlands Education Inspectorate do the external evaluation of the educational quality in schools. They are not specially trained for the job by a specific programme. But since 1989, it has been common practice at the Education Inspectorate for newly appointed inspectors to follow an introduction/training programme before they start carrying out supervision independently. Moreover, since three years the Netherlands Inspectorate has its own Academy for training and has started 'refreshment' courses for all members of Inspectorates.

Spain. In connection with the institutional assessment a training programme for assessors and auditors is started. The purpose of this is to set up groups of

expert assessors and auditors with the technical capacity to carry out the necessary external checks in these processes, in an independent and professional manner. The experts are not accredited.

United Kingdom. The Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) and the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) are responsible for the organisation of training for inspectors of colleges providing post-16 education and training. They are also responsible for maintaining a list of inspectors who can take part in inspections as members of inspection teams. Before taking part in the inspection of colleges, each inspector must satisfactorily complete a course of training provided by OFSTED. Inspectors who have been trained in the use of the Common Inspection Framework are approved to inspect 16–19 education, provision for students over 19 years of age, and/or the inspection of work-based learning. Training for inspectors is covering the responsibilities of OFSTED and ALI with regard to the general duty to promote racial equality. Training is also provided for HE experts. It is organised by the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE).

IV.

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

As examples of good practice we have chosen the **Introduction/training programme for inspectors** in the Netherlands, the **HEFCE programme for training of HE assessors (UK)** and the **Code of Conduct for Inspectors (UK)**.

Introduction/training programme for inspectors (the Netherlands)

The programme contains 7 compulsory and at least one optional module.

1. General introduction into the organization.

- Becoming acquainted with the Inspectorate board, staff developments (tasks and projects) and other groups;
- Organisation structure and reorganization;
- Tasks and products of the Inspectorate (supervision, research, confidential inspectors, centres of expertise, school reports, education report, ICT school portraits, etc.);
- Summary of projects and project structure;
- Facilities and their use (practical information on Intranet, group-wise, computers, location Utrecht) IT (ODIN/ESD/Intranet/Davos/Report macros/EXV-I, etc.).

2. General supervision framework (history, development and methodology).

- History of the Inspectorate;
- What form do the evaluation framework and the method of working have for the various sectors (primary education, secondary education, Expertise Centre, vocational training and adult education, higher education)?
- Learning theories; didactical instructional formats;
- Knowledge of different educational concepts (Jena Plan, etc.);
- The unmanageable practice.

3. Role, position and policy of the Education Inspectorate.

- From European perspective;
- In the Netherlands (strategic policy plan, international projects, current themes);
- External partners (internally in the Netherlands, externally in Europe);
- Development of frameworks with partners.

4. General knowledge of laws, which are relevant to the Inspectorate.

- The WOT (Education Supervision Act), including the administrative context, the WOB (Governmental Information (Public Access) Act) and the history of the Inspectorate (e.g. Art. 23 of the Constitution);
- The education acts for primary education, secondary education, EC, vocational training and adult education, higher education, CE. **A choice of at least one act.**

5. Basic skills related to carrying out the supervision.

- Verbal (discussion) skills (e.g. dealing with difficult people);
- Written skills/writing reports;
- Research skills (interpreting research results, research instruments);
- Computer skills (digital driving licence, ODIN);
- Meeting techniques;
- Presentation techniques.

6. Quality care models, Mavim.

- Most widely-used quality care systems;
- INK and accreditation within the Inspectorate;
- Use of Mavin.

7. Orientation towards the organisation of education in the sectors.

- Sorts of education institutions;
- Funding models.

8. Intensification modules per sector (primary education, secondary education, vocational training and adult education, higher education, CE, EC). **A choice of at least one sector.**

HEFCE programme for training of HE assessors (UK)

The duration of the programme is 3 days. It is expected that at the end of the programme the assessor will have:

- Increased knowledge of the assessment methodology and the common structure of the process;

- Developed understanding of the role, responsibility, and tasks of the assessor;
- Gained an appreciation of the basic principles underlying the methodology: 'fitness for purpose' in subject areas; peer reviews; focus on students' educational experience; basis in self-assessment; concern with quality improvement; importance of divesting oneself of prejudices, etc.;
- Enhanced skills in: analysing self-assessment documentation; gathering evidence to make judgements in the aspects of provision; preparing graded profiles; team communications; interviewing and giving feedback; processes and behaviours in formal meetings; contributing to the judgement-making process; report writing;
- Gained confidence in abilities to undertake the role of the assessor.

The programme is composed of 8 sessions:

1. The purpose, context and some aspects of the quality assessment process.

- Purposes of the session;
- Quality assessment programme;
- Quality assessment division;
- Preparing for an assessment;
- Activities during an assessment visit;
- Protocols;
- Quality assessment report.

2. Analysing the self-assessment – the basis of visit planning.

- Purposes of the session;
- Set of six aspects of provision;
- Analysis of the self-assessment;
- The structure of the self-assessment;
- The nature of the self assessment;
- Purpose of assessment visit;
- Simulation of the first team meeting.

3. Introduction to detailed work on the aspects of provision.

- Purposes of the session;
- Curriculum design, content and organisation;
- Teaching. Learning and assessment;
- Student progression and achievement;
- Student support and guidance;
- Learning resources;
- Quality assurance and enhancement.

4. Focus aspect of provision: teaching, learning and assessment.

- Purposes of the session;
- Observing;
- Effective learning;
- Effective teaching;
- Effective lecturing;
- Group teaching;
- Assessment of learning.

5. Gathering and evaluating evidence in meetings and within timescales.

- Purposes of the session;
- Meting the meeting timescale: scheduling all activities;
- Tasks of assessors for/in meetings;
- Types of meetings with staff during the visit;
- Skills for meetings: preparation for meetings and managing meetings;
- Notes on students work.

6. Assessment team meetings during the visit.

- Purposes of the session;
- Initial team meeting;
- Second team meeting;
- Third team meeting;
- Team meeting on final day.

7. Preparing and writing summaries of evidence for the report.

- Purposes of the session;
- Format of the assessment report;
- Production schedule for quality assessment report.

8. Simulation of the final team meeting.

- Purposes of the session;
- Points for the feedback meeting;
- Oral feedback meeting.

Code of Conduct for Inspectors (UK)

The code of conduct sets out the principles, which govern the professional work of inspectors. Inspectors are expected to:

- Evaluate objectively, be impartial and have no previous connection with the school which could undermine their objectivity;

- Report honestly and fairly, ensuring that judgements are accurate and reliable;
- Carry out their work with integrity, treating all those they meet with courtesy and sensitivity;
- Do all they can to minimize the stress on those involved in the inspection, and act with their best interests and well-being as priorities;
- Maintain purposeful and productive dialogue with those being inspected, and communicate judgements clearly and frankly;
- Respect the confidentiality of information, particularly about individuals and their work.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The following characteristics of quality assurance systems and processes based on assessment could be distinguished in Europe:

- QA systems are very diverse in Europe. Though the quality of education and training is considered to be one of the main priorities both in Bologna and Copenhagen declarations, there is no intention to aim for a single European system for quality assurance. However, the need for the platform for exchange of good practice and mutual learning is strongly stressed.
- QA systems are unevenly developed at different levels: an inspection is predominantly used in the VET sector while peer-review assessment is usually used in the HE sector.
- QA systems at different educational levels are coming closer. It is a clear tendency to establish a regular cooperation between networks of agencies for quality assurance in HE and VET at European level.
- Modern QA systems are based on self-assessment. The four-stage model is most commonly used in the sector of HE and is becoming more and more popular in the VET sector.
- The experience of experts in the field of education is usually emphasized in the case of VET and the scientific degree is stressed in the case of HE, while managerial experience is mentioned more seldom. However, it is common to have people with different background in visiting teams: national experts, international experts, students, graduates, employers, etc.
- There is no considerable difference in the job specification of experts either in different countries or at different educational levels.
- In majority of the reviewed countries experts of visiting teams meet beforehand and get instruction. The common system of the training of experts has not been developed in Europe. There are only few examples when training of QA experts is organized regularly: inspectors in the Netherlands, inspectors and peer-review experts in UK, experts in Spain.

Having in mind the observations mentioned above, the following recommendations could be formulated for the development of the external assessment expert training programme for the VET sector:

- In order to ensure better international comparability, to facilitate and promote mobility, to develop partnerships and other transnational initiatives, the EU dimension should be strengthened.
- The experience gained both in VET and HE sectors should be used when developing and implementing the expert training programme.
- The programme should be based on the four-stage model.
- The programme should have a modular structure to be better adapted to the needs of experts with different experience and background.
- The methodology of the delivery of the programme should include theoretical presentations, self-learning as well as practical training how to carry out the external assessment visit.
- The programme should be provided with the learning material for trainees as well as with the methodological material for trainers.

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Annex 1

The types of assessment an levels

Assessment type	Institutional level				Programme level
	Institutional evaluation	Institutional audit	Accreditation of institution	Bench-marking of institutions	Programme evaluation
Country					
Austria	+	+	+		+
Belgium**					+
Bulgaria	+		+		+
Cyprus					+
Czechia	+				
Denmark**	+				+
Estonia**					
Finland**	+	+	+	+	+
France	+				
Germany			+		+
Hungary			+		
Iceland					+
Ireland	+	+	+		+
Italy**	+	+	+	+	+
Latvia**	+		+		+
Lithuania**	+		+		+
Holland**	+	+		+	+
Norway	+	+			+
Poland		+			+
Portugal					
Romania		+	+		
Spain**					+
Sweden**		+			+
UK		+			+

* assessment is carried out irregularly or seldom.

** there is a different type of assessment

by The Danish Evaluation Institute, 2003a.

			Subject level		
Audit at programme level	Accreditation of programme	Bench-marking of programmes	Bench-marking of subjects	Subject evaluation	Accreditation of subjects
	+				
+					
	+				
	+				
	+				
	+				
	+	+	+		
	+			+	
	+				
+		+	+		
+					
	+				
	+				
	+				
+	+	+	+		
	+				
	+				
	+			+	+
			+	+	

Annex 2

Implementing bodies in investigated countries

Country	Implementing bodies
Bulgaria	National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency and Accreditation Council (under the Council of Ministers), www.neaa.government.bg The standing committees (4 subject-based panels) Ad hoc committees (The expert groups) The National Agency for Vocational Education and Training
Czech republic	The Czech School Inspectorate (CSI) and the Sectoral Control Department (SCD) Accreditation Commission , http://www.msmt.cz/_DOMEK/default.asp?CAI=2417
Denmark	Danmarks Evalueringsinstitut – The Danish Evaluation Institute (From 1992-1999 Evalueringscenteret – The Danish Centre for Quality Assurance) http://www.eva.dk
Estonia	Higher Education Accreditation Centre (www.ekak.archimedes.ee)
Finland	Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINHEEC) http://www.finheec.fi
France	General Inspection of Education Administration National Evaluation Committee (CNE) , http://www.cne-evaluation.fr/
Germany	Accreditation, Certification, and Quality Assurance Institute (ACQUIN) ; www.acquin.org Akkreditierungsrat (Accreditation Council) , http://www.akkreditierungsrat.de
Iceland	Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. Division of Evaluation and Supervision http://eng.menntamalaraduneyti.is/education-in-iceland/
Hungary	The Hungarian Accreditation Committee , http://www.mab.hu

Country	Implementing bodies
Ireland	Higher Education Authority , http://www.heai.ie/ Higher Education and Training Awards Council ; http://hetac.ie/
Latvia	State Inspection of Education – an autonomous part of MES, (Ministry of Education and Science). Higher Education Quality Evaluation Centre , non-profit organization. www.aiknc.lv .
Liechtenstein	Education authority (Schulamt), the Vocational training authority (Amt für Berufsbindung), the Education Council (Bindungsrat), the Vocational Training Council (Berufsbindungsrat) and the School council (Schulrat). These authorities are under the Government. There are no another responsible body in Liechtenstein.
Lithuania	Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority , www.ldrmt.lt Methodological Centre for Vocational Education and Training , www.pmmc.lt Higher Education Quality Evaluation Centre , www.skvc.lt
Luxemburg	No information has been made available on any systematic evaluation procedures in Luxembourg.
Malta	Education Division , http://www.education.gov.mt The National Curriculum Council (NCC)
The Netherlands	The Netherlands Accreditation Organisation (NAO) , www.nao-ho.nl The Inspectorate of Education in the Netherlands
Norway	National Agency of Quality Assurance in Education ; http://www.nokut.no/
Poland	The University Accreditation Commission (UAC) The State Accreditation Committee
Portugal	The General Inspectorate for Education The National Education Board The General Directorate for Higher Education Inspectorate General of Science and Higher Education Educational Evaluation Bureau

Country	Implementing bodies
Romania	<p>National Commission for the Evaluation and Accreditation of Pre-university Education (CNEAIP); (Comisia Nationala de Evaluare si Acreditate a Invatamantului Preuniversitar) http://www.edu.ro/cneaip.htm</p> <p>The National Council for Academic Assessment and Accreditation (NCAAA)(National Council for Academic Assessment and Accreditation) www.cneaa.ro</p>
Slovakia	<p>SIOV, State institute of vocational education and Training. http://www.siov.sk The council of the Minister of Education of the Slovak Republic for Vocational Education</p> <p>Commission for Accreditation of institutions providing CVT Higher Education council (Rada vysokych škôl). http://www.uips.sk Accreditation Commission, Advisory Body of the Government of the Slovak Republic (Akreditačná komisia, poradný orgán vlády SR). http://www.akredkom.sk</p>
Spain	<p>The Spanish National Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation http://www.aneca.es</p>
Sweden	<p>National Agency for Higher Education - http://www.hsv.se The State Audit Institution (Riksrevisionen)</p>
Turkey	<p>Ministry of National Education Republic of Turkey. www.meb.gov.tr/english/main</p>

Annex 3

Short description of implementing bodies in investigated countries

There is a lack of information on quality assessment agencies for IVET and CVET in the analysed European countries. In many countries the function of quality assessment belongs to independent structures, which are related to the ministry or have been established by the Government.

The main data on quality assessment agencies concern higher education that is why the information below also is related to this sector.

The data has been prepared according to the project partners' information.

Country	Main tasks of implementing bodies
Bulgaria	<p>The National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency is the specialized government body for quality assurance, evaluation and accreditation of the activities of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency developed and adopted evaluation and accreditation criteria in accordance with Higher Education Act (HEA) and adopted state requirements. The National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency supports the Ministry of Education and Science in fulfilling its control functions. The National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency conducts its licensing function by evaluating institutions and programmes according to specific procedures for institutional and programme accreditation. Based on its evaluation, the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency grants or denies accreditation to institutions or programmes. The National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency conducts institutional and programme accreditation.</p> <p>The National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency accredits new programmes to be launched in accredited institutions.</p> <p>The Accreditation Council /AC/ and its Chairperson are management units of The National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency.</p>

Country	Main tasks of implementing bodies
Czech republic	In the Czech Republic, the quality assurance and accreditation procedures are used to enhance quality in higher education. The Accreditation Commission of the Government of the Czech Republic carries out these activities. Its activities comprise evaluation and accreditation of newly established HEI and study programs and evaluation of HEI as institutions. To carry out its activities the Accreditation Commission establishes permanent and special work groups to deal with the evaluation of specific matters and activities. While evaluating activities pursued by higher education institutions and quality of accredited activities, the Commission concentrates especially on evaluating activities pursued by faculties and higher education institutes of public or state higher education institutions, private higher education institutions or legal entities which participate in educational, scholarly, research, developmental, artistic or other creative activity of higher education institutions. For evaluation in a certain period the Commission usually chooses one institution or several institutions performing similar accredited study programmes. The evaluation lasts one year and half.
Denmark	<p><u>The Danish Evaluation Institute (From 1992-1999 – The Danish Centre for Quality Assurance)</u> is responsible for the whole evaluation process in all kinds of institutions and study levels. The Danish Evaluation Institute (EVA) is an independent institution formed under the auspices of the Danish Ministry of Education.</p> <p>EVA develops methods for evaluating the quality of teaching and learning; develops and highlights quality of education and teaching through systematic evaluation; advises and collaborates with public authorities and educational institutions on quality issues; is the national centre of knowledge of national experience in educational evaluation.</p> <p>The Danish Evaluation Institute (EVA) initiates and conducts evaluations of teaching and learning - from primary school and youth education to higher education and adult and post-graduate education. Evaluations cover public educational establishments and private institutions in receipt of state subsidy.</p>

Country	Main tasks of implementing bodies
	<p>EVA may initiate evaluations on request. These evaluations are conducted as revenue-generating activities and may be requested by government, ministries and advisory boards, local authorities and educational establishments.</p> <p>EVA conducts accreditation of private courses. Accreditations are part of the Ministry of Education procedure determining whether students at private teaching establishments should receive the Danish state grant.</p>
Estonia	<p>Inspection in VET system is done by the Ministry of Education and Research (Department of Monitoring) and county government inspectors. CVET has no inspection system. External quality assurance in HE and HVE is done by Higher Education Accreditation Centre as independent private body founded by Ministry and operating under contract between the Centre and the Ministry. Inspection in HE and HVE is done by Dept. of Monitoring of the Ministry.</p>
Finland	<p>Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council uses the basic evaluation method, which is commonly used in international higher education evaluations, and which corresponds with the Recommendation by the Council of Europe. The method consists of four phases:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.National coordinating body (in Finland FINHEEC); 2.Self-evaluation; 3.External evaluation team, including an evaluation visit; 4. Public final report. <p>FINHEEC does not have a rigid, predetermined evaluation pattern that is applied in every project. In fact, the chosen methods can vary according to the target of evaluation and phrasing of evaluation questions. In the beginning of each project, the objectives and implementation practices of the evaluation are defined. FINHEEC actively pursues to take the special characteristics of the evaluation target into consideration. This includes analysing the perspectives of the higher education units under review.</p>
France	<p>General Inspection of Education Administration has a role in the evaluation of higher education institutions, be it a marginal one. It assesses whether the public funds allocated to higher education institutions are used properly, i.e., according to the conditions under which they were granted.</p>

Country	Main tasks of implementing bodies
	<p>National Evaluation Committee (CNE) aims at evaluating research, cultural and vocational public institutions, i.e. universities, schools and “grands établissements” reporting to the higher education minister. The CNE may also evaluate higher education institutions reporting to other ministries.</p> <p>The CNE evaluates the institutions in the areas linked to the missions of the higher education public sector, i.e. initial and further education, students living conditions, research and the use of its results. The CNE also examines the way an institution is governed, its policy and management. However, the CNE is neither entitled to evaluate individuals, nor to authorize courses, nor to apportion state funds. In actual practice the CNE runs several types of activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Evaluation of higher education institutions; Evaluation of “university sites” taking into account the interactions of a group of institutions over an area (region, metropolitan area...); Cross-cutting evaluations about specific activities linked to higher education (sport and the students, the use of research results, etc.); Cross-cutting and comparative evaluations as regards a discipline (geography, information and communication studies, chemistry) or a type of degree course (postgraduate degrees in medical studies, pharmacy courses).
Germany	<p>In the Federal Republic of Germany responsibility for the education system is determined by the federal structure of the state. Under the Basic Law the exercise of governmental powers and the fulfilment of governmental responsibility is incumbent upon the individual <u>Länder</u> as far as the Basic Law does not provide for or allow for any other arrangement.</p> <p>ACQUIN has been established on initiative of the Higher Education. The activities of the agency are aiming at the assessment of the educational activities at programme level. In future the activities of ACQUIN will also include institutions as a whole and academic units. So far ACQUIN evaluates programs, sometimes each single program offered by a Higher Education Institution.</p> <p>The main purposes of the activities are accreditation, accountability, improvement & enhancement, benchmarking and information providing, quality management system.</p>

Country	Main tasks of implementing bodies
	<p>The agency nominates and appoints the members of the external evaluation team; the people being assessed are informed about the peers and given the opportunity to formulate objections in case a member of the external evaluation team might be biased. The committee consists of academics, other experts outside Academia and student (a mixed committee).</p> <p>Establishment of the EQA-agency: the agency has been established by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany (KMK) and the Association of German Universities and other Higher Education Institutions (HRK). The Akkreditierungsrat is an independent institution. The Akkreditierungsrat is an organisation on its own. The Akkreditierungsrat has 17 members. The members are representatives of the Länder, higher education institutions, students and professional practice (on behalf of both employer and employee organisations).</p> <p>The Akkreditierungsrat is responsible for accrediting accreditation agencies and in special cases – when formally requested by one of the German Länder – accrediting degree programmes leading to Bakkalaureus/Bachelor and Magister/Master degrees. From 2003 the Akkreditierungsrat is only responsible for accrediting accreditation agencies.</p> <p>The main purpose is accreditation, improvement and enhancement, enhancing student mobility, improving international recognition, accountability, providing information.</p>
Iceland	<p>Iceland does not have a separate national agency for evaluation of education, instead of that a separate division of evaluation and supervision in the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture was established in 1996. The division is responsible for evaluation at all school levels from pre-school to higher education. The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture takes the initiative to conduct an external evaluation, decides when it will be carried out and what focus should be. For this task an external, independent group of specialists is appointed to implement the quality assessment. The evaluations that have been carried out in higher education have so far focused on programmes or disciplines.</p>

Country	Main tasks of implementing bodies
	<p>The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture has initiated and planned evaluations. The interval of evaluation is five-year. For the larger evaluations of disciplines across institutions a steering group, appointed by the Minister of Education, is set up. The participating institutions nominate one member each to the steering group, the respective professional association(s) also nominates members and the Minister of Education appoints the chairman. The steering group is responsible for organizing and conducting evaluations, including making the financial plans, finalizing guidelines for the self-evaluation and peer review, supervising the self-evaluation, selecting the peer review group and conducting a survey among graduates and employers. The Ministry of Education assists and provides the framework for many of these functions.</p>
Ireland	<p>Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) is the national awarding body for further education and training in Ireland. FETAC's functions include: making and promoting awards; validating programmes; monitoring and ensuring the quality of programmes; determining standards. FETAC's mission is to make quality assured awards in accordance with national standards within the national framework, creating opportunities for all learners in further education and training to have their achievements recognised and providing access to systematic progression pathways. Further Education and Training Awards Council has responsibility for making and promoting quality awards in further education and training, validating the quality of programmes, setting NATIONAL standards and establishing working partnerships.</p>
Hungary	<p>The Hungarian Accreditation Committee was established in 1993. Its scope is to accredit higher education institutions including its programmes. The Hungarian Accreditation Committee (HAC) evaluates applications to establish and grant state recognition to higher education institutions and faculties, on new study programmes, and on national qualification requirements for all degree programmes taught in Hungary. The HAC is responsible for evaluating and accrediting the quality of teaching and research at higher education institutions in Hungary,</p>

Country	Main tasks of implementing bodies
	<p>whereby it states its opinion to the Minister of Education (who must publish any dissenting decision). The HAC accredits both programs and institutions.</p> <p>The HAC evaluates universities and colleges (with special regulations for church-run and private institutions applying for state recognition) every eight years, whereby in addition to the institutions' management and infrastructure all degree programs are also assessed (self-evaluation, peer visit and subsequently published report).</p>
Latvia	<p>State Inspection of Education is an autonomous part of Ministry of Education and Science. Inspectors are civil servants. Inspectors are responsible for all the levels and kinds of education. Inspectors are responsible for HE, and they gather information about fulfilment of legal regulations by HEI and supply with this information MES, Accreditation Commission and Higher Education Council.</p> <p>Higher Education Quality Evaluation Centre has the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To work out and co-ordinate the procedures aimed at quality assessment of higher education institutions and study programmes as well as preparing peer visits in compliance with the Law on Education of the Republic of Latvia and the Law on Higher Education Institutions”; To organize the quality assessment of higher education institutions and study programme on behalf of the Ministry for Education and Science; To set up commissions and working groups responsible for solving problems related to quality assessment and accreditation; To invite foreign experts for peer visits to higher education institutions; To sum up and to make public the experience obtained as the system of higher education institution and study programme quality assessment is being set up and implemented.
Liechtenstein	<p>All the procedures of quality assurance are the same as in Germany or Austria (German speaking countries around Liechtenstein). In Liechtenstein there are no specific implementing bodies. All the functions in quality assurance belong to authorities, which are created by the Government. Experts and consultants are invited from Austria and Germany.</p>

Country	Main tasks of implementing bodies
Lithuania	External quality assessment of higher non-university sector is carried out by the two institutions: Lithuanian Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education performs external assessment of non-university study programme quality as well as and the Unit of Study and Teaching Quality Evaluation at Methodological Centre for Vocational Education and Training carries out external institutional assessment of non-university higher education institutions. External assessment of university study programme quality is done by Lithuanian Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education, who assess new programmes and carry out periodic review of existing programmes.
Luxemburg	No documentation has been made available on any systematic evaluation procedures in Luxembourg. A quality strategy in the area of training currently is being introduced. The strategy is based on the fundamental principles of autonomy and making all the actors concerned – namely the Minister, the school directorate, teachers, pupils, parents and the social partners – more aware of their responsibilities. With regard to assessment, which is entirely linked to the concept of quality, it appears that self-assessment takes precedence over inspection, even if the Ministry of Education is actively involved in all cases. Luxembourg is considering creating a quality label for training bodies.
Malta	Monitoring and inspection of schools is done both through an external and internal process. School evaluation is based mainly on internal evaluation through developmental planning. <u>Education Officers</u> based at the Education Division carry out external assessment. The National Curriculum Council (NCC) set up by the Minister of Education has been given the responsibility for the evaluation and monitoring of schools. The Minister of education has recently appointed the NCC, which is implementing the National Minimum Curriculum and will then eventually take up also the role of national evaluator. The NCC is the main system with the main responsibility of evaluating the educational system. This Council has been set up in 2001 and is still at the stage of implementing the National Minimum Curriculum. The NCC

Country	Main tasks of implementing bodies
	consists of a Council, a technical executive staff team, and a secretarial support team. Most of the technical executive staff team members and of the secretarial support team are expected to be within the Curriculum Department at the Education Division. The NCC will carry out its work through these internal components, through the Focus groups which have been set up, and through the commissioning of work to other agencies. The NCC reports to the Director General within the Education Division, which in turn reports to the Minister of Education.
The Netherlands	Evaluation in the context of quality assurance is carried out solely in higher education. First, the Inspectorate assesses the care with which reviews have been conducted. It does this by means of meta-evaluations based on set criteria. The Inspectorate then advises the Minister in relation to courses where the review committee's report give the cause for the concern about the quality of teaching. About two years after the publication of the review committee's report, the Inspectorate conducts an evaluation of the practical steps taken by the administration of the institution in response to the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the review committee. The Inspectorate makes its findings known to both the Minister and the institution. Finally, teams of inspectors evaluate the annual system of quality assurance in a number of institutions. Accreditation also involves self-evaluation and inspection by a review committee. However, as of 1 May 2003, new reviews are no longer finalised by the Inspectorate, but by the Netherlands Accreditation Organisation (NAO) , which has to decide within three months of receiving the committee's report whether the course will be accredited or not. Accreditation applies for a period of six years. As of 2003, new courses may only start once the NAO has screened them and decided that they are up to standard. The NAO will not assess the courses itself. This task will be delegated to review and assessment boards (VBIs), whose members will visit institutions, assess the self-evaluation, decide whether the course meets the accreditation criteria, and give a brief assessment of its quality. The institution will apply to have the course accredited by submitting the board's report to the NAO.

Country	Main tasks of implementing bodies
	External evaluations are organised per discipline and are carried out by review committees made up of external experts. Each review committee has six to eight members. Where desirable, foreign experts may be brought in to assist. The review committee inspects all the courses concerned and publishes a single final report.
Norway	The regulations and curricula are national and are set by the Ministry of Education and Research after the advice from the National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NOKUT). The curricula also include the training in enterprises. The training establishment should have professional qualified personnel who are responsible for the training. The county vocational training board is responsible for the approval. A Ministerial Regulation sets basic demands concerning their competence, with further criteria defined by NOKUT. All evaluations in Higher Education are concerned with educational quality and efficiency but there are no specific, systematic (external) evaluation procedures at programme level. External quality assurance of HE is of the audit type and is directed at the internal quality assurance that institutions themselves carry out, and for which quality criteria are externally given (by NOKUT). Programmes are evaluated in connection with accreditation procedures.
Poland	The goal of UAC's activity is to upgrade the education quality; to create an accreditation system of courses of studies at universities according to those of the European Union and equalize the standards of education quality at universities. UAC's prime area of activity is all the Polish universities. However, it may be expanded to cover also other Polish institutions of higher education if they apply for accreditation of their courses of study. The accreditation procedure for a given direction of studies commences when not less than five universities send in requests for accreditation of this direction. The task of the expert group is to prepare, within two months of its nomination, specific standards for assessing the quality of education for a specific area of studies. The specific standards are subject to acceptance by UAC. The expert group periodically reviews the standards for assessing the quality of education and sends to UAC a report on the reviews conducted at least once every two

Country	Main tasks of implementing bodies
	years. The State Accreditation Committee. The State Accreditation Committee is a statutory body of the Polish higher education system, which aims at enhancing the quality of higher education. The Committee shall submit opinions to the competent minister for higher education. The opinions shall concern in particular: founding an institution of higher education, granting an institution of higher education the right to offer degree programmes in a specified subject area and at a specified level, establishing extramural units of the institution, evaluating the quality of teaching for a specified degree programme, evaluating the quality of teacher training, monitoring compliance with existing requirements for higher-education degree programmes, laid down in separate regulations.
Portugal	The Educational Evaluation Bureau (GAVE), within the component of teaching and didactic guidance for the education system, plays an important role in the planning, design, co-ordination, preparation, validation, application and control of external assessment instruments for apprenticeships. GAVE is responsible for planning the process for preparing and validating instruments for the external assessment of apprenticeships; producing these with the co-operation of specialists in appropriate areas of learning; organising, together with the schools, through the <i>direcções regionais de educação</i> the information systems required for producing <i>avaliação externa</i> instruments for apprenticeships; working with the DGIDC to hold tests for the <i>avaliação externa</i> of apprenticeships; supervising the correction of tests for <i>avaliação externa</i> of apprenticeships; taking part in international studies and projects on the assessment of apprenticeships; working with the other services to produce information, studies and assessments on the results of apprenticeships; taking part in defining the criteria for teacher training on apprenticeship assessment. With the creation of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, the Inspectorate General of Science and Higher Education as an inspection and auditing service, and the National Higher Education Assessment Board a body independent of the Government with attributions in the field of assessment and monitoring of schools of higher education, cover the main concerns in assessing the higher education system.

Country	Main tasks of implementing bodies
	The Inspectorate General of Science and Higher Education – is a service with administrative and technical autonomy, with attributions in the area of auditing and controlling how the higher education system and the scientific and technological system are run, as well as the remaining services and bodies of the MCES.
Romania	<p>The Ministry of National Education of Romania has overall responsibility for performance and quality assurance policy in higher education. The institutional structure of the evaluation/ accreditation system includes The National Council for Academic Assessment and Accreditation (NCAAA).</p> <p>The final decision on accreditation is a parliamentary decision, if it concerns a new institution, and governmental, if it concerns a new programme. The periodical institutional assessment covers all study programmes. The institutions that do not meet the requirements are given a year to improve.</p>
Slovakia	<p>Accreditation of higher education institutions depends on Accreditation commission – an advisory organ of the government of Slovak Republic.</p> <p>Its function is to assist in the development of higher education system in Slovakia by evaluating the level of educational and research activities of institutions and by accrediting degree programs. The practice of composing its working groups (evaluation committees) where the recommendations are actually being prepared has been increasingly oriented towards incorporating representatives of corresponding professional community, too. These responsible bodies work in higher education field. Ministry of Education must approve their regulations and standards (Higher institution act 2002-April).</p> <p>Process of external evaluation and accreditation is now realized regularly.</p>
Spain	The National Institute for Quality and Evaluation (INCE) was created under the 1990 Organic Act on the General Organisation of the Education System (LOGSE) and is governed by a June 1993 Royal Decree. It is the national body in charge of nation-wide evaluation of the education system at the non-university level education.

Country	Main tasks of implementing bodies
	The duties of this body include the evaluation of the extent to which the core curriculum is mastered at the various levels, cycles and grades of the education system; research, studies and evaluation of the system; evaluation of general reforms, as well as the structure, scope and results of innovations; drawing up of a nation-wide system of indicators to evaluate system efficiency and effectiveness; drawing up of evaluation systems for the various kinds of education and the corresponding establishments; furnishing and exchange of information with the Autonomous Communities to facilitate decision making; provision of information to the various sectors of society on performance and results; and publishing and dissemination of the results of the evaluations carried out, as well as any innovations arising in the evaluation process. The respective Educational Inspectorate of the Autonomous Communities conducts the external evaluation of non-university establishments, with a close link at a national level and at the regional and provincial ones between education inspection and external evaluation.
Sweden	<p>The National Agency for Higher Education is the authority in charge of inspecting and promoting higher education sector activities, through follow-up and evaluation of higher education, quality assessment, initiatives for updating teaching methods and assessment of the right to award degrees. The National Agency evaluates the higher education institutions. This takes the form, for instance, of the evaluations of subjects and programmes conducted by the National Agency once every six years. The National Agency exercises supervision of higher education institutions, which means ensuring that they comply with the laws and regulations that apply to the area of higher education. The National Agency reviews the operations of the higher education institutions. From 2001 the Agency perform recurrent and comprehensive subject and programme evaluations.</p> <p>The National Agency for Higher Education is a central agency responsible for matters relating to institutions of higher education in Sweden. The way in which it operates is subject to the instructions issued by the government. These instructions contain, for instance, regulations about the tasks entrusted to it and how to organise the way it operates.</p>

Country	Main tasks of implementing bodies
Turkey	<p>Educational activities are organised and supervised by the ministry, which also confirms inspection commissions for programme evaluation.</p> <p>Schools are scheduled to be inspected on the basis of general conditions, problems and recommended solutions, provided the same type of schools are inspected together. Inspections of high schools for science, Anatolia teacher schools and high schools for fine arts have been completed and their reports are being combined. Other schools shall be inspected on the same basis.</p> <p>Inspection principles of the national education directorates and those of the schools are rearranged to include “Current Situation”, “Problems and Recommended Solutions” so as to ensure that inspections are performed accordingly. Documents including the inspection principles have been prepared so that inspection and evaluation may be possible in the fields of Turkish, Mathematics, Art, Sports, Science, Foreign Language, Social Sciences.</p> <p>Support through guidance and inspection is provided in the areas of Total Quality Management, Education Regions and Councils, School Development Model, Computer-assisted Education on which modern development of the education system is based.</p>