

QUANTUM PROJECT – IO3

Report about implementation and impact evaluation of Quality Networks



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Project Data Sheet

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1. The Impact Evaluation: aims, activities and stakeholders involved

The present document evaluates the process of Quality Networks (QNs) planning and implementation in each partner country: – Austria, Italy, Portugal and Slovakia, within the QUANTUM project, so as to identify relevant lessons learned and useful recommendations to stakeholders with reference to Quality Assurance in VET.

The project focused on activities which were jointly designed and adapted nationally in order to design and pilot a common approach to enable key VET stakeholders actively engage and contribute/support to Quality Assurance in VET. This common Quality Networks’ based approach, has been implemented through the following **steps**:

- Definition of Guidelines which detail how to engage VET stakeholders in Quality Assurance and, specifically in ensuring effective use of tools supporting quality assurance, such as graduate tracking and other instruments based on feedback loops. The guidelines, include a section which explains how the Quality Networks were be implemented in each country (taking into account national contexts in VET in each partner country).
- Design and delivery of a Capacity Building Programme aimed at equipping the key stakeholders involved in QNs with an appropriate set of skills to both use a network as a form of cooperation of stakeholders and Quality Assurance methods and tools based on feedback loops (including graduate tracking).
- Piloting Quality Networks established within the project based on the previous activities and specific contexts in VET in each partner country.

The Impact Evaluation report is based on the following **activities**:

- Evaluation of QNs potential throughout the piloting phase, in each partner country in terms of improvements on VET graduate tracking and feedback loops mechanisms, with reference to EQAVET Indicators 5 and 6¹.
- Reporting from each partner on the evaluation above mentioned, with a focus on lessons learned and further challenges.
- Definition of the lessons learned and further challenges also in light of future sustainability of the QNs.

The **stakeholders** involved in the QNs are those suggested in the IO1 Guidelines, with possible differences among partners.

VET PROVIDERS	PUBLIC AUTHORITIES and SOCIAL PARTNERS	EMPLOYERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teachers / trainers - Headmasters - Education managers - Quality managers - VET schools’ associations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministries - Regional authorities - Public institutions - Employers’ associations / organizations - Trade unions - Chamber of commerce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SMEs - <i>small, medium, micro-enterprises</i> - Entrepreneurs

¹ EQAVEZ indicator 5. Placement rate in VET programmes; EQAVET indicator 6. Utilisation of acquired skills at the workplace

It is worth mentioning the importance of being flexible in the process of QNs implementation, by considering the involvement of other stakeholders who become relevant and useful for specific purposes and actions, at a later stage of QNs development.

The QNs piloting within the Quantum project

Expected Results

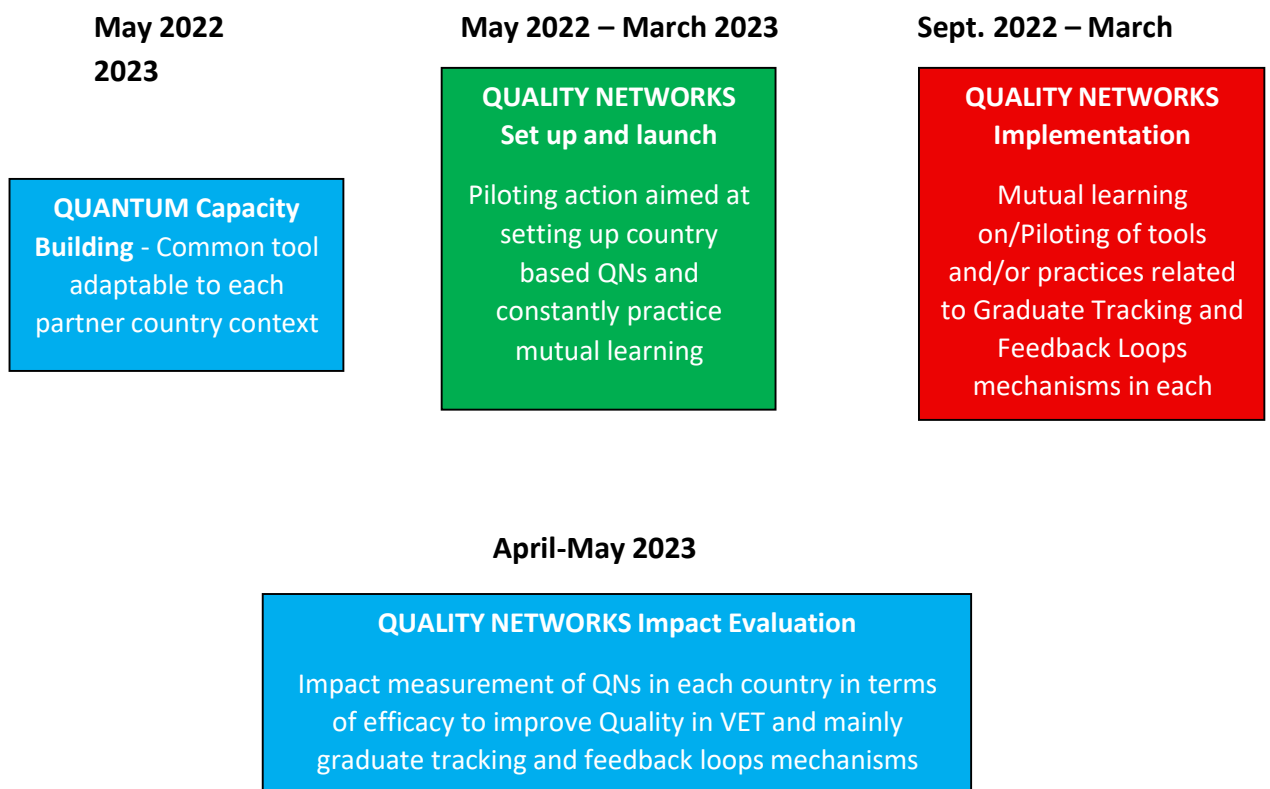
QUANTUM results achieved throughout the project implementation are the following:

- improved access to quality and comparable data about VET provision among the stakeholders within country-based QN and its impacts on employability and other social outcomes in the project countries;
- 4 regional/national networks of VET key actors and stakeholders (providers, education managers, teachers/trainers, learners, policy/decision makers as regional authorities, social partners) set up, implemented and validated in the project countries, using common tools based on feedback loops, graduate tracking arrangements, EQAVET indicators and the European Peer review methodology;
- improved competences of VET professionals and relevant stakeholders and raising their awareness on the active role they can play in contributing to Quality assurance and development in VET;
- defined guidelines for VET key actors and stakeholders, explaining how to set and implement territorial and cross-country networks of VET providers and other VET key actors, and using tools based on feedback loops, graduate tracking arrangements), the EQAVET indicators and European Peer review methodology;
- 4 training courses designed, piloted and validated, one in each project country, on the basis of a new training curriculum for VET professionals, aimed at the Quality Network approach and the EU context of quality assurance in VET,
- two transnational trainings for the project staff in all 4 partner countries designed, piloted and validated, aimed at the methodological framework for implementing QNs at national level and the first results of QNs implementation of national level in order to check the effectiveness/efficacy of this implementation and apply any preventive/corrective measures;
- a proposal on designing a European multi-stakeholder network defined through the cooperation among partners and with the Stakeholders' Committee, with the aim to improve the relevance and efficacy of VET provision with regard to its impact on employability and other social outcomes;
- enhanced partners' staff competences related to the specific project topics and to issues related to transnational cooperation as project management, team working, management of intercultural groups, problem solving.

It is expected that - with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders - the Quality Network methodology developed by the QUANTUM project can positively influence the established procedures for monitoring and evaluation of vocational education and training programmes in line with the initial goals of the project:

- project IOs used and improved in partners' institutional activities within VET so to be further systematised at policy and providers level for improving the relevance and efficacy of VET provision and its contribution to employability in Slovakia, Austria, Italy, Portugal;
- project outcomes and results used to inform possible reform of financial support mechanisms at the level of secondary school and other VET providers' founders to motivate them to set up QA systems;
- project outcomes and results presented to the respective EQAVET NRPs of each of the partners' country involved and the EQAVET network with the aim of informing about new practices implemented through VET multi-stakeholder approaches.

Timeline of the project



Promoting a Transnational Peer Learning among QNs members

The capacity building of QNs members is not the only method of training and active engagement for the members in view of the establishment and further development of QNs in each of the country involved. Coherently with the renewed attention on the methodology of the Peer Review as per the Council Recommendation of 24 November 2020 on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience 2020/C 417/0, stakeholders taking part in the QNs were invited to benefit of transnational peer learning experiences. Such alignment of

approach also serves as motivational factor for the stakeholders engaged at local, regional and national level in Quality Networks.

A **transnational dimension** has been thus ensured, to give QNs members a concrete opportunity to practice and reinforce some of the key competences in a stimulating European environment, characterised by different cultural backgrounds and VET quality assurance systems. By participating to this transnational experience, stakeholders have become more aware of and informed about:

- Coherence between the Quality Networks approach and the current EU policies; in VET
- The relevance of the EU Peer Review methodology for VET providers, according to specific experiences carried out at Country level (i.e. in Slovakia);
- Effective communication with other relevant professionals in VET field;
- Quality Network further sustainability, after the QUANTUM project completion.

The Transnational Peer Learning Activity has been thus delivered with reference to the following characteristics:

- It is a Transnational exchange and peer learning opportunity among similar members of QUANTUM QNs from each country involved. Thus, participants should consider themselves as source of inspiration and knowledge as well as recipients of learning and improvements.
- It is aimed at reinforcing and increasing the competences above listed, with reference to VET Quality Assurance systems in each country involved.

A selected group of stakeholders from each Quality Network at country level, was involved in the Transnational Peer Learning activity. The participants were selected in line with the common criteria which included their capacities to utilize the knowledge obtained and further support the development of the network in the national context.

As a result, from the Peer Learning Activity held in Bratislava several insights about how to ensure further sustainability to the Quality Networks at Country level have been provided and discussed, leading to a concrete possibility to consolidate the Networks functioning in a mid-term perspective.



2. Achievements of the Quality Networks in each partner country

The implementation of the Quality Networks has been realised with minor gaps across the countries starting from April 2022. Their creation has been marked by the kick-off of the capacity building activities, as described in the IO2 – “Report about training experiences on quality assurance in Europe: Training on Capacity Building for Quality Networks Implementation and Sustainability”, and has been overall very coherent with the expectations set out in the previous chapter. Indeed, in the next pages, it is provided an overview of the actual characteristics and processes of each network and its specific achievements with regard to the context of operation.

In **Slovakia**, the QN has been promoted directly by the public authority – State Vocational Education Institute (ŠIOV) – and put into practice as a systematic model for cooperation between VET providers, enterprises, education and training policymakers, and other stakeholders. The aim of the Quality Network was set in strengthening trust and facilitating mutual learning and inspiration to share VET quality assurance practices at national and international level. Membership has been on a voluntary basis, offering the members possibilities of further professional development and other benefits impacting their institutional and personal performance. Specifically, the following results were achieved at the country level:

Short term – during project implementation

1. Strengthening trust and facilitating mutual learning and sharing of VET Quality assurance practices at national and international level.
2. Participating in national and international dialogue on quality assurance in vocational education and training (VET)
3. Participating in training courses on quality assurance (national and international)
4. Identification of new training needs relating to quality assurance of VET providers
5. Direct dialogue with VET quality assurance experts

Long term – project sustainability

1. Consolidating a systematic model for cooperation between VET providers, enterprises, education and training policy makers and other stakeholders
2. Enhanced professional capacity of institutions and individuals in quality assurance measures, e.g. advancing the peer review methodology, introduction to graduate tracking
3. Enhanced training offer on the national level based on the identified training needs within the network members.
4. Opportunity to participate in study visits related to quality assurance abroad
5. Mutual learning and sharing of quality assurance practices at national and international level
6. International cooperation and opportunities for future cooperation with foreign organizations

Similarly, in **Italy** the process of QN creation and implementation has been co-promoted by a regional level policy-maker – Regione Umbria, and a VET provider – FORMA.Azione. Such cooperation is however distinctive in the framework of the QUANTUM project and has paved the way for mixed forms of engagement on the QN’s members, depending on the specific phase. The aim of the QualityNetwork was to make more systematic, shared and structured the relationships among the key VET stakeholders so as to better inform both the planning phase of the training offer and the evaluation phase, especially with reference to employability. Specifically, the following results were pursued by the Italian partners:

Short term – during project implementation:

1. Improved attitude of the QN stakeholders towards dialogue and exchange among them, in relation of Quality in VET;
2. Increased knowledge and competences of QN stakeholders, mainly regional accredited VET Providers, on EQAVET Indicators 5 and 6 and the related measurement and monitoring activities;
3. Increased collaboration among QN stakeholders in providing data and information related to VET provision quality and, specifically to its capacity to positively impact on learners' employability;
4. Improved capacities of Regional accredited VET providers in measuring and monitoring their VET offer in terms of graduates tracking and their employability, according to EQAVET indicators 5 and 6;
5. Possibility to share and adopt, even in an experimental form, a common tool for graduate tracking by the Regional accredited VET providers;
6. Progressions in meaningful and concrete connections between the QUANTM QN and the Regional Observatory of the Labour Market;

Long term – project sustainability:

1. Possibility to periodically inform the Regional Observatory of the Labour Market with relevant data about the employability rate and coherence of the VET provision;
2. Possibility to include the common monitoring tool for graduates tracking among those promoted by the Regional Agency for Active Employment Policies to monitor and assess VET providers' capacities;
3. Possibility to include the capacity to collect data through the common monitoring tool for graduate tracking and learners' employability, among the criteria of efficacy and efficiency of the Regional VET providers' accreditation system.
4. Structured forms of exchange and sharing with other Italian Regions of the monitoring tool adopted for graduate tracking and feedback loops, in relation to EQAVET Indicators 5 and 6
5. Increased demand of training and capacity building opportunities by the Regional accredited VET providers to acquire/reinforce their capacities to measure and monitor graduate tracking and, specifically their employability in terms of both success rate and coherence.

In the case of Austria and Portugal, on the other hand, the QNs have been the result of a bottom-up process. In **Austria**, it has taken the form of a community of practice intended as a voluntary association of stakeholders from the specific field of elementary education who have come together to cooperate, exchange, and network on a local and regional level. In detail, the following list of results were achieved:

Short term – during project implementation

1. Strengthening awareness of the relevance of graduate monitoring for quality assurance and quality improvement of training programmes.
2. Establishing a community of practice for networking and regular exchange.
3. Teaching of competences for the establishment of quality networks and monitoring systems (VET graduate tracking, feedback loops, EQAVET indicators, Alumni Club) to stakeholders.
4. Strengthening the negotiation position of employees through networking throughout Salzburg.

5. Support in the improvement of quality of training and the development of new training courses in the field of elementary education.
6. Support in long-term improvement of framework conditions for employees and trainees (establishment of multi-professional teams, on boarding for newbies, more preparation time, adjustment of the supervision key, training offensive, new trainings, salary reform, ...).

The long-term goal is to reform the system through close cooperation between politics, VET institutions and employee representatives – desirable would be

1. Development of a uniform federal law
2. Improvement of framework conditions for employees and trainees (establishment of multi-professional teams, on boarding for newbies, more preparation time, adjustment of the supervision key, training offensive, new trainings, salary reform, ...).
3. More staff (training offensive, salary reform, changing the image in society, improving general conditions)
4. Building and strengthening mobile multi-professional teams to support the childcare facilities.

In **Portugal**, the QN has been established among the Qualifica centres at national level, which provide VET courses, according to specific training needs in defined economic sectors and validation of non-formal and informal learning. Specifically, the following results were pursued at country level:

Short term – during project implementation

1. Creating an informal network of key stakeholders and testing it within a specific group of Portuguese providers, key-agents in Portugal, namely the Qualifica Centers (QA), state-supported validation and qualification centres for adults, which covers all regions of the country (as mentioned in IO1 strategy of implementation)
2. Implementing through a community of practice approach based upon the Peer Review methodology a dynamic and long-term informal network that can provide insights for the national authorities that regulates and implement VET policies, VET Quality Assurance policies and active labour market policies in Portugal
3. Sharing practices for track and evaluate VET system in Portugal, gathering innovative and local practices developed by each QAs

Long term – project sustainability

1. Supporting the development of the informal network with, at least, one online meeting annually (because QAs are spread across Portugal, the online meetings are essential to bring all QAs together)
2. Using peer learning and peer review methodologies to facilitate mutual learning among network members, at local, regional and national level
3. Within a community of practice approach and an evidence-based approach, developing a long-term improvement of framework conditions that support quality assurance in VET, employability of learners, responsiveness of VET to the changing demands in the labour market and adaptability of the training provision.

To date, all the Networks established have been characterised for being informal, with no special requirements in terms of membership despite the relevance of one's own activity in the VET sector. In the case of formalisation of such structures – as for instance in programme in Austria or Italy – further elaboration in this sense is necessary. The table below gives account of the main specificities of the QNs in partners' countries, which more extensive description can be found below.

Country	Name of the QN	Level of implementation	Educational domain	Members
Austria	CoP – Community of practice for elementary education	Local/provincial	Primary education/VET	49 members [multistakeholder]
Italy	RQ – La Rete per la Qualità dell’Umbria	Regional	VET	27 [multistakeholder]
Portugal	QR – Qualifica em Rede	National	VNFIL	71 members
Slovakia	National informal network	National	VET	33 members [multistakeholder]

The Austrian case: Community of Practice (CoP) in Salzburg

With the objective of supporting the improvement of the quality of the training offer for skills development and the developing new training opportunities coherent with the sector, AK Salzburg has launched the CoP as a framework for key stakeholders from the field of elementary education in relations to the labour market. Specifically, the following actors from the different sectors have been engaged in the cooperation: schools, higher education institutions, politics, interest groups, employees, employers, social authorities, parents.

The term “community of practice” has been used instead of “quality network” because the stakeholders expressed since the beginning of the project that there was no interest in another formal network considering the number of formal networks in the VET/education sector. The softer variant positively responded, on one side, to the capacity and needs of the Chamber of Labour and, in the other, offers added value for the stakeholders. This gave rise to the idea of a community of practice, a loose and living network with no obligations or membership.

Despite the informal features, this CoP has been perceived as positively impacting on the long-term improvement in quality thanks to the set-up of regular contact mechanisms or events and the provision of knowledge (newsletters, monitoring report, interviews).

Among the many input provided by the Curriculum², the modules more relevant for the activity of the Austrian Community of Practice have been those focused on the following topics:

- Quality Network Approach
- Alumni Club and
- Graduate Tracking

The feedback on the individual trainings was very good and it also showed that there is basically a great interest in the topics of quality assurance, quality improvement and networking. In particular, the training day in April on the Quality Network Approach was best received certainly due to the fact that a consistent practical part had been planned with the Barcamp, where stakeholders from all areas

² QUANTUM project, IO2 - Report about training experiences on quality assurance in Europe: Training on Capacity Building for Quality Networks Implementation and Sustainability (2023)

and from the whole province of Salzburg could exchange and network. This – de facto the kick-off of the CoP – has clearly shown that there is a need to adapt to the current conditions in the field of elementary education and first and foremost offer the stakeholders platforms and activities for exchange and networking. The stakeholders confirmed in the feedback that a strong network is important for quality improvement in the long-term run.

The following results have been achieved:

- 49 members in our community, from all over Salzburg, reaching up to 55 participants in the case of specific capacity building appointments;
- Regular communication and information sent out to members, including interviews and news from experts in the sector;
- Increased awareness of the importance of a strong network and its contribution to improving quality in VET;
- Increased mutual learning, exchange of good practice and networking among members who have since the beginning exploited the potential for dissemination of the community;
- Provision of knowledge and tools for quality assurance for implementation in the own institution;
- A new training course for “early childhood specialist”;
- Media presence and political focus on the topic of early childhood and primary education and the skills mismatch characterising the sector;
- Designed and implemented guidance initiatives targeting potential educators and attract them to the sector (Blog-Post in simple language and 3 consultation events reaching out at last 30 people);
- Network meeting of the universities in the field of elementary education;
- Forum on Educational Guidance - within the framework of this forum, all educational counsellors in Salzburg meet four times a year to discuss current issues. The Salzburg Chamber of Labour has held one meeting in the sense of Quantum.

In addition, the idea of building a strong network in the field of elementary education in the near future has been discussed and could be promoted by a group of committed stakeholders – such as the vocational training institute BFI and the City of Salzburg – who are very interested in improving the quality of primary education for workers, children and trainees. The coordinating partner considers it very positively, firmly believing that a spark can ignite great fires. In order to reach that, some of the members have underlined the sharing of enlarging the burden of the coordination efforts to other organisations involved as for the time being, the community has very much lied on the action of AK Salzburg as initial promoter and partner of the QUANTUM project.

The Italian case: RQ – La Rete per la Qualità dell’Umbria

According to the regional policies and aims in VET, the Quality network has identified and detailed the following objectives:

- Identify **virtuous mechanisms on the strategies of an informal network** such as: Recognition of informal (relationship) networks, shared leadership, bottom-up decision-making, Open organizational structure, open communication.
- Identify **equally virtuous mechanisms** on feedback loop within stakeholders belonging to the same system (schools, training institutions), such as: local school councils, vocational

traineeships, exchange and mobility programmes, work-based experiences, alumni networks, work fairs, projects in/with businesses, direct learning at work (in-house learning with schools), work-centred initiatives, at school (expert professionals make their training skills available at school) **and institutional subjects;**

- Identify **virtuous mechanisms on coordination methodologies**

The pathway towards the achievement of those aims started on the 20th of April 2022 and ended in April 2023, with the following milestones:

- April 2022 Kick off meeting aimed at collecting expectations from potential participants/members of the network
- May 2022: 1st training session of the QUANTUM Capacity Building program focused on the preliminary discussion on the RQ and the setting up of common rules of working and shared environment on G Drive
- July 2022: 2nd training session focused on further elaboration on RQ functioning and membership and definition of internal roles. During the training a clearer picture of the background document and policies on Quality Assurance in VET at both National and Regional level has been provided, with additional practices from the regional Chamber of Commerce in relation to a nation-wide training needs and job profiles analysis (Sistema Excelsior)
- September 2022: 3rd Training session aimed at sharing and mutual learning about graduate tracking tools and practices in use in both VET providers and the Regional Agency of Active Labour Policies, also through the establishment of a Working group aimed at defining a common monitoring tool
- January 2023: 3rd Training session focused on the European Peer Review methodology as supporting method to further enhance Quality Assurance mind-set and attitudes in VET organisations. Further development of the monitoring tool
- 28 February 2023 webinar extended to all the training institutions accredited by Umbria Region to present EQAVET and specifically Indicators 5 and 6, by the Coordinator of the Italian EQAVET NRP, the European Peer Review methodology in practice and the testing phase of the common monitoring tool
- March - April 2023 Experimentation of the common monitoring tool by more than 10 accredited VET providers in Umbria.

From September to February the working group has also exchanged and shared several versions of the common monitoring tool to be then tested with interested accredited VET providers.

RQ members are key VET stakeholders from Public Authorities, such as Arpal Umbria (Regional Agency for Active Labour Policies), Regional Councillor's Office of Equality, as well as VET providers representing employers' associations, such as SFCU – Confindustria (Industrial Employers' Association), Apiform (SMEs) and/or Trade Unions, the Regional Chamber of Commerce, Business consultants' associations.

The results achieved in terms of outcomes are:

- Positive reaction to the call to action by the stakeholders;
- Persistent commitment to be part of the QN and keep working with the group;
- Willingness to open access to internal procedures and tools, including to direct competitors (VET providers);
- Capacity to produce a common tool and official presentation at regional level;

- Evolution of public authorities: Region Umbria, ARPAL, Regional Chamber of Commerce (not PA, but institutional body);
- Piloting (on a voluntary basis) of the common monitoring tool completed by at least 11 VET providers.

Output:

- Shared online common space where to upload appropriate resources related to the RQ interests and to work together;
- Common tool for monitoring employment outcomes, piloted by 11 VET providers among those accredited by Regione Umbria.

Further challenges:

- Further push the informal QN in order to be integrated into existing Regional policies
- Planning and implementation of Peer Reviews among members of the QN, given the interest demonstrated by the majority of those participating t both the network and the Multiplier event
- Start a shared path between the Umbria Region, Arpal and stakeholders for the definition and adoption of a common tool for monitoring employment outcomes, also with reference to the 2021-2027 ESF + programming period
- Outline a path of introduction of Peer Review Methodology within accreditation systems as a self-assessment tool.

The Portugal case: QR – Qualifica em Rede

As foreseen in the planning phase of this process, in the case of Portugal the QN has taken advantage of the opportunity provided by the ongoing reform of the Qualifica Centres and the lack of common tools among centres across the country. From a bottom-up perspective, technicians and coordinators of QC at national level were engaged after IO2 training and calling for the participation of public authorities. In order to allow for the participation of professionals from remote areas of the countries, the whole implementation has taken place online, being that positively received by the members. Overall, the professionals engaged have been 72 representatives of the Qualifica Centres, 4 representatives of the EQAVET National Reference Point, the National representative of REFERNET, together with other Public authorities, Social Partners and VET Providers.

Through the creation and implementation of the informal Portuguese Quality Network called “Qualifica em Rede” (QR) starting in February 2023, it has been possible to initiate a shared conversation between CECOIA and national stakeholders on the monitoring system. Members of the network have participated in the co-development of a tool to implement the activities of the QR in a shared space, focusing the following areas: identity, objectives; structure, organization and operation; institutional communication; activities / topics; development of an action plan with meetings, share experiences within QC at national level, reports, transmission to the public authorities; and recommendations from a bottom-up perspective (QC to public authorities). This cooperation is already heading towards a very concrete result, being the production of draft recommendations for policy makers at regional and national level to be developed on the following QR meeting.

Furthermore, the following main results have been achieved in the case of Portugal:

- Reinforced awareness regarding Peer Review Methodology and the importance of networking, communication/collaboration;

- 8 sessions of training to capacity building on implementation and sustainability of Quality Networks creating a common language and terminology to improve efficiency and empower VET actors and stakeholders to create a co-operative environment in QA VET landscape in Portugal;
- Bringing and exploring a bottom-up perspective on VET QA;
- Capacity of the informal network to inform public authorities and policies, thanks to its representativeness and to the presence of key national authorities.

The QR network will be maintained and sustained after the end of the Erasmus + funding, through common work of the members, informal and online meetings of the QR at national level and the production of at least one report annually to inform public authorities on QA issues discussed and worked out during those meetings. Other network activities are supposed to take place according to the agreements done in the first formal meeting of the network, with network coordination rotation among members, in which each QC will organize one meeting and introduce tools/topics to discuss/good practices to share, invite speakers and so on and/or propose other common activities; creation of a corporate image of the network (in progress now).

The Slovak case: a national network for VET providers

The Quality Network is promoted by the NRP EQAVET based at the State Vocational Education Institute (ŠIOV) and has become a powerful tool in the work to improve the quality assurance in VET in the country, as the progressively raising number of members is demonstrating, and ensuring sustainable continuation within the framework of the ŠIOV/NRP EQAVET activities. To date, the Slovakian Quality Network has 33 members, coming from every of 8 regions of Slovakia and representing different professional positions in vocational education and training - teachers, principals, employees of municipalities, or state school inspectors. By joining the Quality Network, VETStakeholders commit to quality assurance under the following conditions:

- Membership of the Quality Network is voluntary and for an indefinite period of time,
- The cooperation of the members of the Quality Network is carried out on the basis of mutual dialogue and needs identification,
- By joining the Quality Network, members express their interest in active cooperation in the development of VET quality through active participation in the professional discussion platform, the implementation of thematic events and other activities aimed at improving the development of VET.

The network creates opportunities for professional development of the parties and individuals involved by offering regular training and peer learning activities relating to quality assurance. Training events and learning mobility are valued by the involved stakeholders as a great opportunity to network, share experiences and gain new inspiration for improving the quality of their work.

Indeed, QN members are regularly informed about all the training, events, and learning mobility in the field of professional education and training and improve their level of awareness and knowledge about quality assurance in VET. Being the QN a safe space to share best practices within Slovakia as well as foreign best practices through mobility consortium, members have been inspired and challenged to use simple quality improvement tools – in particular with regard to quality cycle, peer review and graduate tracking.

As far as concern the learning opportunities/training, these have been focused specifically on the topics such as quality culture in VET, quality assurance and quality improvement tools in VET, training of peers, development of a self-assessment report, preparation and presentation of the peer review visit, creation of the final peer review report.

The QN has achieved the following results so far:

- 33 QN members from all over Slovakia;
- 6 completed learning mobility in the form of job shadowing for 32 persons from VET to CoVEs in Spain, on graduate tracking in Croatia, on quality assurance and regional action planning in Czech Republic;
- Pool of peer reviewers created, an important step towards the systematisation of the Peer Review methodology in the country (overall 30 Peers);
- Number of training sessions for about 200 participants;
- New training content developed and delivered on the national level,
- Continuous interest in the continuation and expansion of the implemented activities;
- Increasing the number of Quality Network members = increased competence of VET actors in quality assurance and thus also better effectiveness and performance of VET.

3. Towards an EU Quality Network: what's next on Quality Assurance in VET at provider level

As an undoubtable first-hand result, QUANTUM project has provided partners and the VET stakeholders activated with motivation and willingness for paving the way to increase and improve collaboration among local and/or national VET stakeholders with the concrete possibility to reach out to a Transnational level, on how to assess the efficacy of VET provision, intended as capacity to positively impact on learners' employability as per Indicators 5 and 6 of EQAVET.

Indeed, through the discussions occurring in the development of the Quality Networks the key stakeholders involved at country level have already shown:

- Positive attitudes towards an open dialogue among the different players intervening in the whole quality process of VET provision starting from training and competence needs, going through the designing phase to the implementation one, and finally the evaluation and review ones.
- Willingness to better shape the set of tools and methods to be used for VET graduates tracking and, consequently to contribute for improving feedback loops mechanisms shared among the different stakeholders at different level of the policy deployment.
- The nature of obstacles faced when systematising and ensuring a real commitment of the stakeholders involved at formal and institutional level rather than at individual/personal level.
- Need of further increased knowledge about EQAVET implementation and, specifically, its set of indicators and related measurements.
- Organisational difficulties and barriers to implementing quality assurance tools without system frameworks providing support for their sustainability.
- Difficulties in engaging the policy level, for instance in Italy the ESF funds Managing Authorities. Thus in effectively producing concrete changes and improvements on VET Quality Assurance mechanisms and methods.

At the same time, VET providers involved, as well as QUANTUM partners, themselves have acquired a clear picture of the importance to further nurture this process of stakeholders' activation and engagement to ease the whole process of ensuring quality in VET provision at local, national and European level.

Learning from what already designed and carried out at European level from a more institutional point of view, with the establishment of the EQAVET Network, VET policy makers in each Member States have found in that network the right informal space to refer to when more exchange, discussion and comparison is needed to effectively work in Quality Assurance, also through peer learning and sharing of good practices.

Bearing that in mind, QUANTUM partners have developed tools and materials that can support the setting up of a European Quality Network that can stem from the experience of the QNs piloted at national/local level through the project implementation, with a view of peer learning and exchanging practices on Quality Assurance in VET, starting from those related to VET graduate tracking and feedback loops mechanisms.

To achieve this goal partners have designed the following steps:

- 1) share a common vision of the possible network to build-up, underlining partners' needs to be a less formal structure, rather more focused on the involvement of relevant VET stakeholders willing to and competent in contributing to ensuring quality in VET provision, particularly with reference to its effectiveness in learners' employability (EQAVET indicators 5 and 6). An *ad hoc* survey has been thus designed and administered to all the stakeholder involved and further education providers not already reached out, at the end of the capacity building process, to collect relevant data and feedback useful for a more concrete co-designing also of the EU Network;
- 2) assess the possibilities currently available at EU and International level in relation to VET and VET Quality Assurance networks among different stakeholders, such as VET institutions, learners'/students' associations, Public Authorities, Employers' and/or companies and companies' associations interested in enhancing VET graduate tracking and feedback loops mechanism among the Quality Assurance priorities in VET at European level with the objective of exploring the possibility of follow-up initiatives at European level and ensure transfer of the practice to VET providers from countries beyond the partner organizations;
- 3) start selecting the most appropriate Network arrangement, according to their needs and objectives, by mapping the different forms available and/or known by them;
- 4) agree on a Roadmap to the EU Quality Network, giving account to the results of the first 3 steps, as a preliminary step of a possible Plan of Action to be developed in the future to make the EU Network a reality. The Roadmap has been shared with the stakeholders participating to the Transnational Peer Learning Activity in Bratislava and is provided in the Annexes.

The QNs in a broader perspective: paving the way towards a European Quality Network in VET

In light of the above described developments and achievements, the QUANTUM consortium is strongly supports the creation of networks with clear objectives within the quality assurance and VET

development frame, and to a certain degree using the peer review methodology. The fact that, in each partner country, each QUANTUM Quality Network focused on a specific sub-sector/location in the education and training framework (VET for Slovakia and Italy, VNFIL in Portugal, professional skills development of teachers) and at different geographical levels (local for Austria, regional for Italy, national for Slovakia and Portugal) is the living proof that the project approach is transferable and usable in different contexts, fields, geographies.

Lastly, all the Quality Networks has engaged in some activities at transnational level to favour the mutual understanding and the learning across the different – but possibly complementary – actions. Specifically:

- Organisation and participation of a 3-day Transnational Peer Learning Activity in Bratislava in November 2022, with the title “MUTUAL LEARNING FOR QNs IMPLEMENTATION” to which participated all the partners and external representatives from the country-based Networks. The training was developed as a peer learning activity in which the different experiences have been shared and all together it has been discussed the idea of a European network to further valorise the achievements of the QUANTUM project.
- Design and distribution of a common survey on the topic of Quality Assurance in VET, including a focus on Peer Review and on the 2 EQAVET indicators targeted by the project (n° 5 and 6). The aims were to, on one side, enlarge the capacity to reach out to stakeholders of the networks and, on the other, to have a better understanding of the level of competences of stakeholders. Results of such survey are provided in the next paragraph below.
- Participation of representatives of the QNs at the final conference held in Salzburg on May 2023, in order to give them the opportunity to see the results of their commitment in the wider picture of the transnational QUANTUM initiative, reinforcing the motivation in being involved and finding inspirations in colleagues’ experiences from other European contexts.

4. Report on the survey on Quality Assurance in VET

During the QNs implementation process at Country level an online survey has been administered with the aim to further investigate the knowledge and competences that VET providers and other relevant stakeholder in the field have in relation to quality assurance in VET and, specifically, practices, tools and systems in place so as to better respond to the Council recommendation on VET³. In addition, as already mentioned above the survey allowed QUANTUM partners to reach out to new relevant VET providers.

The survey is composed of 28 questions, where only one open question is present in relation to the Quality Cycle and also in some questions the option “Other” leaves room to respondents to further elaborate, by providing examples from their own experience.

In addition, what is worth reporting is that in all the countries respondents chose to skip almost the same questions, in some cases in a high number. The questions that have been mostly skipped were related to the practices in place in respondents’ organisations with reference to feedback loop mechanisms, who to involve in, how and what to modify according to the input received by the specific target groups interviewed.

It seems that once the questions try to investigate more in depth the specificities of what and how organisations do to effectively assure quality in their VET provision, they prefer not to answer; or could be also that in these cases the respondents were more from other stakeholders’ category, thus effectively not able to provide an appropriate answer since they are not designing and delivering any training directly.

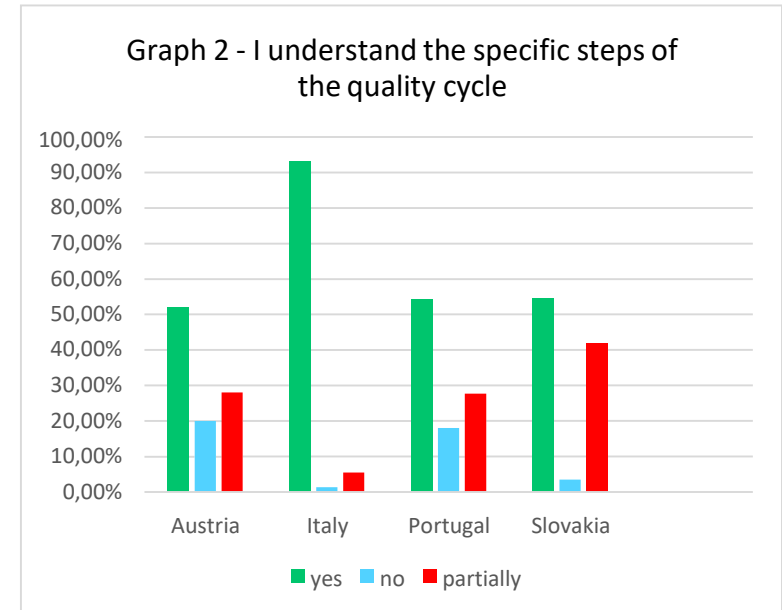
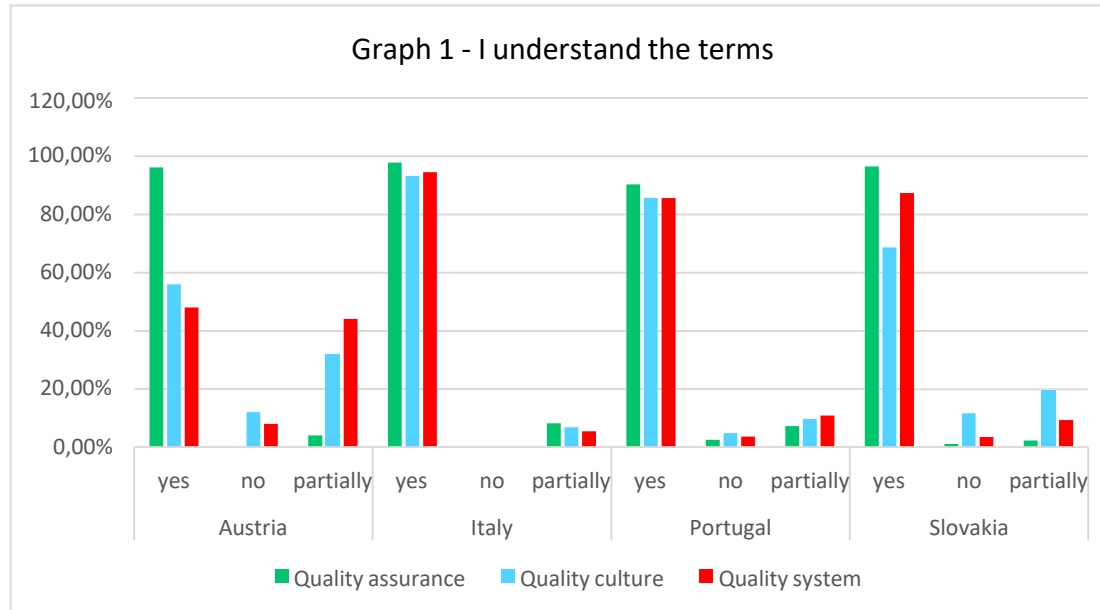
The survey has been administered from the end of February 2023 until mid of May 2023.

The questionnaires have been greatly accepted giving account of a quite relevant interest from the key actors involved, that in total have been 267, divided among the partner countries as follows:

- Slovakia 86 respondent
- Portugal 83 respondents
- Italy 73 respondents;
- Austria 25 respondents.

³ Council Recommendation of 24 November 2020 on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32020H1202%2801%29>

The first 2 questions were focused on investigating not only the familiarity, but also the concrete knowledge of the respondents with some specific Quality concepts, such as Quality Assurance, Quality Culture, System of Quality (Question 1) and Quality Cycle (Question 2). In all countries there have been respondents that were either familiar or partially familiar with these concepts, with a generally low amount of negative answers (see graphs 1 and 2).

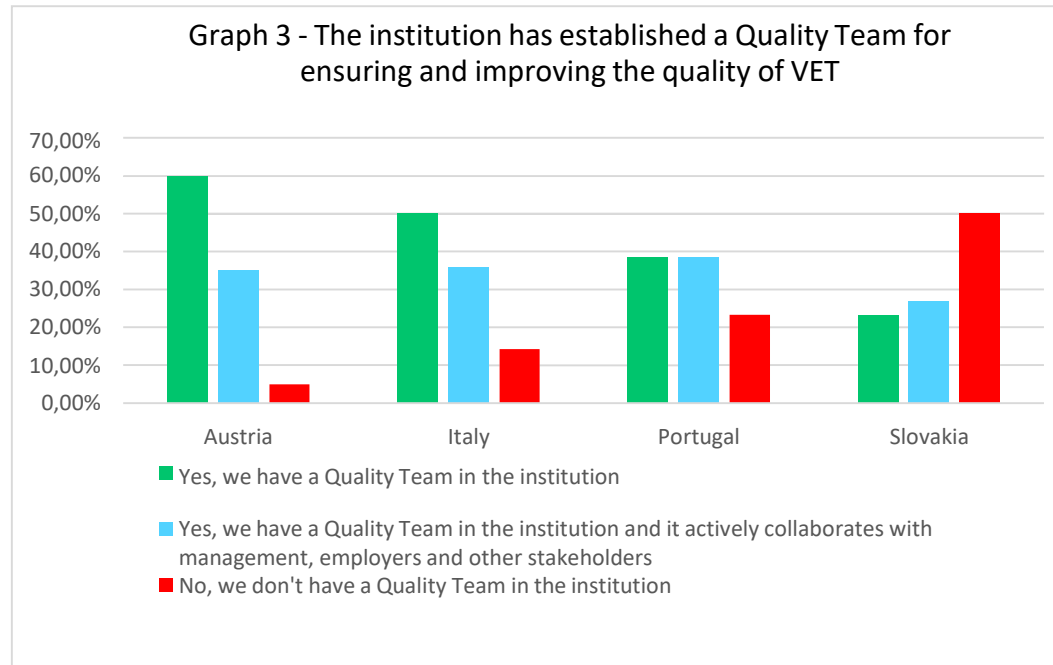


Then, starting from question 3 which is the only open one asking which is the final phase of the Quality Cycle, a common phenomenon of skipping the answers started for all the countries, with less relevance for Italy. This could be related to the difficulty to answer to such specific questions that, progressing in the survey are increasingly becoming more focused on quality assurance practices, internal monitoring and evaluation procedures which could be not the job tasks of the respondents.

For what concerns the availability in the organisation of appropriate competences on Quality Assurance, in terms of either a specific person in charge of or a quality group, Austria, Italy and Portugal reported that there is some kind of responsibility about Quality Assurance (respectively 60%, followed by 50% and

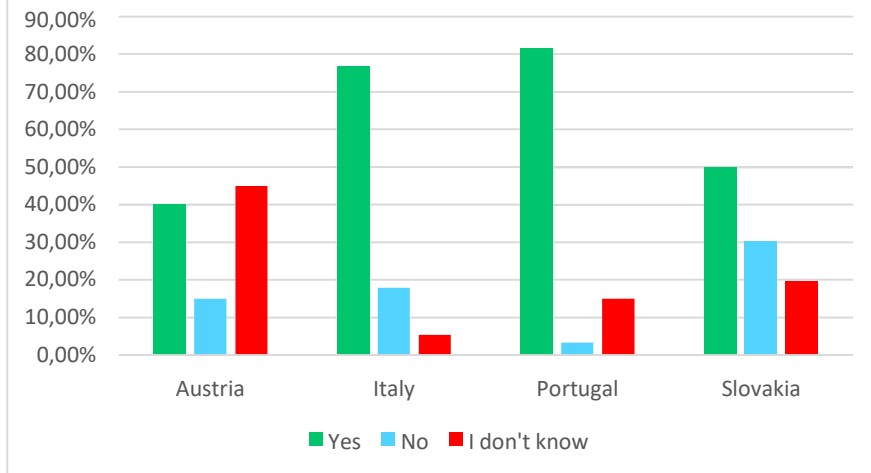
39%; see graph 3). It is worth mentioning that Slovakia included an extra question in the survey⁴ in the context of the project follow-up activities planned in Slovakia in the near future (the upcoming national ESF-funded project focusing on the introduction of quality management at all levels of VET).

When asked if the organizations have developed an action plan, both Portugal and Italy responded positively with respectively 82% and 77%. The other two countries provided overall less positive answers, with 30% of the Slovakian respondents stating that no action plan was developed and 45% of the Austrian ones sharing that they do not know. All the countries show positive data about how much organisations inform their staff on Quality Assurance, led by Italy with 83%, followed by Austria with 80%, Slovakia with 67% and Portugal with 63%; see graphs 4 and 5).

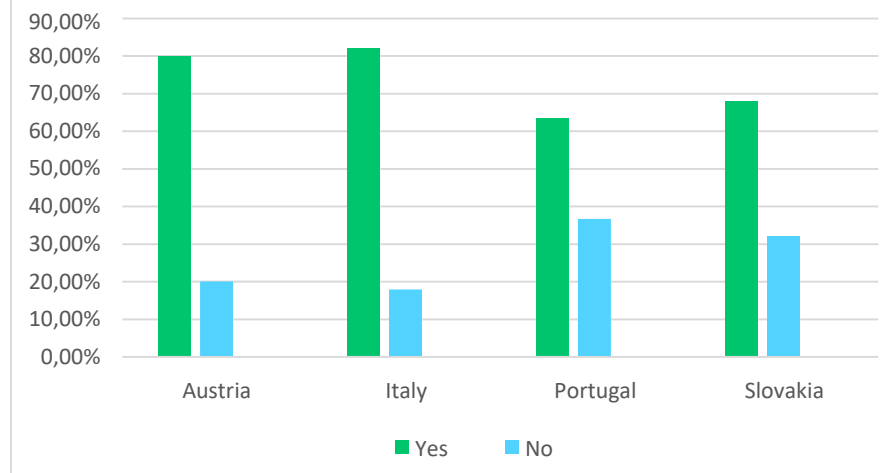


⁴ The extra question in the Slovak survey: The institution has established a Quality Team for the purpose of quality assurance and quality improvement of VET

Graph 4 - The institution has developed an action plan



Graph 5 - The institution informs and trains its employees on the topic of Quality Assurance



How the organisations surveyed work with data collection and VET impact on employability

The following questions are aimed at investigating different aspects of effective quality assurance in VET provision. For the purpose of this analysis, they have been divided into three thematic sets:

- a) **questions 8-12: feedback.** Which practices of feedback collection are in place in the organisations surveyed in each county, mainly from external stakeholders, such as companies, learners, graduated students; how the feedback collection is carried out and through what kind of tools and scheduled plans;
- b) **questions 13-20: self-assessment.** These questions investigate the existence and functioning of an internal self-evaluation system, including eventually feedback collection from internal stakeholder (teachers/trainers, other staff) and their continuous professional development, being a key factor directly influencing the quality of VET provision;
- c) **questions 21-28: impact.** This set aims to evaluate the VET impact on learners' employability and the capacity of the organisations to regularly consult with relevant stakeholders, also in terms of appropriate preliminary needs analysis and overall quality evaluation, including investment on making VET more attractive and better accepted by learners and potential ones.

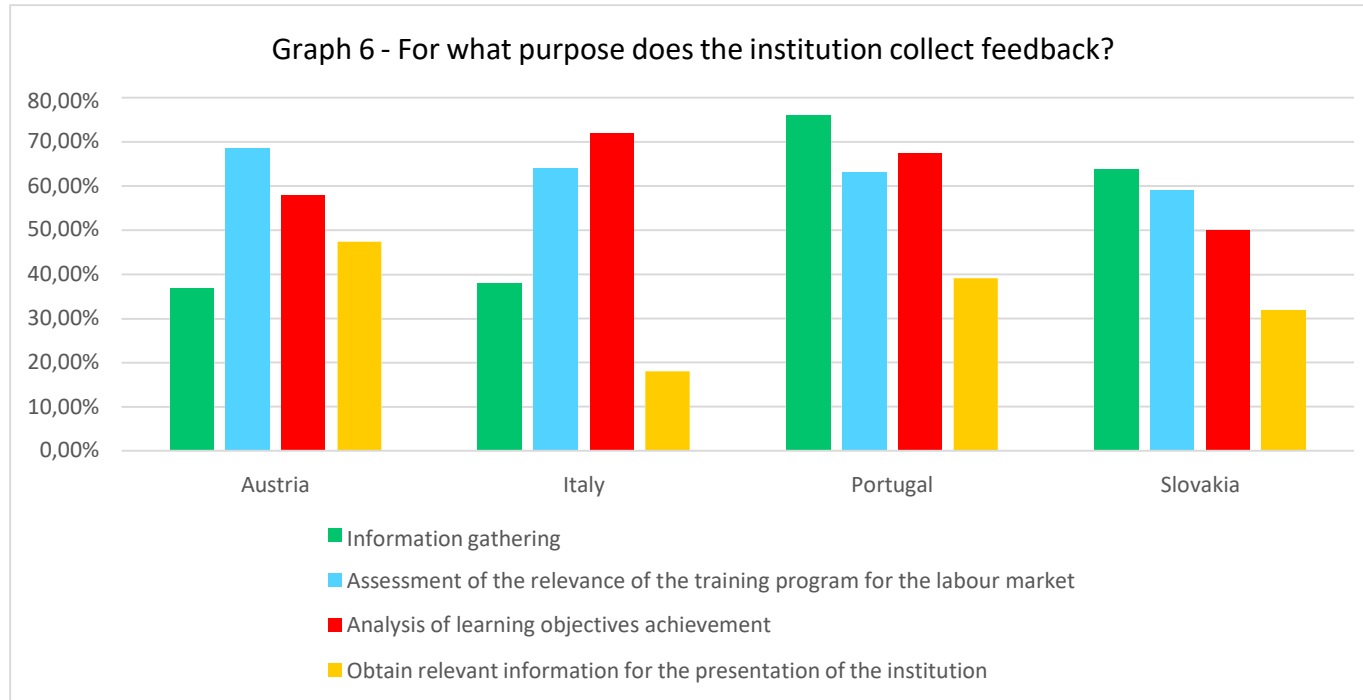
a) Questions 8-12: feedback

Here a table summarizing the main answers about feedback collection with a comparison among the different countries involved.

Country	Feedback collection process in place - % of organisations	From whom	How (tools, methods, practices)	Objectives	Time span
Austria	100%	84% from trainers or other didactic staff, 52% from learners	Through questionnaires for the 94%	68% to assess the consistency/relevance of the training program with the labour market needs and 58% to assess the level of achievement of the expected learning outcomes	More times during the year or at least once a year, both 37%
Italy	93%	74% learners, 64% companies, 56% trainers or	Through questionnaires for the 96%	72% to assess the level of achievement of the expected learning outcomes and 64% to assess the	More times during the year (54%) or at least once a year (40%)

		other didactic staff		consistency/relevance of the training program with the labour market needs	
Portugal	83%	93% learners, 83% trainers or other didactic staff, 46% companies	Through questionnaires for the 89%. While other forms are relevant for almost the 20% and are related to phone calls, internal meetings, informal contacts.	76% to collect information, 67% to assess the level of achievement of the expected learning outcomes and 63% to assess the consistency/relevance of the training program with the labour market needs	More times during the year (52%) or at least once a year (41%)
Slovakia	80%	88% from trainers or other didactic staff, 77% from learners 54% from companies	through interviews 79% and through questionnaires 70%	64% to collect information, 59% to assess the consistency/relevance of the training program with the labour market needs and 50% to assess the level of achievement of the expected learning outcomes	Once a year (70%)

What clearly emerges is the systematic approach that organisations from all countries have towards feedback collection, on a yearly basis and mainly through questionnaires that are the most adopted tools, except for Slovakia where interviews are the most used. Interesting also the aim of the feedback collection that it is not only directed towards collecting information (for both Portugal and Slovakia this is the main goal, respectively 76% and 64%), but also towards assessing the consistency/relevance of the training program with the labour market needs and the level of achievement of the expected learning outcomes (see graph 6).



b) Questions 13-20: self-assessment

This positive attitude towards measurement for evaluating purposes it is also evident through the analysis of the questions from 13 to 20 about internal self-assessment process, including the evaluation of teachers' performances. It is important to underline that only in the case of Austria, the percentage of

respondents having a self-assessment process in place is equivalent to those who do not have one, thus all the next details about its functioning are provided only by 8 respondents, while questions from 17 to 20 are then answered each by an average of 18 respondents out of 25. In the table below are reported for each country some facts and figures about the persons involved and the aims of the self-assessment conducted, together with details about tools used and stakeholders involved in evaluating teachers'/trainers' performances specifically.

Country ⁵	Self-evaluation process	Persons involved/addressed	Time span	Aims of the analysis	Tools-methods to evaluate teachers/trainers	Stakeholders involved
Austria	Yes 42% Adoption in 2 years 16% No 42%	75% from specific profile (i.e. Quality Assurance Responsible)	50% yearly 37,5% with different timing	In 50% cases the analysis is made available to the personnel, thus for personal improvement 25% use it for external evaluation purpose, like Peer Review	89,5 % give regular feedback to teachers/trainers, mainly through questionnaires (88%) and anonymous surveys (35%)	70,5% VET providers' management 65% learners
Italy	Yes 70% Adoption in 2 years 19% No 11%	51,4% involve all the personnel, while 46% involve only some specific profile (i.e. Quality Assurance Responsible)	Once a year 91,4% while around the 8,6% will adopt it by the next two years.	85,7% adopt a plan of action according to the analysis for organisational self-improvement In 51,7% cases the analysis is made available to the personnel, thus for personal improvement	74,5 % give regular feedback to teachers/trainers, mainly through questionnaires (89,4%) and interviews to learners, companies (60,5%)	68% VET providers' management 58% learners
Portugal	Yes 73% Adoption in 2 years 14,5% No 12,5%	71,8% involve all the personnel, while around 26% involve only some specific profile (i.e. Quality Assurance	Once a year 87% while around the 13% will adopt	In around 67% cases the analysis is made available to the personnel, thus for personal improvement.	Around 72 % give regular feedback to teachers/trainers, mainly through questionnaires (78%), interviews to	73% VET providers' management 51% learners, 40,5%

⁵ This section of the survey received less answers than the other ones.

		Responsible) or others, specifically learners and pedagogical team	it by the next two years.	Around 56,7% adopt a plan of action according to the analysis for organisational self-improvement	learners, companies (35%), anonymous surveys (30%)	employers, around 38% colleagues
Slovakia	Yes 60% Adoption in 2 years 29% No 11%	Mostly, it involves the entire staff (88% of respondents) and in the 21.2% of cases also other external groups (mainly students).	Once a year 91% while around the 9% will adopt it by the next two years.	In around 79% cases the analysis is made available to the personnel, thus for personal improvement. Around 42% adopt a plan of action according to the analysis for organisational self-improvement	75 % give regular feedback to teachers/trainers, mainly through interviews to learners, companies (85%), questionnaires (39%) and anonymous surveys (30%)	93% VET providers' management 56% colleagues, around 46% employers and 41,5% learners

For what concerns data about the staff's professional development as part of the organisations' investment in ensuring quality also through professionalization, it is worth mentioning that all the respondents from the different countries show a high percentage of internal training activities going from 100% of the respondents in Austria to 94% of Italy, 89% of Slovakia and 81% of Portugal. In addition, data shows also a high percentage of staff participating in independently chosen training activities according to one's individual needs and preferences (Italy 94%, followed by Slovakia 89% and Portugal 87%, while no answers were provided by Austrian respondents).

c) Questions 21-28: impact

Concerning the feedback collection in relation to employability of the training, thus stakeholders' consultation for both overall training quality evaluation and labour market needs and trends continuous monitoring, some data are missing due to a consistent number of respondents skipping questions, as reported in the table below. Nevertheless, it is interesting to have an overall picture of what kind of stakeholders are generally asked to provide feedback in the different countries, also in view of a possible exchange of good practices.

Country	Stakeholders involved in quality evaluation, including labour market needs	Feedback on employability also in terms of skills used	Impact of the feedback collected	Participation of vulnerable groups
Austria	21% of respondents ask feedback from stakeholders of which employers for both quality evaluation (59%) and labour market needs (89%). For quality evaluation also learners (around 92%) and ex-learners (around 58%) are asked. In addition, Public Authorities are also consulted on training needs (around 68%) and Universities (around 47%).	42% of respondents ask for feedback on employability, while around 37% do not. About skills usability at work, the majority of respondents does not know about (around 37%), while responses Yes and No are equivalent (around 31,5%).	The impact of the feedback is for the 83% in terms of modification on internal planning and for around the 67% on the staff professional development. 50% in terms of modification on the collaboration with employers	Only 15% of the respondents said that they are not specifically working with inclusion of vulnerable groups, while 79% and 68% of the respondents said that they either create specific opportunities for disadvantaged groups or work for “inclusion for all” programmes.
Italy	63% of respondents ask feedback from stakeholders, of which employers for both quality evaluation and labour market needs for a percentage of around 82%. For quality evaluation also learners (around 67%) and ex-learners (around 62%) are asked. In addition, Public Authorities are also consulted on training needs (50%).	Around 69% of respondents ask for feedback on employability, while 25% does not. Around 52% also ask for usability at work of the skills acquired through the training.	⁶ The impact of the feedback is for the 60% of the respondents on the staff professional development, for the 52% in terms of modification on the collaboration with employers and for the 48% in terms of modification on internal planning	Only 25% of the respondents said that they are not specifically working with inclusion of vulnerable groups

⁶ Only 25 answers out of 73.

Portugal	78% of respondents ask feedback from stakeholders, almost exclusively learners in case of quality evaluation (97,5%), while Public Authorities (85,7%) and Employers (81,6%) for labour market trends and needs. on the quality evaluation. Employers are also relevant for quality evaluation (45%).	78% of respondents ask for feedback on employability, while only 7% does not. Around 57% also ask for usability at work of the skills acquired through the training.	The impact of the feedback is for around 52% of the respondents on the staff professional development, for the 48% in terms of modification on internal planning modification and around 41% on the collaboration with employers.	Only 18% of the respondents said that they are not specifically working for including vulnerable groups, while data are almost equivalent for respondents who said that they either create specific opportunities for disadvantaged groups 73,5% or work for “inclusion for all” programmes 71,5%.
Slovakia	Yes/No with the same number of answers (38%), in relation to stakeholders’ feedback collection on quality evaluation. Students are very relevant for quality evaluation (90,5%). For what concerns labour market analysis Public Authorities are consulted by 58,5% together with Universities (49%).	84% of respondents ask for feedback on employability, while only 14,5% does not. About usability at work of the skills acquired through the training answers yes (41,8%) and no (40%) are almost equivalent.	The impact of the feedback is exactly the same in terms of percentage of respondents for what concerns staff professional development and modification on the collaboration with employers (59%). While the highest percentage is registered for the impact in terms of modification on internal planning (68%).	Only 11% of the respondents said that they are not specifically working for including vulnerable groups, while data are exactly the same for respondents who said that they either create specific opportunities for disadvantaged groups or work for “inclusion for all” programmes 64%.

What emerged from the survey is a **positive attitude of the respondents towards the adoption of monitoring and measuring procedures to better inform the decision making process** as a matter of Quality Assurance, but also as a fruitful management approach aimed at taking full advantage of evidence-based practices. This is supported by the answers provided in relation to the use of feedback collected from different relevant stakeholders which effectively show a **high number of respondents who ask feedback about the overall quality of the VET offer**, but also on its impact in terms of employability, according to EQAVET Indicators 5 and 6.

In addition, **the capacities to use data and feedback to self-reflect and self-assess the actual practices and how to learn from them to improve the training offer and the relevance of it for learners' employability is evident**, also considering that the majority of the respondents stated that the responsibility of Quality Assurance is clearly assigned and results are shared among the staff. Of course, depending of the different kind of respondents in each country and the possibility to skip questions while completing the survey, **it seems that there is room for improvement especially with reference to investment on a more structured and embedded quality analysis procedures within the usual management processes.**

The main driver for the internal training activity, the Continuous Professional Development, seems to be a relevant investment for many respondents, but the survey data show room for improvement for example in how the institutions are working to increase the attractiveness of and the awareness about VET. While the majority of them carry out informational and promotional activities, the collection of feedback on such activities and their reach could be further developed⁷.

The survey has proven to be effective also in raising awareness of the respondents on aspects such as the importance of self-assessment, collaboration with relevant stakeholders both for training needs analysis and feedback loops related to learners' employability, and to point out the strategic feature that Quality Assurance systems can have for VET providers and the active labour policies actors.

⁷ The institution collects feedback on information and promotion activities: Austria 53%; Italy 38%; Portugal 41%; Slovakia 32%. The institution monitors the reach of information and promotion activities: Austria 58%; Italy 35%; Portugal 49%; Slovakia 43%.

5. Lessons learnt

According to the indicators set in the QUANTUM project proposal to measure the impact of the QNs at country level here are some of the results per country, collected through a final feedback questionnaire. All the results are related to the stakeholders involved either as learners or active promoters. Thus, to avoid redundancy in the table below we only report a brief description of the expected indicators, considering that they all refer to the above mentioned target groups:

Country	Level of commitment and involvement in Capacity Building	Level of competences, mainly related to quality assurance acquired	Satisfaction level for the training activities	Level of satisfaction with reference to monitoring tool developed, if relevant	Level of feedback provision for assessing QUANTUM activity
Austria	In principle, there is interest in the topic, but there are already many formal networks and few resources for a further QN	Good level (see also the results of the survey above reported)	High level of satisfaction	Not relevant	Willingness to transform the community of practice into a formal network in the long term is tangible
Italy	Positive reaction to the call to action by the stakeholders	Good level (see also the results of the survey above reported)	High level of satisfaction, although difficulties in in person participation still remain	Capacity to produce a common tool and official presentation at regional level Piloting (on a voluntary basis) of the common monitoring tool completed by at least 11 VET providers	Persistent commitment to be part of the QN and keep working with the group Willingness to open access to procedures and tools, including to direct competitors (VET providers)
Portugal	QR informal meeting and implementation (high level of commitment)	High level, especially regarding specific mechanism related with QC target-group of PT QN	High level of satisfaction (see IO2 report on QUANTUM training activities)	QR tool developed and in-progress	QR implementation towards policy level (a bottom-up perspective)
Slovakia	High level of commitment and involvement	High level of competences, mainly related to the peer review methodology	High level of satisfaction	Not relevant	Persistent commitment to be part of the QN and keep working with the group

6. Final recommendations for VET stakeholders based on the experience of the QNs

- ➔ Invest effort in identifying the most relevant and interested stakeholders in order to kick-off and progress with a stable cooperation among stakeholders as *Few Multipliers can have a big impact!*
- ➔ Considering the informal character of the QNs, it is recommended to foresee and agree on mechanisms to share the coordination duties and related responsibilities among all the members (e.g., rotation of the coordination role, shared distribution of tasks, small coordination group instead of 1 professional/organisation). In doing so, and at the same time, different stakeholders will be empowered, reinforcing their sense of ownership, and improving the capacity of the Network to keep working sustainably.
- ➔ Plan and schedule at least an annual meeting/event, preferably in presence, but also online if it is more feasible, to give space for the QNs members to publicly inform on their progress. The focus should be particularly related with quality achievements, especially EQAVET indicators 5 and 6 and/or other results that could be relevant for other VET providers or appropriately inform Policy Makers to further progress on Quality Measurement in VET.
- ➔ Start conceiving and planning, together with the relevant PAs and Institutions, a Quality in VET day/week or event in general, so as to further nurture the networking process. For that, need to engage with more and new potential stakeholders, raise public awareness of the importance of investing in high quality level of VET provision, to make VET more attractive.
- ➔ Keep developing the transnational dimension of both the QNs and the learning activities, also through specific mobility actions or through webinars to make quality Assurance competences more innovative and able to better contributing in shaping the systems at local and National level.
- ➔ Promote the Peer Review methodology as a QA mechanism capable of fostering the cooperation between stakeholders in VET and providing an opportunity for mutual learning and professional growth.
- ➔ Adopt an open space and time approach to favour the participation of the different stakeholders and meet their needs/expectations. It has proven to be an accelerator for opportunities.

Annexes

1. Self-assessment questionnaire (to be used pre and post activities)
2. Map of stakeholders
3. Quality Area 14
4. Methodological Guidelines to strengthen Quality Network functioning
5. Roadmap for setting up a EU network for Quality Assurance in VET
6. Survey on Quality Assurance in VET

ANNEX 1 | Self-assessment questionnaire

Information on the respondent

Organization

Name and Surname

Preliminary self-assessment

I am currently able to:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Actively contribute to Quality Network setting up										
2. Implement the EQAVET framework at provider level (within VET provision)										
3. Organise and apply the EU Peer Review process										
4. Manage Quality Assurance practices and arrangements for tracking graduates										
5. Design and implement VET graduate tracking measures										
6. Collect and systematise data related to VET graduate										
7. Manage QA practices and arrangements for establishing feedback loops										
8. Design and implement feedback loops among VET Key Stakeholders										
9. Identify offline and online feedback loops tools and procedures										
10. Network with VET key actors and stakeholders										
11. Communicate effectively with other relevant professionals in VET field										

The Self-Assessment has been translated into partners' language to facilitate stakeholders' participation and distributed via Google Form.

ANNEX 2 | Map of stakeholders

Annex 2 QUANTUM PROJECT QUALITY NETWORK Mapping of Stakeholders							
N.	Organisation represented	Name and surname	Role	Activities developed with reference to QA, Graduate Tracking and Feedback Loops mechanisms	Activities and tools used to monitor and evaluate graduate/beneficiaries employment rate.	Email	Phone
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							

ANNEX 3 | Quality Area 14

Quality Area 14: Quality management and evaluation		
Criteria	Examples of indicators (not prescribed, the proposed indicators can be (ex)changed)	Sources of evidence
Satisfaction of the stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collection of information: The QN gathers relevant information about the satisfaction of the members and other key stakeholders (VET providers, social partners, public authorities in the field of VET, EQAVET NRP, learners, etc.) regularly and systematically (feedback culture). The information is collected and used for reflecting on the QN activities, goals and performances. Satisfaction of members and other relevant stakeholders: The members and other relevant stakeholders are satisfied with the QN approach and functioning adopted. 	Flash feedback results Satisfaction questionnaire Map of stakeholders
Systematic quality management system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> QA-system: The QN runs a coherent, holistic and systematic quality assurance system that forms an integral part of the institution's policy cycle and organisation. Quality goals, responsibilities and liabilities are defined. Realisation of quality goals: Management works systematically on implementing the formulated quality goals. Assessing the educational quality by including relevant stakeholders: The relevant stakeholders involved are actively contributing to the assessment of the quality of the education provided and their expectations and aspirations are taken into consideration in establishing the quality goals. 	Country report QN Action plan or similar document outlining the agreements among the QN members Interviews with QUANTUM partners & stakeholders Self-assessment (ex-ante and ex-post)
Capacity building of the stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular feedback: The vast majority of personnel (managers, teachers) obtain regular feedback from different sides. They appreciate and use the feedback as a valuable source for continuous learning. Improvement: The feedback is used to improve individual performance. There are various improvement measures based on the feedback results in place. 	Interviews with QUANTUM partners & stakeholders Self-assessment (ex-ante and ex-post)
QN evaluation and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> QN evaluation: The QN conducts evaluations on a regular basis, which ensures the development process is continuous (action plan). Evaluation concept: The QN has defined a formal evaluation concept. Periods, procedures, selection of evaluation topics, contributions etc. are defined and transparent. Competences and responsibilities are determined. The evaluation concept and procedures adopted by the QN are coherent with the indications provided in the IO1. 	Country report QN Action plan or similar document outlining the agreements among the QN members Interviews with QUANTUM partners & stakeholders

ANNEX 4 | Methodological Guidelines to strengthen Quality Network functioning

QNs functioning is mainly based on the key stakeholders' involvement as active players in establishing profitable and long lasting relationships to constantly monitor and measure VET efficacy and impact at local and National level. As already detailed in the QNs Guidelines these relationships are based on and should be continuously nurtured by trustiness and mutual reinforcement among the key stakeholders. In view of ensuring these elements of trustiness and mutual reinforcement, QUANTUM partners found particularly relevant and consistent using the European Peer Review methodology. Indeed, it can be considered the reference method to be taught among the different Quality Assurance approaches practiced in evaluating the quality of VET, especially thanks to the meaningful combination of self-evaluation and external evaluation by a group of Peers that characterises the methodology.

In addition, to further investigate the opportunity and real commitment of the stakeholders involved to use graduate tracking and feedback loops mechanisms as tools for quality assurance in VET, within the QUANTUM project lifecycle a common checklist was defined to self-evaluate their capacities and perspectives towards the expected achievements by them. The check list, built with reference to the Peer Review methodology and specifically the Quality Areas which describe criteria and indicators relevant for (self)peer-assessing quality assurance attitudes and competences, is the first phase of the internal assessment within the QNs.

But, why using the European Peer Review methodology? It is a Quality Assurance method that has proven to be particularly effective when the peer learning dimension and the need of trustiness among the key players involved is highly required, rather than an opportunity to improve and, eventually, learn from own mistakes or others' good practices.

The European Peer Review is a form of external evaluation with the aim of supporting the reviewed VET or adult learning provider in its quality assurance and quality development efforts.

An external group of experts, called Peers, is invited to assess the quality of selected areas of the VET. During the evaluation process, the Peers visit the organisation's venues, laboratories, classrooms and conduct interviews, focus groups or adopt any other form of collecting evidence about how the VET is taking care of Quality.

Peers are external but work in a similar environment and have specific professional expertise and knowledge of the evaluated subject, acquired through an appropriate training. They are independent and "persons of equal standing" with the persons whose performance is being reviewed.

Evaluation within the Network

The rationale behind the adoption of the European Peer Review methodology to assess the impact produced by the QNs in each piloting country lays on its clear focus on avoiding any inspective approach while making value out of a genuine attitude of the Peers involved in promoting and supporting the continuous improvement as a managerial approach towards quality assurance in VET

While we are establishing meaningful relationships among VET key stakeholders – who are interested and committed to measure, monitor and try to improve the quality of VET both at provider and system level – we support their work by building their capacities on Quality Assurance practices based on mutual learning,

reciprocal trustiness, common aims and understanding. The expected benefit to be then measured is related to long lasting cooperation models that should continue working, beyond the QUANTUM project piloting.

In addition, as already mentioned in the methodological section, partners have decided to start preparing the QNs for their setting up, during the Capacity Building activity, by sharing with the stakeholders a check list as a starting point to self-evaluate the capacities and skills available among the actors involved, to effectively ensure a renewed approach to Quality Assurance in VET, with a specific focus on graduate tracking and feedback loops mechanisms.

The check list is conceived as a set of statements (if not questions) that stakeholders should reflect on together so as to clearly state what they can design, plan, do and achieve as future Quality Network within the project piloting lifespan, considering their commitments and expectations, at both personal and organisational level (please consider that more details are available in IO2 “QUANTUM Project Common curriculum, including learning outcomes, training plan, and learning materials”).

Once established that the Peer Review will support the common work of the QNs, further questions arise, also in view of the impact measurement foreseen. How much QUANTUM partners should refer to the methodology? What they can effectively use and implement within QUANTUM project and specifically for measuring the QNs efficacy?

These are key guiding questions that support the whole process of impact measurement according to the specificities of each context where the QNs should be implemented. Thanks to the work done in the past, through several European projects focused on the Peer Review methodology⁸, currently a Manual of Peer Review, with an appropriate set of tools gathered in a Toolbox are available and represent a relevant and useful source of knowledge also in light of QUANTUM project needs and activities. Among the tools available, the Quality Areas which describe the most important processes and activities whose quality directly affect the overall quality of the VET provider, are to be considered the main point of reference once Peer Review has started to be implemented. By simply reading the Quality Areas and the criteria, indicators and proposal of evidences detailed, a self-awareness if not, a self-learning process starts, which can lead to starting implementing new approaches and practices to Quality Assurance in VET.

Indeed, in QUANTUM partners’ opinion, the most important tool that QNs stakeholders should learn and use among those available through the European Peer Review methodology, corresponds to the Quality Area 14. It is focused on criteria and indicators aimed at monitoring and evaluating QNs capacities in setting up, implementing and making functional, also through a constantly reviewed and standardised process of continuous improvement, effective network to track VET graduates and collect and measure relevant data through feedback loops.

Role of Peer Review in the process and in evaluating the QNs’ impact

The impact evaluation approach within the Network is expected to take advantage of the European Peer Review methodology, mainly with reference to the Quality Area 14 as guiding principles to start self-evaluating and mutually evaluating with the peers’ approach, stakeholders’ performances within each Network in each country.

⁸ EuroPeerGuid / EuroPeerGuide-RVC / P.R.I.S.D.O.Q. / PRALINE: all references available at <http://www.peer-review-network.eu/pages/european-projects/transfer-projects.php>

In the direction of fully take advantage of the methodology, it is important also to measure the impact produced on QNs participants/stakeholders in terms of:

- efficacy of the training/capacity building on Peer Review methodology as enabler for QNs participants in applying the methodology specifically for self-assessing and/or assessing other VET stakeholders' activities, participating to the QNs (Internal Evaluation);
- efficacy of the Peer Review piloted at each partner country level, in contributing to the setting up and, possibly, implementation of Graduate tracking and feedback loops mechanisms, in each partner country.

Within these two main measurements it is also relevant to collect even more qualitative data and information on the personal experience by each participant/stakeholder, so as to better describe the impact produced in term of

- While practicing the methodology, also focussing them on developing/reinforcing their attitudes towards working together through the QNs, so paving the way to long lasting professional relationships;
- Empowering QNs members in adopting/adapting the most relevant quality indicators from the original Peer Review methodology, according to their priorities.

That's why also a preliminary self-assessment questionnaire on the competences already owned by each stakeholder, with reference to Quality Assurance mechanisms and practices of quality evaluation, needs to be administered so as to evaluate also the impact of the overall capacity building strategy has produced on QNs participants and, consequently on QNs efficacy as autonomous body.

Promoting a Transnational Peer Learning among QNs members

The capacity building of QNs members is not the only method of training and active engagement for the members in view of the establishment and further development of QNs in each of the country involved. Coherently with the renewed attention on the methodology of the Peer Review as per the Council Recommendation of 24 November 2020 on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience 2020/C 417/0, stakeholders taking part in the QNs are invited to benefit of transnational Peer learning experiences. Such alignment of approach also serves as motivational factor for the stakeholders engaged at local, regional and national level in Quality Networks.

A **transnational dimension** will be thus ensured, to give QNs members a concrete opportunity to practice and reinforce some of the expected key competences in a stimulating European environment, characterised by different cultural backgrounds and VET quality assurance systems. By participating to this transnational experience, stakeholders are expected to be more competent in:

- Implementing the EQAVET framework at provider level, especially in relation to the different methods and policies defined by different countries;
- Managing the EU Peer Review process, with a focus on VET processes affecting the quality in terms of employability;
- Designing and implementing VET Graduate tracking measures and Feedback Loops among VET Key Stakeholders, especially with reference to the specificities of these two key processes at each country involved level;
- Effectively communicating with other relevant professionals in VET field, also considering the use of the English language and eventual differences in country-specific terminology.

The Transnational Peer Learning Activity will thus take place with reference to the following characteristics:

- It is a Transnational exchange and peer learning opportunity among similar members of QUANTUM QNs from each country involved. Thus, participants should consider themselves as source of inspiration and knowledge as well as recipients of learning and improvements.
- It is aimed at reinforcing and increasing the competences above listed, with reference to VET Quality Assurance systems in each country involved and, specifically, the graduate tracking practices and the Feedback loops mechanisms.

A selected group of stakeholders as QN members at country level, will be involved in the Transnational Peer Learning activity according to the following criteria:

- fluency in English, at least B2 level;
- availability to travel and stay abroad for around 4 days;
- capacity to report, if not transfer in each VET system the results and skills acquired through the Transnational Peer Learning;
- willingness to actively work and progress on QNs.

These are not only expected to actively take part to the Peer Learning Activity and report to their and the other institutions/organisations involved in the Network so as to both further progress on QNs implementation and impact at country/regional level, but also to take advantage of the transnational dimension of the learning to pave the way towards a European Multi-stakeholder network on VET Quality Assurance, specifically focused on Graduate Tracking and Feedback loops mechanisms.

Strategic activities to consolidate Quality Networks at country level

The table below contains a list of activities considered strategic in consolidating the Quality Networks at country level, reinforcing the capacity building effort and setting the ground for a sustainable cooperation among stakeholders beyond the QUANTUM project lifetime.

In addition, the following activities can support the setting up of the EU Quality Network described above at page 10.

Type of activity	Objective(s)	Brief description (participants, timing, etc.)
Internal meetings with partners	To collect updated information on the state of the art of the QNs implementation at country level; To review the plan for the QNs and their impact assessment, based on the conducted SWOT/ discussion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All the partner organizations • Before and after the transnational peer learning activity in Bratislava • Doodle for the 1st meeting sent by FORMA.Azione
Public event at regional/national level	To promote the work done by the QN at country level and the results achieved/expected; To engage other interested parties in the QN process for a more systemic impact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners, public authorities, VET providers, companies, etc. not yet involved in the activities of the QN • By December 2022.

<p>Semi-structured quality interviews with partners</p>	<p>To collect qualitative information on the results achieved by the QNs at country level; To review the plan for the QNs and their impact assessment, based on the conducted SWOT/ discussion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of questions and final analysis provided by FORMA.Azione • Partners and stakeholders activated at country level • Between December 2022 and January 2023
<p>Semi-structured quality interviews <i>OR</i> Focus Group</p>	<p>To inform them about the results of the QUANTUM QNs and the EU Quality Network; To explore ways of integrating the QUANTUM QNs at country level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders & Regional/National policy makers • Between January and February 2023 • In a Focus Group: organised with the stakeholders invited to the first one
<p>Transnational Peer Learning Exchange</p>	<p>To collect feedback on the process of QNs setting up; To share practices from the different countries and learn from each other.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners and stakeholders activated at country level • October/November 2022
<p>Roadmap to the EU Quality Network</p>	<p>To agree on a strategy to structure and launch the EU Quality Network within the QUANTUM project lifetime; To act at EU level based on the experience of the stakeholders' cooperation in the QNs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners, in consultation with the stakeholders activated at country level • January to March 2023
<p>Launch of the EU Quality Network</p>	<p>To formalize the cooperation among QNs at European level; To offer a sustainable platform for investing on quality of VET together among partners' countries.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QNs members at country level • March 2023

ANNEX 5 | ROADMAP FOR SETTING UP A EUROPEAN NETWORK FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN VET

Planning phase

1. Participatory need analysis based on the interest and expectations of the (prospect) participants' and EU-level benchmarking.
2. Mapping the expertise and competences of the organizations and professionals willing to be involved in the network. It has been partially done thanks to the activity of the QNs at country level, and the information already shared and made available by the stakeholders participating → see Excel file.
3. Defining the scope, aims and type of activities agreed on for the cooperation at transnational level. Such agreement should be reached through a participatory process and be formalised in a document (i.e. Memorandum of Understanding – see Annex to IO3, or even a Statute depending on the nature of the network).
4. Defining the plan of action for the network, including at least a 2- to 5-year perspective
 - How many years?
 - Common plan or members' plans?
 - Including marketing and promotion activities

1st step of consultation with EU relevant stakeholders, including VET policy makers at national and EU level, on the scope, aims and type of activities to be proposed → collection of input and suggestions to go ahead with the planning phase of the EU network. Possible stakeholders to be contacted: EU Commission, EQAVET secretariat, EfVET, EVBB, EAVT, LLL Platform, NRPs, EQF coordinators, national authorities responsible for VET policies.

Formalization⁹ of the European network – depending on the type of structure but ensuring a formal commitment to the work together and the definition of roles and membership schemes.

1. Public launch of the network through ad-hoc communication and promotion actions aimed at informing on its scope and objectives VET relevant stakeholders and recruiting new prospect members.
2. Summoning and realization of the 1st *General assembly*. As a result, the network will approve the statute and kick-off its activities.
3. Execution of the plan of actions.

Implementation phase

Evaluation Phase

First round of monitoring about the members' satisfaction on the operation, process and achievements of the network

Timing and processes depends on the type of network the group intends to set up. In any case, such kick-off of implementation phase can be done also if the planning phase is not fully completed (i.e. plan of actions to be redefined, etc.).

2. Collection of feedback and suggestions for improvements from stakeholders with whom the network members' get in contact and/or involve in specific activities, including VET professionals and learners.
3. Analysis of the data collected through the monitoring and transparent sharing of the analysis among members.

2nd step of consultation with EU relevant stakeholders, including VET policy makers at national and EU level, on the plan of activities implemented/ under implementation → collection of feedback and suggestions to improve the operation of the network and improve its work and capacity to impact at EU level.

1. Discussion and adoption of adjustment measures to be applied in the planned and on-going activities, based on the outcomes of the stakeholders' consultation and internal monitoring.
2. Assessment of potential further steps in the process of formalization and building of the EU network.
3. Definition of an Improvement Plan, guiding the network both in its continuous building process and in defining the next plans of activities.
4. Discussion and agreement on the following plan of activities, based on the outcomes of the first one.

Review phase

In order to support the work towards a European network by the QUANTUM partners and their stakeholders at national level, a preliminary analysis of what is already happening in terms of transnational cooperation in the field of quality assurance in VET has been conducted, in order to:

- be used as a source of inspiration, in the brainstorming and discussion on the prospect EU network resulting from the project;
- adopt successful elements and further elaborate on them, according to the needs and scope of the prospect network;
- imagine possible synergies and alliances for the future.

To the moment, no European network as such has been identified, but EPRA (see below). Many, however are the organizations/bodies that from different perspectives deal with the internationalization and/or international cooperation of the VET systems, and with Quality Assurance in education. In particular, 4 categories have been explored and are outlined below:

1. thematic Networks established in different geographical contexts;
2. funded projects in the field of Quality Assurance;
3. VET transnational associations;
4. QA champions, meaning organizations who have extensive expertise in the field of QA and, in some cases, Peer Review methodology.

1. thematic Networks established in different geographical contexts

European Educational Research Association – EERA

Mission Statement

The aim of the 'European Educational Research Association' (EERA) is to further high quality educational research for the benefit of education and society. High quality research not only acknowledges its own context but also recognises wider, transnational contexts with their social, cultural and political similarities and differences.

The association's activities, such as the annual conference, season schools for emerging researchers and publishing, build on and promote free and open dialogue and critical discussion and take a comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach to theory, methods and research ethics.

Network Objectives

- to promote the discussion and dissemination through mutual learning of research and the use of research results;
- to explore the relationship between research, policy and practice;
- to foster a high quality of research in the field of Vocational Education and Training; and
- to encourage cooperation among VET researchers in the European educational research area and beyond.

The Vocational Education and Training Network (VETNET) covers a broad range of research areas in vocational education and training (VET), such as:

- Comparison of VET cultures and Governance of VET systems
- Qualification frameworks, competence assessment
- Teachers' and trainers' professional development
- Careers, transitions and guidance & counselling
- Work-based learning, partnership of learning venues
- Social issues in VET and social impact of VET provisions
- Pedagogic support by digital media.

<https://eera-ecer.de/networks/2-vocational-education-and-training-vetnet/>

E-xcellence label for Universities investing in quality in blended and online education

<https://e-xcellencelabel.eadtu.eu/>

To learn from so as to take useful info and tools to be adapted to VET sector/network.

Quality Matters from Maryland – U.S.

The QM Commitment

Today Quality Matters is a non-profit organization comprised of a dedicated staff that works together virtually—from cities all over the United States—to support everyone's quality assurance goals. But in order to truly achieve our mission of defining and maintaining quality assurance in online learning, we rely on our larger community of QM Coordinators, workshop facilitators, peer and master reviewers, program reviewers, conference presenters, and all the other individuals and groups who are champions for QM and help everyone deliver on the promise of online learning.

QM's Vision

Quality Matters is the global organization leading quality assurance in online and innovative digital teaching and learning environments.

QM's Mission

Promote and improve the quality of online education and student learning nationally and internationally through:

- Development of current, research-supported, and practice-based quality standards and appropriate evaluation tools and procedures.
- Recognition of expertise in online education quality assurance and evaluation.
- Fostering a culture of continuous improvement by integrating QM Standards and processes into organizational plans to improve the quality of online education.
- Providing professional development in the use of rubrics, tools and practices to improve the quality of online education.
- Peer review and certification of quality in online education.

<https://www.qualitymatters.org/why-quality-matters/about-qm>

<https://www.qualitymatters.org/index.php/reviews-certifications>

QALEN - Quality Assurance in Language Education Network

The objective of QALEN is to provide opportunities for quality assurance and accreditation bodies in the English language education sector to communicate and collaborate within a safe, supportive environment. In this way, we may develop, explore, and share global perspectives on quality assurance in English language education, and better understand and address common challenges and emerging trends. Working together, we seek to develop and document best practices and promote global awareness in quality assurance, while at the same time respecting and acknowledging our individual characteristics and contexts.

<https://qalen.org/about/>

2. EU funded projects in the field of Quality Assurance

Many projects on Quality Assurance in VET have been developing within ERASMUS + programme, in general or focused on specific areas (i.e. Apprenticeship, Work-based learning, etc.).

They are relevant sources of useful information in relation to network building and how to address Quality in VET.

QC-VET: Quality Culture in Vocational Educational and Training

<https://www.qc-vet.eu/en/>

Benchmarking for Quality Assurance in Apprenticeships and Work Based Learning

<http://www.bequalapp.eu/en/>

Expanding BEQUAL Benchmarking Tool and Community of Practice for Quality Assurance in VET

<https://bequalplus.info/>

Workplace learning: what can we learn from each other

<https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/2018-1-BE02-KA202-046830>

SMART-QUAL: Structured indicators to manage HEI Quality System

<https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/2020-1-BE01-KA203-074900>

QUAL.I.T.I. project aims to improve the quality of higher education teaching

<https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/2019-1-IT02-KA203-063157>

The future VET-teacher

<https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/2020-1-BE02-KA202-074660>

Polycentric Inspections of Networks of Schools

<http://www.schoolinspections.eu/>

3. VET Associations

The EVBB

The European Association of Institutes for Vocational Training (EVBB) is the European umbrella association of non-profit providers of Vocational Education and Training (VET).

Its objective is the **qualitative improvement** of vocational education and training in Europe and beyond and to increase the efforts designed to promote VET as a first choice. EVBB has more than 65 members coming both from the private and the public sector and covers all fields related to initial, advanced and further education and training.

Some **key activities** that have been with dealt with in EVBB projects are

- **Quality assurance in vocational education**
- Promoting practical orientation in vocational education and training
- The integration of youth into society
- Initiatives against long-term unemployment
- Initiatives against youth unemployment
- European networks, cooperation and projects.

<https://evbb.eu/about-the-evbb/>

EfVET - the European Forum of Technical and Vocational Education and Training

The principal aim of EfVET is to provide a transnational framework to support all co-operative actions aimed at enhancing and improving technical and vocational education and training; in particular:

- to facilitate networking and partnership
- to stimulate the creation of co-operative projects and thematic networks
- to enable widescale promotion and dissemination of innovative measures and transnational projects
- to provide technical support and advice to its members and help them access E.C. programmes
- to act as an agent for collaborative projects with TVET (technical and vocational education and training) organisations in outside Europe
- to represent the views of its members' issues in the European public forum and provide a platform for the European Commission and others to consult

In 2018, it promoted Thematic Teams with the main purpose of:

- Become a "think tank", opinion leader, a point of reference for VET in a specific field
- Aggregate members' expertise in a specific field
- Promote innovation and business opportunities among members

The current Thematic teams are focused on: Entrepreneurship, Internationalisation & Learning Mobility, Inclusive Vocational Excellence, Sustainability through VET, Tourism, VET 4.0

<https://www.efvet.org/>

EVTA - European Vocational Training Association

EVTA is a leading European network in the field of Vocational Education and Training. It comprises 15 members from 7 European countries, representing thousands of national training providers and, in certain

cases, national employment services. EVTA works to facilitate the relationship between stakeholders in the field of VET, in order to enable them to share knowledge and practices on how to shape the training for the future.

It has been established in Belgium in 1998 as an International No-Profit Association (AISBL), as the result of the cooperation between VET providers from different EU countries in the framework of the Euroqualification project.

In the last decade, EVTA has evolved into an important stakeholder in the field of VET and human capital development, participating in various cooperation and concertation tables, providing support to its member organisations and ensuring that their needs and expectations are fulfilled.

It focuses on the development of VET within the framework outlined by Europe 2020, through:

- enhancing of the quality of VET.
- promoting the cooperation of VET providers/businesses.
- providing specific expertise.
- disseminating the work based VET approach.
- cooperating in the European dialogue involving institutions, stakeholders, social partners and training providers.

It works on Vocational Excellence also through a kind of label acknowledging Centres of VET Excellence in Europe focused on specific sectors, although according to the website news, only centres from Belgium and Italy have been labelled.

<https://www.evta.eu/about-us/>

EUproVET - European Providers of Vocational Educational and Training

It is a representational platform for European VET providers. EUproVET contributes to the European agenda by:

- Providing the labour market with a skilled and high qualified labour force.
- Contributing to social inclusion, from both the social and economic perspectives.
- Contributing to life-long learning.
- Creating smooth pathways to higher stages of education.
- Contributing to an open European Vocational Education and Training Area (EVETA).

EUproVET answers the following challenges by:

- establishing a direct voice for VET providers at the EU policy level to contribute to effective and feasible policy development and policy implementation.
- promoting transnational cooperation between the members.
- promoting VET (and Adult Education) as major educational form to enhance sustained economic growth and prospects.
- contributing to the realization of the Copenhagen process and a comparable European educational area.
- stimulating and underpinning effective consultation with governments within the member states and influencing EU policies, relevant to VET (including Adult Education) and VET institutions on all levels.

The association vision is based on the following topics:

- Positioning
- Importance and value of VET
- Accommodating learner needs
- Recognition of Prior Learning
- Access

- Mobility
- Shared responsibility

EPRA - European Peer Review Association

The European Peer Review Association is an international society. It was founded as a non-profit association (gemeinnütziger Verein) under Austrian law on 11.3.2013.

The association evolved out of the European Peer Review projects that were conducted between 2004 and 2009: the Leonardo da Vinci Projects „Peer Review in initial VET“, „Peer Review Extended“ and „Peer Review Extended II“.

It aims to disseminate, support and further develop Peer Review as evaluation by colleagues in education and training institutions in the whole of Europe. It observes the following qualitative requirements:

- the standards of the Peer Review procedure as developed in the Leonardo da Vinci projects and
- the quality criteria for (initial and further) education and training developed and applied on the European level.

The programme evaluation standards of the „Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation“ provides guidance to ensure the utility, feasibility, propriety and accuracy of Peer Review

The European Peer Review Association thus promotes exchange, networking and cooperation between individuals and institutions in the area of Peer Review and quality assurance in education and training in Europe, in particular for enhancing European or international understanding and mutual trust.

The tasks and offers of the European Peer Review Association comprise:

- presentations, workshops, working group, discussions, conferences on Peer Review etc.
- trainings and seminars on Peer Review
- facilitation, support and monitoring of Peer Reviews, especially transnational Peer Reviews
- delivery of a Peer Review quality label
- coordination of a European Peer Review Network
- maintenance of a European Peer Register
- maintenance of a register of institutions that apply Peer Review
- networking and cooperation around Peer Review on the European level
- research and development on Peer Review
- dissemination and publication activities.

ANNEX 6 | ONLINE SURVEY ON QUALITY ASSURANCE IN VET

The survey was implemented in the framework of the **QUANTUM** project - Quality Networks promoting the relevance and effectiveness of VET provisions of the Erasmus+ programme (project number: 2020-1-SK01-KA202-078249). The survey is open to be used under other activities relating to quality assurance in VET.

1. I understand the terms:

- Quality Assurance
 - Quality culture
 - Quality system
- yes/no/partially**

2. I understand the specific steps of the quality cycle:

yes/no/partially

1.1 If yes, please fill in the missing step:

- **Planning**
- **Implementation**
- **Evaluation**
- _____

3. Our institution has:

- A vision
 - A mission
 - A strategic plan
- yes/no/don't know**

4. The institution has established a Quality Team for the purpose of ensuring and improving the quality of VET:

- Yes, we have a Quality Team in the institution
- Yes, we have a Quality Team in the institution and it actively collaborates with management, employers and other stakeholders
- No, we don't have a Quality Team in the institution

5. Does the institution use an action plan in its works?

yes/no/don't know

6. The institution informs and trains its employees on the topic of Quality Assurance

yes/no

7. The institution uses feedback to gather information for its own development:

yes/no

7.1 If so, from whom?

- Students
- Teaching and non-teaching staff
- Graduates

- Parents
- Corporates
- Universities
- Other (please specify)

7.2 How often does the institution gather relevant information?

- More often than once per year
- Every year
- Every two years
- Every three years

7.3 For what purpose does the institution collect feedback?

- Information gathering
- Assessment of the relevance of the training program for the labour market
- Analysis of learning objectives achievement
- Obtain relevant information for the presentation of the institution

7.4 The institution collects feedback through?

- Questionnaires
- Interviews
- Alumni club
- Other (please specify)

8. Does the institution implement a self-assessment process?

- Yes
- No
- The institution plans to do so in the near future

8.1 If so, how often?

- Every year
- Every two years
- Other (please specify)

8.2 Who is involved in the self-assessment process?

- The entire staff of the institution
- Only a selected group (e.g. Quality Team)
- Corporates
- The founder
- Other, please specify (e.g. students, graduates, parents)

8.3 How does the institution work with the results of the self-assessment?

- Analysis of results is made publicly available to employees
- Analysis of results is made publicly available to other stakeholders
- The institution develops an action plan for institutional improvement based on an analysis of the results
- The institution uses the results of the self-assessment as a basis for external evaluation (e.g. Inspectorates, Peer Review, etc.)
- The institution doesn't work with the results of the self-assessment
- Other (please specify)

9. Staff professional development:

- The institution produces an annual professional development plan
yes/no/don't know
- The institution organises regular internships in companies for teachers/trainer
yes/no/don't know
- The institution organises regular in-house training
yes/no/don't know
- Employees participate in training according to individual needs and preferences
yes/no/don't know
- The institution uses the Erasmus+ programme (or other programmes) to improve the competences of its staff
yes/no/don't know

10. Teaching and staff receive regular feedback from various stakeholders

yes/no

1.2 If so, from whom?

- The school management
- Colleagues
- Students
- Graduates
- Parents
- Corporates

1.3 How is the feedback collected?

- Questionnaires
- Anonymous surveys
- Interviews (e.g. with students, and corporations)
- Other (please specify)

11. The institution carries out the assessment of the quality of training by involving relevant stakeholders

yes/no/don't know

1.4 If so, who are the relevant stakeholders?

- Students
- Parents
- Graduates
- Employers

12. Does the institution obtain information on the placement of graduates?

yes/no/don't know

13. Does the institution obtain information on how graduates use acquired skills/knowledge in the workplace?

yes/no/don't know

13.1 If so, what changes are you making based on the information you have received?

- changes to the curriculum within the school
- curriculum changes in collaboration with employers
- professional development of staff
- other (please specify)

14. Participation of vulnerable groups in the educational process:

- The institution promotes its educational programmes among different target groups
- The institution creates conditions for the participation of disadvantaged groups in education
- The institution does not actively work to involve vulnerable groups in the educational process

15. The institution observes the changing needs of the labour market through cooperation with:

- Employers
- Local governments
- Universities
- Other (please specify)
- Does not follow

16. How is the institution working to increase the attractiveness and awareness of VET?

- The institution carries out information and promotional activities
- The institution collects feedback on information and promotion activities
- The institution monitors the reach of information and promotion activities
- The institution does not implement information and promotion activities

Thank you for your participation in the survey.