

Transnational Synopsis Report

Lorenz Lassnigg
Eduard Stöger

Institute for Advanced Studies (IHS)

Vienna, April 2005

Contact:

Lorenz Lassnigg
☎: +43/1/599 91-214
email: lassnigg@ihs.ac.at

Eduard Stöger
☎: +43/1/599 91-132
email: stoeger@ihs.ac.at

Content

Introduction	5
Glossary	7
1. Key issues in quality assurance and quality development in initial VET in the partner countries.....	8
1.1. National background of QA and QD approaches in the partner countries	8
1.1.1. Country description: Overview of national requirements concerning QA and QD and external assessment of VET institutions.....	8
1.1.2. Synthesis: Cluster of partner countries categorized by the obligatory use of quality approaches for VET providers	12
1.1.3. Synthesis: Cluster of partner countries categorized by the obligatory external assessment of VET providers	13
1.2. Local pilot projects and adaptations of standardized QM approaches in the partner countries	15
2. Needs and key issues concerning the development of the Peer Review instrument in the initial VET system.....	18
2.1. Needs analysis for improving current QA and QD procedures in the partner countries	18
2.2. Experience in the application of Peer Reviews within the partner countries in the initial VET system	19
2.3. Setting up core criteria as a basis for developing the European Peer Review manual	22
2.3.1. Important conditions for Peer Reviews	22
2.3.2. Obligatory quality areas in a Peer Review process	24
2.3.3. Selection of peers	28

2.3.4. Potential use of the Peer Review instrument with respect to the national QA and QD framework in the partner countries	31
3. Concluding remarks	33
3.1. Expectations regarding the Peer Review as a QA and/or QD instrument	33
3.2. Some other important aspects of Peer Reviews	34
Literature	36
Annex	37

Introduction

This transnational synopsis report is one of the results of the first phase of the Leonardo da Vinci project *'Peer Review as an Instrument for Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement in Initial VET in Europe – Exchange of Experience and Development of a European Manual'*, which has been dedicated to research, identification of good practice and definition of core criteria for the development of the Peer Review manual.

The report should be regarded as a working paper, which targets are the project partners as well as other interested persons/institutions (additional stakeholders from the partner countries, stakeholders from other countries, international institutions, etc.) and it will be used as a basic contribution to the development of the European Peer Review manual.

The report is mainly based on information written down in the national reports of the 10 partner countries in this LdV project: AUT, CH, DK, FIN, HUN, IT, NL, P, ROM and UK-SC. There was a common guideline for all national reports, developed by the IHS (Institute for Advanced Studies) in co-operation with the ÖIBF (Austrian Institute for Research on Vocational Training), to obtain relevant data about two issues:

- 1) To provide an inventory of the status quo concerning national, regional, sectoral or local quality assurance (QA) and quality development (QD) procedures in their VET systems, with special emphasis on the specific procedures and practices of the involved partners (VET providers and educational stakeholders)
- 2) To analyze the needs and the key issues concerning the Peer Review instrument in the partner countries (e.g. experiences, conditions, or quality areas).

The national reports were drawn up by the responsible coordinating partners in the 10 partner countries. The information required for these national reports was collected by means of different research methods, such as desk/internet research, analysis of literature, organization of national workshops, and interviews with key persons. It should be noted that the information included in the national reports by the responsible partners is simply a “snapshot” of the current situation in the partner country and does not necessarily represent a complete description. Consequently, the expectations stated by the responsible partners concerning the Peer Review instrument must be seen as individual views and not as representative opinions (i.e. as “national declarations”) of certain groups of stakeholders like national educational authorities, VET institutions, and VET teachers. Nevertheless, we decided to present several comparisons at a country level, mainly because it makes the use

and the understanding of the existing information easier and also promotes transnational understanding and the mutual learning process within the Peer Review project group.

To give a proper overview of the complex topics we tried to create 'clusters of partner countries' in relation to certain dimensions or 'indicators'. This means that whenever there are congruencies and overlaps between partner countries concerning an indicator we group them together by explicating their common elements. The analysis was, among other things, carried out with the intention to find communalities and common elements among the partners rather than marking the differences, but at the same time to keep in mind the variety of the national context.

We'd like to thank all the partners for their valuable input and their patience in answering all our queries in order to better understand their experience. Sometimes it was not easy to fully comprehend the complex procedures. We also particularly thank Maria Gutknecht-Gmeiner and Barbara Neubauer from the ÖIBF for their helpful contribution to the development and elaboration of the interview guideline for the national reports.

It ought to be mentioned that we made extensive use of the national reports, particularly when we were giving transnational overviews (e.g. the country descriptions in the annexes). To prevent misunderstandings and make the report more readable, we often took terms and explanations written down in the national reports literally, without using formal quotation.

Ultimately, it is our hope that the report will give a proper account of our partners' experiences, and that it will serve as a good starting point for the development of the Peer Review manual.

Glossary

Country Codes

AUT	Austria
CH	Switzerland
DK	Denmark
FIN	Finland
HUN	Hungary
IT	Italy
NL	Netherlands
P	Portugal
ROM	Romania
UK (SC)	United Kingdom (Scotland)

Some other frequently used terms and abbreviations

VET provider, VET institution: The target group of the European Peer Review manual is the initial VET provider. Due to the national differences concerning the structure of the initial VET-system and the terms used for the different school types (VET schools, VET colleges, further education colleges, vocational training schools, etc.), we decided to use the neutral terms “VET provider” and “VET institution” in this report.

QA and QD: Quality assurance and quality development

QM: Quality management

Quality approach: Following the definition of the Technical Working Group (TWG) on Quality in VET (in: A European Common Quality Assurance Framework. Final Version. October 2003) “*quality approaches*” are any integrated set of policies, rules, criteria, tools and verification instruments and mechanism applied by any VET institution, whose collective purpose is to ensure and enhance quality. The term “*approach*” covers both very fixed and formalized systems and any set of more systematic behavior meant to regulate and/or develop the performance quality of a VET system.

1. Key issues in quality assurance and quality development in initial VET in the partner countries

The first chapter deals with certain key issues in the field of quality assurance and quality development in initial VET in the partner countries. As a point of departure, we will give an overview of the national requirements (on the basis of legal regulations) concerning QA and QD in initial VET. As a second step, we will take a look at the different local pilot projects and the relevant adaptations of quality management approaches in the field of VET (like the ISO or EFQM model in the partner countries).

1.1. National background of QA and QD approaches in the partner countries

An important aspect in the field of quality assurance and quality development in initial VET concerns the question about the national requirements, i.e. legal regulations that are set up to ensure a certain level of quality assurance and quality development. We will introduce the different national situations in the partner countries, divided into the following subsections:

- **Country description:** Overview of **national requirements** concerning QA and QD and **external assessment** of VET institutions
- **Synthesis:** Cluster of partner countries categorized by the **obligatory use** of quality approaches for VET providers
- **Synthesis:** Cluster of partner countries categorized by the **obligatory external assessment** of VET providers

1.1.1. **Country description:** Overview of **national requirements** concerning QA and QD and **external assessment** of VET institutions

In the following country description we will elaborate on two particular issues:

-) Regulations at the national level concerning the obligatory use of quality approaches
-) Regulations at the national level concerning the external assessment of VET institutions

*The **Austrian** VET system is currently undergoing various trends of change with QA and QD as a core priority. The system is based on input control and central regulation with some federal elements. Several piloting initiatives have been set up to find new solutions for QA and QD in initial VET, and a new general framework for ‘Quality in VET’ is under construction.*

External assessment: Chief representatives from regional education authorities (“Landesschulrat”) as well as school inspectors (“Schulinspektoren”) are in charge of

monitoring the schools. They are responsible for the performance and the quality within schools. This way of inspecting schools by sending out people, whose field of duty includes aspects of administration, consulting, and controlling, has recently been supplemented by more modern approaches towards quality assurance.

In Denmark, different layers of the QA and QD approach are in place. Firstly, VET institutions are obliged to have a – freely selectable - quality system for running QA and QD, which must consist of ongoing self-evaluation and quality development. Staff, students and local training committees ought to be involved in the self-evaluation. The chosen quality system must ensure that six indicators¹ are performed. Follow-up procedures (how aims can be reached) on the basis of self-evaluation are also obligatory (corresponds with the QD aspect). All vocational institutions are required to publish information about quality issues (e.g. regarding the evaluation of the quality of an institution's education) on their website. Secondly, there is a new funding system (multi-annual agreement) for VET providers (better performance increases funding), which focuses on four quality issues: Competence of teachers, competences of VET provider management, cooperation with enterprises, and student performance, i.e. time of finalization, results.

External assessment: Since 2003, the Danish Evaluation Institute (EVA) has systematically started to evaluate the performance of VET institutions. Besides that, EVA can be asked by the Ministry to carry out evaluation tasks, e.g. evaluating entire VET providers.

In Finland, government regulations demand the obligatory use of a freely selectable QM-instrument for all VET providers. This QM instrument must include – at least – self-assessment (instruments also freely selectable) and the participation in national assessments. There are several national recommendations (voluntary) for QM tools, e.g. an audit by external auditors regarding operations and educational institutions once every three-year (free choice of auditors); the system of self-evaluation should be developed in mutual cooperation with other providers of education; another recommendation is that the CQAF should be used as a reference model for QA in VET institutions. Finland has a financing system, which is based on performance indicators like dropout rate, graduation rate, but also the winning of a quality award (excellence in EFQM, etc.) to ensure the quality of VET providers. This system should encourage VET institutions to motivate their students and to promote quality in VET. Furthermore, the performance indicators allow a comparison of the VET providers. The results of each VET provider are transparent and available via Internet. This also fosters benchmarking and mutual learning.

¹ Six indicators: The teaching complies with the aims that are laid down concerning individual education; the chosen methods of teaching support the aims of the education; the training parts conducted in the college and in the enterprise support each other; the professional and the pedagogical qualifications are updated; the individual teachers and the college receive information about the students' evaluation of the teaching and the way the college has planned the education; reports etc. from external examiners, results from tests, exams, marks, results given instead of marks, and evaluation results.

External assessment:

- 1) VET institutions have to participate in national evaluations of alternately topics.
- 2) An Evaluation Council for Education and Training plans, coordinates and manages the evaluation of VET providers (e.g. creating the network of evaluators).
- 3) Since 1998, FNBE (Finnish National Board of Education) has been responsible for developing the assessment of the students' learning outcomes (e.g. skill demonstrations) and for the organization of the national evaluations based on the skill demonstrations.

In **Hungary**, there are no legal regulations that require VET institutions to have any particular QA or QD procedures.² National organizations, which apply QA and QD systems, exist in higher education and in adult education. The secondary vocational schools also take part in adult education; a few of them possess adult education accreditation, which is the highest nationally recognized level of adult education organizations including QA.

External assessment: There is no national organization that controls QA and QD in VET.

In **Italy**, there are two different types of VET institutions that are subject to different national guidelines:

- 1) Vocational schools (e.g. technical and vocational schools): Since 2003, the National Institute for the Evaluation of the Educational System (INVALSI) has been charged to establish a national framework for the evaluation of quality in these schools. Several pilot projects are carried out at present.
- 2) Vocational training centers have to fulfill a national accreditation, which consists of five quality criteria³. Holding the ISO certification is equivalent to three criteria. Some regions in Italy require their vocational training centers to use ISO application. Regional authorities are responsible for the assessment of accreditation (once every 3-4 years), and they can charge an external assessor with assessing the training institution by means of audits or documentary analysis.
Self-evaluation processes are conducted on a voluntary basis by both VET institutions and vocational training centers.

In **the Netherlands**, government regulations provide for an obligatory, but freely selectable, QM instrument that is to be used by all VET providers. This QM instrument must include – at least – self-assessment (also freely selectable) and external assessment (freely selectable) by independent auditors. Furthermore, self-evaluation reports are assessed by the school inspectorate (using a standard framework of performance indicators).

External assessment: The school inspectorate visits each VET providers every year, and

² The National Institute of Vocational Education (NIVE, NSZI) is running a big project about standardization and quality development in Hungarian VET, which includes the setting-up of standards and the modularization of VET (cf. Ildikó Görgényi Modla, presentation at ECER 2004).

³ The five criteria, for each of which indicators (variables to measure and assess), parameters (phenomena to observe) and indices (minimum thresholds of the phenomena) are described, are as follows: Management of the institution; financial situation; characteristics of teaching and administrative staff; efficiency and effectiveness of previous activities; links and contacts at the local level.

executes a major judgment on quality every three years (institution's self-evaluation report is the first point of action for the inspectorate). Besides that, independent auditors are obliged to judge the quality of the educational performance.

In Portugal, there are two different school types that are subject to varying national regulations:

1) VET institutions must carry out a self-evaluation process⁴ and undergo external evaluation (by the school inspectorate). Every year, school inspectors evaluate all VET institutions by means of formal checklists or personal visits.

2) As for vocational training centers, there is an accreditation system run by the Institute for Quality in Training (criteria are similar to the ISO model).

In Romania, VET providers have been obliged to have institutional development plans since 1999.⁵ The development procedure begins with a self-evaluation of the institutional performance according to a number of indicators and within the specific context of the school.

External assessment: There are regular school inspections and as a starting point the VET institutional development plans are judged with regard to relevance, target scope, managerial concept, etc.

In Switzerland, national regulations require all VET-providers to use a freely selectable QM instrument. Regional authorities define further QA- and QD-related issues, e.g. in the canton Berne the QM instrument must include a quality concept consisting, for instance, of statements about aims, steering and controlling, internal feedback system (i.e. the setting up a self-evaluation system). Minimum standards for the self-evaluation of schools have been laid down.

External assessment: The cantons set up the authorities in charge of school evaluation. In some cantons, school inspectorates control the action plans on the basis of the QM instrument in use, while external auditors or peers evaluate the whole QM instrument.

In the United Kingdom (Scotland), national regulations demand the fulfillment of a standardized quality framework (two quality areas):

1) Curriculum resources, learning and teaching processes, and learner outcomes

2) Leadership and quality management, which includes the obligatory self-evaluation of VET-providers (rather standardized, required once in three years).

External assessment: HMIE Inspectors in Scotland conduct mandatory external reviews (once every 4 years) to complement the providers' self-evaluation (self-evaluation is used as

⁴ Areas of evaluation: e.g. infrastructure, activities, personnel involved, educational success.

⁵ The following aspects should be part of the institutional development plans: objectives, measures taken to achieve these goals, deadlines for the different activities, human resources, material and financial resources involved, budget forecast, responsibilities, risks and advantages of the project, performance indicators.

an information basis), inform the key stakeholders about the quality, and identify and promote good practice.

1.1.2. Synthesis: Cluster of partner countries categorized by the obligatory use of quality approaches for VET providers

The analysis of national requirements concerning QA and QD in the partner countries shows that in the majority of countries VET providers are required to use a quality approach, although none of them prescribes a specific type (with the exception of the obligatory use of the ISO model in some regions in Italy). The following table sketches the national requirements concerning the obligatory or voluntary use of quality approaches by VET providers.

Table 1. National requirements concerning the use of quality approaches

	Pre-determined quality approach	Obligatory, but quality approach is freely selectable (incl. obligatory self-evaluation)	Obligatory, but quality approach is freely selectable (self-evaluation is not obligatory)	No obligatory use of quality approach
AUT				X
CH		X		
DK		X		
FIN		X		
HUN				X
IT	X ⁶		X ⁷	
NL		X		
P		X ⁸		
ROM		X		
UK (SC)		X		

1) The countries in the **first cluster**, consisting of CH, DK, FIN, NL, P, ROM, UK (SC), have set up national regulations that demand the obligatory use of a quality approach from their VET providers, but the VET institutions have the authority to choose an appropriate instrument. An additional and important issue within this context has been the question

⁶ Vocational training centers: In some regions (e.g. Lombardy) all vocational training centers are required to have ISO certification.

⁷ Vocational training centers need to be continually accredited in five quality criteria. The ISO certification is equivalent to three of these five criteria. In the case of vocational and training schools, several pilot projects concerning QA and QD are currently carried out.

⁸ VET institutions are obliged to conduct self-evaluation processes. Vocational training centers have to be accredited regularly.

whether VET providers are obliged to perform a self-assessment,⁹ because self-assessment is seen as one relevant method to assess and evaluate quality within the European Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF) model developed by the TWG. All countries within this cluster demand an obligatory self-assessment of their VET institutions.

2) **A second cluster of countries**, consisting of AUT and HUN, has no national requirements concerning the obligatory use of a quality approach.

3) In the **particular case of Italy**, national regulations vary according to the type of VET institution: Since 2003, the National Institute for the Evaluation of the Educational System (INVALSI) has been in charge of establishing a national framework for the evaluation of quality in upper-secondary schools (including technical and vocational schools). Several pilot projects are currently carried out. Vocational training centers, on the other hand, are subject to a nation-wide accreditation system (covering five criteria, each consisting of indicators, parameters and indices) and are regularly tested by regional authorities. Self-evaluation is not obligatory, neither for technical and vocational schools nor for vocational training centers.

1.1.3. Synthesis: Cluster of partner countries categorized by the obligatory external assessment of VET providers

A second important indicator within the context of national requirements for QA and QD concerns the obligatory external assessment of quality in VET institutions. Two different groups can conduct external assessments: *inspectors* and *external auditors* (e.g. QM assessors, organizational consultants, representatives of stakeholders). External assessment is meant to assist the VET institution by providing it with a neutral and realistic appraisal of the business (the focus could be on input, processes, output and/or outcome results), so as to avoid that VET providers overrate or underrate themselves and to reorient and reassure them (cf. CEDEFOP, TWG on Quality in VET, An European Guide on Self-assessment for VET providers, 2003). In the subsequent analysis, we will indicate whether inspectors and/or external auditors are responsible - i.e. set up by national requirements - for the external assessment of quality in initial VET.

1) There is **only one country**, in which two different groups of external experts (inspectors and external auditors) are in charge of assessing the quality in the VET institutions: the Netherlands.

⁹ N.B. "self-assessment" and "self-evaluation" are used to describe the same practices. But one should keep in mind that in English the term "evaluation" refers to practices applied at the organizational level, while "assessment" refers to practice that assess individual learning outcomes. Most countries, however, use both terms to describe self-evaluation.

2) **The majority of partner countries** practice the ‘conventional’ form of QA, i.e. the school inspectorate, but it has to be mentioned that the frequency, character and scope of assessment vary to a high extent in each individual country.

3) **A third group** of countries have no national regulations that would require an obligatory external assessment of VET providers: Hungary and Finland. However, Finnish VET providers have to take part in national evaluations.

The following table outlines the national requirements concerning the assessment of VET institutions by external persons.

Table 2. National requirements concerning the external assessment of VET providers

	Obligatory assessment by inspectorate and external auditors	Obligatory assessment by inspectorate	Obligatory assessment by external auditors	No obligatory external assessment
AUT		X ¹⁰		
CH		X ¹¹		
DK		X		
FIN				X ¹²
HUN				X
IT		X ¹³		
NL	X ¹⁴			
P		X ¹⁵		
ROM		X		
UK (SC)		X ¹⁶		

¹⁰ Usually, school inspections take place intermittently or in case of urgent problems.

¹¹ Regional authorities decide whether school inspectors and/or external auditors conduct obligatory external assessments.

¹² There is no school inspection system for assessing the quality in Finnish schools. However, VET providers are obliged to take part in national evaluations.

¹³ As for the vocational training centers, regional authorities are responsible for assessing the fulfillment of accreditation requirements. As for technical and vocational schools, the National Evaluation Institute (INVALSI) is currently in the process of establishing an evaluation framework.

¹⁴ The inspectorate examines whether external auditors are involved in the QA-systems.

¹⁵ School inspectors regularly inspect VET institutions, while vocational training centers are regularly accredited by the Institute for Quality in Training (INOFOR).

¹⁶ The inspection of a large Scottish VET provider is regularly carried out in a 4-year cycle and lasts approximately two weeks

1.2. Local pilot projects and adaptations of standardized QM approaches in the partner countries

The first step of our work was to compare the national requirements concerning the obligatory use of quality approaches for VET institutions and the obligatory assessment of these quality approaches by external professionals in the partner countries. Now we want to take a closer look at the regional and local projects and procedures in the field of QA and QD that are not obligatory.

We soon found that there are a large number of different ways to work with quality, but there are two major QM approaches, which play an important role in all of the partner countries: ISO and EFQM. Consequently, we will also have a closer look at the meaning and distribution level of these two QM approaches in each partner country.

After analyzing the distribution of standardized QM approaches in the partner countries, we have come to the following conclusions:

- 1) The **EFQM model** (including relevant adaptations) is very common **in four countries**:
 - DK (many VET providers, e.g. two VET providers participating at the Peer Review project)
 - NL (approximately 71% of all VET institutions)
 - FIN (approximately 64% of all VET institutions, quality award is based on EFQM approach)
 - IT (many technical and vocational schools)

- 2) The **ISO model** (including relevant adaptations) is the prevailing QM approach in **four other countries**:
 - HUN (cf. "Comenius 2000" project)
 - IT (cf. accreditation system for vocational training centers)
 - P (cf. accreditation system in vocational training schools)
 - CH (many vocational schools)

- 3) The **TQM** (Total Quality Management) model¹⁷ is also rather frequently used in two partner countries:
 - AUT
 - CH

- 4) The **BSC** (Balanced Scorecard)¹⁸ – an upcoming QM instrument – is applied in two partner countries:

¹⁷ cf. Danish National Report: TQM is a management tool used to embed awareness of quality in all organizational processes. Its main characteristics are: e.g. the vision has to fulfill the needs of the customer, management across the organization, change of working processes, common culture, and pedagogical aims. This system is the basis for other quality evaluation systems (EFQM).

¹⁸ cf. Finland: National Board of Education. Quality Management of Apprenticeship Training. Evaluation 2/2003, p. 21: "*Balanced scorecard (BSC) is a method used in strategic management and evaluation. It examines the*

- FIN (approximately 45% of all VET institutions)
- NL (approximately 10% of all VET institutions)

5) **Benchmarking**,¹⁹ as an own QM instrument, is currently practiced in three partner countries (which means that there are some networks of cooperating VET institutions):

- DK: ES-network, 22 colleges are participating
- FIN: Promoted through available information on the Internet about performance-based indicators
- UK (SC): between cooperative VET institutions, e.g. a VET provider participating at the Peer Review project is a member of a voluntary benchmarking partnership

Conclusion: The fact that several VET institutions develop their own quality approach and/or adapt existing standardized QM approaches to their own purposes indicates that there is a **particular need for a suitable quality instrument** that fits the requirements of the initial VET system.

organisation from four different viewpoints: economy, customers, processes, and learning. The point of departure is that the vision and strategy of the organisation are transformed into factual goals and indicators."

¹⁹ Cf. Finland: National board of Education. Quality Management of Apprenticeship Training. Evaluation 2/2003, p. 21: "*Benchmarking (learning from the best practices) is based on the exchange of knowledge and experiences and on learning from others. Benchmarking is characterized by the target to be compared being selected in full or in part from some other operational field and by the comparison involving only a given part or process of the activity to be juxtaposed or contrasted. The aim of the method is to assist the participating organizations in defining, by means of the comparison, the correct level of performance, in getting information about good practices, and in finding new ideas to develop operations. The method is suited also to the comparison of the individual units and activities within the organization with one another. Benchmarking may be applied also to evaluation (comparative evaluation).*"

Table 3. Use of standardized QM approaches and other important local QA and QD projects in the partner countries

	EFQM	ISO	Other important local QA and QD projects or QM approaches
AUT	Not wide-spread	Not wide-spread	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Most VET institutions run their own QM approaches, which have been developed by themselves. - TQM (Total Quality Management): Many VET institutions use this type of QA. - QIS (Quality In School) project: A highly developed QA and QD project, which primarily focuses to assist the elaboration of a school development plan.
CH	Not wide-spread	Wide-spread As for vocational schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IPS (Intensive Project for Schools): 5-year formative school development project (all kinds of schools), where Peer Reviews are conducted. Until now, 35 schools have participated. - TQM - Q2E (Quality through Evaluation and Development) - FQS (Formative Quality System): Self-evaluation of teachers is the key focus.
DK	Wide-spread	Not wide-spread	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TQM (many VET providers initially applied this QM instrument) - MARS model: Quality model at the department level (aims, activities, results, self-evaluation). - Benchmarking (e.g. student satisfaction): ES network of VET providers to learn from others.
FIN	Wide-spread (app. 64% of all VET institutions)	Not wide-spread	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BSC (Balanced Scorecard): Used by 45% of all VET institutions. Evaluation method, which examines the organization from four different viewpoints: economy, customers, processes, and learning. - CQAF model: The national recommendations concerning QA and QD in VET will be updated according to the dimensions of the European CQAF model. - Mixed model for particular VET provider's use (combination of EFQM, ISO, BSC, etc.).
HUN	Not wide-spread (but becoming important through Trade School Development Program)	Wide-spread Due to the "Comenius 2000" project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pilot project "Comenius 2000": 121 VET institutions have participated (23% of all VET institutions). It is a QA program with two levels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Satisfaction of partners of VET providers 2) Adaptation of ISO model to the VET providers Exchange of experience and benchmarking of participating VET providers were fostered. - Pilot project "Trade School Development Program" (2003-2006). It is a program of self-evaluation on the basis of the EFQM model called "Trade School Self-Evaluation Model".
IT	Wide-spread As for technical and vocational schools	Wide-spread As for vocational training centers (more than 50%). And a small percentage of technical and vocational schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-assessment procedures are voluntarily conducted and tested more and more in Italy. - Quality Charter: A manifesto of Quality for training centers.
NL	Wide-spread (app.71% of all VET institutions)	Not wide-spread	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Balanced Scorecard (BSC), approximately 10% of all VET institutions - Bve quality model
P	Not wide-spread	Wide-spread	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accreditation criteria in vocational training system are similar to the ISO model - ENIS (European Network of Innovative Schools) participation
ROM	Not wide-spread	Not wide-spread	New PHARE TVET program (2002-): One component: QA in TVET system (incl. self-assessment manual for TVET institutions, elaboration of performance indicators for QA, manual for school inspection, etc.).
UK-SC	Not wide-spread	Not wide-spread	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - QD tool "Customer Orientation" (focus is on increased customer approach) is used by some VET organizations - Benchmarking between cooperative VET organizations to identify, share and refine good practice. - QD tool "Charter Mark" describes a standard of customer service excellence. VET providers should benefit from using Charter Mark either through self-assessment or through formal assessment. Organizations that undertake the formal assessment process are independently evaluated and assessed by one of four accredited assessment bodies.

2. Needs and key issues concerning the development of the Peer Review instrument in the initial VET system

2.1. Needs analysis for improving current QA and QD procedures in the partner countries

An important aspect concerns the question about national needs to improve the current QA and QD system. Consequently, all responsible project partners in the ten partner countries were told to reflect about current practices and to sketch current shortcomings and/or strengths in the field of QA and QD in initial VET. Although there are big differences between national QA and QD systems, we could identify congruent needs that were mentioned – at least – by more than one partner.

- 1) *'Traditional' school inspection mainly provides QA:*
Some countries indicate that their school inspection systems still have mainly controlling functions and do not sufficiently support QD.

- 2) *A common, suitable QA- and QD instrument is missing:*
Some countries emphasize that the current – mainly standardized – QM approaches are not suitable for use in VET institutions, because they are not concrete and easy.
The desired QA and QD instrument should be user-friendly (clear and simple), and our Finish coordinating partner recommends to develop a practical guide on the basis of the CQAF model, which has been developed by the TWG.

- 3) *Assessment of performance in VET institution does not automatically ensure QD:*
Some partner countries point to the fact that the measurement of different – nationally prescribed – performance indicators will not automatically lead to QD. Thus it is necessary, for instance, that the result of measurement includes a new plan for a new quality cycle (e.g. new goals).

- 4) *QA and QD instruments in the VET field should mainly focus on teaching and learning processes:*
Some countries highlight that the key focus of a QA and QD instrument in VET institutions should be teaching and learning and not an evaluation of the entire institution, because there is an absence of an adequate tool for developing quality within the 'classrooms' and within the educational departments.

5) *Monitoring and evaluation of educational output is important:*

Some countries emphasize the need for monitoring and evaluating the vocational careers of VET school leavers. In general there seems to be a requirement in some partner countries for a closer interconnection between the labor market and the school system.

6) *VET teachers are not used to new QA- and QD-instruments:*

Some countries point to the problem that QA and QD instruments are becoming more and more important at the system, regional, and VET provider levels, but that the key actors within these quality models are not appropriately advised and coached with respect to the changes and challenges resulting from the new QA and QD tools. Thus, the VET teachers feel somewhat threatened, which can also lead to passive refusal.

7) *ISO-model:*

Some countries indicate a certain difficulty to apply and adapt the ISO model to the VET field. Its character is considered to be somewhat bureaucratic and the benefits are deemed to be less than the costs.

2.2. Experience in the application of Peer Reviews within the partner countries in the initial VET system

There is only very little experience concerning the use of the Peer Review instrument as a QA and QD tool in the initial VET system at the national level. However, Switzerland has built up considerable tacit and formal knowledge about the application of this instrument. Furthermore, some VET institutions within the partner countries have recently started to use Peer Review for different purposes (e.g. as a benchmarking tool, as an assessment tool, or as a counseling tool). Below, we will give an overview of the different uses of the Peer Review instrument in the partner countries and identify some key criteria for a successful application of this tool, which have been mentioned by the partners.

There are five partner countries (CH, FIN, IT, NL, UK-SC), which have already had experience with Peer Reviews so far. A short summary of the application of this instrument in these five countries is given in the following:

In 1999, within the framework of IPS ('Intensive Project School'), Peer Reviews were first put into action in Switzerland to make external assessments and judgments of self-evaluation results. Stamm, Büeler & Joss from the ZS LLFB (Central Agency for Advanced Teacher Training, Canton Bern) developed the first manual for Peer Reviews, as well as a training concept for peers connected to that, and they have successfully implemented the whole procedure. Since then, this evaluation procedure has been further developed. Currently, there are three Peer Review procedures for different purposes: Peer Review

Extended (focusing on the evaluation of schools and educational projects), Peer Review Sustained (focusing on the external assessment of self-evaluation results), and Peer Review Formative (focusing on extended self-evaluation). By now, several cantons are using the Peer Review procedure. But internal and external evaluation are still not linked systematically in every case. In IPS, the following characteristics are set up for the external evaluation through Peer Reviews:

- *IPS builds up on a self-responsible, formative basis, which includes a 360° feedback culture and which is also valid for Peer Reviews.*
- *The external evaluation in IPS is not an inspection but an external assessment through colleagues who act as peers. Peer Reviews represent a service to the school that is takes part in the procedure.*
- *Reporting and accountability towards the authorities and the general public is becoming more and more important nowadays.*
- *Peer Reviews link internal and external evaluation.*
- *The way of questioning, the collaboration of all important people (within and beyond the school), and the communicative validation of the feedback through teachers bring relevant knowledge: Strengths are honored and help to sustain the quality. Weaknesses can be erased.*
- *Peers gain information about other schools, which can contribute to the further development of their own schools.*
- *To obtain plausible results, the Peer Reviews are accompanied by at least one external expert (e.g. evaluation expert, communication expert).*
- *Peers have to be coached very carefully by external experts.*
- *The communicative validation with the whole staff as well as the subsequent written report is indispensable to the Peer Review process.*

*In **Finland**, approximately 18% of all VET providers (inquiry by FNBE in 2004) have some experience with the Peer Review instrument. The function of the Peer Review instrument varies markedly among Finnish VET providers, but three common characteristics can be outlined: 1) Aspects of teaching and learning (e.g. assessment of teachers' skills), 2) The performance of the whole organization 3) Specific purposes chosen by VET providers (e.g. curriculum development, on-the-job learning, strategic measurement of the organization).*

As all these types of Peer Reviews have started to be implemented only recently, there is still not much experience concerning this QA and QD tool. The existing know-how, however, can be summarized as follows: A Peer Review is a social learning process for the whole organization; the involvement of the management of the institution in the Peer Review process is considered to be very important.

A significant benefit of the Peer Review concerns the exchange of some not-so-good practices, which means that Peer Review also include elements of shortcomings. Another positive experience is that Peer Reviews may lead to closer co-operation, because the group

of VET institutions, which are connected through the exchange of peers, have started further collaborative projects (besides the exchange of peers), e.g. change management.

In **Italy**, ten vocational training centers (all of them have been awarded the ISO 9001:2000 certification between 1998 and 2000) in the Piedmont region (belonging to the CNOS-FAP association) set up a regional quality committee in 2000, which was meant to coordinate and improve their quality processes. One main proposal of this committee was the development of a Peer Review instrument, which has been elaborated with the support of an external consultant. After that, the vocational training centers standardized and adapted their quality instruments in order to be able to use the Peer Review instrument. The ten vocational training centers are divided into three groups according to their geographical location, and the Peer Reviews are organized within each group. There are three annual visits by the peers, who assess the quality systems of the respective training center on the basis of a checklist that leaves some room for improvement suggestions. All vocational training centers agreed to follow the recommendations made by the peers within a defined period of time.

A Peer Review partner within this cluster of training centers outlines an important condition for successful Peer Reviews: There should be no interconnections and shared interests, i.e. no “too close friendship” between peers and reviewed institution.

In the **Netherlands**, a specific survey was conducted to get information about the situation of auditing/Peer Reviews: 22 of the 55 institutions that responded indicated that they have had some experience with external auditing/Peer Reviews. Our coordinating partner in the Netherlands, the regional training center ROC Aventus, is also involved in a ‘Peer Review cycle’, which can be described as follows:

ROC Aventus decided to run Peer Reviews of its own quality system with external experts. A rough concept for a Peer Review was produced, and then quality managers of other VET institutions were invited to discuss the approach and to take part as external auditors/peers. Now there are five VET institutions, which execute this specific Peer Review. Furthermore, there are two other groups of institutions that work together.

The Peer Review is now part of the quality system of ROC Aventus. Follow-up procedures are obligatory (written down in the management contract). The experiences gained so far show, for instance, that Peer Review are a good rehearsal for the visit by the inspectorate, that they have initiated additional activities in the sector, and that peers have learned very much from these reviews.

In the **United Kingdom (Scotland)**, the inspection/Peer Review is a mandatory process and has evolved out of the more formal inspection systems. The Peer Review in Scotland was initiated by the Scottish Further Education Funding Council. The mandatory inspection/Peer Review process is set off by induction and teacher training. The process of self-assessment represents the starting point for any external review. The Scottish formal mandatory peer review results in the publication of a report, which is available to all

stakeholders and identifies the strengths, weaknesses, and good practices in subject areas and across the VET institution as a whole. The report usually discerns some actions that need to be improved, which must then be addressed by the organization. Members of the review team will return within 24 months to ensure that these issues have been resolved satisfactorily. The listed issues thereby lead to changes within the organization, the extent of which depends on the areas or actions that deemed to be in need of improvement. Good practice is shared through the publication of the review/inspection reports, which can then be analyzed by others in the sector.

Additionally, there is a small group of VET institutions (including the Aberdeen College) that run a voluntary benchmarking partnership focusing on the analysis of quality processes and standards to assist in the analysis of performance and planning for improvement.

2.3. Setting up core criteria as a basis for developing the European Peer Review manual

The European Peer Review manual will be the key product of this project. One important cornerstone of this project concerns the co-operative efforts to develop such a manual. Consequently, several questions in the interview guideline were addressed, each of them concerning different aspects of the Peer Review instrument, such as conditions for incorporating the instrument into the national requirements, a preliminary framework for the Peer Review process, the selection of peers, or the possible role of the system level within the Peer Review process. To ensure that the Peer Review manual is developed on the basis of overall agreement by the partner countries and to indicate national differences and congruencies concerning the application of the Peer Review instrument we have decided to base the analysis of the national reports on the following four indicators:

- Important conditions for Peer Reviews
- Obligatory quality areas in a Peer Review process
- Selection of peers
- Potential use of the Peer Review instrument with respect to the national QA and QD framework in the partner countries

2.3.1. Important conditions for Peer Reviews

Some important conditions for the application of Peer Reviews in a more general national framework are summarized in the following, based on congruent experiences and/or suggestions made by the partner countries:

- 1) *Self-assessment as the bedrock for Peer Reviews:*
 The big majority of partner countries state that VET institutions should be required to undergo an obligatory self-assessment process before running a Peer Review.
 In Switzerland, a portfolio must be produced by the VET institution, which has to report on the following issues: results of self-assessment, experiences and know-how gained so far, consequences of self-assessments, etc.
 Some countries even suggest that a standardized quality management system could be a key requirement for conducting Peer Reviews.

- 2) *Clarifying the function of Peer Reviews and having a clear structure and specified procedure for conducting Peer Reviews:*
 Some countries point to the necessity for describing the exact purpose and target of Peer Reviews for both the Peer Review manual (e.g. accountable to school boards and/or service for VET institution) and the Peer Review process itself, which means that no Peer Review can be successful without clear and specified procedures prior to conducting it.
 Nevertheless the Peer Review procedure should ensure a certain situative flexibility, because as ‘hard scheduling’, for instance, was regarded as a shortcoming and/or ‘weakness’ by some reviewed institutions in Finland.

- 3) *The Peer Review process should ensure opportunities for intensive and open communication between peers and the VET institution:*
 Some countries explicitly mention the necessity for having adequate time resources during the Peer Review visit, which will allow a more intensive dialogue between peers and the main persons affected in the reviewed VET institutions (teachers, managers, etc.) and help avoid misleading interpretations of the peers. Our Swiss partner refers in this context to the obligatory requirement of conducting a “communicative validation”, where preliminary results are discussed with the entire VET institution. Some reviewed institutions in Finland have also seen the open discussion as a crucial element in the success of the Peer Review instrument.

- 4) *Development of measurable performance indicators:*
 Some partner countries primarily focus on the assessment of quality with respect to national or regional conditions. These countries have emphasized that the Peer Review instrument should entail specific guidelines about appropriate matters of assessment, i.e. the development of suitable performance indicators for Peer Review is regarded as being highly important.

- 5) *Guidelines for peers should ensure confidentiality, carefulness, and sincerity about the information gained in Peer Reviews:*
 Some countries highlight the necessity for creating guidelines for peers that ensure an

adequate handling of the information – gained through Peer Reviews – with respect to the following aspects: confidentiality, carefulness, and sincerity.

2.3.2. Obligatory quality areas in a Peer Review process

The central issue within a Peer Review process is the selection of quality areas that ought to be reviewed by the peers. Consequently, we have asked the partner countries explicitly to indicate their suggestions. The results show a large variety among the partner countries concerning the range of quality areas and it has become clear that they see Peer Review instrument as a quality instrument for different purposes. It should be noted in this context that we understand the suggestions put forth by the responsible partners in the respective national reports as first judgments, and that revisions and adaptations are therefore still possible.

A first, tentative ‘cluster-building’ of quality areas, which is based on the ten partner countries’ propositions for a Peer Review process, is provided in the following:

A) Few significant assessment areas:

One group of countries propose that only a small number of significant areas could be selected by VET providers as obligatory quality areas. These “significant areas” could mean two different things:

- 1) Free selectable areas based on certain purposes or requirements
- 2) “Core processes” in schools: Teaching and learning processes in the ‘classroom’

B) Departmental development:

A second group of countries tend to focus on a broader level in addition to the core elements. Areas of assessment could be: Teachers’ skills, curriculum development, and ‘educational output’ like students’ skill acquisition.

C) Institutional development:

A third group of countries suggest that key processes in the entire VET institution could be areas for assessment in a Peer Review process, including – besides the quality areas already mentioned – leadership, the QM approach of the whole institution, financial resources, infrastructure, mission statement, etc.

The following table gives a first proposal concerning the quality areas that could be covered by the Peer Review instrument, as collected from the national reports.

Table 4: Quality areas that could be covered by the Peer Review instrument

A) Development of education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Key element: teaching and learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Teaching: teaching contents, teaching methods, etc. b) Learning: self-initiative of pupils, problem-solving skills, acquisition of learning techniques - Participation of pupils and parents concerning teaching and learning processes (e.g. through feedback)
B) Personal development of teachers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Further training of VET-teachers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Updating professional and pedagogical competences b) Regular feedback for teachers from colleagues, management, etc. c) Teamwork among teachers
C) Departmental development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Curriculum development of study program: (relevance to learner, economy, accessibility, planning etc.) - Organization of QA and QD-procedure at the department level (documentation, evaluation of tool, level of improvement, etc.)
D) Organizational development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organization of QA and QD procedure: (documentation, evaluation of tool, level of improvement, etc.) - Mission statement and school program: (mission statement, concrete measures to apply core values, etc.) - School culture: (treatment of minorities, social climate in class, composition and ambience of school building, adequate teaching infrastructure, richness of school life) - VET provider interacts with external stakeholder: (companies, inspectors, ministry, educational experts etc.) - General management of VET institutions: (guidance, organization and administration of VET institution, pedagogic competence of management, leadership of management)
E) Educational output and outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluation of students' performance after graduation (e.g. at the time of finalization, marks, results, drop-out rates)

The following table²⁰ outlines the suggestions concerning the obligatory quality areas in Peer Review process for each partner country.²¹ It will, additionally, shed light on national and

²⁰ A more detailed country description is given in the annex (annex 1).

²¹ As we said in the introduction, the expectations and conditions stated by the responsible partners concerning the Peer Review instrument must be seen as individual views and not as representative opinions (i.e. as "national

regional peculiarities in QA and QD, which have partly influenced the suggestions in this context:

declarations") of certain groups of stakeholders. The authors of this report have further summarized their suggestions for purposes of drawing conclusions.

Table 4. Obligatory quality areas in the Peer Review process and national/regional QA- and QD- peculiarities

	AUT	CH	DK	FIN	HUN	IT	NL	P	ROM	UK-SC
Obligatory quality areas	For first phase: Presentable projects and processes. In general: Teaching and learning processes	1-2 significant quality areas chosen by the VET institution. However, basis of Peer Review is broad self-assessment.	e.g. teaching methods, students' performance, competences of the teachers and the VET provider management, cooperation with enterprises.	Few elementary areas, e.g. quality of teaching. If a review tackles the whole VET institution, it should be aligned to EFQM model	Quality areas should be aligned to ISO model .	Relationship with users, the trainer and teacher skills, the design of training curricula, the results achieved in terms of skill acquisition and impact on the business world.	Quality areas should cover: 1) Self-assessment framework (3 domains): QA and QD at institutional and study program level, teaching and learning, examination 2) Specific issues of the VET institution	Schools procedures, evaluation of teachers and curriculum development.	Teaching and learning, curriculum development, school planning, social partnership and apprenticeship system.	Quality areas should be aligned to EFQM model .
National/regional QA and QD peculiarities	A general framework for QA and QD is under construction	National requirements only demand running a freely selectable QM approach (including continuous self-assessment)	Legal framework defines broad areas of assessment	Finnish Quality Award (additional funds) for VET institutions is based on EFQM framework .	Major pilot project (Comenius 2000) is aligned to ISO model	Vocational training centers require accreditation (five criteria): ISO certification is fulfilling three criteria.	Big majority of VET providers apply EFQM model .	Vocational training schools require accreditation, which is aligned to ISO model	Obligatory institutional development plans.	National regulations prescribe quality framework (curriculum resources, learning and teaching processes, learner outcomes, leadership and quality management) of VET providers.

2.3.3. Selection of peers

An important criterion for a successful Peer Review is the proper selection of peers. Maria Gutknecht-Gmeiner (ÖIBF), our project manager, has outlined a tentative definition of a 'peer' at our first transnational meeting in Amsterdam (Nov. 2004):

"A peer is a person,

- who is an equal of or is on equal standing with the person(s) whose performance is reviewed,*
- who works in a similar environment (and/or – e.g. in the case of institutional review – in a similar institution),*
- who is external (i.e. from a different institution), and*
- has specific professional expertise and knowledge in the field (shares values, professional competence and attitudes, language...),*
- thus bringing to some extent "inside" knowledge of the object of review into the process, and*
- combining it with the external view of somebody coming from a different organization*
- 'external insider'.*

Peers are sometimes also called 'critical friends' (synonym)."

When looking at the relevant considerations and proposals of the partner countries with regard to the appropriate selection of peers, it is necessary to keep in mind that there is a smooth transition from 'real peers' (VET teachers) to similar types of external experts. It will be our common task to establish suitable criteria for the appropriate selection of peers in the European Peer Review manual.

Analyzing the suggestions of the partner countries concerning the selection of peers with respect to their expertise and occupational background, we found that four common criteria were mentioned by more than one partner country:

- 1) **VET teachers** ('real peers') with extensive teaching experience.
- 2) Peers with **particular competences in national/regional/local QA and QD procedures** (e.g. evaluation know-how, certified assessors).
- 3) Peers who have **general vocational experiences in the relevant VET field**, coming either from other school levels (lower secondary level, universities, Fachhochschule) or from the closely related business world (labor market experts, companies).
- 4) One common criterion has been mentioned by almost all the partners: Peers should acquire **specific competences and experiences** pertaining to the **quality areas to be reviewed**.

As to the *composition of the peer team*, some countries state that a successful Peer Review requires that the Peer Review team consists of experts who are specialized in different fields.

The following table²² outlines the propositions concerning the selection of peers for each partner country.

²² A more detailed country description is given in the annex (annex 2).

Table 5. Selection of appropriate peers in the partner countries

	AUT	CH	DK	FIN	HUN	IT	NL	P	ROM	UK-SC
Appropriate peers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - VET teachers - Partners from other VET levels (FHs, universities) - Beyond the school system (companies, labor market experts, organizational development experts) 	Both teachers from other schools and one external expert (e.g. evaluation, communication, moderation)	VET teachers with some experience as teachers and as self-evaluators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Partners from the same VET level - Selected by VET providers themselves. - Expertise in operational environment, self-assessment processes, and about relevant quality areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parents - Representatives of universities - Representatives of local industry, businessmen, decision makers from the field of local policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - QA professionals from VET institutions or - external persons with particular QA expertise. <p>Peers should definitely have expertise in relevant quality areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Certified auditors, if possible - At least persons with national/regional QA expertise, i.e. EFQM knowledge and expertise in inspectorate assessment. <p>Peer team could consist of experts specialized in different fields.</p>	Peers could be selected by other peers.	Independent experts with expertise in QA systems.	Selection of peers could be aligned to the selection and training of EFQM assessors.

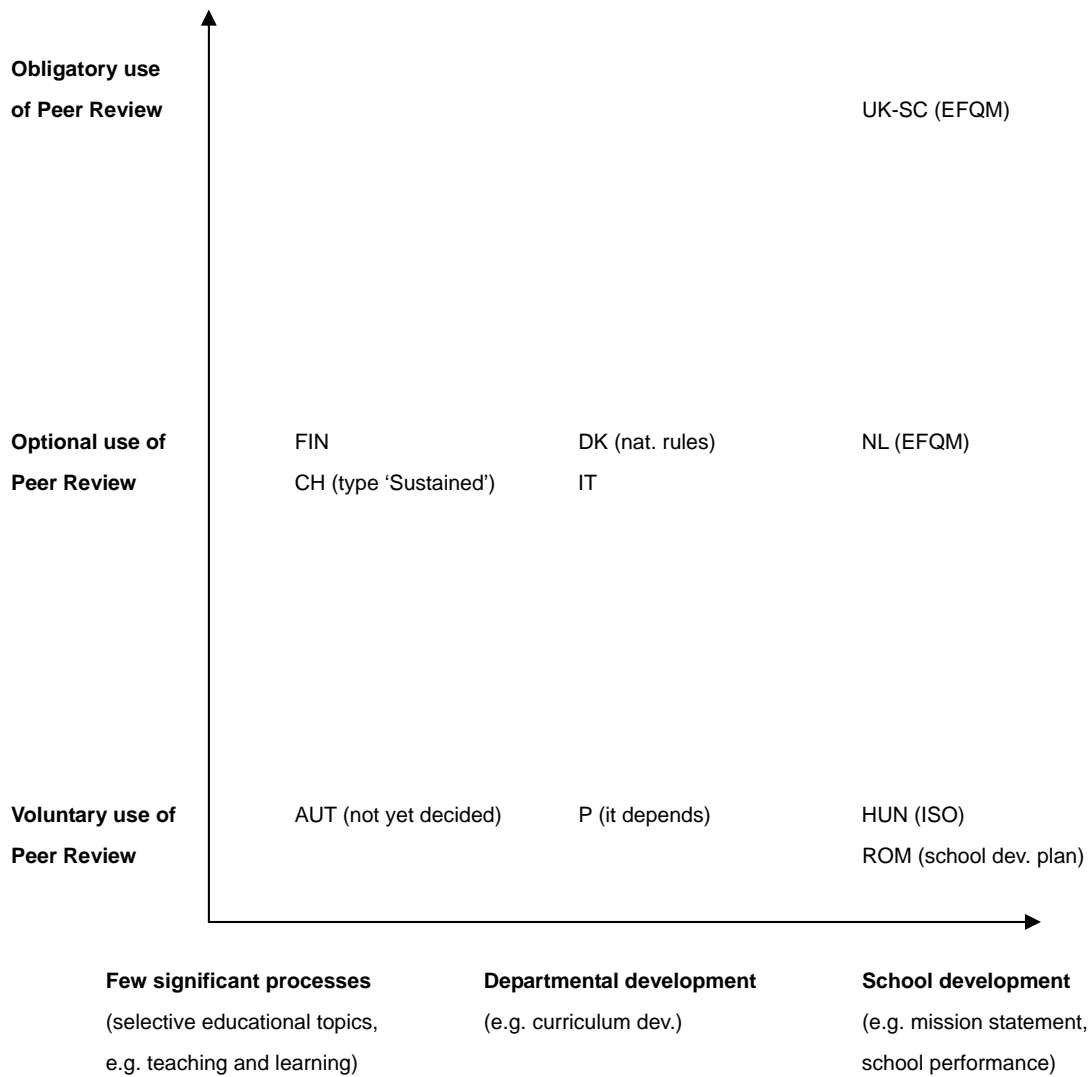
2.3.4. Potential use of the Peer Review instrument with respect to the national QA and QD framework in the partner countries

There are several unambiguous and clear indices indicating that the use of external assessment will increase in the next few years. Thus, a crucial question will be which role the Peer Review could play in a field of partly complementary and partly competing external evaluation instruments. We have sketched the national considerations in this context in a separated country overview, which is outlined in the annex (annex 3).

We chose to illustrate the national differences regarding the potential use of the Peer Review (obligatory, optional, or voluntary) in relation to the expressed suggestions concerning the obligatory quality areas of a Peer Review process in a particular figure (figure 1). This was done because it makes the national perception of the Peer Review instrument more visible and, consequently, promotes the mutual understanding of individual considerations and argumentations.

The distribution of the partner countries, both in relation to the potential use of Peer Reviews and the obligatory areas of assessment, indicates that these two aspects show a certain degree of heterogeneity. The figure displays a broad dispersion among the partner countries with regard to its potential use. Yet this variety may also be used as a potential source of transnational learning when Peer Reviews are applied to the different national system levels.

Figure 1: The potential use of the Peer Review instrument in relation to the obligatory quality areas assessed by Peer Reviews (distinct national/local preferences or requirements regarding a certain QM approach are outlined in brackets).



3. Concluding remarks

3.1. Expectations regarding the Peer Review as a QA and/or QD instrument

Based on the existing information, we have made a first attempt to interpret the specific character of the Peer Review instrument desired by the partner countries on the polarities of 'quality assurance' versus 'quality development'. It has become clear that most partner countries prefer a mix of both, but in some cases there is a certain orientation towards one side. It should be kept in mind, though, that the following overview merely represents a first hypothetical portrayal of the countries' wishes in a compact manner:

*In **Austria**, Peer Review is considered to be useful as both a QA and QD tool, but due to current national legal regulations there is a tendency towards using it as a QD instrument (few quality areas could be voluntarily developed further by VET institutions).*

*In **Denmark**, Peer Review can be used to fulfill two functions: QA of prescribed national indicators, and QD at the department level in important areas like teaching methods, students performance, curriculum development, etc.*

*In **Finland**, Peer Review is mainly seen as a QD tool.*

*In **Hungary**, the Peer Review is represents both a QA and a QD tool to measure and develop important quality areas (e.g. competency of teachers, efficiency of teaching methods) on the basis of the ISO model.*

*In **Italy**, Peer Review is mostly considered to be both a QA and a QD tool, because it can be used to regularly examine the quality areas within the vocational training centers prescribed by the national accreditation system (however, the formal accreditation process is run by the regions). Simultaneously Peer Reviews can be used to further develop the VET institutions' quality systems.*

*In the **Netherlands**, the Peer Review is likewise primarily seen as both a QA and a QD tool. Peers could take the role of external auditors, who examine the quality of educational performance on the basis of a standardized self-assessment framework. Additionally, the Peer Review could be used to develop a few selected quality areas within the VET institution.*

*In **Portugal**, the Peer Review is mainly deemed to be a QD tool in the field of teachers' skills and curriculum development.*

In Romania, Peer Review is essentially seen as both a QA and a QD tool. Peers are meant to assess the broad scope of school development plans and give hints for improvement.

In Switzerland, the Peer Review (type 'Sustained') is primarily considered to be a QD tool.

In the United Kingdom (Scotland), the Peer Review is mainly seen as both a QA and a QD tool. The mandatory review by external inspectors could in the long term be enhanced or replaced by peers, who examine current quality arrangements and make recommendations for further quality development.

3.2. Some other important aspects of Peer Reviews

As a last step, we have collected important – theoretical and practical – aspects of Peer Reviews, which have not yet been explicitly outlined in this part of the report (determining core criteria of Peer Reviews), but have been mentioned by individual partner countries in their national reports. Therefore, we decided to list them and also take them into consideration when developing the Peer Review manual in the next phase:

- The commitment of teachers concerning the Peer Review process is a necessary and decisive factor for success.
- To ensure plausibility and professionalism, Peer Review visits have to be accompanied by external experts (e.g. evaluation, moderation and/or communication).
- The results of the Peer Review should be comprised in a clear report and should contain quality development proposals.
- The reviewed VET institution should translate and apply the development proposals into a concrete action plan with follow-up measures ('gained knowledge has to be transferred into action').
- Peers should be equal, i.e. the VET institutions, in which the peers are employed, should be judged as well.
- Peers have to be purposefully trained.
- The outcomes of Peer Reviews should be useful and visibly profitable, i.e. the results should be translated into concrete action.

- There should not be any disturbances and conflicts during the Peer Review process. It is also important that the VET institution does not run too many other projects at the same time.
- There should be a culture of confidence in the VET institution, i.e. a pleasant climate within the responsible team (which conducts the Peer Review in the VET institution) and in working with the headmaster.

Literature

1) National reports of the project “Peer Review in Initial VET”

- Lassnigg, Lorenz & Stöger, Eduard (2005). National Report Austria.
- Kristensen, Ole Bech (2005). National Report Denmark.
- Koski, Leena & Koski, Emilia (2005). National Report Finland.
- Jakab, Tamas (2005). National Report Hungary.
- Allulli, Giorgio & Tramontano, Ismene (2005). National Report Italy.
With the contribution of Lucio Reghellin (CNOS-FAP), Vittoria Gallina (INVALSI), Alessia Mattei (INVALSI), Luisa Palomba (Ministero del Lavoro), Maria Vittoria Marini Bettolo (Ministero dell’Istruzione dell’Università e della Ricerca)
- De Ridder, Willem (2005). National Report Netherlands.
- Gomes da Costa, Rui (2005). National Report Portugal.
- Balica, Magda & Fartusnic, Ciprian (2005). National Report Romania.
- Strahm, Elisabeth & Peter (2005). National Report Switzerland.
- Hollstein, Rick (2005). National Report UK-Scotland.

2) Other material

- Ravnmark, Lise-Lotte (2003). CEDEFOP. Technical Working Group on Quality in VET. An European Guide on Self-assessment for VET Providers. Final Version.
- Faurshou, Kim (2003). CEDEFOP. Technical Working Group on Quality in VET. A European Common Quality Assurance Framework. Final version.
- National Board of Education. Quality Management of Apprenticeship Training. Recommendations for Use in Apprenticeship Training. Evaluation 2/2003. Helsinki.

Annex

Annex 1) Obligatory quality areas in the Peer Review process, as outlined in the national reports

In Austria, Peer Reviews in the pilot phase should be about “presentable projects and processes,” from which further reviews could subsequently be extended to more critical areas. In general, the core elements of the Peer Review could be learning and teaching processes.

In Austria, there is neither a national requirement concerning the use of a quality approach nor a national/regional tendency to use a standardized quality management tool.

In Denmark, Peer Reviews should be in line with the legal quality framework that covers the following quality areas: Teaching effectiveness, teaching methods, interplay between the VET provider and enterprises (due to the dual system), teachers’ qualifications, management’s qualifications, student involvement in evaluation procedures, student performance (other than ‘just’ marks), competences of the teachers and the VET provider management, cooperation with enterprises.

In Denmark, national legal regulations define certain elements of assessment, which have to be taken up by each QA and QD tool that is applied.

In Finland, Peer Reviews should prescribe few elementary parts, e.g. quality of teaching. A Peer Review manual could furthermore describe a common framework for the assessment of key areas, with the aim to standardize the work of peers. Other quality areas of the review could be chosen freely by the VET providers themselves (e.g. curriculum development). When a Peer Review concerns the whole institution, the reviewing areas could be aligned to the EFQM model.

In Finland, the use of the EFQM model is promoted through an annual quality award (additional funds), whose criteria are based on the EFQM framework.

In Hungary, Peer Reviews should be aligned to the requirements of the standardized quality management approach ISO 9001:2000, which may cover the following areas in the field of initial VET: policy of quality, aspects of management review, efficiency of teachers’ training, etc.

In Hungary, there is one major pilot project in the field of quality assurance, called “Comenius 2000 Quality Assurance Program”, in which approximately 23% of all relevant VET institutions take part and whose theoretical foundation is based on the ISO 9001:2000 model.

In Italy, Peer Reviews should prescribe few key areas: the relationship with users, the trainers' and teachers' skills, the design of training curricula, the results achieved in terms of skill acquisition, and the impact on the business world. Optional elements could be: acquisition of resources, assets, services to support training, equipment maintenance. In Italy, the vocational training centers require an accreditation, which is consisting of five criteria and having an ISO certification is equivalent to having fulfilled three criteria.

In the Netherlands, Peer Reviews should cover two different parts:

1) All quality areas which are prescribed by the obligatory self-evaluation framework, including: QA and QD at both the institutional level and the study program level, legal protection of participants, examination, teaching and learning, institutional results and study program results.

2) The VET institution could additionally choose – freely selectable – specific issues within their organizations

In the Netherlands, most VET institutions apply the EFQM model. Thus many of them recommend that the quality areas of the Peer Review be aligned to the EFQM model.

In Portugal, Peer Reviews should be used in the following fields: Schools procedures, evaluation of teachers and curriculum development.

In Portugal, the vocational training schools require an accreditation by the Institute for Quality in Training, whose criteria are similar to the ISO model.

In Romania, Peer Reviews should cover the following fields: Teaching and learning, curriculum development, school planning, social partnership, and the apprenticeship system. Optional elements could be: Career guidance and the qualification system.

In Romania, all VET institutions must draw up institutional development plans, which consist of e.g. objectives, measures to reach the objectives, human resources, performance indicators.

In Switzerland, Peer Reviews (type 'Peer Review Sustained') are carried out in 1 or 2 significant quality areas, which are chosen by the VET institutions. However, Peer Reviews are conducted on the basis of obligatory self-assessments by the VET institutions, which cover broader quality areas (certain input, process and output qualities).

In Switzerland, the VET provider must apply a – freely selectable – quality approach, which needs to include at least a self-assessment procedure.

In the United Kingdom (Scotland), Peer Reviews should be aligned to the nine areas of the EFQM model.

National regulations demand fulfillment of the quality framework (curriculum resources, learning and teaching processes, learner outcomes, leadership, and quality management) of VET providers.

Annex 2) Selection of peers, as outlined in the national reports

In **Austria**, peers could be teachers from other VET providers, partners from other VET levels (e.g., Fachhochschule, universities) or experts coming from beyond the school system like company representatives, labor market experts, vocational experts, or organizational development professionals.

In **Denmark**, peers could be VET teachers with some experience as teachers and as self-evaluators.

In **Finland**, peers could be partners from the same VET level, selected by the VET providers. However, peers should have some expertise in both the operational environment and the self-assessment processes and in the relevant quality areas.

In **Hungary**, peers could be parents, representatives of universities, or representatives of the local industry, businessmen, and decision makers in the area of the local policy.

In **Italy**, peers could be QA professionals from VET institutions or persons with particular QA experience. Peers should have expertise in the relevant quality areas.

In the **Netherlands**, peers could be certified auditors, but they should at least have expertise in the national and local quality approaches, i.e. especially EFQM experience and expertise in inspectorate assessment. Furthermore, the Peer Review team could consist of experts specialized in different fields.

In **Portugal**, the chosen peers could select other peers, e.g. by means of an election system.

In **Romania**, peers could be independent experts with expertise in QA systems.

In **Switzerland**, a Peer Review team (in the “Sustained” Peer Review type) consists of teachers from other schools and one external professional expert (e.g. evaluation, communication, moderation).

In the **United Kingdom (Scotland)**, the selection of peers could be aligned to the selection and training of EFQM assessors.

Annex 3) Potential use of the Peer Review instrument in the partner countries with respect to the national QA and QD requirements

In **Austria**, the role of Peer Reviews in a quality system must be clarified. This is also considered to be an important question for the project, e.g. it must be clearly defined from the outset whether the Peer Review instrument could be used as an assessment tool or as a development tool. Consequently, it is not yet clear whether the Peer Review instrument will be an obligatory or voluntary tool.

In **Denmark**, the Peer Review is seen as a useful tool for QA and QD at the department level, and it can supplement the obligatory internal evaluation. The Peer Review should comprehend relevant measuring points from the legal point of view. The Ministry will most likely recommend Peer Review as an **optional tool** rather than a compulsory method.

In **Finland**, the Peer Review will be recommended as an **optional tool** by the VET providers, because national requirements demand a QM approach. The appropriate QA tool, however, can be freely selected.

In **Hungary**, the Peer Review instrument is feasible now as a pilot project on a **voluntary basis**, but a general framework for QM could be obligatory in the future.

In **Italy**, the regional authorities demand a periodical external assessment of vocational training centers by certified bodies. In this context the Peer Review instrument can be used as an **optional** assessment tool (instead of external consultants), although interconnections between peers and VET providers ('too close friendship') should be avoided. The Peer Review could even become an obligatory quality tool in the long term.

In the **Netherlands**, VET providers are obliged to run QM systems and to undergo assessment by external experts. Peer Reviews could fulfill this task as an **optional tool**.

In **Portugal**, the use of Peer Review varies: At the micro and meso level, concerning the scope of the areas to be reviewed (like teachers' evaluation or curriculum evaluation), it could be **voluntary**. At the macro level (assessment of school procedures), it could be **obligatory**.

In **Romania**, the Peer Review instrument needs to be adapted to Romanian needs (i.e. incorporating national and regional QA and QD procedures) before the concrete national use of Peer Review can be outlined.

In **Switzerland**, the Peer Review is conducted as an **optional tool**, comprising different types (Peer Review Extended, Peer Review Sustained, Peer Review Formative)

due to different requirements (QA or QD). It is planned that some regions will establish the Peer Review as an obligatory quality instrument.

*In the **United Kingdom (Scotland)**, inspectors conduct mandatory external reviews (once every 4 years) to complement the VET providers' self-evaluation, to inform key stakeholders about the quality, and to identify and promote good practice. The application of the Peer Review instrument in the Scottish context could mean that the national inspection model may develop into an **obligatory** Peer Review model (also on the basis of self-assessment).*

Authors: Lorenz Lassnigg, Eduard Stöger

Title: Transnational Synopsis Report

Projektbericht/Research Report

© 2005 Institute for Advanced Studies (IHS),
Stumpergasse 56, A-1060 Vienna • ☎ +43 1 59991-0 • Fax +43 1 59991-555 • <http://www.ihs.ac.at>
