

Peer Review Extended

Final project conclusions

Joint assessment and conclusions of the project partners
3rd Transnational Meeting Barcelona (December 13-14, 2007)

I. Assessment of project outcomes and impact

I. 1 Suitability of Peer Review Procedure and usefulness of Tool-box

No further adaptation of the European Peer Review procedure in the European Peer Review Manual is required: The procedure worked very well in practical implementation in the three "new" countries Germany, Spain and Hungary.

→ Gutknecht-Gmeiner, Maria; Lassnigg, Lorenz; Stöger, Eduard; de Ridder, Willem; Strahm, Peter; Strahm, Elisabeth; Koski, Leena; Stalker, Bill; Hollstein, Rick; Allulli, Giorgio; Kristensen, Ole Bech (2007): European Peer Review Manual for initial VET. Vienna, June 2007.

→ Available in English, Danish, Dutch, Finnish, German, Hungarian, Italian, Portuguese, Romanian, Catalan and Spanish from:

www.peer-review-education.net/TCgi/TCgi.cgi?Target=home&P_KatSub=6

The forms, checklists and guidelines in the Tool-box were very useful in the conduct of the pilot Peer Reviews and do not need further improvement.

→ Peer Review Tool-box: available in English and German as a CD-Rom from the project management or from: www.peer-review-education.net/TCgi/TCgi.cgi?Target=home&P_Kat=19 (also in IT, DK, HU)

I. 2 Contribution of Peer Review to the further development of the CQAF

The potential contribution of Peer Review has been outlined in detail in a joint paper of the coordinating partners.

→ Gutknecht-Gmeiner, Maria (2007): Peer Review and the CQAF. Peer Review as an innovative methodology for external evaluation in VET and its contribution to the further development of the „Common Quality Assurance Framework“(CQAF). Contributions by Allulli, Giorgio; Koski, Leena; Väyrynen, Pirjo; Molnar-Stadler, Katalin; Camps, Josep; Canyadell, Pere; Vienna.

Further pilotation and meta-evaluation on different levels (institutional, national, European) will show how Peer Review will support the implementation of the CQAF in practice.

I. 3 Transfer of the project results in terms of national implementation of Peer Review

In all of the participating countries, Peer Reviews will be further piloted. In five countries, transfer into the national quality system is planned. A first overview of implementation scenarios in these countries was compiled.

→ Gutknecht-Gmeiner, Maria (ed.) (2007): Implementing Peer Review as part of the CQAF. Scenarios for Peer Review Implementation in Austria, Spain (Catalonia), Finland, Hungary, and Italy. Contributions by Koski, Leena; Molnar-Stadler, Katalin; Allulli, Giorgio; Tramontano, Ismene; Camps, Josep; Canyadell, Pere; Vienna.

I. 4 Transfer and further implementation of Peer Review on the European level

In the Conclusions of the Pécs Conference (2nd transnational meeting for the Project "Peer Review Extended"), the establishment of a sustainable structure for transnational Peer Reviews on the European level was called for in order to support the conduct of transnational Peer Reviews in a European Peer Review network.

➔ International Peer Review Conference Conclusions www.peer-review-education.net/TCgi/TCgi.cgi?Target=home&P_Kat=18

This has been taken up by ENQA-VET who have included Peer Review in their 2008-2009 Work Programme. Actions planned are:

- to "promote and support Peer Review activities"
- to "develop a framework/process/structure for Peer Reviews"
- to "compile and maintain a register of Peer Review experts"
(ENQA-VET Work Programme, Objective 1: Building sustainable European cooperation and exchange of good practice with regard to QA in VET)

I. 5 Added-value of Peer Review

The following key factors were identified as added-value of Peer Review by the operative partners (VET Providers):

External perspective

- The benefits of an external perspective (in comparison with internal evaluations or audits)
- In particular the benefits of an outsider view of the transnational Peer (helicopter perspective)

Motivating process of mutual learning

- The very good and open atmosphere during the Peer Review – voluntary process, development-orientation (no instrument of control), mutual trust and respect
- The motivating effect Peer Review has on the staff in the reviewed institutions
- The good acceptance of feedback of the Peers by the staff of the reviewed institution: feedback is immediate, includes information from many perspectives (interviews, classroom observations, 360° feedback) and individuals can relate to it (teachers, students)
- The possibility of mutual learning: exchange of information and experiences

A focused, in-depth and tailor-made evaluation

- Mirror for VET Provider
- Comprehensive evaluation of learning & teaching
- ;ultiple dimensions/perspectives: inclusion of stakeholders, different methodologies: interviews and observations

Enhancing the skills and competences of Peers and VET Provider staff

- Peer Review as a special form of (in-service) teacher training
 - personal and professional development
 - training in evaluation → new skills

International/European aspect

- Fostering international contacts and transnational learning
- Transnational Peer as an asset for the VET Provider and the Peers: awareness and understanding of cultural differences and of national strategy of quality development → intercultural learning, accepting each other

Overall assessment

Peer Review is perceived as a very **motivating, effective and efficient procedure** which is complementary to other quality activities.

The Peer Review approach focuses on **finding out and improving** not checking and proving.

Additional aspects

Peer Review can be a **useful methodology for all levels of the VET systems**, e.g. also for external reviews of educational authorities, accreditation and evaluation agencies etc.

A very positive aspect of Peer Review was the **exchange of information and experiences during conferences and meetings**. In order to capitalise on this added-value, Peer Review network activities will have to be coordinated and financed in the future.

II. Further cooperation and transfer

There will be **future cooperation in the project Peer Review Extended II**: all institutions are invited to join in topics of interest (e.g. Peer Training relevant for all countries)

- Partners will remain in the mailing list (internal and external (Newsletter)) and will be informed of further developments. Access to key documents will be ensured through the website.
- Partners will also be invited to conferences and meetings of Peer Review Extended II.

A **mentoring system** (exchange between experienced and new institutions) should be established – perhaps in Peer Review Extended II

The partners together with the institutions from "Peer Review in initial VET" constitute a core **"European Peer Review Network"** which can serve as a point of departure for future activities on the European level.

Activities in Peer Review Extended II will be **linked to the activities of ENQA-VET**.

III. Open questions and future developments recommended

III. 1 Training for Peers

Additional face-to-face Peer Training will be needed both on national & European level.

Possible content of Training:

- Training on procedure, quality areas
- Evaluation skills: methods, feedback
- How to prepare Peer Review Report

Modular structure recommended (roles, diff. needs, diff. expertise, special activities)

On-the-job learning and mentoring recommended

- Simulation of real situations in Peer Review: follow procedure as trainee
- Mentoring

➔ The development of a Training Programme for Peers will be part of the project "Peer Review Extended II" (2007-2009).

III. 2 Training and support for VET providers

In the future, further **support and training for VET Providers** could be implemented:

Training:

- How to make the most of a Peer Review, how to ensure impact of the Peer Review (cf. below Impact of Peer Review)
- How to prepare self-report

Mentoring for VET Providers: experienced VET Providers offer support; make material from experienced VET providers available.

→ A mentoring system for VET Providers might be implemented in the project "Peer Review Extended II" (2007-2009), pending interest and approval of the project partners

III. 3 Ensuring the impact of Peer Review at VET Provider level

Ensuring the impact of Peer Review in the reviewed institutions was identified as an important future topic.

Future activities recommended:

- evaluate impact of Peer Reviews which have taken place
- develop tools for recognition of improvement on VET provider level
- explore the possibility of conducting follow-up Peer Reviews to assess the impact of the first Peer Review (how could this be integrated into the overall European Peer Review procedure?)
- support VET Providers in the integration of the results of Peer Review in their institutional improvement process (cf. above Training and support for VET Providers)

III. 4 Possible further development of the Quality Areas

- PDCA-cycle in each quality area → integrate into criteria
- Review quality areas for overlaps in the criteria
- Review quality areas for horizontal "principles" (e.g. QM-principles, Gender Mainstreaming)
- Up-date of quality areas to reflect continuous development of the VET sector

III. 5 Transnational Peer Reviews

Open questions are

- How to organise Peer Reviews on the European level in the future?
- How to ensure financial support for the transnational peer?
- How to manage further exchange on Peer Reviews on European level with a focus on the VET Providers – coordination and financing of a European Peer Review Network?