QUALITY ASSURANCE STRATEGIES AND GUIDELINES FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN GOLF IN EUROPE

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OBJECTIVES OF THE REPORT
This report will present a number of desk research findings. It will primarily present the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQARF) and the quality assurance methodology proposed by this Framework, and then highlight and review the existing good practices found in the current Vocational Education and Training (VET) system for golf professionals in Europe.

These good practices focus on the existing quality assurance standards and procedures for the national Professional Golfers Associations (PGAs). The golf VET system in Europe for golf professionals is overseen and quality assured by the PGAs of Europe.

The aim of this report is not to implement a new Quality Assurance process for Golf professionals but to explore relevant Quality Assurance strategies that might be considered to improve VET.

This report should be read as a source of information and guidance based on an extensive desk research carried out through different sectors in Europe.
INTRODUCTION TO THE GOLF STAND PROJECT
The EU golf industry is growing fast and employers need well trained employees able to match the requirements of a more demanding and socially diverse client. Golf is unique amongst sports in the size and diversity of its labour market. The European golf industry supports a workforce of 350,000 employees according to a 2009 study by KPMG/Oxford Economics. A large number of qualifications exist in the golf industry, some are recognised in national qualification systems (UK and Netherlands) and some others are purely sector-based. New golf markets have emerged in recent years particularly in Southern and Eastern Europe and the potential for a gap exists between the competencies required by golf employers and the learning outcomes acquired by graduate/employees through training due to the ever changing landscape. These new markets lack quality initial vocational training relevant to golf employers’ needs. In many established golf markets, training processes are often focused on learning inputs.

The most relevant previous innovative work in this domain is the 2007/2008 EQF-Sport Sector project led by EOSE which brought together all stakeholders of the Sport and Active Leisure sector to test EQF principles and which developed a common Lifelong Learning (LLL) Strategy – 7 Step Model to develop Occupational Standards, that has been implemented through the Golf Industry during the last two years. This report focuses on Step 7 – Quality Assurance Process of the model shown below.

The Lifelong Learning Startegy for the Sport and Active Leisure Sector (EOSE)
In support of the EU Education and Training plan 2010, the ratified Lisbon Treaty and the EU White Paper for Sport, this project has aimed to introduce changes into national VET systems and practices by transferring the innovative EOSE 2008 methodology for Lifelong Learning in the Sport and Active Leisure sector to Golf. To achieve this task efficiently, the project examined and presented to Golf the innovative tools of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) and European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQARF.)

The European Occupational Standards for Golf project (GOLF STAND) has been developed with the main objective to produce a range of indispensable European occupational standards aiming at defining the competences, skills and knowledge needed for those working in the sector as golf professionals.

The objectives and expected impact of the project work plan were to:

- Improve the recognition of competences and qualifications in the golf sector
- Further enhance the recognition and re-evaluation of the standards set by the PGAs of Europe embracing an EU-wide competence-based, learning output framework;
- Promote a transparent and flexible education and training system with clear learning and career pathways;
- Ensure the development of a competent workforce with the right skills and competences in line with the expectation of the labour market and facilitate the movement between education and employment;
- Further develop mobility, transparency and mutual trust of qualifications.
- Provide a clear Occupational Map and descriptions for the golf industry.

The Golf Stand consortium was a unique combination of 16 national and EU organisations from 10 different member states involved in the golf, wider sports and education sectors. The project brought together for the first time from across EU a strong mix of recognised stakeholders with varied competences including public authorities concerned with education and sport, two national qualifications authorities, sectoral associations combining both established and emerging golf labour markets, social partners and other key stakeholders, such as 3 of EU leading golf training providers. Further information about the project is available on www.golf-stand.eu
INTRODUCTION TO QUALITY ASSURANCE

Quality Assurance is a mechanism which attempts to ensure that Education and Training meet the requirements for quality that are expected by all the stakeholders involved in the sector. Quality assurance includes several processes and procedures that ensure that qualifications, assessment, and training programmes meet certain standards. In the case of the Golf-Stand project, the objective of the Quality Assurance is to make sure that the Occupational Standards that have been developed through the project and by the industry itself, are properly implemented and so guarantee the link between the worlds of education and employment, and ensure fit for purpose qualifications aligned with the expectations of the labour market.

Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (VET) has emerged as a key priority at EU level, especially with reference to the provision of Vocational Education and Training. Quality Assurance forms the backbone on which mutual trust and recognition across the different EU Member States can be established and fostered. It is for this reason that in working towards European integration in VET, the Copenhagen process has created a policy context for voluntary and sustainable cooperation between Member States. This process was initiated primarily as part of the Lisbon Strategy and is today part of the EU2020 Europe Strategy\(^2\).

Agreed Quality Assurance standards as those developed in the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQARF) are the tools through which increased transparency of VET policy developments between EU Member States can be achieved, supporting the mobility of workers and learners, and lifelong learning within a European dimension.

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Quality Assurance standards will ensure that:

- The link between education and employment opportunities in the Golf sector is maintained
- There is increased employability of graduates in the Golf sector
- Clear, transparent learning and career pathways which would then lead to improved participation rates are proposed
- Internal and external mobility is promoted
- There are fit for purpose qualifications which adhere to common agreed standards
- There is the development of a workforce with the right skills expected by the labour market
- The health and safety of participants is not threatened by ensuring that golf facilities as well as the actual training facilities are up to standard

Quality assurance mechanisms will ensure that the agreed minimum standards cover all of the following areas:

1. validation of qualification and standards
2. accreditation or audit of education and training providers
3. quality assurance of the assessment leading to the award of the qualifications.
The 2002 Barcelona European Council\(^1\) set the target of making Europe’s education and training systems a benchmark for the world by 2010. From the various approaches and processes which were triggered off, reform in VET was steered by the Copenhagen process. One of the main achievements of this process was the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18th June 2009 which referred to the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQARF) for Vocational Education and Training\(^4\). EQARF was developed by the Member States in cooperation with the European Commission.

EQARF is a new voluntary reference instrument developed to provide to authorities of the Member States common tools for the quality management services to promote and monitor the improvement of the effectiveness of their systems of vocational education and training (VET). Quality assurance is the mechanism used to ensure the effectiveness of training provided and should underpin every policy initiative in VET. EQARF puts forward methodological suggestions in order to help Member States to assess clearly and consistently at system level whether the measures necessary for improving the quality of their VET systems have been implemented and whether they need to be reviewed. It also provides standards on which the quality cycle for VET provision is based.

EQARF was built on the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), the European Credit System for VET (ECVET) and previous European quality assurance systems such as the Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF) and the European Network for Quality Assurance in VET (ENQA-VET). The CQAF\(^5\) constitutes a European reference framework to ensure and develop quality in VET, building on the key principles of the most relevant quality assurance models. It may be considered as a cross reading instrument that can help policy-makers and practitioners to understand better how QA models work, to identify areas of provision that need improvement, and take decisions on how to improve them based on common quantitative and qualitative references. It also allows for capturing and classifying best practice within and across Member States.

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The Quality Assurance methodology proposed by EQARF is based on three pillars. These pillars include the following:

- **a quality cycle consisting of four interrelated phases** (planning, implementation, assessment and review) described for VET providers/systems;

- **some quality criteria and indicative descriptors for each phase** of the cycle to direct providers on how to implement the quality cycle; and

- **a list of common indicators (quantitative and qualitative)** for assessing targets, methods, procedures and training results at both system and provider level.

Quality Assurance needs to be present at all levels: at the VET-system; at VET-provider; and at qualification-awarding level. EQARF promotes self-regulation through systematic self-assessment. It includes a combination of internal and external assessment processes that are developed at national level but which implement the common European framework EQARF within the national VET context.

EQARF identifies the process to be adopted for the quality cycle for VET systems and VET providers. The QA cycle involves the following phases:

- **Planning**: which reflects the strategic vision shared by the relevant stakeholders and includes explicit goals/objectives, actions and indicators to be achieved;

- **Implementation**: which refers to plans that are devised in consultation with stakeholders and include explicit principles;

- **Evaluation**: where outcomes and processes are regularly carried out and supported by measurement; and

- **Review**: This is closely linked to the result of the evaluation.

Quality Assurance is a continuous process and cyclical. The review leads to the planning and implementation of new actions and improvements which then need to be evaluated and reviewed again. As the cycle goes on, the provision of VET improves in quality, thus ensuring a good supply of highly trained workers.
EQARF is accompanied by a set of 10 indicators. Each of these ten indicators is then further elaborated in order to provide guidance and direction to Member States as well as institutions with respect to what aspects to consider when developing, adapting or reviewing their own quality assurance system. They also serve to identify the different dimensions of quality assurance which needs to be implemented across Europe. These ten indicators are shown in the table below –

The expected impacts of EQARF thus include –

1. increase in transparency and mobility
2. attractiveness and accessibility of VET
3. bridge between what education provides and the expectations from the labour market

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EQARF Ten Quality Indicators</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Relevance of quality assurance systems for VET providers;</td>
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<td>2. Investment in training of teachers and trainers;</td>
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<td>3. Participation rate in VET programmes;</td>
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<td>4. Completion rate in VET programmes;</td>
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<td>5. Placement rate in VET programmes;</td>
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<td>6. Utilization of acquired skills at the workplace;</td>
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<td>7. Unemployment rate according to individual criteria;</td>
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<td>8. Prevalence of vulnerable groups;</td>
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<td>9. Mechanisms to identify training needs in the labour market;</td>
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<td>10. Schemes used to promote better access to VET.</td>
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It is to be understood that the spirit of quality assurance being discussed here is one where all those involved in the provision of VET education and training feel the responsibility and obligation to make sure that they are providing a service which is of quality. The implication is that all those working within the VET sector, from administration and management, to those who have smaller roles and responsibilities should work within this ethos of quality. VET institutions have the responsibility towards their learners, other VET institutions, government at national level but also for mutual trust and transparency across other countries to ensure that they have systems in place which continually monitor the quality of their service. Due to everybody’s commitment within VET institutions to quality, such systems must ensure the input and participation of all those involved, starting with the students, future employers as well as administration. VET institutions also need to have mechanisms which continually monitor the various aspects of its VET provision, and to take action in those aspects where it is weak.

Quality assurance is not about identifying and punishing those who are not performing. It is intended in a positive inclusive way where all those providing education and training in VET ensure that they are providing training which is of quality, matches labour market needs, and has adequate mechanisms for identifying areas where it needs to improve and to take action upon it.

The implementation of EQARF is thus anything but simple. One major challenge is helping those working within VET education and training institutions to understand and accept the spirit within which quality assurance should be. The indicators developed within EQARF need to be translated to the national context and applied to the wide range of potential providers at both IVET and CVET as well as across all the different sectors of VET which exist. The aim for providing quality training is honourable as well as useful, and definitely worth striving for, even if it is difficult to achieve.
THE EUROPEAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK AND NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS

THE PURPOSE OF A QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK
The main purposes of a qualifications framework can be summarised in the following diagram:

- Better match qualifications with knowledge, skills and competences and to better relate qualifications to occupational needs.
- Support lifelong learning.
- Bring coherence to sub-systems of qualifications, e.g., higher education, adult learning, school awards, and in particular VET qualifications, by creating an overarching framework for them.
- Facilitate the involvement of political actors and stakeholders.
A qualifications framework will thus lead to the following benefits:

- contribute to a coherent, transparent and more integrated qualification system
- increase and target access to qualifications also for certain disadvantaged groups
- open up progression routes (both to higher and broader skills)
- introduce flexibility for learners, providers and users
- promote recognition and validation of all qualifications (including non-formal/informal learning)
- promote VET and adult learning (in its own right and through opening access to higher education)
- make qualifications more relevant to societal and labour market needs
- promote investment and participation in skill development in the workplace.

**The European Qualifications Framework**

The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) acts as a translation device to make national qualifications more readable across Europe, promoting workers’ and learners’ mobility between countries and facilitating their lifelong learning.

The EQF aims to relate different countries’ national qualifications systems to a common European reference framework. Individuals and employers will be able to use the EQF to better understand and compare the qualifications levels of different countries and different education and training systems.

Agreed upon by the European institutions in 2008, the EQF is being put in practice across Europe. It encourages countries to relate their national qualifications systems to the EQF so that all new qualifications issued from 2012 carry a reference to an appropriate EQF level.

The core of the EQF concerns eight reference levels describing what a learner knows, understands and is able to do – ‘learning outcomes’. Levels of national qualifications will be placed at one of the central reference levels, ranging from basic (Level 1) to advanced (Level 8). This will enable a much easier comparison between national qualifications and should also mean that people do not have to repeat their learning if they move to another country.

The EQF applies to all types of education, training and qualifications, from school education to academic, professional and vocational. This approach shifts the focus from the traditional system which emphasises ‘learning inputs’, such as the length of a learning experience, or type of institution. It also encourages lifelong learning by promoting the validation of non-formal and informal learning.

This reflects a wider shift within which the EQF is acting as a catalyst for reforms: most Member States are now developing their own National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) based on learning outcomes.
National Qualifications Frameworks

The EQF Recommendation uses the same National Qualifications Framework definition as Cedefop but introduces an important addition:

(An NQF means an instrument) which aims to integrate and coordinate national qualifications subsystems and improve the transparency, access, progression and quality of qualifications in relation to the labour market and civil society.

This additional point, reflecting the agreement of the countries involved in the EQF development process, confirms that NQFs are seen as something more than classifiers. It signals that NQFs should be a force for change and they should be used to question existing interests and promote discussion and development of better qualifications systems. The success of an NQF is therefore very much dependent on its ability to bring together relevant stakeholders and create a platform for cooperation and for addressing common or conflicting challenges. For this reason country representatives (in the EQF Advisory Group as well as the peer learning cluster) have underlined many times that the development of an NQF is a substantial political undertaking and a long term project for improvement rather than a short term means of better referencing to the EQF.

One of the ways an NQF acts as a force for change is through the concept of associated functions of NQFs. The EQF has associated functions in that it goes beyond its formulation as a grid and recommends that countries look closely at encouraging the use of validation of non-formal and informal learning and adopting the European principles for quality assurance. These functions are strengthened by the introduction of NQFs and countries often seek to use the NQF implementation to adjust the ways governance of qualifications operates.

Progression in the MQF is recorded in terms of:

1. knowledge and understanding;
2. applying knowledge and understanding;
3. communication skills;
4. judgemental skills;
5. learning skills;
6. autonomy and responsibility.

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) has been in place since 2001 and is a well-known and frequently-used means of describing the level and credit (size)
of learning in Scotland. The main purpose of the SCQF is to make the Scottish system of qualifications, and the way in which they relate to each other, easier to understand and use. It is intended to:

- support lifelong learning;
- clarify entry and exit points for qualifications and programmes of learning at whatever level;
- show learners and others possible routes for progression and credit transfer;
- show the general level and credit (size) of the different types of Scottish qualification; and enable credit links to be made between qualifications or learning programmes so as to assist learners to build on previous successes.

Any learning in Scotland at any level, provided that it is outcome-based and subject to quality assured assessment, is capable of being included in the single unified structure of the SCQF.

The following diagram shows the structure of the SCQF
ACCREDITATION, APPROVAL AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

According to Cedefop accreditation is “the formal recognition that a body or a person is competent to carry out specific tasks”. Cedefop defines accreditation of an education or training provider as “the process of quality assurance through which accredited status is granted to an education or training provider, showing it has been approved by the relevant legislative or professional authorities by having met predetermined standards.” The definition of accreditation can sometimes differ between countries, in the UK for example awarding bodies are accredited to offer qualifications and are subject to audit. In turn, awarding bodies “approve” or “quality assure” a range of training providers and colleges.

This section will highlight good practices of accreditation, approval and quality assurance found through desk research. This section covers accreditation or approval of training providers but also highlights the accreditation or approval of training programmes.

Firstly an example of good practice in the approval of training providers from the UK will be presented then a sector-based approval and quality assurance policy at the European level will be presented.

UK AWARDING BODY APPROVAL AND QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS

In the UK there are dedicated quality assurance agencies called Awarding Bodies. They are responsible for approval and quality assurance within a range of colleges and providers. They operate a system of External Verification which ensures consistency and quality in the delivery of qualifications.

Typically the quality assurance checks undertaken by an awarding organisation will include the following elements in the initial and ongoing accreditation of the provider:

1. Management

2. Human resources
   - Qualifications and experience of staff
   - Staff development

3. Programme delivery
   - Progressive and logical timetable
   - Variety of teaching approaches
   - Management of assessment
   - Quality resources
   - Learner support
   - Equality and diversity

4. Internal verification
   - Ensuring consistency
   - Sampling
   - IV reports

5. Assessment
   - APL
   - Formative and summative assessments
   - Valid and reliable assessments

6. Physical resources
   - Health and safety procedures
   - Appropriate physical environment and equipment
   - Teaching aids
   - Learning resources

Quality assurance is central to the UK system of vocational education and training and a key part of this is the system of “external verification” where centres are visited to ensure the quality of course delivery and assessment. It is the externality that ensures credibility and accountability in the system.
EUROPEAN HEALTH AND FITNESS ASSOCIATION (EHFA) POLICY FOR ACCREDITATION OF TRAINING PROVIDERS

In response to the principles and aspirations established in the EU Copenhagen Declaration for third party (independent) verification of training providers, EHFA developed a system of quality assurance that has been in use since 2007 and has successfully accredited over 20 training companies. During the accreditation process, each submission was considered on its merits and the EHFA Accreditation Unit (EAU) evaluated content and ensured that the programmes are fit for purpose in producing candidates that can demonstrate the skills and competence required and identified in the EHFA Standards.

The EHFA Standards have been agreed as the minimum requirements for an individual to be called an exercise professional and who are then able to apply for registration with the European Register of Exercise Professionals (EREPS) and the national registers working within its programme.

Because the Commission’s emphasis is on national solutions to promote improving standards in VET it is no longer considered appropriate for EHFA to operate a centralised, proscriptive approach to accreditation. Instead it needs to be tailored to help support providers in their own countries to achieve national standards of quality assurance but in addition to also demonstrate compliance with the delivery of EHFA’s learning outcomes from its standards.

The EHFA Standards Council is setting and reviewing a specific new policy for the Accreditation of Training Providers based on the following key points:

1. Extensive knowledge of EHFA Standards in terms of learning outcomes.
2. Recognized assessor qualification in the field of Education and Training.
3. Recognized qualified staff.
4. Track of a minimum of 3 years serving as Accreditation Body.
5. Independent from any other commercial control.
6. Extensive knowledge of EU working systems and practices, in particular in reference to EQF and EQECVET.
In particular the scheme is based around a declaration that the training provider agrees to

- Review the EHFA standards and confirm that qualification(s) align effectively to the relevant standards in terms of knowledge, skills and competence

- Agree to translate a sample of assessment documents into English (e.g. theory exams, practical competence measuring documents), if required

- Have appropriately qualified and sufficient staff in place to support the qualification(s) provided

- Ensure that an initial assessment of students’ existing skills and knowledge takes place on enrolment, including the identification of any individual learning needs

- Monitor student progress to provide support and guidance where required, taking individual learning needs into consideration

- Use valid and reliable assessment methods to assess underpinning knowledge and practical competence

- Have a robust internal quality assurance process in place to ensure consistency and comparability of assessment decisions over time

- Comply with the relevant law and regulatory criteria in your country

- Provide access to the programme team, students and assessment documentation when accreditation visits are conducted

- Accept that if the Training Provider defaults on the commitments made in this application it may lead to the removal of its accredited status

EHFA Standards Council has created an Accreditation Governing Group to oversee the delivery of EHFA accreditation, ongoing quality assurance, consistency and transparency in the process.
OVERALL FINDINGS AND GOOD QUALITY ASSURANCE PRACTICES IN THE GOLF SECTOR

BACKGROUND

In order for a quality assurance system to be based on the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework there needs to be a solid commitment to quality assurance. This commitment needs to be official and part of the institution’s ethos. There thus needs to be either as part of the institution’s main mission statement, or within an institutional quality assurance policy, a declaration of this commitment.

The PGAs of Europe’s mission is to represent, promote and provide advice to develop professional golf and ensure that the administration of the professional game throughout the continent delivers excellence in the services provided to ensure highly qualified, highly skilled PGA Professionals who lead the advancement of the game around the world.8

This commitment to quality assurance in education is also outlined in the PGAs of Europe operating principles.

Unify and improve standards of education and qualification to increase quality and provide ability for PGA Professionals to work across the continent irrespective of their country of qualification.

This commitment also reflects the EQARF’s objectives of mobility for workers referred to in the Introduction. The PGAs of Europe regularly re-evaluate national PGAs for quality of content and delivery9.

THE PGAs OF EUROPE

The PGAs of Europe is an Association of National PGAs (31 European and 7 International) with a collective membership in excess of 21,000 golf professionals. The association’s core mission is to represent, promote and provide advice to develop professional golf and ensure that the administration of the professional game throughout the continent delivers excellence in the services provided to end users.

The PGAs of Europe guides the administration of the professional game throughout the continent and sometimes beyond in order to ensure excellence in the delivery of those services necessary to guarantee highly qualified and skilled PGA Professionals equipped to lead the growth and advancement of the game around the world. Central to their operation, the association works to raise standards and opportunities in the education and employment of golf professionals whilst also representing member countries in dealing with influential bodies and governments regarding the promotion of the game and the interests of PGA professionals.

It is also a partner in the Ryder Cup with specific responsibility for the management of the Ryder Cup European Development Trust and is widely acknowledged as a lead body in the delivery of golf development expertise on a global basis through its collaboration with The R&A in implementing its Golf Development Programme.

The PGAs of Europe provide a full range of educational and development services to its members. (Refer to Figure 1 below) Member Country PGAs at different stages of development are able to access advise, programmes and in some cases support through the Ryder Cup European Development Trust for specific projects at the appropriate time.

The aim of a PGA education programme is to assist trainees in the development of the skills and competencies necessary to successfully progress their career in professional golf. Although education and training play a large part in the development of skills and competencies it should not be forgotten that experience also plays a major factor in shaping the individual throughout their chosen career pathway. There are two areas of education that are the building blocks which a professional should use in order to maximise career opportunity.
1. **IPE – INITIAL PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION**

Initial Professional Education (IPE) should be thought of as education which takes place before qualification. Therefore an individual entering the profession will undertake a period of education (normally three years) during which they will be exposed to all aspects of the profession whilst immersed in a golf environment. Such an education will likely include a blended mix of: on the job training; tutor contact time, distance learning and many of the elements often found in traditional apprenticeship programmes.

2. **PCE – POST COMPULSORY EDUCATION**

Post Compulsory Education (PCE) follows Initial Professional Education and is used to maintain, improve or broaden knowledge and skills. PCE is a continuing learning process that complements Initial Professional Education while improving practice standards and client care. There are two main themes to PCE –

I. to update – remain current – to be updated on best practice

II. to upgrade – learn new skills – improve – broaden skill and competence sets

PCE may include formal types of vocational education or may also come in the form of in-service (situated training) professional development programmes which may be formal, informal, group or individualised.

The PGAs of Europe have implemented various mechanisms which continually monitor the various aspects of VET provision. These mechanisms can identify aspects where weaknesses may occur. Some of these mechanisms are outlined in the section below. However it is important to bear in mind that quality assurance is not about identifying and punishing those who are not performing. On the contrary it is intended in a positive inclusive way where all those providing education and training in VET ensure that they are providing training which is of quality, matches labour market needs, and has adequate mechanisms for identifying areas where it needs to improve and to take action upon it.

**TRANSPARENCY IN THE PROCESS OF RECOGNITION**

A national PGA that wishes to achieve recognition of its education programme should apply to the PGAs of Europe’s Education Committee and work through a three stage process. Throughout the recognition process an applicant country will receive regular feedback highlighting green, yellow and red points and advise on the development of an appropriate action plan.
- Green – Items which are considered to reach the required standard
- Yellow – Items that with minor adjustment should reach the required standards
- Red – items that need significant change to reach the required standard

EVALUATION OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Once a country’s educational programme has met the European Education Standards and the process of Recognition has been approved the Education Committee will continue to monitor the ongoing development of the programme.

There are two controls that are applied to a recognised programme:

- Annual self assessment control (audit) followed by spot checks
- External assessment (audit), re-evaluation every four years

The annual self assessment control takes the form of providing information and evidence of specific actions within the education programme while ensuring that it satisfies the requirements of the European Education Standard and continues to develop. A request for specific papers relating to the programme may be made by The PGAs of Europe and additional evidence may be required following completion of the annual self assessment.

The Annual Self Assessment Control is evidence that a mechanism is in place to identify what information and data should be collected and used in this VET system. It is also clear that The PGAs of Europe collect feedback from the national PGAs. The collection of feedback is another mechanism which enhances the provision of quality vocational education and training. VET has to meet both employers’ and learners’ needs and the key to any quality assurance system is the way feedback is used to improve the system.

External assessment is conducted three years after the initial recognition and then on a cycle of four years from the first successful re-evaluation. It is expected that the external assessment will be concluded within a period of fifteen months and commences with notification of the completion date. Initially the annual self assessment form should be submitted for evaluation by the Director of Education and a nominated member of the Education Committee. A report will be produced and distributed to the remaining Education Committee members for their analysis.
comparing the components of the programme to the requirements of the European Education Standards guidelines. Recommendations are then sent to the national PGA and once all areas reach green or yellow status (with an agreed time frame) a qualified assessor together with either the Director of Education or Chairman of Education will conduct a final visit (normally 2-3 days) to complete the re-evaluation at which they will have specific interest in:

The progress made on the development of PCE programmes
- The quality of content and materials used
- The teaching process including the knowledge and delivery of tutors
- The assessment / examination process

A successful re-evaluation will allow the Member Country to be recognised for a further period of four years.

INVESTMENT IN TRAINING OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS
This section is included in the section ‘Delivery of the education programme’ in the Annual Self Assessment Control. There are two specific questions which cover this area –
- How many tutors/trainers have undergone specific training and are qualified to deliver education/training within your education programme?
- How are the tutors/trainers assessed for competence?

FACILITIES
Although the EQARF indicators do not cover the physical facilities in which tuition takes places, this area is covered in the Annual Self Assessment Control. The national PGA is asked to describe the facilities that are used for the delivery of the education programme and in a case where satisfactory evidence is not provided will be subject to inspection.

PARTICIPATION IN VET PROGRAMME
This quality indicator is covered in the Annual Self Assessment Control in the section entitled ‘candidate’. The national PGA has to fill in the number of candidates in each year of the training programme and be prepared to make candidates available for interview by members of the PGAs of Europe assessor team. A further enhancement of the scheme could be to elicit further information in order to identify trends e.g. across gender, regionally, socio-economic status etc. to identify patterns and to take actions accordingly.
COMPLETION RATE IN VET PROGRAMMES
This data is useful to track students and carry out tracer studies. This data is useful for analysis of trends. In the Annual Self Assessment Control the PGA has to indicate which students have failed and which have dropped out or not fulfilled all the requirements to carry on to the next year.

SCHEMES USED TO PROMOTE BETTER ACCESS TO VET
A national PGA that wishes to achieve This indicator reflects the strategies and initiatives adopted in order to ensure that there is better access to training in VET, for all sections of society.

Some countries include specific mention of golfers with physical limitations / disability. The PGA of Holland has a dedicated programme on the approach to be taken when coaching golfers with physical limitations / disabilities which will be available to all member countries from late 2012. In 2008 the European Disabled Golf Association (EDGA) took the initiative to contact The PGAs of Europe about the possibility to create ‘continuing professional development’ (CPD) course for professionals, to provide them with additional material and practical training to teach/ coach people with physical limitations.
List of Acronyms used

CQAF – Common Quality Assurance Framework
CVT - Continuing vocational training
ECVET – European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training
EHFA – European Health and Fitness Association
EQARF – European Quality Assurance Reference Framework
EQF – European Qualifications Framework
EDGA - European Disabled Golf Association
HEI – Higher Education Institute
IVT - Initial vocational training
LLL – Lifelong Learning
MQC – Malta Qualifications Council
MQF – Malta Qualifications Framework
NQF – National Qualifications Framework
OECD – Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PGA – Professional Golf Association
QA – Quality Assurance
QAA – Quality Assurance Agency
SCQF – Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
SQA - Scottish Qualifications Authority
VET – Vocational Education and Training
### ANNEX 1: THE EUROPEAN QUALITY ASSURANCE REFERENCE FRAMEWORK: QUALITY CRITERIA AND INDICATIVE DESCRIPTORS

This annex provides common quality criteria and indicative descriptors to support Member States, as appropriate, when implementing the Framework.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality criteria</th>
<th>Indicative descriptors at system level</th>
<th>Indicative descriptors at VET provider level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning reflects a strategic vision shared by the relevant stakeholders and includes explicit goals/objectives, actions and indicators.</td>
<td>Goals/objectives of VET are described for the medium and longterms, and linked to European goals.</td>
<td>Ongoing consultation with relevant stakeholders takes place to identify specific local/individual needs.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The relevant stakeholders participate in setting VET goals and objectives at the different levels.</td>
<td>Responsibilities in quality management and development have been explicitly allocated.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Targets are established and monitored through specific indicators (success criteria).</td>
<td>There is an early involvement of staff in planning, including with regard to quality development.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mechanisms and procedures have been established to identify training needs.</td>
<td>Providers plan cooperative initiatives with other VET providers.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>An information policy is devised to ensure optimum disclosure of quality results/outcomes subject to national/regional data protection requirements.</td>
<td>The relevant stakeholders participate in the process of analysing local needs.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Standards and guidelines for recognition, validation and certification of competences of individuals have been defined.</td>
<td>Providers have an explicit and transparent learner charter and a quality system is in place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation plans are devised in consultation with stakeholders and include explicit principles.</td>
<td>Implementation plans are established in cooperation with social partners, VET providers and other relevant stakeholders at the different levels.</td>
<td>European, national and regional VET policy goals/objectives are reflected in the local targets set by the VET providers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Implementation plans include consideration of the resources required, the capacity of the users and the tools and guidelines needed for support.</td>
<td>Explicit goals/objectives and targets are set and monitored.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Guidelines and standards have been devised for implementation at different levels.</td>
<td>Resources are appropriately internally aligned/assigned with a view to achieving the targets set in the implementation plans.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Implementation plans include specific support towards the training of teachers and trainers.</td>
<td>Relevant and inclusive partnerships are explicitly supported to implement the actions planned.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>VET providers’ responsibilities in the implementation process are explicitly described and made transparent.</td>
<td>The strategic plan for staff competence development specifies the need for training for teachers and trainers.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A national and/or regional quality assurance framework is devised and includes guidelines and quality standards at provider level to promote continuous improvement and self-regulation.</td>
<td>Staff undertake regular training and develop cooperation with relevant external stakeholders to support capacity building and quality improvement, and to enhance performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality criteria</td>
<td>Indicative descriptors at system level</td>
<td>Indicative descriptors at VET provider level</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluation of outcomes and processes is regularly carried out and supported by measurement.</td>
<td>A methodology for evaluation is devised, covering internal and external evaluation. Stakeholder involvement in the monitoring and evaluation process is agreed and clearly described. The national/regional standards and processes for improving and assuring quality are relevant and proportionate to the needs of the sector. Systems are subject to self-evaluation and external review. Early warning systems are implemented. Performance indicators are applied. Relevant, regular and coherent data collection takes place to measure success and identify areas for improvement. Appropriate data collection methodologies are devised, for example, questionnaires and indicators/metrics.</td>
<td>Self-assessment/self-evaluation is periodically carried out under national and regional regulations/frameworks or at the initiative of VET providers. Evaluation and review covers processes and results/outcomes of education including the assessment of client satisfaction as well as staff performance. Evaluation and review includes adequate and effective mechanisms to involve internal and external stakeholders, such as managers, teachers, students, parents, employers, social partners and local authorities. Benchmarking and comparative indicators are used for mutual learning and performance improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review</td>
<td>Procedures, mechanisms and instruments for undertaking reviews are defined at all levels. Processes are continuously reviewed and action plans for change devised. Systems are constantly being developed. Benchmarking to support mutual learning between VET providers is encouraged and supported. Information on the outcomes of evaluation is made publicly available. Learners’ feedback on their learning environment and experience is gathered and used to inform further actions. Information on the outcomes of the review is widely and publicly available.</td>
<td>Procedures on feedback and review are part of a strategic learning process in the organisation. Results/outcomes of the evaluation process are discussed with relevant stakeholders and appropriate action plans are put in place.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ANNEX 2: A REFERENCE SET OF QUALITY INDICATORS FOR VET

This annex provides a comprehensive set of indicators to support the evaluation, monitoring and quality improvement of VET systems and providers. The set of indicators will be further developed through European cooperation on a bilateral or multilateral basis, building on European data and national registers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Type of indicator</th>
<th>Policy rationale</th>
<th>Applicable to</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overarching indicators for quality assurance</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>No 1. Relevance of quality assurance systems for VET providers:</td>
<td>Context/input indicator</td>
<td>Promote a quality improvement culture at VET-provider level.</td>
<td>IVT, CVT</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Increase the transparency of quality of training.</td>
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<td>Improve mutual trust on training provision.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>a) share of providers applying internal quality assurance systems defined by law/at own initiative</td>
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<td>b) share of accredited VET providers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>No 2. Investment in training of teachers and trainers:</td>
<td>Input/process indicator</td>
<td>Promote ownership of teachers and trainers in the process of quality development in VET.</td>
<td>IVT, CVT</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Improve the responsiveness of VET to evolving demand of labour market.</td>
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<td>Increase individual learning capacity building.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Improve learner’s achievement.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a) share of teachers and trainers participating in further training</td>
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<td></td>
<td>b) amount of funds invested.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Indicators supporting quality objectives for VET policies</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>No 3. Participation rate in VET programs:</td>
<td>Input/process/output indicator</td>
<td>Obtain basic information at system and provider levels on the attractiveness of VET.</td>
<td>IVT38, CVT, LLL (Lifelong learning): percentage of population admitted to formal VET programs.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Target support to increase access to VET, including socially disadvantaged groups.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicator</td>
<td>Type of indicator</td>
<td>Policy rationale</td>
<td>Applicable to</td>
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<tr>
<td>No 4. Completion rate in VET programs:</td>
<td>Process/output/outcome indicator</td>
<td>Obtain basic information on educational achievements and the quality of training processes. Calculate drop-out rates compared to participation rate. Support successful completion as one of the main objectives for quality in VET. Support adapted training provision, including for socially disadvantaged groups.</td>
<td>IVT CVT (when relevant)</td>
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<tr>
<td>No 5. Placement rate in VET programs</td>
<td>Outcome indicator</td>
<td>Support employability. Improve responsiveness of VET to changing demands in the labour market. Support adapted training provision, including socially disadvantaged groups.</td>
<td>IVT (including information on destination of dropouts) CVT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) destination of VET learners in six, 12 and 36 months after completion of training, according to the type of program and the individual criteria</td>
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<tr>
<td>b) share of employed learners in six, 12 and 36 months after completion of training, according to the type of program and the individual criteria.</td>
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<tr>
<td>No 6. Utilisation of acquired skills at the workplace:</td>
<td>Outcome indicator (mix of qualitative and quantitative data)</td>
<td>Increase employability. Improve responsiveness of VET to changing demands in the labour market. Support adapted training provision, including socially disadvantaged groups.</td>
<td>IVT CVT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) information on occupation obtained by individuals after completion of training, according to type of training and individual criteria</td>
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<tr>
<td>b) satisfaction rate of individuals and employers with acquired skills/competences.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indicator</td>
<td>Type of indicator</td>
<td>Policy rationale</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>No 7. Unemployment rate:</strong></td>
<td>Context indicator</td>
<td>Background information for policy decision making at VET system level.</td>
<td>IVT, CVT</td>
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<tr>
<td>according to individual criteria</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>No 8. Prevalence of vulnerable groups:</strong></td>
<td>Context indicator</td>
<td>Background information for policy decision making at VET system level.</td>
<td>IVT, CVT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) percentage of participants in VET classified as disadvantaged groups (in a defined region or catchment area) according to age and gender</td>
<td></td>
<td>Support access to VET for socially disadvantaged groups. Support adapted training provision for socially disadvantaged groups.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) success rate of disadvantaged groups according to age and gender.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No 9. Mechanisms to identify training needs in the labour market:</strong></td>
<td>Context/input indicator (qualitative information)</td>
<td>Improve responsiveness of VET to changing demands in the labour market. Support employability.</td>
<td>IVT, CVT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) information on mechanisms set up to identify changing demands at different levels</td>
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<tr>
<td>b) evidence of their usefulness.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>No 10. Schemes used to promote better access to VET:</strong></td>
<td>Process indicator (qualitative information)</td>
<td>Promote access to VET, including socially disadvantaged groups. Support adapted training provision.</td>
<td>IVT, CVT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) information on existing schemes at different levels</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) evidence of their usefulness.</td>
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