Peer Review
in European VET

European Peer Review Reader

Developments and experiences 2004–2009

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European Peer Review Reader
Developments and experiences 2004–2009

Maria Gutknecht-Gmeiner (ed.)

Vienna, September 2009

Peer Review Extended II – Transfer and further development of the European Peer Review methodology as an element of the Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF)
Leonardo da Vinci Project LLP-LdV/TOI/2007/AT/0011

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Foreword

In the past five years, a European Peer Review procedure has been developed, tested, and revised in a cooperation of 15 European countries covering initial and continuing VET as well as guidance and counselling. In three consecutive projects – Peer Review in initial VET (2004–2007), Peer Review Extended (2007), and Peer Review Extended II (2007–2009)[1] – 25 transnational European Peer Reviews have successfully been piloted. The procedure has been laid down in a European Peer Review Manual for VET. It provides a common European standard for Peer Reviews in VET ensuring high-quality reviews and comparability across Europe. It is available in 15 European languages.

A wide range of supporting material for the dissemination, preparation and implementation of Peer Review is ready for further use: A multitude of information and dissemination material and reports in many different languages, a comprehensive European Peer Review website (www.peer-review-education.net), a Peer Training Curriculum which also includes a web-based Peer Training, and a practical Tool-box which provides all necessary checklists, forms and guidelines for conducting a European Peer Review.

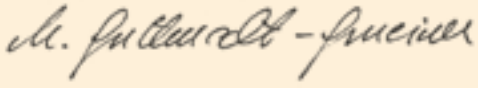
At the close of the third project, it is now time to take stock, to reflect on past experiences, to consider the impact of the Peer Review projects on VET providers and national systems and to outline current and future implementation. This Reader covers all activities and aspects of the "European Peer Review experience", partners from all three projects have contributed their experiences, reflections, and future plans.

- *Part one of the Peer Review Reader sets out with an introduction to Peer Review and to the three Peer Review projects, reporting facts and figures and assessing the projects from the perspective of the European project coordinator.*
- *A second part features the wealth of individual experiences of those who have been involved in transnational European Peer Reviews over the past years: the Peers and the VET providers from all over Europe.*
- *In a short interlude the European Peer Training Curriculum is presented: Peer Training is considered one of the crucial elements for further dissemination and use of Peer Review.*
- *Last but not least, national Peer Review implementation in different countries is portrayed in exemplary case studies. With an outlook on European developments to promote quality in VET and transnational Peer Reviews in the future the Reader comes to a close.*

The structure of the reader also reflects the scope and progress of the Peer Review projects over the past years: Starting with an idea derived directly from European quality policies, spreading out to member states and to VET providers from all over Europe, Peer Review implementation now encompasses not only individual VET systems of partner countries but strives to come full circle back to the European level again by contributing to the practical implementation of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQARF).

We trust that the European Peer Review will continue to support VET institutions/providers in their efforts to improve the quality of their provision and to engage in European cooperation and networking. This reader, we hope, will give a practical and useful insight into our experiences and help to pass on the enthusiasm for and commitment to European Peer Review sparking off new ideas and initiatives all over Europe. We have strived to give a lively account and wish that the Reader makes for enjoyable reading – feedback will be very much appreciated!

For the teams of the European Peer Review projects



Dr. Maria Gutknecht-Gmeiner
Project coordinator

[1] Peer Review in initial VET AT/04/C/F/TH-82000, 2004–2007; Peer Review Extended, LE-78CQAF, EAC/32/06/13, 2007; Peer Review Extended II, LLP-LdV/TOI/2007/AT/0011, 2007–2009.

Content

I. *European Peer Review – Developments and Experiences*

I.1. The European Peer Review Initiative – an overview

Peer Review in initial VET (2004–2007)
In 2003–2004, the Leonardo da Vinci project "Peer Review in initial VET" was developed to support the initiatives in quality assurance promoted on the European level. The project sought to complement the activities of the Technical Working Group on Quality in VET by taking up one part of the TWG's assignment, namely "to promote the exchange of good practice and the use of voluntary peer review at different levels" (Mandate of the TWG on Quality in VET). While Peer Review res. Peer Learning activities were launched by the TWG on the system level, the project aimed at introducing Peer Review on the institutional level in initial VET. The project which was supported by a partnership of 25 institutions[1] from eleven European countries started in October 2004 (cf. www.peer-review-education.net).

After an extensive international research and analysis of Peer Review procedures in use in Higher Education and of existing model projects with Peer Review in VET, Peer Review was tailored to the needs of the initial VET sector: a European Peer Review procedure was developed by a transnational team of experts from eight institutions in seven countries. Additionally, national requirements and needs of the participating countries were taken into account. From the start, the Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF) was used as a guideline for the development of the procedure which in turn supports the principles and criteria of the CQAF by providing a new methodology for external evaluation in VET.

A first version of the procedure was laid down in a European Peer Review Manual by November 2005 (European Peer Review Manual for initial VET, first version, 2005). The procedure was subsequently piloted and tested successfully in 15 pilot Peer Reviews in eight European countries in 2006. The employment of transnational Peers, an important feature of Peer Reviews in Higher Education, was realised in all pilot Peer Reviews. In June 2007, the "European Peer Review Manual for initial VET" was published.

Throughout the first two project years, additional partners (mainly VET providers but also educational authorities, stakeholders and other institutions) asked to join the project but no further funding was available. Some institutions were put on a "waiting list", two institutions participated without European funding, and one institution received part of the grant of one of the partner institutions. The number of Peer Reviews conducted was thus raised from 13 in the project contract to 15.

Peer Review Extended (2007)
To encompass the new institutions and countries on the waiting list, the project "Peer Review Extended" was set up under a special "CQAF call". Experience with Peer Review was thus expanded to new countries: another set of four transnational European Peer Reviews were carried out in four countries (Austria, Germany, Hungary, and Spain/Catalonia) in 2007. A practical tool-box to support the conduct of Peer Review was developed. It complements the manual by providing instruments for VET providers like forms, checklists, additional information and recommendations.

In correspondence with European policies, the project also aimed to investigate the contribution of Peer Review to the further development of the CQAF and a paper summarising the main benefits of Peer Review was drawn up. Additionally, transfer into the regular quality system of partner countries was supported through a guideline for implementing Peer Review as part of the CQAF buttressed by implementation scenarios from 5 European countries res. regions.

Peer Review Extended II (2007–2009)
"Peer Review Extended II" is a transfer of innovation (TOI) project under Leonardo da Vinci. It involves 14 partner institutions from nine European countries. The project aims at transferring of Peer Review to further "new" countries – Czech Republic, Slovenia and Turkey – and to continuing vocational education and training. Adaptations are based on expert analyses of the European Peer Review Manual and further experimentation.

In the current project, the European Peer Review procedure is being tested in another six Peer Reviews in three countries (Austria, Denmark, and Portugal); one of them is carried out in the continuing VET sector.

As a result, the manual has been adapted to fit both initial and continuing VET (European Peer Review Manual for VET).

[1] Three more institutions joined the project in the pilot phase; originally the partnership comprised 22 partners.

Due to the special interest of the Slovenian partner, the procedure has also been transferred to guidance and counselling in adult education and laid down in a separate manual.

Furthermore, as a response to the repeated demand for a comprehensive Peer Training expressed in the previous projects – where only the provision of a web-based Training Programme was reasonable in terms of funding – a curriculum for a two-day-training of Peers has been developed. Pilot Peer Trainings have been conducted in Austria, Denmark, and Finland.

Table 1: The European Peer Review Initiative – an overview

Peer Review in initial VET	Peer Review Extended	Peer Review Extended II

Aims
• Development and testing of Peer Review procedure for initial VET
• Build-up of Peer Review Network
	Aims
	• Further development and testing of European Peer Review procedure
	• Contribution of Peer Review to CQAF
	• Expansion of Network
		Aims
		• Adaptation of Peer Review to
		  ◦ new countries
		  ◦ continuing VET
		• Expansion of Network

Products • European Peer Review Manual for initial VET • Peer Training Programme (web-based)	**Products** • Peer Review Tool-box • Scenarios for Peer Review implementation on national/regional level • Peer Review and the CQAF	**Products** • European Peer Review Manual for continuing VET • Peer Training (face-to-face) • Peer Review Reader
• 15 Pilots (2006) • Oct. 2004 – Sept. 2007 • 25 partners from 11 countries	• 4 Pilots (2007) • Jan. 2007 – Dec. 2007 • 9 partners from 6 countries	• 6 Pilots (2008/2009) • Nov. 2007 – Oct. 2009 • 14 partners from 9 countries

Participating countries: Austria, Germany, Czech Republic, Denmark, Spain, Finland, Italy, Hungary, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Turkey, United Kingdom, Switzerland
Participation in pilot Peer Reviews: Austria, Germany, Denmark, Spain, Finland, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, United Kingdom

I.2. The European Peer Review Procedure

A common standard for a European Peer Review Procedure is described in the European Peer Review Manual. It is currently available in 15 languages: Catalan, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, German, Hungarian, Italian, Norwegian, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovenian, Spanish, and Turkish.

I.2.1. Peer Review as voluntary formative external evaluation on the VET provider level

The European Peer Review procedure was defined by the project partners as a formative external evaluation. It aims at the improvement of the quality of the participating VET provider. Participation in a European Peer Review is voluntary.

I.2.2. Phases of a European Peer Review

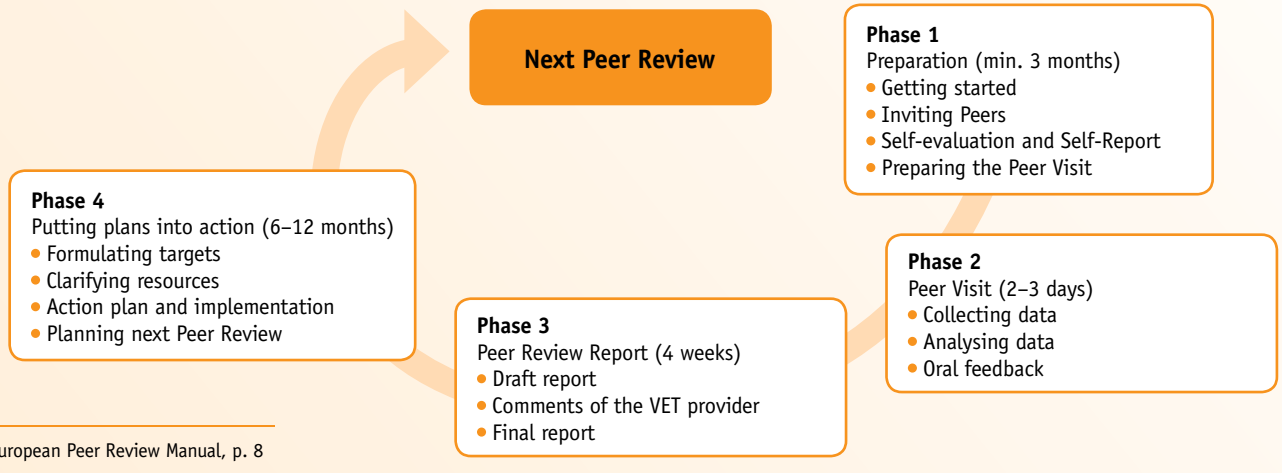
The European Peer Review follows a step-by-step procedure based on prior self-evaluation. The phases comprise:

- a preparatory phase which includes the self-evaluation, the selection and invitation of the Peers and the organisational and methodological preparation of the Peer Visit
- the Peer Visit as the core element of the Peer Review where data is collected and analysed and a first assessment (strengths and areas of improvement) of the Peers imparted to the evaluated institution
- the writing of the Peer Review Report which should be done within weeks after the Peer Visit
- the implementation, i.e. the utilisation and innovative further development of the outcomes of the Peer Review by the VET provider.

Table 2: Position of Peer Review in the "cognitive evaluation map"

Source: Gutknecht-Gmeiner, based on the chart "Evaluation – a cognitive map" by Nisbet (1990, 5).

Table 3: Phases of a European Peer Review



Source: European Peer Review Manual, p. 8

Table 4: Composition of Peer Team – Roles, occupational/institutional background and competences

Number of Peers (4 Peers)	Occupational Background	Required competences
2 "Real" Peers (minimum)*	**Professionals from other VET providers** (teachers/trainers, counsellors, managers, quality experts, etc.)	• Knowledge of Quality Areas under scrutiny • Experience in teaching & learning processes • Experience in QA and QD procedures
1 "Stakeholder" Peer **	**Representative from other stakeholder groups** (other educational levels, companies, social partners, etc.)	• Knowledge of Quality Areas under scrutiny • Experience in QA and QD procedures
1 Evaluation Expert*	**Professional evaluator/quality assessor** (e.g. from research institute/university, independent auditing/ accrediting body, also from VET provider)	• Expertise in evaluation, moderation and communication • Knowledge of VET system
1 Gender mainstreaming expert*	**any of the above**	additional: • Expertise in gender mainstreaming
1 Transnational Peer (optional)***	**any of the above, usually a VET professional**	• Knowledge of Quality Areas under scrutiny • Experience in teaching & learning processes • Experience in QA and QD procedures

* required for a European Peer Review, ** recommended for a European Peer Review, *** required for a transnational European Peer Review
Source: European Peer Review Manual, p. 40

I.2.3. Who are the Peers?

The requirements for becoming a Peer are outlined in detail in the European Peer Review Manual: Peers must first and foremost have extensive expertise in the Quality Areas reviewed.

In the composition of the Peer Team which comprises four Peers, the "purist" approach (only "real peers" may become Peers) has been combined with an "extended" definition of what constitutes a Peer: to preserve the characteristic trait of Peer Review as a professional evaluation among colleagues, a minimum of two Peers must come from other VET providers, while the other two may come from other occupational/institutional backgrounds. The inclusion of a stakeholder representative in the Peer Team is recommended in order to ensure that the perspectives of important stakeholders in VET (e.g. enterprises, social partners, institutions from other educational levels/sectors etc.) are considered.

Besides expertise in the Quality Areas reviewed, the Peer Team needs to have sufficient expertise in evaluation as well as gender mainstreaming. At least one of the team members should have a high level of competence and experience in evaluation, communication and moderation.

I.2.4. How is the Peer Visit conducted?

The Peer Visit has to be planned carefully to allow for efficient data collection and assessment by the Peers. The activities of the Peers may vary and should be planned with regard to the Quality Areas and evaluation questions of the Peer Review. In principle, the European Peer Review procedure comprises the following elements: tour of the premises, interviews with different groups of stakeholders, observations, analysis and assessment of data by the Peers, and a feedback session in which first results are presented. The latter also facilitates exchange between Peers and representatives of the VET provider and allows for a communicative validation of findings. Creative methods of qualitative data collection may and should – if appropriate – be applied.

I.2.5. What is evaluated? – The European Quality Areas

Peer Review is an institutional evaluation – institutions or parts of institutions are reviewed. To support the VET providers in the pilot phase and to ensure transnational transparency and comparability, a quality framework with 14 Quality Areas for the initial VET sector has been developed. The Quality Areas are based on relevant frameworks and indicators in use in the participating countries.

Of these 14 Quality Areas, four relate directly to learning and teaching, the "core business" of VET providers and have thus been defined as "Core Quality Areas". At least one of the Core Quality Areas must be evaluated during a European Peer Review. For the continuing VET sector, an adapted set of Quality Areas is provided. For Peer Review in guidance and counselling, a set of Quality Areas based on the Slovenian guidance centres' quality framework model is available, in other countries the procedure can be used with national quality frameworks.

I.3. Piloting European Peer Reviews in the LdV projects

In the three Leonardo da Vinci projects "Peer Review in initial VET", "Peer Review Extended" and "Peer Review Extended II" the European Peer Review procedure was successfully piloted in 25 Peer Reviews in eleven European countries. In the first pilot phase 15 transnational Peer Reviews were conducted from April to November 2006, another four transnational Peer Reviews were carried out in September/October 2007 and further six Peer Reviews took place between December 2008 and September 2009.

I.3.1. The participating VET providers

The VET providers participating in the pilot phases came from eleven different European countries. In Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Scotland and Spain one institution per country took part, whereas in Finland and Italy networks of three res. four VET providers were established. In Austria, overall participation amounted to six VET schools – two took part in the first project, one in the second and three in the third. In Denmark three VET providers conducted pilot Peer Reviews – one in the first and two in the third project – in which Peers were exchanged between the institutions.

The VET providers covered a wide range of vocational and educational fields, e.g. hotel and catering, health and welfare, business, fashion and arts, sports, engineering, computing, construction; the size of partner organisations varied from small institutions to VET providers with up to 15,000 students.

I.3.2. Coordination, support, and monitoring

The main responsibility for the conduct of the Peer Reviews remained with the VET providers and the Peers: they had to ensure a high-quality process which would comply with the requirements of the European Peer Review Manual. However, they were supported and supervised by partner institutions on the European level. The following tasks were carried out to ensure a smooth running of the pilot phases:

- coordination of the Peer Reviews on a European level: coordination of the individual pilots, scheduling of Peer Reviews (timetable), setting up of a "Pilot-Database" etc.
- soliciting and processing of Peer Applications and maintenance of a Peer-Database
- continuous quality assessment: assessment of Peer Applications, monitoring feedback, analysing reports, passing on feedback and recommendations
- support services: matching of Peers, consulting, training etc.
- provision and coordination of Peer training: web-based training, face-to-face training
- monitoring and data collection: collecting data, questionnaires, and reports.

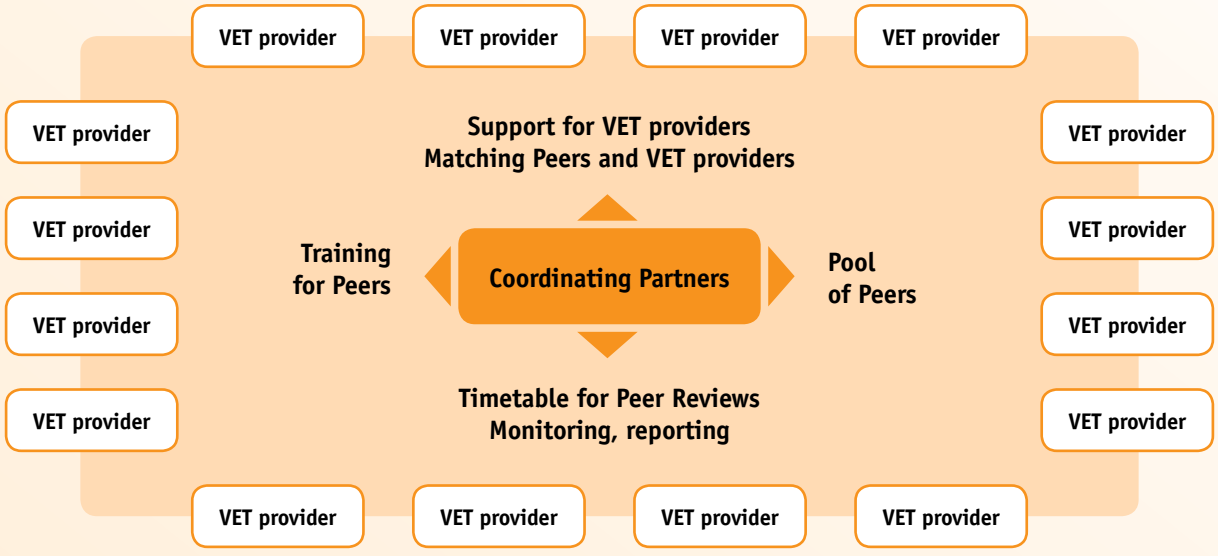
In the first, very comprehensive pilot phase, the Österreichisches Institut für Berufsbildungsforschung (*öibf*) together with the Finnish National Board of Education (FNBE) were responsible partners for the overall coordination of the Peer Reviews, including monitoring, assessment and supporting tasks. In the following projects, these tasks were carried out by *öibf*.

Aberdeen College developed and administered a web-based Peer Training Programme in the first project "Peer Review in initial VET", which was also used in the pilot phase of the project "Peer Review Extended" and – in an adapted and updated version – in the third project "Peer Review Extended II".

Furthermore, in order to meet the demand of a more comprehensive training of the Peers a face-to-face Peer Training was developed in the project "Peer Review Extended II" in a cooperative effort of six partner institutions from five countries. The training for the Peers (including transnational Peers) participating in the Austrian pilot Peer Reviews was conducted by *öibf* together with FNBE in Vienna, Austria; the Peers for the Danish Peer Reviews were trained by the Danish partner institution Kold College in Odense, Denmark.

A Peer-Database was established in the first Peer Review project by the University of Pécs. The Peer-Database has been further developed to an "Extended Peer-Database" and updated continuously in the following projects by *öibf*.

Table 5: Coordination of the European Peer Reviews in the pilot phase – tasks and responsibilities



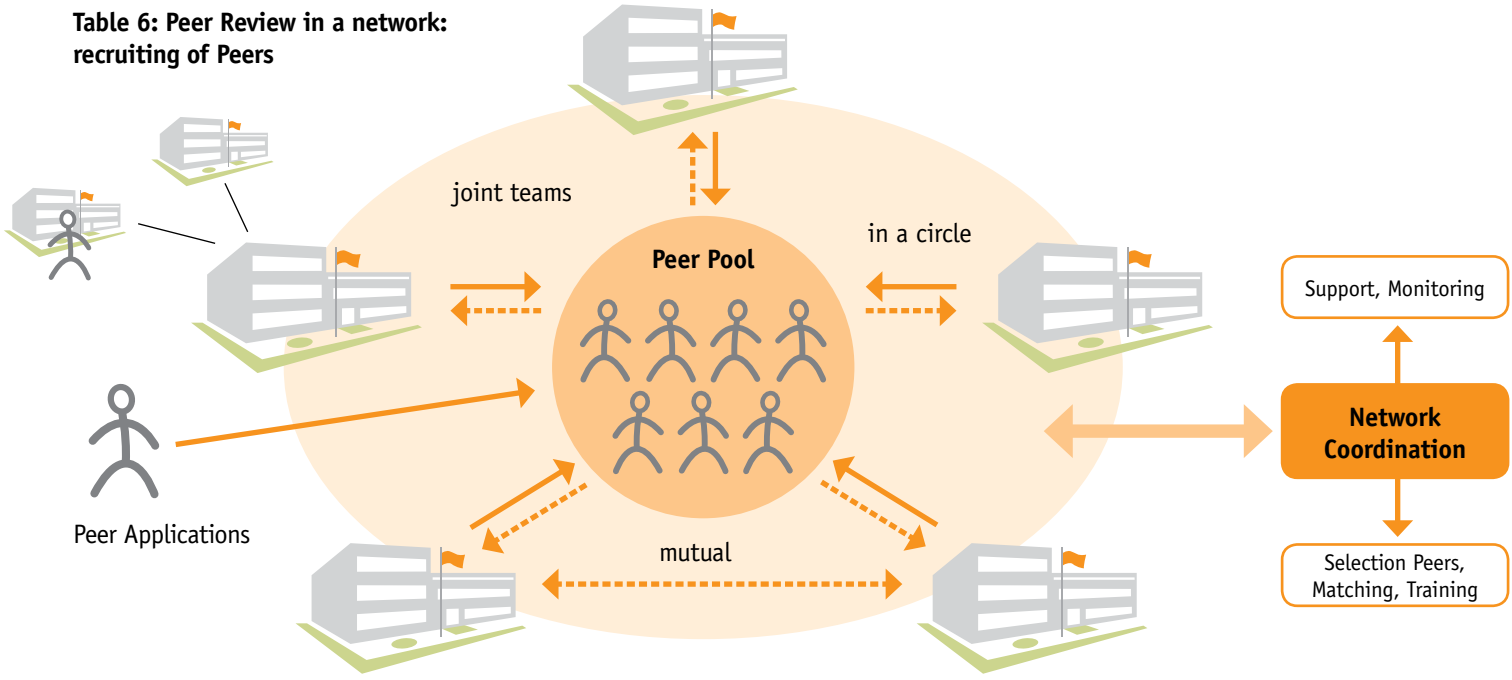
Source: European Peer Review Manual, p. 7

I.3.3. Planning the pilot phase

All participating VET providers had to fill out a so-called "Initial Information Sheet" prior to the pilot phase. The "Initial Information Sheet" contained information on the purpose and the aims of the Peer Review, the Quality Areas chosen for the Peer Review and additional special evaluation questions for the Peers. The form also comprised contact addresses and information on the internal organisation of the Peer Review and the responsible persons (director, Peer Review Facilitator). Prospective Peers and two possible dates for the Peer Review could also be named.

On the basis of these information sheets a Pilot-Database was drawn up by *öibf* for each pilot phase, comprising all relevant information for the coordination and monitoring of the Peer Reviews. In all three projects a partner meeting was held before the pilot phase which also provided an opportunity for the piloting VET providers to get to know each other and to recruit Peers from partner institutions.

Table 6: Peer Review in a network: recruiting of Peers



I.3.4. How were the Peers selected?

The final composition of the Peer Teams was supervised by the partners responsible for the coordination of the pilot phase. The Peers were selected by the VET provider who suggested Peers and asked them to submit a Peer Application. The Peer Applications were made on a special application form provided by the project (available in the Peer Review Tool-box). The Peer Applications were collected and inserted into a Peer-Database. The applications were assessed according to the criteria described in the European Peer Review Manual. The composition of the Peer Teams was discussed and agreed upon by the partners responsible for the coordination and the respective partner institution which then concluded contracts with the Peers.

I.3.5. Who were the Peers?

Overall 125 professionals from all over Europe submitted a Peer application, almost two thirds of which came from VET providers.

Of the 125 applicants, 75 became active during the pilot phases; a number of Peers participated in more than one Peer Review. This concerned Italy and Finland, where some Peers visited more than one institution, as well as the transnational Peers. In the two follow-up projects often Peers with previous experience were invited. While in most Peer Reviews teams of four people were formed, there was also some variation to this rule: in five Peer Reviews five Peers participated,

Table 7: Institutional background of the active Peers

Institutional background	%
VET providers	67%
Providers of general education (schools)	4%
Adult Education	0%
Enterprises	3%
Professional etc. associations	1%
Educational authority / Inspectorate	3%
Research institution / University	15%
Consulting firm	3%
Other (mainly semi-official bodies)	5%

Source: *öibf* Pilot-Database, n=75

in four Peer Reviews additional "guests" or "observers" were invited (who did not count as Peers, though).

The transnational Peers came from Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Scotland.

67% of the active Peers came from other VET providers; they were in fact "real" Peers. Only seven Peers had no teaching experience, though not all Peers with teaching experience were currently working as teachers. Regarding gender, participation of female and male Peers was balanced: 38 women and 37 men participated in the Peer Teams.

I.3.6. How were the Peers trained?

During the preparatory phase, the Peers had to undergo a web-based Training Programme, developed and administrated by the Scottish partner Aberdeen College. In the Training Programme information and exercises on all aspects relevant for carrying out a Peer Review were provided. Peer Teams could also use a communication platform to exchange information and prepare Peer Reviews.

In the project "Peer Review Extended II", the Peers additionally had to participate in a face-to-face Peer Training, conducted by öibf and FNBE for the Peers of the three Austrian Peer Reviews and by Kold College for the two Danish Peer Reviews. In these trainings, all necessary knowledge, skills, and competences to conduct a Peer Review in a professional manner and according to the quality criteria set out in the European Peer Review Manual were imparted to the Peers. In addition, a large part of the preparatory work for the actual Peer Review was carried out by the Peer Teams during the Peer Training.

I.3.7. How were the Peer Reviews prepared?

Preparatory tasks carried out by the responsible partners for the coordination concerned soliciting Peer Applications in cooperation with the VET providers and other stakeholders, the establishment and continuing update of a Peer-Database, the analysis and assessment of the Peer Applications and the continuing update of the Pilot-Database.

For the preparation of the actual Peer Visits two key persons were responsible: the Peer Coordinator as leader of the Peer Team and the Peer Review Facilitator as the responsible person at the VET provider.

Usually a meeting of the Peer Team was organised directly before the Peer Visit (mostly on the eve of the Peer Visit). In

Table 8: Responsibilities and tasks in the preparation of the Peer Reviews

Coordinating Body: Provides monitoring and support
- "Master plan" (based on Initial Information Sheets)
- Assessment of Peer Applications
- Composition of Peer Teams
- Provision of Peer training

Peer Coordinator
- Coordinates and represents Peer Team

Peer Review Facilitator
- Coordinates and represents VET provider

Peer Team
- Peer Training
- Study Self-Report
- Exchange among Peers (e-mail, telephone, personal meeting)

Further tasks:
- Sub-contracts with VET provider
- Ask for more material
- Pre-Visit meeting with VET provider (if possible)
- Make proposal for Peer Visit agenda
- Define interview groups/observation tasks
- Organise a meeting of Peers (on the eve of Peer Visit; earlier if possible)

VET provider
- Self-evaluation
- Self-Report

Further tasks:
- Sub-contracts for Peers
- Send material (Self-Report, other material requested by the Peers)
- Inform all colleagues and other stakeholders about the Peer Review in advance
- Pre-Visit meeting with Peers (if possible)
- Give feedback on agenda
- Make a schedule for the Peer Visit
- Invite interview groups/plan observations
- Local preparation (rooms, equipment etc.)

Source: European Peer Review Manual, p. 19

this meeting, the whole Peer Team – including the transnational Peer – could get to know each other and could make final preparations for the Peer Visit, e.g. fine-tune the topics of the evaluation, draw up interview questionnaires and observation grids etc. In the project "Peer Review Extended II", team-building in the Peer Team and a joint preparation of the Peer Visit were facilitated through face-to-face Peer Training.

A meeting of the Peers with the VET provider well before the Peer Visit was also recommended. This meeting served the purpose of getting to know each other, of exchanging ideas and expectations, fine-tuning the evaluation questions and planning the Peer Visit (type of interviewees, number and composition of interview groups, planning of the agenda for the Peer Visit, organisation of Peer Visit). While most Peer Teams organised such a meeting, a few Peer Teams didn't manage to meet the VET provider before the Peer Visit due to time and financial constraints. In some cases only the Peer Coordinator met with the VET provider, and in countries where more than one VET provider participated in the same pilot phase, often a national meeting of all partner institutions was held to support coordination between Peers and VET Providers. In the Austrian Peer Reviews in the project "Peer Review Extended II", a meeting of the Peer Team and the VET provider was organised within the scope of the face-to-face Peer Training.

I.3.8. Conduct of transnational Peer Reviews: Overview of the pilot phases

The pilot phase in the first project **"Peer Review in initial VET"** was carried out in 2006 on the basis of the first version of the European Peer Review Manual, which had been available since November 2005. Since most VET providers needed a planning and preparation phase of at least one semester, the majority of Peer Reviews took place in autumn 2006. Only two Italian VET providers managed to carry out their Peer Reviews in spring 2006 (April and June 2006). First experiences from these two Peer Reviews as well as from the preparatory work were collected by the project coordinator and passed on to the partners as additional recommendations in August just in time before the next Peer Reviews started. The Peer Applications had already been assessed in April and most Peer Teams had been established before the summer holidays. In a limited number of cases, Peers were prevented from participation on short notice and replacements had to be organised – this, however, did not pose a serious problem.

The main part of the first pilot phase started in September 2006, the majority of the Peer Reviews (10) were carried out in October, so that in some weeks of October two to three Peer Reviews took place at the same time. Two Peer Reviews were carried out in November 2006.

The first Peer Review pilots were thus completed according to the project work programme in a high-quality process and without any delays. This success – which seems remarkable for such a comprehensive pilot phase with so many partners from different countries and little relevant previous experience – must be attributed to a very large extent to the commitment and professionalism of the VET providers participating in the project.

Additionally, the pilot phase clearly showed that the European Peer Review procedure can easily be adopted by VET providers even if they do not have prior expertise in external reviews. Thus the project's aim to develop a procedure which can be implemented readily and without major adaptive efforts by various types of VET providers in different European countries had been met.

The pilot Peer Reviews and the draft European Peer Review Manual were evaluated. Based on the results, the procedure was slightly adapted and the manual was revised. The final version of the manual was published in June 2007 (cf. Gutknecht-Gmeiner et al. (2007): European Peer Review Manual for initial VET, Vienna).

The pilot phase of the project **"Peer Review Extended"** started in May 2007. It aimed at the further fine-tuning of the procedure and the further development and testing of the Peer Review Tool-box. Recommendations from the experiences of the comprehensive first pilot phase were available and the final version of the manual was published at the beginning of the preparatory stage. However, the participating VET providers had to face a very tight time schedule: the project duration was only twelve months and without prior experience with Peer Review at least one semester is needed for the planning and preparation of the review – a lesson learnt from the first pilot phase. Thus all four Peer Reviews were carried out during the last week of September and the first weeks of October 2007. This meant that a larger part of the preparation had to be carried out before the summer holidays and preparatory work continued throughout the summer. The Peer Teams had largely been established by the end of June. In two of the Peer Reviews even two transnational Peers were deployed, in one case the Peers came from two different countries.

Award of Peer Review Certificates at the International Peer Review Conference in Pécs, Sept. 13, 2007

All Peer Reviews were successfully carried out according to the manual and the project work programme. The pilot phase also pointed out the importance of a time schedule for the preparation and conduct of a Peer Review which fits in with other milestones and activities in the sequence of the school/academic year in a given country.

In the two-year project "Peer Review Extended II" a more extensive time frame for the pilot phase could be realised since the tools for the conduct of the Peer Review (manual, toolbox) had already been available since the beginning of the project. Preparations started in May 2008 and the first Peer Review was carried out in December, followed by one Peer Review in January, and three reviews in March/April 2009. The Peer Review in the continuing VET sector was conducted in September 2009.

In addition to the Peer Review procedure, the newly developed face-to-face Peer Training was tested during the pilot phase in Austria and Denmark, preparing the Peers participating in the pilot Peer Reviews. In Finland, the training was piloted within the national Peer Review implementation activities. Both Peer Reviews and Peer Training were piloted successfully. The face-to-face training was perceived as very useful for the preparation of the Peer Visit and for team-building.

In the light of European Peer Review experiences and national pilot projects in a number of participating countries, a timeframe of about 1.5 years can be recommended for the conduct of a set of Peer Reviews. About half a year needs to be reserved for the information and recruitment of the VET providers and first preparations: setting up a team at VET provider level, decision on Quality Areas, self-evaluation, and recruitment of Peers. Another half year is needed for the Self-Report and the training of the Peers in order for the Peer Reviews to be carried out at the beginning of the third semester, with Peer Review Reports and monitoring and networking activities completing the Peer Review round in the final months.

I.3.9. Which networking patterns emerged?

The European Peer Review Manual does not propose a specific way of organising Peer Reviews. Instead different possibilities are equally recommended provided that the quality criteria defined for the European Peer Review are met. The networking patterns which emerged in the pilot phases are therefore the result of processes of self-organisation at the VET provider level. Feasibility and the availability of suitable Peers/networking partners also played a major role. The responsible partners for coordinating the pilot phases *(öibf* and FNBE in the first project res. *öibf* in the second and third projects) only intervened if asked for help – activities mainly concerned the recruitment of transnational Peers.

Hence, the number of available partner institutions per country had a major influence on the way the Peer Reviews were organised. In the countries in which only one school participated in one of the pilot phases and in Austria, the Peer Reviews were organised as "single Peer Reviews", i.e. the partners had recourse to existing networks and contacts to recruit Peers. In Finland and Italy the Peer Reviews were organised in networks with reciprocal Peer Reviews on the national level, i.e. the Peers were exchanged between the partner institutions. In these two countries the VET providers also received additional support by the national coordinating partners FNBE and ISFOL. In Denmark, Peers were exchanged between the three participating VET providers.

Peer Review thus can be seen as a methodology which fosters networking and has a tendency to reach out to institutions external to the core partnership: in 25 transnational pilots 38 additional institutions were included in the Peer Review network through the Peers; all in all 66 institutions thus were activated in the pilot Peer Reviews.

Reciprocal transnational Peer Reviews in the sense that the VET providers evaluated each other by exchanging one Peer, i.e. the transnational Peer, were conducted in three Peer Reviews in the first and in one Peer Review in the second project: the exchanges concerned an Austrian school and one of the departments of the Dutch partner institution, an Austrian and a German VET provider, a Finnish VET provider and another department of the Dutch partner institution, and the Scottish partner college and an Italian VET provider. In the Scottish-Italian cooperation further activities like mutual visits, and the preparation and conduct of exchange programmes were prompted by the Peer Review.

I.3.10. How were the Peer Review pilots evaluated?

The pilot phase was evaluated continuously by the responsible partners. Detailed information was collected and analysed concerning the Peers (Peer-Database, assessment of the applications) and the individual Peer Reviews (Quality Areas reviewed, special evaluation questions, dates, Peer Teams) by the responsible partners for the coordination *(öibf* and FNBE). Both the Peers and the VET providers were asked to fill out comprehensive questionnaires in order to report on their experiences and to make recommendations for the improvement of the procedure. The Peer Teams also had to furnish a report containing a meta-evaluation of the experience by the team.

In addition, in the first project an external evaluation was carried out by the German partner Univation. This evaluation drew upon the above mentioned reports and monitoring data supplied by the project management as well as interviews with selected participants and external stakeholders.

I.4. Experiences and results of the pilot phases

I.4.1. Motivation and expectations

Peer Review was perceived as a useful and supportive procedure by the participating VET providers. The main motivating factors for taking part in the pilot phase were the further improvement of quality within the institution, European exchange and networking, mutual learning and the testing of an innovative evaluation procedure. The expectations of the VET providers were by and large met and in some cases also exceeded.

"We hoped that the peer review would provide us with knowledge of how we can further improve our organisational processes as well as enabling us to showcase our good practice. We used the results of this as the basis for action planning." (VET provider)

"Being 'tested' in a Peer Review we thought would give us new inputs to improve our institution continuously and to affirm the quality of our institution on a regional and national scale." (VET provider)

Not only for the VET providers but also for the Peers a participation in a Peer Review had important benefits. Peers' expectations were largely met. In particular, Peers reported that they gained insight into other VET institutions and their organisation of education processes, got into a personal exchange with colleagues from different fields of education and training and/or different education systems, and picked up ideas and stimuli for improving and developing their own professional practice.

"I found the experience extremely valuable and have been able to apply some of the insights gained so far." (Peer)

"I personally gained a lot of experience. I brought many ideas with me home to my school about how to develop learning and teaching." (Peer)

I.4.2. Transnational Aspect

The inclusion of a transnational Peer was an enriching experience in most cases, in some Peer Reviews this was also perceived as the highlight of the procedure. Transnational Peers were completely impartial as far as national/regional/local etc. characteristics of the VET system were concerned and introduced a strong external perspective: they were able to address topics which national Peers would not recognise (any more) nor did not feel comfortable discussing. In many cases a comprehensive exchange of experiences was prompted from which the evaluated VET provider, the national Peers and the transnational Peer benefited.

Language barriers did pose a problem in a number of cases. In seven Peer Reviews the transnational Peer was able to speak the national language well enough for the Peer Review to take place in the national language. In all other cases, the Peer Review or parts of it were held in English. This constituted a challenge especially for the VET providers – but also for the Peers. In many cases a professional interpreter was not available (interpretation is, of course, also a question of funding), all communication including the interviews with different stakeholders had to be in English or the national Peers (Peers were always working in pairs, so-called "tandems") helped out with spontaneous interpretation. Interpretation always meant a loss of time which made the already tight schedules even tenser. The question of language barriers should therefore be attended to carefully in the preparation of future transnational Peer Reviews.

"The participation of an international peer allowed for an external expert view that we would otherwise not have had the chance to get." (VET provider)

"A national Peer usually does not wonder why we do the things we do the way we do them, but a transnational Peer asks 'why?' This is refreshing!" (VET provider)

Visiting the bakery, Jyväskylä Catering College, Finland

Testing electronical parts, CNOS-FAP Fossano, Italy

"My strongest experience was coming to a small Italian town on a Sunday night and encountering my hotel where not a single person could speak English. Wondering 'What am I going to eat? How am I going to pay? When is breakfast served? Where is the school?' and many more questions. Then, on Monday, walking around town, locating the school, meeting the other members of the team and, slowly, getting used to another way of life. In case you are wondering – yes, the small Italian town where the Peer Review took place is very different from anything you find in Denmark and it is not at all like the other places I have been to in Italy. However, as soon as we started working with the Peer Review and worked in the school, I felt at home.
This was the most positive experience: finding out that teachers in both Italy and Denmark are very alike. They wonder about the same things, they worry about the same kinds of students, and they complain about the same things within the organisation and about the job. It is interesting that you immediately feel like colleagues, even though you teach in different systems.
The VET provider I reviewed had a very good way of dealing with students, so the drop-outs were kept at a minimum. This was very inspiring, and has motivated me to work on a government funded project at my own school." (Transnational Peer from Denmark)

I.4.3. Cooperation within the Peer Team and between the Peers and the VET provider

The cooperation within the Peer Teams as well as the cooperation between the Peers and the VET providers was highly esteemed by almost all participants. Most Peers and VET providers highlight the open atmosphere of trust prevalent in the Peer Reviews. Long working days and time pressure did not, in most cases, have a negative effect on the teamwork. The intensive exchange and the close cooperation were stressed as a particularly positive aspect by the Peers.

"The VET provider cooperated thoroughly with the Peer team, preparing the materials for the visit, giving us all the information we needed and last, but not least, welcoming us with kindness and heartfelt friendship." (Peer)

"In my opinion the Peer Team cooperated very well. […] I believe that we formed a very effective Peer team and were able to focus on the tasks presented to us. I think that strong bonds are formed in a short space of time during this type of process, and I would be very happy to work with all of the team again." (Peer)

I.4.4. Added value of Peer Review

The special value of Peer Review in comparison with other external evaluation methodologies was highlighted especially by those VET providers who have comprehensive experience with external evaluation and auditing and are thus able to compare Peer Review to other types of evaluation.

- Peer Review is seen as a "friendly" and "humane" methodology which generates goodwill and openness on the part of the VET provider. It is not perceived as threatening as other procedures allowing VET providers to put up for evaluation difficult topics which would be omitted or concealed as much as possible in audits or inspections for fear of negative consequences.
- Peer Review thus directly contributes to the actual improvement of those areas where VET providers themselves recognise difficulties. Additionally, VET providers are much more motivated to act upon the results of a Review if they themselves have initiated the Review and chosen the areas to be scrutinised. For VET providers with less experience, Peer Review is an attractive methodology for experimenting with external forms of evaluation.

Because of its cooperative set-up, Peer Review has some additional effects which are not provided by other forms of external evaluation.

- Peer Review fosters networking and cooperation on a national and European scale – also beyond the project's end: A number of mobility and cooperation projects between VET providers have been started as "spin-offs" of Peer Review activities.
- For the Peers, acting as a Peer also constitutes an important opportunity for professional development. Many Peers were also inspired by what they witnessed in other VET institutions bringing good ideas and best practice home to their own institutions.
- And last but not least, Peer Review is a win-win-activity: both the VET providers and the Peers benefit and the effects of learning remain within the VET sector whereas in traditional external evaluation, the learning of the evaluators is usually not fed back into the system.

"We were quite happy to be confirmed in the matter of 'spotting problem fields'… and to know that we do already work to improve our services where it is really needed." (VET provider)

I.5. Conclusions based on the experiences of the LdV Peer Review projects

After piloting and evaluating 25 Peer Reviews in three sequenced pilot phases which aimed at (further) development and improvement of the procedure, the following conclusions can be drawn:

I.5.1. Successful piloting in the VET sector

The successful conduct of Peer Review as professional external evaluation of institutions in the VET sector is possible.

The procedure is "easy to use" for VET providers. This has been clearly demonstrated in the quite extensive number of pilot Peer Reviews carried out by VET providers from different vocational and educational fields, with different prior experience with external evaluation and of various sizes.

As in Higher Education, transnational Peer Reviews can be carried out if support concerning the coordination of the Peer Reviews, training for Peers, monitoring of evaluation quality and financial means are provided.

I.5.2. Why VET providers adopt Peer Review as external evaluation methodology

There is a clear interest of VET providers in many European countries to test Peer Review as an external evaluation procedure. From the experience of the projects the following rationales underlie the preference of VET providers for Peer Review:

- Especially in the **introductory phase of external evaluation** when experience of VET providers is marginal, Peer Review is seen as a form of evaluation which is less threatening and more acceptable due to the common professional background of evaluators and the VET practitioners working in the evaluated institution. The opportunity to learn from other VET providers through a Peer Review is also particularly attractive in this situation.

- At the other end of the spectrum, VET providers with considerable experience with external evaluations and audits **value Peer Review for its development-oriented approach and the mutual exchange and learning process** which is triggered. The latter benefits are particularly relevant if a formative approach is taken. In the pilot phases, "getting to know (professionals from) other institutions", "receiving external feedback", "detecting blind spots", "receiving impulses for further development of quality" and "learning from best practice" have been the main motivating factors for the participation of VET providers and Peers.

- In addition, VET providers with a strong European/international orientation also have voiced interest in a **continuation of Peer Reviews on the European level.** As has been the practice in the LdV projects so far, these transnational Peer Reviews may be carried out in a formative, development-oriented way. In the longer run, however, the possibility of **certification** should also be considered: this has already been demanded by some VET providers and would entail summative evaluations within the European Peer Review network using a clear set of common indicators at VET provider level.

I.5.3. Contribution of Peer Review to the EQARF

Peer Review as an improvement-oriented qualitative external evaluation carried out in a network of VET providers constitutes a new methodology within the European quality model proposed by the EQARF.

The European Peer Review procedure can be put to use in individual member states but may also be organised on a transnational level facilitating direct exchange and networking between VET providers from different European countries. A European Peer Review Network comprising VET providers and other stakeholders from all over Europe who engage in mutual reviews should contribute to the development of a common European Area of VET.

Peer Review thus has important benefits at European, national/regional and VET providers' level. In particular, Peer Review supports the implementation of EQARF in Member States by

- contributing to the improvement of the quality of VET provision
- promoting a shared quality culture at VET provider level
- stimulating mutual learning from good practice across Europe
- fostering European networking of VET providers and encouraging mobility
- enhancing cooperation of VET providers and member states at European level
- supporting mutual trust among and within member states
- disseminating good practice, enhancing synergies, and fostering the transfer of innovation both between VET providers and member states.

As a bottom-up approach to quality assurance between VET providers Peer Review complements and supports other quality initiatives and activities on the European or member states' level.

I.6. Outlook

I.6.1. Implementation of Peer Review in European countries

Before the start of the project "Peer Review in initial VET" in 2004, experience with Peer Review had been virtually non-existent in all participating countries, except for some experimentation with benchmarking (Finland) and internal audits by "Peers" as a "rehearsal" for ISO certification audits (Italy, Catalonia). In Finland, Italy, and Catalonia quality networks of VET providers already existed which can now be used for Peer Review. In 2009 the implementation schemes in some of the contributing countries are already quite advanced.

In all countries dissemination among the target groups, esp. the primary target group of VET providers, has been extensive. A wide range of activities has been carried out. In a fair number of countries, Peer Review is being introduced into the national quality schemes as a new methodology of external evaluation. In many of these countries, the Quality Assurance National Reference Points (QANRPs) set up as points of liaison between the members states and the European quality networks (currently ENQA VET, starting 2010 the EQARF network) will play a substantial role in the proliferation and transfer of Peer Review to the national level, perhaps even in the coordination and support of national and/or transnational European Peer Reviews. In all of these countries, national Peer Review pilots are currently being conducted or planned for the near future.

Austria
In Austria, Peer Review is currently implemented within the quality initiative QIBB in the initial VET sector. In 2008, a feasibility study was carried out by the Österreichisches Institut für Berufsbildungsforschung *(öibf)*. At the same time, a first nucleus of a Peer Review network was established by *öibf* in cooperation with the "Austrian Reference Point for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training – ARQA-VET" (www.arqa-vet.at) and seven national Peer Reviews were piloted successfully with support by *öibf* in 2008/2009 (for more information see chapter IV.1. in this reader). Currently, ARQA-VET has taken over the coordination from *öibf* and a new round of 15 Peer Reviews has been announced for 2009/2010.

Catalonia
In Catalonia (Spain), the Peer Review methodology will be integrated into the national quality project "Qualitat I Millora Contínua als centres educatius" in which mutual audits in thirteen networks covering 90 initial VET colleges are already practised (see chapter IV.2. in this reader).

Finland
In Finland, Peer Review is one of the quality assurance activities advocated by the "Quality Management recommendations for vocational education and training". National implementation by VET providers has started on a voluntary basis (see chapter IV.3. in this reader).

Hungary
In Hungary, the piloting of Peer Review in about 20 VET schools was included in the 2008 Work Programme of the Quality Management Component of the Development Programme for Vocational Training Schools. A network of 70 schools established to support the self-assessment process through horizontal learning served as a starting point for a Peer Review network. In the meantime a number of national Peer Reviews have been carried out and further implementation is planned.

Italy
In Italy, the establishment of a supra-regional Peer Review network of vocational and technical schools and regional VET centres to support the voluntary conduct of Peer Reviews has started (see chapter IV.4. in this reader).

Netherlands
In the Netherlands, the Dutch partner institution ROC Aventus (see chapter II.10. in this reader) has implemented Peer Review in its own quality system – with eight Peer Reviews carried out to date. VET institutions are waiting for transnational European Peer Reviews to start.

Slovenia
In Slovenia, the European Peer Review procedure has been adapted by the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (SIAE) for use in guidance and counselling. Starting 2009, Peer Review will be piloted in the network of the Slovenian adult education guidance centres (see chapter IV.5. in this reader).

Additionally, some of the countries participating in the Thematic Group on Peer Review (see below) have started to pilot Peer Reviews.

Norway
Although not an official partner of the Leonardo da Vinci projects, the Norwegian Directorate for Education and

Training translated the European Peer Review Manual into Norwegian in 2007. In 2008/2009, a national pilot of mutual Peer Review was carried out with three counties, involving the authorities who are responsible for VET on the regional level in Norway. Peer Review will now be transferred to the VET provider level. A group of Norwegian VET schools have confirmed their intention to participate in transnational European Peer Reviews.

Sweden
In Sweden, the Swedish National Agency for Education has taken a great interest in Peer Review as a complementary formative tool to quality assurance since spring 2008. A small-scale pilot with a mutual Peer Review by two schools is planned for the upcoming school year.

United Kingdom
In the United Kingdom, with support of the Quality Improvement Agency (QIA) a Peer Review network of about 800 VET institutions with about 170 active sub-groups – each encompassing about four to eight participating organisations – has developed in the past years. Peer Review in the UK is a voluntary improvement-oriented activity, the procedure is called "Peer Referencing" and fits in very well with the European Peer Review. With almost half of the 1,800 institutions delivering VET involved in Peer Review at this moment, the UK institutions are eager to start Peer Reviews in transnational European partnerships.

I.6.2. Designing the future of transnational European Peer Reviews

On the European level, the European Network for Quality Assurance in VET (ENQA VET) has established a Thematic Group on Peer Review which in the past one and a half years has developed a proposal outlining a process and structure for sustainable transnational Peer Reviews starting 2010 (see chapter IV.6. in this reader).

All in all, 18 European countries to date have taken part either in the Leonardo da Vinci projects or the Thematic Group on Peer Review. In a survey of ENQA VET member states, a demand of about 250 transnational Peer Reviews has been forecast by 14 countries for the years 2010 to 2013 – no mean challenge for any future European coordination structure. Hopes are that within the EQARF implementation Peer Review will play a relevant role, making Peer Review one of the pillars of future quality initiatives in VET in Europe.

I.6.3. Impact of Peer Review

Does Peer Review really come "full circle"? Does it prompt concrete improvement in VET institutions? What effects can be detected? And: how should Peer Reviews be conducted in order to have maximum impact?

If Peer Review is to become one of the evaluation methodologies used both on national and on European level, questions concerning impact of Peer Review are highly relevant. In a further Leonardo da Vinci Transfer of Innovation project "Peer Review Impact" coordinated by the Finnish National Board of Education and buttressed by an earlier LdV project on evaluation impact "REVIMP", an empirical analysis of Peer Reviews carried out within the three LdV Peer Review projects will help to shed a light on Peer Review's potential to trigger institutional change and lead to improved effectiveness of external evaluation.

II. *Peer Review in Practice*

II.1. Reflections on being a transnational Peer

Rick Hollstein, Aberdeen College

- **04:30:** Time to get up! I didn't sleep very well. I went to bed late; it's the weekend after all! Why did I volunteer to do this? Sunday is a day of rest, not a day to travel across Europe.
- Got my passport (Why are we not true Europeans with ID cards?), got my boarding card (checked in online last night, but I must remember to keep the boarding pass for the financial records...), got all the documentation, got my laptop, and charged my spare battery (why don't we have universal European electrical sockets!)
- **05:00:** Leave for Aberdeen; I have a taxi booked at 05:30 to take me from my friend's house where I leave my car, to take me to the airport. The roads are usually a bit icy so I better be careful...
- **05:25:** Aberdeen; the taxi is waiting for me. Put my car keys through Colin's letterbox and get in the taxi for the airport. The driver is just finishing his night shift. I'm just starting my day!
- **05:45** Arrive at the airport; it's really quiet. Check in my suitcase. Cheery but tired staff talking about their night out in the nightclubs in Aberdeen last night. I remembered to take a picture of my suitcase with my mobile phone. I wonder when I will see it again?
- Go through security and as usual I am asked to remove my shoes. The floor is cold!
- Time for a coffee and a croissant before the flight to Amsterdam/Paris (but not London Heathrow!).

I live in the extreme north west of the European Union. I live way up in Scotland. It's a long way to the vast majority of Europe. Aberdeen airport is quite a small airport, and most of their flights are to the capital cities of the UK, the Netherlands, France and Ireland. Very few flights are with low-cost airlines.

Travelling as a transnational Peer meant getting up very early in the morning to travel to the airport and then waiting around for long periods of time in Aberdeen airport. It meant spending a lot of time flying to Paris or Amsterdam, and then waiting even longer in Schiphol or Charles de Gaulle airports.

A major transferable skill for a transnational Peer is the ability to be able to fall asleep almost anywhere. The advert should read:

"Can you fall asleep on an aircraft before it has left the ground?
Can you concentrate on work in major international airports?
Can you then fall asleep on the next flight and arrive in your host country ready to attend the afternoon/evening pre-review teambuilding and preparation session?
Can you fall asleep in a strange hotel bedroom and awake refreshed even though you may be in a different time zone?
Can you concentrate on conversations about technical aspects of European VET for up to 12 hours a day?

... Then become a transnational Peer"

(Fortunately I can.)

(It is also fortunate that outside the overpriced UK, most European hotels within the price range of a Peer are of a good quality, and European strong black coffee is usually really good!)

How did my involvement begin?
In the autumn of 2003, my line manager entered the room carrying his mail. He is always a very busy and active person. He quickly tore open an envelope from an organisation that he didn't recognise, the Österreichische Institut für Berufsbildungsforschung *(öibf)*. At the time, none of us had heard of this organisation. How times change!

It was an invitation to join a project developing a trans-European quality standard and developing a method of determining quality across Europe.

He commented "Rick, this looks interesting", and passed the letter to me. I sat down and carefully read the letter. I also read the second side.... Basically it said, "Would you like to come to Vienna at the expense of the Austrian government to help develop a project application". When my manager came back into the office, I told him that the project was something I'd be very interested in getting involved in. To his credit, when I pointed out the invitation to Vienna, he said, "well, I suppose you better go", and as the English expression goes, "the rest is history".

Early the next year the project was developed, the application submitted, and eventually almost a year after the original invitation, the project was born: "Peer Review as an Instrument of Quality Assurance and Development in initial Vocational Education and Training".

Thoughts on the challenges of being a transnational Peer

Foreign language skills vs. English as "lingua franca"

One of the project requirements was that each Peer Review contracts the services of a transnational Peer. Although my father was German, it is to my continued shame that I speak very little German, and in fact, have very few linguistic skills in any foreign language, so it was with some trepidation that I applied to be a transnational Peer.

The working language of the project was English, so there was some understanding that the vast majority of Peer Reviews in this project would be conducted in English unless all the Peers present were fluent in the native language.

Understanding a foreign VET system

Initial VET in the UK in general and Scotland in particular, appears to be quite different in terms of its status, accessibility and structure to most of the rest of Europe. Whilst having an intimate knowledge of my own national system, the challenge of being a transnational Peer was of course to gain an understanding of the place occupied by VET within the national context.

I'm a scientist, I like facts. I believe science is a way of thinking. It's a way of asking rational questions, examining the facts as they are presented and making tentative value judgements about those facts, whilst looking at variables which can or cannot be controlled. In VET, the latter are usually those variables which are controlled by the national bodies that fund the VET provision ("The ministry"!).

Even before examining the self-report, a transnational Peer must understand the national position of VET. The national Peers will of course understand more of the nuances, challenges and constraints of the national situation; however, the transnational Peer has to approach a review with an open mind.

I was involved in observing a lesson with a native Peer. The native Peer came out of the lesson commenting, what an excellent and interesting lesson that was. I had very little knowledge of both the subject and the language so all I was able to do was observe interactions between the teacher and students. I commented that I thought that the lesson was actually quite poor, because, although the teacher was clearly enjoying himself and five of the students were actively involved in the class, it was clear to me that at least nine of the students played no part at all. Here knowledge of the language and subject may have been a disadvantage. I was not distracted by the content but found myself concentrating on the teaching and learning processes.

Asking "stupid questions"

An interesting and rewarding aspect of being a transnational Peer is that it is okay to ask relatively naive, open questions of the senior management. If these were asked by a native they may in fact appear impolite and not get full and frank responses.

Why do you do that? Why does that happen? Why don't you stop that? Senior managers will feel almost duty-bound to explain in full. This can be extremely revealing for the native Peers, who may be able to interpret the national position in a different way.

Leaving for a European adventure

And of course the students ...

In all the Peer Reviews I have been involved in I found it constantly reassuring that students participate fully and completely. Almost all were bright, articulate and committed. They have the most important perspective, the one that as a teacher we often forget: the perspective of the learner.

Clearly, it is learning and not teaching that is most important.

Learning from a Peer Review
There are of course fantastic personal and professional benefits to being a transnational Peer. You get the opportunity to examine a situation equivalent to your own, and as such, very often identify areas for improvement in your own situation. (Ah the quality cycle!).

- **22:00:** Wow that was hard work! What nice people. How do I get back to the airport? How late will I get home? What do I have to do at work tomorrow? Have I got any milk in the fridge? Wasn't that an interesting trip? I wonder if I can do that again?

Dr. Rick Hollstein (r.hollstein@abcol.ac.uk) is the Quality Audit Coordinator at Aberdeen College, UK (SCO).

He has been a member of the Peer Review projects since their inception. He has participated as a Peer Review Facilitator in Aberdeen College, and transnational Peer and Peer Coordinator in 4 Peer Reviews.

II.2. My first experience as a Peer

Alexandrina Mihai, Politehnica University of Bucharest

My name is Alexandrina Mihai and I am university professor of the Engineering and Management of Technological Systems Faculty at the Politehnica University of Bucharest. In addition to my assignment as a professor, I am working as an internal auditor in this university.

From 2006 to 2007 I was involved in the Leonardo da Vinci project "Peer review as an instrument for quality assurance and quality improvement in initial VET in Europe" due to my previous experience in European projects. Within this project I was invited as a Peer at "Gh. Airinei" Technical College of Post and Telecommunication, an important VET school from Bucharest, with which I had already had good collaboration before.

National background and the reviewed VET provider
"Gh. Airinei" Technical College of Post and Telecommunication in Bucharest, Romania, is one of the largest vocational high schools, with 4,000 pupils enrolled. At present, the school has 121 classrooms and it offers different forms of education such as: full-time education (including bilingual classes: English, French, and German), evening classes, post-school education, part-time education (no compulsory school attendance), vocational (technical) education, apprenticeship, post-school education (PHARE). Graduates usually have good employment opportunities and the school has signed a lot of contracts with important partners in the Romanian economy, like the Ministry of Communications or the companies such as Romtelecom, Radio Communications Romanian Post RA, Automations and Railway Signals Company, Dual S.A Telecommunication Company etc.

In Romania, the use of quality systems in education is still marginal; the schools supported by the Romanian government (i.e. the public schools) have not yet implemented any quality system that would meet the European standards. Only some public universities have implemented the quality system ISO 9001:2000 res. 2008: University of Brasov, University of Pitesti, Politehnica University of Bucharest (in work, not yet certified) and a few others.

In 1998, the "National Committee of Quality in Higher Education" was created under the coordination of the Ministry of Education, then was discontinued in 2000 and restored again in 2002 under the name "Strategy Commission for Higher Education" (with one department for the Quality Assurance in Higher Education). At the moment, two national bodies for certification of quality system in the Higher Education sector are established. At pre-university level, no quality system has been recognised. Yet, Romanian vocational training is generally appreciated as good training, because the schools who offer training consider the quality of programmes, curricula, teachers training and competency etc. a high priority.

Personal experience with Peer Review
As university professor and internal auditor, I have many times been involved in quality evaluation activities with "traditional methods" used in training evaluation for reports required by the Romanian Ministry of Education and by the Territorial Schools Inspectorate: periodical analysis (each year) of the curricula and syllabi, training results, training level of teachers; statistical analysis of results of pupils: e.g. total number of pupils/school year, total number of promoted pupils/year, total number of pupils promoted with average grade between 10 and 9 (10 is the best grade that can be achieved), total number of pupils promoted with average grade between 9 and 8 etc., total number of drop out etc. Each of the above-mentioned issues is attentively analysed at the level of the school's Teachers Committee and some of them at the level of the Territorial Schools Inspectorate.

Due to my prior experiences and expertise I was involved as a Peer in the Peer Review project. I participated in the web-based Peer Training Programme organised by Aberdeen College and I found this method very attractive and useful.

I know that other European schools have already established some sort of quality assurance system and that it is important for the conduct of a Peer Review to have some experience in quality assurance. However, even though being a university professor teaching students from the quality management

department, doing a Peer Review was a new experience for me, and not only for me but also for the whole Peer Team and the VET provider.

The Peer Review was planned in accordance with the rules of the Peer Review Manual. We were four people in the Peer Team: Mrs. Väyrynen from Finnish National Board of Education, Finland, Mrs. Ionescu from "Dumitru Moţoc" Technical College for Food Industry in Bucharest, and Mr. Solomon and I both from Politehnica University of Bucharest.

Due to the fact that the Technical College of Post and Telecommunication was involved in such a quality analysis for the first time, at the beginning the Peer Review created some sort of discomfort and misunderstanding. Among the usual activities of the school, the Peer Visit seemed to be an unexpected inspection or control. The Peer Team had to use some diplomacy to get the school's staff involved. But after the finish of this Peer Review, all involved persons were satisfied and even enthusiastic.

Our team organised many agreeable and pleasant interviews with teachers, pupils, staff members (administrative and teaching), parents and graduates. From many interesting interview situations, I'd like to give the following examples:

A student's opinion:
Does the teaching arrangement encourage students to combine subject theory and practice (and own experience)?
Sometimes, however, there's too much theory and too little practice.

Would you find it interesting to study for a few months or a year abroad?
Of course, but there are many financial problems to deal with; the ministry doesn't support pupils with funds in this respect.

What would you change about this school if you were the manager/principal of this school?
I would improve its appearance, the material conditions in the classrooms, the sports hall, and the labs. When it comes to computers, the school has enough, and some of them are quite good, but others are not. This could be improved.

A parent's opinion:
What do you think about the curriculum, is it ok?
Yes, the pupils learn very much, but sometimes it is too much, our children are too busy due to the school requirements. They don't have enough time for other activities, like sports or hobbies.

A company representative's opinion:
What do you think about the curriculum, is it ok?
The domain of Post and Telecommunication is very dynamic. The curriculum does not change as fast as the technology; It is not yet possible that the students from this school participate in other courses which are not taught in this school; there is no legal basis yet.

A teacher's opinion:
What is your opinion about the lesson planning?
In the lesson planning there are too many bureaucratic requirements.

All interviews were free, pleasant, friendly and sincere. Many interviewees expressed their positive opinion about the differences between the expected "inspection" and the actual very friendly and useful Peer Visit.

Although now it has been some time since this Peer Visit, I still have a very good souvenir from it and I would like to repeat this experience. Many times I told my students about this interesting activity and I recommended them to use and to promote this very good qualitative analysis method.

II.3. European Peer Review – a 360° experience

Victoria Puchhammer-Neumayer
TGM – Institute of Technology, Head of the Department for Industrial Engineering

Maria Gutknecht-Gmeiner
öibf – Österreichisches Institut für Berufsbildungsforschung, Project coordinator

Victoria Puchhammer-Neumayer was Peer Coordinator, transnational Peer, and Peer Review Facilitator in the European Peer Review projects; in the Austrian national pilot project she was active as Mentor and Peer Coordinator – "a 360° experience of Peer Review", as she puts it. In an interview with project coordinator Maria Gutknecht-Gmeiner, Victoria Puchhammer-Neumayer takes stock of her diverse and multifaceted encounters with Peer Reviews.

On being a Peer Review Facilitator

MGG: What comes to your mind when you think about Peer Review? What were the most salient features for you as manager in a technical college?

VPN: Well, the decision to take part in a Peer Review is a very interesting experience. The process starts way before the Peers enter the school building: the school team gets together and takes a decision to do a Peer Review. People start to reflect, to talk with each other. We've done that before, but now it gets more systematic. It becomes concrete, it also becomes more fun. It is very gratifying when you enter the teachers' room and realise that people have started to discuss about teaching and quality during coffee breaks. This is what is valuable: what happens on the formal level of the institution also has an effect on what people think, what they talk about. It has an effect because people start to do something on their own – and not because they are ordered to.

MGG: Any fears and reservations on the part of the colleagues?

VPN: Quality management always generates a certain amount of fears; after all it is generally used as a tool for steering. So people always have fantasies about what can happen. In my experience it was extremely important to dispel misunderstandings, to present the Peer Review procedure, to make clear that it stimulates change and improvement. Instead of reacting passively to survey results, teachers are actively involved. It is their decision to say: we want to improve, we want to become more professional at what we are doing, we look at our blind spots and afterwards we will feel better, more satisfied. But it was very important that people realised that Peer Review is not an instrument of control. That is why we asked you as the project coordinator to give a presentation on the purpose of Peer Review and the procedure at our school before the Peer Review. That was helpful to allay fears.

MGG: What was most remarkable about the Peer Visit?

VPN: It was particularly remarkable that the atmosphere was really very pleasant. At the beginning it was like going to the cinema. You are anticipating the film, you are curious: how is this going to turn out, will it be the way I think it would be, can this actually work? Before the Peer Review many had said: how can anyone gain comprehensive insights in two days which will be able to help us develop further?

Well from the time that the Peers entered our school everything was quite relaxed. Some of the colleagues were almost disappointed when they were not invited for an interview. People wanted to be a part of it, the fears were gone.

MGG: So what happened then?

VPN: We had a communicative validation, which is the feedback session at the end of the Peer Visit. It was held in a small circle and attendance was voluntary – the results were communicated to all the teachers in a conference later on. We could recognise our school in the feedback we got and we obtained some inputs for further work. We had chosen two areas: one where we had already accomplished a lot and one we were just starting to work on. All in all, the feedback we got was very useful. We also realised that we have some strengths we were not aware of.

We've also started to market the Peer Review results, especially our strengths which we were happy the Peer Team had

confirmed. We put parts of the feedback session into a folder – original quotes – and distributed the folder on our open day. We could see that prospective students and their parents were very interested in these results. Many asked us: "What is this – Peer Review? We did not know that this kind of evaluation is done in Austria. Well, then you must already be far advanced, as far advanced as the Finns…"[1]

MGG: *This sounds very positive. What are possible pitfalls from your point of view? What are your recommendations for other VET providers?*

VPN: Peer Review takes time, writing the Self-Report takes time. One should not underestimate the time factor. That was what happened to me the first time and time pressure was pretty bad.

As an overall strategy, I strongly recommend other VET providers to talk to someone who already has experience, someone who can draw your attention to the most important hurdles. This is what we did as mentors in the Austrian pilot project, for instance. I warned my mentee school not to take the time factor lightly.

In the first phase of the process – before the Peer Review – it was important to keep everybody up to date. You always think you organise a meeting and you get your points across, but in the end communication is an ongoing process and you always have to feed something into this process. This does not only hold good for the teachers but also for other staff at the school. And the students, of course, were included.

As to the preparation of the Peer Review, I recommend a very structured approach to the self-evaluation and the Self-Report: use all the material you have, don't do things twice. The Self-Report does not have to be exhaustive. You focus on two quality issues and these should be fully presented. But you do not have to go into every detail. An all-encompassing Self-Report is a burden for the Peers who will drown in the flood of information.

MGG: *Your conclusions?*

VPN: It was a very interesting experience to be kind of "x-rayed" as a school. Peer Review is quite fascinating compared to other evaluation methods. All those quantitative surveys remain on the surface, especially if results are not broken down to individual teachers and subjects. People may feel they are personally concerned – or not. Peer Review on the other hand is about individual feedback; even if the procedure is anonymous and nobody may be addressed directly in the feedback, people recognise themselves personally in the qualitative feedback. This is what I find exciting: getting feedback in this confidential manner, where you do not have to be afraid but where you actually get something worthwhile. Like a service, like in a counselling situation – this is really great.

Maria Gutknecht-Gmeiner *(öibf)*, Victoria Puchhammer-Neumayer (TGM), Barcelona Conference, Dec. 2007

MGG: *Why is it that this kind of feedback resonates with people much more than other evaluation results?*

VPN: I think there are several factors which are key to this issue. First of all, the teachers together with the management choose the evaluation questions – so it is our most important questions that are being investigated. The second factor is that in these interviews which can go into depth but also width – depending on the subject – things are unearthed which you would never have thought of. Everything comes to the surface and this is what makes for a quality and a depth which you can never obtain through a quantitative survey. And that is why if I want to have detailed insights into specific issues, I will benefit the most from Peer Review.

On being a Peer

MGG: *You have also had ample opportunity to get to know Peer Review from the "other side" so to speak. What experiences stand out?*

VPN: For a Peer it is a win-win-situation. First of all you gain insights into areas that otherwise are never accessible to outsiders. It is like the relation between doctor and patient or attorney and client. The Peers are obliged to strictly observe confidentiality and the institutions open up. As a Peer you can have a look at the hidden spots that you only know from your own institution and you are able to make comparisons. You get to know a lot of strengths. Since it is usually the most committed schools who undertake a Peer Review, this means that you find a lot of ideas for your own work.

MGG: Can you give examples?

VPN: Now I have to be careful not to breach the confidentiality clause… Well, in a school which is of a quite similar type to mine, for instance, I saw how highly effective platforms for sponsoring partners can be. This has been taken up by my institution immediately and we have used this idea in a way which is appropriate for our school.

Then there is the way we deal with our students. Within our school, we have our own "language" and our own ways of communicating with young people. If you look at schools which are quite different from your own, with a different VET offer and a different student population, you realise that things work differently there, the awareness for the students, the language, and the leeway given to students. And then you ponder whether you should adapt your own ways.

And if you go abroad you get to see yet another perspective. I was a transnational Peer in Germany and I witnessed how proud young people there are of their apprenticeship training. That is when I said to myself: so these youngsters are quite proud of an education which corresponds to an intermediate qualification in Austria. And they are boasting about their training institution and they campaign for it and love it. This is something which should be promoted in Austria – that people are proud again of the qualifications they acquire in apprenticeship training.

✱ So if you want to delve deeper and get a very precise high-resolution picture, if you want to obtain tailored impulses for your institutions, then you should turn to Peer Review.

For me as a manager, the organisation of the teaching staff in other schools was also particularly interesting. You see for instance how a team of teachers has been structured by introducing areas of responsibility without creating a hierarchy, but only a subject-related structure so that the whole team can work together more productively. This is what I picked up.

Then there are the seemingly more trivial observations, like how classrooms are equipped – this sounds very mundane but in practice it is very important how this is organised. And things which work well are usually presented by the school. And then you go home with an answer and you kind of hatch the idea and when it is ready you implement it.

MGG: All of this sounds very positive again …

VPN: So now you want to know what the stress factors and the stumbling blocks were?

MGG: Yes, and the critical success factors from your point of view.

VPN: Well, being a Peer is exacting and strenuous. In every Peer Team I was part of we realised that we were quite exhausted after the days we spent visiting the school. During those days you don't really have time to do anything.

It is very important that the Peers cooperate well as a team. And I would like to point out that in the Peer Training we had in the last round of Peer Reviews the teams met and were already working together before the review. That was very helpful and it made things much easier for the Peer Teams. A Peer Training which includes the preparation of the Peer Review – the coordination in the Peer Teams and the planning of the Peer Visit – is really great.

In the planning of the Peer Visit you must be careful not to underestimate the time needed. You must be economical in that you should not plan to do too much. Instead you must concentrate on the most important issues; otherwise you get completely lost in those 2.5 days. You must draw up a generous schedule with buffers which you then strictly adhere to. If there are problems or hold-ups in the schedule, a good coordination with the school will help to cope with the situation.

MGG: You just mentioned the cooperation in the Peer Team. How can a good cooperation be ensured?

VPN: A common language is important. So if you have a transnational Peer in the team, s/he should know the native language of the country – or at least English if the Peer Review is in English – so that this person can really participate. Another important aspect is the composition of the Peer Team. If there are representatives from companies in the team or an international Peer then at least one Peer should be from a similar institution to the one reviewed to be able to explain the particulars and give background information on how to interpret certain findings.

And as far as stumbling blocks are concerned … well, the reporting duties must be mentioned, I can confirm this from my own experience. Reserve time for writing the Peer Review

Report, procrastination does not help at all. You just drag it with you and the longer you wait the more the report turns into a millstone which you haul along until you neither want to write the report anymore nor can remember exactly all the details of what happened during the visit. So the last time the Peer Team sat down right away to draft the report during the Peer Visit. This absolutely made our lives easier.

On European cooperation

VPN: Speaking about being a transnational Peer. This was a very enriching experience. From my point of view it is a gift to be introduced into another school system. Not to be shown around as in a study visit and see the sunny sides but, as I pointed out before, that the system really opens up. You have a look inside, into the culture, the values, the workings of the system. Not only that the Peers perform an important task in the Peer Review, at the same time this leads to an additional qualification. So this is like training for the Peer – the acquisition of in-depth knowledge about other systems. Getting this inside view is a privilege of transnational Peers.

And it works both ways. The transnational Peers who come to our schools see things we do not notice anymore – the so-called blind spots. They ask all these questions and you start to give these questions some thought. You realise there are different ways of doing things. And then there were the Peer Review conferences.

MGG: *What about the conferences?*

VPN: I had the opportunity to participate in the Vienna, Pécs and Barcelona conferences in 2007 and I am planning to come to Lisbon this September. It is not only about travelling and seeing another culture, because it was equally worthwhile for me when we had that event in Vienna, the city I live in. It is about the mix of participants who all bring along their own perspectives. There were people who came from institutions of education and training, of course, teachers, trainers, and managers from different countries. But there were also participants from the administrations and the educational authorities. And interacting with these people during the conferences you get to know the different systems. You engage in exchange, establish partnerships with other institutions and you learn from comparison as in former times when professionals travelled to bring home the know-how from all over the world.

Unique features of Peer Review – a résumé

MGG: *So to wrap it up: from your experience, what are the unique features of Peer Review?*

VPN: What is special about Peer Review in contrast to quantitative methodologies is that you have very concrete evaluation questions. I find it particularly charming that you can formulate the questions yourself, that the Peers delve into the depths of these questions and concentrate on certain issues, that Peers can react and adapt their questions in the interviews according to what aspects become salient – which is not possible in a standardised procedure. The methodology also entails that instead of enormous heaps of quantitative data you have data with different shades and nuances. And through this narrow focus the Peers actually find out much more about the atmosphere and the general quality of an institution than through a broader quantitative approach – which is actually kind of paradoxical. Of course, if you need a comprehensive assessment which covers all areas of the institutions, you will probably turn to other models, like the EFQM model. Yet, these assessments remain on the surface. Results are presented according to a coarse screen. So if you want to delve deeper and get a very precise high-resolution picture, if you want to obtain tailored impulses for your institutions, then you should turn to Peer Review.

On being a Peer Review mentor

VPN: Some things turn out to be "infectious" – and Peer Review certainly is. It is an instrument for your own personal professional development. After a Peer Review you feel well on your way, you feel more motivated, really enjoy your work again. So you think if being a Peer and being reviewed both are so rewarding, you would like to become a mentor and pass this experience on to other schools. And then you lean back with the feeling: "Now I've done something which makes a difference." Because: reflection of your own practice is the only way to improvement. This is something nobody can order you to do, you have to grasp it through experience – and Peer Review certainly is a good instrument for supporting improvement through self-reflection.

[1)] So this shows the respect Austrians have for the Finnish educational system.

II.4. European Peer Review in action – a play in three acts

Anne Leaf, ibc-: Hetzendorf

Scene I, Act 1 ***in a school corridor, Spring 2008***

Other teacher: So Anne, the boss tells me you're taking part in the Peer Review?

Me: … the peer what? …

Scene II, Act 1 ***in the staff room, later in Spring 2008***

Me: … but is it a good idea to make team teaching in the bilingual programme one of the Peer Review areas? … there are a lot of unresolved issues there …

Boss: … but, Anne that's why it would be good to do it; it might help us to get the teachers to focus on the problems …

Scene III, Act 1 ***in the staff room, early Summer 2008***

Me: … but that means we'll have to rewrite the entire feedback questionnaire, both students' and teachers' versions; get all the teachers and students into computer rooms to fill in the questionnaires before the summer holidays, evaluate the results and then translate the whole thing!!! … before we can even start writing the Self-Report?!

Boss: Yes.

Scene 1, Act 2 ***in the staff room, Autumn 2008***

Me: What do you mean we only have two days to finish the Self-Report? I thought we had until the end of the month?

Peer Facilitator: No, there was a misunderstanding about the deadlines. It has to be done by Friday so it can be given to the Peers before the training session.

Scene 2, Act 2 ***staff room, Winter 2008***

Me: … no, I've no idea why the Peers are coming to see two of your classes and none of mine. I'm as surprised as you are …

Yes, I can understand you might feel that's unfair … I really have to refer you to the Peer Review Facilitator …

Other teacher: … the peer what …?

Scene 3, Act 2 ***staff room***

No, sorry, we decided the language of the Peer Review would be English.

Aber ich kann kein Englisch! (But I don't speak English!)

It's just a short group session. You won't have to say very much if you don't want to.

Scene 1, Act 3 ***staff room***

So, Anne, what did the Peers have to say? You were at the feedback session, weren't you?

Ja, aber das war in Englisch. Was haben sie wirklich gesagt? Ich meine … nachher … (Yes, but it was in English. What did they really say? I mean … afterwards …?)

Scene 2, Act 3 ***staff room***

… the Peers were actually quite nice …

… they didn't say very much. Just asked us questions …

Scene 3, Act 3 ***staff room***

The Peers said they didn't see evidence of differentiation in the bilingual classes.

That's ridiculous … no differentiation …!!!

What is differentiation anyway?

Scene 4, Act 3 ***semester conference***

Boss: The final Peer Review Report will be discussed in detail at a future conference and in the appropriate subject groups.

Me: (sigh of relief)

II.5. European Peer Review at the Vocational School for Business Administration, Vienna

Michaela Hoke, Thomas Wallisch, Berufsschule für Verwaltungsberufe, Vienna

The Berufsschule für Verwaltungsberufe participated in the project "Peer Review Extended II" and was the first Austrian vocational school offering dual education to conduct a European Peer Review (in contrast to full-time vocational schools, quality management is not yet implemented in schools offering dual education in Austria). From autumn 2007 to autumn 2009, the project involved the entire institution. The actual preparation for the Peer Visit took 1.5 years.

First, some facts and figures on our school:

- 38 teachers (71% female/29% male)
- 650 students aged 15 to 18 (64% female, 36% male)
- Students are mainly apprentices of the city council of Vienna (office trainees)
- Three years of dual education: twice a week theoretical education, three days training on the job at the city council of Vienna, at the Wiener Linien (public transport) and Wien Energie (power supplier)

After the decision of the school board and the management to carry out a European Peer Review, the teaching staff was informed about the project in a school meeting in March 2008. The colleagues were invited to suggest issues to be reviewed from which the following two were chosen by vote:

Quality Area 2: Learning and teaching
Can a specialisation of the teachers in a reduced number of subjects contribute to the quality of teaching?

Quality Area 12: Social participation and interaction
Are the students provided with a coherent and transparent set of rules in class and at school?

At the same time, a "Peer Review working group" (five members) was established in order to carry out a self-evaluation, write the Self-Report, and to prepare and support the conduct of the Peer Visit.

The Self-Report was drawn up during the summer months of 2008. It includes the results of the self-evaluation as well as a detailed analysis of the chosen issues. Writing the report took longer than expected (120–150 working hours), since only very few data were available at the school. A lot of information was acquired through a survey among the students and the teachers. In the end, the Self-Report comprised 20 pages, details of the self-evaluation were provided in a comprehensive annex (80 pp).

In the meantime the Peer Team was selected: Two Peers with prior experience in conducting Peer Review in VET were recruited as well as another Peer with experience with the methodology and with evaluation, and a high-ranking representative of an important partner in the dual education. The transnational Peer came from Finland and – fortunately – was fluent in German.

After the Self-Report had been finished and sent to the Peers in September 2008, a first meeting with the Peer Team was held on 28th of October, after the Peer Training in Vienna. This preliminary talk was essential from our point of view; basics principles like the methods and interview groups for the Peer Visit were discussed.

In the weeks before the Peer Visit, several preparatory tasks had to be carried out:

- Organising accommodation and transfer for the transnational peer
- Choosing and inviting interviewees (principal, teachers, current and former students, employers etc.)
- Providing materials and additional documents to the Peers
- Concluding contracts with the Peers
- Organising rooms for the interviews

- Planning and organising infrastructure in the school (technical equipment and catering)
- Setting up of a timetable for the interviews
- Organising classroom observations
- Informing colleagues and inviting them for the presentation at the end of the visit
- Organising an evening programme

The Peer Visit took place on the 2nd and 3rd of March 2009. At the end of the visit, the Peers gave a short presentation of the first results.

The visit itself was very demanding for the facilitators. The time schedule was very tight; if something didn't work (e.g. laptop) one had to react immediately to ensure a smooth running. Thus, the importance of a sound preparation must be emphasised. In order to cope with these tasks, a "Checklist for Peer Review Facilitators" was drawn up which is available from the project website www.peer-review-education.net.

From our point of view, the Peer Review at our institution went very well. We identify the following factors as responsible for the success:

- The Peer Team was well prepared and cooperated well.
- As Peer Review Facilitators we were available for the Peers during the whole visit. We were able to support the Peer Team and provide a smooth running.
- All interview partners were available at the planned time.
- The teaching staff participated actively and supported the project.

The final Peer Review Report was delivered at the beginning of April. After informing the teaching staff, implementation of improvements can now start.

The following stumbling blocks were identified during the course of the project:

- Support within the organisation is crucial, also from the colleagues.
- The quality of the Self-Report is essential to get useful results.
- Careful planning of the Peer Visit is very important.
- Acting upon the results of the Peer Review has to be planned.
- Funding: sufficient resources (personal and financial) are important.

Finally, some data on the amount of work required in a case like ours when a self-evaluation has to be carried out before the Peer Review.

Peer Review plus self-evaluation is hard work:

- 400 working hours put in by the Peer Review working group
- 700 e-mails written
- 150 files produced (analyses, reports, presentations, minutes …).

II.6. Open-Minded Education – an account of the results of the Peer Review at the College of Fashion and Art Herbststraße

Ingrid Smutny, College of Fashion and Art Herbststraße, Vienna

Peer Tandem interviewing students

The project "Peer Review Extended II" offered the opportunity for VET schools to assess the current position in its development. The Herbststraße didn't want to miss this chance to obtain the opinion of "critical friends".

The Herbststraße College of Fashion and Art is a school rich in the tradition of vocational secondary schools in Austria. After several decades of growth, today it is a stimulating training centre for creative talents.

The Herbststraße currently offers the following training programmes:

- the secondary college for fashion (fashion design and graphics, fashion marketing and visual merchandising) (5 years)
- the secondary college for creative design (textiles or sculpture) (5 years)
- the course of lectures for fashion (commercial and creative production) (3 years)
- the course of lectures for design, fashion, and textiles
- the course of lectures for marketing, logistics, and management
- the master school for ladies dressmaking (haute couture, stage costumes)
- the evening course of lectures for jewellery design (continuing education).

The choice of a training programme is based not only on the different talents and aspirations of the students, but also on the different market requirements. The qualification and final exams also include a commercial and business degree.

The Herbststraße sees its mission not only in preparing the graduates for the business world, but also in preparing the students for life. This is achieved primarily by team-oriented, independent work in projects which is carried out in cooperation between students and supervising teachers. Personal development and the ability to face new challenges with a positive attitude are equally important educational goals.

The results of the Peer Review confirm that these goals are actively lived in the school and are not just empty phrases.

To ensure a high standard of training in the Herbststraße, quality assurance has become an integral element of the school's efforts. Therefore, it was clear from the beginning that the chance to participate as one of three Austrian schools in the Leonardo da Vinci project "Peer Review Extended II" should not be passed up. At the request of the school, the transnational Peer Team reviewed two quality areas: "assessment" and "institutional ethos and strategic planning".

What did our "critical friends" report after two days of doing interviews with students and teachers?

- Creativity, innovation, teamwork, individual development and connection between the subjects were those terms of the schools' mission statement which most interviewees could identify with.
- Transparent performance evaluations have increased accountability and objectivity of the achievement assessments (even though there have been start-up difficulties). Through the external view also suggestions for further improvements in this area were brought in.
- Furthermore, the professional organisation of the school,
- a high feel-good factor,
- a school without prejudices,
- and a high degree of openness in the collaboration with the Peers were the most interesting results of the Peer Review.

This is all good news, but should not be seen as a reason to rest on our laurels, but instead should be taken as stimulation for further work on the school's development.


SDE-College Peer Team

II.7. Peer Review reveals disagreeing apprentices

Frank Nilsson, Erhvervsskolen Nordsjælland

SDE-College in Odense has participated in a European Peer Review. The Peer Review took place at the construction department and focused on the carpenter education. The review revealed among other things, that the pupils not always have the same opinion on crucial issues.

"Our workshops are quite good, but our classrooms are bad. You get a headache after 10 minutes and we have no real tables for drawing", said four carpenter apprentices from SDE-College when they were interviewed by four Peers (I was one of them). Many of the issues and problems we tackled were originally identified by the institution through satisfaction surveys among pupils and employees.

Pupils disagree

Based on a Self-Report drawn up by the carpenter department and the head of the quality department it was the task for the Peers to investigate the areas the school had asked the Peers to focus upon. The four Peers divided into groups of two and started interviewing about the standard of classrooms and workshop and about social life at the school.

One group of students made a point that social arrangements were only for "sissies". They were here to take an education and not to socialise! Another group of apprentices asserted the opposite: "We should have had teambuilding in the beginning of our basic programme. We want a Friday party like the students in the gymnasiums and colleges. We want field trips. If we had this kind of activities, we would be better at cooperating at school when we train to be carpenters."
Many others were interviewed: managers, teachers, guidance counsellors, and representatives from companies which train carpenters and cooperate with the school in the education of the apprentices.

Immediate response

The Peer Review took two days and the meeting with the site manager is of great importance. The Peers present the preliminary conclusions and discuss them with the attending representatives from the school. When this is done the writing of the Peer Review Report can be finalised. At this time of day two, one must admit that the Peers are exhausted and the writing process is slow and tedious. Therefore it is important that the Peers split the rest of the writing in a clear and practical way or choose one Peer to do the remaining work. In this case we split the work between us and communicated via cell phone and e-mail. It worked.

It is not necessarily within the concept that the Peers suggest answers and solutions, but we did that anyway because we are Peers – critical friends who present their professional opinion. To give an example: we were not neutral about the pupils' attitudes to social arrangements and teambuilding. The Peers suggested that the school try to put into practise the ideas of the students who supported social arrangements.

Education and training of Peers

Before the Peer Review we received one day of training. This also brought the Peer team together and made it possible for us to get to know each other and to plan the review. Now, after the Peer Review, it is interesting and exciting to hear from SDE-College and find out if they can use the report to sustain success and improve things which ought to be improved.

SDE-College is a vocational school situated in Odense and Vejle in Denmark, and has 5,400 pupils and students, and 830 employees.

A brief introduction to the Danish vocational educations

- Basic programme: 20–60 weeks
- Apprenticeship: agreement between an employer and a trainee, a company, and an apprentice.
- Periods alternating between vocational training and school periods.
- Final exam – journeyman's test.
- The parliament and government make the law, but the social partners and stakeholders have great influence.
- A system founded in the Middle Ages similar to the German "Lehrling und Meister" organised in guilds.

II.8. Peer Review as a tool for continuous development

Marit Nieminen and Pekka Selenius, Helsinki Culinary School Perho

Background

- Quality work started in Helsinki Culinary School Perho in 1994.
- Determined development work towards the success of Perho.
- Values discussed and defined together with the staff (customer orientation, co-operation, and ethically sustainable efficiency).
- Former service groups are nowadays teams who define their work, targets and the way to implement the values and operation in their work. Teams have to make regular self-evaluation and they are audited regularly every second year.
- Quality work has received recognition for its determined and productive activities (Quality Award granted by the Governor 1999, Quality Award of Ministry of Education twice 2001 and 2004).
- Helsinki Culinary School Perho has taken part in many bigger and smaller quality-projects, e.g. Quality in VET Schools 2003–2005, coordinated by the Finnish National Board of Education, FNBE.
- These quality projects achieved good results which have been disseminated both on national and European level.
- Due to these prior experiences with quality development Helsinki Culinary School Perho was asked to take part in the first Peer Review project to work together with many other institutions from all over Europe and contribute to the development and testing of a common European procedure for external evaluation: the European Peer Review.

Participation in the project "Peer Review in initial VET" 2004–2007

The first meeting of all project partners took place in Austria in April 2005. First it was a shock for us: lots of people from all over Europe. Mainly we did not know each other before and the aims and targets seemed to be unclear. But quickly we found the "common language" and we started the development work according to the project's work plan. We got to know the "key persons" of the project and after that everything was clear.

Choosing the Peers, transnational and national, was no problem for us. We had an experienced and reliable partner among our Dutch colleagues and in the following partner meeting in January 2006 in Trento, Italy, we agreed on a cooperation in the pilot phase between Helsinki Culinary School Perho and ROC Aventus from Apeldoorn, the Netherlands: the transnational Peer participating in the Perho Peer Review came from ROC Aventus, and vice versa Perho sent a transnational Peer to ROC Aventus. In the same meeting we agreed on a rotation system for the exchange of Peers in the three Finnish Peer Reviews: thus, Perho was in charge of the Peer Review in South Carelia Polytechnic, Jyväskylä Vocational College was in charge of the Peer Review in Perho, and South Carelia Polytechnic was in charge of the Peer Review in Jyväskylä Vocational College.

Pilot Peer Reviews in a network

All Peer Reviews mentioned above were conducted between October and December 2006. The Peer Review in Perho was arranged for the end of October (26–27). The atmosphere

"Peering the lunch" in Perho, Peer Team and representatives of Perho, from left to right: Mr. Markku Meriläinen, Peer, Jyväskylä College, Mr. Pekka Selenius, development manager, Perho, Mrs. Sini Siren, Peer, Jyväskylä College, Mrs. Pirjo Väyrynen, Peer Coordinator, Finnish National Board of Education, Mr. Piet De Noord, International Peer and evaluation expert, ROC Aventus, and Mrs Marit Nieminen, director, Perho.

was very good; the Peers were well prepared and enthusiastic. First the people invited for the interviews were afraid of having the conversations in English, but in the end it was no problem for anyone. The Peers did a good job when interviewing the participants. The schedule was very tight. We had chosen two quality areas and the Peers had prepared a lot of interview questions, but everything went well and in the final feedback session we got good advice on how to improve our actions and development work.

The Peer Review in ROC Aventus took place just after Perho's Peer Review (October 30–31, 2006). Mr. Pekka Selenius from Helsinki Culinary School Perho acted as a transnational Peer in ROC Aventus. This allowed him to acquire good knowledge about the Dutch education system as well as obtain good advice on different teaching methods and educational environments.

The Peer Review in South Carelia Polytechnic took place in November (29–30). There were two representatives from Perho, one from Jyväskylä Vocational College and as a transnational Peer one representative from ROC Aventus.

After the Peer Review
The report we got from the Peer Team after the Peer Visit was very good and useful for us. On the basis of the report we developed ideas for the improvement of our operations: e.g. the curricula-team has revised our curricula to make it more informative and easier to read for students and teachers and to make sure that students will get equal qualifications through their studies. We have improved the public accessibility to our curricula as well: the students now can get acquainted with the curricula via internet. Also, modules which can be studied by e-learning have been planned by the curricula team together with teachers. Cooperation between our school and the industry has increased with the result that students have even more choice for their on-the-job-learning and skills demonstrations. These are some examples of what we have improved after the final Peer Review Report. And the development work will continue.

Also the representatives of Perho have been involved in a national Peer Review project which aims at adapting the European Peer Review procedure to the Finnish situation, making it suitable for adult education, and disseminating the Peer Review methodology to VET schools all over Finland. Perho has also encouraged other schools on the national level to take part in Peer Review. The representatives of Perho will support them to get acquainted with the basics of

Students from ROC Aventus getting ready for Halloween dinner

Peer Review and help them to make evaluations according to the Peer Review methodology.

Another benefit of participating in the LdV Peer Review project was the establishment of networks. Since Perho got in cooperation with ROC Aventus, we have had further cooperation in student and teacher exchange-programmes.

And apparently, Perho did a good job in the piloting of Peer Review, because after the project was completed our representatives were asked to take part in other Peer Reviews. In October 2007 our director, Mrs. Marit Nieminen, acted as a transnational Peer and evaluation expert in Hungary within the follow-up project "Peer Review Extended". In October 2009, we will participate in another Peer Review in Hungary, in Sátoraljaújhely. A preliminary meeting was held in June 2009 in Budapest. Also we have been asked to act as a partner in an Austrian Peer Review network project, coordinated by the Gastwerbefachschule der Wiener Gastwirte in Vienna.

This seems to be a continuous way towards good quality! We really can recommend Peer Review as a good method for evaluation and development work in every VET organisation.

II.9. Peer Review – an accurate and friendly way of external evaluation. The experiences of the Ferenc Hansági School for Catering and Tourism

Imre Csüllög, Ferenc Hansági Vocational and Secondary School for Catering and Tourism

II.9.1. Introducing the institution and background information about the work environment

As one of the few privately maintained schools, Ferenc Hansági Vocational and Secondary School for Catering and Tourism has been operating under the Ferenc Hansági Education Foundation in the biggest city of southeast Hungary, in Szeged, since 1991. It offers two phases of vocational education: a pre-vocational foundation phase (vocational guidance) and a vocational training phase in the catering trade in chef, pastry chef and server professions.

Challenges the school faces are a decreasing number of students as a result of demographic changes and the prejudices towards Hungarian vocational education providers which are not as highly esteemed as general education. We have also witnessed a shift in the student population which now increasingly includes students with learning or behavioural difficulties. For this target group the school has launched several special developments in the last few years.

In the light of the above-mentioned challenges, our institution started to introduce quality assurance in 2000 believing that quality development would be the most effective way to increase the competitiveness of the school and ensure its survival and success in the "education market".

In order to get an external view on our quality activities, we carried out a Peer Review at our institution within the Leonardo da Vinci project "Peer Review Extended" in October 2007. The Peer Team consisted of two national and two transnational experts – all experienced in teaching – and one representative of the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce who completed the team as a "stakeholder Peer".

II.9.2. Expectations

Validating self-evaluations and gaining new knowledge
Our school had been implementing self-evaluations based on the EFQM model since 2002[1] and we had a demand for validating our self-evaluations and the results of the action plans based on them: we wanted to have a critical opinion on our work and an external judgement from independent experts. Thus, when the idea of joining the "Peer Review Extended" project emerged, the foundation and the management of the school with the approval of the teaching staff made a decision to participate.

Our general expectations at the beginning of the project were:

- We wanted to get feedback on the accuracy of our self-evaluation and on the appropriateness of our actions plans to cope with the challenges we face.
- We also wanted to determine crucial areas of improvement which might have escaped our attention during the self-evaluation.
- Moreover, we wanted to get acquainted with new methods and tools in both the reviewed Quality Areas and in quality assurance.

Quality Areas
From the 14 European Quality Areas we chose "Learning and teaching", which is one of the four Core Quality Areas of the European Peer Review and "Institutional ethos and strategic planning". Why did we choose those two Quality Areas? Because they are important to us. In our opinion it definitely makes sense to have the areas systematically determined by the demand of the institution/maintainer and then periodically reviewed.

In both Quality Areas we hoped to acquire new insights. "Learning and teaching" was chosen in order to evaluate the achievements of our pedagogic developments – which were launched as a response to the challenges generated by the society – and to receive suggestions for the direction of possible further improvements.

"Institutional ethos and strategic planning" is essential to the survival and success of our institution: we have to be able to foresee and to accommodate changes of the environment and the education market very quickly and therefore need reliable and flexible planning strategies.

II.9.3. Phase 1: Preparation of the Peer Review

Timing
A three months preparation period really is a minimum time considering the quantity of tasks to be fulfilled, especially if you engage transnational Peers and a range of documents have to be translated.

Apart from that, the timing within the school year was a little difficult: to make the project deadlines, the self-evaluation had to be carried out at the end of the school year when everyone was busy with exams; the Self-Report was due in the summer holiday, when most of the employees were on holiday. For future Peer Reviews we recommend to adjust the project schedules to the school year.

Finding Peers
In our experience, finding the right Peers demands considerable efforts. Lots of aspects must be taken into account: Peers have to be experienced in more than one field, the date of the Peer Visit has to suit everyone, contracts have to be signed with the transnational Peers in time etc. Thus, both the selection of the Peers and the arrangements with them must be launched in due time.

II.9.4. Phase 2: Peer Visit

Transnational Peers
The involvement of the foreign Peers was very useful, since the reviewed areas were evaluated more comprehensively. The transnational Peers also shared with us good practices from their own countries.

Quality Areas and time management
In our experience, even with a tight schedule a maximum of two Quality Areas can be reviewed during a two-day visit. Thus contrary to our earlier thoughts about having more areas broadly reviewed, we recommend focusing on the detailed examination of certain sub-areas. At any rate: time management is essential during the Peer Review – the recommendations made in the European Peer Review were very helpful.

Involvement of media
We also tried to involve the media in an appropriate way: while we felt it was important to give sufficient publicity to the Peer Review activity, we also made sure that media presence would not disturb the Peer Visit: reporters should not appear out of the blue or make unreasonably long interviews. From our experience we recommend that the presence of media should be limited to a period previously arranged with the Peers.

Selection of interviewees
One perhaps less obvious but all the more dangerous temptation – or should we say trap? – is the selection of the interviewees. While the groups for the interviews are determined by the Peers, the individual interviewees are selected by the school. So it is up to the school to remain objective and not to manipulate the selection in order to generate a "nice impression" since this would seriously flaunt any attempts to get a realistic picture.

II.9.5. Phase 3: Peer Review Report

Facing the results
In this phase of the Peer Review we were looking forward to "facing" the results, as the comparison of the Self-Report and the Peer Review Report is a perfect way of assessing one's own skills of self-evaluation. To our delight, the external evaluation with only some small differences supported the strengths and areas of improvement determined in the Self-Report. Obviously our institution had managed to give a realistic portrait of its operation.

Smooth running of the Peer Review through comprehensive and accurate documentation
Finally, a small remark about documentation: deliberate planning is necessary for the preparation of the Self-Report and all related documents. However, the energy used during the preparation of these documents will return multiplied during the operative activities and in the reporting phase: documents which contain all necessary information ensure the smooth running of the whole procedure.

II.9.6. Phase 4: Implementation of the planned developments and action plans

In the last phase of the Peer Review we studied the areas for improvement, we deduced aims for improving the operation of the school, and compiled action plans.

… coming full cycle to the next Peer Review
In our opinion, Peer Review can only reach its aim if the improvements, started as a result of the Peer Review, will be checked again after a certain time. So another round of Peer Reviews will be necessary …

II.9.7. How our expectations were met

Our expectations were met: we had the chance to review our work both in the field of quality assurance and in education and to confirm many of our good practises esp. in the realm of learning and teaching. Furthermore, the Peer Review also revealed some areas for improvement that we hadn't considered so important in our self-evaluation, as for instance the need to intensify cooperation with the world of work regarding the content of our teaching materials.

Beyond acquiring useful information on the Quality Areas, we also generally expanded our professional knowledge and gained a lot of useful experience in the field of quality assurance. We learned new methods and gained personal experience – through getting a supportive evaluation from outsiders and learning from each other. By putting our experiences from the Peer Review into everyday practice, the whole school – management and teaching staff – goes forward to solve problems collectively.

II.9.8. Why we recommend Peer Review to other VET providers

The added value of Peer Review

- Peers have an external view: they can highlight details which might have been overlooked or might not have been properly interpreted during the self-evaluation.
- The involvement of the transnational Peers is very useful, since the reviewed areas are assessed more comprehensively and good practice from other countries can be shared.
- During the oral feedback of the Peers, the involved staff had a chance to ask questions and also to state their case. This way it is also possible to exchange information and experiences.
- During the Peer Review evaluation there is chance for informal professional consultations between the Peers and the representatives of the school – such as travelling together, chatting during the meals or after the peer evaluation – which are not planned parts of the procedure but provide good opportunities for exchanging good practice and sharing possible suggestions for improvement.
- The supportive atmosphere of the Peer Review and the genuine interest the Peers took in our institution generated a lot of motivation in the teaching staff to continue their efforts towards improvement.

We thus find Peer Review a friendly, humane and multi-perspective external evaluation method which is extremely useful for all VET providers willing to improve their operation.

[1)] Regional Quality Award of the Southern Great Plain Region, Quality Award for Public Education, Vocational Self-evaluation Model.


ROC Aventus

II.10. Peer Reviews in the Netherlands

Willem de Ridder, ROC Aventus

The Netherlands participated in Peer Review developments for VET right from the start. A representative of the Regional Training Centre, ROC Aventus, was a member of the development team in the project "Peer Review in initial VET". In the pilot phase of the project in 2006, two Peer Reviews were conducted in ROC Aventus – in the Business, Finance & Trade department and in the Tourism & Leisure department. Meanwhile the score of Peer Reviews conducted is eight. Another two Peer Reviews were conducted in the Healthcare and Welfare department, one in the Mobile Techniques department, another one in Tourism & Leisure department and two more in the Business, Finance & Trade department.

In the Netherlands there is a legal obligation for VET institutions to have external experts look at the quality of the education provided. This has been one of the reasons for institutions to introduce 'auditing' as an additional part of their quality system. For ROC Aventus the audits are now replaced by Peer Reviews. There are two reasons for doing this:

- Peer Reviews fits better to the needs of the institution, because it can answer real questions that have arisen from risk management. Peer Review complements planning and control which cover the rest of the main quality assurance criteria and indicators.

- The other main reason for introducing Peer Review is that external accountability is very important in large institutions like the Regional Training Centres. By inviting representatives from the labour market as Peers and having the (former) director of the chamber of commerce as the Peer Coordinator/Chair in all Peer Reviews, ROC Aventus manages to link vocational education to the labour market. By doing this, accountability to important stakeholders is put into practice.

When will all VET institutions in the Netherlands be involved in Peer Reviews? This question is difficult to answer. From the start, dissemination was an important element of the project, numerous presentations and workshops were held all over the Netherlands. Potential Peers and VET institutions are interested, but apart from ROC Aventus no institution has planned to actually conduct a Peer Review yet. Because of the prominent role attributed to ENQA VET concerning transnational Peer Review and the current developments on the European level[1] VET institutions think it is wise to wait for new developments and a national support structure. There is a QANRP, a Quality Assurance National Reference Point, there are four VET institutions who are interested in participating in Peer Review and six Peers who have shown their interest in becoming a (trans)national Peer. In fact all parties are waiting for Europe to make the next move.

Will Peer Reviews be implemented at a large scale? It's probably like in the old song "To know you … is to love you". To get the wheel turning it is necessary to not just talk about Peer Review but to actually have one … the sooner the better!

Facts and Figures ROC Aventus

"Stedendriehoek" region: In the mid-east of the Netherlands.
- Locations in Apeldoorn, Deventer and Zutphen.
- Education Centre for senior secondary vocational education (MBO), adult education, company training courses.
- Over 200 study programmes.
- Over 15,000 students and course participants per year.
- Major employer in the region: 1,250 employees.
- Turnover/year: Euro 85 million.

[1] See introduction

III. *European Peer Training*

Maria Gutknecht-Gmeiner, *öibf*

III.1. Qualified Peers needed

The success and acceptance of Peer Review is highly dependent on the competence of the Peers. Thus recruitment and training of Peers have been recognised as crucial issues, especially with regard to a system-wide introduction of Peer Review on the national and on the European level. Throughout the Peer Review projects, there has been repeated demand for a comprehensive Peer Training from Peers, VET providers and educational decision-makers.

In the first two projects, high standards of Peer competence were established through recruitment requirements alone – due to scarcity of funding no face-to-face Peer Trainings could be held. In Peer Review Extended II, a transnational group of experts has now developed a comprehensive Peer Training based on an elaborate Peer Competence Profile.

III.2. Peer Competence Profile

The necessary competences of Peers can be derived from the specifications of the European Peer Review Manual:

Peers should have expertise
- „in teaching and learning
- in quality assurance and development
- in the Quality Areas under scrutiny."

(Gutknecht-Gmeiner et al. 2007, p.41)

Of the three main areas, two relate directly to the nature of Peers who must be equals and come from a similar environment/a similar institution. So teaching experience as well as knowledge and experience in the Quality Areas to be evaluated are main qualifications of the Peers and must be selection criteria in the recruitment of Peer Teams, i.e. they need to be fulfilled by Peers already in the application stage.

As to the expertise in quality assurance and evaluation: competences in this area can but must not necessarily be a requirement in the recruitment phase since an appropriate competence level can also be ensured through training. So "make or buy?" is the leading question in determining what scope and level of training in quality assurance and evaluation is needed. For the sake of a balanced European Peer Training, a low to intermediate competence level in this area was assumed so as to open the procedure to teachers and trainers with only basic knowledge and experience in evaluation and quality assurance.

Other competence fields identified by the expert team were social and personal competences – the so-called "soft skills".

III.3. European Peer Training Curriculum

With time and resources usually scarce, the European Peer Training was developed to ensure an efficient and synergetic implementation of Peer Review: it aims to directly prepare the Peers for the independent conduct of Peer Reviews.

Table 9: Overview of the European Peer Training Curriculum

Module	Theory/practice; preparation*	Phase**	Field of competence
1 Introduction to the Peer Review, evaluation and quality management	Theory	Phase 1	Fundamentals of evaluation/Peer Review
2 Tasks and roles of Peers	Theory and practice	Phases 1–3	Fundamentals of evaluation/Peer Review; social and personal competences
3 Qualitative methods	Theory and practice/Preparation	Phase 2	Methodological competence
4 Design and planning of a Peer Review	Theory and practice/Preparation	Phase 1	Methodological competence
5 Analysis, interpretation and assessment	Theory and practice	Phase 2	Methodological competence
6 Oral feedback and report	Theory and practice	Phase 3	Social and personal competences
7 Social and personal competences	Theory and practice	Phases 1–3	Social and personal competences

* Preparation of Peer Review; ** Phase of a Peer Review. Source: Gutknecht-Gmeiner 2009

European Peer Training, Oct. 2009

The Peer Training must therefore be very practice-oriented both regarding the selection of content – impartment of theory as a support of practical implementation rather than as an end in itself – and regarding didactical methods, which should support the acquisition of practically relevant knowledge and skills and enhance personal development and capacity building. Social and personal competences (see module 7 below) are thus not imparted within the framework of a separate module but integrated as a cross-curricular theme. The full training programme takes two to three days and also comprises preparatory work and a possible practical phase between training days.

Peer Training Modules
The European Peer Training is presented as a curriculum that is broken down into individual modules. It is structured in accordance with the Peer Review's sequence, relevant are phases 1 to 3, i.e. the preparation of the Peer Review (Phase 1), the implementation of the Peer Visit (Phase 2), and reporting (Phase 3). At the same time, this structure also allows for integration of the preparatory tasks conducted in the Peer Teams, i.e. the training course can be tailored to fit synergistically into the organisation of Peer Reviews.

Target group
The target group are primarily teachers/trainers and other staff of VET Providers (e.g. counsellors etc.) as well as representatives of stakeholder groups who are to become active as Peers in a Peer Review.

Some previous experience with evaluation and quality management is a prerequisite; should the majority of participants not have any previous experience, modules 3 to 6 must be extended both in content and duration.

Didactics
In principle, the European Peer Training calls for an adult-learning-oriented and participant-centred didactical approach which responds to the participants' interests and needs, knowledge and previous experience. As the Peers' capacity to act professionally is the ultimate objective of the training, didactics should be geared towards facilitating understanding and exchange between participants; they should be action- and process-oriented and engender reflection. An appropriate mix of different methods of delivery is required.

Professional development and capacity building must be safeguarded by continual practice-orientation. It is recommended to work with "cases" (case study method), i.e. either with actual cases when preparing a Peer Review or with fictitious "typical" cases, which need to be prepared by the trainer. Suitable methods particularly include work in (small) groups, role plays, simulations and practical exercises, preparation and discussion of specific cases and typical or difficult situations.

III.4. Use of the European Peer Training

Alongside the European Peer Training Curriculum with its seven modules an array of further material and documents has been developed. The compilation comprises the following parts:

Table 10: Overview of European Peer Training

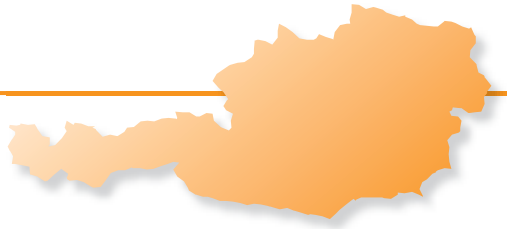
Part I	Competence Profile for Peers Peer Training Curriculum	*Maria Gutknecht-Gmeiner*
Part II	Quality assurance of European Peer Training – a checklist	*Josep Camps, Pere Canyadell*
Part III	Peer Training Modules	*Maria Gutknecht-Gmeiner, Pirjo Väyrynen, Leena Koski, Anette Chur, Anette Halvgaard, Rick Hollstein*
Part IV	Good practice examples Case Study Supporting Material	*Maria Gutknecht-Gmeiner, Leena Koski, Anette Chur, Anette Halvgaard, Rick Hollstein*
Part V	Web-based Peer Training Programme	*Rick Hollstein*

How can the European Peer Training be used?
The European Peer Training was developed to support the conduct of future Peer Reviews, i.e. it can be carried out as is by institutions who meet the quality criteria set out in the quality assurance checklist in Part II of the European Peer Training.

In addition, the curriculum and supporting material should also prove to be a sound basis for the development of national training programmes in the different countries currently implementing Peer Reviews.

Since the European Peer Training has been piloted successfully on the European level, it can also serve as a model for future transnational Peer Training courses.

IV. *Peer Review Implementation*



IV.1. Peer Review – the Austrian experience

Maria Gutknecht-Gmeiner, *öibf*

IV.1.1. Introduction

Austria has been in the vanguard of Peer Review activities in VET ever since spring 2003 when the idea to promote Peer Reviews on an institutional level was taken up by some members of the Technical Working Group for Quality in VET. The Austrian ministry then asked the Österreichisches Institut für Berufsbildungsforschung *(öibf)* to develop a project in the framework of the European programme Leonardo da Vinci. From the start, the Austrian ministry expected not only a European added value from the project but also valuable input for the further development of quality assurance in the national VET system, namely the QualitätsInitiative Berufsbildung (QIBB). Support has continued throughout the projects "Peer Review in Initial VET" (2004–2007), "Peer Review Extended" (2007), and "Peer Review Extended II" (2007–2009).

The Austrian interest in Peer Review is also reflected in the high number of schools who participated in the transnational pilots: of the 25 Peer Reviews carried out between 2006 and 2009, six took place in Austrian VET schools and colleges. So far, Peer Review has been tested in almost all types of VET colleges in Austria: in technical, tourism, business administration, trade, and art colleges. In the last European project, a vocational school (Berufsschule) also took part.

IV.1.2. Dissemination in Austria

Regular national project meetings involving the ministry and other relevant stakeholders in all important stages of development enhanced the quality and applicability of the European Peer Review procedure and helped to promote the European Peer Review in Austria. Peer Review was also repeatedly presented at conferences, workshops and meetings to the different stakeholders in Austrian VET.

In March 2007, the European Peer Review procedure and experiences of the first transnational pilot Peer Reviews in Austria were presented in the Conference "Impulsveranstaltung Peer Review in der Berufsbildung" at the Hertha Firnberg Schulen für Wirtschaft und Tourismus in Vienna. The conferences was hosted by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture (BMUKK) and organised by *öibf*. Participants were key players and stakeholders from all levels of the initial VET system – representatives of the ministry, provincial education boards, the inspectorate, schools –, also including managers of the QIBB on provincial and school level as well as representatives of social partners, enterprises, and the higher education sector (including teacher training). About 100 people participated. Participants discussed the implementation of Peer Review within the Austrian quality assurance initiative QIBB and drew up concrete plans and requirements.

In 2007 and 2008, further dissemination activities of Peer Review have taken place targeting special parts of the system (e.g. the Colleges for Business Administration, the Colleges for Engineering, Arts, and Crafts etc.). Pilotation of Peer Review within the national quality initiative (QIBB) was imminent.

Austrian Peers at the Conference "Impulsveranstaltung Peer Review in der Berufsbildung"

Workshop with stakeholders within the feasibility study "Peer Review in QIBB"

IV.1.3. QualitätsInitiative Berufsbildung

The QualitätsInitiative BerufsBildung (QIBB) is a comprehensive quality initiative for the initial VET sector. Launched in 2005/2006, it incorporates the elements and principles set forth in the CQAF (Common Quality Assurance Framework)/ EQARF (European Quality Assurance Reference Framework) and works in a systemic way comprising all levels of the VET system – from the ministry to the provincial education boards and inspectors to the VET schools and colleges. From a general system-wide mission for VET, goals are deduced for the different parts of the sector following a logical framework. Based on voluntary participation by schools, most VET schools have by now been included in the initiative.[1]

QIBB relies on yearly development plans, self-evaluation of VET schools and colleges, and management reviews. These management reviews are a discussion between the director of a VET school and the responsible inspector on the results of the self-evaluation (and other evaluation results available) and should lead to negotiated improvement objectives for the next year. They do not constitute institutional evaluations.

External evaluations on the institutional level had so far not been part of QIBB, although in some instances scientific evaluations have been carried out usually focusing on a special topic (e.g. evaluations of development projects or curricula evaluations). These evaluations, however, had a narrow focus, were only carried out on demand, in individual cases and usually as one-off evaluations and only had a limited impact on the VET system.

Peer Review as a voluntary and "friendly" evaluation between VET institutions was considered an attractive methodology for carrying out external institutional evaluations in QIBB.

IV.1.4. Preparing for implementation

In October 2007, the Austrian Reference Point for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (ARQA-VET) was established. By the end of the year, a feasibility study had been commissioned by ARQA-VET to explore the conditions and procedures for implementing Peer Review in QIBB.

IV.1.4.1. Feasibility study on Peer Review in QIBB

The feasibility study was carried out by *öibf* in 2008. It intended to clarify the conditions for implementation of Peer Review in Austrian initial VET. All stakeholders – schools and colleges, regional quality managers in QIBB, regional boards of education, the ministry of education and social partners – were involved. The study included moderated workshops, focus groups and qualitative interviews. At a conference in October 2008, a workshop on Peer Review was held bringing together different stakeholders and facilitating exchange on Peer Review experiences.

Topics of the feasibility study were:

- the integration of Peer Review into QIBB (function of Peer Review within QIBB; integration of system level; structures, responsibilities and competences; quality control and monitoring; recognition of Peer Review)
- necessary adaptation of the European Peer Review to tailor it to the Austrian situation (terms, quality areas, forms etc.)
- an estimate of personal and operational resources needed
- research of necessary support (support in coordination and networking, Peer selection, training, mentoring etc.) and
- recommendations for assuring the possibility of transnational Peer Reviews. The feasibility study was linked to the establishment of a Peer Review network and mentoring partnerships between VET providers.

Outcomes of the feasibility study were that the European Peer Review procedure can be used in Austria without any major adaptations. As external, formative evaluation Peer Review fits in very well with QIBB. The necessity of an external evaluation to complement self-evaluation and surveys was recognised.

Almost all stakeholders interviewed were in favour of the introduction of Peer Review, VET schools viewed it as an attractive external evaluation methodology. Concerns regarded the role of the inspectorate and the timing of introducing yet another quality instrument when schools were still struggling to fully put into practice the other elements of QIBB. After all, system-wide implementation had only started three years earlier. The final report has been available since January 2009 (Gutknecht-Gmeiner 2009b).

IV.1.4.2. National Peer Review pilot project (2008/2009)

In close connection with the feasibility study which also included building up a Peer Review network in the Austria initial VET sector a national pilot project was started by the Ministry of Education to test national implementation of the European Peer Review procedure within the framework of

QIBB in 2008. *öibf* was responsible for the coordination and management of the project.

The project comprised

- the preparation and conduct of seven Peer Reviews in VET schools and colleges from all over Austria
- the adaptation of the Peer Review tools (forms, checklists etc.) to QIBB
- the training of the Peers
- the establishment of mentoring activities to make use of experienced Austrian Peers and Peer Review Facilitators
- networking between the pilot schools and colleges and
- monitoring and quality assurance of the Peer Reviews.

Peer Training in January 2009

Project activities

- **Internal preparation:** After a kick-off workshop in May 2008, the pilot schools and colleges started the internal preparation of the Peer Reviews. This included decision-making on the quality fields to be reviewed and the distribution of responsibilities for the Peer Review within the institution. The pilot schools also concluded a formal contract with the project coordinator öibf.
- **Recruiting Peers:** In addition, the pilot schools were asked to identify suitable Peers in their own institution as well as in other schools. Potential Peers were then asked to submit Peer Applications.
- **Workshop for Peer Review Facilitators:** All Peer Review Facilitators were prepared for their tasks in a joint one-day workshop in early October 2008.
- **Mentoring:** Seven experienced Peers res. Peer Review Facilitators who had taken part in the two previous European Peer Review projects were selected as Mentors, three of them became active. Their task was primarily to assist the schools in the organisation of the Peer Visit. The mentoring activities were evaluated as a useful element of Peer Review implementation.
- **Peer Trainings**: Peer Trainings were held for the Peer Teams of the pilot schools in November 2008 and January 2009. The Peer Training Programme followed the European Peer Training Curriculum (cf. Gutknecht-Gmeiner 2009a).
- **Peer Visits**: The two-day Peer Visits were carried out successfully between March and April 2009.
- **Project wrap-up**: A final meeting of all VET Providers and Peers will be held at the beginning of October 2009. The meeting will serve to exchange and assess experiences in order to support the further improvement of Peer Review implementation in Austria.

IV.1.5. Outlook

Currently, the Austrian Reference Point for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (ARQA-VET) is taking over from Österreichisches Institut für Berufsbildungsforschung *(öibf)* as the coordinating institution for Peer Reviews.

The overall strategic responsibility for the Peer Review implementation lies with the QIBB steering group. Coordination and quality assurance is carried out by ARQA-VET, while operative support and training will provided by selected pedagogical universities, the institutions responsible for teacher training in Austria.

"Peer Review in QIBB" starts in autumn 2009. A call for 15 Peer Reviews has been announced for 2009/2010.

[1] It should be noted, however, that in Austria's dual system, only schools are part of QIBB while the practical part of the dual system, the training in the enterprises, is governed by traditional regulations implemented mainly by the Economic Chambers: These regulations include (traditional) input quality standards. Additionally, external final exams for apprentices are carried out by the Economic Chambers. Other forms of quality assurance have so far not been adopted systematically across the dual system.

IV.2. Implementation of Peer Review in Catalonia, Spain

Pere Canyadell, Josep Camps, Department of Education, Catalonia, Spain

IV.2.1. Implementation of Peer Review in Catalonia

Cross-audits in the Quality Networks of VET providers
The "Quality and Continuous Improvement Project in VET Colleges" is based on thirteen networks (at the moment) covering 90 initial VET colleges. In the networks a method similar to "Peer Review" is used. The internal audits (based on ISO 9001:2008) are carried out using self-evaluation tools and cross-audits between colleges. In these audits, colleagues, i.e. "peers" from other colleges in the networks visit the audited college and participate in the audit of all the processes. These audits are complemented with external audits (ISO 9001:2008) and external inspections. These external inspections are classic inspections related mainly to the school management and the learning and training processes.

The participation of the colleges is voluntary and development-oriented and at this moment the project is addressed to initial VET colleges (only VET providers of the public system) at regional level. The audits are supported by the quality networks; the ministry provides training of auditors and support for selecting auditors.

Recently, a new model has been established named "e2cat", an excellence based model using 12 transversal quality areas. So far, the model has been piloted in 4 VET colleges with the support of external experts/evaluators/peers.

Piloting of the European Peer Review methodology
The European Peer Review procedure was piloted in a transnational Peer Review at IES Quercus, a Catalan VET provider from one of the quality networks situated in St. Joan de Vilatorrada, in September 2007.

Dissemination of the European Peer Review
The European Peer Review procedure has been disseminated in various conferences on quality in VET: e.g. in a national conference held in November 2007 with 700 participants, the European Peer Review and the experiences of IES Quercus were presented to VET providers of Catalonia (continuous VET, initial VET, and private VET providers), policy makers, inspectorate and other relevant actors. In March 2008 during the first Conference on Good Practices in Quality Assurance in VET, IES Quercus presented the conclusions of the participation in a European Peer Review and in June 2008 the Peer Review methodology was disseminated during the yearly meeting of the Quality Assurance Networks in Catalonia.

IV.2.2. Status quo of implementation of the EQARF/CQAF in Catalonia and future plans

In Catalonia, the EQARF/CQAF has been implemented in the national project named "Projecte de Qualitat I Millora Contínua als centres educatius", launched by the Department of Education. One of its objectives is to support initial VET colleges in the establishment of a quality management system in their organisation. This system includes the quality circle (Plan-Do-Check-Act) and self-evaluation as a tool. It is based in the first step on ISO 9001:2008 but when it has achieved a high level of maturity the colleges use the EFQM model combined with ISO 9001:2008. The VET colleges must build a strategic plan with improvement actions leading to an improvement of academic outcomes. The plan is to extend this framework to the colleges on a voluntary basis.

IV.2.3. Contribution of Peer Review to the further implementation of the EQARF/CQAF in Catalonia

Peer Review can contribute to improving the methodology used for cross-audits in the quality networks. The internal audits are focused mainly on the organisational level but not on the classroom level. Peer Review establishes core quality areas in learning and teaching (including areas with a strong link to the classroom). The Catalan Ministry of Education will implement these quality areas both in the quality management system and in the cross-audits in order to improve the system and to promote mutual learning between providers focusing on "quality in the classroom".

IV.3. Peer Review Implementation in Finland

Leena Koski, Finnish National Board of Education (FNBE)

IV.3.1. Quality assurance and the CQAF/EQARF in Finland

In Finland, the Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF) model has been embedded in the national steering of vocational education and training (VET) which can be divided into three main elements: national steering of VET, quality management of VET providers and external evaluation of VET. There are two types of quality assurance mechanism in Finland:

- normative mechanisms (licensing/accreditation, curricula and qualification requirements, skills demonstrations, matriculation examination, financing, self-evaluation, taking part in external evaluations)
- voluntary mechanisms (quality management, recommendations, quality awards etc.)

International policies and mechanisms relating to quality assurance, such as the CQAF/EQARF, play an increasing role in the development of quality management at both national and providers' level.

Quality Management Recommendations for VET
In Finland, the "Quality Management Recommendations for Vocational Education and Training" (whose origins date back to the late 1990s, early 2000s) are the main instrument to implement the CQAF/EQARF in VET and follow-up on the Copenhagen process. They support and encourage VET providers to pursue excellence when improving the quality of their operations on a voluntary basis. They were drawn up by the Finnish National Board of Education (FNBE) in cooperation with VET providers, representatives of the world of work, and students.

The recommendations can be applied to all VET forms: initial VET, further and continuing training, competence tests and training preparing for competence-based qualifications, as well as curricular or school-based VET, special needs VET and apprenticeship training. In addition, the recommendations can be applied at both VET provider and individual unit level. The structure of the "Quality Management Recommendations for VET" reflects the CQAF. The recommendations are divided into sections on the basis of the characteristics of an excellent organisation: holistic and systemic approach, customer focus, leadership, result orientation, continuous learning, people as resources, effective processes, relevance to the world of work, and social responsibility. Each section presents recommendations relating to different phases of the model: planning, implementation, evaluation and assessment, and feedback and procedures for change. In January 2008, the Ministry of Education verified the recommendations. The implementation of the recommendations will be supported by different kinds of quality tools and methods developed by FNBE in cooperation with VET providers.

Practice of quality assurance in Finland
Finland boasts a long tradition of using the EFQM model and the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) in quality assurance in VET. In 2004 and again in spring 2009, FNBE conducted surveys on quality assurance. In the latest survey, of 158 VET providers invited, 110 responded (69%). The responding VET providers are engaged in systematic quality work (nearly one quarter has experience of more than 10 years, 6–10 years, 3–5 years, and less than 3 years respectively). Over 60% of the respondents of the 2009 survey have used the Excellence model (EFQM), about 50% the Balanced Scorecard and 36% the ISO standard.

IV.3.2. Implementation of Peer Review in Finland

Peer Review included in Quality Management Recommendations for VET
The use of Peer Review at national level – following the procedure developed in the LdV Peer Review projects – has been included in the Quality Management Recommendations for VET. It is to be used on a voluntary basis. Peer Review will not replace existing QA/QD tools used by VET providers but will complement them.

In Finland, the CQAF/EQARF model has been perceived as an overarching common framework for assuring the quality of VET at both the national and VET providers' level. For different phases of the CQAF model, different tools and methods

Table 11: Evaluation and assessment: An example of the recommendation

VET providers make diverse use of various evaluation methods and data in order to develop their operations.

VET providers

- collect and analyse evaluation results and other feedback information
- make use of results obtained in other evaluations, such as the results of national evaluations
- have an external evaluation of their operations carried out at least once every three years
- develop their operations by means of internal audits
- co-operate with other education and training providers e.g. by carrying out benchmarking and peer reviews

Source: Quality Management Recommendation for VET, FNBE

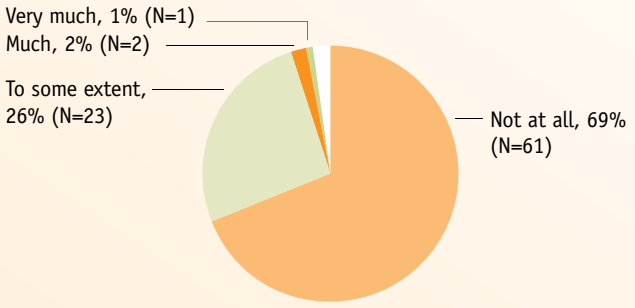
are used. Peer Review as one of these tools has a tight connection especially with the holistic and systemic approach to quality management which includes evaluation, continuous learning, improvement, and innovation. Peer Review is to be used in the evaluation and assessment phase.

VET providers interested in Peer Review

Even though there are many VET providers interested in Peer Review, only a few of them have had actual experience with the procedure so far, according to the FNBE 2009 survey.

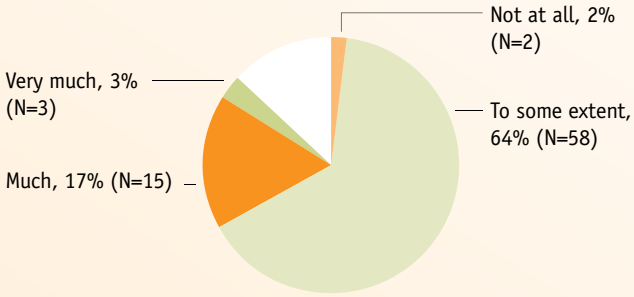
There are, however, many VET providers in Finland who consider using Peer Review as a method of quality development in the future. Only 2% of the VET providers participating in the survey have no plans to use Peer Review at all.

Table 12: How much have you been using the European Peer Review for the improvement of the quality of education?



Source: Survey on Quality Management in Finland, 2009, FNBE

Table 13: How much are you planning to use the European Peer Review for the development of the quality of education in the future?



Source: Survey on Quality Management in Finland, 2009, FNBE

IV.3.3. Activities of the National Quality Assurance Reference Point at the Finnish National Board of Education (FNBE)

FNBE hosts the Finnish National Reference Point on Quality whose task it is to disseminate and promote the CQAF/EQARF model. The Finnish representative of the European Network on Quality ENQA-VET (who is an expert at the FNBE) also has an active role in promoting the use of the CQAF/EQARF model in Finland and in disseminating information on quality assurance activities at the European level to Finland.

Exchanging experiences

The 2008–2009 contract between the Ministry of Education and FNBE includes the national development and support activities to promote the use of Peer Reviews on a national level in Finland and, as a next step, also on the transnational level. In Finland the first challenge is to obtain further experience with the procedure in familiar circumstances. It is expected that VET providers who have had good experiences with Peer Review on a national level will then be more suited and willing to conduct European Peer Reviews also on a transnational level.

To meet these needs FNBE organised a national seminar in October 2007 to exchange experiences and good practices of implementing Peer Reviews and to encourage the use of the European Peer Review instrument in the future. Further similar events have been organised by FNBE throughout 2008.

Adaptation to Finnish VET and pilot Peer Reviews

In 2008 and 2009, a project was carried out in Finland in which the European Peer Review procedure and criteria were tailored to Finnish initial and continuing VET. Furthermore, pilot Peer Reviews were conducted on a national level in initial VET and a structure for the support of Peer Reviews is about to be set up.

Peer Review seems to fit in very well with the quality management of VET providers in Finland; it is a good complement to other quality management methods used in Finland. However, some modification of the transnational quality criteria in the European Quality Areas is needed for the use in initial VET on national level and even more for continuing VET. National criteria will be ready both for IVET and CVET by the end of the year.

Peer Training and extension to continuing VET
The further development of training of Peers and the extension to continuing VET have been pivotal for an implementation of Peer Review in Finland. This is why FNBE has been keen to take part in the European project "Peer Review Extended II".

In spring 2009, two face-to-face Peer Trainings were conducted by FNBE. The trainings consisted of three training days, with an exercise phase in advance and practical exercises between two training periods. Additionally, there has been one day of training for VET providers. In autumn 2009, FNBE will organise a third Peer Training.

One task of the Finnish Reference Point on Quality in VET is to promote networking in Finland, to enhance and support the VET providers in Peer Reviews and to be a contact point also for European Peer Reviews in Finland. The different activities undertaken by FNBE to promote and further develop Peer Review span the European and national level and will be continued in the future.

IV.3.4. Future challenges

Peer Review structure on European level
The establishment of a permanent structure for transnational Peer Reviews is one of the development activities needed to continue with Peer Reviews at the European level in the future. This will ensure that experienced Finnish VET providers will have the possibility to engage in transnational Peer Reviews as a next step towards excellence in a European setting.

Sharing of experience and training for Finnish VET providers
A precondition for the use of the European Peer Review procedure in Finland is that there is more knowledge and experience on national level and that there are opportunities to share and discuss the experiences and expectations of the VET providers. Additionally, more Peer Trainings will have to be provided in the future.

Table 14: Overview of activities to promote Peer Review in VET in 2008 and 2009

PEER REVIEW IN VET IN FINLAND YEARS 2008 and 2009

At European level

ENQA-VET
- The structure for European Peer Reviews 2008–2009

Leonardo projects
- **Peer Review Extended II**
- Peer Review for continuing VET
- Face-to-face training 1.11.2007–1.11.2009
- **Peer Review Impact** 1.10.2009–31.9.2011

The European Peer Review Manual

Quality Area: Student Assessment

guide for national approach

In Finland

- Application of the criteria and indicators for Peer Reviews at the national level
- Quality areas and criteria and indicators based on Finnish education system and the Quality Management Recommendation for VET

- Developing face-to-face training
- Piloting face-to-face training
- Application of the Peer Review procedure
- Adaptation of the Manual for continuing VET

Peer Review as a tool in skill demonstrations for VET
- ESF project
- to pilot the Peer Review procedure and develop criteria for skill demonstrations

Peer Review as a development tool for projects

Source: Leena Koski, FNBE

IV.4. Peer Review Implementation in Italy

Giorgio Allulli, Ismene Tramontano, ISFOL

IV.4.1. Implementation of Peer Review in Italy

In Italy, the European Peer Review methodology has become known among the main national stakeholders at system and VET providers' level.

National activities
VET providers: Consultations have been made with schools and vocational training centres involved with ISFOL in other projects; CIOFS (an important organisation for providing vocational training, which took part in the first Peer Review project) stated their will to apply Peer Review for their centres.

An international conference was held in Rome in December 2007 "Una rete per la Qualità". This conference was attended by the top policy makers at national and regional level. During the conference, the European Peer Review projects were presented and the Peer Review methodology has been identified as a key factor for the QA improvement at national and European level. The European Peer Review Manual has been distributed in the Italian version to 200 hundred selected policy makers, experts, providers, trainers. Also, ISFOL held lots of local seminars in which the Peer Review methodology, results and national perspectives were presented.

As a matter of fact, the dissemination and implementation of the Peer Review methodology has become part of ISFOL objectives and activities, such as the Reference Point for quality[1] has the added value of multiplying the dissemination. Lots of VET providers have asked to be involved in a national network for mutual Peer Reviews.

In 2008, the application of the Peer Review methodology has been included in the LdV project "OCT – Open Coordination for Vocational Training" (LLP-LDV/TOI/08/IT/514), coordinated by the Province of Latina, and the first Peer Review took place in Coria (Spain) on May 13–16, 2009. The objective was to evaluate a pathway addressed to youths aged 16–25, the Escuela Taller, run in cooperation with Patronato de Formacion y Empleo.

Outlook
There are Italian VET providers who are planning to use the European Peer Review methodology as a QA/QD instrument on a voluntary basis. A voluntary approach to the implementation of Peer Review is necessary given the features of the Italian QA system, requesting a national pupils' achievement assessment for vocational schools and the regional accreditation for Vocational Training centres: Peer Review constitutes a complementary tool that cannot replace compulsory tools for quality assurance.

The Peer Review methodology can also become a complement to the self-assessment tool developed by ISFOL which is currently being disseminated at regional level. These two methodologies can be applied on a voluntary base as it happens today, but with the approval of institutions they could also be introduced in the regional programmes for implementing the quality of education and training. At local level it would also be possible to contact local networks or centres to stimulate the use of the Peer Review methodology.

At the national level, ISFOL is starting – with the funding of ESF and in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour, the Regions and the Ministry of Education – the establishment of a network for mutual review among schools (under Ministry of Education governance) and vocational training providers (under the responsibility of Regions). The aim is to foster, through the Peer Review methodology, integration at a double level:

- education and vocational training
- VET providers from north and south, which belong to very different social and economical context.

IV.4.2. Status quo of implementation of the EQARF/CQAF in Italy and future plans

The planning model of VET activity which is adopted by regional governments is based on the same principles described by CQAF; the recent introduction of Accreditation for VET providers allows Regions to select quality providers. Other pilot initiatives are based on the quality statements and on the process defined by the EQARF/CQAF:

Quality Chart
The Quality Chart is a voluntary agreement between VET providers, who commit themselves to respecting some quality criteria (regarding organisation, teaching, processes, and outputs). The major providers' organisations have signed it under ISFOL coordination in November 2003. The quality chart takes into consideration the four dimensions of the EQARF/CQAF.

Guide on Self-Assessment
The guide on self-assessment prepared by the TWG on Quality in VET (the predecessor of ENQA VET) has been translated into Italian and adapted. ISFOL has tested it with VET providers. After this experimental phase it is now available to the VET System.

Analysis of the Quality of Regional Systems
An evaluation model has been designed to check the quality of the regional training system using a complex set of indicators, which follow the EQARF logic. A pilot study has been carried out on three regions: Lombardia, Val D'Aosta and Trentino.

Indicators and Self-evaluation
A coherent set of indicators has been developed in the province of Trento for school self-evaluation. General and vocational schools have to submit their data through an online data-collection-system, and the system calculates and puts out the indicators (context, input, process and outputs) compared with provincial averages. On the basis of these indicators schools must present a self-evaluation report.

IV.4.3. Outlook: How can Peer Review contribute to the further implementation of the EQARF in Italy?

- In connection with self-assessment: Peer Review as a light form of external assessment can be considered as the right and necessary complement to self-assessment.
- Peer Review is a very friendly process as it favours the involvement of the whole organisation and this will contribute to the realisation of the review phase which is one of the most important phases included in the process described in the EQARF but it is still very weak inside the organisations (see results of the Leonardo REVIMP project coordinated by the University of Twente and with ISFOL among partners).

[1] The national point for the European Network for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and training has ministries, social partners, associations of schools and vocational training centres inside its board.

IV.5. Implementation of Peer Review in Adult Education Guidance Centres in Slovenia

Sonja Klemenčič and Tanja Možina, Slovenian Institute for Adult Education

IV.5.1. In search of new methods for evaluating quality

When the colleagues from Finland and Austria invited us to participate in the Peer Review Extended II project, we were extremely pleased: at the Slovenian Institute of Adult Education (SIAE) we were at that time intensively thinking about adequate qualitative methods to evaluate our quality.

We were already offering training for educational institutions encouraging them to use qualitative methods of data analysis, benchmarking and focus groups. These methods turned out to be a very suitable addition to the methods already in use in these institutions, but also apt to be used on their own in organisations wishing to continuously monitor the quality of their processes and the results of their work.

When studying various appropriate methods we found the "Peer Review" methodology. Peer Review was not entirely new in our country, but it certainly wasn't (commonly) used in the processes of the evaluation of quality in education. We thought it would be suitable for those educational organisations which are not beginners at a systematic quality evaluation: institutions who have carried out at least one extensive cycle of self-evaluation and whose working collectives have a clear idea about why quality must be systematically dealt with, what the role of different (outside) interest groups in the process is etc.

When given the chance to join this European project we felt it was an excellent opportunity: it gave us the chance to meet experts who had introduced this method into the processes of quality development in vocational education and training in a number of European countries. Moreover, they had already successfully tested Peer Review in practice. Their experience was, without doubt, a great help.

During our work in this international group we also got to know the European Peer Review Manual which had been created in a previous project. Initially, the manual was prepared for the use in VET. However, as we are currently forming and implementing a holistic approach to quality development in adult education guidance centres (ISIO centres) we decided to add another aspect to the manual: how to use the method not only in VET, but also for adult education guidance
activities. This also created a precedent on how to adjust the method to be used in other activities or services.

IV.5.2. Adult education guidance centres in Slovenia

Guidance has always been an additional activity of adult education and learning. It gained a new role and an incentive for development in the beginning of this century with the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning, especially with its fifth key message that addresses guidance for all, in all age groups. Thus guidance also gained an important role in Slovenia as a core support activity for the processes of lifelong learning of adults whose goal is to acquire new knowledge, skills and competencies that they need in their work, personal and social life.

Since 2001, adults in Slovenia have had a chance to receive free guidance from one of the 14 regional centres within the network for adult education guidance centres. Guidance centres provide adults with:

- free, impartial, confidential, holistic, and high-quality information and guidance for their education and learning
- information and guidance before the enrolment in an education programme, during the process, and at the end of the educational process
- accessibility of information and guidance in different ways: personal guidance, information and guidance by telephone, written guidance – by ordinary and electronic mail, and via information materials; if agreed, group consultation and counselling outside the guidance centre are also possible.

Ever since the establishment of the first guidance centres we have been aware that they will only be effective as long as their response to the needs of individuals and organisations in their area is fast and of high quality.

In order to be able to monitor efficacy and efficiency of guidance centres, indicators for guidance centre activities have been determined on the national level; these are monitored and analysed regularly.

However, the five- or six-year review cycle demands a new development step in systematic monitoring of guidance centre quality. We wish to strengthen the experience we have with the monitoring of activities, complement the goals and monitoring methods with new aspects and thus implement systematic quality evaluation and development in guidance centres for adults. For this reason we have developed a special model based on the three primary objectives of counselling and guidance activities in adult education: 1) providing access to guidance for education and learning to all adults, especially to vulnerable groups, 2) providing quality guidance service for education and learning, and 3) effective measures for better involvement and success of adults in lifelong learning.

IV.5.3. Using Peer Review methodology in Adult Education Guidance Centres in Slovenia

One of the main aims of the project "Peer Review Extended II" for the SIAE was to translate the European Peer Review Manual into the Slovene language and to adopt it for use in adult education guidance centres.

The most important adaptations to the manual were:

The use of Peer Review in adult education guidance centres in Slovenia was defined as a process that can trigger important incentives for quality development in adult education guidance, or in quality of individual guidance centre or even in the entire guidance centre network in Slovenia.

Advantages and benefits of Peer Review are similar for guidance centres and guidance in adult education to those in VET – of course in the former case the assessment is not about the quality of vocational education and training, but about the quality of guidance work. An outside view and professional exchange about the quality of individual processes, solutions and results, can be considered even more valuable for guidance counsellors than for teachers and trainers since – due to the nature of their work environment – the possibilities for exchange are quite limited: in the majority of cases, there is only one guidance counsellors working in an organisation; at most there are two counsellors working together. Such an environment may curtail or even prevent the possibility for the flow of information, discussion, comparison and also evaluation. Using Peer Review thus guarantees the counsellor – among other things – a wider professional field/environment that allows him/her a possibility of quality development.

The guidance centre network has similar stakeholder groups like VET; however, some are specific for the guidance sector: potential users of guidance services; guidance clients, former guidance clients; guidance counsellors; guidance centre managers; other employees in institutions where guidance centres are located; members of strategic councils of guidance centres; members of boards of experts of guidance centres; social partners, especially unions; educational institutions from the surrounding areas; development institutions from the surrounding areas; educational/school authorities.

In our opinion the guidance centres will have no trouble in finding partners to carry out Peer Review since the network is consolidated. There are several possibilities: mutual Peer Reviews could be undertaken in the entire guidance centre network, between guidance centres from neighbouring regions, between guidance centre with a roughly similar structure and profile of clients, between guidance centres with the approximately same number of inhabitants in the region, between guidance centres that are introducing a new approach into the guidance work etc. At least in the pilot phase it makes sense that the SIAE assumes the role of a coordinator, because one of its primary missions is to introduce development innovations into the guidance network. The institute's role can be primarily educational, guiding and organisational.

The decision about the Quality Areas to be evaluated is one of the most important decisions for the guidance centre before the Peer Review. Although a number of common Quality Areas can be recognised between VET and guidance activities, the Quality Areas and indicators in guidance work are significantly different from the ones in VET. When deciding for a Peer Review in guidance we will mostly emphasise areas that are relevant for guidance. On the European level, common basic areas and quality indicators for guidance activities have not yet been defined; we do, however, know of such definitions in individual countries (for example England). In 2008, quality areas, indicators and quality criteria in adult education

guidance centres were developed in Slovenia. Ten quality areas were defined: potential clients of guidance (target groups), staff, resources, equipment, databases, guidance process, partnership, information and promotion, quality assessment and quality development, results, effects, management, administration, organisation. They are the starting point for guidance centres when deciding which quality area to assess within a Peer Review.

When choosing the Peers for the review of quality in guidance services one should chose primarily among the experts who have knowledge and experience in guidance work. Thus this task could be carried out by counsellors from one guidance centre for another guidance centre or for the entire network of guidance centres. Of course, the Peer Review can include experts – counsellors from similar fields (for example psychologists, social workers) or experts from other fields if this is required by the issues to be reviewed. The required competences and skills for the colleagues to participate as Peers in the field of guidance are: training in adult education guidance, training in quality evaluation and development (in adult education and guidance in adult education), and training in the areas that are the subject of the review.

IV.5.4. Planned implementation activities of the Peer Review methodology in the future

A major first major step of dissemination is the training of counsellors from the Slovenian adult education guidance centres in using Peer Review. Dissemination and transfer activities also comprise the pilot implementation of the methodology in guidance centres and the monitoring of the implementation. In 2009, the SIAE starts to implement the framework for quality assurance and quality development in the whole network of guidance centres; one of the methods that will be implemented in the guidance centres within the quality framework will be Peer Review. The following steps are planned in the process of the implementation of Peer Review:

- The guidance centres will prepare a SWOT analysis of their activities by using the analytical data that is already available.
- At the same time, the training of counsellors from guidance on the Peer Review methodology will be carried out.
- Reciprocal pilot Peer Reviews between the guidance centres will be arranged.
- The next step will be the implementation of Peer Review. The results will be included in the self-evaluation reports of guidance centres.
- At the end of the pilot implementation, a meta-evaluation of the whole process and its results will be carried out.
- On the basis of the self-evaluation reports (which will not only make use of the results gathered in the Peer Review, but will be prepared also on the basis of other ongoing assessment processes) the guidance centres will carry out discussions with partners from their local environments.
- On this basis, the action plans for the quality development of the guidance centres and for the whole network of guidance centres will be prepared.

We are aware that the implementation of Peer Review for the processes of educational quality development will not be easy and it will probably not be possible in all areas; introducing Peer Review is not a simple task, especially not in a culture where it is not a common practice to lay out in the open methods of work and their results and expose them to the professional assessment of Peers.

Nevertheless, we hope that teachers, counsellors in adult education, other experts and the managers of educational organisations will accept the challenge of using the Peer Review methodology, test it in practice and take the opportunity to learn from each other, which is what Peer Review particularly encourages.

IV.6. Designing the future of transnational European Peer Review

Maria Gutknecht-Gmeiner, *öibf*

IV.6.1. Introduction

Peer Review as a new external evaluation methodology for VET has from the start been designed for future use on the European level. As has been pointed out (see chapter V.3), the European Peer Review projects directly contributed to European policy goals. As early as 2006, European Peer Review was already mentioned in the first work programme of ENQA-VET, the European Network for Quality Assurance for VET (ENQA-VET work programme 2006–2007, p. 8).

Agreement on a common standard for Peer Review by a substantial number of European member states and positive experiences with transnational Peer Reviews – with one Peer coming from another country – were major pre-requisites for the implementation of Peer Review across Europe. By 2008, these requirements had been met. Because of its potential contribution to policy development and quality improvement in European VET (see chapter V.3) Peer Review was included in the 2008–2009 work programme of ENQA-VET.

IV.6.2. Thematic Group on Peer Review (2008–2009)

In order to make further use of the groundwork laid by the three LdV projects and to exploit the synergies with current European VET policies, continued European cooperation on Peer Review in VET is essential. A Thematic Group was set up within ENQA-VET which between May 2008 and September 2009 dealt with the future of transnational Peer Reviews on the European level. In particular, the group's mandate was to develop a sustainable process and structure for European Peer Reviews.

All in all, twelve European countries were represented in the Thematic Group on Peer Review: Austria, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Additionally, the European Training Foundation (ETF) which has substantial experience with Peer Reviews on a system level participated very actively.

Thematic Group on Peer Review (2008–2009)

- Mandate: development of a sustainable process and structure for Peer Reviews
- Aim: contribution to ENQA-VET's aim to "build sustainable European cooperation and exchange of good practise with regard to Quality Assurance in VET, within and among member countries, between VET and higher education, and between VET organisations and other key stakeholders"
- Basis and background: builds on the work of the LdV projects "Peer Review in initial VET", "Peer Review Extended" and "Peer Review Extended II"

The Thematic Group met semi-annually over a period of roughly 17 months (May 2008 to September 2009). A work programme developed at the first meeting in June 2008 had to be revised several times to take the changing policy context into account. Between meetings, participants worked on agreed topics in sub-groups. In 2008, the following four issues were tackled:

- European Peer Register
- Peer Training
- coordinating body and structure for European Peer Review
- integrating countries with no Peer Review experience.

Coming to terms on these issues was an important pre-condition for work on the group's common proposal.

ENQA-VET Thematic Group on Peer Review: working session

In 2009, the sub-groups were restructured to work a) on the structure and the common principles for European Peer Reviews and b) on the support for European Peer Review necessary in a European implementation project. The contributions of these work groups were the basis of the "Proposal for a sustainable process and structure for transnational European Peer Reviews" (ENQA-VET Thematic Group Peer Review 2009), the group's major product which was revised several times and has now been approved in a final version by the group and ENQA-VET.

Apart from the development of policy-relevant, practical products like the "Proposal" and an additional paper on Peer Review addressed to the Quality Assurance National Reference Points (QANRPs) (Gutknecht-Gmeiner 2009c), the Thematic Group's outcomes included

- a substantial progress in sharing of experience and development of a common understanding of Peer Review
- structured feedback and documented exchange on national developments
- the integration of other ENQA-VET member states
- a forecast of European Peer Reviews 2010–2013
- a dissemination plan for 2009 in accordance with ENQA-VET activities.

IV.6.3. European policy developments

In the past two years important moves towards a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework have been made. On May 11, 2009, the EQARF Recommendation was agreed and signed by the Council of Ministers; on June 18, 2009, the Recommendation was co-signed by the European Parliament.

Throughout the past months, the EQARF Recommendation with its two annexes has guided the elaboration of the Thematic Group's proposal on transnational Peer Reviews. While the main principles – a systematic and systemic approach to quality based on the quality cycle – have remained unchanged, there are also some inherent new developments which had to be taken into account.

During the EQARF launching conference on May 20, 2009, proposals for the management of the implementation of the EQARF were presented. The work of ENQA-VET will continue in an EQARF network and will be supported by the national reference points (QANRPs). Those member states which have not established reference points yet, were asked to nominate QANRPs. A forum for QANRPs at the European level will be established. The QANRPs will most likely play an important role in the promotion of European Peer Reviews, too. The European Commission oversees the implementation of the European recommendations and will play a more overt steering role in the future. A secretariat will support the 2010–2013 implementation period of the EQARF.

IV.6.4. Demand for a continuation of transnational European Peer Reviews

The highly satisfactory results of the Peer Review pilot projects have led to a call for the continuation of transnational Peer Reviews at the European Level – i.e. of Peer Reviews in which at least one Peer from another country participates – both by VET providers and policy makers from ENQA-VET member states.

In a survey of ENQA-VET member states (Jan.–Feb. 2009), so far 18 member states have voiced their interest in participating in further Peer Review activities on the European level, 14 of which have also given a first forecast of the number of transnational European Peer Reviews between 2010 and 2013, which add up to almost 250 Peer Reviews within this four-year-period.

Table 15: Forecast for transnational European Peer Reviews 2010–2013

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
No. of Peer Reviews	43	56	70	78	247

Source: Gutknecht-Gmeiner 2009c (figures as of March 20, 2009)

Member states who have no concrete plans to conduct European Peer Reviews state that they want to be included in the activities with a view to full participation in the future.

Thirteen member states plan to use the QANRPs as liaison and coordinating institution for European Peer Reviews on the national level. The remaining states have either not established a QANRP yet or have so far denoted another institution as responsible institution for coordinating European Peer Reviews.

Interested member states at this moment are: Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Italy, Hungary, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

It is this demand which underlies the "Proposal for a sustainable process and structure for transnational European Peer Review".

IV.6.5. Proposal for a process and structure for transnational European Peer Reviews

The proposal has two main aims: firstly, it highlights the policy-relevance of European Peer Reviews as well as the practical feasibility and impact on VET quality improvement. In a second part it shows important principles and elements for an institutional Peer Review architecture on the European level and outlines the different tasks and functions in the implementation of transnational European Peer Reviews. The latter include information and dissemination, support for VET providers and Peers (including e.g. Peer Training), quality assurance and learning, and funding. Funding is based on a shared-cost principle between VET providers, national/regional/local/sectoral authorities and European funds; use of the Lifelong Learning Programme is recommended.

Brainstorming on the structure for European Peer Reviews

Given the current policy developments, a choice of three flexible scenarios has been created instead of stipulating one preset project implementation plan. For all three scenarios, the roles of different actors and stakeholders, in particular the QANRPs, have been sketched.

IV.6.6. Scenarios for transnational Peer Reviews

Scenario 1

Scenario 1 is a "grass-roots model" in which no coordination and support for Peer Reviews is provided at the European level. Countries implementing Peer Review may consider some kind of bilateral or even multilateral cooperation in order to promote transnational Peer Reviews, yet these activities are not linked to a broader European strategy and/or network. In countries in which Peer Review is not supported by authorities transnational Peer Reviews will be individual, happenstance and often one-off activities of VET providers with no overall mechanisms for monitoring, exchange and learning between the individual institutions since information flows are not coordinated. No quality assurance of Peer Review is provided.

In this scenario, the QANRPs might take up coordination and support functions at the national level and give individual support for transnational activities – possibly also through bilateral/multilateral agreements with similar bodies from other countries.

Scenario 2
Scenario 2 is a "decentralised coordination model" in which a coordinating body on the European level provides a basic framework for transnational European Peer Reviews in that it coordinates the national lead bodies, gives technical support, and ensures that common procedures (including quality criteria for Peer Reviews) are followed in all participating countries. The main responsibility for dissemination, operative support and monitoring, however, lies with the national bodies. Participation of VET providers from countries with no national coordination body is not foreseen.

In this scenario, the QANRPs may play a decisive role as national lead bodies.

Scenario 3
Scenario 3 is a "transnational cooperative model" in which the coordinating body at European level would play a more comprehensive role. While operative tasks and responsibilities by and large remain with the national bodies – who clearly are closer to the VET providers and can provide support on-site much easier – there are also offers at the European level, as for instance European Peer Training or workshops for VET providers. A wider range of support activities (e.g. training, workshops, networking events etc.) on the European level highlights the European dimension for all actors involved, especially for the primary target group – VET providers and Peers. If the coordinating body is also involved in recruiting, an additional avenue for participation is opened for VET providers and Peers from countries with no national bodies responsible for Peer Review.

In this scenario, the QANRPs may again play a decisive role as national lead bodies but can also rely on operative support and expertise from the European coordinating body.

It is this "transnational cooperative model" which is recommended by the Thematic Group on Peer Review.

IV.6.7. Outlook

If there is a political agreement on the European level to continue with transnational European Peer Reviews, the following next steps have been identified:

First, a decision on the choice of scenarios must be taken. Then a European project plan for the implementation of the chosen scenario including timelines, allocation of responsibilities and tasks, and funding has to be elaborated. At the same time, a feasibility study which also takes into account existing experiences in national implementation of Peer Review could be undertaken to buttress the project plan.

As an ongoing activity, which should start in due time before the first transnational Peer Reviews are scheduled, a comprehensive European dissemination should support the spreading of information and the recruitment of VET providers.

Because of the policy developments at the European level and the decision-making involved, the follow-up on the "Proposal for a structure and process for transnational European Peer Reviews" is expected to take at least half a year. Thus the implementation of Peer Review at European level is likely to start in mid-2010 at the earliest. In the meantime, continued promotion and piloting of Peer Reviews on the national level will encourage and strengthen future transnational developments.

If implemented properly, European Peer Review as a practical, tangible and concrete tool to implement the EQARF recommendation has the potential to become one of the main pillars of European VET quality policy in the next five to ten years encompassing all relevant actors – VET providers, social partners and other stakeholders as well as the VET systems of the participating member states.

V. Appendix

V.1. Literature and (re)sources

Peer Review website: www.peer-review-education.net

European Peer Review Manual

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ENQA-VET Thematic Group on Peer Review

- ENQA-VET Thematic Group Peer Review (2009): *Proposal for a structure and process for transnational European Peer Reviews.* Maria Gutknecht-Gmeiner (ed.) Contributors: Leena Koski (Chair), Dana Stroie, Willem de Ridder (Workgroup moderators); Michaela Jonach (Austria), Gabriela Nimac (Austria), Thomas Reinholz (Germany), Stanislav Michek (Czech Republic), Katalin Molnar Stadler (Hungary), Maria Vittoria Marini Bettolo (Italy), Unni Teien (Norway), Shawn Mendes (Sweden), Asta Modig (Sweden), Chris Lambert (UK), Linda Wilson (UK), Margareta Nikolovska (ETF).

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Other relevant websites

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- FNBE – Finnish National Board of Education www.oph.fi
- QIBB – QualitätsInitiative Berufsbildung www.qibb.at
- Quality Improvement Agency www.qia.org.uk
- REVIMP – From Review to Improvement www.revimp.org

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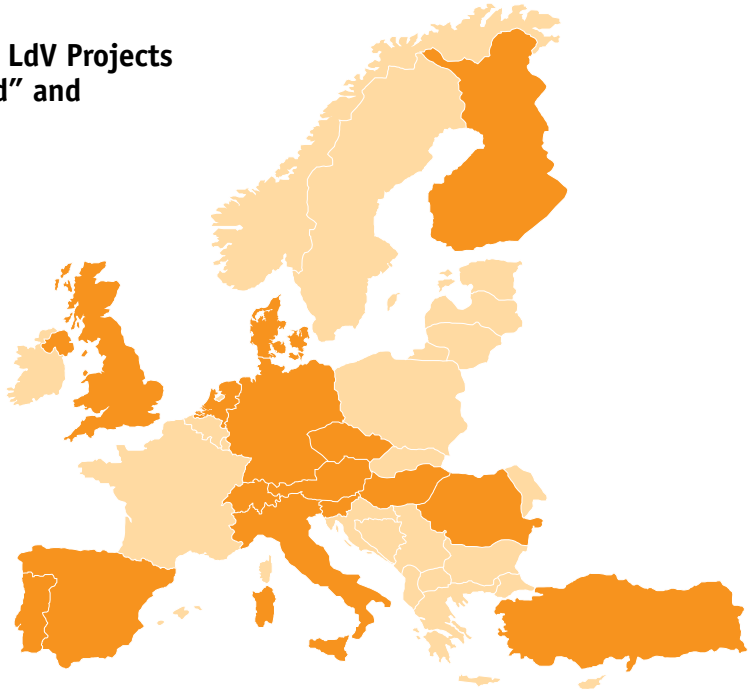
V.3. European Peer Review Network: Partners of the LdV Projects "Peer Review in initial VET", "Peer Review Extended" and "Peer Review Extended II"



Austria
Österreichisches Institut für Berufsbildungsforschung (öibf) (Project Management/DP/CP)
Austrian Institute for Research on Vocational Training
www.oeibf.at
Institut für Höhere Studien (IHS) (DP)
Institute for Advanced Studies, Employment-Qualification-Innovation (EQUI)
www.equi.at
Hertha Firnberg Schulen für Wirtschaft und Tourismus (OP)
Hertha Firnberg Schools for Business and Tourism
www.hertha-firnbergschulen.at
Höhere Technische Lehr- und Versuchsanstalt für Textilindustrie und Datenverarbeitung Spengergasse (OP)
Higher Technical Federal College and Research Institute for Textile Industry and IT
www.spengergasse.at
TGM Höhere Bundeslehr- und Versuchsanstalt Wien 20 (OP)
Institute of Technology Vienna
www.tgm.ac.at
Bundeshandelsakademie und Bundeshandelsschule Wien 12 (OP)
International Business College (ibc-:) Hetzendorf
www.ibc.ac.at
Berufsschule für Verwaltungsberufe Wien 5 (OP)
Vocational School for Business Administration
www.bs-wien.at
Höhere Bundeslehranstalt für Mode und Bekleidungstechnik sowie für künstlerische Gestaltung Herbststraße (OP)
College of Fashion and Dressmaking, College of Arts and Crafts
www.herbststrasse.at

Czech Republic
Národní ústav odborného vzdeláváni (NUOV) (CP/DP)
National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education
www.nuov.cz

Denmark
Syddansk Erhvervsskole Odense-Vejle(CP/OP)
SDE College
www.sde.dk
Kold college (OP/DP)
www.koldcollege.dk
Erhvervsskolen Nordsjælland (OP/DP)
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Finland
Opetushallitus (OPH) (CP/DP)
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Helsinki Culinary School
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Jyväskylä Catering Institute
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Etelä-Karjalan ammattiopisto (OP)
South Carelia Vocational College
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Germany
Univation – Institut für Evaluation Dr. Beywl & Associates GmbH (EP)
Institute for Evaluation Dr. Beywl and Associates GmbH
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Berufliche Schulen Odenwaldkreis (BSO) (OP)
Vocational Schools Odenwaldkreis
www.bso-michelstadt.de

Hungary
Pécsi Tudományegyetem Felnőttképzési és Emberi Erőforrás Fejlesztési Kar (CP)
University of Pécs, Faculty of Adult Education and Human Resource Development
www.pte.hu
M & S Consulting Tanácsadó, Szolgáltató és Kereskedó Kft. (CP)
M & S Consultancy, Service and Trading Ltd.
Hansági Ferenc Vendéglátóipari és Idegenforgalmi Szakiskola és Szakközépiskola (OP)
Ferenc Hansági Technical and Professional School for Catering and Tourism
www.hansagi.sulinet.hu

Italy
Istituto per lo Sviluppo della Formazione Professionale dei Lavoratori (ISFOL) (CP)
Institute for the Development of Vocational Training for Workers
www.isfol.it
Federazione Nazionale Centro Nazionale Opere Salesiane – Formazione Aggiornamento Professionale (CNOS-FAP) (OP)
CNOS-FAP National Federation
www.cnos-fap.it
Istituto Professionale per l´Industria e l´Artigianato (I.P.S.I.A) Monza (OP)
www.ipsiamonza.it
Istituto di Istruzione Superiore "don Milani-Depero" (OP)
Vocational Institute of Administration, Tourism and Leisure, Social Services and Arts
www.mide.it
Centro Italiano Opere Femminili Salesiane – Formazione Professionale (CIOFS-FP) Puglia (OP)
www.ciofsfppuglia.it

Netherlands
ROC Aventus (CP/OP)
Regional Training Centre Aventus
www.aventus.nl

Portugal
Instituto de Soldadura e Qualidade (ISQ) (CP)
Welding and Quality Institute
www.isq.pt
Centro de Formação Profissional para o Comércio e Afins (CECOA) (OP/DP/CP)
Vocational Training Centre for the Trade
www.cecoa.pt

Romania
Institutul de Ştiinţe ale Educaţiei (ISE) (CP)
Institute for Educational Sciences
www.ise.ro
Colegiul Tehnic de Posta si Telecomunicatii "Gh.Airinei" (OP)
"Gh.Airinei" Technical College of Post and Telecommunication
www.ptcbuc.8k.com
Universitatea Politehnica Bucuresti
Polytechnic University of Bucharest (PUB)
www.pub.ro

Slovenia
Andragoški center Slovenije (ACS) (CP/DP)
Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (SIAE)
www.acs.si

Spain
Direcció General d'Ensenyaments Professionals, Artístics i Especialitzats, Departament d'Educació, Generalitat de Catalunya (CP/DP)
Ministry of Education (Catalan Government), General Direction of VET and Lifelong learning
www.xtec.es/fp/
IES Quercus (OP)
Secondary School Quercus
www.iesquercus.com

Switzerland
Erziehungsdirektion des Kantons Bern, Zentralstelle für Lehrerinnen- und Lehrerfortbildung, IPS "Intensivprojekt Schule"
Educational Directorate Bern
www.erz.be.ch

Turkey
Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart Universitesi (COMU) & Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı (CP/DP)
Çanakkale Onsekiz Mar University & Ministry of Education
www.comu.edu.tr, www.meb.gov.tr

United Kingdom (Scotland)
Aberdeen College (OP/CP/CP)
www.abcol.ac.uk

CP – Coordinating Partner
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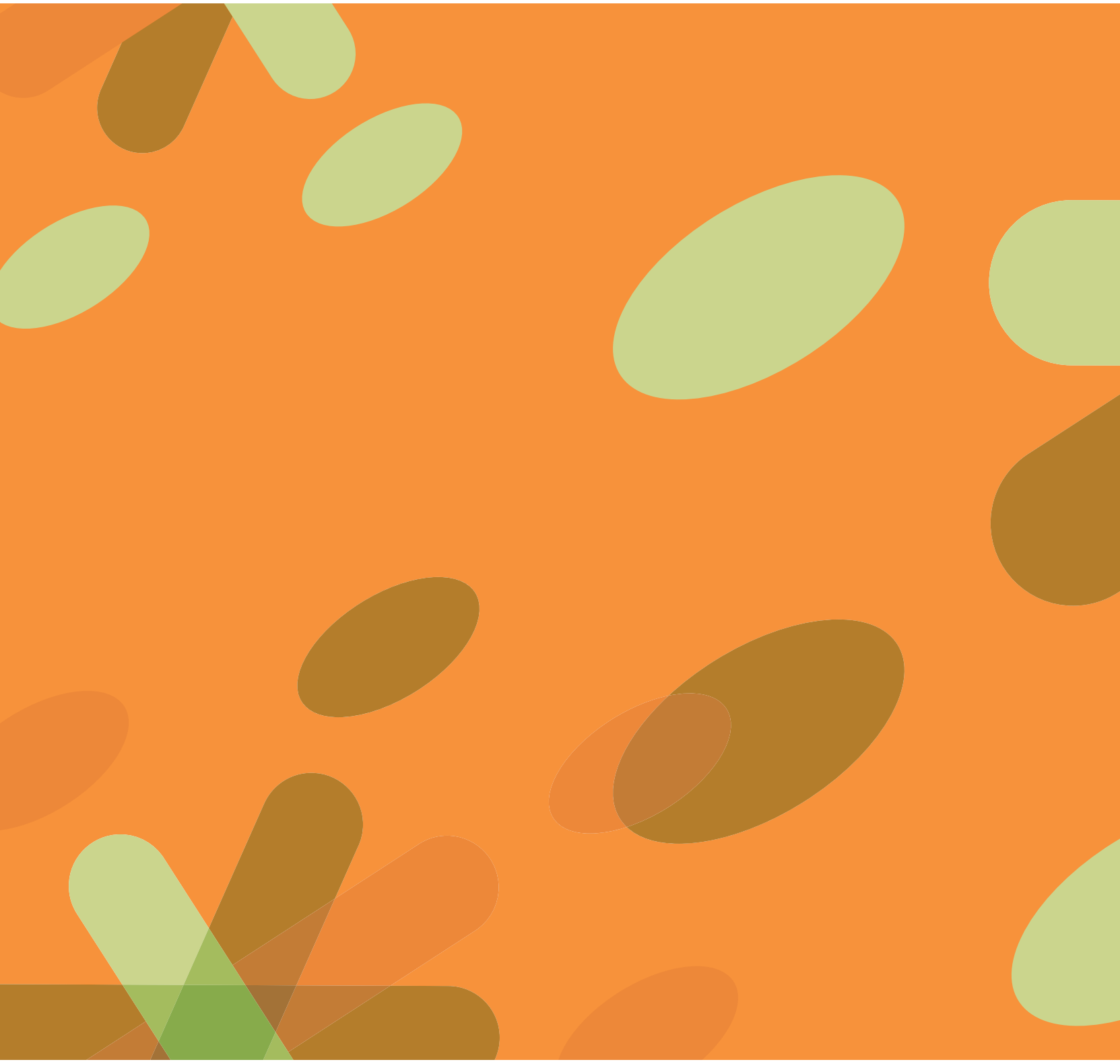

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