

Opportunities from ECVET for Companies

EASYMetal

EASYMetal – European Credit System for Basic Vocational Qualifications in Metal Industry



ECVET – European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training

European Reform Initiatives for Vocational Training

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Introduction

General and vocational training are indispensable for the development of the knowledge-based society in Germany and Europe. Thus, in a rapidly changing world lifelong learning must be given highest priority, since it is the key to employment, economic success and a comprehensive social participation.

To support lifelong learning and assign a high value to knowledge throughout Europe, the transparency and comparability of certificates and educational qualifications must be improved, as must be the methods of mutual recognition.

The European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) is an instrument for making acquired vocational competences transparent to facilitate recognition, to improve permeability within the vocational training systems in Germany and in Europe and to support vocational mobility.

With this brochure we would like to offer information to companies about ECVET and about how they can use it for their benefit. Our starting point are the experiences of EASYMetal. The Leonardo da Vinci project aims at partners at home and abroad co-ordinating procedures and instruments to improve the permeability of a specific transition step, or so-called interface, within the vocational training system.

Lifelong learning

Comparable performances

ECVET and EASYMetal

Beneficiaries

Companies are faced with enormous challenges when it comes to hiring new employees. Recruiting staff means to be able to assess the achievement potentials of the applicants. This applies particularly to skilled workers from abroad. ECVET is a European instrument for this purpose, which can be used beyond national boundaries.

The brochure offers information to companies about:

- the aims of ECVET,
- the value added to companies by the instruments,
- the practical use of the project results of EASYMetal,
- the possibilities of applying the instruments of transparency and
- important contact persons and links.

This brochure addresses companies intending to recruit skilled employees from abroad.




ECVET – European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training

ECVET

On June 18th, 2009, the European Parliament and the Council passed a recommendation to install a credit system for vocational education and training. The “European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)” offers a framework throughout Europe to provide transparency, comparability and mutual recognition of vocational competences and qualifications at different levels. ECVET is intended to be implemented at national level first, in order to make it work transnationally in a next step. ECVET is based on*:

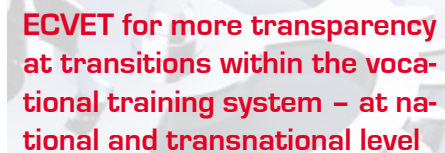
- **Learning outcomes** defined and described as knowledge, skills and competences.
- **Units** of learning outcome comprising qualifications or degrees. The units can be evaluated, validated and recognised.
- **ECVET points** providing further information – by means of numeric representation – about the different weighting of the units in the entire training (qualification).
- **Credit points** given to the trainees for their evaluated and confirmed learning outcomes. The learning outcomes, for which the credit points are assigned, can be recognised and accumulated until a qualification can be acquired in accordance with the relevant norms and regulations of the participating countries.
- Mutual trust and partnership among the participating institutions by means of **partnership agreements** and **training contracts**.



* You will find further information here:
www.ecvet-projects.eu

There is ample room to shape the procedures more concretely. The common aim is to improve the transparency at transitions within the vocational training system – be it at national or transnational level. This requires an agreement about common procedures and instruments for improving the readability of vocational competences at interfaces and the recognition of acquired competences. At the core of this is the description of the learning outcomes.

What kind of role ECVET will play in the German vocational training system is as yet unclear. The implementation and realisation of the ECVET recommendation is voluntary and must be in accordance with the existing national laws and regulations. In 2014 the European Parliament and the Council will review and evaluate the first phase of implementation of ECVET, and, if necessary, adapt the recommendation.



ECVET for more transparency at transitions within the vocational training system – at national and transnational level

EASYMetal

The project **EASYMetal** (Europäisches Anrechnungssystem für Teilqualifikationen in Metallberufen – *European Credit System for Basic Qualifications in Metal Industry*) tested the ECVET procedures at a specific interface within the vocational training system and thus brought life into it. Companies, even in other fields of vocational training, will be able to benefit from these experiences.

The project EASYMetal in a nutshell:

- **Issue:** To test ECVET at the interface between pre-vocational training and dual training in metal industry.
- **Funding:** The European Commission, Programme for Lifelong Learning – Leonardo da Vinci, and the Hessian Ministry of Economy, Transport, Urban and Regional Development (HMWVL).
- **Duration:** March 2011 to August 2013.
- **Partners:** Seven institutions from Austria, Denmark, Germany and Turkey.
- **Co-ordination:** INBAS GmbH Offenbach, Germany.
- **Further information:** At the end of the brochure you will find further information about the project EASYMetal under “Information and Instruments“.

The procedures and instruments developed in EASYMetal aim at making transparent the competences adolescents have acquired during pre-vocational training and illustrating possibilities of recognition so that companies are able to assess the adolescents' competences. Incentives are given to improve the permeability between pre-vocational training and dual training. Thus, adolescents in this transitional phase are offered subsequent perspectives, and lifelong learning will be enforced.

With these procedures EASYMetal wants to:

- upgrade the performances during pre-vocational training and
- strengthen the trust of companies in the learning achievements of young trainees.

Beneficiaries are companies, adolescents and educational institutions:

- **Companies:** They are given instruments which improve the recognition of already acquired competences.
- **Adolescents:** They show what they are capable of and are provided with an informative evaluation.
- **Educational institutes (educational providers, vocational schools and companies) offering pre-vocational training:** They are able to define their training efforts by means of clear aims, performance assessments and documentations.

Aims of EASYMetal

Benefits and Beneficiaries

Procedures

The project developed recommendations based on selected occupations in the metal industry:

- EASYMetal created common units of learning outcome covering the first year of training for seven different occupations in the metal industry. The units of learning outcome are based on framework training plans and framework curricula and they describe complete work tasks. They refer to work situations.
- After having finished the first unit of learning outcome, the adolescents undergo an assessment to demonstrate their competences. The assessment is based on standards of quality assurance.
- Documentation and certificates help the companies see what an adolescent is capable of and how the assessment has been conducted. In this way they are able to recognise contents for the subsequent training.

Selected occupations in the project EASYMetal:

Industrial occupations,
3½ years of training:

- Plant mechanic
- Industrial mechanic
- Construction mechanic
- Tools mechanic
- Milling machine operator

Skilled trade occupations,
3½ years of training:

- Metal worker

Industrial occupations,
2 years of training:

- Machine/plant operator

Added Value for Companies

What do companies think about the additional benefits of ECVET and the results and experiences of the project EASYMetal? We asked company representatives individually and in groups for their assessment.

Question to companies: **“What is your assessment of the results and experiences of EASYMetal in your company?”**

- **Description of learning outcomes as instrument for transparency**

Companies benefit from transparency

The learning outcome approach of the ECVET recommendation offers companies a clearer view about what applicants are already able to accomplish. Projects such as EASYMetal describe competences based on work situations that can be linked to real tasks in the company. Work situations are similar in all countries. Units of learning outcome in terms of work situations therefore make mastered work contexts and the level of acquired capabilities more transparent.

Statement from companies: **“More transparency for application procedures certainly serves our best interests.”**

Transparency

Consistency

- **Units of learning outcome as structuring element**
Companies consider the units as a helpful subdivision

A coherent concept to develop units of learning outcome can encourage companies – regardless of the vocational field – to develop their own units. These units of learning outcome may work as structuring elements at various interfaces and thus improve the permeability within the vocational training system. Once developed units offer the possibility to structure the transition to training, the actual training or second-chance qualification.

Statement from companies: **“Of course it would be nice to have a coherent system from the dual training on up to a university master’s degree“.**

Comparability

- **Units of learning outcome as instrument of comparability**
Companies need support in making comparisons beyond national borders

Work tasks are comparable at transnational level. The units of learning outcome are based on complete work tasks and work situations. Thus, they are understandable beyond national boundaries. Units of learning outcome facilitate the comparability of vocational training and basic qualifications across national borders.

Statement from companies: **“Well, I’d say, for a career entry, such comparability is good.“**

- **Units of learning outcome for the internationalisation of vocational training**
Companies benefit from units of learning outcome they can use across national borders

For companies operating at international level it is important that trainees at different locations worldwide have the same technical level at the end of their training. Thus, structuring the training by coherent units of learning outcome and their application at different training locations can be a suitable way to achieve this aim.

Statement from companies: **“This could be regarded as quite an important tool if it serves to make vocational training comparable within the EU.“**

Transnational implementation

Second-chance qualification

- **Units of learning outcome for new employees**

Companies consider units of learning outcome as instrument for second-chance qualification

Companies need well-trained, skilled employees. Many of them conduct further qualification measures for staff members who do not have a complete training yet. In this context, units of learning outcome can be used for targeted second-chance qualification measures in companies.

Statement from companies: **“This also applies to older employees. if you have a reasonable approach, there is still so much potential in your own company.”**

Transcripts of records

- **Performance assessment to certify vocational competences**

Companies need transcripts of records for assessing applicants

When companies receive applications from abroad, they require confirmation about the applicants' actual capabilities to master the described skills. According to the ECVET recommendation, each unit of learning outcome ends with a performance assessment which is documented in a record. Thus, apart from the official qualification level, the companies are provided with further information about the vocational proficiency of the applicants.

Statement from companies: **“Well, what I like is that you can also compare it objectively. This is good.”**

- **Credible documents**

Companies need reliable partners

Companies want to be sure that documents and transcripts of records were issued by trustworthy and reliable institutions. The ECVET recommendation of involving the relevant organisations in the procedure (e.g. proficiency assessment, validation and recognition of learning outcomes) improves the validity and credibility of documents, certificates and records. However, more bureaucracy is not wanted. “European Chambers”, well-known partner companies or renowned educational institutes are considered to be trustworthy and reliable when it comes to assessing transcripts of records below the official qualification level. Such transcripts of records therefore help the companies to recognise competences.

Statement from companies: **“If it is certified by the German Chamber of Industry and Commerce or a union or something like that, I would certainly give more credit to it.”**

Credibility

Additional information

- **ECVET points**

Companies can benefit from the additional information

Companies do not actually need ECVET points to assess the performance of applicants. However, the points are welcome as additional information. They offer information to the companies about the importance of a unit of learning outcome in comparison to another unit and about its importance within the vocational training as a whole. Using the points for recognition of competences requires a credit point system which, however, not all countries have or wish to introduce.

Statement from companies: “Yes, absolutely, I think assessment is part of it; objective assessment is absolutely o.k.”

Transnational mobility

- **Recruiting**

Companies benefit from comparability of documents, certificates and records

The aim of the above mentioned recommendation is the implementation of ECVET in the EU member countries. Transnationally readable units of learning outcome make it easier for companies to recruit employees on the European labour market due to an improved comparability of their competences made transparent in documents, certificates and records. The use of units of learning outcome facilitates the transnational mobility of employees.

Statement from companies: “Well, we will soon have to abandon some of our narrow-minded views anyway, and improve our mobility in all areas.”

The conclusion drawn from questioning the companies can be summarised as follows: What the companies really appreciate about ECVET and the instruments of EASYMetal are the transparency, comparability, transnational readability, credibility and the possibilities for second-chance qualifications they offer.



Information and Instruments

Project website EASYMetal

The project website of EASYMetal provides the materials, which were produced according to the ECVET specifications. Interested companies and educational institutes can download, for instance, the “Konzeption zur Entwicklung von Lernergebniseinheiten“ (*Conception on the Development of Units of Learning Outcome*) or the four “Lernergebniseinheiten“ (*Units of Learning Outcome*) that cover the first year of training for seven occupations in the metal industry. The project team will publish further material on this website by the end of the project.

www.easymetal.inbas.com

Website of the European Commission

More information about ECVET is available on the website of the European Commission.

www.ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/ecvet_en.htm

Website of the National Co-ordination Office ECVET (NKS-ECVET)

The National Co-ordination Office ECVET in the National Agency Education for Europe at the Federal Institute of Vocational Training (NA at BIBB) is a service on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). It provides information, counselling and support to those involved in education for using ECVET in the context of transnational mobility in Germany.

www.ecvet-info.de

European Database ADAM

ADAM presents projects which were co-financed by the support programme LEONARDO DA VINCI in the area of vocational training and further education. Some of them deal with and test ECVET.

www.adam-europe.eu/adam/thematicgroup/ECVET

Website of the National Agency Education for Europe

The Federal Institute for Vocational Education (BIBB) offers this website with information on action programmes and initiatives of the European Commission in the field of vocational and general education.

www.na-bibb.de

Website of the Pilot Initiative DECVET

This website presents the results of the project initiative “DECVET – Development of a Credit System for Vocational Education and Training”, which is co-financed by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF).

www.decvet.net

EASYMetal Project Partners

EASYMetal is conducted by European and German partners:

BIBB – Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung
Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training
(Germany), www.bibb.de

BWHW – Bildungswerk der Hessischen Wirtschaft e.V.
Educational Institute of the Employers' Federation of Hesse
(Germany), www.bwhw.de

EDUSER – Educational Consultancy Services Co.
(Turkey), www.eduser.com.tr

HWK – Handwerkskammer Frankfurt-Rhein-Main
Frankfurt-Rhine-Main Chamber of Crafts and Trades
(Germany), www.hwk-rhein-main.de

INBAS – Institut für berufliche Bildung, Arbeitsmarkt- und Sozialpolitik GmbH
Institute for Vocational Training, Labour Market and Social Policy
(Germany, project co-ordination), www.inbas.com

L & R Sozialforschung – Lechner, Reiter & Riesenfelder Sozialforschung OEG
L & R Social Research – Lechner, Reiter & Riesenfelder Social Research OEG
(Austria), www.lrsocialresearch.at

Metropol – The Danish Centre for the Development of Vocational Education and Training
(Denmark), www.phmetropol.dk

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EASYMetal

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