



Be-TWIN: Testing a Joint ECVET-ECTS Implementation

Final Report

Public Part

Project information

Project acronym:	Be-TWIN
Project title:	Testing a Joint ECVET-ECTS Implementation
Project number:	147825 – FR-2008-LEONARDO-ECVET
Sub-programme or KA:	Projects to test and develop the credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET)
Project website:	http://www.betwin-project.eu/
Reporting period:	From 01/03/2009 To 30/04/2012
Report version:	1
Date of preparation:	March –April 2012
Beneficiary organisation:	Chambre de commerce et d'industrie de Paris
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This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.

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Executive Summary

This report is aimed at any institution or private person involved in the field of education and training and interested in the latest and future developments of the European Union in the field of mobility, transparency, recognition of qualifications and credit systems.

The ECTS (European Credit and Accumulation System) has become one of the main pillars of the Bologna process towards a common European Higher Education Area. More recently, ECVET (European Credit for Vocational Education and Training) has been designed as a response to the specificities of vocational education and training (VET). A central issue is to define the connections between these two instruments. Indeed, higher education (HE) and VET are often interconnected and, in the context of lifelong learning and in order to favour vertical mobility, especially for those shifting from VET to HE, this connexion has to be explored.

The Be-TWIN project aimed at tackling this issue by testing a common implementation of both credit systems to achieve the following objectives:

- improve learners' and workers' horizontal and vertical mobility
- foster a common approach to education and training in Europe and the realisation of a European area for lifelong learning, thus linking the benefits of both systems and enhancing mutual understanding,
- develop transferability, integration and recognition of qualifications in Europe.

In order to address the need for a dialogue between higher education and VET, the project proposed to put in place innovative translation tools between both systems, which will contribute to reaching common goals of transparency, mobility and recognition.

First of all, a common methodology and a matrix linking ECVET and ECTS has been shaped, using the expertise and experience of the consortium partners in the field of higher education, VET, lifelong learning and credit systems. The project has successfully completed its activities and produced significant outcomes : the Methodological Guide "ECVET-ECTS: Building bridges and overcoming differences", the Tool Kit for pedagogical staff "Bridging ECVET and ECTS", the implementation of three case studies (Plastics Industry, Hospitality Management, Training of Trainers) and the report on this operational testing.

The model developed within the Methodological Guide was applied on existing training programmes. This trial implementation phase aimed to experiment the ECVET-ECTS matrix in three case studies throughout Europe in the field of Plastics Industry, Hospitality Management and Training of trainers. The proposed implementation, which was finalised in September 2011, aimed to go beyond sheer dichotomies and to contribute to favouring the geographical and horizontal mobility of learners across Europe.

Using the outputs of the methodology and of the trial implementation, the project finally produced a "Tool Kit for Trainers", whose aim is to disseminate the developed model to potential users across Europe and to communicate a workable and transferable model for those encountering the same challenges as met within the Be-TWIN partnership.

A large consortium of 13 partners from 8 EU countries has been put together to achieve these objectives. It included representatives from all spheres of education and training: universities, VET providers, certifying authorities, chambers of commerce and business representatives.

The partnership constituted a very important dimension of the project, since it provided a unique opportunity to foster dialogue and mutual understanding between players from education and training that are not necessarily used to work together. This dimension constituted an added value of the project, since, in the long term, all institutions dealing with ECVET and/or ECTS will have to cope with the issue of their linkage. Be-TWIN thus opened up the way for a broader

dialogue Europe-wide, which consequently goes ahead with a number of challenges and uncertainties.

Table of Contents

1. PROJECT OBJECTIVES.....	6
2. PROJECT APPROACH.....	8
3. PROJECT OUTCOMES & RESULTS.....	11
4. PARTNERSHIPS	16
5. PLANS FOR THE FUTURE	19
6. CONTRIBUTION TO EU POLICIES	20

1. Project Objectives

Whereas the lifelong learning programme and the European Qualification Framework promote an unified approach to education and training in Europe, integrating higher education and vocational education and training, the two credit systems will coexist strating with 2012, when ECVET will be officially implemented by the EU Member States. Although each credit system is based on a specific methodological approach, both pursue the same objectives, namely credit transfer, accumulation and recognition, students' and workers' mobility, lifelong learning, transparency and recognition of qualifications across Europe. This necessity to address the need of a comprehensive area of education and training in Europe has also been stressed in the Recommendation on ECVET itself, which suggests to the member states to *“facilitate the compatibility and comparability between credit system used in VET and the ECTS, which is used in the higher education sector, and thus [to] contribute to greater permeability between levels of education and training.”*

As the image below highlights, both the ECTS and the ECVET systems pursue the same objectives, however, the ways they intent to achieve their purposes of transfer, accumulation and recognition differ.

ECTS and ECVET: Main features



Based on a presentation made at a conference on mobility in VET in Brussels (“MOVET, the VET skills and mobility day”) on June 22, 2010.

In order to facilitate a common implementation of ECTS and ECVET, Be-TWIN proposed to develop innovative tools and methodologies to link the two credit systems. The project's objective was not to revise the existing credit systems or the methodology they are based on, but to find solutions to coordinate them in order to:

- favour the vertical (from VET to HE and vice versa) and horizontal (i.e. recognition between countries) mobility of learners and workers across Europe as well as their employability;
- foster a common approach to education and training in Europe and the realisation of a European area for lifelong learning, linking the benefits of both systems and enhancing mutual understanding;
- develop transferability, integration and recognition of qualifications in Europe.

By proposing this new, innovative approach to education and training and encompassing the challenges of both the higher education and the VET sectors, Be-TWIN intended to have an impact on several target groups. Thus, all of them have been included in the project as partner institutions and/or beneficiaries:

- **Competent bodies** in charge of the design and certification of training programmes, such as ministries of education, ministries of labour, universities, chambers of commerce, etc. They are represented in the Be-TWIN partnership, since a joint ECVET-ECTS implementation might have as a consequence the reshaping of some training programmes. Certifying bodies will thus have a key role to play if some changes have to be integrated in the existing training offer.

- **Education and training institutions** in charge of the provision of education and training: VET providers, universities, higher education institutions. They constitute the heart of the Be-TWIN partnership and are the key player to put in place a coordinated ECVET-ECTS implementation.

- **Educational staff**: professors, trainers, training programme managers, persons in charge of the international development within their educational institution. The experts working on the project represented all these categories of educational staff. In the future, the pedagogical staff will need to be trained in order to make the methodology a reality within their training institutions. Also, the ECVET-ECTS matrix will hopefully enable to put in place new international partnerships and favour mobility periods abroad, which will concern the staff in charge of the European and international development within the training institutions.

- **Learners**: students, VET learners, apprentices, adult learners. They are directly concerned by the methodology proposed by the project and will be involved in the process through the three case studies, which target three different types of learners: apprentices, students and adult learners. The Be-TWIN philosophy, whose aim was to make the training offer more transparent, was clearly addressed to them as end-beneficiaries, since it will enable them to better identify their gained knowledge, skills and competences, and thus to integrate more easily the job market.

- **Companies**: one of the benefits of the matrix will be to link the educational content with identified learning outcomes, thus favouring the adequacy between the provision of education and training and the labour market's needs. The key is to foster the employability of learners and workers and to contribute to the economical growth Europe-wide. Furthermore, one of the project's main objectives was to make geographical mobility easier. It has been proven that learners' mobility is one of the best ways to improve employability by reinforcing the ability of beneficiaries to work in different work and cultural contexts.

2. Project Approach

Be-TWIN was the only ECVET pilot project having decided to deal with the issue of the correspondences with ECTS. By doing so, it was clearly situated in the front line of the future developments of the EU towards an integrated approach of education and training.

However, this added-value also represents some challenges in terms of:

- **Pedagogical and methodological approach**, the ECVET/ECTS model being developed by experts from both the higher education and the VET spheres, which are not necessarily used to work together.
- **Internal organisation and management**: regarding the high amount of partners involved in the project (13 partners), a lot of managerial work had to be invested and tools developed to ensure the project's objectives were accomplished.
- **Visibility**: the issue of linking ECVET and ECTS is controversial and the outputs of the project are crucial regarding the future developments of EU policies in the field of education and training.

Methodological approach

The first half of the project's duration was dedicated the production of methodological tools while in parallel the implementation phase started. The project benefited from the expertise of a very diverse and numerous working group, 11 of the 13 project partners being involved in the work package dedicated to methodology. The balanced representation of the VET, university and business representatives was considered a necessity in order to produce a well documented and referenced document. Each partner institution sent at least one expert to the working group's meetings and the lead partner of this work package, UNICA (the Network of the Universities from the Capitals of Europe), played a key role as it made available three experts to coordinate the work on the methodology.

The working group's approach was, from the beginning, to focus on the similarities and common features of the two credit systems, rather than to insist on their differences and inconsistencies. Indeed, although these aspects needed to be tackled as well, it was crucial to first identify a common ground to build upon a shared methodology and create a space for mutual trust and understanding among very diverse and numerous partners.

In order to explore how these two devices can be brought closer and to bridge the gap between higher education and VET, a state of the art of the existing methodologies regarding ECVET and ECTS was made. It became obvious that, although the two credit systems do not share the same historical and methodological backgrounds, they both pursue the same goals of credit transfer and accumulation, mobility of learners and workers, lifelong learning and transparency of national systems within a common European Education Area.

The group working on the elaboration of the methodology thus first focused on identifying the main commonalities between ECVET and ECTS. Since, as stated in the Methodological guide, *"the project strives to be instrumental for a dialogue between higher education and vocational education and training"*, their common features needed to be put forward in the first place.

However, the two credit systems have very distinct backgrounds. They have developed in very different historical, institutional and methodological contexts. To start with, one, the ECTS, is 20 years older than the second, ECVET. Also, their theoretical and methodological bases differ to some extent: the ECTS, although it has been reshaped in 2009 and now includes the learning outcomes approach, constitutes an input based system which takes into account the learning content and the student's workload to allocate credit points to

courses and modules. The new ECVET system, on the other hand, was shaped according to an output based model which takes into account the results of the learning process (the “learning outcomes”) for allocating the credit points. **Whereas the ECTS is a quantitative means of expressing an amount of time invested to obtain defined outcomes, ECVET is a qualitative means of defining the relative importance of learning outcomes within a given qualification.**

The workload for ECTS and the relative importance of the units of learning outcomes within the qualification for ECVET have thus been identified as the main inconsistencies between the two credit systems. Having acknowledged this, the challenge remained to build a common matrix, despite the fact that the methodological ground of the two credit system differ to some extent. Thus, **learning outcomes have been identified as the only possible translation device between the two credit systems**: they comprise the driving force behind contemporary higher education reform and constitute the very core of the VET philosophy.

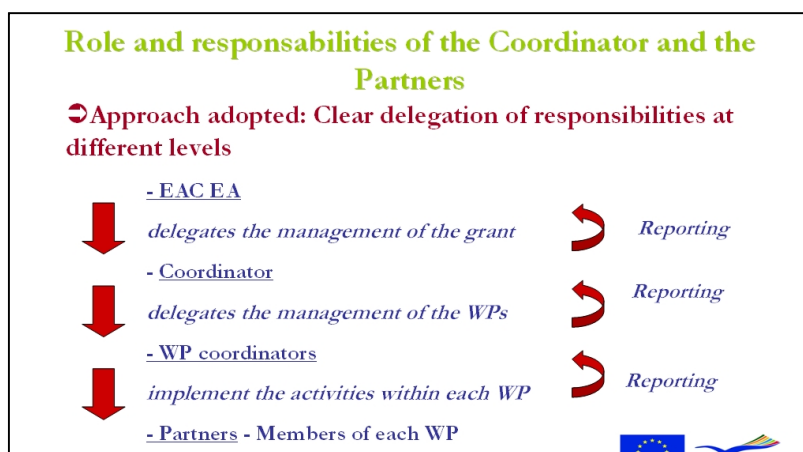
The adoption of learning outcomes shifts the focus on the learner, the role of a teacher shifts towards that of a facilitator of the learning process. It furthermore recognises that many activities can take place outside the classroom, based on learners’ own independent activities. This approach has influenced significantly the latest developments at EU level: it stands behind the elaboration of the European Qualification Framework and of ECVET and has also transformed the ECTS towards an output based approach as well.

The result of these considerations, to be found in the Methodological Guide, is a double entry table (the “matrix”), whose common denominator are the learning outcomes, but which also takes into account the specific characteristics of ECTS and ECVET, namely the workload for the former and the relative importance of the units of learning outcomes for the latter.

Management and evaluation

The project management was relying on a clear delegation of responsibilities between the project coordinator and the work packages coordinators, who were in charge of important implementation and reporting tasks within their working groups. The project was organised in six work packages, namely : management, design of the methodology, operational testing, evaluation and quality assurance, exploitation of results and dissemination strategy.

Be-TWIN: Managerial structure



Based on a presentation made at the project’s kick-off meeting in Paris on March 6, 2009.

In order to ensure the project's quality assurance and continuing improvement, Be-TWIN benefited from an internal and external evaluation process.

Internally, four partner institutions have constituted the Evaluation Board, which was in charge of the day-to-day monitoring and evaluation of the project's management and main results. In order to perform these tasks, the Evaluation Board has put in place evaluation procedures and developed evaluation templates. Thus, each meeting of the partnership could be evaluated thanks to a meeting evaluation form, which had to be filled in by each participant at the meeting. The forms were then compiled by the Evaluation Board which produced an evaluation report. This good practice enabled the partners to improve the meetings' practical organisation and content. Secondly, the main deliverables issued by the project were also being evaluated by the partnership through a deliverable evaluation form.

The project was also evaluated externally. The external evaluator of the project, who was selected for his experience in the evaluation of EU funded projects, produced a mid-term evaluation report and a final evaluation report of the project activities, based on his reading of the project materials, his consultation of the project website, his meetings with the project partners, his participation in the partnership meetings and the project final conference. The point of view of a person external to the project constituted a real added value and helped improving the quality of the project, in particular the managerial and organisational aspects.

Exploitation and dissemination strategy:

Regarding exploitation and dissemination, the project planned the following activities:

- **Exploitation:** In order to raise awareness of appropriate decision-makers and to convince end-users to adopt and apply the project's results, the project has prepared an exploitation plan that was launched in October 2010.

The main activities of the exploitation plan were the organisation of Info sessions by the partners. The purpose of these Info sessions was to present Be-TWIN to appropriate key actors of education and training and to convince them to adopt and apply these results. The partners organised these Info sessions using their networks at local, regional, national and European level. They were addressed to organisations that the partners usually cooperate with as well as to new stakeholders. The info sessions were organised as follows: three to Paris/ France, one to Ruse/ Bulgaria, one to Venezia/Italy, one to Staffordshire/UK.

Secondly, the partners produced a "Tool Kit for Trainers", which was edited in three EU languages (English, French and Italian). The findings of the Methodological Guide and the results of the trial implementation were taken into account in order to produce a user-friendly tool kit used to promote the project to appropriate decision-makers in regulated local, regional, national and European systems and to convince individual end-users to adopt and apply the results of Be-TWIN to their own degrees/qualifications. The Tool Kit is available in three languages, English, French and Italian and it is free for dissemination by any interested party (the Tool Kit can be downloaded at <http://www.betwin-project.eu/>).

- **Dissemination:** the creation of a graphic design that is representative of the aims and objectives of the project, as well as the necessary and communication supports were done at the beginning of the project, in order to ensure that all the partners communicate about the project using the approved visual identity.

Be-TWIN logo:



The project's website <http://www.betwin-project.eu/>, was launched in the autumn of 2010.

The dissemination was also supported by publishing results in newspapers and other journals and through the use of national and international forums. For example, an article about Be-TWIN was published in the French National Agency's (Agence Europe Education Formation France) magazine Soleo in June 2010, and the project has been presented on several occasions in the framework of national and international seminars in the UK, in France, in Belgium, in Greece, Italy and at the ECVET launching conference which took place in Brussels in November 2009.

The Be-TWIN final conference took place on the 9th of December 2011 and brought together about 60 participants from several European countries, thus enabling the project's results to achieve large scale-dissemination. It brought together representatives of educational institutions, competent bodies, the industry sector and other relevant European stakeholders interested in the outcomes of the project.

Finally, the Be-TWIN project was a part of a broader dynamic to develop, implement and disseminate ECVET throughout Europe. Indeed, the ECVET pilot projects were all engaged in a joint initiative to exchange about the methodologies they were developing. This overall coordination was ensured through the consulting firm GHK, which organised regular seminars in order to enable the projects to share their good practices and to avoid them working in isolation. Be-TWIN contributed to these activities on a regular basis and also brought its contribution to the ECVET pilot projects' final conference held on the 22nd-23rd February in Brussels.

The ECVET pilot projects, including Be-TWIN, were members of the ECVET user's group, ECVET Synergy. This group was put in place by the European Commission as a consortium in charge of supporting, accompanying and training the Member States for the implementation of ECVET.

Project Outcomes & Results

The main outcomes of the Be-TWIN project include the Methodological Guide, the implementation of three case studies, the Report on the operational testing and the Tool Kit for trainers. All the products are available for consultation and downloading on the project website: <http://www.betwin-project.eu/>

Methodological Guide

The first deliverable produced in the framework of Be-TWIN was the Methodological Guide: **"ECVET-ECTS: Building bridges and overcoming differences"**. The guide was published in July 2010 and it contains the methodology that strives to suggest a possible approach to coordinate ECVET and ECTS.

A first theoretical part presents the main historical developments of the Bologna and Copenhagen processes and the philosophy behind both credit systems. Then, the guide proposes a "face to face" comparison of the credit systems' consistencies and inconsistencies. The last and most innovative part is the matrix, which works as a double entry table articulating both ECTS and ECVET, and can serve as a transparency tool and a translation device in that it asks qualifications from both systems to apply identical and thus comparable information parameters. As a common interface it emphasises learning outcomes and the systems' secondary layers of information, namely the workload and the relative importance of the units of learning outcomes within the qualification. It is important to stress that this methodology does not propose a completely new model of curriculum

development or the revision of the presentation of qualifications in general, but strives to help presenting the training offer more easily and to link the learning content with the learning outcomes.

Methodological Guide: The matrix 1/2:

**A simplified model –
the matrix step-by-step**

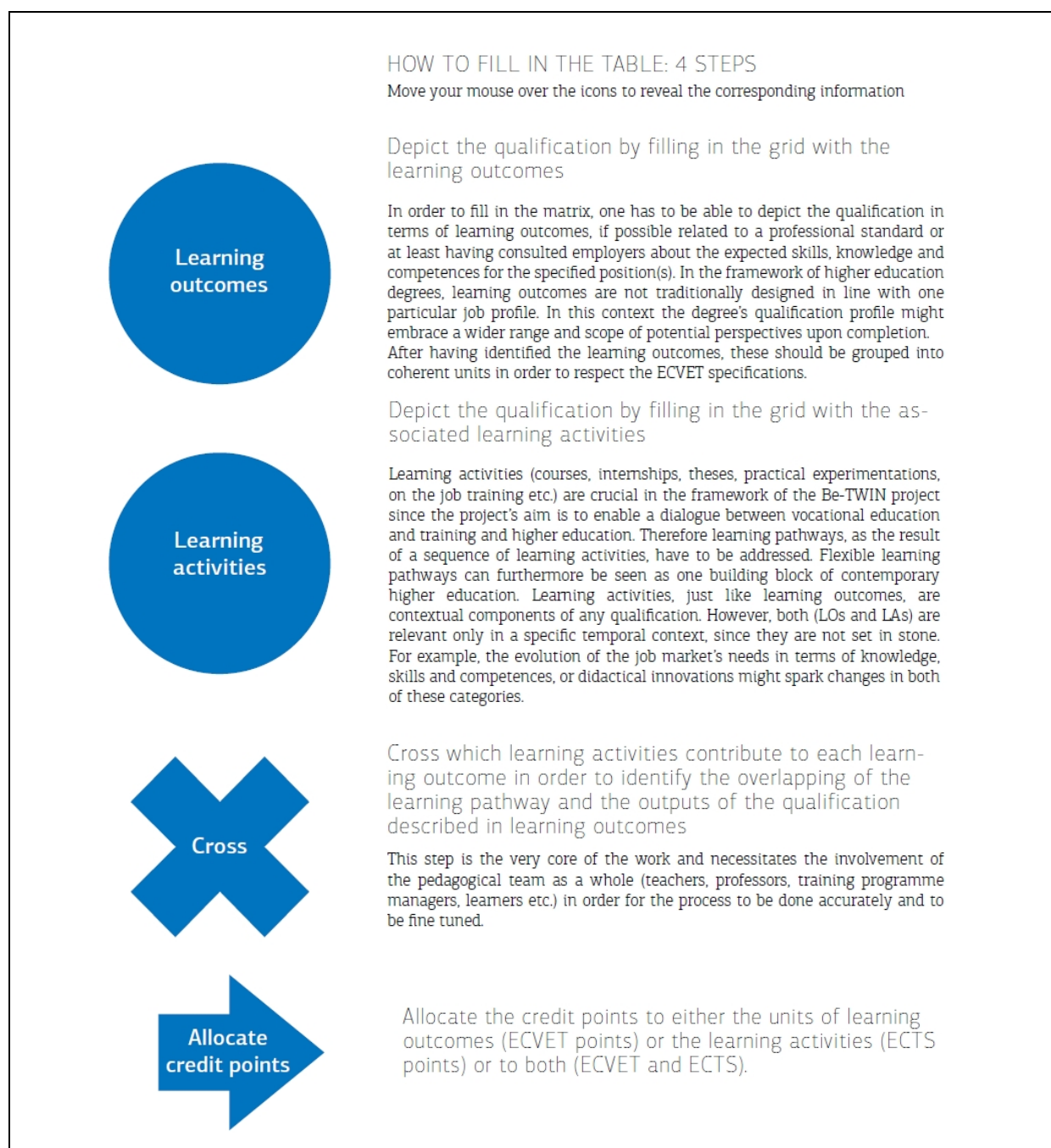
The model can be used from different entry points and is compatible with the specificities of higher education and of vocational education and training. The only pre-requisite is to start with an existing qualification, possibly referenced to an EQF/QF-EHEA level (depending whether the national framework has been referenced to the EQF already).

The matrix is a double entry table, which enables to better depict and present a given qualification, by detailing the learning outcomes and the learning activities (curriculum).

		LEARNING ACTIVITIES						ECVET credit points
		L1	L2	L3	L4	L5	Ln	
UNITS OF LEARNING OUTCOMES	U1							...
	L01	*		*	*			
	L02			*				
	L03		*		*			
	U2							...
	L04		*					
	L05	*			*			
	L06							
	U3							...
	L07	*	*		*			
	L08							
	L09			*				
	U4							...
	L010	*			*			
	L011							
	L012							
	Un
ECTS credit points			Total

Extract of the Methodological Guide: “ECVET-ECTS: Building bridges and overcoming differences”, page 26.

Methodological Guide: The matrix 2/2:



Extract of the Methodological Guide: “ECVET-ECTS: Building bridges and overcoming differences”, page 27.

Case studies

In order to put into practice the methodology, the partnership chose three qualifications at different EQF levels (5 and 6). These qualifications are situated at the junction of VET and higher education as they are designed according to the learning outcomes approach, favour on-the-job training and respond to a professional standard needed by the labour market. Three sectors have been selected: plastics industry, hospitality management and training of trainers.

1) **Case study 1** was applied to the developed model on a French diploma, the BTS (Brevet de technicien supérieur) in the field of plastics industry. The BTS is a vocational qualification at higher educational level (it should be referenced at EQF level 5). It is a national diploma of the French Ministry of Education, the training being delivered in several training centres in France. The degree was designed according to the labour market needs with a strong focus on developing technical skills. The case study was coordinated by the Fédération de la Plasturgie, which represents the 1 500 French companies working in this economic sector. The French Ministry of Education, which is the certifying body for the BTS, is a partner of this case study as competent institution. The training centre involved in this case study is one of the Paris Chamber of Commerce and Industry's technological schools, the CFI, (Centre des formations industrielles). The specificity of this case study relied in the fact that the target public were the apprentices. In the French system the CFI apprentices spend half of the time at school and the second half in the enterprise that employs them. The German system is the so-called dual system in which apprentices are both trained and employed by the BASF. Therefore, the feasibility of the developed methodology in this case study was tested through a mobility scheme between the CFI and the BASF's training centre in Germany. The two training centres have been cooperating for some years and the apprentices' exchanges have already taken place a few times, although the mobility periods were never recognised before. The 12 German apprentices did a three weeks mobility in France in the autumn of 2010 and the 12 French apprentices did a three weeks mobility in Germany in the spring of 2011. For the purpose of the case study, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the institutions involved and Learning Agreements and Personal Transcripts prepared for each learner. The objective was to enable the learning outcomes gained abroad to be recognised and capitalised through the ECVET and ECTS credit systems. The results of this case study whose implementation took place in 2010-2011 could be extended to other training centres delivering the BTS in Plastics Industry in France.

2) **Case study 2** applied the developed methodology to a Foundation Degree (FdA) and a Bachelor Degree (BA) in Hospitality Management in the UK. The FdA is a vocational qualification at higher educational level (it should be referenced at EQF level 5). It is a vocational higher education award, designed with employers, which aim is to develop technical and work specific skills underpinned by rigorous and broad-based academic learning. With the emphasis on work experience, Foundation Degrees are a two-year route to a degree and are highly valued in the job market. The BA in Hospitality Management can be taken after the FdA as a one year top-up, and it is referenced at EQF level 6. The FdA in Hospitality Management is delivered at the Stratford-upon-Avon College in the UK and at the Ecole de Savignac in France. The students can choose to either take the first year of training in France or in the UK. The Bachelor training programme, however, can only be followed at the Stratford-upon-Avon College. Both the FdA and the BA degrees are delivered by the Thames Valley University in the UK, which uses the UK credit system. The objective of this case study was not to test the methodology in the framework of a geographical mobility as in case study 1, but to apply the matrix to a vertical mobility scheme between the Foundation Degree and the Bachelor Degree. Indeed, the training is delivered in two different countries, but as part as one and only training programme. Thus, recognition and transfer of the learning outcomes achieved between the two countries are already ensured and guaranteed through a formal agreement between the two institutions (the Stratford-upon-Avon College on the one hand and the Ecole de Savignac on the other hand). The ECVET/ECTS implementation in this case study thus concerned the reshaping of the training offer thanks to the learning outcomes' approach. UK credit points were allocated to the modules of learning activities and ECVET credit points to the units of learning outcomes. The Stratford-upon-Avon College applied the ECVET/ECTS matrix to both the FdA and the BA, thus enabling a better understanding and transparency of the job profile and associated learning outcomes. This case study also contributed to facilitating the recognition of the vertical mobility between the Foundation Degree towards a Bachelor Degree. The partners put in place a Progress

Agreement, containing strong arguments in favour of the adoption of the ECVET in the British system and include the application of the developed ECVET/ECTS methodology in the given field of study. The ECVET credits attributed to the units of learning outcomes were integrated in the agreement to ensure the quality assurance of the “ECVETisation process” of the FdA.

3) **Case study 3** applied the methodology to a degree in the field of adult education, namely the training of trainers. The training programme, CDAF EDA COURSE was designed by the Ministry of education of the Veneto Region (Ufficio Scolastico Regionale per il Veneto) and the Education Faculty (Dipartimento di Scienze dell'Educazione) of the University of Padua.

This training programme has been launched three years ago and 75 teachers have attended it so far. The assessment was positive since innovative training practices were introduced and applied in the schools after the teachers have followed this specific training path. The objective of the case study was to cross the teacher's professional profile, which had been defined in terms of expected learning outcomes, and the training content, thus applying the Be-TWIN matrix. On the long run, this should contribute to ensuring that the training programme and the learning outcomes are better recognised on the labour market and thus to valorise the teachers' continuing learning experience.

Report on the operational testing

The projects partners elaborated a detailed report on the implementation of the three case studies. The report illustrates the rationale for the choice of the three case studies and gives a very detailed view of the manner in which they were put in practice, as well as the performed activities. The report outlines the lessons learnt from the application of the Be-TWIN Methodology to the three case studies above mentioned. As a conclusion the report mentions the constraints identified at the system level in the process of transferability of competences, transparency of qualifications and permeability between VET and HE but also the recommendations made by the project partners to national and regional VET stakeholders.

Tool kit for trainers

Taking into account the methodology as well as the results of the three case studies, a practical device, namely a “tool kit for trainers”, was issued in three EU languages: English, French and Italian.

The objective was to produce a user friendly guide which should promote the results of Be-TWIN to appropriate decision-makers (ministries of education and any other relevant certifying and/or competent body) in regulated local, regional, national and European systems and convince individual end-users (teachers, trainers, training programme managers) to adopt and apply the results of Be-TWIN to their own training systems and training programmes. A working group defined and elaborated the content of the Tool Kit during a seminar in Venice in October 2010. The tool kit as such was released in June 2011.

3. Partnerships

The Be-TWIN consortium gathered initially 15 partners from 9 countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland and the United Kingdom. Even if two of the partners had to retire during the project implementation due to lack of necessary resources caused by the financial crisis, the project continued to be built by a strong partnership that was able to reallocate tasks in a coherent and balanced manner. Moreover, through one of the partners (UNICA, the Network of the Universities from the Capitals of Europe), the project benefited from the expertise of two other member states, namely Austria (University of Vienna) and the Czech Republic (Charles University Prague).

In addition to respecting the EU geographical diversity, the Be-TWIN partnership building also had to respond to three challenges, regarding the issues being tackled by the project:

- they had to achieve a **balance between VET representatives and higher education representatives**, in particular universities;
- they had to combine partners fulfilling the **ECVET and ECTS pre-requisites**;
- the team building also had to cope with the **constraints and feasibility of the case studies**, since the ECVET call for proposals specified that the selected project must test and implement ECVET within existing training programmes. The partnership had to bear in mind that the project's objective would be to test ECVET and ECTS in real life. Therefore, they decided that the case studies should as much as possible build upon existing partnerships and even on running mobility projects. Since the project was a rather ambitious one, it was considered as an added value to work on pre-existing partnerships. This explains why for the the case studies the project partners had associated partners we collaborate with, which also constituted a great opportunity to target institutions which were not directly involved in the project.

Partnership typology

We have worked on elaborating a consortium which would be representative of the diversity of the education and training community in Europe. All sectors concerned by ECVET and ECTS were represented, academic as well as non-academic partners. Some of the partners were even competent in more than one field related to ECVET and ECTS. The consortium included namely:

- **VET providers** from France, the UK, Italy, Poland, Germany and Greece: Paris Chamber of Commerce and Industry (10 schools), Stratford-upon-Avon College, CPV - Fondazione Giacomo Rumor Centro Produttività Veneto, ZDZ, DEKRA Akademie GmbH, Econometrica.
- **Universities and higher education institutions** from Bulgaria, the UK, Italy, Austria and the Czech Republic : University of Ruse, Stratford-upon-Avon-College and Thames Valley University as associated partner for the purposes of the case study, University of Padua as associated partner of USP Venezia for the purposes of the case study, UNICA, the Network of the Universities from the Capitals of Europe (University of Vienna and Charles University Prague).
- **Ministries of education** from France and Italy: Rectorat de Paris (Paris Regional Ministry of Education); Ufficio scolastico provinciale di Venezia (Venezia Regional Office of the Ministry of Education).
- **Professional federations** from France, Belgium (European Confederation) and Italy: Fédération de la Plasturgie; European Marketing Confederation; Fondazione Giacomo

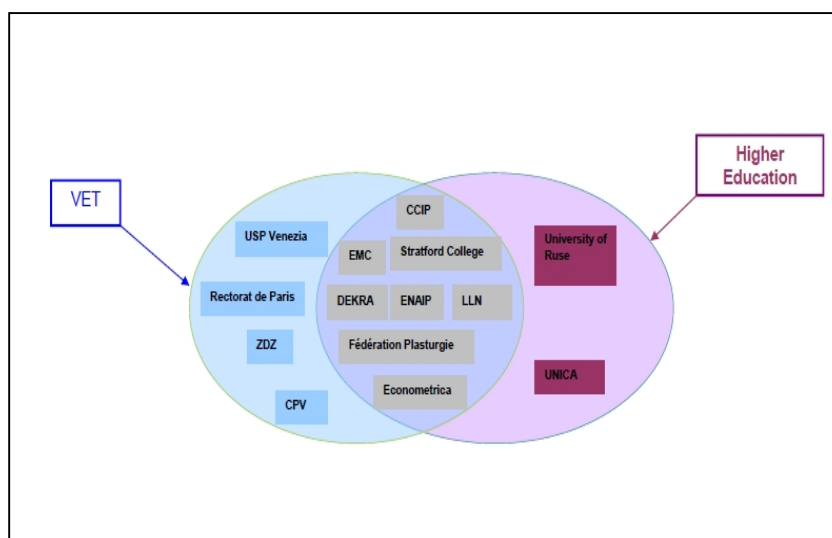
Rumor - Centro Produttività Veneto (association promoted by Business associations: industrial association of Vicenza and Small Business Association).

- **Chambers of commerce** from France and Italy: Paris Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Fondazione Giacomo Rumor - Centro Produttività Veneto (association promoted by the Chamber of commerce of Vicenza in collaboration with 4 other Chambers of commerce: Verona, Venice, Padova and Treviso).

- **SME** from Greece: Econometrica.

- **Networks active in the field of education, training and lifelong learning** from the UK and Italy: Lifelong Learning Network Staffordshire, Stoke on Trent, Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin; ENAIP (Ente Nazionale ACLI Istruzione Professionale).

The VET and HE balance in the Be-TWIN partnership:



Based on a presentation made at the ECVET Launching Conference in Brussels on November 17-18, 2009

Typology of partners involved in the Be-TWIN project:

Categories	Training provider	Certifying body	Business representative	Network (support)
Partners				
CCIP				
Stratford College				
Univ. Rousse				
Rectorat de Paris				
Fédé. Plasturgie				
CPV				
USP Venezia				
UNICA				
LLN				
ZDZ				
EMC				
ENAIP				
DEKRA				
Econometrica				

Based on a presentation made at the ECVET Launching Conference in Brussels on November 17-18, 2009

Lessons learnt

The great diversity (geographical and sectoral) and the large amount of partners is one of the most striking characteristics of the Be-TWIN project. It constitutes an added value, since the project brought together representatives from very different spheres of education and training which were not used to work together.

Creating a space for debate, dialogue and mutual trust was one of the key objectives of the project, and this placed the participants at the front line of the future developments of the European education and training area towards an integrated approach. Indeed, all institutions dealing with ECVET and/or ECTS will have to cope with the issue of their linkage at some point, therefore Be-TWIN opened up the way for a broader dialogue all over Europe.

However, coordinating such a composite partnership was a complex task, and went along with a number of challenges. First, having to deal with such a large amount of partners, implied the need time for knowing each other better and to achieve results. For instance, for the trial implementation (case studies), the high number of partners and the difficulty of setting up efficient cooperation with institutions capable of testing both ECVET and ECTS within training programmes had an important impact. Some of the partners involved in the testing phase were not able to provide the required resources and expertise. Nevertheless, they could be replaced by other partners, capable of taking over the tasks immediately. This paradoxically revealed one of the major added-value of having a wide partnership: it was possible for the partners that could not be involved in the case studies to be easily replaced by others.

Secondly, it is more difficult to build a zone of mutual trust among such a wide partnership, composed of very diverse stakeholders not having neither the same cultural and methodological backgrounds, nor the same objectives in a joint ECVET-ECTS implementation. For example, in the framework of the work package dedicated to the methodology, more time and additional meetings than originally planned were needed to learn to work with each other and to understand the one another points of view.

Moreover, in terms of thematic the Be-TWIN partnership illustrated both the high interest and potential of such a project and the difficulties to achieve results in real life and to succeed in bridging ECVET and ECTS, VET and higher education.

The project partners concluded that there is an obvious need to invest in long term transnational partnerships where obstacles are tackled simultaneously, thus creating a basis for cooperation and exchange with VET providers, learners and companies for quality placements exceeding the duration of single mobility measures.

The project also pointed out that there is a need to invest in long term dialogue between VET and HE organisations in order to favour the establishment of transparent procedures for the recognition of credit in the context of progression to higher education through vocational routes.

There is also obviously a need of a shift from a project-based mobility to as system-based mobility. Furthermore, relevant stakeholders have to promote the building of infrastructures and services supporting mobility and foster the implementation of a quality assurance system for placements and recognition of the skills acquired abroad.

And finally, the project encouraged the development of the use of learning outcomes across all aspects of learning, teaching and assessment, and also to engage with other key players and encourage the proper use of learning outcomes.

4. Plans for the Future

1) Valorisation of the project results and transfer towards a new project “Be-TWIN 2 ECTS-ECVET: Building Bridges and Overcoming Differences”. This project was submitted by the Fondazione Giacomo Rumor Centro Produttività Veneto, one of the cornerstone partners of Be-TWIN, in February 2012 under LLP/Leonardo da Vinci Transfer of Innovation Programme. This project brings together 11 partners from 5 countries and focuses on current approaches to ECVET that are shifting from the issue of implementation of ECVET for VET qualifications at all levels to establishing equivalence and achieving conversion between ECVET and other existing credit system. The shift from input orientation to a learning outcomes approach in education and training policy to design qualifications is progressively becoming a prerequisite for transferability of competencies and transparency of qualifications in order to ensure permeability between VET and HE. Therefore, the project Be-TWIN 2 seeks to address these needs by contributing to facilitate a common implementation of ECVET and ECTS for improving learners' mobility, linking the benefits of both credit systems and promoting the transferability and recognition of qualifications in EU. The project will transfer and adapt the methodological tools developed in previous LLP among which the Be-TWIN project (Testing a Joint ECTS-ECVET implementation).

2) The valorisation and exploitation of the Be-TWIN results through the dissemination of the project's main products, the Methodological Guide, Tool Kit and Report on the operational testing. They will be disseminated by the project partners at the relevant meeting, conferences and seminars with relevant stakeholders, and during any opportunity to encounter competent bodies, training providers, universities, training programme managers, teachers, European stakeholders, etc.

3) Continuing the dissemination and communication strategy

The project's public website www.betwin.eu.com will be maintained for one more year thus making publicly and freely available the projects products. The presentations of Be-TWIN final conference that took place on the 9th of December 2011 are also available on this website and are free for consultation and download.

5. Contribution to EU policies

By tackling the pending issue of the ECVET and ECTS coexistence within a unified education and training area in Europe, Be-TWIN contributed to several EU key policies and objectives:

Support the realisation of a European Area for Lifelong Learning

Be-TWIN brought along partners from different spheres of education in Europe to work together: training providers from HE and VET, national authorities, professional associations, European federations, etc. The project acted as a facilitator of dialogue and has set up a common space of mutual trust between various partners in the field of lifelong learning. This complies with the Lifelong Learning Programme's objective to *"permit greater synergies between the different fields of action and [to] support developments in the lifelong learning"*.

Support the realisation of the Copenhagen Process and the implementation of ECVET

The strategy for improving the performance, quality and attractiveness of VET, commonly referred to as the "Copenhagen process", was tackled by the project. By putting in place an innovative matrix, Be-TWIN proposed to help VET providers to better connect the job profile and the qualification to the training offer and pedagogical investment, thus improving their attractiveness, quality and the mobility of VET learners.

Also, the project implemented the ECVET technical specifications by redefining qualifications in terms of units of learning outcomes and associated ECVET credit points and furthermore explored its connexion with the ECTS.

Support the realisation of the Bologna Process and the implementation of ECTS

One of the major objectives of the Bologna Process in recent years has been to promote the modernisation of higher education and the shift the focus on students. This has among others included the redesigning of the ECTS system according to the learning outcomes approach, as the "ECTS user's guide 2009" highlights.

By proposing a new, innovative matrix that can be easily used by higher education institutions already using ECTS, Be-TWIN proposed to help them making the learning content more transparent and linked with identified learning outcomes, in line with the new "output oriented" ECTS system.

Learning mobility

Although only one of the project's three case studies included a period of geographical mobility, the methodological tools developed by Be-TWIN should enable enhanced and more recognised mobility schemes in the future. Also, by addressing the issue of the vertical mobility (case study 2) and the recognition of learning outcomes in the case of continuing training (case study 3), the project offers a diversified approach to the challenges aroused by the ECVET implementation.

"Youth on the Move"

The recent Communication of the European Commission on "Youth on the move" has set the following priorities:

- Modernising education and training so that it is more relevant to the needs of young people and employers. Actions will target schools, apprentices and better recognition for skills

gained outside formal education. They also aim to make higher education more attractive to increase the proportion of young people with high-level qualifications.

- Supporting learning and job mobility.
- Providing a new EU framework for youth employment, including recommendations to Member States on labour market reform and more help for public employment services to improve support for young people.

Be-TWIN contributed to this initiative by promoting a unified approach to education and training and of the possibilities for learners to move from one learning context to another while having his/her learning outcomes recognised (vertical mobility).

The matrix developed by Be-TWIN should also help training providers presenting their training offer in accordance with the labour market's needs, thus improving the relevance of the training programmes. It should also support the recognised learning and job mobility of learners and workers across Europe thanks to the transparency introduced by the matrix.

“New Skills for New Jobs”

By promoting a learning outcomes based approach and the identification of the knowledge, skills and competences needed by the companies to design training programmes, the matrix is clearly in line with the Commission's initiative on “New Skills for New Jobs” and its willingness to bridge the gap between the world of education and training on the one hand and the labour market on the other hand.

EUROPE 2020 - A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth

As stated in the European Commission's Communication “Europe 2020”, three priorities stand ahead the member states:

- Smart growth: developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation.
- Sustainable growth: promoting a more resource efficient, greener and more competitive economy.
- Inclusive growth: fostering a high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion.

In order to contribute to a high-employment economy, Be-TWIN tested its methodology on three economic sectors: the plastics industry, the hospitality sector and the continuing training of trainers.

The European plastics industry makes a significant contribution to the welfare in Europe by enabling innovation, creating quality of life to citizens and facilitating resource efficiency and climate protection. More than 1.6 million people are working in about 50,000 companies (mainly small and medium sized companies in the converting sector).

The hospitality management sector is also a strategic segment of the European labour market. Around 1.7 million enterprises, employing some 9.5 million workers, make up the European hospitality industry. They represent an essential part of our society's cultural and social landscape and form the backbone of European tourism. It is crucial to enhance the quality of the training programmes leading to these occupations and to integrate the European dimension in those training programmes, since this industry requires its workers to be mobile and to experience different types of national cuisines and services in order to progress in their careers.

Finally, regarding training of trainers, Be-TWIN made the choice of adult learning since it is crucial to invest in continuing training to avoid workers being downgraded and their knowledge, skills and competences no longer in line with the labour market's needs.