

EQAVET Peer Learning Activity on ‘Quality Assurance in Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVE)’

Online workshop on 7-8 October 2021

Project story factsheet: European Platform for Urban Greening, The Netherlands

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Project information

The project aims to increase the knowledge and skills required to address biodiversity, climate adaptation and well-being in the urban green living environment, and to broaden the expertise among professionals in Europe. It involves a wide range of stakeholders, including high schools and educational NGOs, businesses and business associations, local and central authorities. The project specifically addresses the development of innovative curricula and teaching methodologies in the field of urban green landscaping, in order to raise the quality and adaptability of the skills ecosystem.

Approach to quality assurance

Our quality assurance approach is based on a quality assurance strategy, internal feedback loops and a Board of Advisors. The quality assurance strategy with associated tools and processes is to be used at the level of each Work Package and it follows the Deming circle with its developments: plan/do/check(study)/act(adjust) at the level of outputs/deliverables (set in the project application) but also outcomes (intermediate to long term effects at the target groups levels) and processes (how the outputs lead to outcomes).

Which QA instruments have been used (at provider level or for the network)?

We developed a QA tool to be used at the level of each Work Package (WP), for assessing the indicators (to be planned, followed, checked/studied, adjusted/used for adjustments) as established by each WP’s team under the coordination of each WP’s leader and with the assistance of the members of WP related to quality assurance.

Which EQAVET indicators have been used for quality assurance?

EQAVET Indicators are to be considered in the Work Package related to educational activities for VET students and business employees as well as in the one related to Knowledge and Skills Transfer between the staff members of each CoVE and all project partners’ staff members through the PoVE (indicative descriptors – implementation). Also, they might be considered in the Work Package related to CoVE and PoVE Creation for the establishment of the regional CoVEs and the European PoVE as well as in the Work Package related to follow-up to make the current project sustainable after the lifespan of the project (indicative descriptors – implementation).

Strengths and challenges

We tried to strike a balance between an easy-to-use yet value-added quality approach, which can effectively support continuous improvement. We focus on facilitating for our colleagues to assume ownership for learning and adjustment and to share it with them in a concise way. At the same time, we tried to avoid it being considered as a

bureaucratic requirement and a burden, a time-consuming task, too complex and/or difficult to use.

We have focused the approach on relevance for our colleagues, considering their context (previous experience, various backgrounds, time constraints, etc.). Moreover, we are looking at relevance for the target groups in their own context as well as ensuring the conditions for sustainability and impact on a systemic level, beyond what we have promised in the application. We considered the quality approach relevant for the project's ambitious goal (to have a systemic impact), while taking into account that it is a pilot project (based on the approach of testing and learning for continuous improvement). We also emphasized the importance of analysing the results in order to learn from them and make adjustments, stressing that it is not just about planning, implementation and control, which are usually the phases used but are not enough for improvement.

Lessons learnt

Our colleagues seemed relieved that the tools are not too extensive or too complex and easy to use. They also like the 'learning for adjusting' approach, considering that this is a pilot project and we do not have 'recipes'. Also, they appreciate that the approach supports them in synthesizing lessons learned and identifying needed adjustments which are useful for reporting as well as for supporting others and for systemic impact.

Next steps/ future developments

So far, we developed the approach and present it to our colleagues. Also, we tested it with some WPs. We will continue to deepen the work in each WP to develop indicators and implement the quality assurance tools and processes. We will also learn and adjust our quality approach to make it more relevant, value-added and simple.

Further information

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Useful sources and resources (link to project's website or related publications):

<https://www.platformurbangreening.eu/>
