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Methodological and organizational compendium of ECVET system for mentors in eco-industry
(Final version)

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List of abbreviations

ECVET European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training

ECTS European Credit Transfer and accumulation System

EQAVET European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training

EQF European Qualification Framework

ENIC European Network of Information Centres

ENIC- NARIC European Network of Information Centres - National Academic Recognition Information Centres

ET Education and Training

EU European Union

EUCEN European University Continuing Education Network

HE Higher Education

IVET Initial Vocational Education and Training

LA Learning LLLgreement

LLL LifeLong Learning

LO Learning Outcomes

MOOC Massive Open Online Courses

MoU Memorandum of Understanding

NARIC National Academic Recognition Information Centres

NCP-ECVET National Contact Point - European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training

NEET Not (engaged) in Education, Employment or Training

NVQs National Vocational Qualifications

NQF National Qualification Framework

PLA Peer Learning Activities

VET Vocational Education and Training

VNFIL Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning

VPL Validation of Prior Learning

Introduction

This publication will be used by mentors to disseminate the ECVET (European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training) system among the person during the training process. It will be also practical guide how to use the ECVET system in Eco-industry.

The publication will fill the significant gap in materials concerning the assumptions and implementation of ECVET which will be the rich compendium containing:

- Description of the main principles of the ECVET system;
- Benefits of the use of educational mobility using ECVET;
- Information about the level of development and implementation of ECVET tools in partners' countries;
- Explanation of the methodology of transfer of units of learning outcomes in Eco-industry based on the Ecomentor project;
- Presentation of opportunities for using ECVET in eco-industry for validation of educational achievements and mobility of the EU workers;
- Other ways for recognition of competences (included informal and non-formal competences) among different EU states;
- Introduction to EQAVET (European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training) guidelines.

The Compendium aims to give a significant impact to implementation and dissemination of ECVET tool, being the significant aid to everyone who will use ECVET tool in every field of vocational education and training.

The publication gives an insight at the current state of progress of ECVET tool implementation in the Member States and presents the research and analysis work done in order to bridge the world of education and the world of work, giving the possibility to translate areas of competencies (to be used to plan and assess mobility) into language of learning outcomes (to be used to validate and certify qualifications/parts of qualifications).

The development of this output has been coordinated by SINERGIE (IT) with the main support of ITeE-PIB (PL) and contributions by all other partners in charge of sections related to their respective countries.

2 ECVET - the concept and principles of the system

The **European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training**, often referred to as **ECVET**, is a technical framework for the transfer, recognition and (where appropriate) accumulation of individuals' learning outcomes with a view to achieving a qualification. Guided by a European-level Recommendation, ECVET relies on the description of qualifications in units of learning outcomes, on transfer, recognition and accumulation processes and on a series of complementary documents such as a Memorandum of Understanding and Learning Agreement.

ECVET is intended to facilitate the recognition of learning outcomes in accordance with national legislation, in the framework of mobility, for the purpose of achieving a qualification.

ECVET aims to support the mobility of European citizens, facilitating lifelong learning - achieved in formal, non-formal and informal settings - and providing greater transparency in relation to individual learning experiences, making it more attractive to move between different countries and different learning environments.

At a systems level, ECVET aims towards greater compatibility between the different vocational education and training (VET) systems in place across Europe, and their qualifications.

From a geographical mobility perspective, ECVET aims at facilitating the validation, recognition and accumulation of knowledge and skills acquired during a stay in another country, with a view to ensuring that such achievements can contribute to the achievement of vocational qualifications.

ECVET brings a range of benefits to all those involved in geographical mobility and lifelong learning.

Benefits of ECVET for Geographical Mobility: While mobility in vocational education and training (VET) is already happening, the EU's political ambition is to significantly increase the number and duration of exchanges. Developing and enhancing geographical mobility implies putting in place a range of support mechanisms and activities for learners including, for example, language learning, and financial support. The visibility and recognition of learning achieved abroad is equally crucial for enhancing VET mobility.

Benefits of ECVET for Lifelong Learning: In the context of economic restructuring, where certain sectors are declining whilst others have difficulties in recruiting adequately qualified staff, there is a need for a flexible workforce. Individuals are expected to have both the aptitude as well as the opportunity to enable continued learning and the development of new knowledge, skills and competence. Lifelong learning and the recognition of learning and skills aim at facilitating the transition between different jobs, companies or sectors, as well as the transition from unemployment or inactivity into employment. It is seen as a means of improving the match between labour market demand and supply and for supporting social inclusion.

ECVET is a tool that can assist lifelong learning by *improving the transfer, recognition and accumulation* of that which has been learned in the past, irrespective of the learning environment. It can facilitate the development of individualized and flexible lifelong learning paths enabling individual learners to gain knowledge, skills and competence, and ultimately a qualification.

ECVET supports a range of learners and learning scenarios including:
- Learners wishing to upgrade or extend their qualifications through part-time study.
- Learners wishing to study for additional qualifications that complement or build on those already held.
- Learners seeking qualifications for career progression.
- Learners returning to education or training.

How does ECVET work?

ECVET relies on a series of common goals, principles and technical components that centre on the recognition of learning outcomes and achievements for European citizens undertaking vocational education and training, irrespective of the learning context, location or delivery method.

ECVET works hand in hand with the **European Qualifications Framework (EQF)** to provide greater transparency in European qualifications, promoting the mobility of workers and learners, and facilitating lifelong learning.

ECVET brings together a wide range of actors, at local, national and European levels, with a view to encouraging its wider implementation and use, particularly in learning mobility.

ECVET Principles and Technical Components

ECVET is a technical framework for the transfer, recognition and, where appropriate, accumulation of learning outcomes, with a view to achieving a qualification.

ECVET is a decentralized mechanism that relies on the voluntary participation of Member States, and wider VET stakeholders, and relies on mutual trust being established among all those involved.

ECVET centres on a series of Technical Components that, together, facilitate the process of learning recognition, irrespective of the country or education system in which the learning took place.

Successful ECVET implementation requires that qualifications be described in terms of learning outcomes, with learning outcomes brought together in units, and units often accumulated to form the basis of qualifications or awards. Assessment, validation and recognition processes must also be agreed, among all those participating, and should respect existing national, regional, sectoral or institutional practice.

In cases where credit is able to be awarded, a points system might also be considered with points directly attributed to ECVET units and qualifications.

ECVET practitioners are able to benefit from the use of common European documents, or templates, that promote quality in learning mobility, namely:

- **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)**: a voluntary agreement, between competent institutions, which sets out the framework for credit transfer and accumulation; the MoU formalizes the ECVET relationship through confirming mutual acceptance of the status of, and the procedures put in place by, competent institutions.
- **Learning Agreement (LA)**: a contract signed by all mobility parties, including the learner, in which the learning duration and expected learning outcomes are confirmed alongside mechanisms for assessment, validation and recognition.

ECVET and Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes are defined in the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of the EQF, and in a similar ECVET Recommendation, as *"statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process, and which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence"*. Learning outcomes are usually developed as a part of the process of designing and building qualifications, and can be achieved, by individual learners, through various different learning pathways, modes of delivery and learning contexts (formal, non-formal and informal).

Whilst the European definition of learning outcomes uses the terms *knowledge, skills and competence*, as a common denominator, learning outcomes are often described using terminology or descriptors already in place across different European countries, regions and sectors. Once developed, learning outcomes are usually grouped together to form units, according to one or more common criteria (for example, linguistic, occupational or technical nature; complementary competences; level of learning). Units are then brought together to form whole qualifications. Decisions on the grouping of learning outcomes remain with the competent institutions in each country.

In terms of geographical mobility, ECVET targets the improved recognition of learning outcomes, enabling individuals to fully integrate mobility-related achievements into new or existing learning pathways, recognising and making visible that which they have learned abroad. Successful implementation of ECVET requires that qualifications be described using learning outcomes, with many of the technical components of ECVET underpinned by their use:

- in some European countries, the achievement of learning outcomes results in credit being awarded, following a process of validation, with such credit often contributing to the achievement of a qualification or award.
- in other countries, where unit-based qualifications are not in use, or where qualifications systems do not allow for credit accumulation or transfer, learning outcomes can be developed specifically for mobility purposes, with activities recognised as a part of the curriculum, yet with achievements often viewed as extra-credit.

In all cases learning outcomes should be agreed in advance, and communicated to all parties, with direct reference made in the learning agreement.

Additional information on the use of learning outcomes for ECVET and geographical mobility can be found in the ECVET Toolkit[1].

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[1] http://www.ecvet-toolkit.eu/ecvet-toolkit/ecvet-toolkit

3 Development and implementation of ECVET tools in partners' countries

To grasp the **development of ECVET in Europe**, it is important to initially consider the broader context. For example, many countries are in the process of modernising their VET systems, tackling issues such as the introduction of learning outcomes and the development of a unit-based approach. National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) are also being developed, or developed further, with many countries reflecting on the value (and need for) credit systems and ECVET as a part of this.

Since 2010, following the adoption by the European Parliament and the Council of the ECVET recommendation (European Parliament and Council of the EU, 2009), Cedefop has been regularly monitoring the implementation of ECVET.

The last monitoring report has been published by Cedefop[2] in 2016 "**ECVET in Europe: monitoring report 2015**"[3].

This is the fifth monitoring report, in which Cedefop tried to capture whether vocational education and training systems provide opportunities for individuals to have their learning outcomes transferred or accumulated towards vocational qualifications. It also looked into how countries promote ECVET and inform all stakeholders about these opportunities. Although there is still a long way to go to the moment that we can speak about a European credit system in VET, the monitoring shows that many steps have been taken and quite a lot has been accomplished in the Member States, with their different starting points and different educational practices and cultures.

It is sometimes difficult to separate the development and implementation of ECVET principles from the developments of national qualification frameworks. Based on learning outcomes, NQFs have made significant progress. The same could be said for the validation of non-formal and informal learning and the modularisation of training programmes. ECVET-related developments go hand in-hand with, and result from, reforms aimed at transparency and permeability of education and training systems, better employability processes and employment or re-employment.

There is no doubt that the implementation of a credit system for VET could be the turning point in making VET more attractive and will enable learners to experience mobility as well as permeability with higher education. Progress has been achieved but more commitment towards establishing a credit system for VET that is transparent across all Member States is increasingly becoming the next step in a quality VET system.

3.1 Poland

Poland Cross-country geographic mobility for IVET (Initial Vocational Education and Training) is not a national priority but there is growing interest among stakeholders in using ECVET as a tool to support it. Transfer of learning outcomes and periods of employment abroad are recognised case by case. The NQF was linked to the EQF in 2013. The IVET qualifications and core curricula are based on units of learning outcomes, which are in line with principles of ECVET. Qualifications are awarded based on the assessment of LO (Learning Outcomes) conducted by external validation and certification bodies. Vocational diplomas (compound qualifications) and vocational certificates (single qualifications) can be awarded, also based on LO acquired through non-formal or informal learning. The implementation of ECVET principles for CVET is

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[2] CEDEFOP - European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/)

[3] "ECVET in Europe: monitoring report 2015". Luxembourg: Publications Office. Cedefop research paper; No 56. https://publications.europa.eu/it/publication-detail/-/publication/493c40b3-3c29-11e6-a825-01aa75ed71a1/language-en

prepared and tested. It is expected that ECVET will be implemented in all contexts following the adoption of the Polish qualification framework and modernised qualification system. No decision has yet been taken on use of ECVET credit points. The national team of ECVET experts is promoting ECVET through workshops focused on how to implement ECVET during international mobility. In addition, site visits in institutions implementing ECVET in mobility projects are being carried out. An NCP-ECVET (National Contact Point for European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training) has not yet been appointed.

3.2 Italy

VET providers actively participate in mobility actions funded by EU programmes. Within these, learning abroad can be recognised by the home institution. Education and training providers define units of learning outcomes for mobility actions. VET and HE (Higher Education) structures are compatible with ECVET principles. Most reforms included designing learning outcomes-based curricula and units. The Ministry of Education, University and Research issued guidelines for ET (Education and Training) providers that include learning outcomes. Higher technical education and training is organised in modules and units; training credits are recognised by HE institutions and are ECTS-compatible. In principle, the ET system enables switching between learning pathways. Legislation on certification and validation of competences was introduced in 2012 (Legge Fornero) and in 2013 the Decree 13/2013 defined the standards. Studies point to a growing interest to ECVET. A recent formal decision (the State-region agreement, January 2015) defines indicators and procedures to certify competences and to develop a credit system for IVET and CVET compatible with ECVET. This decision has to be implemented by the regions even if in some (seven regions), certification and validation system has already been set up. A team of experts and a community of practice exist, but the latter needs to be developed. An NCP-ECVET has not yet been officially nominated.

3.3 United Kingdom

England: Cross-country international geographic mobility for VET is supported predominantly through EU-funded projects. There is no legislative framework to enable automatic recognition of learning outcomes obtained abroad: awarding organisations (regulated by OFQUAL, the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation) recognise learning outcomes achieved outside their own programmes at organisational discretion, and in accordance with any applicable regulatory requirements for the qualification or sector. Europass mobility can be used to record learning periods spent abroad. The VET system is based on learning outcomes that are combined to establish units, which are allocated credits via a national credit system. There are clear procedures for accumulation, recognition and transfer of credit. Units in VET programmes are assessed independently within qualifications, and are linked to credits. No formal decision has been taken to apply ECVET to the current national system, though, in theory, legislation/regulation is compatible with ECVET. The government has taken the decision to encourage the use of ECVET for international mobility purposes and as such supports the UK ECVET experts team to promote the use of ECVET to VET providers. The UK ECVET experts develop guidance, advice and resources for increased understanding and use of ECVET. An NCP-ECVET, ECCTIS Ltd, is in place.

Northern Ireland: Learning outcomes assessed abroad can be recognised as part of pilot projects between the participating countries when satisfying the specifications set by qualifications awarding organisations. Europass mobility can be used to record learning periods spent abroad. The QCF (qualifications and credit framework) was introduced across England, Wales and Northern Ireland (EWNI) in 2008 for VET qualifications. The QCF regulations set out how QCF units and qualifications should be designed (based on learning outcomes and credit) and the procedures for accumulation (rules of combination), recognition and

transfer. Credit-based units of learning outcomes can be assessed independently within these qualifications. An NQF also exists in EWNI alongside the QCF mainly for the school/general (academic) qualifications (GCSEs and GCEs). These frameworks are currently under review to bring the two together into a single framework. Validation of non-formal and informal learning varies with certification bodies and sectors and is limited by the discretion of the awarding organisation. This is due to the lack of agreement between competent institutions, and the range of learning experiences which need to be recognised. The UK ECVET experts' team develop guidance, advice and resources for increased understanding and use of ECVET for transnational mobility. An NCP-ECVET, the Council for Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CCEA), is in place.

Scotland: Cross-country geographic mobility for VET is not a specific national priority. All achieved learning outcomes abroad are reassessed at national level (double assessment) due to national quality assurance measures. Europass mobility can be used to recognise learning periods spent abroad, while complete qualifications gained can be recognised through a UK NARIC comparability statement. There are no plans to devise legislation related to ECVET although the main building blocks to support it are in place. A credit and qualifications framework has been in place for more than 10 years. Credit-based units of learning outcomes are already developed and strongly embedded in the VET system. Units are assessed independently within qualifications, and are linked to credits. Validation of non-formal and informal learning varies with certification bodies and sectors and is limited by the discretion of the awarding body. This is due to the lack of agreement between competent institutions, and the range of learning experiences which need to be recognised. A UK-wide ECVET expert team continues to work to develop guidance, advice and resources for increased understanding and future use of ECVET. Periodic workshops and events are held for information and staff development, particularly for the tertiary college sector. An NCP-ECVET, the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership (SCQFP), is in place.

Wales: Cross-country mobility for VET is not a specific national priority for VET. However, CollegesWales, the national membership organisation for further education colleges in Wales, coordinates a pan-Wales consortium application for Erasmus+ on behalf of the sector in Wales. All learning outcomes achieved abroad are reassessed at national level (double assessment) due to national quality assurance measures. Europass mobility is used to recognise learning periods spent abroad, while complete qualifications gained can be recognised through a UK NARIC comparability statement. There are no plans to devise legislation for ECVET; in theory, a credit and qualifications framework (CQFW) which has been in place for more than 10 years is compatible. Credit-based units of learning outcomes are already developed and strongly embedded in the VET system. Units are assessed independently within qualifications, and are linked to credits. Validation of non-formal and informal learning varies with certification bodies and sectors and is limited by the discretion of the awarding body. This is due to the lack of agreement between competent institutions, and the range of learning experiences which need to be recognised. The UK ECVET experts develop guidance, advice and resources for increased understanding and future use of ECVET. An NCP-ECVET, CollegesWales/ColegauCymru, is in place.

3.4 Greece

Cross-country mobility has been supported by the (former) lifelong learning programme and Erasmus+. Learning abroad is included in assessment of the overall programme by the home institution. VET providers are engaged in defining units of learning outcomes for mobility purposes. The NQF has been designed by the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (Eoppep). The qualifications register is being developed to include qualifications from formal education, with the emphasis on learning outcomes. However, the learning outcomes approach has not been fully adopted by

the education and training system; the process has been gradual, so far. IVET has been mainly input oriented but analysis of IVET qualifications according to a learning outcomes approach has been completed. There is no legislation that foresees the development of a credit system in line with ECVET (units of learning outcomes, credit points and partnerships) and compatible with the NQF, creating the necessary legal and regulatory framework. Currently, there is no framework to support the transfer of assessed learning outcomes between qualifications or institutions, yet in some cases learning (i.e. semesters) can be recognised and validated to avoid double assessment. The existing legal framework for validation of non-formal and informal learning has not been implemented but validation is possible for professionals in private security services, in some technical occupations (including plumbers, technical works machinery operators, liquid and gas fuel installation and welding) and for teaching competence of adult trainers in non-formal learning. There have been EU-funded projects related to ECVET and a national team of ECVET experts has been set up. An NCP-ECVET, Eoppep, is in place.

4 The methodology of transfer of units of learning outcomes in Eco-industry based on the Ecomentor project

A Competence Matrix has been implemented in order to allow a clear and detailed correspondence between Learning Outcomes related to mentoring activities in the Eco-industry and the training units of the Ecomentor project training course.

COMPETENCE MATRIX			
Training Module	**Modular Unit**	**Hours**	**Learning Outcomes (knowledge, skills and competences)**
Module 1 **Planning the mentoring activities**	M1_JM_01. Applying principles of adult learning and mentoring in the work based learning process	4	The learner (mentor): - Understands the role of mentor in learning process - Understands the principles of adult education and VET - Is able to identify which types of learning would be most effective for the learner (mentee) - Is able to agree the rules and boundaries of mentoring relationship - Acts in a way that shows he/she is willing to help the learner (mentee) - Takes responsibility for his/her own work approach and role - Identifies opportunities for mentoring
Module 1 **Planning**		4	The learner (mentor): - Understands the methods of identification of learner's needs (mentee), learning objectives and goals - Understands the methods used to develop and agree with the learner (mentee) plans and to implement individual learning programmes - Understands the ways of preparing and agreeing on the contractual arrangements with the learner (mentee) according to organisational policies and procedures - Is able to prepare for the mentoring process in terms of time and resources

the mentoring activities	M1_JM_02. Designing and planning the mentoring process		- Is able to identify and accommodate learner's (mentee) objectives and needs - Is able to plan workplace mentoring process - Listens and responds effectively and check understanding - Respects the client's need for information, commitment and confidentiality within legal and organisational requirements - Invites a two-way exchange of information and feedback with the learner and others - Enables the learner (mentee) to take responsibility for and ownership of their objectives and goals
Total Module 1		**8**	
Module 2 **Conducting the mentoring activities**	M2_JM_03. Analysing the conditions relevant to the mentoring process at the workplace	4	The learner (mentor): - Understands the organisational policies and procedures relevant to the mentoring process - Understands the operational context, working methods, resources and relevant personnel of the employing organisation - Understands the key personnel and support available from the learner's school, training organisation - Understands the common factors and barriers affecting the mentoring process in the workplace - Is able to explain the term 'corporate culture' in general to the learner and to describe the specifics of corporate culture of the specific company or organisation - Is able to uncover problems that may arise regarding the learner's job satisfaction or mentoring process taking into account the input from the learner and help in their solution - Takes responsibility for his/her own work approach and role - Respects the client's need for information, commitment and confidentiality within legal and

Module 2 **Conducting the mentoring activities**			organisational requirements - Complies with, and ensure that others comply with, legal requirements, industry regulations, organisational policies and procedures and professional codes - Identifies opportunities for mentoring - Invites a two-way exchange of information and feedback with the learner and others
	M2_JM_04. Conducting the mentoring process	10	The learner (mentor): - Understands the principles, approaches, and methods of mentoring in the context of implementation of successful work-based learning programmes - Understands the conflict resolution theories, methods, and models that can be used during mentoring process - Is able to use mentoring techniques and methods for achieving learner's (mentee) learning outcomes and goals - Is able to work with learner (mentee) to undertake the learning - Is able to ensure that the learner (mentee) has an adequate ongoing level of support by workplace management and colleagues for learning and where relevant settling into the organization - Takes responsibility for his/her own work approach and role - Acts in a way that shows he/she is willing to help the learner - Creates and maintains an effective relationship with the learner (mentee) that will help the learner to reach their professional goals - Adapts his/her personal style to empathise with different types of learner (mentee) - Seeks to understand people's needs and motivations - Enables the learner (mentee) to

			take responsibility for and ownership of their objectives and goals
Module 2 **Conducting the mentoring activities**	M2_JM_05. Recording and reviewing the mentoring process	**6**	The learner (mentor): - Understands the principles and methods for assessing and monitoring learner's progress and providing feedback - Understands the methods and tools of review for mentoring process - Understands the organisational requirements for recording and reporting the interactions, outcomes, and progress of the workplace mentoring process - Is able to agree and record the interactions, outcomes, and progress towards objectives and goals with the learner according to organisational requirements - Is able to review the learning progress with the learner at regular intervals - Builds and maintains rapport over sustained periods - Takes responsibility for his/her own work approach and role - Creates and maintains an effective relationship with the learner that will help the learner to reach their professional goals - Respects the client's need for information, commitment and confidentiality within legal and organisational requirements
	Total Module 2	**20**	
		4	The learner (mentor): - Understands the principles of summative evaluation of work-based mentoring process - Understands the principles for documentation and presentation of evaluation results - Is able to prepare for the evaluation of the workplace mentoring process - Is able to ensure that results of

Module 3			
Module 3 **Evaluating the mentoring activities**	M3_JM_06. Preparing the evaluation of the mentoring process		evaluation of the work-based mentoring process are taken into account for the improvement of the mentoring programme and organisational procedures - Takes responsibility for his/her own work approach and role - Complies with, and ensure that others comply with, legal requirements, industry regulations, organisational policies and procedures and professional codes - Identifies opportunities for mentoring
Module 3 **Evaluating the mentoring activities**	M3_JM_07. Conducting evaluation of the mentoring process	6	The learner (mentor): - Understands the methods and tools for evaluating the mentoring process - Understands the methods to analyse the evaluation results as well as their use in order to identify areas for improvement - Is able to evaluate the mentoring process in terms of its effectiveness in meeting learning objectives - Is able to document and present evaluation results - Is able to draw useful conclusions from the evaluation process, identify areas for improvement and take appropriate actions - Takes responsibility for his/her own work approach and role - Builds and maintains rapport over sustained periods - Complies with, and ensure that others comply with, legal requirements, industry regulations, organisational policies and procedures and professional codes
Total Module 3		**10**	
Total		**38**	

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6   Opportunities for using ECVET in eco-industry for validation of educational achievements and mobility of the EU workers

The Europe 2020 Strategy is subtitled "A European Strategy for Smart, Green and Inclusive Growth". It is based on priorities that come to clarify the nature of growth and headline targets that serve as benchmarks for the EU in 2020 on employment, education, social inclusion, research and development, and climate and energy. The flagship initiatives in this strategy are among others:

- 'Resource-efficient Europe' to help decouple economic growth from the use of resources, support the shift towards a low-carbon economy, increase the use of renewable energy sources, modernize the transport sector and promote energy efficiency.
- 'An Industrial Policy for the Globalization Era' to improve the business environment, notably for SMEs, and to support the development of a strong and sustainable industrial base able to compete globally.
- 'An Agenda for New Skills and Jobs' to modernize labour markets and empower people by developing their skills throughout the life cycle with a view to increase labour participation and better match labour supply and demand, including through labour mobility.

Growth and job creation will result through new business opportunities. The ecosystem and resource management, renewable energy, eco-industries and recycling all have a particularly high potential for employment growth. Environment policies contribute to job creation and social inclusion in the EU. It can create new demand for environmentally-friendly goods and services, allowing eco-industries to expand their business and take on new workers. All these activities will favour 'An Agenda for New Skills and Jobs'.

A skilled and flexible workforce is increasingly identified as a key to economic development. With the emergence of a global market in both educational services and labour, a system of mutual recognition and transparency of skills and qualifications have become important elements of international co-operation.

Furthermore, we can state that high-quality work-based learning is now central to European education and training policies as a means of improving employability and increasing economic competitiveness, while stressing quality assurance and permeability of the systems.

ECVET is a tool to support mobility and its transparency in terms of using learning outcomes as well as establishing common procedures.

Nowadays in Europe the implementation of ECVET for recognising mentoring skills in the eco-industry has a strong potential and would be of great benefits for workers.

Particularly, an evaluation system and certification of skills can promote and develop:

- Qualified career path making the personal curriculum more interesting thanks to mentoring competences;
- Career and professional mobility, because with certified competences (either for those acquired in formal, non-formal or informal contexts), it would be possible to build a personal professional growth path and match it with personalized training courses;
- Geographical mobility.

7 Other ways for recognition of competences among different EU states

The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) are two of a series of instruments developed to support European cooperation in education and training.
Other instruments include:
- **NARIC** (National Academic Recognition Information Centres);
- **VNFIL** (Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning);
- **EQAVET** (European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training);
- Europass: a portfolio of five documents with the aim of enabling European citizens to present their acquired skills and qualifications in a clear and comparable way (CV, Language Passport, Certificate Supplement, Diploma Supplement, Mobility);
- **ECTS** (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System).

7.1 Role of the NARIC system

The **NARIC (National Academic Recognition Information Centres) network** supports the recognition of diplomas and periods of study undertaken in other countries. It consists of national centres in the countries covered by the Erasmus+ programme and works closely with the wider European Network of Information Centres covering the whole of the European Higher Education Area.

The status and scope of work of individual centres differs from country to country. In most countries, higher education institutions are autonomous, taking their own decisions on the admission of foreign students, as well as any exemptions for students on the basis of education undertaken abroad. While some NARIC centres make binding decisions on recognition cases, most offer advice on international education systems and qualifications.
The European Commission supports the activities of the NARIC network through the exchange of information and experience between countries, the identification of good practices, the comparative analysis of systems and policies in this field, and by supporting cooperation projects such as the development of the European Area of Recognition Manual.

ENIC-NARIC centres created and maintain their respective Country Page up-to-date with official information on:
- National Information Centres
- National education bodies- System of education
- University education
- Quality Assurance in Higher Education
- Post-secondary non-university education
- Recognized higher education institutions
- Policies and procedures for the recognition of qualifications
- Qualifications Framework
- Diploma Supplement Information

Partner Country	
Poland	http://www.enic-naric.net/poland.aspx
Italy	http://www.enic-naric.net/italy.aspx
United Kingdom	http://www.enic-naric.net/united-kingdom.aspx
Greece	http://www.enic-naric.net/greece.aspx

Full list of Countries
http://www.enic-naric.net/educational-systems-country-profiles-and-other-tools.aspx

7.2 Recognition of informal and non-formal competences

Validation of non-formal and informal learning, or the effort to make visible and value the learning taking place outside formal education, has grown in importance and visibility over the last few decades. Stakeholders at national as well as European level have argued consistently that validation can play a key role in opening up education and training systems to the learning taking place at work and during leisure time.

The importance to Europe of skilled and knowledgeable citizens extends beyond formal education to learning acquired in non-formal or informal ways. Citizens must be able to demonstrate what they have learned to use this learning in their career and for further education and training.

Countries need to establish systems that allow individuals to identify, document, assess and certify (=validate) all forms of learning to use this learning for advancing their career and for further education and training.

The **Council Recommendation on NonFormal and Informal Learning** (20 December 2012)[4] encourages Member States to put in place national arrangements for validation by 2018. These arrangements will enable individuals to increase the visibility and value of their knowledge, skills and competences acquired outside formal education and training: at work, at home or in voluntary activities.
Member States agreed to put in place arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL) experiences by 2018, enabling individuals to obtain a qualification (or part of it) on the basis of their validated experiences.

Cedefop cooperates with the European Commission and Member States to develop validation systems by:
- updating and hosting the European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning;
- disseminating and further developing European guidelines on validation;
- piloting data visualisation and creating a European database on validation, which connects the European Guidelines with the European inventory;
- conducting case and thematic studies;
- assisting the Commission and countries in organising peer learning activities (PLAs) and workshops.

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[4] COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2012:398:0001:0005:EN:PDF

The **European Guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning** identify main challenges facing policy makers and practitioners and present possible responses to those challenges.

The guidelines are practical, and provide advice for individuals and institutions responsible for initiating, developing, implementing and operating validation arrangements. Their impact relies exclusively on their relevance and ability to add value at national or local level.

The second edition of the European guidelines (12/2015) is the result of a two-year process involving various stakeholders active in validation at European, national and/or sectoral levels.

The **European Inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning** is a regularly updated overview of validation practices and arrangements across Europe. It is compiled in cooperation with the European Commission.

Recognising that society has an interest in using all available skills, national and regional authorities and sectoral bodies have introduced many arrangements for validating non-formal and informal learning. Yet information about how such learning is identified, documented, assessed and certified is, in most countries, not easily accessible.

The European inventory makes information on current practices – including examples from selected sectors – available. It covers all countries taking part in the EU 2020 cooperation process.

So far the inventory has been updated five times (2004, 2005, 2008, 2010, 2014 and 2016). A new update is planned for 2018.

The **European database on validation of non-formal and informal learning** is a pilot data visualisation project, which connects the European Guidelines with the European inventory.

Poland

In the Polish legislation, validation of qualifications acquired in a non-formal and informal mode is not regulated. It is identified mainly with adult learning. So far no works on systemic solution of this issue have been commenced. For several years there have been made attempts to implement, under the existing legal framework, solutions consisting in verification and validation of qualifications acquired through work experience. Initiatives of undertaking actions within this scope appear during the completion of projects that allow for testing of innovative solutions, such as the model of validation of competences acquired in the course of informal or non-formal education.

The methodology of validating informal qualifications, presented herein, refers to the essence of state exams confirming professional qualifications obtained in formal education and uses standards of professional qualifications and modular programmes of vocational training as tools supporting and organising the competence validation process in Poland.

Validation of non-formal and informal competences

Validation of professional competences conducted in Poland during the completion of some EU projects considers two complementary processes:
- verification of knowledge, skills and professional liability of a candidate,
- issuance of a "certificate" recognised by entrepreneurs.

Competence validation, as a way of obtaining the "certificate", has some value only when everybody knows about its existence and methods of obtaining it, while the "certificate" itself enjoys recognition of

entrepreneurs and local community. At the same time, it opens the path to further vocational training and learning. The main concepts of competence validation mean in practice confirmation of qualifications through validation of acquired experience.

Methodological assumptions of the professional competence validation process include e.g.:

- provision of information and promotion in a local environment of a new approach to competence assessment,
- development of procedures and tools of competence validation,
- preparation of technical and teaching infrastructure of the exam site,
- preparation of examiners for assessment of a value of professional competence,
- inclusion of representatives of employers, also professional self-governing bodies, in the competence validation process,
- quality assurance for competence validation and transparent certification mechanisms.

Stages of validation of non-formal and informal competences in Poland

Below you may find particular stages of validation of non-formal and informal competences in Poland developed in the project funded by the European Social Fund.

Stage I – Information meeting

While participating in a meeting, candidates receive detailed information on the entire process, while in case of any doubts they may obtain answers to burning questions. The meeting aims at the discussion of assumptions of competence validation and acquainting candidates with documentation (rules and regulations of participation and agreement on participation in professional competence validation). During the meeting, one informs also on a date of the soonest validation. If the candidate decides on the confirmation of its skills, it complies with any formalities, i.e. signs an agreement and specifies the date of participation in a theoretical and practical exam.

Stage II – Theoretical exam

On the day of validation of informal competences, participants take the theoretical exam first. It consists in taking theoretical tests verifying knowledge within the scope of qualifications reported for validation (one test per every component qualification). Theoretical exam lasts about one hour, while members of the Examination Board assess provided answers directly after it. The candidate qualifies for the next stage if it scores at least 60% of required points within the scope of every reported component qualification.

If participants obtain an insufficient number of points (less than 60% of points but not more than 30%), they are entitled to a supplementary conversation with members of the Examination Board. It consists in holding an informed debate between the candidate and examiners. Often an additional opportunity to demonstrate knowledge consists in taking another theoretical test. Final assessment of the candidate's level of knowledge, resulting from supplementary actions, decides on its admission to the next stage of competence validation.

Stage III – Practical exam

A positive result of the theoretical exam enables the candidate to take a practical exam part, which is connected with drawing by lot a practical task (test) from the prepared set. This exam, apart from compliance of performance of a test task with the received scheme, aims at the assessment of being liable and complies with occupational health and safety principles, takes place under simulated conditions, prepared particularly for this purpose. Assessment of an undertaking begins upon filing the material demand and is continuous up to the end. Therefore, members of the Board do not refer to the very result, its compliance with the scheme, but through observation assess the task performance process, with particular consideration of OHS regulations and quality of work, simultaneously filing an assessment card.
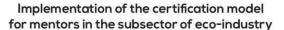
At the end, as evidence of a successfully performed task, there is taken a photo of a candidate against its "work" as an effect of the practical task. In addition, a skill of system dismantling is also assessed. As there is no time limitation to performance of a specific task, time spent at the Stage III depends only on the participant's pace of work.

Stage IV – Assessment of task performance and decision of the Examination Board
A decision on confirming the assessed professional competence is made after the end of the practical task, while its results from particular stages are documented on an exam protocol form, confirmed by all members of the Examination Board participating on a given day in the competence validation process.
Due to the exam specificity (skill validation), the Commission makes a descriptive collective assessment ("passed" or "failed") based on partitive zero-one assessments ("compliant" or "non-compliant" with requirements) resulting from correctness, quality and responsibility for performance of the practical task.

Stage V – Qualification validation and certificate issuance
Issuance of a formal validation of competences acquired by way of experience occurs based on documentation collected in a specially created candidate's dossier.
Verification of the dossier content, confirming the history of the candidate's competence validation process, with a final decision of the Examination Board is conducted also by an external unit that has not directly participated in the certification process. If evidence is compliant with the Examination Board's decision, a competence certificate is issued and transferred to an interested person.

Examination tools: sheets of theoretical tests and sets of practical tasks are subject to verification and improvement in the course of the validation process. Evaluation questionnaires for participants (clients) of the competence validation process are applied i.a. for this purpose. In addition, there are developed documents specifying the principles of conduct of competence validation participants, guidelines for instructors and persons being subject to assessment, which also contributes to ensuring quality of this service. It should be emphasised that the competence validation model, verified in practice, is based on the foundation of national professional qualification standards, which constitute a recognised standard in the environment of employers' organisation, education and other labour market institutions. Therefore, it is a solution integrated into the present system describing qualifications required in the work environment in the reality of Polish economy. It constitutes a proposal, compliant with superior documents, for validation of competence acquired in informal and non-formal education, for which professional qualification standards constitute a central point of reference.

Italy
As a result of years of debate and initiatives since 2012, a national legal framework on validation has progressively developed in Italy. The emergence of a national policy is linked to the Law 92/2012 on the reform of the Labour Market, which defines the validation of non-formal and informal learning, in the framework of the national system of certification of competences, as one of the key elements to ensure and implement lifelong learning. The law establishes rules and regulatory requirements (standards) concerning the characteristics and the parties involved, with the aim of ensuring transparency, usability and broad accessibility of validation/certification services.

The implementation of Law 92/2012 led to the adoption of the Legislative Decree on the "**National competences certification and validation of non-formal and informal learning**" n. 13/2013, which covers all the range of qualifications from HE and VET sectors, regardless of whether they have legal value or not.

On 30 June 2015, an Inter-ministerial Decree, by Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Education, defined the National Framework of Regional Qualifications according to Decree 13/2013. The National Framework of Regional Qualifications established:

1) A mechanism of mutual recognition among regional qualifications;
2) Process, attestation and system standard procedures for the services of identification/validation of non-formal and informal learning and certification of competences.

Validation in Higher Education

In the HE sector, since 2014 there has been a number of new initiatives from RUIAP (Rete Universitaria Italiana per l'Apprendimento Permanente - Italian university network for lifelong learning), which is an important Italian university network that brings together about 30 Italian universities engaged in promoting lifelong learning at university level (University LLL) member of EUCEN (European University Continuing Education Network)[5]. In 2014/2015 the RUIAP, through the University of Ferrara, promoted a MOOC entitled "Recognition of competences and validation of prior learning" providing 20 university credits (ECTS). This was a preparatory initiative for the launch of a first level Master s programme in "Expert in accompaniment to competence recognition and validation of prior learning".

As for the VET sector, In Italy the Regions are constitutionally in charge of ruling and managing the VET system. After a relevant and complex technical work, on 22 January 2015 the Regions agreed on the "National Framework of Regional Qualifications" and on 30 June 2015 the Agreement was recognised in an Inter-ministerial Decree signed by the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education.

Validation in the Labour Market

The Law 92/2012 on the reform of the Labour Market indicates employment services and enterprises, together with schools, universities and VET providers, as relevant actors. It also states that these stakeholders should constitute local networks for the concrete application of the policies on lifelong learning and validation. The system designed by Decree 13/2013 covers all the range of qualifications, including professional qualifications (regulated and unregulated). These are the main reasons why the Italian strategy and policy on validation is directly related to the labour market as it has been developed primarily for employability purposes. The qualifications authorities are the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and the Ministry of Economic Development – EU Policies Department. However, both of these institutional contexts have not yet addressed the validation issue in an organic way.

Concerning the services of validation, in many Regions the bodies entitled for the validation services are, sometimes exclusively, the public or private employment services. Some sectors were spontaneous in their involvement. One of the most interesting projects concerns the Banks and Insurance sector.

Funding of VPL

The funding framework for validation activities has not changed since 2014 and is mostly represented by public funds, mainly regional and European. Also Employers' Training Funds (Fondi Interprofessionali) have been used for financing validation projects and models. Within the last two years (2014-2015), there has been an increased use of the Youth Guarantee funds for validation procedures addressed to NEET beneficiaries, including the national project of validation in the Civil Service.

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[5] http://www.eucen.eu/

There are some pilot experiences of co-funding between private and public funds. In **Emilia Romagna** Region there are some experiences of funding in cooperation between public and specific enterprises interested in validation for their employees.

The **Emilia Romagna Region** has its own system of formalization and certification of competences (SRFC-Sistema regionale di formalizzazione e certificazione delle competenze) *however and everywhere acquired*. Everyone can obtain a **Skills and Knowledge Sheet** (in Italian: Scheda Capacità e Conoscenze) that formalizes correlations between documented evidence and the skills and knowledge corresponding to one or more Competence Units of a Regional Qualification; it is achieved following of an Assessment by Evidence or following an Assessment by Evaluation Interview or Assessment by Exam in case they end with a positive evaluation referred to specific knowledge or skills.

Greece

The completion of the referencing of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) in December 2015 is a significant first step towards the development of a framework for validation of non-formal and informal learning in Greece. The law on Restructuring of Secondary Education (Law 4186/2013) identifies entities/institutions offering non-formal learning that can lead to recognized certifications on a national level. According to the law, non-formal learning institutions (public or private) are:

- Vocational Training Schools (Sxoli Epaggelmatikhs Katartishs – SEK) that offer initial vocational training to graduates of compulsory education – these institutions will however be abolished on 31 August 2019;
- Institutes of Vocational Education and Training (Institouto Epaggelmatikhs Katartishs- IEK), offering initial vocational training to graduates of formal, non-compulsory secondary education (general or technical lyceums) and of SEK;
- Lifelong Learning Centers, offering continuous vocational training, general adult education, vocational guidance and lifelong counselling;
- Colleges, which offer non-formal learning to graduates of non-compulsory secondary education. These institutions can be public or private.

Private providers have to meet specific criteria to receive licensing. EOPPEP is the National Organization for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance, an all-encompassing statutory body investing on better quality and more efficient & reliable lifelong learning services in Greece. EOPPEP operates under the supervision of the Minister of Education & Religious Affairs, Culture & Sports and is seated in Athens.

Moreover, the Hellenic Accreditation System (ESYD) is established by the Law 4468/2017; a non-profit legal entity of private law with the purpose of the implementation and management of the National Accreditation System. The autonomous operational unit "National Accreditation System" of Law 4109/2013 is seceded from the legal entity of private law under the name "National Quality Infrastructure System - ESYP" and is included in the legal entity "Hellenic Accreditation System" which is established by this Law. ESYD employs external assessors and experts. The assessors are selected and trained according to strictly defined criteria and procedures and they must comply with specific regulations concerning their independence, integrity and confidentiality. One of the accreditations that ESYD is providing is for Person Certification Bodies. ESYD is responsible for accrediting bodies and training programs according to ISO 17024/2012, which contains principles and requirements for a body certifying persons against specific requirements, and includes the development and maintenance of a certification scheme for persons.

Validation in Higher Education

The Greek Constitution states that universities are public and charge no fees. At present, the Greek State has no system in place to recognize degrees wholly or partially obtained from private universities in Greece (though it does recognize degrees from private universities abroad via DOATAP [formerly DIKATSA]). Consequently, nearly all private universities in Greece cooperate with foreign bodies for accreditation or validation, typically in the UK and USA. All private universities in Greece cooperate with foreign bodies, usually Universities, for accreditation or validation, typically in the UK and USA.

The Greek law permits public bodies to set up institutions of higher education (at university level). The Greek validated institution may act as a branch or franchise, or it may be independent and offer degrees validated by several foreign universities. Some of these Greek institutions are independent businesses; some are legal branches of a foreign university or college. A few institutions listed here under "validated" are (partially) accredited in the USA but operate under a for-profit basis (AUA, NYC). Most non-profit institution in Greece are accredited, none offers validated degrees (this may change).

Validation in the Labour Market

Validation in labour market in Greece is limited compared to other European countries. In Greece there still seems to be a poor disappointing connection between education and labour market, due to disagreements between the involved stakeholders of the fields of education, job training and the labour market, with regards to professional rights. A commonly agreed framework of key qualifications has to be created and certified.

Funding of validation

The Greek government covers costs for validation of prior learning (VPL).

United Kingdom

There are a number of routes through which learners can have their non-formal and informal learning recognised and validated in England and Northern Ireland. Validation of Prior Learning is used in relation to formal, regulated qualifications.

In vocational education, VPL is mainly used to tailor the learning offer and in higher education (HE), it can be used for access, exemption and award.

Progress and achievement in non-regulated learning (no accredited learning) can be recognised through a five-stage process known as RARPA, which however does not lead to any form of certification.

National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) represent an opportunity to validate workplace learning. They are aimed mainly at people in work and lead to a nationally-recognised qualification, proving the ability to perform an occupation to a nationally-recognised occupational standard.

VPL in Higher Education

For HE, the responsibility for RPL lies ultimately with the degree awarding body or other AO (as that is where ultimate responsibility for academic standards lies). Although there is no legislation that regulates RPL, there is a long tradition of recognising prior learning and encouraging mature students to participate in higher education.

In 2012-13, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) introduced the UK Quality Code for HE, which is 'the definitive reference point for all UK higher education providers'. The Quality Code sets out the 'expectations' that all providers of UK HE are required to meet (the Code applies to England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland). Each expectation is accompanied by a series of indicators that reflect 'sound practice'.

By bringing together assessment in relation to formal learning and RPL in one chapter, the aim was to demonstrate that both forms of assessment share common principles and that the quality assurance of RPL should be as firmly embedded as quality assurance for any other aspect of HE provision.

Validation in the Labour Market

National vocational qualifications (NVQs) are work-related, outcomes-based, competence-oriented qualifications which are based on national occupational standards (NOS3). They are mainly targeted to people who are currently in work and provide evidence of professional competence. They can be taken as a qualification on their own, or as part of an apprenticeship.

NVQs are assessed through evidence of performance against certain work-related tasks, rather than formal examinations. They can be individualised to the learner, to fit around his/her work commitments. There are no time limits on the completion of NVQs, no age limits and no special entry requirements.

At sector level, Skills Passports have been developed.

Funding of VPL

Providers are required to assess the prior learning of each individual learner against the learning outcomes of the qualification concerned and tailor the learning accordingly, so that the learner is not required to repeat learning already achieved. Where prior learning is accredited, funding awarded to the learning provider for the delivery of the qualification has to be reduced proportionally.

Where prior learning is not accredited, the training provider still receives funding for providing the qualification, to cover the costs of the assessment activity required to ascertain whether the learner has achieved the learning outcomes in question and accredit that learning. In the HE sector, institutions have the autonomy to decide whether/how much to charge for an VPL procedure – the QAA Quality Code states only that there should be clear information on how much they charge.

In Northern Ireland, there are no specific funding arrangements for RPL. It is funded in the same way as formal learning would be.

8 European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training - EQAVET guidelines

The **European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET)** brings together the EU Member States, the Social Partners and the European Commission to develop and improve quality assurance in European VET systems within the context of the implementation of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework by:

– Assisting the Member States in developing effective approaches to support the implementation of the Reference Framework;
– Developing a culture of quality, to be embedded at European level and other levels with the help of the Quality Assurance National Reference Points and other Network members;
– Supporting the Member States and the European Commission in the monitoring and implementation of the Reference Framework within the context of the Education and Training 2020 Strategy;
– Supporting the quality assurance dimension of work in EQF and ECVET.

EQAVET is a community of practice where members and national experts:

– Exchange information and experience in open discussions;
– Initiate a process of mutual learning and consensus building for the development of common principles, reference criteria, indicators and tools for quality improvement in VET, and the implementation of the Reference Framework;
– Reach shared results and solutions in the development of guidelines and criteria for quality assurance, embedding a culture of quality improvement and sense of ownership in implementing the Reference Framework across Europe.

This community of practice leads to higher levels of cooperation and synergy within and across EU Member States on quality assurance related issues.

EQAVET's way of working: community of practice

EQAVET, through its programme of activities and structures, operates in a collaborative mode to create a sustainable platform or community of practice for quality assurance in VET.

The **European Quality Assurance Reference Framework** is designed to promote better vocational education and training by providing authorities with common tools for the management of quality.
The Reference Framework forms part of a series of European initiatives which aim is to recognise qualifications and competences received by learners across different countries or learning environments, thereby promoting modernisation, mutual trust and mobility in vocational education and training (VET).

Developed by Member States in cooperation with the European Commission, the Reference Framework has now been adopted by the European Parliament and the Council. It is a key element in the follow-up of the Copenhagen Declaration and the ongoing work in renewing Europe's education and training systems.

The adoption and implementation of the Framework in the participating countries is voluntary.

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