

*ECVET-BASED TRAINING OF TRAINERS IN ORGANIC FOOD
RETAILING TO 'ECOQUALIFY' QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM
(ECVET-ECOQUALIFY)*

LIFELONG LEARNING PROGRAMME
LEONARDO DA VINCI Transfer of innovation
No 2013-1-BG1-LEO05-08698

**ECVET-ECOQUALIFY
PROJECT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

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PROJECT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

I. INTRODUCTION

The current project management strategy is designed to contribute for the achievement of the project objectives in the following directions:

- Understand the project *objectives* and ensure they are thoroughly followed and achieved;
- Prepare a *project work plan* with achievable schedules and performance goals;
- Ensure the *project team* is well-organized, adequately staffed, and working well together;
- Establish efficient *partners' collaboration*, based on mutual agreement, good manners and permanent contacts.
- *Manage project schedule in terms of time* and deadlines according to the requirements of the LLP and design the activities adequately to the work program;
- Provide regular and traceable *budget management*;
- Evaluate the project regularly (internally and externally) in order to follow the achievement of the project *goals*.
- Identify and manage project *risks*.
- Working and managing the project in a *sustainable* manner.

II. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The **general objective** of the ECVET-EcoQualify project is to create a training course for teachers/trainers and tutors/instructors oriented to offer them the abilities needed, so that they will be able to design, plan and distribute ECVET and EQF-based training courses in the field of organic food retailing, including e-learning.

The **specific objectives** of the project are:

- Translate and adapt of the EQF and ECVET for EcoQualify to NQF of partner countries;
- Analyze, compile and define didactics and methodologies for training of teachers/trainers and tutors in organic sector based on the "EcoQualify" QAS and following the EQF and ECVET learning outcomes approach;
- Piloting the on-line training course and collect feedbacks for its improvement;
- Define of Community of Practice shared interests and manifest a common cooperation agreement among stakeholders of VET in organic retail sector in order to produce a market oriented training course.

III. PROJECT METHODOLOGY AND WORK PLAN

The **key phases** of the project (as they are outlined in the Annex 1: Gantt chart) are:

1. Project management and administration - The key objectives of this work package is to establish efficient management of the project concerning the overall planning, coordination and administration of the project in order to ensure completion of the tasks on time, within cost and to required quality standards, according to the planned budget and in compliance with the Administrative and Financial Rules of LLL. A strategy for project management will be developed. UARD as a project coordinator and contractor will be responsible for the overall project management.

2. Revision and elaboration of EQF and ECVET system for Eco-Qualify - the material concerning EQF and ECVET will be taken out of the already existing Handbook for the "Quality Assurance System "ECO-Qualify" into EQF and ECVET". All texts will be shortened and made easily accessible. A description of competence based learning will be laid out. Furthermore the difference between "knowledge", "skills" and "competence" will be explained in sufficient details thus enabling teachers and trainers to learn about these vital basics of all National Qualification Frameworks in a quick and efficient way.

3. Translating and adapting of EQF and ECVET-system for Eco-Qualify to NQF of partner countries. Preparation of the materials related to EQF and ECVET-system for Eco-Qualify for adaptation, translation and transfer. This activities will be preceded by the following elements: a/ Updating of transferable materials; b/ Designing of the materials. The main transferable product which needs to be adapted and translated is the Handbook called: "Integration of the Quality Assurance System "EcoQualify" into EQF and ECVET. The partners will provide materials, feedback and progress from the previous partnership projects in order to facilitate the process of adaptation and integration of the product to the current project activities.

4. Analysing, compiling and defining of didactics for training of teachers in organic sector following EQF and ECVET learning outcomes approach - The aim is to define the didactics for training as well as to instruct the trainers in practicing. Work package 4 is the fundament for the development of the pilot course (WP 5).

5. Developing of a pilot course - The aim of this work package is to develop a pilot training course, that will demonstrate to the target audience a method how to work with and transform a particular curriculum to ECVET.

6. Testing of the pilot course and revision - Testing of the functionality and practicability of the pilot course for training of teachers in organic sector following EQF and ECVET learning outcomes approach in practical application in Austria, Germany, Bulgaria, Italy, the Czech Republic and Turkey.

7. Community of practice in organic retail sector - Social Network Platform for Community of Practice will be set up with the following objectives:

- Exchange information and experience;
- Initiate a process of mutual learning and consensus building for development of common principles, criteria, methodology and tools for improvement of VET in organic food retailing, implementing the EQF and ECVET;
- Disseminate and implement (where it is possible) the results and products of the ECVET-EcoQualify project;
- Facilitate the creation of a market oriented pilot training course.

8. Quality Assurance and Evaluation

The aim of this work package is to monitor and evaluate the quality of all the activities, products/results and events implemented during the project lifetime as well as the quality of the transfer and its effectiveness and value in order to:

- Ensure project objectives are met.
- Ensure that project results are of the highest quality commensurate with European standards.
- Ensure that the programme of work is evaluated on formative basis.

An overall evaluation on the operation and management of the project, in particular the role of the coordinator/contractor, core partners and associated partners will be carried out. The evaluation methodology as a part of the Quality Management Plan will be a fundamental tool for improvement of good practice and therefore performance of the project.

9. Dissemination and Valorisation

The aim of this Work Package is to disseminate the project results/outcomes to the general public, education establishments and potential users, both at national level in the partner countries and at European level.

Two Partners - Organic Retailers Association (Austria) and Educational Research Association (Turkey) will drive the dissemination activities, but the rest of the partners will also have a role in dissemination, but at a lower level of effort.

III. STRUCTURE AND QUALITY OF CONSORTIUM

▪ Project coordinator/contractor

The promoter and project coordinator is the **University of Agribusiness and Rural Development /UARD/ (Bulgaria)** that has an extensive experience in the development of EU projects, especially in the LEONARDO DA VINCI programme. The work team of the promoter has developed some of its main activities to ecological themes and has recently participated in another Leonardo da Vinci project that focuses on training on New European Standards in the Context of Reformed EU Common Agricultural Policy /NewCAP/ (№ 2012-1-SK1-LEO05-04199). The UARD will coordinate and manage all the activities as project promoter and coordinator/contractor. All other tasks and responsibilities have been distributed reasonably according to organizational strengths and resources with partners with previous experience of leading LLP projects.

▪ Partnership

The partnership involves 9 partners across 5 European countries (Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany, and Italy) and 1 country in accession (Turkey) - specialized organizations covering various working fields vital to the project.

The partnership includes collaboration of 2 universities (UARD in Bulgaria and Canakkale Onsekiz Mart University in Turkey), 3 adult education providers - Adrialand (Italy), FORUM Berufsbildung e.V. and Ökomarkt Hamburg and 1 adult education providers association - Educational Research Association (Turkey).

The involvement of Ökomarkt e. V., Hamburg and FORUM Berufsbildung, Berlin, who are specialized in offering VET for the organic food retail, will bring a sufficient value for achievement of the project aims and objectives.

Institute Equalita with its experience in development and management of international projects, especially in the frame of EC programs will contribute to promote co-operation and networking of partners within the EU. Moreover, Institute Equalita was leading organization for the EcoQualify initiative in the framework of three bigger projects from 2002 to 2012.

Zivy Venkov as an organisation, assisting SMEs and local entrepreneurial and marketing initiatives will - together with FORUM Berufsbildung - assist in developing a market oriented pilot training course.

The Organic Retailers Association (ORA) as European Umbrella Association for Organic Retailers and Stakeholders will focus on the transfer of innovation process, dissemination and implementation of the ECVET-EcoQualify project in Europe and other regions.

IV. EFFECTIVE COOPERATION AND COMMUNICATION

For effective cooperation and communication between the partners, from each partner institution, **one person** will be nominated as **project manager**. He/she will participate at the meetings and be professionally involved into the content work, especially at the adaptation, testing and piloting processes.

A Project Management Board (PMB) will be established to monitor and ensure that the project is running according to the budget and schedule and the quality of the outcomes is according to the standards acceptable to all the partners and the LLP.

All project managers, together with the project coordinator nominated by University of Agribusiness and Rural Development, will form the **Project Management Board (PMB)**. Decisions, involving the overall project management strategy will be taken by the PMB.

Conflicts that cannot be resolved at lower levels are referred to the PMB. In the unlikely event that the PMB is unable to reach consensus or where a partner formally contests a PMB decision in writing, the dispute will be referred to the Partner Committee (PC). The Partner Committee is made up of one director or high-level manager from each partner organisation. The Partner Committee will make the final resolution of disputes and a majority decision reached by the Committee shall be final and binding.

- **Communication Flow within the Consortium:** The project home page will contain an internal area that will allow easy access and communication between the partners. This facility will allow progress on work-packages or individual tasks to be reviewed and monitored. The system will allow proactive management and communication through e-mail and virtual conferences.
- **The working language** of the Partnership will be **English**. We know that all communication must take into consideration linguistic and intercultural differences.
- **Support actions:** Special attention will be paid to support partners who have less experience with LLP projects, in order to empower them to acquire competence in EU project management.
- **Intellectual property rights** and exploitation issues: The Consortium Agreement between the promoter and each partner will contain rules of sharing intellectual property.

Allocation of tasks to third parties concerns subcontracts for web site design, translations, production of print versions and eventually for external evaluation.

V. TIME MANAGEMENT AND CALENDER OF ACTIVITIES (See the attached Figure 1. Gantt chart)

VI. BUDGET MANAGEMENT

The budget of the ECVET-EcoQualify project is estimated totally in the light of the project aims and in accordance with the tasks foreseen in the work programme.

The budget calculations are based on the instructions given in the Lifelong Learning Programme, Call for proposals 2013, and with particular reference to the financial provisions.

Staff cost counts for 63.86% of the total project costs, which is reasonable, because the major tasks are related to adaptation, implementation and testing of the final products, as well as validation for different beneficiaries in the real learning context of the partners. The biggest portion of the work days are allocated to the coordinator, since the UARD, BG will be in charge of 3 work packages - WP1, WP3 and WP8, and will be responsible for the overall coordination and management of the project. The rest of the partners will get a certain portion of the staff cost budget according to their task load and involvement in the project activities as they are planned in the work programme.

Travel costs add up to 21.87%, which is the next largest expenses. There will be 6 international meetings of the partners scheduled in the 24 months project lifespan. The meetings will take place in Vienna, Berlin, Senigallia, Brno, Canakkale and Plovdiv. The kick-off meeting is scheduled to take place in Vienna, Austria - the country of origin of the donor partner - Organic Retailers Association. Besides, the partnership will organise the final conference in the country of the coordinator (Bulgaria) in order to promote the final products/results and disseminate the project outcomes.

Subcontracting accounts for 7.55%; most of these expenses will be for translation of the products into the partners' languages - Bulgarian, German, Italian, Czech and Turkish; for the design and maintenance of the website and for publishing of printed materials (flyers, Guidelines, CDs, PR materials, etc.).

Other costs (6.72%) are estimated to support the dissemination activities, including expenditures for media work, production of PR materials, renting of facilities, travel costs for strategic partners, etc.

In order to achieve a high sustainability, the budget of Work Package 9 - Dissemination and Valorisation comes up to 14.35% which is the highest portion among the work packages.

VII. DEVELOPING RISK RESPONSE STRATEGIES

The project team should be prepared to identify the possible risks in order to mitigate them and to take immediate action. The effectiveness of planning determines whether risk increases or decreases for your project's objectives. Several **risk response strategies** are available:

- **Avoidance** - changing the project plan to eliminate the risk or protect the objectives from its impact.
- **Mitigation** - reducing the probability and/or consequences of an adverse risk event to an acceptable threshold. Taking early action is more effective than trying to repair the consequences after it has occurred.
- **Acceptance** - deciding not to change the project plan to deal with a risk. Passive acceptance requires no action. Active acceptance may include developing contingency plans for action should the risk occur. An example of active acceptance is creating a list of eligible instructors that can be called upon if last minute replacements are needed for your project.

Since not all risks will be evident at the outset of the project, periodic risk reviews should be scheduled at project team meetings. Risks that do occur should be documented, along with their responses. Your lessons learned may be useful to others or on future projects.

VIII. EVALUATION AND QUALITY MANAGEMENT

The ECVET-EcoQualify project will have several levels of quality management:

1. Development of Quality Management Plan (QMP) - this document will define the project's quality-related procedures, the areas of application, the implementation processes and the roles and responsibilities of the partners. It will also explain how the project will plan, implement and assess the effectiveness of its final results/outputs. All the partners will contribute to the Work Package 8 - Quality Assurance and evaluation.

2. Internal monitoring system - the internal monitoring procedure will contain indications of all partners about their actions for the respective period. Main criteria will be:

- the degree to which objectives have been reached in relation to the respective work package;
- the coordination activities to ensure that the different work packages are contributing to the same goal;
- description of the management measures that have been taken to ensure convergence and synergy of the partners' activities;
- indication of problems that might affect achievement of the objectives;
- explanation of corrective actions taken by the partners to overcome any problems or deviations.

3. Project evaluation - the evaluation process will be carried out as a permanent accompanying process during the project. It will support the project management to clarify and facilitate the operational project objectives and strategies, and provide continuous recording instruments/tools for the feedback process (questionnaires, etc.).

Meetings and project outputs will be also a subject of evaluation within the project duration. Six project meetings are scheduled (Figure 1. Gantt chart.):

- November 2013 - Kick-off meeting in Vienna, Austria
- March, 2014 - in Berlin, Germany
- September, 2014 - In Senigallia, Italy
- January, 2015 - in Brno, Check Republic
- May, 2015 - in Canakkale, Turkey
- September, 2015 - in Plovdiv, Bulgaria (Final Conference)

The following main products/outputs will be subjects of evaluation:

- Comprehensive and detailed methodology for EQF and ECVET-based training courses for organic food retailing;
- National versions of learning outcomes;
- Guidelines for VET institutions in organic sector;
- Training course;
- Dissemination activities, etc.

The evaluation team on the overall project management and performance will consist of evaluators from the core partners under the leadership of the project coordinator - University of Agribusiness and Rural Development, Bulgaria.

Minimum requirements for outputs, products, articles etc. of ECVET-EcoQualify project

In case of all outputs of ECVET-EcoQualify project (products, articles, publications) the following statement and LOGO´s should be present:



“This project has been founded with support from the European Commission. The content of this document does not necessarily reflect the view or legislation of the European Commission. Neither the European Commission nor the project partners or any person acting on behalf of the Commission is responsible for the use that might be made of the information in this document”.

