**Croatian Quality Assurance Framework
for Vocational Education and Training**

SELF-ASSESSMENT MANUAL

Self-Assessment Manual for VET Providers

For the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education:

Preface

Since the ratification of the first European *Common Quality Assurance Framework for VET* in May 2004 by the European Commission[1], quality assurance and quality improvement have become increasingly important for institutions providing vocational education and training throughout Europe. In particular <u>self-assessment</u>, combined with external evaluation, is a promising instrument of quality assurance and development for VET institutions/providers. Self-Assessment can build on quality activities already in place at a VET institution/provider, and it fosters partnerships and exchange between VET providers and the local community and labour market.

Croatia is only at the beginning of adopting European developments in QA for VET. Starting in March 2010 the EQARF[2] was adapted to the national context and a proposal for a Quality Framework in VET was developed together quality assurance instruments for the VET system. From March 2010 to March 2012 the main project partner AVETAE[3], with the help of a European-funded IPA project *"VET Quality Assurance Development"*, designed, piloted, and revised a Self-Assessment Framework for VET.

One of the outcomes of the project is the <u>Self-Assessment Manual</u>, which describes a standard procedure for carrying out self-assessment in vocational education and training. Recommendations based on the experiences of the pilot phase have been taken into account in the revision of the Self-Assessment procedure. The Self-Assessment Manual thus presents a procedure which has passed the test of practical implementation and capitalises on the experiences gleaned from the piloting VET schools.

The Self-Assessment Manual takes a formative, development-oriented approach and aims at supporting VET institutions/providers in their efforts to offer high quality education and training. The focus lies on the promotion of continuing quality improvement in an atmosphere of openness and mutual trust that contributes to enhancing transparency and comparability in Europe. Good practice is valued and mutual learning encouraged in a dynamic and motivating process, from which both the VET institution/provider and AVETAE can benefit.

The Self-Assessment Manual was developed for use by VET institutions/providers; therefore, its focus is on a practical approach: it offers directly implementable guidelines for VET institutions/providers. We hope that the Self-Assessment Manual will live up to our expectations and that it will be very useful both for the VET institutions/providers and the Agency in the improvement of its expert-pedagogical monitoring of VET schools. Since we are dedicated to the further improvement of the Self-Assessment procedure, feedback on this Manual will be very much appreciated!

For the team of the project

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[1] Council Conclusion on Quality Assurance in VET of 18th May; 9599/04LIMITE/EDUC117/SOC252
[2] European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET, July 2009
[3] Agency for VET and Adult Education

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[4] Adjusted based on NCEEE example of *Self-assessment Manual for Secondary Schools,* Zagreb, 2010, www.ncvvo.hr

1. Quality Areas and Criteria (Methodology)

1.1.　　　Introduction

This self-assessment manual is intended for VET providers. It was produced by a working group as part of the initial development of a Quality Assurance Framework for the VET system in Croatia, which was piloted by 24 VET schools between 2010 and 2011. The working group used the *European Guidelines for Self-Assessment by VET Providers* (CEDEFOP, 2003) as the basis for developing the manual. The pilot edition was revised by the working group to take account of feedback from piloting VET schools that tested the manual and other developments on the VET system level.

Achieving a particular level of quality in the delivery of VET programmes is a long-term process which requires careful planning and organisation. One of the many steps towards establishing a quality system is the practice of self-assessment of VET providers' performance against defined quality standards. The guidance contained in this manual serves to assist VET providers in undertaking their self-assessment process on all aspects of their work as part of a national quality assurance system.

The VET Self-Assessment Manual contains the following sections:

Chapter 1　　　Quality Areas and Criteria (Methodology)

Chapter 1.1.　　　Introduction

This section gives an overview of the different parts of the self-assessment manual.

Chapter 1.2.　　　Background

This section gives some background to the introduction of a quality assurance system and the processes and values which underpin it. It continues in outlining the development work carried out by AVETAE[5] regarding quality assurance of VET providers.

Chapter 1.3.　　　Priority Areas, Quality Areas and Quality Criteria for VET

This section outlines the six priority areas and associated quality areas and quality criteria or performance descriptors, which form the basis for self-assessment, external evaluation, and quality improvement.

The priority areas and quality areas represent the domains and sub-domains of management, organisation, and delivery against which VET providers will self-assess and be externally evaluated. The quality criteria/performance descriptors set out the standards to be achieved.

Chapter 1.4.　　　Sources of Evidence

This section contains examples of sources of evidence. These sources might generate useful evidence when undertaking the self-assessment process. Some sources might generate evidence belonging to various areas of quality. This section does not intend to give an exhaustive list of sources or to suggest that all these sources have to be used automatically for every self-assessment.

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[5] AVETAE = Agency for VET and Adult Education

The suggestions include documentation, measures, procedures and activities that VET providers might be able to judge as evidence of their achievement and performance. Producing these items will be part of VET providers' long-term development plan.

Chapter 1.5.   Examples of Judgements

This section contains examples of judgements which will be useful to VET providers and external evaluators when judging evidence against the quality criteria. The list is not definitive and VET providers and external evaluators will find different performances at different VET providers; the examples may help them to judge any performances they might come across.

Chapter 1.6.   Statistical and Performance Data

This section contains a list of the statistical data that VET providers should collect. The list is not exhaustive, and individual VET providers can add specific types of data relevant to them. The web-based tool will allow VET providers to enter their data online and to print out a quantitative statistical report together with comparison and benchmarking charts. These charts will help them in making realistic judgements about their performance during the next self-assessment cycle.

Chapter 1.7.   Self-Assessment Coordinator Role & Responsibilities

This section explains the role of the self-assessment coordinator, who is a member of the Quality Committee at the VET provider. The self-assessment coordinator will assist in and oversee the development and operational implementation of the self-assessment, external evaluation, and improvement planning processes and related procedures against the quality criteria.

Chapter 2   Self-Assessment

Chapter 2.1.   Guidelines for Self-Assessment of VET Providers

This section gives some general guidance on the self-assessment process and improvement planning. It details the requirements for setting up the self-assessment process, gathering and generating evidence, using evidence to make evaluative decisions on the level of performance, and for developing the improvement plan. It also includes a summary of the self-assessment process.

Chapter 2.2.   Writing the Self-Assessment Report

This section provides further guidance on writing the self-assessment report by using the example of priority area "Teaching and Learning". All members of the quality team and heads of expert teams in charge of "mini" self-assessment reports should familiarize themselves with this manual before writing their reports and improvement plans.

Chapter 3   Additional Material (Formats and Templates)

Chapter 3.1.   SA Preparation Checklist

The SA preparation checklist can be helpful when preparing for self-assessment. It is particularly useful for those organisations that are introducing self-assessment and improvement planning for the first time or are still in the early years of implementation. It is recommended that VET providers use this example as a basis for developing their own checklist, which would also be a useful piece of evidence in their self-assessment report.

Chapter 3.2.   SA Report Cover and Templates by Priority Area

This section contains the self-assessment report format with a separate template for each priority area. The format also includes the template for the improvement plan.

Chapter 3.3.   Checklist for the Long-Term Development Plan

This section contains a checklist that VET providers might find useful when evaluating their long-term development plan.

Chapter 3.4.   SA Decision Making Process

This section and the following one contain the table which outlines the decision making process that VET providers apply during self-assessment and improvement planning.

Chapter 3.5.   KREDA[6] Analysis

This section contains the SWOT analysis table and the grading descriptors that VET providers apply during the grading process.

Chapter 3.6.   Web-based Self-Assessment Tool

This section contains a diagram showing the web-based self-assessment tool which will simplify the reporting process for VET providers. The tool enables VET providers to generate comparison charts for benchmarking and target setting activities.

Chapter 4   Annex

Chapter 4.1.   Quality Glossary

In the future, this section will contain a glossary which describes the terms of quality assurance and explains how the terminology is used within the Quality Assurance Development project and its quality assurance (QA) instruments (e.g. self-assessment and external evaluation manuals). Mostly the CEDEFOP "Glossary on Quality in VET" (2003) has been used but so were internet search engines (e.g. Google), the ENQA "Terminology of QA in HE" (2006), OECD "Glossary in Education" (2008), CEDEFOP "Terminology of VET Policy" (2004), CEDEFOP "European Guide on Self-Assessment of VET Providers", and EFQM "Glossary of Terms", www.efqm.org/Portals/0/Glossary.pdf.

The CROQF[7] Glossary published by the Ministry of Science, Education, and Sports in Zagreb on June 03, 2009 has been added to the Quality Glossary by marking entries with the reference number: CROQF-P-S4-T2, 06/2009.

Chapter 4.2.   Quality Brochure

The Quality Brochure will be developed and published after the pilot phase to make available to VET stakeholders and the wider public the results and outcomes from the pilot phase. It contains an overview of self-assessment in VET in Croatia and the knowledge gained.

Chapter 4.3.   Examples of Completed SA Reports

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[6] Adjusted based on NCEEE example of *Self-assessment Manual for Secondary Schools,* Zagreb, 2010, www.ncvvo.hr
[7] CROQF = Croatian Qualification Framework

These examples were produced during the pilot phase from September 2010 to July 2011. They might be useful for VET providers when writing their own reports.

Chapter 4.4.   *Observations Handbook*

This section contains an **example** of a "Handbook for Observations", which provides general guidance on how to carry out lesson observations and on how to complete the observation report, which is in the handbook. The observation report can be used for observing the learning process, for recording the findings, and for reporting on the quality of what was observed. Completed observation reports are a source of evidence. The handbook also contains **examples** of procedures that VET providers may use as the basis for developing their own procedures.

Chapter 4.5.   *Examples of Survey Questionnaires*

This section contains examples of survey questionnaires for learners, teachers, and employers. VET providers are free to copy and adapt these documents.

Chapter 4.6.   *Examples of Procedures*

This section contains examples of procedures. VET providers are free to copy and adapt these documents.

1.2.   Background

Like other countries world-wide, Croatia is facing a number of challenges which require a flexible workforce capable of meeting the demands of the labour market and willing to undertake lifelong learning to keep up with economic and technological changes. One way in which countries are addressing these challenges is to reform their Vocational Education & Training (VET) systems in an effort –

- to improve progression routes for young people by giving them relevant and up-to-date qualifications
- to raise the qualification levels of the workforce
- to increase participation in lifelong learning
- to make re-skilling and up-skilling easier for individuals
- to raise competence levels nationally
- to raise confidence in and reliability and quality of qualifications
- to raise the status of VET

Any reform of the VET system will need to take place within a rigorous quality assurance framework. In this context, the AVETAE[8] is tasked (VET Law 2009) with developing a quality assurance framework for the VET system.

The intention is to develop an overarching system of quality assurance which could be relevant to VET in all its forms and could in the future be capable of being used with all types of education provision. Under the system of quality assurance the individual parts of the system will develop their specific measures and procedures for authorisation, accreditation, and external evaluation.

Although the competent body for quality assurance is the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education, all institutions in the education system share a common set of values and employ similar methods to assure the quality of the education and training system in Croatia.

The key values for quality assurance are:

A. alignment with good practice – particularly European practice
B. a holistic approach – which addresses specific areas within a single system
C. identifiable beneficiaries – with a particular focus on learners and employers
D. transparency – which will be a requirement of all institutions and agencies involved in the system
E. continuous improvement – using self assessment and internal and external monitoring
F. external scrutiny – such as monitoring, evaluation, and inspection, which will help support the self-assessment process and quality improvements
G. effectiveness and efficiency – ensuring that the system is cost-effective

There are currently two European Quality Assurance Frameworks based on which the Quality Assurance Framework for VET in Croatia has been developed:

a.   CQAF for VET in Europe and the up-dated EQARF
b.   ENQA[9] in HE

a.   CQAF for VET in Europe and EQARF

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[8] AVETAE = Agency for Vocational Education & Training and Adult Education
[9] ENQA has been re-named to European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

The *Common Quality Assurance Framework for VET in Europe*[10], which was ratified in May 2004 by the European Commission[11], is the umbrella framework under which each nation state will develop its own quality assurance framework for VET. There are five quality areas in the European CQAF:

- methodology
- purpose and plan
- implementation
- assessment and evaluation
- feedback and change

These quality areas are further detailed in the *European Guide to Self-Assessment for VET Providers* (CEDEFOP, 2003).

The CQAF is based on six concepts:

- VET providers are responsible for the quality of their provision
- annual self-assessment by VET providers
- criterion-referenced assessment
- competence-based assessment
- evidence to demonstrate competence and compliance with criteria
- quality cycle (plan – do – check – react)

In July 2009 the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union published their final recommendation for the establishment of a *European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET* (EQARF-VET)[12]. The objective of this recommendation is to establish the EQARF-VET as a reference tool to help Member States to monitor continuous quality improvement of their VET systems, and to examine how the existing quality assurance models work.

The EQARF-VET has three strands, and a national discussion needs to take place as to what mechanisms, standards, and procedures should be developed that allow for self-assessment on system and provider level, external monitoring and evaluation, and collecting and analysing relevant data for the setting of key performance indicators (KPIs).

b.   ENQA in HE

The *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)* were drafted by the European Association (former Network) for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA, 2005). The proposed standards and guidelines are designed to be applicable to all higher education institutions and quality agencies in Europe, to promote mutual trust, and to improve transparency while respecting the diversity of national contexts and subject areas.

The standards and guidelines are based on a number of basic principles about quality assurance:

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[10] TWG 'Quality in VET', CEDEFOP, 2004
[11] Council Conclusion on Quality Assurance in VET; 9599/04LIMITE/EDUC117/SOC252 of 18th May
[12] Recommendation of 18 June 2009, published 08.07.2009 / C155

- providers of higher education have the primary responsibility for the quality of their provision and its assurance
- the interests of society in the quality and standards of higher education need to be safeguarded
- the quality of academic programmes needs to be improved across the EHEA
- transparency and the use of external expertise are important
- a culture of quality should be encouraged
- higher education institutions should demonstrate their accountability, including for the investment of public and private money

Article 11 of the **Croatian VET Act (2009)** outlines 8 areas for quality assurance:

1. planning and programming of the work
2. teaching and support to learning
3. participants' accomplishments
4. material conditions and human resources
5. professional development of staff
6. interpersonal relations within the VET institution
7. administration and management
8. cooperation with other stakeholders

The structure of the Croatian Quality Assurance System is divided into **6 Priority Areas** that cover the areas of quality from the aforementioned law that VET providers need to address.

Once customers' needs (e.g. learners, employers) have been identified they have to be transformed into specifications in order to be able to measure whether VET providers' activities and processes meet those needs.

Therefore, each priority area is broken down into **Quality Areas** which are further defined through a number of quality criteria which determine the standard and level of activities and processes in VET. These quality criteria are based on the *European Guide to Self-Assessment* (CEDEFOP, 2003), and are set out as **Performance Descriptors**. This is done in order to encompass all types of VET provision that will be available.

The main principle is that quality assurance is **learner–centred** and **competence–based**. Performance descriptors describe the activities and situations that can be expected in successful VET providers. By carrying out the activities VET providers will generate evidence that will demonstrate to which level an activity is being performed. VET providers will identify the impact their actions have on the learning experience.

The purpose of the performance descriptors is to direct attention to the most important quality criteria (e.g. those with the most impact on learners' learning experience) and to give an indication to VET providers of the level of quality of their activities and processes.

The quality areas and performance descriptors will be used by VET providers for their self-assessment process, but also by external evaluators who undertake quality audit visits.

1.3. VET Priority Areas and Quality Areas
Priority Areas, Quality Areas, and Quality Criteria/Performance Descriptors

PRIORITY AREA 1 – PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING OF THE WORK
QUALITY AREAS AND QUALITY CRITERIA
PROVIDER CURRICULUM AND ANNUAL PLAN **Quality Criteria/Performance Descriptors:** 1.1   The VET provider curriculum contains all legal compulsory elements, particularly aims and objectives and a procedure for assessing the achievement of set aims and objectives 1.2   The VET provider curriculum is developed on the basis of the prescribed national curriculum 1.3   An organisation's annual plan is developed on the basis of the provider syllabus and curriculum and contains all elements prescribed by law 1.4   The VET provider curriculum and annual plan must reflect the guidelines set by the organisation's annual improvement plan 1.5   There are annual operational plans for subjects and they have all prescribed components 1.6   Annual operational plans are part of an organisation's annual plan 1.7   Annual operational plans are aligned with the existing framework curriculum 1.8   Annual operational plans are aligned with the curricula, if they exist 1.9   The organisation evaluates the implementation of elements of the annual plan 1.10   The organization of teaching/training is suited to students and teachers/trainers 1.11   Annual plans are developed by an organisation's professional councils 1.12   An organisation's professional councils evaluate the implementation of their annual plans 1.13   The organisation plans and celebrates holidays, public and cultural activities, and volunteer and humanitarian activities, and works to prevent unacceptable behaviours and addictions
DESIGN AND IMPROVEMENT OF ADULT LEARNING PROGRAMMES 1.14   adult learning programmes are designed in cooperation with local authorities and economic sector to meet the identified needs of the labour market, and improvements are shaped by feedback from all stakeholders 1.15   adult learning programmes are designed in line with prescribed methodology 1.16   adult learning programmes are designed to ensure equality of access and opportunities for all learners 1.17   learning outcomes and competences as well as their assessment criteria are regularly reviewed and improved so they are in line with current labour market and industry demands 1.18   adult learning programmes are reviewed on at least an annual basis, and learners contribute to the review with their feedback 1.19   programmes are developed and reviewed on the basis of feedback from all stakeholders; and feedback is consistently gathered from learners, businesses, and communities for this purpose 1.20   the review of learning programmes leads to improved teaching, training, learning, and student achievement 1.21   knowledge assessment and achievement information, including analysis of performance of different groups of learners, serve as a guide to the sustainability of learning programmes

PRIORITY AREA 2 – TEACHING, TRAINING, AND SUPPORT TO LEARNING

QUALITY AREAS AND QUALITY CRITERIA

LEARNER ADMISSION

2.1. the VET provider has effective procedures for identifying and reflecting needs for student enrolment in accordance with the needs of the local/regional labour market (e.g. deficit occupations, facility and programme conditions relating to special educational needs learners, the ability to implement practical learning, regional and national economic development plans and strategies, sector profiles, etc.)

2.2. the VET provider offers interesting and diverse activities, programmes and projects through the school curriculum

2.3. the VET provider carries out effective promotional, informational, and counselling activities for learners and parents (e.g. information sessions, open house, presentations, providing adequate guidance to learners to explore their areas of interest or to help learners which have been rejected for specific learning programs find an adequate alternative, etc.) in order to guide learners into the learning programme/occupation which best suits their needs and interests.

2.4. the VET provider organizes and provides professional support through professional career guidance and counselling services

2.5. initial assessment is conducted in accordance with the prescribed admission criteria

2.6. the VET provider, at the request of a learner, considers the option of changing learning programmes and strives to be as flexible as possible

PLANNING OF TEACHING, TRAINING, AND LEARNING

2.7. the VET provider offers systematic support to teachers and trainers in developing all forms/documents when planning lessons and they are reviewed in accord with innovations in the vocational fields and in education science

2.8. teachers and trainers develop operational plans for the subjects they are teaching in the current school year (they are aligned with the curriculum framework and detailed curriculum and their components are aligned with the demands of contemporary educational science)

2.9. teachers and trainers develop individualized operational lesson plans and preparations for learners with special educational needs in accordance with the decisions of the responsible services and/or submitted medical documentation and in collaboration with the organisation's professional service

2.10. teachers and trainers prepare for lessons (they plan the content, methods, kinds of work, and resources)

2.11. lesson planning is aligned with a target group of learners and the specific needs of individuals, including learners with special educational needs

2.12. lesson planning is carried out in collaboration with members of the professional councils and cross-subject correlation

2.13. the physical and technical planning of lessons is aligned with the pedagogical standard and minimal material requirements prescribed by the framework curriculum

2.14. teachers and trainers plan written and oral assessments for the current school year in accordance with the existing rulebook

2.15. extra-curricular programmes and activities are planned in view of learners' interests and developmental abilities as well as the organisation's capabilities

2.16. when planning curricular and extra-curricular activities (lessons), the organisation takes into account all activities which are important to the education of youths (awareness of nationality, preservation of national, historical and cultural heritage, etc.)

TEACHING/TRAINING PROCESS

2.17.	teaching/training is carried out in accordance with the prescribed curriculum framework
2.18.	teaching/training is carried out in facilities which are in line with pedagogical standards
2.19.	teachers and trainers carry out lessons/sessions according to lesson preparations and achieve planned lesson goals and tasks
2.20.	teaching/training methods, kinds of work, and learning resources and aids are aligned with learning content and are appropriate to learner capabilities
2.21.	the teaching/training process is based on active, learner-centred methods (learner participation in implementing the learning process; research-based learning; experience-based learning, project-based learning, multi-media lessons, individualized approach to learners, interdisciplinary approach)*
2.22.	teachers and trainers monitor and record the progress of learners
2.23.	the VET provider organizes additional and supplementary lessons taking into account learners' interests and developmental abilities
2.24.	the VET provider organizes extra-curricular activities taking into account both learners' interests and developmental abilities as well as the organisation's capabilities
2.25.	the VET provider has learning support programmes in place for learners
2.26.	the VET provider encourages collaboration between teachers/trainers and external experts with the objective of improving the quality of the teaching process
2.27.	the VET provider's specialist service, director, and co-expert teachers/trainers monitor the work of all teachers/trainers, particularly teacher-trainees

LEARNING THROUGH EXPERIENCE (PRACTICAL LEARNING)

2.28.	practical learning is carried out on the basis of an occupational curriculum framework (vocational curriculum)
2.29.	practical learning is organized and carried out in accordance with regulations
2.30.	there is a clear link between theoretical and practical learning
2.31.	practical learning is focused on the development of skills resulting in vocational competences for a particular occupation/qualification
2.32.	practical learning is organized through learning in school practicums and in the workplace (learning through experience and learning-by-doing)
2.33.	the basics of workplace safety and environmental protection are provided in practical learning programmes
2.34	the organisation and employers have written agreements on the provision of practical learning and the organisation keeps records of this
2.35.	the organisation terminates agreements on the provision of practical learning if the employer does not meet contractual obligations or conditions for the provision of practical learning
2.36.	the collaboration between the organisation and the employers in the provision of practical learning is transparent
2.37.	practical learning teachers and trainers who monitor learners on work placements regularly record learners' progress in compulsory pedagogical documentation
2.38.	the organisation collects data on the success rate of learners on work placements and on employer satisfaction
2.39.	necessary adjustments, equipment and teaching methods are provided for learners with special educational needs

PRACTICE FIRMS

2.40.	the VET provider registers its training firms with the Central Office for Training Firms (AVETAE'S SUVT)
2.41.	the VET provider's training firms follow the approved curriculum and the instructions of the Central Office for Training Firms

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

2.42.	learners have access to extracurricular activities which have a direct and effective contribution to achieving the targets and objectives

	set in the educational policies and programming documents at national, county, or local level
2.43.	when planning and carrying out extra-curricular activities the equal involvement of all teachers and trainers and the personal and professional development of learners are taken into account
2.44.	a portion of extra-curricular activities are related to health, equality and diversity, the physical and social development of learners, and environmental protection
2.45.	when planning extra-curricular activities the VET provider uses the results of national and/or international projects in which it participated and/or is participating in
2.46.	the effectiveness of extra-curricular activities is regularly monitored; learners, teachers, trainers and stakeholders contribute to the review; and learner initiatives for extra-curricular activities are implemented where possible

LEARNER SUPPORT SERVICE

2.47.	learners can always turn freely to teachers, trainers, and expert associates for counselling, support and effective assistance as well as for help in resolving personal problems (legal, emotional, health, and other) and difficulties in regards to education, professional progress and socialization
2.48	the organisation's teachers, trainers and expert associates continually monitor and record the professional progress of learners and organize individual and group counselling of learners at minimum once a year
2.49	the VET provider collaborates with a multi-disciplinary team from the local and broader community (Croatian Employment Service, experts from health institutes, mobile teams of experts, professional associations, employers' associations, parents and persons with disabilities, education centres, institutions of higher education, and more)
2.50	during the learning period all learners are familiar with their rights and responsibilities which are clearly and precisely detailed in the rules of conduct and the organisation's statute and located in a visible area
2.51	learners have the ability and opportunity to provide feedback on their satisfaction with the provided support, assistance, and counselling services, and the organisation records the feedback and compares it with previously set criteria and expected results
2.52	all support activities are recorded in confidential files and learners are guaranteed the protection of their personal information
2.53	information and advice are effective in helping learners in choosing their career progression after gaining vocational qualifications
2.54	the organisation has a system in place for following up on learners after they complete their education and gathering and recording information on learners' professional progression (e.g. programmes of continued education and/or a learner's employment in the profession) and informs appropriate institutions (local government, AVETAE) as needed
2.55	the organisation has within the learner support service a model of strengthening the role and influence of the parent and student councils

LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

2.56.	the VET provider, in collaboration with the founder, provides for the integration of learners with special education needs into vocational programs in their place of residence in accordance with the decision of the competent authorities
2.57.	the VET provider, in collaboration with the founder and other appropriate institutions, ensures facility and programme adjustments at the start of education and during the course of obtaining general education and vocational competences required for inclusion into the labour market, continued education, and lifelong learning
2.58.	the VET provider is in a network with other educational institutions, social welfare institutions, health institutes, associations, employers, funds, etc. for the purposes of a multi-disciplinary approach to the education of learners with special educational needs
2.59.	all provider employees are familiar with relevant international and national laws, conventions, declarations and strategies related to the rights of learners with special educational needs to an education

2.60.	teachers, trainers and expert associates continually monitor and record the progress of learners with special educational needs and gifted learners
2.61.	teachers, trainers and expert associates regularly undergo professional development to work with and have high quality collaboration with special educational needs learners
2.62.	the VET provider carries out programs which promote solidarity among peers, the dignity of each individual, and the right to diversity and nonviolence
2.63.	the VET provider has a model of identifying and working with learners with special educational and socialization needs which do not have previously submitted evaluations or decisions by competent services
2.64.	the VET provider assesses, takes record of, and implements models of monitoring gifted and talented learners
2.65.	the VET provider provides gifted and talented learners with continual educational, pedagogical-didactic, and psychological support which improves their learning and acquisition of competences in the best manner possible (regular course programmes, competitions, extra-curricular activities, workshops, summer school and winter school, clubs, camps, etc.)

ATTENDANCE

2.66.	the VET provider collects, processes, and analyses data on attendance
2.67.	the VET provider undertakes appropriate measures to reduce learner absence
2.68.	the VET provider collects data on drop-out rates (%) and reasons for dropping out
2.69.	the VET provider collects, processes, and analyses the number of disciplinary faults, monitoring increases or decreases by learning period
2.70.	the VET provider records and analyses the particulars of the attendance of learners who commute, learners with extra-curricular obligations and activities, and learners in other/parallel learning programmes (music schools, athletic programmes, chronic illnesses) and provides support options
2.71.	the VET provider includes the parent and student councils in resolving attendance issues

COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION

2.72.	the VET provider encourages communication among teachers and trainers and between them and learners, other staff, and management; the communication is based on cooperation and mutual respect
2.73.	teachers and trainers use effective measures to promote equal opportunity and to avoid discrimination so that learners can achieve their full potential
2.74.	teachers and trainers effectively apply the standards for teaching, training, and learning and use other strategies (e.g. learner-centred learning, learning through experience, practical learning) to meet individual learning abilities, cultures, gender, and motivation
2.75.	teachers and trainers collaborate with each other with the objective of linking the learning content within the same or differing fields (intra/interdisciplinary approach to learning)
2.76.	teachers and trainers enable students to apply problem-solving strategies, the development of key competences, and creative and critical thinking

PRIORITY AREA 3 – LEARNERS' ACHIEVEMENTS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES
QUALITY AREAS AND QUALITY CRITERIA

INTERNAL MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF LEARNERS' ACHIEVEMENTS

3.1.   all relevant stakeholders (learners, parents, teachers/trainers, and professional pedagogical staff) are informed of the procedures and methods of monitoring and assessing learners

3.2.   assessment elements and criteria are clear, available, and are predicated upon the vocational curriculum

3.3.   learners can evaluate their own level of knowledge and skills based on the clear assessment criteria and elements

3.4.   monitoring and assessment is adapted for learners with special educational needs

3.5.   assessment is used to monitor the progress of learners in gaining competences and to inform them of their achievements and progress

3.6.   teachers and trainers encourage the learner's advancement and self-confidence through the assessment process

3.7.   learners are able to have additional assessments of their achievements

3.8.   learner assessment procedures are valid, reliable, suitable, consistent, and fair and are carried out regularly and in line with current regulations

3.9.   internal monitoring and evaluation of learning outcomes meets the requirements of the occupational standard and enables learners to acquire appropriate professional and vocational competences which are characteristic of the occupational profile

3.10.   the internal monitoring and evaluation procedure is regularly analysed and improved

3.11.   employers recognise the acquired competences (knowledge and skills) as relevant for the work place and applicable in practice

3.12. all necessary school records and documentation about learners, information on their accomplishments and information on certificates issued are retained in accordance with regulations

EXAMINATIONS (subject, corrective, differential and class exams as well as final project)

3.13.   the submission and defence of the final project is carried out in accordance with the timetable for the submission and defence of the final project

3.14.   the timetable for the submission and defence of the final project is published on the bulletin board and/or school web page

3.15.   the provider keeps compulsory records on the completion, submission, and defence of the final project

3.16. the school evaluation committee and final project defence committee conduct their work according to the rules of procedure issued by the provider's governing body

3.17.   the VET provider conducts the subject, corrective, differential and class examinations in line with the regulations

3.18.   the manner of conducting subject, corrective, differential and class examinations is prescribed by the organisation's statute

3.19.   compulsory records on the conducting of examinations are kept and retained in learner files

EXTERNAL EVALUATION

3.20.   the VET provider conducts national examinations and Matura according to prescribed procedures

3.21.   overall learner achievement data is analysed and compared with the national average and is available to all stakeholders

COMPETITIONS AND STUDENT PROJECT FAIRS

3.22.   the VET provider organizes and participates in competitions at a school, regional, national and international level as well as student project fairs

3.23.   the number of learners participating in extra-curricular activities and/or competitions and student project fairs is over 15% of the

total number of learners at the VET provider
3.24. learners at VET providers take part in competitions and student project fairs for occupations/qualifications which are carried out in their institutions
3.25. regional self-government and representatives of the economy are actively involved in the carrying out of competitions and learner project fairs
3.26. the VET provider keeps track of the participation and accomplishments of its learners in competitions and project fairs

PRIORITY AREA 4 – PHYSICAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES – PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF

QUALITY AREAS AND QUALITY CRITERIA

SECURING THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

4.1.   specialist learning equipment and accommodation (sanitary facilities, administrative spaces, auxiliary spaces, library, documentation centre, ICT, specialist classrooms and workshops) are accessible and are used safely, adequately, efficiently

4.2.   the learning process takes place in a safe environment and in line with regulations on work safety and other regulations

4.3.   necessary resources are available and used to support learning, and are accompanied by clear, easy to understand operating and safety instructions

4.4.   learners, staff, and other stakeholders feel safe, and violent and other unacceptable behaviours are prevented

4.5.   staff and learners are secured access to prescribed medical services

4.6.   staff, learners, and other stakeholders are familiarized with and periodically drilled in emergency management procedures

MATERIAL CONDITIONS / RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

4.7.   material conditions, teaching/training methods, and learners' needs are aligned with changes in the vocational curriculum

4.8.   the VET provider ensures material conditions enabling all learners, including special educational needs learners, to participate fully in the learning process in accordance with their needs

4.9.   accommodation (including: sanitary facilities, administrative spaces, auxiliary spaces, library, documentation centre, ICT, specialty classrooms and workshops), facilities and equipment are accessible to all stakeholders, staff, and learners and are signposted and easy to locate (e.g. floor plan layout of all rooms, signs on doors)

4.10.   the VET provider ensures the use of new material resources when there is technological progress

FINANCE

4.11.   development and sustainability of services for learners are based on responsible financial management

4.12.   effective accounting is carried out according to financial and legal requirements; the school board reviews the financial report

4.13.   spending priorities and the use of financial resources are clearly linked to learning programmes and planning priorities and strongly reflect the VET provider's aims and objectives

4.14.   staff are consulted (they express their needs) during the drafting of the financial plan

4.15.   the VET provider effectively uses its own capacity to access additional funding and manages funding responsibly

4.16.   the VET provider effectively uses its own resources and those of the local, national and European communities (e.g. participation in EU projects) for the implementation and improvement of learning programmes and practical learning

HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES

4.17.   all staff are employed in accordance with legislation and subordinate legislation as well as the current vocational curriculum

4.18.   all staff roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and understood; authority is clearly defined and recognized

4.19.   human resource policies are in line with current regulations and all staff performance is monitored and assessed effectively through appraisal and review systems which result in further planning and improvement

4.20.   the VET provider's school board issues the provider's ethical charter in collaboration with the teachers' council

4.21.   the director of the VET provider has appointed a person in charge of interpersonal conflict resolution

4.22.   interpersonal conflicts are dealt with effectively and solved efficiently

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF

4.23.	individual and organized professional training and development is carried out with the support of the VET provider within occupational/professional fields and also in the fields of pedagogy, didactics, educational psychology, methodology, information and communication technology, counselling, management, and educational policies as well as other fields relevant to the effective and high quality provision of education in schools/institutions
4.24.	the staff professional development policy includes appropriate arrangements for induction of new staff and for CPD
4.25.	the continuing professional development of all staff contributes to their effectiveness and allows staff to reflect on their own practice and plan their professional development in line with the goals and objectives of the VET provider
4.26.	learner achievement data is used as a source of information for identifying potential staff development and education needs
4.27.	data on the VET provider's achievements is collected, analysed and published in accordance with the development aims and objectives

PRIORITY AREA 5 – COOPERATION WITHIN THE VET PROVIDER - COOPERATION WITH OTHER STAKEHOLDERS – PROMOTION OF PROVIDER
QUALITY AREAS AND QUALITY CRITERIA

SCHOOL BOARD
5.1.　the school board actively supports and is involved in the development and quality of the teaching, training, and learning process as well as other services supplied by the VET provider
5.2.　the school board effectively supports the VET provider's staff in the protection of employment rights
5.3.　the school board develops parts of the vocational curriculum in line with the national framework curriculum in accordance with local and regional needs by 31 August for the following year
5.4.　equality of opportunity of staff and learners is promoted and discriminations avoided in all activities
5.5.　the school board has appointed a Quality Assurance Committee

THE DIRECTOR OF THE VET PROVIDER
5.6.　performs activities as outlined by the Law on Institutions
5.7.　acts as professional school leader
5.8.　ensures the development of the institution and professional development of its staff, a team-oriented approach to work, and a stimulating work environment
5.9.　the director regularly monitors the work of teachers/trainers, expert associates and expert councils
5.10.　the director regularly self-evaluates his or her own performance

PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION
5.11.　procedures are in place to ensure that the VET provider's mission and vision are communicated to and fully understood by all learners, staff, and other stakeholders
5.12.　the rights and responsibilities of learners and staff are clearly defined in the organisation's statute
5.13.　all relevant stakeholders are familiar with the rights and obligations of learners and staff
5.14.　the overall achievements of the organisation, learners, and staff are available and published regularly
5.15.　there are procedures in place for identifying and successfully resolving communication problems which arise
5.16.　activities aimed at improving interpersonal relations among staff and learners are carried out

INFORMATION SYSTEM
5.17.　the information system is used to regularly provide information to learners, staff and other stakeholders
5.18.　the VET provider ensures the collection of useful and relevant data and its entry into the information system
5.19.　the school board, director, staff and learners use the information system
5.20.　information about activities, achievements, and results within the organisation is regularly gathered, updated, stored and analysed
5.21.　data on the organisation, staff, and learners is stored in accordance with current regulations

PARTNERSHIPS
5.22.　partnerships developed with external stakeholders are regularly worked on
5.23.　information about the current and future needs of relevant stakeholders is systematically collected and used for improving the educational process
5.24.　partnerships with other VET providers are developed and used to improve the learning process
5.25.　partnership projects contribute to local development

PROMOTION OF VET PROVIDER AND LEARNING PROGRAMMES

5.26. there are effective procedures and marketing methods for promoting the VET provider at the local and regional levels and beyond

5.27. the VET provider promotes the values and principles adapted in the mission and vision statements

5.28. the VET provider's educational programmes and services are promoted through, for example, meetings, fairs, conferences and participation in events at a local level and beyond

5.29. the overall achievements of the VET provider, staff members, and learners are used for the purpose of promoting the VET provider and its programmes

5.30. the VET provider has a web page which it continually updates

PRIORITY AREA 6 – ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT (PROVIDER AND QUALITY)

QUALITY AREAS AND QUALITY CRITERIA

QUALITY MANAGEMENT
6.1. the school board and director are actively involved in quality assurance with the objective of improving the organization's performance
6.2. the director develops the mission and vision in close collaboration with the organisation's staff and learners
6.3. the organisation's medium and long-term development plans are aligned with local, regional, and national VET development strategies
6.4. the VET provider developed a school action plan and all relevant stakeholders are familiar with it
6.5. the VET provider developed a code of ethical conduct
6.6. the VET provider has set up a Quality Assurance Committee and has designated it directly responsible for the quality of the organisation and its learning provision
6.7. a Quality Coordinator has been appointed and ensures operational quality management
6.8. the director ensures that all teachers, trainers, other staff, and other stakeholders are involved in the implementation of quality assurance within the scope of their responsibilities
6.9. all key stakeholders discuss recommendations for quality improvements with the Quality Assurance Committee

INTERNAL MONITORING OF QUALITY PROCEDURES
6.10. the organisation has a strategy to ensure that quality management and the quality assurance manual are subject to internal monitoring
6.11. monitoring of the quality system takes place at least annually
6.12. measures and policies for quality assurance are monitored and evaluated on a regular basis to ensure that the system and processes are appropriate, effective, and are maintained and complied with
6.13. there are procedures in place to address non-compliance and implement corrective measures where necessary
6.14. there are quality assurance methods and procedures, systematic procedures for controlling teaching and learning, and procedures for the improvement of learner achievement as well as procedures for resolving appeals and complaints
6.15.   there is a procedure for making recommendations for quality improvement and there are procedures which ensure that quality improvement is implemented and monitored

SELF-ASSESSMENT PROCESS
6.16. the self-assessment process is transparent, systematic, carried out annually with all relevant staff, and is informed by the views of all relevant internal and external stakeholders
6.17. the policy of self-assessment is communicated to and understood by all relevant stakeholders
6.18. all aspects of the organisation, including learning programmes and other services provided by the organisation, are subject to self-assessment
6.19. the quality system has a mechanism for collecting regular (at least annually) feedback and satisfaction rates from learners and other relevant internal and external stakeholders on all aspects of the organisation's performance
6.20. specific instruments (e.g. questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, and others) are used to evaluate the organisation's performance
6.21. the organization's performance is reviewed against internal and external key performance indicators

6.22.	self-assessment leads to the identification of priorities and the planning of further action for quality improvement (e.g. SWOT / KREDA decision making process)
6.23.	VETIS and other procedures for statistical data collection are used during the self-assessment process and for writing the self-assessment report
6.24.	procedures are established for the internal monitoring and validation of evaluation decisions made during the self-assessment process, and decisions made about supporting evidence
6.25.	the VET provider developed the self-assessment report and external auditors monitor and validate the VET provider's self-assessment process and report

IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

6.26.	the established procedures build on strengths, address weaknesses, and implement improvements; and results from the self-assessment process and report are used to inform future developments
6.27.	improvement plans address all of the identified weaknesses, including those not completed from the previous cycle; and areas selected for improvement are an appropriate response to the strengths and weaknesses of the VET provider
6.28.	improvement plans include clearly defined targets, priorities, tasks, responsibilities, and timescales; and success criteria are specific, measureable and achievable
6.29.	the implementation of action plans and corrective measures is monitored and evaluated
6.30.	all staff are involved in continuous quality improvement
6.31.	all staff and stakeholders receive feedback on the outcomes of the self-assessment process and improvement plan (taking into account the rights for individual data protection)
6.32.	the findings of external bodies are communicated to appropriate staff, and corrective measures are implemented
6.33.	external auditors monitor and validate the VET provider's improvement plan

1.4.   Sources of Evidence

VET providers will collect and present their own sources of evidence. The table contains **examples** only, and the list is not exhaustive. It is also important to remember that it is not a requirement to identify evidence for each quality criteria. The evidence should refer to the priority areas or at least to the quality areas.

Quality Management
The quality management assures the quality of learning programmes and promotes continuous improvement through a self-assessment process

- records of how regional and local education action plans (if available) relate to the provider's own development plans
- documented mission statement; provider goals and fundamental values
- management job specifications; statements of responsibilities
- management statement including evidence on how the director and management team are actively involved in the quality assurance process
- minutes of meetings of all the organisation's committees
- documented quality assurance policies and procedures
- organisational structure; roles and responsibilities
- evidence that policies and procedures are put into practice
- communication and information flowchart and processes
- additional quality standards (e.g. for career guidance, practice firms, work-based learning)
- self-assessment reports and improvement plans
- internal monitoring and internal evaluation reports
- internal monitoring and review processes and procedures
- minutes of Quality Committee
- relevant minutes of school board, teachers' council, learners' council, parents' council, and other committees
- learning programme review report; minutes of expert councils in cases of adult learning programme review
- national benchmarks and indicators used in self-assessment and target-setting
- annual review of school long-term development plan and other plans
- review of internal regulations and making proposals for changes/improvements
- report on implemented activities from the organisation's plans
- action plans
- records of improvement trends over time (3 years); records of year-on-year improvement; records of the achievement of targets
- feedback from all stakeholders and analysis
- reports of external evaluation, professional and educational supervision, inspection, and financial audits
- records of proposals for improvements set by external auditors and how these are communicated to stakeholders and implemented
- vocational curriculum approval records
- external validation of the self-assessment report and improvement plan
- reports sent to community or other institutes
- documentation relating to ethnic and minority groups
- lesson/session observation charts

NOTE:
- *Stakeholders = stakeholders are all relevant internal and external individuals, parties, agencies, and other organisations that have an interest in the VET provider's work and activities, including learners, teachers, trainers, parents, and employers*

- *Key Performance Indicators = these are the quantitative national benchmarks against which providers can measure their performance.*
- *Learners = learners are participants in learning programmes leading to the achievement of qualifications.*
- *VET provider = this encompasses all organisations that offer vocational learning, e.g. VET schools, colleges*

Management Responsibilities

The organisation provides effective management of all processes, of education & training provision, and of adult learning programme development

- documented mission statement; the institute's goals and fundamental values
- management organisation and methods statement, including evidence on how the director and management team are actively involved in the quality assurance process
- minutes of management meetings
- adult learning programme approval records
- strategic plans, annual improvement plans and operational plans
- strategies for keeping staff, learners, and other stakeholders well briefed on information, opportunities, legislation, and current and developing practices
- sources of information for stakeholders (mail-shots, handbooks, leaflets, publications, website, etc.)
- evidence of internal and external dissemination of information (e.g. website, announcement board)
- marketing strategy and marketing business plan (e.g. provider long-term development plan)
- partnership and cooperation policies and procedures
- minutes of meetings between the director of the provider organisation and key stakeholders, correspondence
- records of visits to other providers
- formal agreements of partnership/cooperation with partner organisations (especially local economic agents and local community)
- evidence of system for gathering, storing, using and archiving management and other data and information; statistical data
- data on student success after graduation
- feedback from stakeholders (e.g. interviews, questionnaires, focus groups)
- evidence of staff training for use of the provider's information system
- analysis of cost of learning
- minutes of meetings on equality; minutes of expert teams/councils

Resources & Staff Management

The organisation provides learners with a safe and healthy environment and ensures that programmes are delivered and assessed by competent and qualified staff

- work health & safety policy and procedures; qualified staff with health & safety responsibilities
- risk assessment documentation
- minutes of meetings regarding work health & safety
- system for checking conditions of work placements, external learning locations
- equipment safety checks, action plans
- fire warden and fire drill documentation; procedures for other emergencies
- records of accommodation, e.g. offices, workshops, sports ground, classrooms, practical training rooms, library
- policy and procedures regarding access to resources
- policies and procedures regarding up-dating of resources
- analysis and plans for procurement of equipment
- feedback from staff and learners on the use of resources and analysis of feedback
- adult learning programme approval process documents

- minutes from meetings about meeting required criteria for a chosen adult education program
- learning support policy, evidence that support is offered to learners with special educational needs
- career guidance policies and procedures
- data on student success after graduation
- staff CVs and records; records of compliance with legislation and current regulations
- organisational structure; roles and responsibilities; job descriptions
- policies and procedures for new staff (e.g. curriculum for new staff)
- documentation on policy and procedures for monitoring teaching and learning; teaching and learning observation reports;
- benchmarking against internal and external standards; feedback from observations; action plans and guidelines for observations
- staff self-evaluation; research activities
- staff appraisal and review policy and procedures; appraisal review forms; feedback from learners
- staff training and development policy and procedures; action plans
- minutes from meetings which brought up the need for specific staff training, decisions on staff training
- evidence of staff participation in professional training
- feedback from training; evaluation of training, archiving of all materials received available to everybody
- CPD (continual professional development) folders; records of professional occupational training of staff; certificates and qualifications achieved during staff training
- self-assessment and internal evaluation outcomes; improvement plans
- external audit reports

Learning Programme Design, Development, and Review
The organisation is responsive to the needs of all stakeholders in developing and delivering adult learning programmes

- stakeholder policy and procedures; records of stakeholders' needs, characteristics, interests, and expectations; data on external variables such as social, ecological, economic, legal, and demographic developments
- profiles of learners, employers, organisations, employment markets, demographic data
- procedures on collecting data on local and national labour market needs; labour market research; labour market information
- targets and strategy documentation; business plan (e.g. provider long-term development plan); project plans
- evidence of involvement with local focus groups; consulting groups; variety of local partners; review and evaluation documents; feedback from learners and employers
- partnership policy and procedures; minutes of partnership meetings; evidence of contributions to local and regional development
- evidence of how learning programmes meet identified needs of stakeholders
- programme approval process and documentation, including evidence of need and rationale
- learning programme aims; objectives and outcomes
- learning programme review evidence; evaluation feedback
- employer and learners feedback on learning programmes
- documentation on teaching and learning; teaching and learning observation policy and procedures; observation reports; feedback from observations; action plans from observations; observation guidelines
- staff self-evaluation and reflection on own practice; research activities
- self-assessment report; improvement plans
- action plan for raising retention, progression and achievement levels
- survey data and analysis on completion and achievement

- achievement data and achievement trends across different group of learners compared with recruitment profiles
- enrolment planning

Teaching, Training, and Support to Learning
The organisation offers equality of access to learning programmes and supports all learners

- the organisation's charter; mission statement; aims and objectives of the organisation
- marketing and promotion literature; prospectus, school magazine; articles in local press, local TV, attendance at exhibitions and fairs
- equal opportunity policies and procedures, recognition of special educational needs and policies and procedures relating to learners with special educational needs; action plan
- minutes from meetings dealing with equal opportunities, special educational needs, support for learners, etc.
- documentation on accessibility criteria (including access to resources)
- statistics on enrolment, retention, achievements, and destinations according to, for example, gender, ethnicity, disabilities, minority, disadvantages
- data on minority and disadvantaged groups
- advice and guidance process (including careers guidance), enrolment and recruitment procedures, learner handbook
- records and analysis of profiles of rejected learners
- documentation showing how individual learning needs are identified during initial assessment
- records of monitoring of learners and their progress
- teaching and training observation policy and procedures; observation records;use of feedback from observation; observation action plans; observation guidelines; staff self-evaluation and reflection on own practice
- program approval documents; resource requirements; lesson/session plans; staff development activities in support of a programme
- information on the progression and destination of learners after their final project defence
- appeals and complaints policies and procedures
- minutes of teaching methodology committee (who, why, agreed improvements)

Assessment and Monitoring of Learning
The organisation operates effective assessment and monitoring processes to help learners progress

- records of learner registration; records of certification dates; records of up-to-date learner numbers on programme
- learning programme specifications showing assessment criteria and elements
- standardisation of criteria and elements of assessment; minutes of meetings
- learner achievement and feedback reflects regular access to assessment
- appeal process, including evidence of meeting learners' needs in terms of alternative assessment procedures and "second chance"
- internal monitoring of assessment, feedback forms, observation records, action plans
- internal observation of formative and summative assessment activities (e.g. as part of internal monitoring procedure)
- internal and external evaluation reports and action plans
- records of assigning the examination commission
- learner achievement data and comparison with recruitment profiles
- information on the professional development of learners after graduation
- portfolio of staff who carry out assessment and internal monitoring
- evidence of storage system and process of retaining pedagogical documentation; archives

Note:
- *Summative assessment here includes all forms of testing, e.g. written or oral examination, competence-based assessment, projects.*

Quality Improvement
The organisation's performance is monitored and evaluated; the self-assessment process leads to improvement planning and improvements are implemented and monitored

- review and evaluation documents
- feedback mechanism (e.g. interviews, questionnaires, focus groups with stakeholders) and analysis of feedback
- records showing how stakeholders are involved in quality assurance
- SWOT analysis and KREDA[13] analysis
- action plans
- strategic plan (e.g. provider long-term development plan)
- mini SARs and improvement plans for each of the organisation's departments/units
- records of review policies and procedures
- minutes of management meetings; meetings of Quality Committee
- minutes of meetings with key stakeholders/external partners
- internal and external monitoring and evaluation reports and action plans
- performance and survey data and analysis; trends in performance
- records of use of national data and reports
- records of compliments, appeals, complaints, and responses
- records of suggestions for improving quality systems and arrangements
- self-assessment and improvement plan process

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[13] Adjusted based on NCEEE example of *Self-assessment Manual for Secondary Schools,* Zagreb, 2010, www.ncvvo.hr

1.5.   Examples of Judgements

VET providers collect, analyse and present the evidence upon which judgements are being made regarding strengths and weaknesses and the grading of VET providers. This table contains examples, and the list is not exhaustive. Both VET providers and external quality evaluators may use these tables to guide them when making their own judgements about the VET provision.

1. The following descriptions illustrate judgments about retention, progression and achievement:

Strength	Adequate	Weakness
• Pass rates and retention rates are above averages • General education subjects pass rates are above national averages • Vocational education subjects pass rates are above national averages • Knowledge and skills of learners are above what is expected • Most learners are working to their capacity and respond well to challenges • Most learners have made significantly more progress than their starting performance would suggest • Employment rates and higher education enrolment rates are above national averages	• Pass rates and retention rates are in line with national averages • Most learners attain the expected level of transferable skills (communication, maths, and IT where crucial to attaining vocational competences) • Most learners demonstrate the knowledge and skills expected of the average learner • Employment rates and higher education enrolment rates are in line with national averages	• Pass rates of all groups of learners are below national averages (average, gifted, special learning needs) • The majority of learners do not attain progress in education • A significant number of learners' achievements in the transferable skills are too low for them to cope adequately with their learning programme, or for them to have reasonable prospects of meeting the demands of further education and/or employment • In individual learning programmes or subjects, achieved learning results are significantly lower than in other subjects taken by the same learners

2. The following descriptions illustrate judgements about learning:

Strength	Adequate	Weakness
• Work is thoroughly prepared, but this does not prevent effective and flexible adjustments to meet the particular needs of individual learners or a whole group of learners • Teachers'/trainers' enthusiasm and commitment inspire learners, who respond well to the challenges set for them. • Teachers/trainers demonstrate authority and expertise in their subject or	• Course content is planned and presented clearly and effectively • Working methods are suitable for the task and enable learners to make progress • Lessons/sessions have clearly defined objectives and tasks • The work of learners is regularly monitored and marked in detail, and feedback helps learners improve their work • Learners actively	• The teachers'/trainers' command of the subject is inadequate for the level demanded by the subject. • Monitoring and assessment of learners are inadequate and do not give learners a clear and critical picture of their learning achievement and progress • Learners do not have an adequate understanding of what is necessary for them to greater progress • Learner involvement in the learning process is

Strength	Adequate	Weakness
occupational area.	*participate in the learning process*	*insufficient*
• *Over a period of time, the range of methods used is varied and learners develop different ways of working*	• *Teachers/trainers encourage learners to work independently*	• *Learners' attendance at lessons is poor*
• *Teachers/trainers regularly monitor, assess, and analyse the work of learners so learners are aware of their results and of opportunities for progression*		• *No use is being made of work placements for practical learning*
• *Effective use is being made of work placements for practical learning*		• *Learners have little or no opportunities to gain practical skills*
• *The VET provider has highly effective partnership agreements with employers for work placements and provides high quality practical learning opportunities for all learners*		

3. The following descriptions illustrate judgments about the quality of guidance and support:

Strength	Adequate	Weakness
• *Information regarding guidance and support are available to learners in various forms*	• *Initial information is clear and accessible to all learners.*	• *Large numbers of learners change their courses soon after entry*
• *Induction enables learners to settle in quickly to their programmes*	• *Learners are offered both mentoring and learning support appropriate to their needs.*	• *A large number of students drop out of a programme or the school entirely*
• *Learner needs are accurately and quickly identified at registration or at the beginning of the school year*	• *Targets are set and checked regularly, and learners know what is expected of them.*	• *Guidance and support for groups of learners with particular/special learning needs are not effective (e.g. developmental difficulties, ethnic groups, etc.)*
• *Needs for additional learning support are addressed rapidly and sensitively and learners put in the extra work*	• *There are opportunities for weaker learners to obtain extra help.*	• *Learning support needs are not assessed, or they are assessed, but not met.*
• *The efficiency of this support is regularly assessed and is evaluated against measures of cost and of learners' achievement*	• *There are models of providing help and support to learners with current personal problems (e.g. financial, health, or family)*	• *Learners are not familiar with support options*
• *There are good and varied arrangements to provide support in times of difficulty, and a wide range of personal and social*	• *The VET provider monitors, records and assists in learner career progression (continued education and/or employment)*	• *Communication between support staff and teachers/trainers is poor or non-existent*
		• *Records of learners' progress are poor or non-existent*
		• *The working atmosphere of the VET provider is not conducive to learning, or learners have reasons not*

Strength	Adequate	Weakness
services for learners • *Learners are familiar with the professional staff of the organisation who provide them support during their learning* • *There is good communication between teachers/trainers and support staff* • *Targets are set and progress is carefully monitored and recorded* • *There are frequent opportunities for learners to discuss future courses of study* • *There are high levels of successful progression without discrimination* • *The needs of learners from all backgrounds are recognized and met.* • *The VET provider forms a supportive community in which learners take responsibility for their own and others' welfare.* • *There are programmes of service to the VET provider and the wider community.*		*to feel safe*

4. The following descriptions illustrate judgments about assessment of learning**:**

Strength	Adequate	Weakness
• *Assessment is regular and consistently according to clear, previously defined criteria* • *Teachers/trainers mark learners' work according to defined criteria* • *Teachers/trainers discuss with learners the assessment procedures and methods* • *Learners are given accurate information about their achievements* • *Learners understand the strengths and weaknesses in their work and are able to identify targets for their progression* • *Assessment is used to identify additional learning needs of individuals*	• *Regular assessments of learners' work are accurate and give learners feedback on their progress and how they can improve* • *The level of assignments presented to learners is mostly in line with the set objectives and tasks* • *Teachers/trainers set frequent written tests and regularly assign homework to learners* • *Most teachers/trainers have an objective approach to grading learners.* • *Learners are able to see the results of their written tests* • *Teachers/trainers often make encouraging comments*	• *Assessments are not in line with the criteria and do not enable learners to form an accurate picture of their achievements* • *Assessment criteria are not known or defined* • *Records of learners' progress give inadequate indications of what has been learnt* • *Internal evaluation procedures are inadequate* • *Learners are not helped in developing skills and knowledge which enable them to evaluate their own work* • *The VET provider does not respond in an appropriate and timely manner to the views of external*

Strength	Adequate	Weakness
• *Reporting is accurate and gives learners and their parents a clear picture of the learners' performance* • *Learners' performance and progress are used to evaluate the quality of effectiveness of VET provision* • *Teachers/trainers evaluate learners' achievement ensuring the criteria are consistent for different groups and learning programmes* • *Internal monitoring procedures enable collaboration and the exchange of good practices within and between occupational areas for defining evaluation criteria* • *There are high quality partnerships with employees, which enables the assessment of learners during work placements* • *Most learners understand the practical competence-based assessment procedures* Note: "Most" or "majority" implies well above 50% or national average.	• *Use is being made of work placements for assessment* • *Some learners understand the practical competence-based assessment procedures* Note: "some" implies less than 50% or according to national average	evaluators • *No use is being made of work placements for assessments* • *Learners do not understand the practical competence-based assessment procedure*

5. The following descriptions illustrate judgments about the design and development of adult learning programmes:

Strength	Adequate	Weakness
• *The curriculum is rich and varied with a choice of programmes that permit learners to continue with learning at different levels* • *Learning provision is well organized* • *Programmes are carefully planned and monitored* • *Programme planning ensures that learners can build on their existing knowledge and experience* • *Learners make effective use of facilities provided for working on their own.* • *Programmes ensure*	• *The VET provider offers a good range of programmes at all levels appropriate to learners' needs.* • *The VET provider ensures that learners are aware of what is available in other VET providers in the area.* • *The extra-curricular programme offers a satisfactory range of activities.* • *There are suitable arrangements for the development of practical skills.*	• *The VET provider lacks policies or practices that effectively support inclusion.* • *The curriculum lacks sensitivity to educational inclusiveness and equality of opportunity, with the result that particular groups of learners are not adequately provided for.* • *The range of courses is too narrow to enable learners to progress to other programmes.* • *Learning programmes are not effectively planned,*

Strength	Adequate	Weakness
equality of access and opportunity • *Highly effective partnership agreements with employers and local communities enable the effective evaluation and development of adult learning programmes.*		*managed and monitored, so that a significant number of learners fail to make the progress expected.* • *Programmes do not enable learners to gain the competences necessary for employment, further training, or higher education* • *There is a lack of coherence owing to a lack of communication between different teachers/trainers* • *The progressive acquisition of knowledge and skills by learners is hampered because taught and practical sessions are not integrated.* • *The learning programmes do not allow learners to acquire practical skills* • *The quality of provision varies depending upon the teacher/trainer or occupational sector*

6. The following descriptions illustrate judgments about human resources management:

Strength	Adequate	Weakness
• *Teachers and trainers are well qualified and regularly undergo professional development* • *They have up-to-date subject or occupational knowledge that is used well to promote learning.* • *The VET provider provides an interesting and encouraging environment for learners.* • *Accommodation and material learning resources are good.* • *Surveys show that staff and learners value the material conditions under which they work* • *Learners' work is displayed in classrooms and public areas.* • *Libraries and learning resource centres are well*	• *Staff are well qualified for the work they undertake, but a few teachers/trainers don't keep up with developments in their occupational field* • *The accommodation for learner services is spacious and offers learners easy access* • *There are smaller rooms in which private meetings with individual learners can take place.* • *Most classrooms provide a pleasant environment for learners.* • *Learners can use computers offering a wide range of software and good access to the Internet.*	• *Significant numbers of teachers/trainers are poorly qualified in their subjects, lack experience, or do not hold teaching/training qualifications.* • *There is little opportunity for professional development* • *The effectiveness of professional development is not evaluated consistently* • *Specialist equipment and materials for work and learning is of poor quality.* • *There are insufficient books, videos and computer-based learning materials to meet the needs of the learners.* • *Some areas of the VET provider are inaccessible or*

Strength	Adequate	Weakness
designed, well equipped and well used.		*unsuitable for learners special learning needs and/or disabilities*
• *Learners have unlimited access to computers and the internet, which are available in open-access areas and most classrooms and workshops*		
• *The VET provider encourages the use of computers.*		
• *Printing and copying services enable teachers/trainers to create learning materials*		
• *All areas of the VET provider have easy access for learners with special learning needs*		
• *Adaptations to classrooms and workshops enable learners with a wide range of learning difficulties and physical disabilities to learn effectively.*		

7. The following descriptions illustrate judgments about leadership and management:

Strength	Adequate	Weakness
• *The director and governing body of the organisation share a common purpose with staff and put learners and their achievements first*	• *The VET provider's director and governing body are clear about its strengths and weaknesses*	• *There is a significant amount of unsatisfactory teaching/training, or there are unacceptably wide variations in the quality of teaching/training across the VET provider (the amount of unsatisfactory teaching/training is significant if over 10% of lessons observed are unsatisfactory)*
• *The aims and values of the VET provider are clear and equality of opportunity is emphasized strongly*	• *They have established certain procedures to raise levels of achievements*	
• *Staff are well informed and committed to the VET provider's aims*	• *Retention, progression and achievement targets are set and mostly met.*	• *Standards in the VET provider are significantly lower than they should be.*
• *The VET provider works effectively with partners, such as employers and community groups*	• *Most staff have access to accurate data on learners' retention, progression and achievement, and use the data in evaluating their work.*	• *The VET provider consistently fails to achieve its performance targets.*
• *Learners' achievements are evaluated regularly.*	• *Much of the work of the VET provider is monitored closely.*	• *Little effort has been made to promote equality of opportunity.*
• *Information on learners' retention, progress and achievement is accurate, accessible to teachers/trainers and used effectively to improve performance.*	• *The majority of staff are appraised regularly and receive training to meet their identified needs.*	• *The director and governing body do not know the strengths and weaknesses of the VET provider.*
• *Systems to appraise the performance of staff,*	• *Financial and other resources adequately support educational priorities of the VET provider.*	• *Unsatisfactory resources reduce the quality of the learning process*

Strength	Adequate	Weakness
identify their training needs and ensure these are met, are comprehensive and effective. • *Financial and other resources are effectively deployed to support educational priorities.* • *Best practice principles are defined and applied well* • *Members of the provider's governing body monitor its performance* • *They understand the VET provider's strengths and weaknesses, and set the right priorities for development and improvement.* • *They fulfil their statutory duties and provide a clear sense of direction for the VET provider.*	• *Members of the governing body are informed of the VET provider's performance and set targets for improvement.* • *They meet their statutory responsibilities.*	• *The aims and objectives of the VET provider are not clear.*

8. The following descriptions illustrate judgments about quality management, self-assessment and improvement:

Strength	Adequate	Weakness
• *The values and code of conducts are understood by all and are practiced in day-to-day activities.* • *The VET provider has effective teams which set demanding yet realistic targets including targets for retention, progression and achievement.* • *Teachers/trainers and other staff clearly understand their responsibility in working with others to identify and provide evidence of strengths and weaknesses in their area of work.* • *Teachers/trainers, professional and other staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and their impact on the VET provider and on learners' success.* • *Learners, teachers/trainers and other staff understand the process of quality management and self-assessment and are able to*	• *Teamwork is generally well established and the VET provider has set sensible objectives.* • *Teachers/trainers contribute to quality assurance and self-assessment, but there is no contribution expected from support members of staff or other stakeholders.* • *Retention, progression and achievement targets are set and normally met.* • *Most staff have access to accurate data on learners' retention, progression and achievement, and use the data well in evaluating their work.* • *Much of the work of the VET provider is monitored closely.* • *Some policies and procedures are adhered to, monitored, reviewed and improved, but stakeholders do not contribute to this process.* • *Some policies and*	• *There is no evidence that members of staff other than the director and governing body of the organization participate in quality management or self-assessment.* • *There is little monitoring and evaluation of performance, and few steps are taken to improve achievements.* • *The director and governing body do not know the strengths and weaknesses of the VET provider.* • *Adherence to policies and procedures is irregular throughout the VET provider, and policies and procedures are rarely reviewed.* • *Learners and other stakeholders are not actively invited to use the appeals and complaints procedures, and few are aware of these.* • *Appeals and complaints are dealt with ineffectively and*

Strength	Adequate	Weakness
contribute to it.	*procedures are adhered to, monitored, reviewed and improved, but stakeholders do not contribute to this process.*	*with long time delays.*
• *Other interested parties and stakeholders understand the VET provider's self-assessment process and contribute to it.*		• *Self-assessment and improvement planning are ineffective and show little results.*
• *The work of the VET provider is thoroughly monitored, particularly the effectiveness of the learning process and cross-organizational activities.*	• *Quality improvements are carried out, but not monitored for their effectiveness.*	
• *Learners' achievements are evaluated regularly.*		
• *Information on learners' retention, progression and achievement is accurate, accessible to teachers/trainers, the director, and the governing body, and used effectively to improve performance.*		
• *Prescribed and agreed upon policies and procedures are adhered to, monitored, reviewed and improved, and all stakeholders contribute to this process.*		
• *Appeals and complaints are dealt with effectively, promptly and to the satisfaction of all involved.*		
• *Appeals and complaints data is used effectively to improve performance.*		
• *Quality improvement procedures are carried out and monitored for their effectiveness*		

1.6.   Statistical and Performance Data

*For your self-assessment process you will need statistical data. There is no need to re-produce tables; if they are already generated by specific software and available in a suitable format, then you can attach print-outs to your self-assessment report. Your statistical data will also include information for key performance indicators. You will **not** have all the statistics available at this stage of your development; but, your data should provide as detailed information as possible.*

You need to provide data on –

Learners	Faculty	Resources	Learning Provision and Environment	Learner Achievement *for last **2** years*	Other
total # of learners by level, age, gender, ethnicity, prior achievements other	total # of faculty staff male female	total # of non-faculty staff administrative financial technical cleaning security librarian	total enrolments by learning programme/ qualification	achievements: by grade by subject by examination by programme/ qualification by gender by SEN by age by ethnicity/minority	mechanisms to identify training needs in the labour market
total # of learners residing in different municipalities counties	work experience less than 5 yrs 6-10 yrs 11-15 yrs 16-20 yrs over 20 yrs	total # of shifts in the organisation	# of qualifications/ occupations by type	# of learners who obtained a qualification/ occupation (completion rate) by qualification/ occupation by gender by SEN by age by ethnicity/minority	measures used to promote better access to VET
total # of learners commuting by bus by train by other means	industrial experience none less than 1 yr 2-5 yrs 6-10 yrs 11-20 yrs over 20 yrs	total # of classrooms	# of learning programmes by type	# of learners who have failed the year	information on occupation obtained by VET-graduates and satisfaction with acquired skills and competences both from former learners and

Learners	Faculty	Resources	Learning Provision and Environment	Learner Achievement *for last **2** years*	Other
					employers
total # attending courses in a non-native tongue	# of professionals pedagogical advisor mentor pedagogue psychologist external associate speech therapist defectologist	total # of facilities used elsewhere classrooms gym IT	# of curriculum areas by type	# of learners directed to take remedial exam	summary of progression data (destination of VET-learners 6, 12, and 36 months after completion of training) by type of progression employed self-employed unemployed university further education other VET apprenticeship pregnancy military service illness other
total # attending courses in minority language	total # of faculty who have attended seminars for working with SEN learners	average # of learners per class	# of locally developed programmes by type	average score/grade by qualification/occupation by gender by SEN	
total # receiving welfare	education background university degree college diploma high school diploma vocational qualification	provider owns gym sports court in yard library computers workshops practice firms kitchen canteen restaurant industrial equipment etc.	# of adult programmes by type	other learner achievements by competition by testing	
total # receiving child	total # attending	total # of library books	# of elective courses	total # employed in	

Learners	Faculty	Resources	Learning Provision and Environment	Learner Achievement *for last 2 years*	Other
allowance	professional development programmes during last academic year industrial knowledge didactic/methodical SEN quality entrepreneurship partnership building provider management other	per learner	and optional activities religious instructions ethics instructions other	occupation related to finished VET programme immediately after 1 yr after 3 yrs after 5 yrs	
total # of drop-outs by qualification/occupation by gender by SEN by age by ethnicity	# of hours of professional development during last academic year per faculty total	financial resources national budget salaries donations sponsorship projects provider own income	# of extra-curricular activities by type % of attending learners % of involved faculty	total # employed in occupation not related to the finished VET programme immediately in 1 yrs in 3 yrs in 5 yrs	
total # of expelled by qualification/occupation by gender by SEN by age by ethnicity	# of hours of professional development for non-faculty staff per type of staff total	funds invested in license exams professional development books and magazines educational software audio-visual aids other learning aids investing in facilities learning consumables insuring school in insurance companies	# of learner clubs by type % of learners who are members % of involved faculty % of involved local community % of involved employers	total # who passed State Matura after finishing a VET programme per subject per level	
total # of absences by hour per learner		school safety security guards video surveillance enclosed yard special lighting in yard faculty safety duty	# of foreign language courses by language % of learner members % of involved faculty	total # who continued their education after completing VET programme by vocation by level	

Learners	Faculty	Resources	Learning Provision and Environment	Learner Achievement *for last **2** years*	Other
		preventive programmes			
# of learners repeating their programme by qualification/occupation by gender by SEN by age by ethnicity		# of agreements with employers for real work placements up-dating of equipment	# of languages in which courses are delivered by language	total # who gained a higher degree in education by vocation by time needed to finish a particular programme in comparison with the given duration of a programme	
total # of adult learners			# of projects by type		
Total # of SEN learners			# of pedagogical measures by type % of learners attending		
Total # according to types of SEN			specific characteristics of the provider description		
total # of learners attending work placements by type by location by length			total # of professional excursions by type by # of learners by # of days		

1.7. Self-assessment Coordinator – role & responsibilities

ROLE

- To act as leader in the development and operational implementation of the self-assessment, external evaluation, and improvement planning processes and related procedures against the quality criteria
- To ensure data is being collected and analysed
- To support the VET provider in the development of its quality assurance system in line with national priorities and VET provider targets
- To assist in the planning, design, and implementation of the VET provider quality system and quality improvement initiatives

TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Act as lead manager for the self-assessment and improvement planning processes within the Quality Committee
- Assist/support all members of the VET provider in their self-assessment and improvement planning processes
- Ensure all stakeholders (internal & external) are involved in the self-assessment and improvement planning process
- Ensure feedback is collected from all stakeholders (via survey questionnaires, focus groups, etc.)
- Ensure the development of the overall VET provider SA report and improvement plan
- Take turns in preparing and chairing quality committee meetings
- As a quality committee member assist in the analysis of the performance of learners, their motivation and progress
- Monitor and analyse VET provider data
- As a quality committee member promote the role of the VET provider in cultural and public life (school image)
- As a quality committee member promote VET provider's core values, strategic objectives and operational targets and business activities
- Promote the principles of equality of opportunity and treatment of learners, and the celebration of diversity throughout the VET provider
- Promote professional relationships in the VET provider
- Cooperate with expert teams/councils

LEARNER ACHIEVEMENT

- Together with expert teams/councils and the quality committee analyse the level of learner achievement and success rate
- Support other members of the VET provider in the development, improvement, and annual review of the VET provider's programmes
- Based on learner performance assist in analysing the way in which learners achieve the learning outcomes and assessment criteria as required by the curriculum/qualification (e.g. are there particular learning outcomes that learners consistently do not achieve or where grades are consistently very low?)

2.   Self-assessment

2.1.   Guidelines   for   Self-assessment   for   VET Providers

1.   Introduction

This is a general handbook which aims to help VET providers carry out self-assessment and improvement planning effectively. It will help individuals and teams at all levels carry out the processes.

The handbook has been created in a manner that allows it to be used chapter by chapter.

Self-assessment, or "self-evaluation," is the making of judgements about the quality the VET organisation provides autonomously and with full accountability. Evidence which is referenced in the self-assessment report is used in self-assessment. The goal of self-assessment is:

- Determining the current condition and making comparisons with examples of good practice
- Determining improvement potential
- Systematic quality improvements

Self-assessment is a cyclical process.

It is exceptionally important that VET providers manage the quality of the educational process and continually improve it using defined quality criteria.

As part of monitoring and improving the quality of their work, VET providers encourage their staff to analyse and evaluate their own performance. The Quality Assurance Committee makes use of the results of analysis to reach a view of the overall quality of the organisation.

The result of this self-assessment process should be plans for improvement in all relevant areas and all relevant levels.

These guidance notes are based on the principles of self-assessment and aim to equip the QA Committee with a tool to plan for, undertake, and report on self-assessment. The aim is to enable VET providers to ensure the quality of their provision. The continuing strength of the quality areas and criteria is that they are used in external evaluation as well as in self-assessment by VET providers and by national institutions (e.g. AVETAE[14]) in quality assurance procedures. As a result they provide an opportunity to expand partnerships at all levels of the education system which is central to the VET development strategy.

The self-assessment framework uses the term "quality criteria" to reflect the qualitative nature of the judgements to be made and to distinguish them from straightforward quantitative or statistical measures. However, the overall framework and purpose remain the same. They are intended to underpin both self-assessment and external evaluation.

There are, of course, a range of approaches to quality assurance and improvement. There is no single model for self-assessment. VET providers which adopted the self-assessment process have placed it under their own control and responsibility. Evidence

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[14] AVETAE = Agency for VET and Adult Education

must be collected and analysed in order for a VET provider to make judgements about their performance.

All VET providers produce an annual self-assessment report, the core of which should be an evaluation based on answers to the criteria of the VET Quality Framework; and perhaps other internal and external quality models (e.g. EQARF, CQAF for VET; VET Act). In drawing up their self-assessment report VET providers should make judgements about their performance and identify strengths, weaknesses and other aspects of provision in need of improvement. All judgements should be supported by reliable evidence.

This handbook is an introduction to the principles of self-assessment and improvement planning. VET providers can work through the processes as they implement them, using the handbook for information and ideas. Self-assessment, improvement planning and the monitoring of improvements are continuous, and the handbook is, therefore, useful throughout the year.

The main purpose of the handbook is to provide VET providers with explanations to carry out self-assessment and improvement planning which can help them raise quality and improve provision.

There are detailed ideas, useful tools, and information on how to do the process. The handbook is for people who manage or are accountable for self-assessment and improvement planning, and for those who are putting it into practice, such as delivery teams of teachers, trainers and assessors. There is also a guide on how to write the self-assessment report.

We can view the process of self-assessment through three segments:

How are we doing?	• asks providers to consider how their organisation is performing in relation to the VET provider mission, targets, and objectives
How do we know?	• describes the use of performance indicators and quality criteria to measure how the VET provider is doing within key areas of provision • asks the provider to identify "evidence" that substantiates their judgements
What are we going to do now?	• An improvement plan is created based on the current condition

2. Self-Assessment and Continuous Improvement

The primary purpose of self-assessment and improvement planning is to improve the quality of the learning process, and it supports the VET provider's further development needs and measures progress against its mission and goals.

Self-assessment is a legal requirement and is:

- an essential part of a continuous review and improvement process

- led by the needs of the VET provider rather than external requirements; but is also be able to meet those external requirements

- based on reliable, valid, and up-to-date evidence – it is necessary to use data as the starting point for any judgement or grading

- inclusive, with all members of the organisation contributing to the process and owning the actions for improvement, and monitoring those actions continuously

- the basis of effective and continuous action plans which, when implemented, lead to improvements or maintain set standards

Action: When thinking about self-assessment processes, VET providers should consider what areas and quality criteria are essential for their organisation. They should also ensure that everyone in their organization who is involved in self-assessment is aware of the tools, policies, and procedures to be used.

Continuous improvement contributes to the quality of VET provision in line with changes in society and gained experience. All those involved in VET are engaged in a constant process of learning and of developing their ideas, and self-assessment, change and improvement are therefore both natural and essential to an effective VET provider. VET providers are accountable to society and are involved in agreeing aims and policies to promote and improve learning and attainment.

Through self-assessment a provider comes to know:

- what it is aiming to do
- whether it is meeting its aims successfully
- what needs to be maintained or improved
- whether changes are working

If a VET provider comes to know these things through self-assessment and acts on them, it is well on the way to having an efficient quality assurance system. VET provider self-assessment is at the heart of quality assurance.

The process of self-assessment and continuous improvement should include:

- evaluation of performance
- annual self-assessment report
- annual improvement plan, improvement targets and action plans
- long-term (e.g. 3 to 5 years) development plans
- monitoring and reviewing the extent to which annual improvement, long-term development, and other action plans are achieved and targets are met
- external evaluation

The main purpose of self-assessment is the improvement of provision quality. Effective self-assessment will enable VET providers to identify their strengths and weaknesses, to compare their performance with that of other VET providers, and to plan for improvement. This planning will involve:

- identifying and prioritising areas for improvement
- setting objectives and determining the actions which need to be taken to bring about improvement
- agreeing targets, milestones and criteria which will be used to direct and control the improvement process
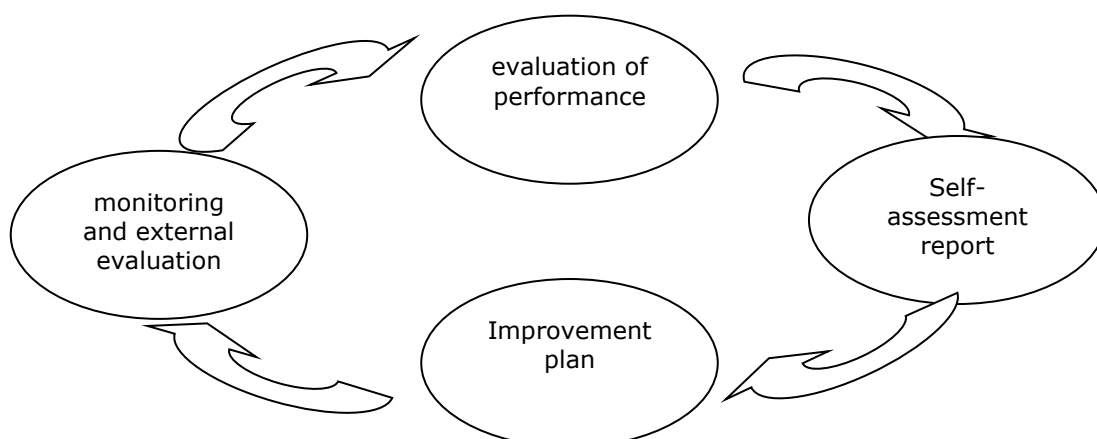
Figure 1: Annual Self-Assessment Cycle

Steps need to be taken to ensure that providers are setting suitably challenging targets and that VET provision is in line with prescribed standards. These steps are undertaken by the providers through the self-assessment process.

Self-assessment results in quality improvement and the establishment of a system of quality assurance. Regional and national agencies or institutions (e.g. AVETAE, NCEEE, ETTA) will give support to providers undertaking self-assessment, validate their results, and collect the national and international data which will ensure the increasing quality of VET. Providers will, drawing on this support, ensure the quality of their performance and bring about improvement.

In addition to the outlined benefits, self-assessment enables the raising of standards in learning, such as:

- achieving high levels of learner involvement and achievement
- widening participation, removing barriers to learning, and lessening inequalities in opportunities for employment
- developing excellence in teaching and training
- transparent financial operations and safe investments in profitable activities
- continuous year-on-year improvements in the quality of VET provision and raising standards

To this end, VET providers are expected to undertake their self-assessment and improvement in concert with all the key stakeholders in their work. This will include all staff, learners themselves, parents, local employers and local VET planning bodies. VET providers should fully involve all of these in the process of self-assessment and improvement planning.

3.   Benefits of Self-Assessment and Quality Assurance

VET provider performance quality is closely tied to an understanding of the development strategies of the relevant training sector. This requires partnership networks between VET providers and all relevant stakeholders, particularly employers and professional associations.

The learning process is structured so that it responds to the needs and expectations of all beneficiaries:

1) - **learners,** who want to acquire general and occupational competences which will enable successful employment and/or further education.

2) - **employers,** who want a qualified workforce with necessary competences

3) – **public sector,** which expect from VET providers continual support and assistance in implementing activities/programmes in line with local and national development efforts.

In other words, VET providers should develop and assess competences which will provide learners a passport into employment. In order for this to happen, providers must have properly trained management and staff who will share in the development of the learning process.

With the objective of quality assurance, learning provision must ensure outcomes which correspond to the real needs of learners, employers and other relevant stakeholders.

Benefits to Learners

- improved employability
- equality of opportunity
- better information on learner opportunities
- active involvement in the development of the adult VET programme
- learners comments and views are valued and respected
- raised confidence and self-respect
- higher motivation for learning and advancement in the programme
- increased value for and support of the learning programme

Benefits to Employers

- closer links to the VET system and the opportunity to influence the development of occupational standards, qualifications, and occupational curriculums
- availability of a workforce with relevant general and occupational skills
- contribution to the profitability of the employer's organisation
- quicker integration of new recruits into the work practices
- confidence in the quality of the performance of organisations competent for the development and implementation of vocational education

Benefits to Public Authorities

- VET system enables learners to acquire competences in line with labour market needs
- more efficient educational process
- higher levels of competences for attracting inward investment from various sources
- confidence in the reliability and quality of learning and its outcomes
- key performance indicators for future strategic development planning of VET provision and providing necessary support to organisations and learners

Benefits to VET Providers

- information about good practice
- comparison with other VET providers
- confidence about own provision
- improved ability to promote the organisation, its programmes, and the overall sector
- increase in learner registration numbers
- increased confidence of current and potential funding bodies
- positive contribution to local community and regional development
- enhanced recognition and legitimacy of VET provider

4. Purpose of Self-Assessment and Quality Assurance

The monitoring, reviewing, and evaluating that are carried out during the self-assessment process contribute directly to the quality assurance of VET provision.

Quality assurance involved all techniques and activities aimed at eliminating causes of unsatisfactory performance at all relevant stages – from the identification of needs to the assessment of whether these needs have been met.

Hence a quality assurance process which would cover the following steps:

- identifying priority areas which need to be monitored
- setting targets, standards, or required levels of performance for these priority areas
- developing and implementing a system for collecting, analysing and reporting on performance in priority areas

- identifying what action should follow if performance falls below targets, standards, or required levels
- implementing and monitoring action for change

In the first instance, quality assured provision means that VET provision is in line with the needs of learners, employers, the local community, and the economy.

Self-assessment is designed to ensure that the interests of the learners come first and are of paramount importance. The intention is to place learners, their needs, experiences and achievements at the heart of self-assessment and improvement. Furthermore all provision for learners should be responsive to the needs of employers, the local community, and the economy. To this end, VET providers are expected to undertake their self-assessment and improvement in concert with the competent external agency. The emphasis is on collaboration rather than competition. VET providers should fully involve key partners in the process of self-assessment and improvement planning.

VET providers are expected to promote equality of opportunity in all aspects of provision. This includes adopting measures to widen participation, removing barriers to learning, and lessening inequalities in opportunities for employment. Furthermore, VET providers are required to demonstrate financial probity and value for money as key elements of their self-assessment. Finally all VET providers are expected to achieve continuous year-on-year improvements in the quality of their provision and to raise standards. If standards are already very high, they should be maintained.

5. Responsibilities for Self-Assessment

The main purpose of self-assessment is self-improvement. Effective self-assessment enables a VET provider to identify its strengths and weaknesses, to compare its performance with that of other VET providers, to identify opportunities for improvement, to set objectives and targets, and to prioritise the actions required to achieve these. It also provides the means of identifying and responding to the needs of learners and other stakeholders.

Self-assessment is an important way of demonstrating a commitment to satisfying the needs of learners and the community; and key stakeholders should be informed about, and involved in, the process.

Self-assessment should underpin organisational development. It should therefore be undertaken as an integral part of strategic and operational planning, not as a bolt-on activity. It should be integral to the VET provider's overall quality assurance arrangements, enabling benchmarking against national and European quality standards. Thus the quality and transparency of the self-assessment process are an important means of demonstrating a dedication to public accountability.

The self-assessment process – like all organisational processes - should be subject to periodic review and revision. This review should be annual, but each review may focus on specific aspects of the process, so that the cycle for a complete review may last a number of years, say three to five years.

Self-assessment needs to be planned, and responsibilities for this must be clear (e.g. Quality Assurance Committee). Arrangements should be in place to ensure a constructive relationship between those responsible for overall management and those with a specific responsibility for quality assurance. For example, responsibility for strategic and long-term planning for self-assessment needs to be shared between the organisation's management, director, and Quality Assurance Committee.

Planning each annual round of self-assessment might be delegated entirely to the Quality Assurance Committee; although, the responsibility of the QA Committee for liaising with other relevant individuals, groups or teams in the organisation will have to be clearly

established. On the other hand, the management of the improvement planning and implementation, which flows from the self-assessment process, is likely to be the primary responsibility of the institution's administration.

In planning for self-assessment VET providers should identify:

- why self-assessment is being carried out
- which areas and/or activities have been prioritised to be subject to self-assessment
- how the self-assessment will be carried out – systems for collecting, analysing and reporting on performance in key areas
- who will carry out the self-assessment
- when the stages in the process will be carried out
- how the results will be reported on, how they will be made available

The purpose of self-assessment should be properly communicated to all staff, learners and other stakeholders. All participants should be aware of their responsibilities within the self-assessment process. They should be properly briefed on the purposes of self-assessment, the scope of the self-assessment framework, how the self-assessment will be carried out, and the timescales for self-assessment.

5.1 Engagement of all Staff at all Levels

In order to achieve continuous improvement, all staff must be encouraged to monitor and evaluate their own performance and to identify areas for improvement. They should also be given the time and training necessary to carry out this work. It is easy to underestimate the time needed to complete an effective self-assessment, particularly the time required to gather the necessary evidence.

Consideration needs to be given to the nature of the duties of the members of staff concerned, and whether they are full-time or part-time. In the case of teachers and trainers, important factors to be taken into account might include the number of classes they are dealing with or the use of equipment, workshops, practice settings and laboratories, and the nature of the subject/curriculum to be covered.

It is best practice (particularly for large VET providers) to establish teams to carry out the assessment of their own areas of activity. These teams could be:

- subject teams linked to areas of learning or curriculum areas
- functional teams for specialist services and administrative staff
- cross-functional teams offering services across subject and service areas

Teams should be trained in the techniques of self-assessment, particularly the skills of assessing evidence and making sound judgements. Each team should have a leader who plans and manages the self-assessment process and takes responsibility for writing the team's self-assessment report.

Once the team completes its self-assessment process, report and improvement plan, these will be submitted to the QA Committee, which is responsible for writing the overall VET provider self-assessment report. the key points from teams' self-assessment reports are pooled into the overall organisational self-assessment report and improvement plan. The final report will have to be approved at the management level.

Understandably some detail will be lost in this process and resulting action points are organisational rather than team focused. It is vital therefore that the teams receive feedback on their report and action plan. In this way the teams know why some actions can be progressed while others cannot. This leads to a true and realistic team understanding of priorities by the teams.

Outlined below is a sequence of steps which could serve as a structure for new teams when organising self-assessment and improvement planning in their area.

1. agree the coverage of the self-assessment and team responsibilities	2. study the quality areas and agree the targets, standards, and levels to be examined	3. establish good practice, what evidence is available, and what evidence will have to be generated
10. consult on plan with colleagues and director and revise where necessary	subject and service teams' SA process	4. gather evidence of performance, compare to quality criteria, and reach a judgement on the standard of performance
9. draft an improvement plan - agree targets, roles and responsibilities, timescales, and milestones for review and evaluation		5. identify strengths and weaknesses, gaps in evidence, and causes for unsatisfactory performance
8. identify resource implications for actions and recognise opportunities and constraints for actions	7. propose ways of addressing weaknesses or generating additional evidence, and devise possible solutions and actions to be taken	6. write team self-assessment report, and consult with colleagues

Figure 2: Subject and Service Teams Self-Assessment Process and Improvement Planning

5.2 Involvement of Learners

In order to achieve the aims of the quality assurance process, VET providers will have to involve learners in the self-assessment process. Learners should be properly briefed on the purpose and outcomes of the self-assessment process, and it is good practice to ensure that some learners are involved in self-assessment teams and learner-consultation committees. These matters should be addressed when defining statements about learners' entitlements and responsibilities.

VET providers must demonstrate that they have fully involved learners in the self-assessment process. They need to develop effective methods of gathering feedback from learners, including questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, workshops and complaints processes.

Surveys should also include the needs of prospective learners and leavers' level of satisfaction with their programmes. It is particularly important to collect data on the destinations of learners after graduation and on learners dropping out of programmes before completion.
The evaluation of the impact and effectiveness of a "Learner Involvement Strategy" should form an integral part of the self-assessment processes and report. Within the self-assessment framework learner responsiveness measures provide key information which should be used in self-assessment to check the effectiveness of the "Learner Involvement Strategy".

Action: VET providers should ask whether their current self-assessment processes focus sufficiently on user engagement and subsequent actions; and whether these activities are reflected in the self-assessment processes.

It is good practice to have a learner involvement policies and procedures and to check whether they work in reality; and if yes, what are the outcomes for learners. If the quality assurance policies and procedures doe not work VET providers will have to introduce changes to ensure a more efficient implementation of policies and procedures.

5.3   Involvement of Stakeholders

It is important that the self-assessment process actively involves everyone who works in or with the VET provider, in order to get a balanced set of views and judgments. External evaluators will check whether and how VET providers have done this, and how they have made use of the feedback they have collected.

In planning the self-assessment process, VET providers must consider the role employers will play. VET providers need to develop effective methods of gathering feedback from external stakeholders, for example, from employers and the local community, about learners participating in work-placements and/or entering the employment market.

Further, relevant stakeholders need to be informed about the purpose and outcomes of the self-assessment process, and their feedback should be used to develop the quality of VET provision.

It is important to make sure that staff, learners, and other stakeholders understand:

- The self-assessment process and their role in it, including the monitoring of improvements resulting from actions in the improvement plan

- What happens with their views and the evidence and data they provide

- How these inform judgments and the improvement plan

There is no single right way to achieve staff, learner, and stakeholder involvement. External evaluators ask staff and stakeholders how they are involved in the self-assessment process and what they know about the final report. They will focus on the learner journey, and are likely to interview individual learners and groups to hear their views and their experiences. VET providers need to carry out similar activities regularly and consistently across their provision.

Depending on the size and spread of operations, organizing involvement and feedback through one self-assessment day may be easy or complex for the VET provider. A large VET provider, for example, may need to hold separate events on multiple days and bring the findings together.

Examples of good practice in involvement include:

- All staff need to be aware of the main content of the current self-assessment report, along with grades and the improvement plan, as well as the long-term provider development plan

- Staff who are able to say "yes, I recognise our organisation from this report"

- Linking self-assessment to quality improvement procedures so that the two cycles overlap and do not duplicate time and resources. Staff then see how what they are doing in terms of observation, gaining feedback from learners or employers, internal monitoring and programme review all link to the production of the self-assessment report

- Having an 'inclusive' self-assessment process that engages learners, staff, employers, and other interested parties

- Good communication about the process of self assessment and final report – for example, holding an annual event to bring underlying evidence together to form judgements

- Gathering views from those who know about the teaching and training and can contribute to its improvement, including learners, employers and training staff

- Involving staff, and others, from the start of the process, not just to comment on the finished draft report - 'bottom-up' rather than 'top-down'

- Using samples of staff, learners and employers (e.g. focus groups) where it is not possible to consult every individual for feedback on a particular theme

- Using a number of ways to gain learner views: surveys on key issues; focus groups; having the learner voice as a standing agenda item for groups and committees; a learner 'parliament' or forum; learner and parent councils

Linking all survey questions and focus group topics to the learner's journey through education as well as mapping them to the priority areas of the self-assessment framework – for example, a VET provider could invite all learners to rate their course three times a year on a scale of 1 to 5, results could be reviewed by the director and board of administration and action taken to praise success and tackle areas needing improvement

Local, regional and national benchmarking data regarding, for example, participation, learner achievement, learner destination and employment situation, needs to be taken into consideration, as well as national data on economic developments (e.g. labour market analysis) and government policies.

When the VET Key Performance Indicators have been identified, the relevant national agency will gather and store benchmarking data, and VET providers will be able to access it. National policy on the use of benchmarks will also be made clear – in particular the use which will be made of benchmarks at a national level (by the Ministry or by national institutions), and the degree of flexibility which providers will have in the selection and use of benchmarks.

5.4   Engagement of the Director and Board of Administration

The self-assessment process must be effectively and efficiently led and managed. The director and board of administration must be committed to the aims of self-assessment and seek to promote a climate of trust in which individuals feel able to be reflective and self-critical about their performance.

As indicated above, the responsibilities for carrying out quality assurance processes, including self-assessment, and for bringing about changes resulting from these processes must be shared between the board of administration, director, and the Quality Assurance Committee.

Responsibility for coordinating and overseeing the self-assessment process should lie with the Quality Coordinator and the Quality Assurance Committee, reporting to the board of administration and director. The Coordinator and the Committee must have the authority and decision-making responsibility appropriate to the task, and this should be agreed and documented.

The coordination of the self-assessment process normally involves planning, timetabling, advising, monitoring, reviewing, validating, report writing, editing, and disseminating examples of best practice. Except for very small organisations, the self-assessment report will be constructed from any number of subject and/or service teams' sub- (mini-

)reports. The Coordinator needs to establish clear procedures for the way in which this is to be done. It is important that the final report is concise and clearly expressed.

The board of administration and director must actively participate in the self-assessment process in a manner consistent with their responsibilities for raising standards and improving the overall effectiveness and efficiency of learning programmes. They must also approve the final self-assessment report and improvement plan and evaluate the effectiveness of the self-assessment process.

6.   Self-Assessment Framework

VET providers should seek to develop a form of self-assessment that is responsive to their own organisational needs and the needs of their stakeholders. However, there are three basic requirements relating to the self-assessment framework that all VET providers must satisfy.

1)   Self-assessment deals with all aspects of the VET provider's activity, but, in particular the quality and standard of learners' experience and achievement.

Self-assessment reports must address all areas of learning. Reports should include judgements on all other key activities that contribute to the experience of learners, such as guidance, support and care for learners, and equal opportunities. Some parts of these areas may be evaluated under different quality areas, for example as part of Learning, as part of Management Responsibilities, and/or as part of Resources Management. When making judgements on any aspect of provision and performance, the emphasis should be on outcomes and/or impact on learners and other stakeholders rather than on policies and procedures.

2)   Self-assessment addresses all the agreed priority areas, quality areas, and criteria of the VET Provider Self-Assessment Framework.

Although it may not be possible or necessary to address each of the criteria, self-assessment reports still need to make clear how these descriptors have informed the VET provider's judgements and how they have shaped the identification of key strengths and weaknesses.

3)   Self-assessment must take into account relevant stakeholder interests, national improvement strategies, and government policies.

VET providers need to take account of national, regional and local interests when undertaking and evaluating their self-assessment process. These will include government policies and plans for learning and skills and economic development, together with any other regional and local education action plans. These plans are usually based on reports from local, regional and national VET authorities, and they need to be matched with VET providers' plans for meeting the needs of learners, employers and the community.

To ensure that full account of these interests is taken, relevant stakeholders should also be directly and indirectly involved in planning, carrying out, and evaluating the self-assessment process. In particular this refers to learners, parents (in initial VET), employers, and other representatives of the local community. Indirect involvement will be achieved through surveys, discussions, and interviews; direct involvement through membership of planning groups, management groups, focus groups, and evaluation teams.

7.   Gathering and Generating Evidence

A further key principle of organizational self-assessment is that all of the judgements made against the quality areas and criteria must be supported by evidence and that this

evidence must be valid, reliable, authentic, consistent, sufficient, and in other ways suitable for the purpose.

VET providers will have to pull together evidence relating to all the activities/areas which are subject to self-assessment. Most of the evidence required will be gathered from existing sources – documents, sets of data, and reports; some evidence will have to be generated.

Sources of Evidence	Evidence	Quality Area
Records of learner achievement	Accurate information about achievement is obtained from the organisation's pedagogical documentation	Information systems: Information systems are suitable for use in planning and implementation
	the figures on learner achievement are in line with comparable national data	Professional pedagogical staff: support to learners in resolving problems during the course of their learning programmes

Figure 3: Evidence and Sources of Evidence for two Criteria

Many sources will provide evidence for more than one priority area and/or quality area, and providers are advised to establish systems to ensure that they do not duplicate effort in this respect; for example, by storing the same evidence more than once and in different forms, or by generating evidence in new ways when it can already be drawn from existing sources directly or with a small modification to existing practices. The organising system might take the form of a summary grid tracking sources of evidence and evidence against the criteria. More sophisticated tracking systems could be used where the main storage of information is electronic.

In the self-assessment process, assessors make judgements based on various types of evidence. Evidence must be drawn from the various sources of evidence available in order to make judgments.

For example, quality area: "information systems" will require relatively simple as well as more complex judgements. Most of the judgements about the information system to be made are about accuracy, security, review cycles; and the evidence will come from the information itself and the procedures associated with it. This should be quite straightforward.

However, the question is also raised whether staff and learners have easy access to relevant information, and a judgement here will require the use of a range of additional evidence including policy documents, and staff and learner views. In many cases it will also be important to make comparisons, interpreting the provider's own data in the light of similar local, national and international data, and making judgements about the relative strengths and weaknesses of the provider (see Figure 4).

8.   Data Collection

When VET providers judge their performance it is necessary for them to make effective use of performance data, including benchmarks and management information. VET providers will collect data relating to the priority areas and criteria used in the self-assessment framework and to all the activities/areas which are subject to assessment.

It is essential that self-assessment reports include data to support judgements about learners' achievements and performance. This will include data on, for example, retention, achievement of qualifications (part or whole), progress against other learning

outcomes and individual learning goals, added value, attendance (excused and unexcused absences), punctuality and progression to other forms of education and training or employment.

Evidence also needs to be presented to justify comments on the quality of teaching and training and the effectiveness of learning. This will include observations of teaching and training activities, and information from questionnaires designed to measure learners' level of satisfaction with their learning opportunities. Data (evidence) might also be drawn from staff training and development activities.

Data needs to be collected for assessing the performance of VET providers' learner support services. It is best practice for VET providers to establish clear procedures and standards to help measure the effectiveness of these services. Questionnaires designed to elicit staff and learners' views of these services may also provide useful evidence.

Year-on-year trends in VET providers' performance must be recorded to provide evidence of improvement. Performance should be set against agreed targets and should, where possible, be compared against that of other VET providers or national targets.

Using comparative information and benchmarking data are important means of assessing performance and setting appropriate target improvements. VET providers should seek to use nationally and locally derived data for these purposes.

In particular, providers need to be able to distinguish clearly between strength and weakness, and practice which should be standard in similar providers, or performance which might be expected as a norm in comparable organisations.

In Figure 4, for example, a judgment would have to be made as to whether the cohorts of learners reported on are comparable to the cohorts reported on nationally.

The intake of learners for different providers might differ greatly, creating scenarios where a provider might actually be very effective with a poor intake of learners. Another provider might be less effective than appears with a very able intake of learners. Judgements of this nature will have to be supported by evidence about intake, and other evidence about learner progress.

Weakness/Strength	Evidence (provider data)	Benchmark (national data)
weakness: poor retention and achievement in learning programme below national benchmark	retention: 51% achievement: 35%	retention: 68% achievement: 43%
strength: high learner achievement and retention in learning programmes above national benchmark	98/99 retention: 97% achievement: 89% 99/00 retention: 99% achievement: 93%	98/99 retention: 65% achievement: 83% 99/00 retention: 67% achievement: 85%

Figure 4: Use of Benchmarking Data to Support Judgements on Retention and Achievement

Selecting comparative data as benchmarks – e.g. targets which the provider should try to achieve – means identifying, understanding and learning from the processes and practices that lead to superior performance in other organisations. It requires that VET providers ask such questions as:

- How good are we?
- How good can we be?
- How can we get better?
- How can we learn from others?

Answering these basic self-assessment questions will be a challenge, and will require good internal processes supported by external expertise.

9.   Self-Assessment Evidence and Judgements

It is necessary to always distinguish the actual evidence presented in support of a judgement from the source of that evidence.

The source of the evidence is in itself not sufficient. The internal and external sources from which the evidence is derived, must, however, be stated clearly. The VET Provider Self-Assessment Framework gives suggestions of possible sources of evidence for each priority and/or quality area. Some evidence sources are used for more than one quality area.

Strength	Evidence	Source of Evidence
Good retention on level 2 programmes	Average of 89% retention	Retention records

Figure 5: Actual Evidence and Source of Evidence

However, those engaged in self-assessment, as well as internal and external evaluators will all have to make a judgement about the quality and robustness of the evidence quoted in self-assessment reports. They have to decide whether the evidence provides adequate justification for the strengths or weaknesses claimed. For evidence to be robust, it should be:

- **valid**: evidence is relevant to and supports the strength or weakness identified

  The idea of validity applies to the relationship between the evidence, the source of evidence, and the judgement drawn from it. The link must be logical. If the link between the evidence, the source, and the judgement can be shown to be weak or ambiguous, then the evidence will not be valid for the judgement, and the judgement itself will be invalid. It is important, therefore, to ensure that these links between source, evidence and judgement are clearly understood and thoroughly tested.

  As an example we might consider evidence about the numbers of learners completing courses.
  The source is an accurate record which contains all the information necessary to make a statement such as "In the last academic year X% of learners in their final year successfully completed the courses in which they were enrolled on" or, more broadly, "Over the past N years, the average percentage of students aged 15-18 successfully completing courses was X%".

  If there is any doubt about the completeness or accuracy of the record, or if it is unclear whether the record includes all relevant learners or all relevant courses, or if there is a doubt about what criterion has been used to judge success, the evidence and judgement may be considered invalid.

  If the evidence is robust, then it could validly be used to make a judgement about success rates, and could also be used to make comparisons with success rates in other similar providers if similar data is available.

- **quantifiable**: internal and external performance measures are used, both figures and percentages are used and are clear and unambiguous

- **sufficient**: evidence is complete and there is enough to cover all the criteria of one area; evidence can be triangulated, e.g. there is evidence from three separate sources and three different perspectives

  There must be enough evidence to allow conclusions about strengths and weaknesses to be drawn. In the example above there would have to be data about all of the learners, not a sample. In most cases different evidence from different sources will be required, to give sufficient evidence of different perspectives.

- **current**: evidence is recent enough to give an accurate position at the time of writing the self-assessment report

  For most purposes this will mean using data from the same year during which self-assessment takes place; but, for some purposes it will mean using evidence from previous years where the data is stable enough.

- **accurate**: evidence is attributed to named and verifiable sources

Strength	Evidence and Triangulation Three different sources of evidence
Highly effective learning process in accounting course	Of 15 sessions observed in 99/00 there were: • 3 x graded outstanding • 8 x graded very good • 4 x graded good 57% were graded outstanding or very good, this shows an improvement over our last year's figure of 50%
	95% of learners surveyed in 99/00 rated the overall quality of the learning process very good or excellent (92% response rate from 205 learners)
	5 out of 6 external quality audit reports during the last year specifically mentioned the quality of the learning process

Figure 6: Use of Evidence which is valid, quantifiable, sufficient, current and accurate

Figure 7 shows how evidence may be used to make judgements about strengths and weaknesses in performance.

Quality Area	Judgement	Evidence	Source
Teacher, Trainer and Learner Relationships	Strength: Teachers and trainers use a range of teaching, training and learning methods to meet individual learning needs.	External reports specifically mention this aspect of the learning process as strength. 65% of learners rate the extent to which the learning process met their needs as "good" or "very good". (No figures for previous years) Of 205 sessions observed in 05/06: • 24% were graded 3 • 61% were graded 2 • 15% were graded 1 This shows an improvement over the previous year's figures: • 20% grade 3 • 52% grade 2 • 28% grade 1	External monitoring report Inspection report Report on survey of learners Reports on lesson/session observations
Practical learning	Weakness: The need to set up a system of identifying and recording needs of employers has been in the Providers Action Plan for two years, but, has not yet been actioned.	Only informal agreements have been reached with 24 employers to provide practical training for 5 profiles. Recent survey of all 24 partner enterprises showed that 8% were very satisfied with learners on placements and provider graduates, 60% were satisfied, and 32% were not satisfied. Discussions with senior advisors suggest that this is a low figure compared to other providers in the area.	Report on survey of partner enterprises Board of Administration Minutes Provider SWOT analyses Senior Expert Consultant or Inspection Report

Figure 7: Use of Evidence to Support Strengths and Weaknesses

In Figure 7 under strength, for example, there is no indication of the number or range of learners surveyed, and, therefore, it is impossible to say whether this is in fact strong evidence. The number of lessons observed is given, and the figure of 205 suggests that this must have included most or all teachers, but this is not made clear. Under weakness the figures for the employer survey are clear in themselves, but there is no indication how the figures for this provider compare, for example, regionally or nationally.

Judgements should reflect the volume and range of provision under review. It would not be acceptable, for example, to claim "excellent retention" as a key strength if the area concerned involved only a small proportion of the learners. Where possible the number of, for example, learners surveyed should be significant.

Judgements should also reflect the balance of strength and weaknesses, and take account of the relative importance of the issues under review. Poor levels of achievement on the part of learners would, for example, outweigh other perceived strength. VET providers must seek to identify the most significant strengths and weaknesses, in particular those that have an impact on learning and learners' achievements.

9.1　The Language of Judgements

Judgements are an evaluation, and vague language needs to be avoided; this also involves a VET provider's capacity to distinguish between real strength and normal or standard practice. Aspects of provision or performance are only a strength if they are above what is normally expected.

Each of the statements in Figure 8 is in some way vague or open to debate or challenge. Many of these issues can be addressed by internal monitoring of the self-assessment process or by teams charged with validating the self-assessment reports; and training should be provided for this purpose. External validation will add information which helps to ensure that standards are consistent with those of other VET providers.

Internal and external quality evaluators will ask questions about the evidence, but also about the judgements in the self-assessment, such as:

- Can the judgements be clarified or measured? Where they are measured, how are they quantified?

- Do the evaluative terms (like "good", "outstanding" or "excellent") mean the same across different departments in the provider? Does it mean the same for a particular subject across a range of VET providers?

Descriptions of inadequate judgements, statements, etc.	• Examples of inadequate judgements, statements, etc.
Evaluative judgement *Needs to be supported by evidence*	• prospective learners receive comprehensive information • there are well-established quality assurance procedures that are used effectively to bring about improvements
Evaluative judgement *the vague quantifiers need to be supported by quantifiable evidence that indicates how many and what is sufficient*	• in many cases, teachers pay insufficient attention to the individual needs of learners in planning their lessons • additional support for identified learners is not consistently available
vague statement *so what? – is it relevant? – do learners learn from it?*	• work experience is included as part of the learning programme
evaluative statement *needs to be supported by evidence*	• all learners have access to a vocationally relevant work placement that is integral to their programme and contributes to the practical assessment of learners
vague judgement *do they or don't they?* *which facilities? – how serious is the problem?*	• learners appear not to understand the criteria for assessment • some of the learners' social facilities could be improved

impact on learners *needs to be supported by evidence*	• effective collaboration with other agencies has led to an increase in the number of learners joining programmes
Naming the fulfilment of requirements as a strength *It would be surprising if these were not fulfilled because this is expected performance*	• staff are appropriately qualified • staff are well informed • staff are enthusiastic • staff are committed to their work

Figure 8: Judgements, Statements and Norms

9.2   Using Statements to Define Strengths and Weaknesses

- Statements should be evaluative, not descriptive. Wherever possible, VET providers should include specific information which enables strengths and weaknesses to be quantified. VET providers should show why something is a strength or shortcoming, rather than just stating the facts.

- VET providers should use data and benchmarks wherever possible – comparing performance to benchmarking data or showing trends over previous years. VET providers should compare outcomes to targets set previously. This helps to put raw data into context, and to show that standards are improving and the VET provider is moving on.

- VET providers should be clear about where there are genuine strengths, rather than normal features which would be expected in any provider. Compliance with statutory or contractual obligations is a norm, not a strength.

- VET providers should show the impact of both strengths and weaknesses – if surveys and reviews are undertaken to assess effectiveness, how are the results acted on? If there is a shortcoming, how does it impact on learners and other stakeholders?

- VET providers should make statements clearer by showing how judgements have been reached, and vague statements and vague quantifiers should be avoided.

- If a shortcoming is particularly significant and poses a major risk to the VET provider, this needs to be shown as a priority for action

Examples of Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths	
Unclear Statements	Clear Statements
Learner attainment is consistently high (which learners? How high is the attainment rate? How does it compare to sector benchmarks or the provider's own targets?)	Full-time learner attainment is well above national comparators (65% against a sector average of 54%)
The effectiveness of support services is regularly reviewed (how often? What happens to the results of the reviews?)	The effectiveness of support services is reviewed on a term basis and the outcomes are reported to the governing body
An annual survey of learner satisfaction is	An annual survey of learner satisfaction is

undertaken and reported to the governing body. This shows a consistent upward trend in learner satisfaction (what proportion of learners are surveyed? By how much has the satisfaction rate increased? How do the results of the survey lead to improvements in provision?)	undertaken, based on a 10% sample of learners in each subject area. The results are reported to the Director and governing body and follow-up actions are agreed. There has been a consistent upward trend for the last five years. The 2005/06 survey showed a learner satisfaction rate of 82%, up 4% on 2004/05.
Targets for all quality areas are set and monitored annually (this would be expected in any organisation – it is not a strength in itself. What targets are set? At what level? How do directors review targets to ensure they are realistic and appropriate? How are targets used to effect improvements)	Targets for recruitment, social inclusion, retention, attainment, qualification framework attainment, income and expenditure are set at course and programme/occupational level. Analysis of previous performance and benchmarking data is used to set the targets.

Figure 9: Using Evaluative Statements to Define Strengths

Weaknesses	
Unclear Statements	Clear Statements
Learner completion has fallen over the last year (by how much? Was there a quantified target?)	Learner completion for 2005/06 was 68%, below our target of 70%.
Facilities for learners on some sites could be improved (which facilities? Which sites? How serious is the problem? What is the impact?)	The lack of facilities at our institution makes it difficult for learners to access books, periodicals and computers, and therefore to complete their coursework on time.
Some trainers need to update their industrial knowledge (how many trainers? In which areas?)	Training needs analysis shows that nearly a quarter of trainers in the Engineering, Construction and Catering areas need staff development to ensure that their industrial knowledge reflects current practices.
Procedures for reporting on performance are underdeveloped (which areas of performance? What procedures need to be developed? What is the impact?)	Standardised management information reports on learner recruitment, retention and attainment are produced at programme level, but not for individual courses. This means that course leaders do not have standard data to inform reviews of provision.

Figure 10: Using Evaluative Statements to Define Weaknesses

The self- assessment process is ultimately about developing a self-critical organisation that actively promotes feedback from staff, learners, employers and other interested parties; and that is equally confident about admitting weaknesses as claiming strengths.

VET providers have to establish procedures for standardising, moderating and validating self-assessment judgements. Does "outstanding", for example, mean the same across different learning areas? Does it mean the same for a particular area of learning across a range of VET providers? Internal moderation can be carried out by internal auditors or by teams charged with validating the self-assessment reports, and training should be provided for this purpose. External validation is important to ensure that standards are consistent with those of other VET providers. This can take place as peer review or through external evaluation.

9.3   Grading Performance

It has been suggested that VET providers should grade their performance based on the judgements and evidence of the self-assessment process. It has been suggested grading be carried out using a five-point scale:

excellent =	**5**	100% to 90% of quality criteria are achieved
very good =	**4**	89% to 80% of quality criteria are achieved
good =	**3**	79% to 70% of quality criteria are achieved
adequate =	**2**	69% to 50% of quality criteria are achieved
inadequate =	**1**	less than 49% of quality criteria are achieved

When grading each quality area the above % defines the level of achievement and the grade descriptor. The overall grade for each priority area is the average grade of all quality areas belonging to that priority area.
Alternatively, the grade descriptors for each priority area could be as follows:

The grade descriptors could be as follows:

Excellent

An evaluation of excellent applies to VET providers who meet the majority of the quality criteria and whose performance level is above the national average in all indicators (statistical report). There must also be evidence of continuous year-on-year improvements.

An overall summative grading of "excellent" can be applied to a VET provider, when at least 5 out of 6 priority areas have been graded "excellent" (this must include priority area – Teaching and Learning), and the others have been graded "very good" or "good".

Very Good

An evaluation of very good applies to providers with major strengths:

- the policies, processes, and procedures are of a very high standard
- learners are achieving and progressing at much higher rates than might be anticipated or compared to national benchmarks
- satisfaction rates among learners, employers and staff is consistently very high

There must be evidence that these high levels of performance have been maintained consistently or are capable of being maintained.

Grading a priority area "very good" requires that most of the quality areas associated with the priority area are achieved to a very good standard and that there is robust evidence for some additional positive features or characteristics related to that area.

An overall summative grading of "very good" can be applied to a VET provider, when at least 5 out of 6 priority areas have been graded "very good" (this must include priority area – Teaching and Learning), and the others have been graded "good" or "adequate".

There will be very few areas for improvement, and any that do exist will not significantly diminish the benefits to learners, employers and staff. However, it will also be clear that the provider is seeking opportunities to maintain, and to strive to improve performance.

Good

An evaluation of "good" applies to VET providers with strengths which outweigh weaknesses. There are weaknesses, but, they do not have an adverse impact on the learning experience:

- policies, processes and procedures are slightly above the national average
- the achievements and/or progression rates of learners are slightly above the national average
- satisfaction rates among learners, employers and staff are slightly above the national average

Grading a priority area "good" requires that more than half of the quality areas associated with the priority area are achieved to a good standard.

An overall summative grading of "good" can be applied to a VET provider when at least 4 out of 6 priority areas have been graded "good" (this must include priority area – Teaching and Learning), and the others have been graded at least "adequate".

There may be a number of areas for improvement. The provider will be seeking to address areas of weakness while building on its strengths.

Adequate/Satisfactory

An evaluation of adequate or satisfactory will apply to VET providers which are mainly meeting the local or national norms. Some important weaknesses have an impact on the quality of learning. There will be a need for a structured and timed action. Their strengths must outweigh weaknesses.

- Policies and procedures meet the minimum national standards
- the achievements or progression rates of learners meet the national average
- satisfaction rates among learners, employers or staff meet the national average

There must be evidence that the provider is aware of and attempting to address its weaknesses, and is maintaining or endeavouring to maintain its strengths.

Grading a priority area "adequate" requires that at least half of the quality areas associated with the priority area are achieved to an adequate standard; although, this may be at a minimum level.

An overall summative grading of "adequate" can be applied to a VET provider when at least 3 out of 6 priority areas have been graded "adequate" (this must include priority area – Teaching and Learning).

There will be a number of areas for improvement with some benefits for learners, and possibly for employers and staff. The provider must be seeking to address as many areas of weakness as possible, and also to maintain or build on strengths.

Inadequate/Weak

An evaluation of weak/inadequate/unsatisfactory will apply to providers which are failing to meet local or national norms in most areas. There are major weaknesses in provision, requiring immediate remedial action on the part of the VET provider. The learning experience is at risk in significant aspects. A provider who is being graded "weak" in priority area – Teaching and Learning, will be graded "weak" overall, even if the other priority areas achieved a higher grading.

"Weak" providers may have strengths; but, these will be outweighed by weaknesses.

- Policies and procedures do not meet the national minimum requirements
- the achievements or progression rates of learners are below the national average
- satisfaction rates among learners, employers or staff are below the national average

There may be evidence that the provider does not fully understand its weaknesses and is struggling to address them.

A priority area must be graded "inadequate" when less than half of the quality areas associated with the priority area are achieved; that means that the majority of the criteria are not being achieved; even at a basic level. It could be that there is evidence of a failure to achieve the characteristics, or that there is a lack of evidence of achievement.

An overall summative grading of "inadequate" must be applied to a VET provider, when at least 2 out of 6 priority areas have been graded "inadequate" (even when priority area – Teaching and Learning has been graded higher). A VET provider graded "weak" in priority area – Teaching and Learning, will also be graded "weak" overall, even if the other priority areas achieved a higher grading.

There will be a number of urgent areas for improvement. A grading of "weak" implies the need for significant re-appraisal of provision by the VET provider through immediate structured and planned action.

It is essential that VET providers come to an overall judgement using the five levels. This is where external evaluation will help, as external evaluator's judgement provides the important process of moderation, as the grading of the VET provider will be compared to the grading of the external evaluator. This moderation can assure VET providers that their grading is accurate, and will give them confidence in their own judgements.

10.   Timescales for Self-Assessment

VET providers should carry out the self-assessment process at least once a year. VET providers should take a strategic and incremental approach to introducing self-assessment and embedding quality improvement in professional practice. The aim should be to ensure that problems are solved at source and that ways of achieving excellence are shared throughout the organisation on a continuous basis.

Many VET providers still underestimate the time required to complete the self-assessment process, including the time necessary to gather and analyse evidence, draft the report, and to take action on weaknesses. It is important, therefore, that systems are developed to make these processes straightforward, routine and integral to professional practice, and so reduce the time they take.

11.   Improvement Plan

In order for VET providers to plan effectively they need to know how they are doing. Effective self-assessment is the basis for strategic and improvement planning. Well managed provision quality planning:

- promotes effective learning
- improves the learning experience and learners' attainments
- ensures that change is managed and monitored by those implementing it
- sets realistic priorities, targets, and timescales

Self-assessment should not be an end in itself but a means of ensuring continuous improvement. It must be complemented by improvement planning to address weaknesses, build on strengths, and implement other necessary changes identified through the self-assessment process.

In summary, the improvement plan should specify:
- areas for improvement – e.g. general statements of what needs to be improved and why

- broad objectives and targets – e.g. what needs to be achieved to address the improvement
- actions and milestones – e.g. the specific activities that will be undertaken to achieve the targets

The planning and implementation of changes prompted by the self-assessment need careful consideration.

It is best practice to involve all key stakeholders in the planning process. It is also important that the interdependence of individual subject and service areas' action plans is properly understood and that all action plans become integral to the corporate improvement planning of the VET provider.

In summary, the improvement plan should specify actions and targets for the improvement process in specific areas and assign responsibilities for carrying out the required actions within agreed timescale. Directors need to ensure that the activities are properly resourced.

Appropriate arrangements should be in place for monitoring the implementation of agreed actions, for measuring and evaluating outcomes and judging the effectiveness of the self-assessment and improvement planning process.

11.1 Prioritising Areas for Improvement

Through self-assessment, areas for improvement should be identified. These need to be prioritised. Objectives and targets to address them need to be set, and actions and milestones carefully planned to maximise the chances of success in bringing about improvement. It is good practice to involve stakeholders in the planning process. As far as is practicable the extent to which the quality area action plans are interdependent should be mapped out. Means of keeping these under review should be included in the plan.

Improvement plans must be manageable in terms of their scope. Self-assessment will generate new areas for improvement. Priorities should therefore be set, focusing on those areas for improvement that:

- impact directly on learners' learning experience
- are paramount to learning and learners' achievement
- consolidate strength and rectify weaknesses promptly
- reflect national and local priorities

Improvement plans also need to address actions not completed in previous planning cycles.

11.2 Defining Targets for Improvement

VET providers are expected to set clear targets for improvement, together with measures for judging whether the agreed actions have been successful. Targets should be clearly defined, they should be capable of being measured, they should be achievable, they should be results-oriented (achieving improvements not increasing activity), and they should be time-bound with specific dates set for achieving targets. VET providers should carry out benchmarking activities when setting their targets.

Targets may take the form of reforms or changes to practices and activities which must be brought about; or specific tasks (such as developing or setting up new systems) which will need to be undertaken. VET providers are also expected to develop activities that are important to measure, rather than easy to measure.

11.3 Assigning Responsibilities

At an early stage it should be clear who will have overall responsibility for each action, and specific responsibility for the activities and tasks within the actions. The individuals and teams identified should be involved in the detailed planning at an early stage.

Responsibilities for carrying out proposed actions also need to be recorded in the improvement plan. The person with overall responsibility should be identified and other team members appointed to carry forward the proposed changes. Responsibilities for monitoring the plan and evaluating outcomes must also be clearly defined. Appropriate training and development should be given to ensure that staff have the required knowledge and skills to carry out this work.

11.4   Specifying Actions for Achieving Improvements

Improvement plans must provide a sound basis for bringing about improvement. For this purpose, they should specify all the activities and tasks necessary to achieve the proposed objectives and targets for improvement. Activities should be defined at a level of detail necessary for the effective implementation of the plan and should be ordered into a logical sequence. Care needs to be taken to ensure that the proposed activities tackle the central issues. A key question to ask is: "How is this activity going to make a difference?"

The detailed planning stage will involve some negotiation to ensure that the targets are realistic. This stage will have to be carried out together with costing and resourcing. The detailed planning will involve agreeing about following:

- the actions which will be required to achieve the targets
- the benchmarks which should be used to define standards and measure improvements
- the criteria by which the actions will be judged
- the sequence of work to be carried out
- the overall timescales for the actions
- milestones (junctures and time periods) for reporting and reviewing

The planning process should also acknowledge any factors or circumstances which constitute risks for the plan, and an evaluation of the potential impact of these factors. As far as possible, steps should be taken to eliminate, minimise or control these risk factors; but, it is very likely that some aspects of the plan will be subject to change as a result of changes in circumstances within the provider or at local or national level.

11.5   Costing and Resourcing

The activities defined in the improvement and action plans should be properly costed and resourced. For this purpose an estimate should be made of the number of staffing days and other resources required for each task. The total cost for the project should then be identified and a budget made available for the work to be undertaken.

If there are difficulties with resources, then aspects of the detailed planning may have to be reviewed and adjusted within the available money or time allocated to the action.

11.6   Monitoring Improvements

VET providers will need to set specific timescales for completion of each activity or task, and milestones should be set for assessing progress to ensure that the plan stays on track. The implementation of the improvement plan needs to be carefully monitored by checking that staff are fully involved in the process, that actions taken conform to the plan, that reasons for departure from the plan are understood and agreed, and that relevant actions are taken to update or modify the plan.

Procedures to accommodate circumstances which lead to changes to the plans will also have to be put in place. Amendments to the improvement plan need to be approved and properly recorded.

The processes and means by which reports will be created and delivered and the people responsible for these reports will also have to be identified. An appropriate means of reporting should be selected.

11.7 Measuring Outcomes

At an appropriate point in the cycle (which will need to be agreed at the planning stage) the final outcomes of the improvement actions should be measured according to the previously agreed criteria, and a judgement will have to be made as to their actual effectiveness. A full judgement of effectiveness may not be possible within one cycle.

In evaluating the outcomes of improvement initiatives VET providers must consider:

- the results achieved
- how far the results meet the targets set
- unintended outcomes (positive or negative)
- evidence of year-on-year improvements in performance
- opportunities for sharing findings, experiences and best practice

As part of the review process VET providers will also seek to evaluate the effectiveness of the self-assessment and improvement planning process. It is good practice to assess whether the capacity for self-assessment and improvement is enhanced by the process. The improvement plan process is outlined below:

identify areas for action

prioritise

identify targets, specify actions
and outcomes, set timescales,
including milestones

brief staff and
allocate
responsibilities

identify and
allocate
resources

monitor

take corrective action
monitor
provide feedback
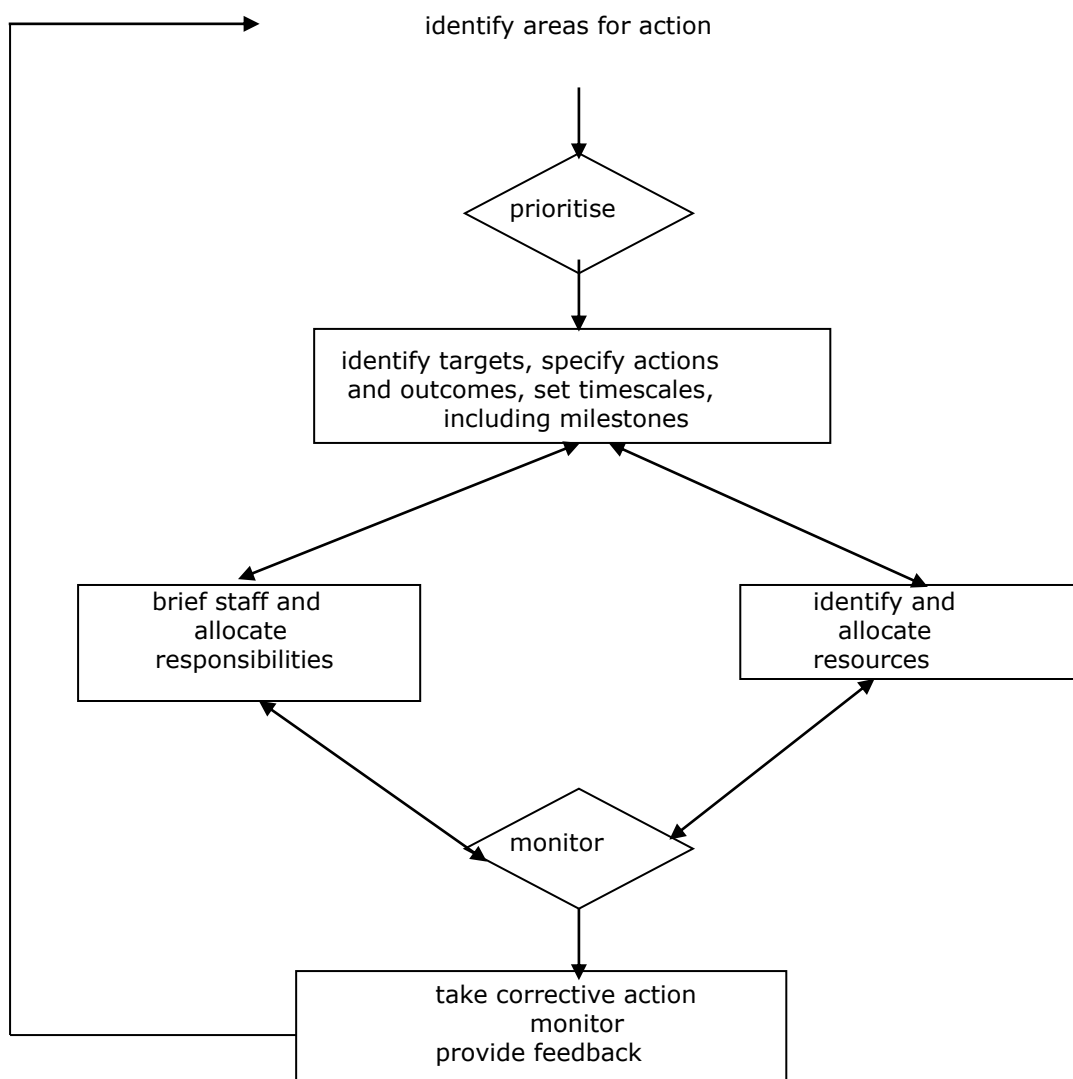
Figure 11: Improvement Plan Process

Summary of Requirements

Self-Assessment
Self-Assessment Process • staff at all levels of the organisation are encouraged to evaluate their performance • learners, employers and other stakeholders are involved in the process • all the quality areas in the VET provider Self-Assessment Framework are addressed • the process is an integral part of strategic and operational planning and quality assurance **Self-Assessment Report** • the report deals with all aspects of the providers' activity • particular attention is paid to the effectiveness of learning and the standard learners achieve • the report is approved and endorsed by the governing body • the report is set out in a clear structure, following the quality areas and criteria **Evidence and Judgements** • management information and performance data, including benchmarks, are effective • clear evidence for judgements is provided • judgements are evaluative rather than descriptive • judgements are honest and objective
Improvement Plan
Structure of the Plan • the plan is presented in tabular form • it sets out areas requiring improvement • it sets targets for improvement • it sets out actions required to bring about improvement, including cost • expected outcomes of specific actions are clearly stated • measures for making judgements are clearly defined • responsibilities for ensuring that actions are carried out are allocated • timescales and milestones for the completion of actions and achievement of outcomes are set out • procedures for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on progress are made • key partners are involved in drawing up and reviewing the plan **Implementation of the Plan** • the plan is executable • the plan is linked explicitly to all actions identified in the self-assessment report • national and local priorities are taken into account • prioritised areas for improvement are identified • the plan is reviewed and up-dated regularly

2.2. Writing the Self-assessment Report

1.   Introduction

This guide complements the Self-Assessment Report Format; it was written to help you prepare and carry out the self-assessment process. The step-by-step guide will take you through your self-assessment against the example of priority area: "Teaching and Learning". Once you have undertaken the self-assessment process for one priority area, you are then in a position to confidently continue to self-assess your organisation against the other priority areas and quality areas.

Users of this guide will find some repetitions from chapter to chapter. Some guidelines from the *SA Handbook* are repeated here as well.   This is on purpose, as in most situations there will be no need to read the whole guide; but rather, only the chapters that are necessary at a given moment. Quality Committees and teachers and trainers carrying out the self-assessment process will need to read the guide. All members of the Quality Committee and heads of departments or curriculum areas in charge of "mini" self-assessment reports should read this manual before embarking on the writing of their reports and improvement plans.

This manual is intended to help all VET providers in carrying out and understanding the self-assessment process.

2. Form and Content

Self-assessment reports should be produced and/or up-dated every year at the same time, should derive from the previous year's quality assurance activities, and should accurately reflect the VET schools' work: what is done well, what is satisfactory, and what is poor. It should address the standards and criteria of the self-assessment framework and their impact on learners. There should be an associated improvement plan that arises from the report, focusing on main strengths, spreading good practice, and addressing weaknesses to minimise their impact on learners.

Good self-assessment reports are easy to read and contain judgements rather than being purely descriptive. Reading a self-assessment report should give someone who knows nothing about your organisation a good feel for it.

The Self-Assessment Framework has a total of 6 priority areas, each of which is further defined by a number of quality areas and criteria, against which you assess and judge your organisation's performance. Each judgement must be supported by evidence.

The Self-Assessment Framework is based on the Common Quality Assurance Framework for VET in Europe (CQAF) and its associated European Guide to Self-Assessment for VET Providers[15]. The basic structure of the CQAF approach consists of four interrelated elements: plan – do – check – react.

These four elements relate to the overall structure of the framework as well as the self-assessment process. Each of the four elements represents an area of quality within the CQAF: Plan = Purpose & Plan; Do = Implementation; Check = Assessment & Evaluation; React = Feedback & Change. The Croatian Self-Assessment Framework uses 6 priority areas to cover all the quality areas within the Vocational Education Act.

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[15] CEDEFOP, 2003
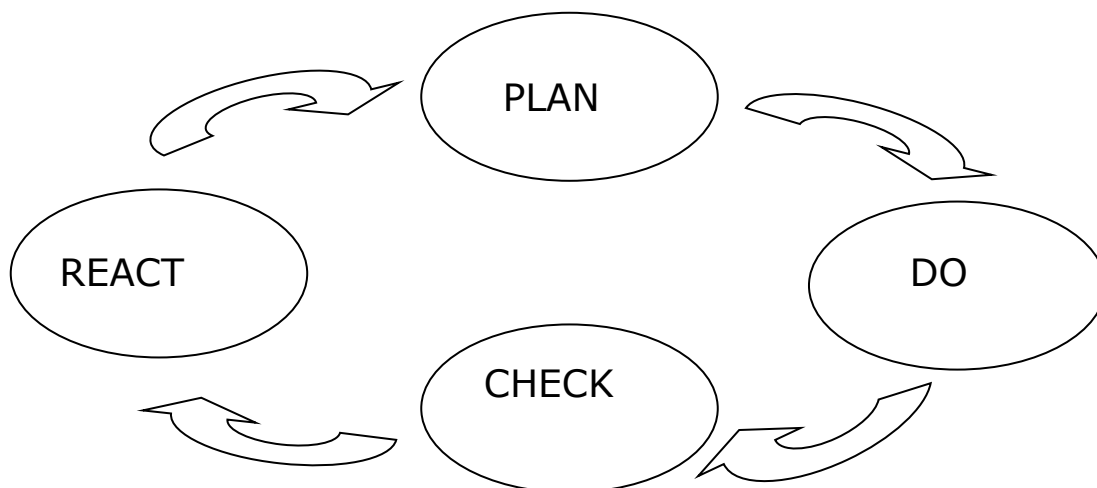
Fig.1: CQAF Structure and Self-Assessment Process

3. Preparing and Planning for Self-Assessment

The self-assessment guidelines are a component part of the Handbook to Self-Assessment and provide you with an overview of the process and rationale of self-assessment.

Your first self-assessment will probably highlight a lot of weaknesses. Remember that self-assessment is your first step towards developing excellent quality in all areas of your organisation over a long-term planning and implementation period. When self-assessing you will step back and look at your organisation in a critical and objective way to answer these four questions:

- How good are we?
- How good can we be?
- How can we get better?
- How can we learn from others?

First you want to make sure that all staff and learners are familiar with the self-assessment process, why your organisation needs to carry out this process, and what everybody's involvement will be. As a member of the Quality Assurance Committee you are responsible for managing quality assurance process. However, you will need to allocate specific responsibilities to other members of the VET school. For example, collating statistical information, observing teachers and trainers, and internally validating the self-assessment process and report will probably be carried out by other staff.

But it is important to also ensure that the director of the organisation and the Quality Assurance Committee demonstrate their commitment to self-assessment and are role models in the process. Although ultimately responsible for the self-assessment report, you will be working closely with the other members of your VET school. This will also help you to better understand the process and better identify solutions to the problems that you will come across.

The following table gives an outline of who does what in quality assurance activities at your organisation:

Roles	Responsibilities in the Self-Assessment Process
Director	- Developing mission and vision - developing mission and vision - management and administration; human and physical resources - promoting the VET provider

Roles	Responsibilities in the Self-Assessment Process
	• managing partnerships
Quality Coordinator	• chairing the quality committee • work on defining policies and procedures for monitoring quality • developing quality system • coordinating the data collection and analysis
Self-Assessment Coordinator (Specialist) *if different from quality coordinator*	• coordinating self-assessment • coordinating improvement planning • carrying out internal monitoring of SA and IP process • liaising with external visits
Members of Quality Committee	• carrying out self-assessment • validating the SAR and IP
Observers	• observation of teaching & learning • analysing annual self-assessment reports • making recommendations for improvements for individual teachers, and overall teaching and learning
Data Administrator	• ensuring correct input/output of data collection and analysis
Work Placement or Practical Learning Teachers and Trainers	• establishing partnerships regarding implementation of practical learning • keeping records, in prescribed documentation, of learners' progress in practical learning
Teachers, Trainers, Learners, and other expert associates	• validating SAR and IP • carrying out action plans

Self-assessment process asks of you to decide for each of the criteria whether you are already doing the activities or not. Furthermore you must judge how well you are performing the activities, and whether you have evidence to support your judgement about these activities. An overall judgement is made about the whole priority area or the quality areas based on your judgements about the criteria.

The new web-tool which will be available will simplify this process even more. You will be making judgements directly about the quality areas and whole priority areas. There will be a link to the criteria which you can use as guidelines when making judgements for each quality area. You will be able to print out your self-assessment report and improvement plan directly from the web-tool. For your statistical report you will also be able to access and print out comparison charts with other VET providers.

If you are currently not doing the activities as described in the criteria, then you need to ask yourself, whether this has a negative impact on learners' learning experience. If it does, then you need to identify this weakness in your self-assessment report, and address it in your improvement plan. Should you decide that some criteria are not relevant to your organisation, then again, you need to check whether this has a negative impact on learners' learning experience.

If are doing the activities, then you need to judge whether this has a positive impact on learners' learning experience. If it does, then you need to identify this strength in your self-assessment report. You need to ensure that you have evidence to support your judgement of strengths.

If they way you are doing things has no discernable impact on learners; but meets the national average (once these benchmarks are available), then you are performing adequately. You might need to discuss whether this satisfactory performance could be improved into a good or very good performance. Again you need to identify this in your self-assessment report and improvement plan.

Finally you need to grade your overall performance in each of the 6 priority areas. This is difficult, as you are assessing your performance against criteria. The grade descriptors themselves are criteria against which you assess the level of your performance. When you are assessing against criteria you would normally not grade your performance on a scale of 1 through 5, but rather conclude whether you do or do not meet the prescribed criteria.

However, the criteria in the self-assessment framework not only identify the status quo of competence and quality in your organisation, they are also used as improvement targets for those areas where you identified weaknesses.

 There are five grades:

- excellent: the performance is above benchmarks (national, regional, local and sector key performance indicators) in almost all quality areas and quality criteria; the very few weaknesses have no impact on learners' achievement; the organisation's high level of achievement and year-on-year improvements are continuously being maintained and/or surpassed

- very good: the performance is over and above benchmarks (national, regional, local and sector key performance indicators), and above what is the expected level of performance with very few areas for improvement, which do not significantly impact learners' achievements; there are special activities with strong positive impact on learners' experience; there are a lot more strengths than weaknesses

- good: the performance shows more strengths than weaknesses; the areas of improvement have some negative impact on learners' achievements; however, more activities in significant areas are above the benchmarks (national, regional, local and sector key performance indicators), and few activities are below the average

- adequate: the performance meets the minimum requirements and expected level of performance; strengths and weaknesses are balanced; but the weaknesses have a substantial negative impact on learners' achievements; you are doing what is normally expected of your organisation; however, with further development and improvement, this performance could be judged good in the future

- inadequate/weak: the performance does not meet the requirements; there are serious gaps, which have to be addressed in the improvement plan; there may be some strengths, but the weaknesses seriously hinder learners' achievements; the performance is below what is normally expected of your organisation; e.g. benchmarks (national, regional, local, and sector key performance indicators)

Your judgement and grading must be based on evidence. If you have identified, that your teaching and training processes are excellent and above the benchmarks, then you have to provide hard evidence about what it is exactly that you and your teachers and trainers are doing in addition to the basic requirements of the criteria.

4. Self-Assessment and Improvement Planning – Essential Requirements

What do you need to do?

- Produce an annual self-assessment report (SAR)

- Review the SAR and improvement plan throughout the year

- Choose and implement the improvement processes which best meet your organisation's needs

- Evaluate and seek to improve your provision continuously. It is essential that your self-assessment report and improvement plan (IP) are up-to-date and that your quality assurance and improvement processes are carried out regularly. Continuous and regular quality assurance and improvement are also the best way to improve your organisation's performance.

Self-assessment and improvement processes are primarily for your organization. However, the use of the SAR and IP by external evaluators is extremely important, and as a VET provider, you will need to ensure that you meet at least their minimum expectations when producing them. However, the greatest value of self-assessment and improvement planning is to enhance your organisation's process of provision.

To achieve the most benefit you need to:

- Keep the self-assessment report and details of the evidence continuously up-to-date so that you can demonstrate the progress you are making

- Ensure that self-assessment is part of your organisational culture, with staff at all levels clear about self-assessment and their contribution

- Ensure that all interested stakeholders are involved or consulted about the annual SAR

- Carry out self-assessment in a climate of openness where frank and honest views can be expressed

- Evaluate self-assessment processes regularly to evaluate your capacity to improve

- Ensure self-assessment includes stakeholders and, more importantly, what actions are taken as a result of their impact.

What must you include in the annual Self-Assessment Report?

Self-Assessment is a process involving a whole organisation's need for continuous improvement.

In the future a "good practice database" will contain common strengths and areas for improvement that have been taken from external evaluation reports. The database will offer particularly effective practices identified during self-assessment and external evaluation and include health check questions.

In summary, ensure that your SAR includes:

- A precise description of your organisation, its mission, its environment, and its learner population; all the key elements: about your organisation, the local and regional environment including demographics, and an overview of your programmes of provision

- A summary of the grades you have awarded yourselves

- A description of procedures for carrying out the self-assessment process; consider using a diagram to document your processes

- A summary of improvements since the last SAR, with evidence, focusing on the outcomes of the previous year's improvement plan and giving reasons why any of your improvement targets have not been met. The annual SAR should provide clear evaluations and data to support these conclusions.

- If you are required to grade your SAR, you should include judgements (with supporting evidence) on:

  a. Overall effectiveness – overall effectiveness is a judgement about how well you meet the reasonable needs of learners and other stakeholders

  b. Your organisation's capacity for improvement

  c. Management of the organisation – you should include judgements about equality of opportunity, which itself includes tackling discrimination and promoting educational and social inclusion. Educational and social inclusion describes your approach to providing progression for learners, to meeting the diverse needs of learners, and to raising the participation and achievement of learners from minority and underrepresented groups. You should also include your judgements about safeguarding; e.g. how well you ensure your learners are safe, how well you manage resources, and how well you engage with others to support and promote improvement.

  d. Outcomes for learners – how well your learners achieve, compared with benchmarks and your own targets, which should be challenging

- Judgments about to what extent your organisation puts learners first, and about your strengths and weaknesses in safeguarding vulnerable adults

- Judgements on your own key performance measures and/or goals

- Judgements on how you engage with learners, employers, and the local community and the impact of this engagement and the actions you take as a result. Include an appendix in your SAR which shows the views of learners, employers, and the local community. State your areas of strengths, your areas for improvement, and how you intend to address these.

- Judgements about how well your activities contribute to the health, safety and welfare of learners.

- Actions taken to achieve further improvements in performance. Where performance is satisfactory, there should be clear evidence of plans to bring about improvement. Where performance is good or outstanding, there should be actions to improve or maintain it

- Where provision is inadequate, (particularly where the external evaluator has recommended actions), detailed plans should be provided, with an indication of milestones and monitoring procedures. You should act immediately on areas of underperformance

- An appendix which contains key performance data used to support the SAR judgements; for example: data derived from National Key Performance Indicators, current enrolments by qualification/occupation, type of programme and age; information on learners' success rates and progression, including any differences between groups of learners, e.g. between learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those without, or from different ethnic groups

It is good practice to regularly review and evaluate individual sections of your self-assessment process and report. As well as the minimum expectations outlined above, think about other policies which are important for self-assessment and improvement planning. You must ensure that your SAR covers the current legislative requirements, the latest policy and regulatory requirements, as well as meeting your own business development requirements. You should consider other external standards (e.g. international quality models) and approaches your organization may use, and how these can support or align with your self-assessment and improvement planning.

5. Carrying out the Self-Assessment Process

The report format was developed to assist you in assessing how well your organisation is performing in the learning process, as described in priority area Teaching and Learning. The format outlines the criteria of what is normally expected in a good learning process. This is not a checklist! The task is to find out how close your learning process is to fulfilling the criteria.

The following questionnaire may help you identify what evidence you already have, what evidence you need to develop and where the gaps are. The questions cover other areas associated with "learning" as well. This questionnaire is just one example of how you might approach the self-assessment process. You are not required to develop questionnaires for each quality area as you will be using the criteria of the self-assessment framework.

Another approach would be to start with the evidence (e.g. your observation reports) and analyse which quality areas would match the evidence and what the evidence tells you about the level of performance in that quality area.

You will probably find that you cannot answer all the questions straight away, because right now you "are not doing this activity" and currently "it does not apply to the situation in Croatia". However, you will find that with further development of the qualification framework these activities will become essential.

Questions:	Do we have Supporting Evidence:	
	Yes	No
1. Are future learners told about the learning programmes they can attend at this VET school; and how do we know who our future learners are?		
2. How are we learners about our learning programmes?		
3. Do learners understand how they can progress horizontally and/or vertically from one learning programme to another (horizontal and vertical progression routes)?		
4. How are we helping those learners who have difficulties in understanding our information?		
5. Are we interviewing each learner before they join a learning programme?		
6. Are we recording all the information about learners carefully and do we keep these records safely?		
7. Are we collecting information about learners' needs, their individual learning styles, the additional learning support they might need, their prior knowledge or experiences, the skills they have already learned,		

Questions:	Do we have Supporting Evidence:	
	Yes	**No**
whether they need special assessment arrangements, whether they need other personal support, what their future aims are, etc.?		
8. Are we sure that learners are attending a learning programme that is suited to their abilities and aspirations, and meets their needs?		
9. Do we provide learners with information about the learning programmes, the school, the support service, etc.?		
10. Can learners change to a more suitable learning programme if this should be necessary?		
11. Are we helping learners that we did not recruit?		
12. What advice do we give rejected learners and is this recorded?		
13. Are the different aspects of the recruitment and initial assessment observed and are records kept of these observations?		
14. Do we tell our learners about their rights and responsibilities at the VET school and is this written down in a document?		
15. What kind of support do we give to our learners outside the classroom or workshop?		
16. Are the support needs of learners formally identified, is there a record of this and is it regularly reviewed with the learner?		
17. How are we telling our learners about further learning when they have finished their current programme and is this recorded?		

	Do we have Supporting Evidence:	
Questions:	**Yes**	**No**
18. Are interviews with learners regarding their support needs observed and are records of these observations kept?		
19. Are our teachers/trainers trained or briefed in dealing with equal opportunity issues?		
20. How do we know that teachers/trainers promote equal opportunity and do we have records of this?		
21. What do we do when a learner complains that she or he has been discriminated against by a teacher/trainer and do we keep records of the activities?		
22. How do we use the initial assessment to set individual targets with learners; where is this recorded?		
23. How often do we review individual learner targets to see whether these are still appropriate?		
24. Are learning programmes divided into reasonable steps of achievement; and are learners regularly assessed in their progress against these steps?		
25. Do learners know about these steps through the learning programme and when they should achieve them?		
26. Does the lesson plans used by teachers and trainers have clear criteria on how the learners' work is going to be assessed?		
27. Do learners know how their work is going to be assessed?		
28. Are teachers and trainers regularly observed; and are observation records kept?		
29. Do we have an observation schedule that we use when observing teachers and trainers; and do teachers and trainers know the criteria against which they are going to be observed?		
30. Are teachers and trainers using a range of different teaching, training, and learning strategies; and are these planned for in lesson plans?		
31. Are formative assessments with learners planned and carried out; and is the feedback discussed and recorded?		
32. How do we know that learners learn from the feedback?		
33. Are learners aware of their strengths and weaknesses, and are they using their feedback to improve their learning; and how do we know this?		
34. How learners are supported in achieving their individual targets; are there different forms of support available?		
35. Is this support consistent and does it include all groups of learners; how is it recorded?		

Questions:	Do we have Supporting Evidence:	
	Yes	**No**
36. Do learners attend mock examinations and trial assessments before the final summative assessment; and do they receive feedback on their performance?		
37. What are we doing when a learner appeals against an assessment decision?		
38. Are our learners really at the centre of all we do?		
39. How are we getting feedback from learners, their learning experience, the learning environment, the support they received, etc.?		
40. How are we dealing with learners' complaints and dissatisfied learners?		

For those questions you have answered with "yes", you now need to look carefully at the evidence. Does the evidence show that you are meeting the criteria? Or are you doing more than what is expected? For example, if you are claiming that a significant strength is that you are meeting the needs of your learners, data about recruitment and retention of learners would be important. Poor retention would raise questions about your claim of strength, unless you could demonstrate that learners moved on, because they were making progress and could go into another learning programme; and that this figure is above the national average.

The questions you have answered with "no" represent a current weakness in your organisation. In your improvement plan you have to address these weaknesses. Be sure to refer to the chapter on Improvement Planning in your Handbook and the Improvement Plan Format; this also links into your long-term provider development plan.

6. Completing the Self-Assessment Process

Now you have to go back to your Self-Assessment Report Format and grade your overall performance in priority area Teaching and Learning. Then you need to check how many of the criteria you are not doing (e.g. they might be a weakness), how many could be improved, and how many are a strength.

Once you have done all criteria of priority area Teaching and Learning, the total count will help you identify the overall grade for this priority area. You need to enter this grade on the front sheet of your report format.

However, the main objective of the self-assessment process is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of your organisation. These you record on the summary pages at the end of each priority area in the report format. When you give feedback to staff and learners about the results of the self-assessment process, you need to ensure that you also highlight and celebrate your strengths.

When all your assessments are completed, you have analysed the evidence, judged your performance and graded the priority area, you should be in a position to identify:

- your strengths in Teaching and Learning
- your weaknesses in the area of Teaching and Learning
- actions that you need to take to overcome the weaknesses
- actions that you could take to develop "good" areas into strengths
- policies and procedures that you need to write
- adult learning programmes that you need to review and adjust
- resources that you need so that you can further improve the learning experience for your learners

7. Writing the Self-Assessment Report

Sometimes it becomes clear during external evaluation that staff are not familiar with the strengths and weaknesses given in the self-assessment report or the grade proposed for the area they work in, or with any targets. A good report should naturally follow from established quality management procedures, and should:

- include views of stakeholders such as learners and employers
- make use of all available data (recruitment, retention, achievement, employment, progression, and equal opportunities)
- be self-critical
- make judgements that are supported by evidence, and can be demonstrated to outsiders such as inspectors or external evaluators

Because a good self-assessment report is the basis for your improvement plan, it promotes continuous development, meaning better teaching.

7.1. Producing a Summary

It is useful to describe your specific process of self-assessment in the report's summary. For example, state who compiled the report, including how staff, learners, employers, and other stakeholders were involved. Show how the report's production links in with your annual cycle of quality assurance activities; whether it is the first, second, etc. that your organisation has produced; and how it fits in with your strategic plan or long-term development plan. Make reference to any self-assessment training or external support that you or your staff have received.

If any form of external evaluation took place during the year, include it and state the outcomes. It is useful to say whether the results of self-assessment and external evaluation have been disseminated in any way, for example, in your organisation's newsletter or on posters in your building.

7.2. Involving All Stakeholders

One of the most effective ways of producing a self-assessment report is through an annual self-assessment focus day, where all staff and stakeholders can take part in sharing ideas. Data on achievement as well as evidence from quality assurance needs to be available. Such an approach helps all stakeholders to become involved.

For each learning programme you need to supply information about staffing, learner numbers by learning programmes, and where and how the learning programme is delivered. In leadership and management it is useful to describe overall staffing and resources such as learning sites, policies and procedures relating to management, equal opportunities, and quality assurance systems.

Brief staff about the 6 priority areas and their relevance to the learning process so that strengths and weaknesses can be discussed and judgements made about norms.

7.3. The Importance of Data

Any judgement made by any individual or team in the self-assessment report must be backed up by data. This data has to be reliable, up-to-date, and relevant to the judgement. For example, if you are making judgements about your responsiveness to community needs, you need to define what you mean by 'community', what criteria of responsiveness you are using, and how you are going to measure them. The data you use must relate to the criteria.

As well as analysing outcomes for the year, you should indicate trends, for example in learner success rates.

To analyse trends, ask yourself:

- What is improving?
- Which areas are maintaining outstanding/excellent outcomes?
- What is satisfactory, and needs to aim for good and outstanding/excellent results?
- What is declining and needs urgent action to improve?

The new web-tool will help you identify what data you need to collect and how to use it for your self-assessment and SWOT analysis. The web-tool will also generate benchmarking and comparison charts which will provide you with data for making judgements about your self-assessment results and help you in identifying strengths and weaknesses accurately. These charts will also provide you with valuable data for your target setting in your improvement plan.

7.4.   Making Judgements using Qualitative and Quantitative Data

Your data can be quantitative (for example, learner success rates or numbers of employers engaged) or qualitative; for example, feedback from learners throughout their learner journey, from employers, and from other interested stakeholders on their satisfaction with your performance.

It is important to compare the data against any available benchmarks, and to ensure that it is validated. Learner achievements (including their progression) are key sources of information for you in making judgements; so are the results of your observations of teaching, training, and learning. Your processes and judgements for observation should be based on clear criteria.

7.5.   Capturing the Information

Use plain language when writing the report and avoid jargon. Try to make your report readable to anyone, not just an expert audience.

More important than the wording of strengths and weaknesses, is the confidence that a particular quality really is a strength. In other words, can it be shown to be above the norm or to have a positive effect on the experience of the learner? If a "high rate" of retention is claimed, it needs to be clear what the rate is being compared with. You may feel that retention is good at your organisation because your learners are disadvantaged and have a number of additional social needs. Your evidence has to demonstrate what it is that you and your staff are doing that is above the norm and leads to your high rate of retention.

Whenever possible use statistical data: achievement rates; results of questionnaires to learners, parents, or employers; or grades given internally for observation of teaching and training.

Look particularly closely at achievements in the development of practical skills; are they particularly good, or are they what would be expected? Regularly check the website of ministries and national institutions for national trends in retention and achievement in learning programmes and key performance indicators and benchmarks. This helps in clarifying the validity of your strengths and weaknesses.

For each priority area and/or quality area arrange bullet points in terms of their importance with the most significant strength or weakness first. This way of presenting, in bullet points, will help in your grading decision.

If you are making judgements which do not require a grade, balance carefully the strengths and weaknesses, and ensure your text is evaluative. Evaluation starts with a judgement based on evidence, and then states why you have made that judgement.

External evaluators are one of the audiences for your report. They will use it to inform decisions and discussions with you. Therefore, you should write both report and plan as succinctly as possible, making sure you cover all the relevant elements in the Handbook. Short sentences, good numbering of sections with headings and the use of charts and diagrams (such as graphs to show trends) will help make the report more readable.

The improvement plan should be as simple as possible, cover all strengths and weaknesses, and be continuously monitored and updated.

7.6. Including Learners' Views

Learners' views are relevant to self-assessment reports. Give a summary of what they think of you as a provider. Make two lists of bullet points under the headings "what learners like about the provision" and "what learners think could be improved". Many VET schools gather this kind of information through questionnaires, but make little use of it in driving improvements. Another opportunity for learners to express their views could be in self-assessment focus groups.

Just as learners are at the heart of the learning process so they should be at the heart of the self-assessment process. The weighting of strengths and weaknesses directly relates to the impact on learners.

Many VET schools grade their performance higher than it actually is. This can be avoided by critically analysing the evidence, and by involving stakeholders in the grading activity.

Questions to ask when grading:

- Can there be a grade of 4, "very good," if retention is poor?
- Can there be a grade of 1, "weak," if there are several strengths and no weaknesses, or if the weaknesses have little impact on learners?

7.7. Capacity to Improve

Your "capacity to improve" is a judgement about how well you are able to carry out your self-assessment and improvement planning, as these are your key processes to assure and raise quality. It is fundamentally about the impact of your actions and whether they achieve the goals you have set, which should be stretching.

Capacity to improve is defined as "the ability of a VET provider to continue improving standards, based on what has been accomplished so far, or to maintain exceptionally high standards". Quality assurance puts a great deal of emphasis on capacity to improve during external evaluation, and in any other review of your self-assessment. To assess your capacity to improve, you need to consider these questions:

- Do you know your weaknesses, and take the right actions to correct them?

- Do you know which areas are just satisfactory? If yes, what are you doing to raise the level in these areas?

- Do you know your strengths, and maintain them?

- Do you set and monitor flexible targets which are based on improvements and on maintaining exceptionally high standards?

- Do you keep records of what you need to do and do you really do it?

You should analyse your capacity to improve. The results should be included in your self-assessment and improvement planning processes.

7.8.   Finalising the Self-Assessment Report

Self-Assessment should be firmly linked to and underpin your quality assurance cycle. It is good practice to keep copies of every self-assessment report and improvement plan. This makes it possible to track the production process and to see how outcomes have developed and improved from year to year.

Think of the impact resulting from your actions, especially your improvement actions. The changes you make will have consequences on the quality of provision and will impact stakeholder satisfaction. Unless it is your first SAR, you should highlight the impact of previous improvement actions in the current SAR.

You should also consider the impact which the self-assessment process itself has on learners and staff. How does it enhance their involvement in strategy and their commitment to the organisation's mission, goals and key performance indicators?

And once again: ensure you balance strengths and weakness; do not confuse strength with a required norm. Meeting required norms is a feature which, if absent, would be a weakness. Norms and strengths change as expectations and the bar on performance rises.

7.9.   Moderating and Validating your SAR

Moderating and validating your SAR judgements are essential. You need robust internal and external contributions before you finalise your judgements and your grades.

You can set up internal validation. This is often a small panel which questions managers about their judgements and actions. You might also invite someone from outside your organisation to question you and your staff.

Find associates to challenge your judgements and grades. They should ask these key questions about your report and plan:

- How open were you when you made judgements? Did you start by saying "we think we are grade very good" and then seek to prove it? Or, better, did you put aside all the preconceptions and really ask yourself: "what does the evidence tell us about our performance?"

- How do you know that your judgements are valid and reliable? Where is the evidence and how good is it?

- How do you know that an action is likely to improve provision where there is a weakness, or maintain a strength (i.e. have you planned action and is it the right action?)

Set up a self-assessment focus group with representative staff and learners from different levels to review and internally monitor the proposed report. Their task will be to give an internal, but independent view of your self-assessment report to ensure that it represents a true picture of your organisation. Basically they review the proposed evidence, and decide whether the report is a true reflection of strengths and weaknesses. Finally they decide if they agree with your report and your grades or not.

An effective way of internally monitoring the self-assessment process is to give internal monitors the report without any grades. Internal monitors then have to grade each priority area by judging the proposed evidence against the criteria. The results of this "blind" grading can then be compared to the grades proposed by the Quality Committee.

Once your self-assessment focus group or internal monitors have monitored the self-assessment process and report, and changes have been made, they should internally validate the self-assessment report and improvement plan. The Quality Committee will formally accept the self-assessment report and improvement plan. The report will then be signed by the director of the organisation.

If learners and employers have given information via a questionnaire, let them know what happened as a result of their contribution. This demonstrates the value of their feedback in your efforts to make improvements.

Action plans are central to improving quality. They are the means of making self-assessment work. They keep staff focused on maintaining what is good and doing other things better. Improvement plans should address principal weaknesses, improve satisfactory aspects, and reinforce and spread good practice to other areas.

Review the improvement plan regularly between self-assessment reports (usually quarterly) to monitor progress. Update improvement plans as things change. A self-assessment report properly linked to an action plan will automatically be updated at review time, and this will be clear to any outside party reading it.

Another way of doing this would be through peer review by other VET schools.

Peer review enables you to undertake an in-depth and more collaborative exploration of the self-assessment process. The more rigorous and transparent your self-assessment process, the more you can be confident that the SAR and IP are accurate and fit for purpose and that you have both the capacity and the will to improve. You will find peer review an important way of taking a whole organisation approach to self-assessment.

Put simply, the peer review process is one where a group of VET providers formally join together to review aspects of each other's provision in order to bring about collaborative improvement. They usually start by reviewing the current improvement plan to help the host VET provider understand how well and how comprehensively it has been implemented.

The provider being reviewed is commonly referred to as 'the host' and the other providers are referred to as 'reviewers'. The process is cyclical and is explained in more detail in the Handbook to Peer Review.

In order for a peer review to be rigorous and effective, a peer review group needs to undertake all the following key activities:

- Prepare for the review
- Carry out the review
- Offer professional challenge to the host VET provider
- Undertake feedback and reporting
- Support development planning
- Undertake monitoring and evaluation

Throughout the peer review process, the host and reviewers need to be honest and open about all aspects of the self-assessment process. The reviewers' task is to test out the host's quality systems and processes and make a judgement on the sufficiency, validity, objectivity and the reliability of the data and evidence the host uses for self-assessment. The reviewers also test the fitness-for-purpose of the improvement plan which has resulted from the self-assessment process.

8.   Improvement Planning

There is no prescribed approach to improvement planning; however, there are many examples of good practice. First and foremost, it is essential to engage the entire staff so that the improvement plan becomes a regular agenda item and is reported on at team and staff meetings. This sets the stage for a culture of quality improvement in which all staff expect and maintain exceptionally high standards. Secondly, it is important that actions are evaluated, assessed and improved continuously and promptly.

As you self-assess and identify areas for improvement, you will measure against the standards and priority areas from the self-assessment framework. Additionally, you may measure yourself against other organisations, internal key performance areas and 'stretch' targets for continuous improvement. You can also use the improvement plan to show how the organisation will build on its overall key strengths, maintaining them and using them to plan future provision.

Effective quality improvement plans include processes for monitoring progress and evaluating success. If this is done on a regular basis, e.g. quarterly, it becomes part of the process of quality improvement rather than a hurried exercise 'just in time' for external evaluation.

The areas to be included in your improvement plan should be referenced from the self-assessment report. In your plan, you might consider at least these headings:

a. Where you are
b. Where you want to be
c. How you will get there
d. How much time will you need

How do you review and improve your action planning? Ask:

- Do we get our judgements right?
- Do we identify the right actions?
- Do we get to the root causes of weaknesses?
- Do we resource activities adequately?
- Do we follow through and complete actions, recognise what went well, and praise those responsible?

Root Cause Analysis

Root cause analysis can be used by all VET providers. It is an approach which gets you to the cause of the problem not the symptom.

An area for improvement which requires root cause analysis is one that recurs with the greatest frequency and consumes the greatest resource to resolve. Once an area for improvement is identified, finding the cause of a problem can speed the improvement process and ensure the right issues are addressed. This will prevent you spending time on problem areas that are the result of other problems and will focus you on those that will provide the most improvement and positive change. Changing two or three areas which cause the most problems may improve the entire organisation.

Gap Assessment

1. Where you are now and what do you want to accomplish? What are the related targets, outcomes and success criteria?

2. What is your timeline for the improvement? What are the milestones and completion dates? Once the completion date is set, the tasks can be broken down into fortnightly

or monthly chunks; this makes action monitoring and reporting easier than tackling a large project.

3. Who is responsible for implementation? What resources are necessary for success? If the action is dependent on previous actions you will want to take this into consideration as you assign resources.

4. How will you monitor, evaluate and report progress? If the staff accountable at each level reports upwards, the improvement plan stays on track and becomes part of the daily process.

5. What lessons have you learned as a result of your actions for improvement? This is essential information to avoid the same problems in the future.

6. What have you learnt about your processes for improvement planning? How can you improve them, or make sure that they stay effective?

Continuous Monitoring

External evaluation visits are likely to take an interest in the progress of quality improvement plans, especially if they have any indication that a specific subject area or activity is underperforming.

Successful improvement planning is outcome-focused. As you identify the cause of the problem and plan and manage the improvement actions, you can continuously monitor your performance against what you have achieved and are achieving. Use a cyclical process of observing the action, monitoring the consequences of the action and making adjustments to do this. As you focus on outcomes throughout this process, you apply what you are learning from your actions immediately instead of months or even a year later. As you plan your action, you plan the internal monitoring. You can also evaluate the work of staff, or set and agree on goals with them for improvements in their performance. Doing this will link self-assessment and improvement planning to the performance of staff.

Ask yourself about continuous monitoring:

- How sure are you that your improvement action relates to the weakness or will maintain the strength?
- Have you planned improvements *involving* those who have to implement them?
- Can those responsible for making them happen do so? Do they have the skills and resources? How motivated are they on a scale of 1 to 10? (Anything less than 8 out of 10 is not enough!)
- Have you decided on the monitoring criteria as you plan? How clear and measurable are they?
- How will you monitor the actions? Will you do it soon after they take place?
- How will you involve the people who implement the actions in the internal monitoring?
- How ready are you to accept the results of the internal monitoring and to make further changes to your plan?

9. Rigour in Self-Assessment and Improvement Planning

Rigour in critical. This means:

- Using national and local benchmarks and other comparative data
- Internally and externally validating judgements and grades
- Systematic use of learner and employer satisfaction data

- Setting of challenging targets for improvement
- Effective internal observation of teaching, training and learning; activities which are observed should include coaching, assessment, feedback and reviews of learning, where possible
- Basing judgements about the quality of teaching, training and assessment on professional standards for teachers and trainers
- Having access to and making effective use of accessible management information
- Rigorous performance management of the organisation and of individuals and teams
- Close involvement of the director and governing body of the organisation in the self-assessment process
- The honesty to confront weaknesses as well as maintain and where possible improve further on strengths
- Ensuring weaknesses from the last self-assessment and/or external evaluation have been resolved
- Quality Improvement action plans must lead to change and improvements (or maintaining strengths). Internal monitoring has to take place
- Self-assessment and improvement are continuous; all parts of the organisation should review quality regularly, and plan to improve it.

10. What happens to the Self-Assessment Report and the Improvement Plan?

The judgements and grading in your report will be validated annually by an external evaluator. The evaluator's role will also be to advise and support you in your development, as well as disseminate good practice.

You need to keep your report and plan up-to-date and consider it a live set of documents which reflect your work. You must also keep your summary up-to-date and make sure you include information about changes in areas of learning.

Keeping the report and plan live benefits your organisation and your learners. It is much easier to update them regularly than at longer intervals or annually. Putting your improvement plan into action becomes part of your routine.

The information on all the self-assessment reports and external evaluation reports will be collated and analysed in the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education to determine the countrywide strengths and weaknesses, support needs, and possible areas for development in VET provision.

The results of this analysis provide valuable information on benchmarking and key performance indicators for your next self-assessment process.

11. What Now?

By going through the self-assessment process against priority area Teaching and Learning you should have learned what activities are involved in self-assessment, the time it takes to collect and judge data and evidence, and how to turn weaknesses into improvement targets.

You will now need to write the improvement plan. Time and resources will most likely prevent you from achieving all your improvement targets immediately. Therefore you have prioritised your activities. Once the first improvement targets have been completed, you need to communicate this to all stakeholders and get motivated for your next activities.

Before starting next year's self-assessment cycle, you might like to look at the Self-Assessment Preparation Checklist. This list will help you in your preparation through a series of questions. Where you answer with "no", you should try addressing the issue at

hand before you self-assess so that your process moves closer to the ideal situation described in your Handbook.

ANNEX

Content List for Self-Assessment Report:

1. short overview describing the VET school situation description: kind of school, qualifications/occupations offered, etc.
2. period of this report
2. improvements from last report; progress achieved
3. stakeholder views, especially how learners see the VET provider
4. priority areas and their judgements and evidence supporting judgements
5. strengths and weaknesses (and, if possible, recommendations for improvements)
6. grades
7. good practice examples
8. statistical data to support evidence

The identified weaknesses will be transferred to the annual improvement plan (or to the long-term development plan, depending on resources).The annual improvement plan must include resources and responsibilities as well as the way it is going to be monitored.

3. Additional material (formats and templates)

3.1. Self-assessment Preparation Checklist

This checklist is for the annual period from _____**to** _____
date   _date_

This checklist was monitored by: _____   **Date:** _____
signature of authorised management staff   _completion date_

* Persons with overall responsibility for making the action happen, not those actually carrying out the action.

Self-Assessment and Improvement Planning		Yes	No	Action by	
				Who*	When
Purpose and Scope	• are the purpose and scope of self-assessment clearly defined, agreed, and understood by staff and stakeholders				
	• are these purposes properly communicated to and understood by all those involved				
	• is the link between self-assessment and benchmarking clearly communicated to and understood by all those involved				
	• is self-assessment used as a vehicle for improvement rather than being an end in itself				
	• is the link to internal monitoring and external evaluation clearly communicated to and understood by all those involved				
	• have cycles and priorities for self-assessment been planned and discussed with relevant stakeholders				
	• do cycles combine self-assessment, improvement planning, and strategic planning (e.g. SAP = School Action Plan)				
	• are the costs and the benefits of the process properly understood				
Preparation	• have systems for collecting, analysing, and reporting on performance in key variables been agreed on				
	• has it been agreed how the results will be reported on, how they will be made available, and who will receive the report				
	• are quality areas and performance descriptors fully taken account of				
	• has it been agreed who will carry out the self-assessment and when stages in the process will be carried out				
	• have local, regional, and national strategies and reviews been taken account of				
	• are the needs of learners, employers, the community, and economy being taken account of				

Self-Assessment and Improvement Planning		Yes	No	Action by	
				Who*	When
Responsibilities	• is management actively committed to and involved in the self-assessment process				
	• are teams established and prepared for all areas to be assessed				
	• are team leaders appointed to plan and manage the self-assessment process				
	• has relevant authority assigned to those responsible for the co-ordination of the process (e.g. self-assessment coordinator)				
	• are staff appropriately trained in self-assessment methods and procedures				
	• do staff have reasonable time and resources to carry out the process				
	• are learners actively involved in the process				
	• are employers and other stakeholders involved in the self-assessment process				
Timescales	• has the annual cycle of self-assessment been established and communicated to staff				
	• has sufficient time been allowed to undertake the process, including the gathering of evidence				
Performance Data	• is performance data available for all learning provision / service areas / management and all learner groups				
	• is performance measured against agreed targets				
	• are trends in the performance measured (e.g. year-on-year improvement)				
	• is performance benchmarked against the performance of other providers and national data				
	• is the data easily accessible				
Analysis of Data	• how does performance compare with targets				
	• what are the trends in performance; are there any significant trends				
	• how does performance compare against that of other providers and national performance				
	• is current performance sustainable				

Self-Assessment and Improvement Planning		Yes	No	Action by	
				Who*	When
Evidence	• is there a system/means of gathering and cross-referencing the sources of evidence to avoid duplication of effort				
	• is the evidence valid, reliable, sufficient, accurate, consistent, and current				
	• is evidence available for all learning provision / service areas / management and all learner groups				
	• is the evidence (apart from confidential material) easily accessible				
Judgements	• are claimed strengths real strengths or do they just reflect what is normally expected				
	• how do strengths or weaknesses relate to learning and achievement				
	• are arrangements in place for the moderation and validation of judgements				
	• are self-assessment judgements evaluative rather than descriptive				
	• do judgements make the most of the evidence available				
	• were relevant stakeholders involved in making judgements and deciding on grades				
	• have steps been taken to ensure that the grading system is applied consistently				
Report	• are the needs of learners, employers, the community and the economy taken account of				
	• are the performance descriptors set out in the VET Provider Self-Assessment Framework taken account of				
	• have all quality areas been taken account of				
	• have local, regional and national continuous improvement strategies and review processes been taken account of				
Improvement Plans	• is the plan clearly linked to the results of self-assessment together with local, regional, and national priorities				
	• were relevant stakeholders involved in drawing up the improvement plan				
	• do improvement plans address all of the identified weaknesses				
	• do the plans address actions not completed from the previous cycle				
	• are the targets for improvement specific, measurable, achievable, result-orientated, and time-bound				
	• do plans tackle the root causes of identified problems				
	• are individual and team responsibilities for action clearly defined				
	• are improvement plans properly costed and resourced				
	• are there clear timescales within which actions are to be completed, including milestones; is the plan manageable				

Self-Assessment and Improvement Planning		Yes	No	Action by	
				Who*	When
	• are plans clearly written and documented thoroughly				
	• are improvement plans integrated with strategic and operational plans				
Monitoring	• is the implementation of improvement plans properly monitored and reviewed where necessary				
	• were the actions taken in line with the improvement plan				
	• where appropriate, was action taken to modify the plan				
Evaluating	• what were the results of actions taken under the plan				
	• how do the results compare to the expected / desired results				
	• were there unintended outcomes (positive and/or negative)				
	• did the benefits of the process justify the effort and known costs				

Comments	

3.2. Self-assessment Report Cover

I.   General Information on the VET Provider

Name of VET Provider			Provider's registration/identification number:	
Address of VET Provider	Street		Town	
Full Name and Address of Relevant County Office				
Contact Details	Phone	Fax	Email	Website
Name of Director				
Name of Quality Coordinator(s) in Quality Committee				
Name of SA Coordinator (s) *if different from Q-Coordinator*				

Date of SA Report						
Period of this SA Process	from day/month/year			to day/month/year		
Priority Areas *tick those examined during this SA Process*	**1. Planning**	**2. Teaching/Support**	**3. Achievements**	**4. Resources**	**5. Human Relations**	**6. Management**

II. Details of this Self-Assessment Report

External Visits	Dates	Priority Areas examined during the Visit
1st external visit		
2nd external visit		
advisory visit as requested by provider		
Inspection		
other external visits		

Date of Report Validation		Result of SWOT Analysis: (inadequate – adequate – good – very good – excellent)		
Name of External Evaluator				
Signature of External Evaluator		**Agreed with External Evaluator:** *please circle or cross out*	YES	NO

Internal Monitoring	1st Period September to November	2nd Period December to February	3rd Period March to May	4th Period June to August
Date of Changes to SA Report:				
Date of Changes to annual IP:				

Evaluation Decision:	1. Planning and Programming of Work	2. Teaching, Training, Support to Learning	3. Learners' Achievements	4. Physical and Human Resources	5. Human Relations in the VET Provider	6. Administration and Management
please mark* relevant box for each priority area examined						

- enter **+** = strong; **0** = satisfactory; **--** = weak during the self-assessment process and enter a **grade** according to 5-point scale at the end of your self-assessment cycle when completing the report: inadequate – adequate – good – very good – excellent

Signatures of Responsible Staff *(could be only the director)*	Director	Quality Coordinator	Self-Assessment Coordinator

III. Members of Quality Committees and Teams taking part in this Self-Assessment Cycle

Committee/Team/Group	Name	Position *e.g. technical teacher, learner, parent, employer*
• **Quality Committee**		
• **Quality/Self-Assessment Team** *if this exists at the provider in addition to the Q Committee*		
• **Long-Term Development Plan** *if this exists at the provider*		
• **Priority Area Team** *if this exists at the provider in addition to the Q Committee*		

IV.   Summary of Overall Judgements and Decisions

Remember that for Self-Assessment and External Evaluation VET providers need to provide a **brief** explanation of the nature of the VET provider and its work, the range of learners it serves and what the VET provider sees as its main aims and purposes. This part could also be cross-referenced if this information is provided elsewhere (e.g. provider long-term development plan). However, the information in this section <u>must</u> include a summary of the progress and quality improvements that the VET provider has made since the last report; e.g. the VET provider should briefly list improvements made since the last self-assessment report (**year-on-year improvements**).

Overall Judgement

Please attach your self-assessment reports for the individual priority areas examined during this self-assessment cycle!

PRIORITY AREA 1 – Planning and Programming of the Work
Quality Areas and Criteria
PROVIDER CURRICULUM AND ANNUAL PLAN **Quality Criteria/Performance Descriptors:** 1.1. The VET provider curriculum contains all legal compulsory elements, particularly aims and objectives and a procedure for assessing the achievement of set aims and objectives 1.2. The VET provider curriculum is developed on the basis of the prescribed national curriculum 1.3. An organisation's annual plan is developed on the basis of the provider syllabus and curriculum and contains all elements prescribed by law 1.4. The VET provider curriculum and annual plan must reflect the guidelines set by the organisation's annual improvement plan 1.5. There are annual operational plans for subjects and they have all prescribed components 1.6. Annual operational plans are part of an organisation's annual plan 1.7. Annual operational plans are aligned with the existing framework curriculum 1.8. Annual operational plans are aligned with the curricula, if they exist 1.9. The organisation evaluates the implementation of elements of the annual plan 1.10. The organization of teaching/training is suited to students and teachers/trainers 1.11. Annual plans are developed by an organisation's professional councils 1.12. An organisation's professional councils evaluate the implementation of their annual plans 1.13. The organisation plans and celebrates holidays, public and cultural activities, and volunteer and humanitarian activities, and works to prevent unacceptable behaviours and addictions
DESIGN AND IMPROVEMENT OF ADULT LEARNING PROGRAMMES 1.14 adult learning programmes are designed in cooperation with local authorities and economic sector to meet the identified needs of the labour market, and improvements are shaped by feedback from all stakeholders 1.15 adult learning programmes are designed in line with prescribed methodology 1.16 adult learning programmes are designed to ensure equality of access and opportunities for all learners 1.17 learning outcomes and competences as well as their assessment criteria are regularly reviewed and improved so they are in line with current labour market and industry demands 1.18 adult learning programmes are reviewed on at least an annual basis, and learners contribute to the review with their feedback 1.19 programmes are developed and reviewed on the basis of feedback from all stakeholders; and feedback is consistently gathered from learners, businesses, and communities for this purpose 1.20 the review of learning programmes leads to improved teaching, training, learning, and student achievement 1.21 knowledge assessment and achievement information, including analysis of performance of different groups of learners, serve as a guide to the sustainability of learning programmes
Evaluation Decision
Evidence to support Evaluation Decision

KREDA[16]/SWOT-Analysis for Priority Area 1 – Planning and Programming of the Work

1. What can we commend in this priority area? *(list the key **strengths** here, which will also be reflected in the provider long-term development plan)* •	2. Which difficulties are we facing? *(list the key **weaknesses** here, which will also be reflected in the provider long-term development plan)* •
3. What are our unused resources? *(list all the unused resources and other **opportunities** owned by and available to the provider)* •	4. What obstacles prevent us from progressing? *(list external obstacles or **threats** which are preventing your provider from making progress)* •
5. What can we do to be even better? *(list the main **improvements**** that could be carried out – compare with other providers – find examples of best practice)* • ** details can be found in the annual improvement plan	6. Who can help us make **progress**? *(list institutions, persons, and others who could help improve the quality of the provider work)* •

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[16] Adjusted based on NCEEE example of *Self-assessment Manual for Secondary Schools,* Zagreb, 2010, www.ncvvo.hr

Annual Improvement Plan for Priority Area 1 – Planning and Programming of the Work

relating to same weakness: **Page _____ of _____**

KEY WEAKNESS to be addressed:
(from above self-assessment report)

Targets and Objectives	Methods & Actions required	Costing and Necessary Resources	Responsible for Implementation of Actions	Milestones for Internal Monitoring	Date by which Objectives will be completed	Measurable Indicators for Achievement of Objectives	Responsible* for Evaluation of Achievement of Objectives

Comments

For each weakness you need to cut and paste this improvement plan format.   *different from responsible for implementation of actions*

PRIORITY AREA 2 – Teaching, Training, and Support to Learning

Quality Areas and Criteria

LEARNER ADMISSION

2.1.   the VET provider has effective procedures for identifying and reflecting needs for student enrolment in accordance with the needs of   the local/regional labour market (e.g. deficit occupations, facility and programme conditions relating to special educational needs   learners, the ability to implement practical learning, regional and national economic development plans and strategies, sector   profiles, etc.)

2.2.   the VET provider offers interesting and diverse activities, programmes and projects through the school curriculum

2.3.   the VET provider carries out effective promotional, informational, and counselling activities for learners and parents (e.g. information sessions, open house, presentations, providing adequate guidance to learners to explore their areas of interest or to help learners which have been rejected for specific learning programs find an adequate alternative, etc.) in order to guide learners into the   learning programme/occupation which best suits their needs and interests.

2.4.   the VET provider organizes and provides professional support through professional career guidance and counselling services

2.5.   initial assessment is conducted in accordance with the prescribed admission criteria

2.6.   the VET provider, at the request of a learner, considers the option of changing learning programmes and strives to be as flexible as possible

PLANNING OF TEACHING, TRAINING, AND LEARNING

2.7.   the VET provider offers systematic support to teachers and trainers in developing all forms/documents when planning lessons and they are reviewed in accord with innovations in the vocational fields and in education science

2.8.   teachers and trainers develop operational plans for the subjects they are teaching in the current school year (they are aligned with the curriculum framework and detailed curriculum and their components are aligned with the demands of contemporary educational science)

2.9.   teachers and trainers develop individualized operational lesson plans and preparations for learners with special educational needs in accordance with the decisions of the responsible services and/or submitted medical documentation and in collaboration with the organisation's professional service

2.10.   teachers and trainers prepare for lessons (they plan the content, methods, kinds of work, and resources)

2.11.   lesson planning is aligned with a target group of learners and the specific needs of individuals, including learners with special educational needs

2.12.   lesson planning is carried out in collaboration with members of the professional councils and cross-subject correlation

2.13.   the physical and technical planning of lessons is aligned with the pedagogical standard and minimal material requirements prescribed by the framework curriculum

2.14.   teachers and trainers plan written and oral assessments for the current school year in accordance with the existing rulebook

2.15.   extra-curricular programmes and activities are planned in view of learners' interests and developmental abilities as well as the organisation's capabilities

2.16.   when planning curricular and extra-curricular activities (lessons), the organisation takes into account all activities which are important   to   the education of youths (awareness of nationality, preservation of national, historical and cultural heritage, etc.)

TEACHING/TRAINING PROCESS

2.17.   teaching/training is carried out in accordance with the prescribed curriculum framework

2.18.   teaching/training is carried out in facilities which are in line with pedagogical standards

2.19.   teachers and trainers carry out lessons/sessions according to lesson preparations and achieve planned lesson goals and tasks

2.20.   teaching/training methods, kinds of work, and learning resources and aids are aligned with learning content and are appropriate to learner capabilities

2.21.   the teaching/training process is based on active, learner-centred methods (learner participation in implementing the learning process; research-based learning; experience-based learning, project-based learning, multi-media lessons, individualized approach to learners, interdisciplinary

PRIORITY AREA 2 – Teaching, Training, and Support to Learning
Quality Areas and Criteria

approach)
2.22.   teachers and trainers monitor and record the progress of learners
2.23.   the VET provider organizes additional and supplementary lessons taking into account learners' interests and developmental abilities
2.24.   the VET provider organizes extra-curricular activities taking into account both learners' interests and developmental abilities as well as the organisation's capabilities
2.25.   the VET provider has learning support programmes in place for learners
2.26.   the VET provider encourages collaboration between teachers/trainers and external experts with the objective of improving the   quality of the teaching process
2.27.   the VET provider's specialist service, director, and co-expert teachers/trainers monitor the work of all teachers/trainers, particularly teacher-trainees

LEARNING THROUGH EXPERIENCE (PRACTICAL LEARNING)
2.28.   practical learning is carried out on the basis of an occupational curriculum framework (vocational curriculum)
2.29.   practical learning is organized and carried out in accordance with regulations
2.30.   there is a clear link between theoretical and practical learning
2.31.   practical learning is focused on the development of skills resulting in vocational competences for a particular occupation/qualification
2.32.   practical learning is organized through learning in school practicums and in the workplace (learning through experience and learning-by-doing)
2.33.   the basics of workplace safety and environmental protection are provided in practical learning programmes
2.34   the organisation and employers have written agreements on the provision of practical learning and the organisation keeps records of this
2.35.   the organisation terminates agreements on the provision of practical learning if the employer does not meet contractual obligations or conditions for the provision of practical learning
2.36.   the collaboration between the organisation and the employers in the provision of practical learning is transparent
2.37.   practical learning teachers and trainers who monitor learners on work placements regularly record learners' progress in compulsory pedagogical documentation
2.38.   the organisation collects data on the success rate of learners on work placements and on employer satisfaction
2.39.   necessary adjustments, equipment and teaching methods are provided for learners with special educational needs

PRACTICE FIRMS
2.40.   the VET provider registers its training firms with the Central Office for Training Firms (AVETAE'S SUVT)
2.41.   the VET provider's training firms follow the approved curriculum and the instructions of the Central Office for Training Firms

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES
2.42.   learners have access to extracurricular activities which have a direct and effective contribution to achieving the targets and objectives   set in the educational policies and programming documents at national, county, or local level
2.43.   when planning and carrying out extra-curricular activities the equal involvement of all teachers and trainers and the personal and   professional development of learners are taken into account
2.44.   a portion of extra-curricular activities are related to health, equality and diversity, the physical and social development of learners, and environmental protection
2.45.   when planning extra-curricular activities the VET provider uses the results of national and/or international projects in which it   participated and/or is participating in
2.46.   the effectiveness of extra-curricular activities is regularly monitored; learners, teachers, trainers and stakeholders contribute to the review; and

PRIORITY AREA 2 – Teaching, Training, and Support to Learning

Quality Areas and Criteria

learner initiatives for extra-curricular activities are implemented where possible

LEARNER SUPPORT SERVICE

2.47. learners can always turn freely to teachers, trainers, and expert associates for counselling, support and effective assistance as well as for help in resolving personal problems (legal, emotional, health, and other) and difficulties in regards to education, professional progress and socialization

2.48 the organisation's teachers, trainers and expert associates continually monitor and record the professional progress of learners and organize individual and group counselling of learners at minimum once a year

2.49 the VET provider collaborates with a multi-disciplinary team from the local and broader community (Croatian Employment Service, experts from health institutes, mobile teams of experts, professional associations, employers' associations, parents and persons with disabilities, education centres, institutions of higher education, and more)

2.50 during the learning period all learners are familiar with their rights and responsibilities which are clearly and precisely detailed in the rules of conduct and the organisation's statute and located in a visible area

2.51 learners have the ability and opportunity to provide feedback on their satisfaction with the provided support, assistance, and counselling services, and the organisation records the feedback and compares it with previously set criteria and expected results

2.52 all support activities are recorded in confidential files and learners are guaranteed the protection of their personal information

2.53 information and advice are effective in helping learners in choosing their career progression after gaining vocational qualifications

2.54 the organisation has a system in place for following up on learners after they complete their education and gathering and recording information on learners' professional progression (e.g. programmes of continued education and/or a learner's employment in the profession) and informs appropriate institutions (local government, AVETAE) as needed

2.55 the organisation has within the learner support service a model of strengthening the role and influence of the parent and student councils

LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

2.56. the VET provider, in collaboration with the founder, provides for the integration of learners with special education needs into vocational programs in their place of residence in accordance with the decision of the competent authorities

2.57. the VET provider, in collaboration with the founder and other appropriate institutions, ensures facility and programme adjustments at the start of education and during the course of obtaining general education and vocational competences required for inclusion into the labour market, continued education, and lifelong learning

2.58. the VET provider is in a network with other educational institutions, social welfare institutions, health institutes, associations, employers, funds, etc. for the purposes of a multi-disciplinary approach to the education of learners with special educational needs

2.59. all provider employees are familiar with relevant international and national laws, conventions, declarations and strategies related to the rights of learners with special educational needs to an education

2.60. teachers, trainers and expert associates continually monitor and record the progress of learners with special educational needs and gifted learners

2.61. teachers, trainers and expert associates regularly undergo professional development to work with and have high quality collaboration with special educational needs learners

2.62. the VET provider carries out programs which promote solidarity among peers, the dignity of each individual, and the right to diversity and nonviolence

2.63. the VET provider has a model of identifying and working with learners with special educational and socialization needs which do not have previously submitted evaluations or decisions by competent services

2.64. the VET provider assesses, takes record of, and implements models of monitoring gifted and talented learners

2.65. the VET provider provides gifted and talented learners with continual educational, pedagogical-didactic, and psychological support which

PRIORITY AREA 2 – Teaching, Training, and Support to Learning
Quality Areas and Criteria
improves their learning and acquisition of competences in the best manner possible (regular course programmes, competitions,   extra-curricular activities, workshops, summer school and winter school, clubs, camps, etc.)
ATTENDANCE 2.77.   the VET provider collects, processes, and analyses data on attendance 2.78.   the VET provider undertakes appropriate measures to reduce learner absence 2.79.   the VET provider collects data on drop-out rates (%) and reasons for dropping out 2.80.   the VET provider collects, processes, and analyses the number of disciplinary faults, monitoring increases or decreases by learning   period 2.81.   the VET provider records and analyses the particulars of the attendance of learners who commute, learners with extra-curricular   obligations and activities, and learners in other/parallel learning programmes (music schools, athletic programmes, chronic illnesses)   and provides support options 2.82.   the VET provider includes the parent and student councils in resolving attendance issues
COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION 2.83.   the VET provider encourages communication among teachers and trainers and between them and learners, other staff, and management;   the communication is based on cooperation and mutual respect 2.84.   teachers and trainers use effective measures to promote equal opportunity and to avoid discrimination so that learners can achieve   their full potential 2.85.   teachers and trainers effectively apply the standards for teaching, training, and learning and use other strategies (e.g. learner-   centred learning, learning through experience, practical learning) to meet individual learning abilities, cultures, gender, and motivation 2.86.   teachers and trainers collaborate with each other with the objective of linking the learning content within the same or differing fields (intra/interdisciplinary approach to learning) 2.87.   teachers and trainers enable students to apply problem-solving strategies, the development of key competences, and creative and   critical thinking
Evaluation Decision
Evidence to support Evaluation Decision

KREDA[17]/SWOT-Analysis for Priority Area 2 – Teaching, Training, and Support for Learning	
1. What can we commend in this priority area? *(list the key **strengths** here, which will also be reflected in the provider long-term development plan)* •	2. Which difficulties are we facing? *(list the key **weaknesses** here, which will also be reflected in the provider long-term development plan)* •
3. What are our unused resources? *(list all the unused resources and other **opportunities** owned by and available to the provider)* •	4. What obstacles prevent us from progressing? *(list external obstacles or **threats** which are preventing your provider from making progress)* •
5. What can we do to be even better? *(list the main **improvements**** that could be carried out – compare with other providers – find examples of best practice)* • ** details can be found in the annual improvement plan	6. Who can help us make **progress**? *(list institutions, persons, and others who could help improve the quality of the provider work)* •

[17] Adjusted based on NCEEE example of *Self-assessment Manual for Secondary Schools,* Zagreb, 2010, www.ncvvo.hr

Annual Improvement Plan for Priority Area 2 – Teaching, Training, and Support for Learning

KEY WEAKNESS to be addressed:
(from above self-assessment report)

Targets and Objectives	Methods & Actions required	Costing and Necessary Resources	Responsible for Implementation of Actions	Milestones for Internal Monitoring	Date by which Objectives will be completed	Measurable Indicators for Achievement of Objectives	Responsible* for Evaluation of Achievement of Objectives

Comments

For each weakness you need to cut and paste this improvement plan format.   *different from responsible for implementation of actions*

PRIORITY AREA 3 – Learners' Achievements and Learning Outcomes
Quality Areas and Criteria
INTERNAL MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF LEARNERS' ACHIEVEMENTS 3.1. all relevant stakeholders (learners, parents, teachers/trainers, and professional pedagogical staff) are informed of the procedures and methods of monitoring and assessing learners 3.2. assessment elements and criteria are clear, available, and are predicated upon the vocational curriculum 3.3. learners can evaluate their own level of knowledge and skills based on the clear assessment criteria and elements 3.4. monitoring and assessment is adapted for learners with special educational needs 3.5. assessment is used to monitor the progress of learners in gaining competences and to inform them of their achievements and progress 3.6. teachers and trainers encourage the learner's advancement and self-confidence through the assessment process 3.7. learners are able to have additional assessments of their achievements 3.8. learner assessment procedures are valid, reliable, suitable, consistent, and fair and are carried out regularly and in line with current regulations 3.9. internal monitoring and evaluation of learning outcomes meets the requirements of the occupational standard and enables learners to acquire appropriate professional and vocational competences which are characteristic of the occupational profile 3.10. the internal monitoring and evaluation procedure is regularly analysed and improved 3.11. employers recognise the acquired competences (knowledge and skills) as relevant for the work place and applicable in practice 3.12. all necessary school records and documentation about learners, information on their accomplishments and information on certificates issued are retained in accordance with regulations
EXAMINATIONS (subject, corrective, differential and class exams as well as final project) 3.13. the submission and defence of the final project is carried out in accordance with the timetable for the submission and defence of the final project 3.14. the timetable for the submission and defence of the final project is published on the bulletin board and/or school web page 3.15. the provider keeps compulsory records on the completion, submission, and defence of the final project 3.16. the school evaluation committee and final project defence committee conduct their work according to the rules of procedure issued by the provider's governing body 3.17. the VET provider conducts the subject, corrective, differential and class examinations in line with the regulations 3.18. the manner of conducting subject, corrective, differential and class examinations is prescribed by the organisation's statute 3.19. compulsory records on the conducting of examinations are kept and retained in learner files
EXTERNAL EVALUATION 3.20. the VET provider conducts national examinations and Matura according to prescribed procedures 3.21. overall learner achievement data is analysed and compared with the national average and is available to all stakeholders
COMPETITIONS AND STUDENT PROJECT FAIRS 3.26. the VET provider organizes and participates in competitions at a school, regional, national and international level as well as student project fairs 3.27. the number of learners participating in extra-curricular activities and/or competitions and student project fairs is over 15% of the   total number of learners at the VET provider 3.28. learners at VET providers take part in competitions and student project fairs for occupations/qualifications which are carried out in   their institutions 3.29. regional self-government and representatives of the economy are actively involved in the carrying out of competitions and learner   project fairs 3.26. the VET provider keeps track of the participation and accomplishments of its learners in competitions and project fairs
Evaluation Decision

PRIORITY AREA 3 – Learners' Achievements and Learning Outcomes
Quality Areas and Criteria
Evidence to support Evaluation Decision

KREDA[18]/SWOT-Analysis for Priority Area 3 – Learners' Achievements and Learning Outcomes	
1. What can we commend in this priority area? *(list the key **strengths** here, which will also be reflected in the provider long-term development plan)* •	2. Which difficulties are we facing? *(list the key **weaknesses** here, which will also be reflected in the provider long-term development plan)* •
3. What are our unused resources? *(list all the unused resources and other **opportunities** owned by and available to the provider)* •	4. What obstacles prevent us from progressing? *(list external obstacles or **threats** which are preventing your provider from making progress)* •
5. What can we do to be even better? *(list the main **improvements**** that could be carried out – compare with other providers – find examples of best practice)* • ** details can be found in the annual improvement plan	6. Who can help us make **progress**? *(list institutions, persons, and others who could help improve the quality of the provider work)* •

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Annual Improvement Plan for Priority Area 3 – Learners' Achievements and Learning Outcomes

KEY WEAKNESS to be addressed:
(from above self-assessment report)

Targets and Objectives	Methods & Actions required	Costing and Necessary Resources	Responsible for Implementation of Actions	Milestones for Internal Monitoring	Date by which Objectives will be completed	Measurable Indicators for Achievement of Objectives	Responsible* for Evaluation of Achievement of Objectives

Comments

For each weakness you need to cut and paste this improvement plan format.   **different from responsible for implementation of actions*

PRIORITY AREA 4 – Physical and Human Resources – Professional Development of Staff

Quality Areas and Criteria

SECURING THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT
4.1.   specialist learning equipment and accommodation (sanitary facilities, administrative spaces, auxiliary spaces, library, documentation centre, ICT, specialist classrooms and workshops) are accessible and are used safely, adequately, efficiently
4.2.   the learning process takes place in a safe environment and in line with regulations on work safety and other regulations
4.3.   necessary resources are available and used to support learning, and are accompanied by clear, easy to understand operating and safety instructions
4.4.   learners, staff, and other stakeholders feel safe, and violent and other unacceptable behaviours are prevented
4.5.   staff and learners are secured access to prescribed medical services
4.6.   staff, learners, and other stakeholders are familiarized with and periodically drilled in emergency management procedures

MATERIAL CONDITIONS / RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
4.7.   material conditions, teaching/training methods, and learners' needs are aligned with changes in the vocational curriculum
4.8.   the VET provider ensures material conditions enabling all learners, including special educational needs learners, to participate fully in the learning process in accordance with their needs
4.9.   accommodation (including: sanitary facilities, administrative spaces, auxiliary spaces, library, documentation centre, ICT, specialty classrooms and workshops), facilities and equipment are accessible to all stakeholders, staff, and learners and are signposted and easy to locate (e.g. floor plan layout of all rooms, signs on doors)
4.10.   the VET provider ensures the use of new material resources when there is technological progress

FINANCE
4.11.   development and sustainability of services for learners are based on responsible financial management
4.12.   effective accounting is carried out according to financial and legal requirements; the school board reviews the financial report
4.13.   spending priorities and the use of financial resources are clearly linked to learning programmes and planning priorities and strongly reflect the VET provider's aims and objectives
4.14.   staff are consulted (they express their needs) during the drafting of the financial plan
4.15.   the VET provider effectively uses its own capacity to access additional funding and manages funding responsibly
4.16.   the VET provider effectively uses its own resources and those of the local, national and European communities (e.g. participation in EU projects) for the implementation and improvement of learning programmes and practical learning

HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES
4.17.   all staff are employed in accordance with legislation and subordinate legislation as well as the current vocational curriculum
4.18.   all staff roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and understood; authority is clearly defined and recognized
4.19.   human resource policies are in line with current regulations and all staff performance is monitored and assessed effectively through appraisal and review systems which result in further planning and improvement
4.20.   the VET provider's school board issues the provider's ethical charter in collaboration with the teachers' council
4.21.   the director of the VET provider has appointed a person in charge of interpersonal conflict resolution
4.22.   interpersonal conflicts are dealt with effectively and solved efficiently

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF
4.23.   individual and organized professional training and development is carried out with the support of the VET provider within occupational/professional fields and also in the fields of pedagogy, didactics, educational psychology, methodology, information and communication technology, counselling, management, and educational policies as well as other fields relevant to the effective and high quality provision of education in schools/institutions

PRIORITY AREA 4 – Physical and Human Resources – Professional Development of Staff
Quality Areas and Criteria
4.24.   the staff professional development policy includes appropriate arrangements for induction of new staff and for CPD 4.25.   the continuing professional development of all staff contributes to their effectiveness and allows staff to reflect on their own practice and plan their professional development in line with the goals and objectives of the VET provider 4.26.   learner achievement data is used as a source of information for identifying potential staff development and education needs 4.27.   data on the VET provider's achievements is collected, analysed and published in accordance with the development aims and objectives
Evaluation Decision
Evidence to support Evaluation Decision

KREDA[19]/SWOT-Analysis for Priority Area 4 – Physical and Human Resources – Professional Development of Staff	
1. What can we commend in this priority area? *(list the key **strengths** here, which will also be reflected in the provider long-term development plan)* •	2. Which difficulties are we facing? *(list the key **weaknesses** here, which will also be reflected in the provider long-term development plan)* •
3. What are our unused resources? *(list all the unused resources and other **opportunities** owned by and available to the provider)* •	4. What obstacles prevent us from progressing? *(list external obstacles or **threats** which are preventing your provider from making progress)* •
5. What can we do to be even better? *(list the main **improvements**** that could be carried out – compare with other providers – find examples of best practice)* • ** details can be found in the annual improvement plan	6. Who can help us make **progress**? *(list institutions, persons, and others who could help improve the quality of the provider work)* •

[19] Adjusted based on NCEEE example of *Self-assessment Manual for Secondary Schools,* Zagreb, 2010, www.ncvvo.hr

Annual Improvement Plan for Priority Area 4 – Physical and Human Resources – Professional Development of Staff

KEY WEAKNESS to be addressed:
(from above self-assessment report)

Targets and Objectives	Methods & Actions required	Costing and Necessary Resources	Responsible for Implementation of Actions	Milestones for Internal Monitoring	Date by which Objectives will be completed	Measurable Indicators for Achievement of Objectives	Responsible* for Evaluation of Achievement of Objectives

Comments

For each weakness you need to cut and paste this improvement plan format.   **different from responsible for implementation of actions*

PRIORITY AREA 5 – Human Relations in the VET Provider – Cooperation with other Stakeholders – Promotion of Provider

Quality Areas and Criteria

SCHOOL BOARD
5.31. the school board actively supports and is involved in the development and quality of the teaching, training, and learning process as well as other services supplied by the VET provider
5.32. the school board effectively supports the VET provider's staff in the protection of employment rights
5.33. the school board develops parts of the vocational curriculum in line with the national framework curriculum in accordance with local and regional needs by 31 August for the following year
5.34. equality of opportunity of staff and learners is promoted and discriminations avoided in all activities
5.35. the school board has appointed a Quality Assurance Committee

THE DIRECTOR OF THE VET PROVIDER
5.36. performs activities as outlined by the Law on Institutions
5.37. acts as professional school leader
5.38. ensures the development of the institution and professional development of its staff, a team-oriented approach to work, and a stimulating work environment
5.39. the director regularly monitors the work of teachers/trainers, expert associates and expert councils
5.40. the director regularly self-evaluates his or her own performance

PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION
5.41. procedures are in place to ensure that the VET provider's mission and vision are communicated to and fully understood by all learners, staff, and other stakeholders
5.42. the rights and responsibilities of learners and staff are clearly defined in the organisation's statute
5.43. all relevant stakeholders are familiar with the rights and obligations of learners and staff
5.44. the overall achievements of the organisation, learners, and staff are available and published regularly
5.45. there are procedures in place for identifying and successfully resolving communication problems which arise
5.46. activities aimed at improving interpersonal relations among staff and learners are carried out

INFORMATION SYSTEM
5.47. the information system is used to regularly provide information to learners, staff and other stakeholders
5.48. the VET provider ensures the collection of useful and relevant data and its entry into the information system
5.49. the school board, director, staff and learners use the information system
5.50. information about activities, achievements, and results within the organisation is regularly gathered, updated, stored and analysed
5.51. data on the organisation, staff, and learners is stored in accordance with current regulations

PARTNERSHIPS
5.52. partnerships developed with external stakeholders are regularly worked on
5.53. information about the current and future needs of relevant stakeholders is systematically collected and used for improving the educational process
5.54. partnerships with other VET providers are developed and used to improve the learning process
5.55. partnership projects contribute to local development

PROMOTION OF VET PROVIDER AND LEARNING PROGRAMMES
5.56. there are effective procedures and marketing methods for promoting the VET provider at the local and regional levels and beyond
5.57. the VET provider promotes the values and principles adapted in the mission and vision statements
5.58. the VET provider's educational programmes and services are promoted through, for example, meetings, fairs, conferences and participation in

PRIORITY AREA 5 – Human Relations in the VET Provider – Cooperation with other Stakeholders – Promotion of Provider
Quality Areas and Criteria
events at a local level and beyond 5.59. the overall achievements of the VET provider, staff members, and learners are used for the purpose of promoting the VET provider and its programmes 5.60. the VET provider has a web page which it continually updates
Evaluation Decision
Evidence to support Evaluation Decision

KREDA[20]/SWOT-Analysis for Priority Area 5 – Human Relations in the VET Provider – Cooperation with Stakeholders – Promotion of Provider	
1. What can we commend in this priority area? *(list the key **strengths** here, which will also be reflected in the provider long-term development plan)* •	2. Which difficulties are we facing? *(list the key **weaknesses** here, which will also be reflected in the provider long-term development plan)* •
3. What are our unused resources? *(list all the unused resources and other **opportunities** owned by and available to the provider)* •	4. What obstacles prevent us from progressing? *(list external obstacles or **threats** which are preventing your provider from making progress)* •
5. What can we do to be even better? *(list the main **improvements**** that could be carried out – compare with other providers – find examples of best practice)* • ** details can be found in the annual improvement plan	6. Who can help us make **progress**? *(list institutions, persons, and others who could help improve the quality of the provider work)* •

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[20] Adjusted based on NCEEE example of *Self-assessment Manual for Secondary Schools,* Zagreb, 2010, www.ncvvo.hr

Annual Improvement Plan for Priority Area 5 – Human Relations in the VET Provider – Cooperation with Stakeholders – Promotion of Provider							
relating to same weakness: **Page _____ of _____**							
KEY WEAKNESS to be addressed: *(from above self-assessment report)*							
Targets and Objectives	**Methods & Actions required**	**Costing and Necessary Resources**	**Responsible for Implementation of Actions**	**Milestones for Internal Monitoring**	**Date by which Objectives will be completed**	**Measurable Indicators for Achievement of Objectives**	**Responsible* for Evaluation of Achievement of Objectives**
Comments							

For each weakness you need to cut and paste this improvement plan format.   **different from responsible for implementation of actions*

PRIORITY AREA 6 – Administration and Management (Provider & Quality)
Quality Areas and Criteria
QUALITY MANAGEMENT 6.1.　 the school board and director are actively involved in quality assurance with the objective of improving the organization's performance 6.2.　 the director develops the mission and vision in close collaboration with the organisation's staff and learners 6.3.　 the organisation's medium and long-term development plans are aligned with local, regional, and national VET development strategies 6.4.　 the VET provider developed a school action plan and all relevant stakeholders are familiar with it 6.5.　 the VET provider developed a code of ethical conduct 6.6.　the VET provider has set up a Quality Assurance Committee and has designated it directly responsible for the quality of the organisation and its learning provision 6.7.　 a Quality Coordinator has been appointed and ensures operational quality management 6.8.　 the director ensures that all teachers, trainers, other staff, and other stakeholders are involved in the implementation of quality assurance within the scope of their responsibilities 6.9.　 all key stakeholders discuss recommendations for quality improvements with the Quality Assurance Committee
INTERNAL MONITORING OF QUALITY PROCEDURES 6.10.　 the organisation has a strategy to ensure that quality management and the quality assurance manual are subject to internal monitoring 6.11.　 monitoring of the quality system takes place at least annually 6.12.　 measures and policies for quality assurance are monitored and evaluated on a regular basis to ensure that the system and processes are appropriate, effective, and are maintained and complied with 6.13.　 there are procedures in place to address non-compliance and implement corrective measures where necessary 6.14.　 there are quality assurance methods and procedures,　systematic procedures for controlling teaching and learning, and procedures for the improvement of learner achievement as well as procedures for resolving appeals and complaints 6.15.　there is a procedure for making recommendations for quality improvement and there are procedures which ensure that quality　　　improvement is implemented and monitored
SELF-ASSESSMENT PROCESS 6.16.　 the self-assessment process is transparent, systematic, carried out annually with all relevant staff, and is informed by the views of all relevant internal and external stakeholders 6.17.　 the policy of self-assessment is communicated to and understood by all relevant stakeholders 6.18.　 all aspects of the organisation, including learning programmes and other services provided by the organisation, are subject to self-　assessment 6.19.　 the quality system has a mechanism for collecting regular (at least annually) feedback and satisfaction rates from learners and other relevant internal and external stakeholders on all aspects of the organisation's performance 6.20.　 specific instruments (e.g. questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, and others) are used to evaluate the organisation's performance 6.21.　 the organization's performance is reviewed against internal and external key performance indicators 6.22.　self-assessment leads to the identification of priorities and the planning of further action for quality improvement (e.g. SWOT / KREDA decision making process) 6.23.　 VETIS and other procedures for statistical data collection are used during the self-assessment process and for writing the self-assessment report 6.24.　 procedures are established for the internal monitoring and validation of evaluation decisions made during the self-assessment process, and decisions made about supporting evidence 6.25.　 the VET provider developed the self-assessment report and external auditors monitor and validate the VET provider's self-assessment process and report
IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

PRIORITY AREA 6 – Administration and Management (Provider & Quality)
Quality Areas and Criteria
6.26.   the established procedures build on strengths, address weaknesses, and implement improvements; and results from the self-assessment process and report are used to inform future developments 6.27.   improvement plans address all of the identified weaknesses, including those not completed from the previous cycle; and areas selected for improvement are an appropriate response to the strengths and weaknesses of the VET provider 6.28.   improvement plans include clearly defined targets, priorities, tasks, responsibilities, and timescales; and success criteria are specific, measureable and achievable 6.29.   the implementation of action plans and corrective measures is monitored and evaluated 6.30.   all staff are involved in continuous quality improvement 6.31.   all staff and stakeholders receive feedback on the outcomes of the self-assessment process and improvement plan (taking into account the rights for individual data protection) 6.32.   the findings of external bodies are communicated to appropriate staff, and corrective measures are implemented 6.33.   external auditors monitor and validate the VET provider's improvement plan
Evaluation Decision
Evidence to support Evaluation Decision

KREDA[21]/SWOT-Analysis for Priority Area 6 – Administration and Management (Provider & Quality)	
1. What can we commend in this priority area? *(list the key **strengths** here, which will also be reflected in the provider long-term development plan)* •	2. Which difficulties are we facing? *(list the key **weaknesses** here, which will also be reflected in the provider long-term development plan)* •
3. What are our unused resources? *(list all the unused resources and other **opportunities** owned by and available to the provider)* •	4. What obstacles prevent us from progressing? *(list external obstacles or **threats** which are preventing your provider from making progress)* •
5. What can we do to be even better? *(list the main **improvements**** that could be carried out – compare with other providers – find examples of best practice)* • ** details can be found in the annual improvement plan	6. Who can help us make **progress**? *(list institutions, persons, and others who could help improve the quality of the provider work)* •

[21] Adjusted based on NCEEE example of *Self-assessment Manual for Secondary Schools,* Zagreb, 2010, www.ncvvo.hr

Annual Improvement Plan for Priority Area 6 – Administration and Management (Provider & Quality)

KEY WEAKNESS to be addressed:
(from above self-assessment report)

Targets and Objectives	Methods & Actions required	Costing and Necessary Resources	Responsible for Implementation of Actions	Milestones for Internal Monitoring	Date by which Objectives will be completed	Measurable Indicators for Achievement of Objectives	Responsible* for Evaluation of Achievement of Objectives

Comments

For each weakness you need to cut and paste this improvement plan format.   *different from responsible for implementation of actions*

3.3. Long-term Development Plan Checklist

Structure of the Long-term Development Plan

Part 1   CONTEXT

- Statement of Purpose
- Regional and Local Objectives and Priorities
- Review of the Past Year (from Self-Assessment Report)

Part 2   NEEDS ANALYSIS

- Analysis of the External Environment
- Analysis of the Internal Environment
- SWOT Analysis – Summary
- Summary of Main Aspects for Development (from Self-Assessment Report and Improvement Plan)

Part 3   DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- Provider Objectives (Specific) and Targets
- Actions for the Provider (including Responsibilities, Timescales and Resources)
- Provider Partnership Plan – Summary
- Staff Development Plan
- Funding of Plan

Part 4   CONSULTING, MONITORING, AND REVIEWING

- Summary of Arrangements for Consultation in Development of the Plan
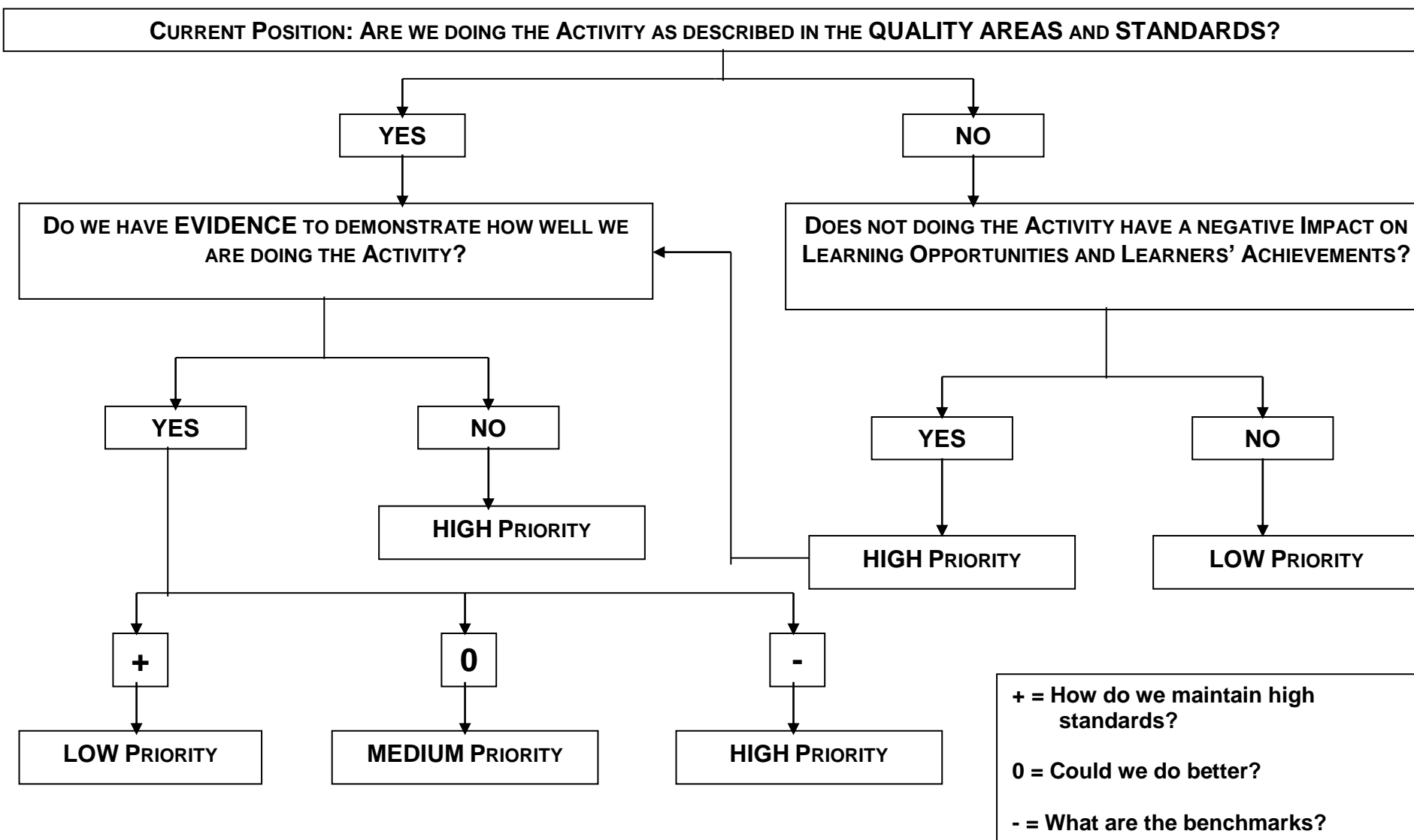- Arrangements for Monitoring, Reviewing, and Updating the Plan

CHECKLIST FOR FEEDBACK ON PROVIDER LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT PLAN

No	COMPONENT Completed Satisfactory:	Yes	No
1	**Is the Plan complete** (Have all the sections from the attached content been filled in)?		
2	**The Plan has a professional appearance:** • It is a single document with a cover /title page mentioning the name of the provider and the fact that this is a Provider Development Plan for 2011-2016 • It includes a contents page • It has no spelling or printing mistakes • The layout is clear and allows an easy reading of the document		
3	**The Plan is written in a clear and accessible style for people who do not work in education** and/or includes a glossary explaining any specialized terms or terms from the educational field.		
4	**Do the first two parts reflect the fact that the plan adopts a long-term perspective until 2016, as well as the fact that it includes an operational plan for one year?** • The needs analysis refers to the situation until 2016 and it includes conclusions drawn on anticipation data as well as on historical data • It refers to regional and local action plans and to their conclusions with regard to the long term requirements and priorities • The objectives and targets are provided for the time period until 2016 or at least beyond 2014		
5	**The Plan contains a substantial needs analysis from an external perspective** including: • Labour market demands and final users' needs, including learners' needs • Relevant information on the VET development and especially the skills needs for the fields /sectors for which the provider provides vocational training • Clear <u>conclusions on the implications for the future of VET</u> NOTE: the needs analysis should not repeat the information found in the needs analysis within regional and local action plans, but it must include relevant conclusions on the future plans of the VET provider		
6	**The Plan comprises a self-assessment of the internal environment** and the strengths and weaknesses of the actual VET provision for each of the headings specified • Teaching, Training, and Support to Learning • Didactic Materials and Resources • Learners' Achievements • Professional Guidance and Counseling Service for Learners • Qualifications and Curriculum • Physical & Human Resources • Partnership and Cooperation NOTE – in this phase only vocational schools have begun the pilot implementation of a segment of the new quality assurance standards. Have clear conclusions, and not only a set of statements, been formulated?		
7	**There is a summary (preferably maximum two pages) of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats which has the following aspects:** • Presents the main conclusions • Helps identify elements that need to be developed and priorities • Creates links between the evidence collected during the internal analysis and those collected during the external analysis		

No	COMPONENT Completed Satisfactory:	Yes	No
8	**The Plan identifies a set of priorities which:** • are based on the needs analysis • are correlated with the priorities within regional and local action plans • are adapted to the VET provider profile and its mission • are in line with the VET reform programme such as is the case with current European-funded projects • focus on the key interventions (it is better to have less than more such interventions that can not be performed) NOTE - the plans should not include any priority goal to which the VET provider cannot contribute, for example: the establishment of a regional or local observatory		
9	**Does the Plan include a clear set of objectives and targets that are correlated to the priorities?** These: • Contribute to a coherent local planning that ensures the existence of a coordinated VET offer in a certain geographical area • Improve and modernize teaching and learning by adopting new learner-centered methods that satisfy learners with SEN • Fulfill the need to provide continuous adult and youth training		
10	**Are there SMART objectives and targets?** • They refer to a_specific development aspect, but with a view to 2015 (these objectives should not cover only one year) • They include a measurable target (ideally a target that can be measured in a simple manner) • Is the measurement method clear? • The objectives are achievable during the specified period of time and with the estimated available resources, being at the same time sufficiently ambitious and demanding for the VET provider in order to encourage actions for improvement? • The objectives are relevant for the future VET provider mission and profile (taking into account the other VET providers from the area) • Do the targets that are to be achieved specify the period to 2015?		
11	**Is each objective accompanied by a corresponding set of actions --** • established for the following provider year 2011-2012? • included in the VET provider activity and responsibility area , taking into account its mission and profile (namely you should specify the activities the provider can perform)		
12	**Are the actions directly connected to the achievement of the specified objectives?**		
13	**Are these actions based on the principle of collaboration and partnership:** • Between the members of the VET provider staff • With other providers from the same region • With other providers that provide qualifications in the same field or in similar fields • With the psycho-pedagogical services • With the career guidance service • With the employment agencies • With the employers and employers' associations		
14	**Do the actions stand as proof for the decision to_increase and improve VET provider networks and partnerships?** • Has the provider partnership plan been developed? Does it include criteria on working with enterprises?		
15	**Actions:** • Are the actions realistic and achievable, but at the same time ambitious? • Are they clearly and unambiguously formulated? • Have the partners been identified? • Has the leader/person in charge been nominated for each action and the duration of the performed action determined?		

No	COMPONENT Completed Satisfactory:	Yes	No
	• Have the implications been analyzed from the resources perspective?		
16	**Is there evidence that support the fact that the development of the long-term plan has been completed through a collaboration and consultation process** (this aspect should be included in the 4th part of the plan). Is there proof that the following have been consulted in the plan development: • Employers, employees, SME owners and employers' association? • Employment agencies • Parents • Learners • Provider staff • Teachers and directors from other providers • Provider managing board (not only in order to obtain approvals but also as a source for guidance and counseling) • Education Inspectors, External Monitors, Occupational Committees, etc.		
17	**Does the Plan contain proper mechanisms for the monitoring and analysis to be carried out by** • People responsible for actions • Director and other people involved • Provider managing board		
18	**Have the vocational development needs of staff members been identified?**		
19	**The enrollment plan is logically correlated with the long-term development plan:** • It supports the priorities, objectives and targets • Does it take into account the offer of other providers from the city and other factors such as the future number of young people in the area and the future demand for such qualifications?		
20	**Comments** Please express your comments in order to support your statements above and provide feedback to the VET provider. You should pay special attention to the strengths of the plan and to suggestions on the ways in which it can be improved.		

3.4. SELF-ASSESSMENT DECISION MAKING PROCESS

CURRENT POSITION: ARE WE DOING THE ACTIVITY AS DESCRIBED IN THE QUALITY AREAS AND STANDARDS?

YES

DO WE HAVE **EVIDENCE** TO DEMONSTRATE HOW WELL WE ARE DOING THE ACTIVITY?

YES

NO → HIGH PRIORITY

+ → LOW PRIORITY

0 → MEDIUM PRIORITY

- → HIGH PRIORITY

NO

DOES NOT DOING THE ACTIVITY HAVE A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES AND LEARNERS' ACHIEVEMENTS?

YES → HIGH PRIORITY

NO → LOW PRIORITY

+ = How do we maintain high standards?

0 = Could we do better?

- = What are the benchmarks?

3.5.   KREDA[22] Analysis

The name KREDA can also be applied when describing a provider as a whole and whose aim is to be Competitive, Representative, Efficient, Well-intentioned, and Authentic.

There are 4 steps when creating a KREDA analysis in VET providers:

1.   In the first phase, the VET provider Quality Team analyse the departmental self-assessment reports against the 7 questions from the KREDA Table.

2.   In the second phase, the answers are evaluated, and it is agreed which final answers to put into the KREDA-Analysis Table as a real picture of the VET provider. The number of answers is not set or recommended but rather varies depending on the characteristics of the VET provider.

3.   In the third phase, the Quality Team will make a quantitative evaluation and grade the overall VET provider performance on a 5-point grading scale.

4.   In the fourth and final phase the Quality Team will use the completed KREDA Table for developing and writing the VET provider overall Self-Assessment Report and the Improvement Plan (*for more information on how to do this please see the Self-Assessment Manual and particularly the Handbook for Writing the SAR*).

KREDA-Analysis Table

<table>
<tr><td colspan="7" align="center">KREDA-Analysis for VET Providers</td></tr>
<tr>
<td colspan="3">1. What can we commend in our provider?
(list the key strengths here)</td>
<td colspan="4">2. Which difficulties are we facing?
(list the key weaknesses here)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td colspan="3">3. What are our unused resources?
(list all the unused resources owned by the provider)</td>
<td colspan="4">4. What prevents us from progressing?
(list external obstacles which are preventing our organisation from making progress)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td colspan="3">5. What can we do to be even better?
(list the improvements that could be carried out – compare with other providers – find examples of best practice)</td>
<td colspan="4">6. Who can help us make progress?
(list institutions, persons, and others who could help improve the quality of the provider work)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td colspan="7" align="center">7. How good is our provider?
underline the appropriate grade:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><i>Not satisfied</i></td>
<td>inadequate</td>
<td>adequate</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>excellent</td>
<td><i>Completely satisfied</i></td>
</tr>
</table>

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[22] Adjusted based on NCEEE example of *Self-assessment Manual for Secondary Schools,* Zagreb, 2010, www.ncvvo.hr

VET providers should grade their performance based on the judgements and evidence of the self-assessment process. It is proposed that grading could be carried out using a five-point scale:

excellent =	**5**	100% to 90% of quality criteria are achieved
very good =	**4**	89% to 80% of quality criteria are achieved
good =	**3**	79% to 70% of quality criteria are achieved
adequate =	**2**	69% to 50% of quality criteria are achieved
inadequate =	**1**	less than 49% of quality criteria are achieved

When grading each quality area the above % defines the level of achievement and the grade descriptor. The overall grade for each priority area is the average grade of all quality areas belonging to that priority area.

Alternatively, the grade descriptors for each priority area could be as follows:

Excellent

An evaluation of excellent applies to VET providers who meet the majority of the quality areas and whose performance level is consistently above the national average in all indicators (statistical report). There must also be evidence of continuous year-on-year improvements.

An overall summative grading of "excellent" can be applied to a VET provider when at least 5 out of 6 priority areas have been graded "excellent" (this must include priority area – Teaching and Learning), and the others have been graded "very good" or "good".

Very Good

An evaluation of "very good" applies to providers with major strengths:

- the policies and procedures are of a very high standard
- learners are achieving and progressing at much higher rates than might be anticipated or compared to national benchmarks
- satisfaction rates among learners, employers and staff is consistently very high

There must be evidence that these high levels of performance have been maintained consistently or are capable of being maintained.

Grading a priority area "very good" requires that most of the quality areas associated with the priority area are achieved to a very good standard; and when there is robust evidence for some additional positive features or characteristics related to the priority area.

An overall summative grading of "very good" can be applied to a VET provider, when at least 5 out of 6 priority areas have been graded "very good" (this must include priority area – Teaching and Learning), and the others have been graded "good" or "adequate".

There will be very few areas for improvement, and any that do exist will not significantly diminish the benefits to learners, employers and staff. However, it will also be clear that the provider is seeking opportunities to maintain, and to strive to improve performance.

Good

An evaluation of good applies to VET providers with strengths which outweigh weaknesses. There are weaknesses, but, they do not have a significant adverse impact on the learning experience:

- policies and procedures are slightly above the national average

- the achievements and/or progression rates of learners are slightly above the national average
- satisfaction rates among learners, employers and staff are slightly above the national average

Grading a priority area "good" requires that more than half of the quality areas associated with the priority area are achieved to a good standard.

An overall summative grading of "good" can be applied to a VET provider, when at least 4 out of 6 priority areas have been graded "good" (this must include priority area – Teaching and Learning), and the others have been graded at least "adequate".

There may be a number of areas for improvement. The provider will be seeking to address areas of weakness while building on its strengths.

Adequate

An evaluation of „adequate" will apply to VET providers which are mainly meeting the local or national norms. Some important weaknesses have an impact on the quality of the learning experience. There will be a need for structured and timed action on the part of the VET provider. Their strengths must outweigh weaknesses.

- policies and procedures meet the minimum national standards
- the achievements or progression rates of learners meet the national average
- satisfaction rates among learners, employers or staff meet the national average

There must be evidence that the provider is aware of and attempting to address its weaknesses, and is maintaining or endeavouring to maintain its strengths.

Grading a priority area "adequate" requires that at least half of the quality areas associated with the priority area are achieved to an adequate standard; although, this may be at a minimum level.

An overall summative grading of "adequate" can be applied to a VET provider, when at least 3 out of 6 priority areas have been graded "adequate" (this must include priority area – Teaching and Learning).

There will be a number of areas for improvement with some benefits for learners, and possibly for employers and staff. The provider must be seeking to address as many areas of weakness as possible, and also to maintain or build on strengths.

Unsatisfactory

An evaluation of "unsatisfactory" will apply to providers which are failing to meet local or national norms in most areas. There are major weaknesses in provision, requiring immediate remedial action on the part of the VET provider. The learning experience is at risk in significant aspects. A provider who is being graded "weak" in priority area –

Teaching and Learning, will be graded "weak" overall, even if the other priority areas achieved a higher grading.

"Weak" providers may have strengths; but, these will be outweighed by weaknesses.

- policies and procedures do not meet the national minimum requirements
- the achievements or progression rates of learners are below the national average
- satisfaction rates among learners, employers or staff are below the national average

There may be evidence that the provider does not fully understand its weaknesses and is struggling to address them.
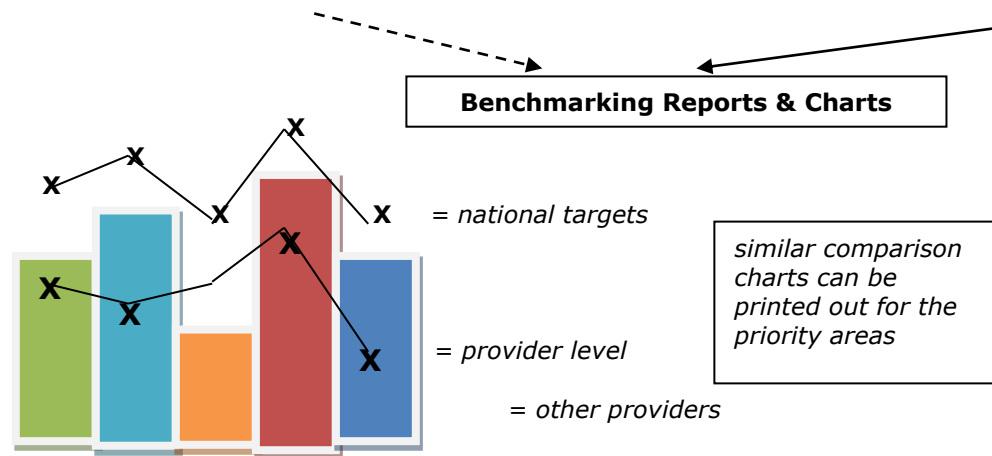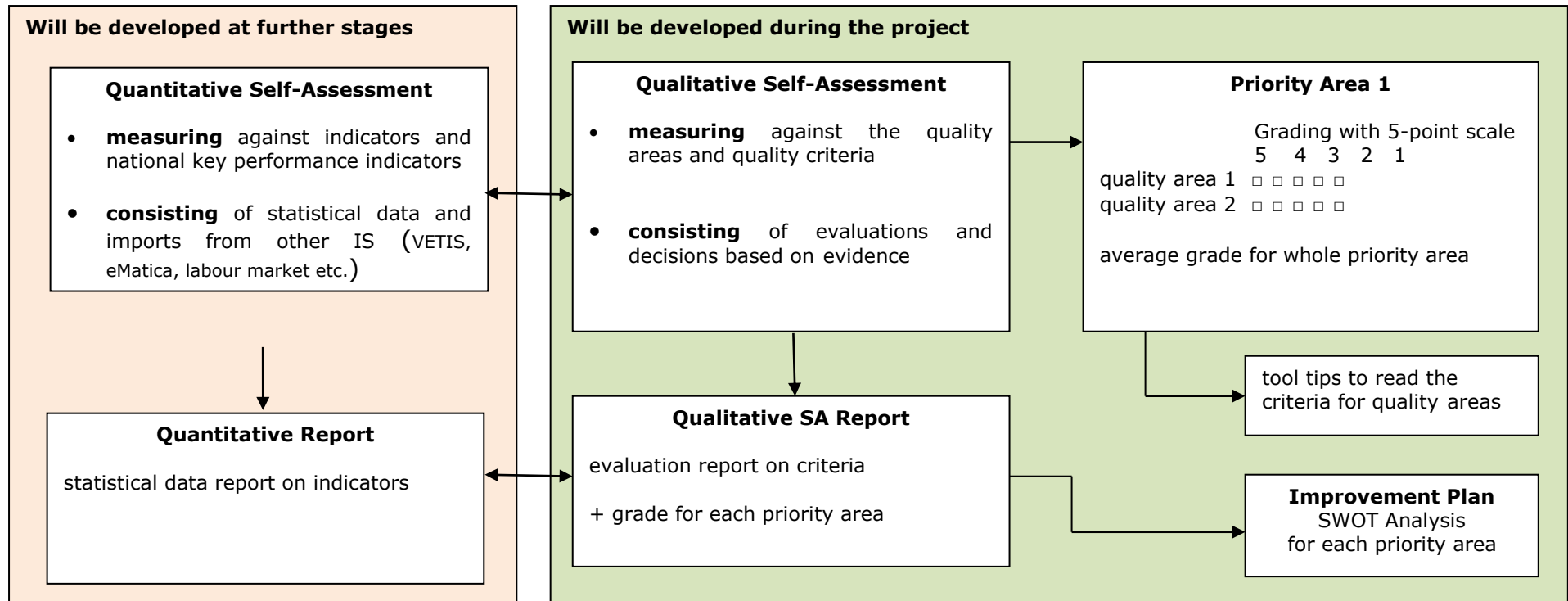
A priority area must be graded "inadequate" when less than half of the quality areas associated with the priority area are achieved; that means that the majority of the criteria are not being achieved; even at a basic level. It could be that there is evidence of a failure to achieve the characteristics, or that there is a lack of evidence of achievement.

An overall summative grading of "inadequate" must be applied to a VET provider when at least 2 out of 6 priority areas have been graded "inadequate" (even when priority area – Teaching and Learning has been graded higher). A VET provider graded "weak" in priority area – Teaching and Learning, will also be graded "weak" overall, even if the other priority areas achieved a higher grading.

There will be a number of urgent areas for improvement. A grading of "inadequate" will imply the need for significant re-appraisal of provision by the VET provider through immediate structured and planned action.

It is essential that VET providers come to an overall judgement using these five levels. This is where external evaluation will help, as external an evaluator's judgement enables the important process of moderation, as the grading of the VET provider will be compared to the grading of the external evaluator. This moderation can assure VET providers that their grading is accurate, and will give them confidence in their own judgements.

3.6. Web-based SA Tool

Will be developed at further stages

Quantitative Self-Assessment

- **measuring** against indicators and national key performance indicators

- **consisting** of statistical data and imports from other IS (VETIS, eMatica, labour market etc.)

Quantitative Report

statistical data report on indicators

Will be developed during the project

Qualitative Self-Assessment

- **measuring** against the quality areas and quality criteria

- **consisting** of evaluations and decisions based on evidence

Priority Area 1

Grading with 5-point scale
5 4 3 2 1

quality area 1 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
quality area 2 ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

average grade for whole priority area

tool tips to read the criteria for quality areas

Qualitative SA Report

evaluation report on criteria

+ grade for each priority area

Improvement Plan
SWOT Analysis
for each priority area

Benchmarking Reports & Charts

X = national targets

= provider level

= other providers

similar comparison charts can be printed out for the priority areas

	PA1	PA2	PA3	PA4	PA5	PA6
QA1	4	3	4	5	4	3
QA2	5	4	4	4	3	2
QA3		2	3	4	3	5
QA4		1	2	5	2	5
QA5		3		4	3	
QA6		3			4	
QA7		2				
QA8		4				
QA9		3				
QA10		4				