



NETIN VET

memorandum





N E T I N V E T

This memorandum describes the developments of the NETINVET network, the experience gained and the foreseen development.

It also presents the challenges faced by participating members in implementing mobility projects.

Finally, it makes recommendations for moving forward and stronger.

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1 / The mobility network NETINVET and its recent development





Origin and founding principles of NETINVET

NETINVET was initiated in May 2011 by the CGI (*French Confederation of Wholesale and International Trade*) as the result of two previous European projects: RECOMFOR and COMINTER which primarily provided support for the creation of the common professional profile “*International Trade assistant*” and the implementation of a network to develop and support learner and teacher mobility at level 5 of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). One year later, the network continued to expand thanks to the Euro Trans Log project, coordinated by the AFT (*French association for the development of vocational training in transport and logistics*), aiming to enable and facilitate learner mobility at EQF level 5 in the Transport and Logistics sector in Europe.

Philosophy and principles

NETINVET pursues a sectoral approach and benefits from a strong implementation of professional organisations which support the VET centres in the realisation of mobility. One of the main pillars is the establishment of mutual trust resulting out of the acceptance of quality charters and annual conferences allowing the members to meet regularly.

NETINVET has the legal form of an association governed by the law of 1901 and is presided by the CGI and the AFT. The network is open for new members who have to conform to the network’s quality requirements and propose a training programme which is compatible with the shared references: “*International Trade assistant*” and/or “*Transport & Logistics services*”.

To insure the quality, approve new membership requests and decide on the development of the network, NETINVET is governed by a Steering Committee composed by representatives from schools and training centres. A Scientific Committee consisting of representatives from competent and professional organisations provides advice.

The network is mainly financed through its membership fees. The CGI and the AFT support the network, inter alia with the allocation of two coordinators.

Evolution of NETINVET: growth and innovation

Quantitative growth: partners involved and beneficiaries

- **Expansion of the VET Centres partnership:** the network increased its membership from some 50 to more than 75 VET centres and 300 related companies in view of increasing the number of mobility opportunities and initiatives within the network¹.
- **Increasing number of mobility projects:** 700 study or professional mobility initiatives took place in 2016 (compared to 450 in 2013).
- **Geographical widening:** from 8 partner countries, territorial extension is planned for 2017. Two additional EU Countries are in the process of joining the network in 2017: Poland and the United Kingdom (Northern Ireland). Thus, NETINVET will have 10 participating countries².

Diversification of activities

- **Teachers mobility programmes:** to gain insight into training schemes and curricula in various countries. The objective is to develop a better understanding of different approaches in order to develop joint projects or exchange programmes. These activities take place within several European projects (mobility projects for Professionals in VET focusing on the transfer, improvement and update of competences and/or of innovative methods and practices in the field of vocational training) organised within NETINVET³.
- **Commitment to participate** in the “European Alliance for Apprenticeships” by providing concrete activities in the pledge (see [here](#)).

Development of tools and online instruments

- **Provision of mobility tools.** The objective is to enhance the quality of apprenticeships and mobility operations: e.g. the France/Catalonia learning agreement for Senior Transport and Logistics Technicians, the template for work placement contracts.
- **Online supporting instrument:** renewing, strengthening and expanding services provided to the network members by the www.netinvet.eu website with new spaces dedicated to teachers, academic advisors and students, including new tools for setting up mobility projects⁴ and a community forum.

Quality and excellence process

- **Quality charters:** the network has implemented a specific quality approach based on two quality charters: the training providers and the hosting companies quality charters. These charters are key elements for incorporating new members and ensuring consistent and sustainable quality.
- **Mobility Prize:** the prize is awarded to learners having taken advantage of a mobility opportunity within the network, encouraging them to creatively recount their experience abroad.
- **Quality award for partner companies:** the awarded quality certificate is evidencing that the host enterprise's arrangements are complying with the quality standards set out in the NETINVET Quality Charter; this certificate is issued to companies that are regularly involved and active in developing learner mobility.

1- This expansion took place in several partner countries: France, Germany, Italy, Portugal and Spain.

2- Germany, Belgium, Spain, France, Italy, The Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Poland, UK Northern Ireland.

3- Focusing on topics such as: Integration and explanation of the national education systems and specifically the VET education; Integration and explanation of the content and the possibilities of the profiles International Trade Assistant and Transport & Logistics services; Conditions for study and work placement mobility projects; Visits to umbrella organisations involved in NETINVET, to member training centres and companies.

4- Designing and filling in required documents online, simultaneous work on the same online documents, online approval; portal service for downloading, interactive tools to facilitate proposals and requests in terms of mobility, additional information on schools, including offers of accommodations, automatic updating of mobility initiatives created and pairing of proposals and requests.

Improving mobility with the support of EU instruments

NETINVET is designed to promote mobility, considering EU transparency instruments such as EQF, Europass or VNFIL, in line with the Riga conclusions of the Ministers in charge of vocational education and training⁵. In particular it takes on board the ECVET⁶ principles. In fact, all network partners agree that ECVET provide answers to the conceptual questions raised by the recognised mobility and provides applicable technical solutions.

Thus by embedding the ECVET processes since the very beginning NETINVET promotes and supports academic and internship “recognised” mobility, i.e. for enabling the NETINVET mobile learners, when coming back home, to have their learning outcomes achieved abroad, transferred, recognised and taken into account for the award of the VET diploma.

For achieving this objective on the basis of ECVET principles, the NETINVET members have first agreed on common standards (professional activities, qualification levels and skills). In parallel, the network has established mutual trust between members, based on commitment and agreed quality criteria. That is a powerful lever for its development and, at the same time, one of its most tangible and convincing results as an operational European network.

Near future of NETINVET: sectoral diversification and openness at all levels

The success of NETINVET has led its promoters to open access to the network, on the one hand to other sectors, and on the other hand to other levels of training and qualification. The objective is to enrich the network, both by extending the operational partnership, by diversifying the sectoral offer and by

transferring and sharing with these new sectors the experience gained. It also means allowing youngest VET learners to take advantage of the same mobility opportunities.

- **Extension of the sectoral offer:** new sectors or professional branches have expressed interest in joining the network, in particular the automotive trade and repair sector.
- **Openness to additional VET levels:** in 2017, the conditions and arrangements necessary for the participation of young learners wishing to achieve level 4 qualifications in Transport and Logistics will be get started. This initiative is also based on the results of another project, ETL4ALL⁷. It presents new challenges for NETINVET promoters and actors, taking into account the age of the learners, their previous educational background and socio-cultural issues, and the specific set up of VET programs at this level which is very different from that of Level 5. In addition, trainers and teachers who teach at these levels often have a more reserved approach regarding mobility. Therefore, they need the support of a network such as NETINVET even more.

5- RIGA CONCLUSIONS 2015 on a new set of medium-term deliverables in the field of vet for the period 2015-2020, as a result of the review of short-term deliverables defined in the 2010 bruges communiqué. Preamble: declaration of the Ministers in charge of vocational education and training – of EU Member States, Candidate Countries, European Economic Area Countries. “*We will combine our efforts to encourage the effective use of EU transparency tools, and in particular of the European Qualifications Framework, as a common reference for EU comparison and transparency to facilitate mobility of students and workers in Europe*”.

6- European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training

7- The ETL4ALL project (European transparent Transport and Logistics EQF level 4 qualifications for All) responds to these developments by ensuring that Transport & Logistics EQF level 4 qualifications are available in the four partner countries (France, Belgium, Italy and Spain) and subsequently in other European countries as well, and by making them compatible with the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET). <https://etl4all-project.eu/en/page/home>

2

Challenges in implementing recognised mobility and proposals for moving forward with ECVET





ECVET is the best way for making the Erasmus + requirements a reality in vocational education and training⁸. Within NETINVET mobility, according to ECVET principles for recognised mobility, the learning outcomes achieved abroad and formalised as units of learning outcomes, should be transferred to the home country as building blocks of the home qualification.

- 2.1 -** Despite the fact that the partner training providers are convinced of the interest of ECVET and are ready to make all necessary arrangements to implement it, the regulations in force in the field of qualifications are sometimes in contradiction with the spirit and objectives of recognised mobility, except in Catalonia where ECVET is fully implemented.

OUR PROPOSAL:



As depending on the implementation at national level, Member States and competent bodies should be strongly encouraged to apply ECVET principles, according to the Erasmus + programme guidelines⁹.

- 2.2 -** Within the network, VET providers are facing one technical challenge. Partners note the wide scope and big “size” of units (or modules) of learning outcomes, within all qualifications and in all partner countries. It means that the achievement of such units requires long-term mobility periods (five to six months). Unfortunately, such duration is not compatible, neither with the vocational training programmes nor with the age of learners, who are often under 18.

In addition, teachers and trainers teams usually use to implement short time training sessions. These sessions may fit with short mobility period and may enable mobile learners to achieve an optimal volume of learning outcomes. However, these learning outcomes constitute only a part of those of LO within a full unit.

8- “The learning outcomes are formally recognised and validated at an institutional level, course contents are adapted as necessary to ensure that the mobility period abroad fits well with the course in which the apprentice/VET student is enrolled.”

9- Erasmus + programme-guide 2017; pp 269-270; 20/10/2016; European Commission

As a consequence, the participation in one or several training sessions abroad is recognised as a step in the learner's training path (e.g. with ECTS) but, paradoxically the outcomes cannot be formally recognised through the award or the crediting of a unit.

OUR PROPOSAL:



When a coherent set of learning outcomes has been assessed and validated abroad by the host VET centre, these learning outcomes should be transferred and valued thus formally recognised as part of one or several units/modules/qualification components, regardless of the volume of the learning outcomes subject to transfer.

To that effect, firstly the ECVET technical specifications could be supplemented e.g. by reinforcing the concept of credit and by introducing the concept of component of units/modules (sub-unit or partial unit);

Secondly, the competent authorities empowered for designing programmes and training sessions should be encouraged to provide or to make possible provision of short term training sessions in line with the requirements of recognised mobility.

- 2.3 - A MoU¹⁰ has been drafted for the network, but its value remains virtual as it has not been endorsed by the central competent authorities on which the training centres are dependant. Thereby further reducing the VET centres' autonomy to recognise the learning outcomes achieved abroad.

OUR PROPOSAL:



To merge the learning agreement and the MoU into a single document and to empower training centres and providers to endorse the MoU.

10- Memorandum of Understanding

3

Challenges in enhancing mobility with the support of the Erasmus + programme





NETINVET members use to participate in the Erasmus+ programme. However, they are facing some challenges when applying for a mobility project (“Mobility projects for learners in higher education”).

Currently, the award of Erasmus + mobility grants¹¹ is governed by a distinction between VET and Higher Education, on one hand, and mobility for studies and mobility for traineeships on the other hands. An additional distinction between VET learners and apprentices is now introduced by the European Commission: within the key policy initiatives promoted by the European Commission’s Work Programme for 2017, in relation to apprenticeships, a new dedicated long-term (6 to 12 months) apprentice mobility activity labelled “ErasmusPro” is proposed and is subject to a call for proposals for pilot projects¹².

These distinctions illustrate the praiseworthy desire of Europe to respond to the need to make mobility a reality accessible to all learners, regardless of their status and by devising administrative rules adapted to each category of learners. In this sense, the NETINVET experience is an opportunity to question the adequacy of some of these rules to the specificities of VET learners.

While for vocational training that does not belong to HE (level 4 and below), the minimum duration of the mobility period is two weeks, regardless of the content (study, traineeships, combination), for higher education (from level 5, including short cycle), the minimum duration of student mobility project varies according to whether the planned activities are studies (3 months) or traineeships (2 months). In addition, when the mobility project combines a study period and a traineeship period abroad, (as encouraged by the Programme), the combination follows the minimum duration of study mobility, i.e. 3 months.

Based on NETINVET experience, we can say that the three months rule is binding and inadequate regarding level 5 vocational training for three main reasons:

- Learners studying at level 5 are usually young or very young. A mobility of three months is a real challenge, given their maturity.
- Vocational training is fundamentally based on the principle of a close link between work based learning and VET school, since the duration of the period spent in a company may be much longer than that spent at school.
- The year of study in vocational training is not set out on the model of university higher education (quarters and semesters) and requires a great deal of flexibility, especially when it comes to a two-year curriculum.

OUR PROPOSAL :



To make possible the application of the Erasmus + rules for making possible mobility periods of less than three months, when the mobility project combines a study period and a traineeship period abroad. The wording could be: when the mobility project combines a study period and a traineeship period abroad, the combination follows the minimum duration of traineeships mobility.

11- Erasmus + programme-guide 2017; 20/10/2016; European Commission

12- European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion Skills VET, Apprenticeships and Adult Learning, Call for proposals VP/2017/007)

4

Promoting and developing a European sectoral approach





For the time being, NETINVET is based on a sectoral approach covering two industries, Wholesale and International Trade / Transport & Logistics. This approach structures the network by bringing together the contributions of three stakeholders:

- professional organisations in EU member states representing employers and employees in charge of vocational training policies,
- competent authorities in EU member states according to the qualifications covered by the proposed mobility programmes,
- European training centres and providers involved in the organisation of mobility.

An integrated and collaborative European sectoral approach

NETINVET is driven by a commitment to furthering the development and recognition of mobility in order to:

- Enhance the appeal of the addressed professions in Europe,
- Promote greater convergence of qualifications in Europe thanks to a spillover effect,
- Offer guidance to European trainers involved in mobility initiatives,
- Develop common tools on the basis of European instruments.

Based on these concrete initiatives, the organisation works to incorporate said tools into national sectoral policies, particularly with the help of social partners, while also broadening their application at the European level.

This integrated and collaborative approach, both at national and European level, long-term by its very nature, embodies one area of focus for the implementation of a strategy of skills development in EU Member States involved in the project.

NETINVET thus became active in the European Alliance for Apprenticeships. Attention must now be paid on the procedures for implementing apprenticeships, e.g. by putting forth model of mobility scenarios, as well as introducing greater flexibility in the structure of mobility operations. This approach, led by directly involved European stakeholders, goes further than offering cross-cutting generic tools. Indeed, it is the key to success: co-construction for more effective co-production!

Challenges in creating European mobility consortia with Erasmus +

NETINVET faces a paradoxical situation. The network is highly active, but the Erasmus + calls for projects in the fields of learner and teacher mobility in the context of sectoral alliances, do not take into account the characteristics of a consortium structure such as NETINVET, and thus preclude network participation of European mobility consortia in such programmes.

As such, regarding mobility projects for VET learners and staff, a national mobility consortium only could be created with an eye to submitting a common application to fund mobility initiatives originating in the country. However, creating a European consortium¹³ would not be possible. This fact restricts opportunities for mobility networks such as NETINVET, which would otherwise be perfectly suited to serve as coordinator, guaranteeing high-quality mobility programmes in accordance with ECVET/Credit systems principles and requirements. Moreover, such consortia could provide strong support to learners and their families, as well as to training centres and trainers teams, regarding the specific needs of the young people targeted by the mobility projects.

OUR PROPOSAL:

Make it possible within the new programme Erasmus + to create European consortia authorised to submit funding requests for mobility initiatives originating from several countries.



NETINVET as source of inspiration and think tank

Moreover, NETINVET fully supports the ‘Agenda for new skills in Europe’, referring to pilot sectors. NETINVET wishes to participate in and contribute to the programme. In addition, the foreseen revised EQF Recommendation should include an annex on “Principles for credit systems related to the European Qualifications Framework”¹⁴. In addition, the recent call for proposals regarding the new apprentice mobility activity labelled “ErasmusPro”, underlines that the “organisations in the consortia should determine, through appropriate assessment, documentation and validation, to what extent the agreed learning outcomes have been achieved by participants and ensure that these are appropriately recognised [...]. Organisations may decide to apply the European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) in the framework of their mobility activities”¹⁵.

In this regard, considering the potential multiplier effect of ECVET-type mobility, it is important for such an approach to be incorporated into structural mechanisms such as those supporting the ECVET Users’ group works and the ECVET Network reflection.

Indeed, that is one of the founding principles of representatives of the sectors that make up NETINVET. NETINVET promoters and stakeholders are able to make their experience available to European vocational training actors, at any level, policy or technical.

13- Erasmus + programme-guide 2017; p 263 and p 270; 20/10/2016; European Commission
14- Strasbourg, XXX COM(2016) 383/2; 2016/0180 (NLE) Proposal for a COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION on the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning and repealing the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning.

15- European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion Skills VET, Apprenticeships and Adult Learning, Call for proposals VP/2017/007)

OUR PROPOSAL:



To associate NETINVET to the working groups established with the various advisory bodies led by the Commission, such as the ECVET Users' group or associated think tanks, to make it possible to take account of the sectoral and branch-based approach, which currently remains under/unrepresented. In this context, NETINVET could play a role for sectoral assistance and provision of experience and practice to other interested sectoral organisations.

Following discussions with national and European representative bodies, to include the NETINVET sectors in the upcoming agenda. Such an approach should be based on bottom-up experimental reasoning that should be broadly disseminated at the sectoral level in all EU Member States.

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