PANORAMA

Recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning for VET teachers and trainers in the EU Member States

EN

Recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning for VET teachers and trainers in the EU Member States

The **European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training** (Cedefop) is the European Union's reference Centre for vocational education and training. We provide information on and analyses of vocational education and training systems, policies, research and practice.
Cedefop was established in 1975 by Council Regulation (EEC) No 337/75.

A great deal of additional information on the European Union is available on the Internet.
It can be accessed through the Europa server (http://europa.eu).

Cataloguing data can be found at the end of this publication.

Printed in Belgium

Foreword

Validation of non-formal and informal learning is a centrepiece of lifelong learning, becoming a priority for national and European vocational education and training (VET) policies in the last decade.

More and more European countries focus on learning outcomes, regardless of where, when and how these have been acquired, when devising qualifications. Some countries already have well-established systems for validation of non-formal and informal learning. Others have recently introduced appropriate measures, or are in the process of doing so.

Validation of non-formal and informal learning is also a methodological challenge. How to measure? How to validate? How to compare? Through exchanges of information on validation methodologies and on ways to improve their quality, further progress can be made.

These developments have a considerable impact on the professional development of VET teachers and trainers, and the improvement of the quality of education and training. As social and labour market needs change, the responsibilities, tasks and activities of teachers and trainers are expanding. There is a need to validate the experience they gain at work.

This report addresses the role of validation of non-formal and informal learning for enhanced professional recognition of VET teachers' and trainers' competences. It presents the outcomes of a study carried out by Cedefop's training of trainers network – TTnet.

The study's objectives were to:

- provide a comparative overview of the approaches and methodologies that countries use to validate non-formal learning for VET teachers and trainers;

- describe and analyse current practice;

- inform on the main challenges and issues at stake and the political will to tackle them.

From nine countries, 28 examples highlight developments and good practices by describing the aims and outcomes, the processes and methodologies of validation, as well as quality assurance mechanisms in place.

Christian F. Lettmayr
Deputy Director

Acknowledgements

Contributors

Preface

Recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning (or *validation des acquis de l'expérience,* VAE) has become an issue of considerable importance in European policy initiatives. Most recently its importance was re-emphasised in the Helsinki communiqué (European Commission, 2006) issued by the European Ministers for vocational education and training (VET). In their review of VET priorities in Member States, 'promoting the recognition of non-formal and informal learning to support career development and lifelong learning' was identified as needing 'more attention' as one of the means of 'improving the attractiveness and quality of vocational education and training'.

While the findings of this study may have some general application to the recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning of various workforces, there are reasons why VET teachers and trainers should receive particular attention.

Teachers and trainers make a direct and major contribution to the quality and effectiveness of the workforces they service. They are key to promoting change, adaptability, and the flexibility of those they train. Importantly, because of the functions they perform, they may be looked to as models demonstrating the practices of lifelong learning. Yet, as this report shows, the status of VET teachers and trainers is comparatively low. There are, in many systems, difficulties in recruiting and retaining VET teachers and trainers.

There are two informing principles to the recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning:

- much individual vocationally-relevant learning takes place outside of formal programmes of education and training;

- such learning can (and should) be recognised.

The first principle assumes that learning includes knowledge, understanding, skills, and competences. It also assumes that such learning may be gained in various ways: through vocational, personal, and social experience. The second principle raises the question of how such experience and the learning derived from it may be identified in relation to a particular job or vocation. These matters in turn pose questions as to the form (or forms) which such recognition should take, and the means to acknowledge the value of that learning.

The subject of this TTnet study addresses these issues in relation to the validation of non-formal and informal learning for VET teachers and trainers. There are, as indicated earlier, pressing reasons why VET teachers and trainers should attract specific attention. In their final report to the European Commission, Leney et al, (2005, p. 153) put the matter in the following way:

'One of the core problems of vocational educators' search for professional recognition is based on a paradox: while vocational teachers and trainers are essential to supporting skill development in the workforce, they are not high status for this role'.

That paradox is addressed, in part, in the first of the (revised) Common European principles for teacher competences and qualifications (European Commission, 2005a, p. 2) which refers to the need for 'a well-qualified profession'. As well as being highly qualified in their professional area, initial vocational education teachers should have 'a suitable pedagogical qualification'.

Vocational teachers, in most national/regional systems, belong to a regulated profession. No such widespread regulation exists for VET trainers, however. The question remains unanswered as to how to include VET trainers in the Common European principles of a well-qualified profession in a context of lifelong learning.

The status of VET teachers' and trainers' is bound up with the question of their professional qualification for the role. While competence may be developed in the performance of the job undertaken by VET teachers/trainers, confirmation of that competence in the form of certification promotes wider public and stakeholder recognition of that professionalism. That recognition, critically, includes the acknowledgment of fellow communities of VET teachers and trainers who hold professional teaching/training qualifications obtained through formal study and training.

In the context of wider stakeholder recognition, almost all EU Member States 'are opening up for recognition of non-formal learning and most of them consider the accreditation of prior learning as an important issue' (Leney et al, 2005, p. 151) – though the state of development of validating experiential learning varies from well-established methods to emerging practice. While application of the principles of validation of experiential learning varies, the case studies in this project demonstrate various forms of recognition, each contributing to enhancing the status of VET teachers and trainers. That contribution relates both to initial training of VET teachers and trainers as well as their continuing professional development. Given that the roles and responsibilities of VET teachers and trainers are changing and expanding, recognition and validation of their non-formal and informal learning acquires even greater significance ([1]).

([1]) The changing role of VET teachers is the subject of another study: *PROFF: Professionalisation of VET teachers for the future* (Cedefop, Cort and Härkönen, 2004).

Table of contents

Executive summary

This report describes the results of an extensive project carried out by Cedefop's TTnet network. National networks were invited to contribute examples of current practice, from their own countries/regions, illustrating the recognition of VET teachers' and trainers' non-formal and informal learning. Through analysis of these case studies, examples of good practice were identified both across and within individual cases, including specific approaches to and methodologies for validating non-formal and informal learning. From these findings, the project aimed to identify common transnational issues to make recommendations for policy-makers.

The project team comprised members representing Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, France, Italy, Lithuania, Slovakia, Finland and the UK. Each of the nine members submitted briefing papers contextualising the practices described. Those practices detailed the aims, outcomes, processes and procedures of recognition and validation, together with the quality assurance mechanisms for each case. In all, 33 case studies were received, of which 28 were selected for close analysis.

The case studies illustrated diverse outcomes for recognising non-formal and informal learning, including: appointment and promotion as a VET trainer, and accreditation via a national trainers register. Many outcomes, however, related to the professional development of VET teachers and trainers. In most cases, VET teachers' and trainers' knowledge, skills, and competence gained through non-formal and informal learning experiences were recognised as meeting in part, or even in full, the certification requirements for awarding a professional qualification. That award, in some instances, was equivalent to a full teaching qualification. In others it provided a continuing professional development (CPD) route towards a first or higher degree. These findings are of particular significance for the professionalisation of VET teachers and trainers whose acknowledged status, in general (as previously found), is comparatively low.

Analysis of the case studies identified various processes by which informal/non-formal learning can be made visible and, therefore, evaluated. Of particular note was the portfolio approach. Although the term portfolio assumes various forms in the practices described, there is sufficient likeness across and between these forms to develop the portfolio approach further. Elements borrowed from different practices may aid construction and application of portfolio templates to fit a range of specific purposes.

Analysis of the case studies revealed some characteristic curriculum models within which professional qualifications, both at initial and continuing levels for VET teachers and trainers, can accommodate and validate non-formal and informal learning. These models, extrapolated from various practices, provide potential for further exploitation and, as such, provide useful guides to designing awards to promote the professional development of VET teachers and trainers.

The validation process critically, depends on assessing the range and quality of the personal, social, and vocational learning which the VET teacher and trainer can apply appropriately in their professional roles. The procedures adopted to assess non-formal and informal learning, as this report later shows, may vary from traditional forms of assessment applied to testing learning acquired directly through formal means. In fact, the assessment of such learning opens up a wider range of possible methods.

Identification of informal or non-formal learning must acknowledge the particular nature of this learning for two reasons. First, such learning has been developed in a less explicit and directed fashion. Second, such learning is embedded, rather than defined, in personal, social, and work experience. Assessment, therefore, must be based on a clear statement of learning outcomes and competences being looked for. What is required is not a distinctive, or special, range of knowledge, skills, and competences obtainable only through informal/non-formal learning, but learning which can be shown to be equivalent to either or both of:

- knowledge, skills, and competences acquired through formal means of study and training;

- knowledge, skills, and competences required for the performance of a particular job role and responsibilities.

Assessment requires robust procedures and criteria, particularly where recognition of non-formal and informal learning leads to the same qualification, or one of equal status, as that achieved through formal study and training. Such credibility and acknowledgement of value must be beyond doubt to promote alternative ways to professional recognition. To that end, from the case study descriptions, a set of key quality assurance principles has been drawn up as a guide to practice.

The examination of practice in this report enables some general conclusions to be drawn. Expressed in more detail in the body of this report, in summary, recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning:

- can provide a valid, reliable, and alternative route towards professional recognition and certification of VET teachers and trainers;

- can be employed as a means of establishing a national/regional register of approved VET trainers for those working in and for enterprises;

- can provide an important incentive to VET teachers and trainers to engage in professional development. By acknowledging what they already know, understand, and can do it is also possible to reduce the time taken to achieve recognised certification;

- makes possible more flexible programmes of professional development which are easier for VET teachers and trainers to access and achieve certification both at initial and CPD levels;

- actively promotes the model of the professional reflective practitioner through a different paradigm of learning which encourages the VET teacher or trainer to set a personal

'programme' of individual (rather than collective and institutional) professional development;

- can employ a range of assessment tools and procedures, including work-based assessment;

- may serve to attract mature entrants, with significant work and social experience, to enter the VET profession;

- can be quality-assured in ways which confirm the integrity and value of certification to ensure wider stakeholder confidence among national and regional governments, their agencies, and social partners such as teacher unions and professional organisations.

At various stages and in TTnet network workshops and conferences this project and its results were discussed and validated. The key messages from the project are that policy-makers should:

(a) promote development of the professional roles of VET teachers and trainers through validation of non-formal and informal learning;

(b) promote wider stakeholder confidence in the principles and procedures leading to recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning;

(c) promote and invest in non-formal and informal learning as a valid alternative route for VET teachers and trainers to obtain recognised teaching and other professional qualifications;

(d) exert influence upon enterprises to encourage VET trainers to obtain recognised teacher qualifications and support the development of opportunities leading to such recognition;

(e) encourage and support experienced VET teachers/trainers to undertake programmes of continuing professional development (CPD) by providing further professional qualifications based upon the recognition of non-formal and informal learning;

(f) consider setting–up a national/regional register of approved VET trainers;

(g) invest in VET quality through mechanisms enabling teachers/trainers to access both initial and continuing professional awards based on the greater flexibility made possible by recognising and validating non-formal and informal learning;

(h) support universities and other awarding bodies to innovate such professional recognition programmes;

(i) sponsor working parties, drawn from the TTnet community, to innovate and develop further such provision.

Key messages for training providers are that they should:

(a) review their provision of awards available to VET teachers/trainers and incorporate informal/non-formal learning, including both initial teaching qualifications and progression routes to higher levels of recognition;

(b) identify additional and specific certification possibilities (for example IT, counselling), based on e recognition and validation of informal/non-formal learning, to meet VET teachers and trainers' expanding and changing roles;

(c) work with enterprises to offer initial teaching qualifications to take into account the circumstances in which such VET trainers operate, as well as their prior informal/non-formal learning;

(d) review curriculum models to design or re-design programmes to integrate informal/non-formal learning and which provide exemption from part or parts of the programme;

(e) consider the full range of processes available to identify such learning and its assessment;

(f) review and monitor quality assurance systems and processes for assessing non-formal and informal learning, following principles of best practice;

(g) work with all stakeholders, policy-makers in particular, to promote wider understanding and acknowledgement of principles and practices for validating informal/non-formal learning;

(h) seek funding for transnational workshops among practitioners to initiate and develop further opportunities to validate VET teachers' and trainers' non-formal and informal learning.

Recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning provides policy-makers and providers with opportunities to invest in and encourage VET teachers and trainers' professional development. This report provides many examples of practice showing the various ways such development may be pursued. More significantly, by establishing working principles for the recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning, it is hoped that this report will encourage all interested parties to exploit further the potential of such learning and generate additional practical applications.

1. Objectives and methodology

Within the broad terms of reference for this TTnet study, three specific objectives were set to:

- provide an overview of the approaches and methodologies implemented at national level on recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning for VET teachers and trainers;

- describe and analyse examples of good practice for developing recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning;

- identify common transnational issues and make recommendations for policy-makers.

To support these specific objectives, additional analyses of the case studies have been undertaken to:

- establish the range of outcomes for validating informal/non-formal learning;

- define the processes and procedures by which non-formal and informal learning is recognised;

- establish quality assurance criteria for validating informal/non-formal learning;

- identify common features across case studies;

- identify features of good practice as illustrated both across and within case studies.

The terms of reference and the report focus on the design, functioning, development, and application of methods to recognise and validate non-formal and informal learning. However their implementation resides always in a sociological context that varies from one national/regional system to another and involves decision-makers at various levels. Fuller implementation of the principles and practices to validate experiential learning require the widest possible stakeholder involvement, promotion, representation and positive acceptance.

For the first phase of the project, the nine countries contributing to the project (Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Slovakia and the UK) submitted a background paper summarising the national/regional context for VET provision; the requirements for recognition as a vocational teacher or trainer in its nation/region; and indicators of existing provision to recognise and validate non-formal and informal learning as part of the initial or continuing professional development (CPD) of VET teachers and trainers. For revised versions of these papers, see Annex 2.

Following the first phase, a grid to collect information on specific practices to validate experiential learning relating to VET teachers and trainers was designed, revised and sent to participating members for completion.

The grid was intended to elicit information in the following categories:

- context and aims for each case described the processes and procedures adopted in each case for the validation of informal/non-formal learning;

- quality control requirements for each case.

The nine country members contributed 28 case studies selected for detailed analysis (summarised in Annex 3):

		Number of case studies analysed
Belgium	(BE)	2
Denmark	(DK)	2
Finland	(FI)	3
France	(FR)	3
Ireland	(IE)	2
Italy	(IT)	9
Lithuania	(LT)	2
Slovakia	(SK)	2
United Kingdom	(UK)	3

Various workshops of project members were conducted throughout the study. They included presentations by group members to clarify issues and practices in national/regional systems. Interim and final results were presented and discussed with the whole TTnet network and various stakeholders at national and EU level.

The results of this TTnet study offer a substantial contribution to the professional needs of VET teachers and trainers by detailing practices and mechanisms by which validation of their non-formal and informal learning can enhance their professional development and recognition.

2. Concepts and terms of reference: a brief discussion

There has been, and continues to be, extensive debate on defining and describing concepts and terms of reference used in this report. Case studies submitted to the TTnet study confirm differences in the use of key terms. Before considering the results of the project it is essential to rehearse the range of meanings attached to these terms and establish their use in this report.

2.1. Non-formal and informal learning

Non-formal and informal learning are usually defined in contradistinction to formal learning. The definitions adopted by the European Commission (European Commission, 2001, p. 32-33) read as follows:

- formal learning is typically provided by education or training institutions, structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support) and leading to certification. Formal learning is intentional from the learner's perspective;

- non-formal learning is not provided by an education or training institution and typically it does not lead to certification. However, it is structured, in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support. Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view;

- informal learning results from daily life activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time and/or learning support). Typically, it does not lead to certification. Informal learning may be intentional but in most cases, it is non-intentional (or incidental/random).

The key distinction in these definitions is between formal and non-formal learning (both of which offer structured learning opportunities) and informal learning which is unstructured. The subsidiary distinction is that formal and non-formal learning is an intentional learning activity, whereas informal (in most cases) is non-intentional. There is also a contextual distinction. Formal learning is an activity specifically directed towards the achievement of certification (a recognised qualification of some kind), where both informal and non-formal learning are not so directed. In that contextual distinction resides particular challenges to acknowledge the value of experiential learning as a valid alternative to formally-acquired knowledge, skills, and competences. Value, in the context of certification, must be determined by equivalence.

In the end, there can be no absolute distinction between non-formal and informal learning. Even within non-formal learning, structured by learning objectives, other incidental but valuable learning may take place. In the context of the TTnet study reported here, what matters is not whether learning was derived from either non-formal or informal opportunities,

or whether it was intentional or incidental. What matters is the individual's ability to make that learning explicit, and apply it to the professional roles and responsibilities of a VET teacher or trainer. Application of that learning may refer both to current and prospective teaching and training roles and responsibilities.

The collective range of such learning (whether acquired informally or non-formally) as cited in the project's case studies may derive from work, social, or personal experience. Examples drawn from this full range (with variations shown in brackets) include:

- knowledge (practical knowledge, theoretical knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of the enterprise);

- skills (practical skills, written skills, communication skills, social skills);

- savoir-faire/'know-how';

- attitudes (professional attitudes, attitudes to self-development or 'personal growth');

- competences (job competences, personal and social competences, technical and teaching competences, planning and administration competence).

It must be noted that the distinction between non-formal and informal learning is, in any case, not in general use throughout all national systems. The term 'experiential learning', for example, has greater currency in some national systems (see 'accreditation of prior experiential learning' in Section 2.2. below), and is the conventional translation for *acquis de l'expérience* adopted from a collection of contributions on the French system and its applications (Deret, 2005). It is also a term of reference directly used in the European Commission report on the Testing conference on the common European principles (European Commission, 2005c, p. 6). 'Experiential learning' implies both learning from experience and through experience; that is, the extrapolation and application of learning. In a wider sense, the term 'prior learning' may also acknowledge learning acquired both informally/non-formally and formally.

For the purposes of this report, both 'non-formal and informal learning' and 'experiential learning' have been adopted as equivalent alternatives to denote the descriptions in Section 2.2.

2.2. Recognition and validation

The title assigned to the TTnet study reported here includes the terms 'recognition' and 'validation'. Both terms of reference can vary according to context and use and it is important to establish as clearly as possible the sense in which each is used in this report.

In the European Council Draft Conclusions (Council of the European Union, 2004a) 'identification' and 'validation' are defined as follows:

'Identification records and makes visible the individual's learning outcomes. This does not result in a formal certificate or diploma, but it may provide the basis for such recognition. Validation is based on the assessment of the individual's learning outcomes and may result in a certificate or diploma.'

'The term validation is used in a very specific sense … but is used differently in the Member States. For some, the term is broadly used to encompass the identification as well as the assessment and recognition of non-formal and informal learning.'

Variation in the use of the term validation is evident in contributions to this study and has been the focus of much discussion among and between project members.

Validation in the French system of validation of learning from experience (*validation des acquis de l'expérience*, VAE) is legally defined and regulated. In this system, experiential learning of knowledge, skills, and competences may lead to the award of a full certificate and can be applied to 'all diplomas, titles and certificates included in the national register of vocational certifications' (Cedefop, Colardyn and Bjørnavold, 2005, p. 38) ([2]).

In UK practice, validation refers to the process by which a proposed university award (certificate, diploma, degree) is subjected to scrutiny, both internally and by external academic experts, to ensure it meets all the standards and requirements of such an award. What is being scrutinised in this process is the whole curriculum design and the quality assurance procedures that go with it. Within that scrutiny there will be an examination of the proposed level and range of learning, including the methods to be adopted for the assessment of that learning.

Validation of experiential learning in the sense proposed in the Council's Draft Conclusions (Council of the European Union, 2004a) also includes assessment of learning. That assessment, in most of the cases examined in this report, is made against a schedule of requirements (which can be expressed variously as criteria, learning outcomes, competences, standards). Referenced assessment of this order may be known in some systems as accreditation (as in Belgium, Ireland, Slovakia, Finland and the UK) and has two common applications: APL (accreditation of prior learning) and APEL (accreditation of prior experiential learning).

([2])   For a more extensive and critical account of VAE see: Deret, 2005, p. 97-108.

Despite individual system differences, the convention of this report use validation as a generic term, in the context of experiential learning, to embody the following dimensions and processes:

<div align="center">

identification of learning

↓

assessment and/or testing of learning

↓

recognition (of various kinds)

</div>
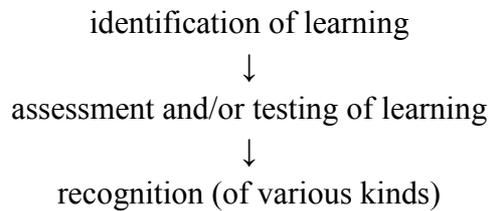
'Valorisation' has been proposed, within this project, as an alternative to validation in the context of non-formal and informal learning. Use of this additional term of reference, however, would add greater uncertainty, given that it is not a term in widespread use, in this context, among Member States. There is the further complication that valorisation is used to refer to dissemination and exploitation of project outcomes and their application. The definition of validation, in this report, has wider recognition of its more inclusive sense. It is also accommodates all of the examples of good practice collected in this project. Further, validation in the sense adopted here is that proposed, and more extensively argued for, by Cedefop, Colardyn and Bjørnavold (2005, p. 23-25), as 'a common term' which:

'is sufficiently general to cover the various activities in question (ranging from the first identification of learning outcomes, via assessment and/or testing processes, to recognition, certification or accreditation coming at the end of the process).'

Such an application of the term is also in line with the Cedefop's glossary of social terms which defines validation as:

'The process of assessing and recognising a wide range of knowledge, know-how, skills and competences, which people develop throughout their lives within different environments, for example through education, work and leisure activities' (Cedefop, Tissot, 2004).

Within the full process of validation, therefore, recognition refers to the outcome resulting from the assessment of experiential learning measured against external standards, requirements, or criteria. Many of the case studies in this report start with individual self-identification as the basis for a process of self-assessment which, in turn, is subjected to external assessment. Indeed, such an interconnected process is shown as a distinguishing characteristic of the validation of non-formal and informal learning.

2.3.   VET teachers and trainers

In their report for the European Commission's Maastricht deliberations Leney et al. (2005, p. 154-155) identified five broad clusters of vocational teachers and trainers:

(1) teachers or lecturers working in formal school or college settings and giving instruction in vocational courses;

(2) instructors and laboratory assistants, working in school or college settings in vocational labs, who teach with a high degree of autonomy or sometimes act as assistants to other vocational teachers;

(3) trainer, tutor, and others in enterprises who integrate training and education functions in to their jobs with varying degrees (from incidental to full-time teaching of trainees and apprentices). In dual systems, this function is often separated from human resource development (HRD) functions within companies, while in others this distinction is not strongly maintained;

(4) instructors and trainers working in labour market training institutions supported by governments and public authorities, often with a strong focus on social inclusion and basic occupational competences;

(5) instructors and trainers working in employers' organisations, such as chambers of commerce, sectoral training institutions or privately-run training companies and providers that focus on upgrading of technical competences, training in communication skills, etc.

Following these categories, a European Commission discussion document (European Commission, 2005b, p. 2) proposed that:

'For simplification, the persons falling under categories 1 and 2 will be considered as teachers; those falling under categories 3, 4 and 5 will be considered as trainers.'

In fact, as is acknowledged in the European Commission's own *Common European principles for teacher competences and qualifications* (European Commission, 2005a), the division between teacher and trainer is not always so clear:

'... a teacher is a person who is acknowledged as having the status of a teacher (or equivalent) according to the legislation and practice of a given country. The word "equivalent" is needed because in some countries there could be groups of teachers with different titles but holding the same status. In some countries a teacher could also be a trainer who works with school-aged pupils and young adults following vocational programmes in schools, colleges, companies or training organisations.'

The distinction between teacher and trainer, however, is not simply defined by their work settings. For example, trainers in some systems work also with both mature adults and 'school-aged pupils and young adults.' To acquire teacher status (and certainly a teacher of general or academic subjects), most European systems require a formal teaching qualification, in most cases achieved prior to entry to the profession. Vocational teachers, even in the same system, may not be required to hold pedagogical qualifications for appointment. The qualifications held by these teachers relate to those crafts and trades they will teach, together with appropriate vocational work experience.

The title trainer is even less clear than the definition of teacher quoted above. In many cases 'trainer' carries no formal acknowledgement in terms of national/regional legislation and no requirement to hold a teaching qualification. Difficulty in defining the term 'trainer' is problematic for three principal interrelated reasons:

- as noted by Leney et al. (2005, p. 155), for trainers in organisations and enterprises training may only be part of their job description. Many trainers fulfil a variety of roles as well as training;

- trainers operate in a wide diversity of locations across a wide range of public and private organisations and enterprises;

- vocational trainers' roles, especially, 'are extending … from instruction to learning facilitators and innovators and are increasingly involved in additional tasks, such as human resource development, guidance and coaching, and assessment of competences' (Cedefop, Tessaring and Wannan, 2004, p. 51).

VET teachers too must 'cope with new roles and functions':

'They have to act as counsellors, perform administrative and managerial tasks, plan, conduct research and cooperate with colleagues and external partners (other institutions, enterprises, public authorities, parents, etc.) … [and often] work in cross-disciplinary teams' (Cedefop, Cort and Härkönen, 2004, p. 39).

Any absolute and formal distinction between teacher and trainer can not be sustained in the varying European contexts of VET. What is clear is that VET teachers and trainers share in common in many systems is a relatively low status despite being 'essential to supporting skill development in the workforce' (Cedefop, Tessaring and Wannan, 2004, p. 51). The importance of VET teachers and trainers in achieving the Lisbon goals was underlined in the Maastricht communiqué (European Commission, 2004) calling for urgent action to improve the quality and status of this target group. As Cedefop, Tessaring and Wannan noted (2004, p. 51), by this date there had been 'few attempts at European level; to tackle the specific challenges of [trainers'] education and training.' A European Commission discussion document in the following year (October 2005b, p. 1) acknowledged that:

'In many countries the professions of VET teacher/trainer are not attractive, they are not sufficiently recognised, their initial education does not equip the individuals with the required skills and competences, and continuous professional development is lacking'.

Diverse action is needed to address these deficits. Among them, the application of practices to validate informal and non-formal learning may have an especial role to play in enhancing the recognition of VET teachers and trainers, and promoting their professional status.

3. Case studies: outlines, national contexts, specific objectives

3.1. Case study outlines

The nine country members of this project contributed 28 case studies selected for analysis.

Among the 28 case studies outlining the validation of non-formal and informal learning:

- 9 refer exclusively to VET teachers;
- 12 refer exclusively to VET trainers;
- 7 refer to both VET teachers and trainers.

These returns indicate a fair representation of diverse opportunities available to VET teachers and trainers to obtain recognition of their learning achieved informally or non-formally from personal, social, and employment contexts. They show also, as detailed in Section 5.1., the range of outcomes available through the processes of assessment of that learning.

Case studies range from established (even long-standing) and continuing practices to the experimental and innovative. Collectively they illustrate a variety of possible approaches to recognition and validation of informal and non-formal learning. Some cases were in early stages of development. Several submissions from Italy reported on short-term pilot projects or experiments mainly of one or two years' duration. Their particular value (as indicated in Section 3.2.) is their collective contribution to emerging policy and practice. In particular, it is clear that such experimentation ate enabled considerable progress to be made towards establishing the *bilan de competénces* as a means of assessing informal and non-formal learning (see Section 4.4.8. for a detailed account).

The case studies provide a rich resource of practices which clearly endorse the principles of validation of informal/non-formal learning, confirm the validity of the process, and provide a variety of tested procedures.

3.2. National/regional policy for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning

Apart from Lithuania and Slovakia, all of the countries and regions represented in this report have national legislation in place either to acknowledge the validation of non-formal and informal learning in vocational contexts or for teacher education allowing for such recognition. Slovakia has legislation prepared but not yet formally adopted. The concept of lifelong learning and lifelong guidance was approved by the government in April 2007. This

policy paper is opening the door to drafting legislation, to regulate recognition of informal and non-formal learning. The Act will be submitted to the government by the end of 2007.

Of the nine countries featured in this report, France has the longest tradition for the validation of informal/non-formal learning going back to the 1930s. Subsequent legislation, in the 1980s through to 2002, broadened the scope for such validation of prior occupational learning (*Validation des acquis professionels* – VAP) and of learning from experience (*Validation des acquis de l'expérience* – VAE).

In the UK statutory recognition of vocational competences gained through experiential learning and assessed through on-the-job performance, was introduced in 1986. Awards, at different levels of achievement, are known as National vocational qualifications (NVQs) or Scottish national vocational qualifications (SNVQs).

In most other countries represented in this report, legislation was passed from the late 1990s onwards to enable (and thus encourage) validation of non-formal and informal learning.

Italy is an interesting example of such a recent policy change. In 2000, the Italian government and regional authorities agreed to establish a framework to validate vocational competences. The decrees of 2001 set out the requirements to certify vocational competences, which allowed for validation of experiential learning. Some of the Italian case studies, therefore, can be read as anticipations of forthcoming reforms, and others as immediate implementations of newly-introduced national policy at regional level. Their especial relevance to this project centres upon the application, for a different purpose, of a *bilan de compétences*. In the Italian adaptation, such a portfolio provides a means of validating non-formal and informal learning (which the French original does not).

Taken together, the profiles of countries involved in this project represent therefore varying stages, from the well-established to emerging, policies to recognise experiential learning of various kinds and in various contexts.

3.3. Specific objectives

National and regional legislation and policy enable practical examples of the validation of experiential learning to be developed. While this report does not examine theoretical justifications for recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning, it is important to note the aims of the particular practices submitted to this project.

There is a high degree of convergence in the statement of aims defined in the case studies. In general terms these aims can be summarised by a combination of the statements made in the Belgian and French submissions. For an organisation offering validation of non-formal and informal learning, the aims are to:

- provide a more flexible/swifter learning route towards qualifications;

- avoid duplication of learning;

- have prior learning valued and accredited.

These aims combine to make an alternative route to recognition, especially in the context where awards (certificate/diploma) are the end result of the process. All of these aims are seen as important to motivate teachers/trainers as adult learners.

To these shared declarations of aims can be added other aims which are explicit in the documentation of particular case studies and implicit in other examples. The Finnish cases (FI1 and FI2) serve to illustrate two such aims as:

- taking into account individual learning needs;

- personalising the contents of a programme of study/learning.

The UK (UK3) submission is worthy of note in that it refers to the intention 'to professionalise and develop the workforce' of trainers in enterprises. This is very close to the aim of one of the Italian case studies (IT1) and is implicit in others.

The Irish (IE2) case study is also directed at trainers (in training organisations). The aim here, however, is 'to promote investment in training by employers' through an assurance of the quality of such trainers validated for entry to a National Register of Approved Trainers.

Only the Belgian case studies (BE1, BE2) refer specifically to reducing training costs in programmes for which applicants can claim exemption by virtue of assessment of their experiential learning.

Whatever the individual differences among case studies, their cumulative evidence clearly confirms that validation of experiential learning has particular aims which distinguish it from most examples of formal learning as an alternative route to formal learning.

Sections of this report address the following issues:

- identification of non-formal and informal learning is addressed in Section 4;

- recognition of non-formal and informal learning in Section 5;

- curriculum models relating to the validation of non-formal and informal learning in Section 6;

- assessment in Section 7.

There are particular reasons for adopting this order of presentation. The assessment of experiential learning, in many cases, takes place in the context of a formal curriculum (leading to an award). The design of that curriculum determines, or influences, the nature and extent of the assessment of non-formal and informal learning. Matters relating to assessment therefore must take into consideration the context of the curriculum and the ways in which non-formal and informal learning are tested and acknowledged. More generally, however, assessment is both the key to validation of experiential learning and the assurance of its quality and relevance. It is that assurance which enables validation of non-formal and informal learning to achieve wider social recognition and action.

4. Processes in the identification of non-formal and informal learning

Identification refers to the processes by which non-formal and informal learning is made visible. Identification makes explicit the knowledge, skills and competences already achieved by individuals and shows how such learning has been, or can be, applied to the professional role of the teacher or trainer.

4.1. Learning to know

In addition to knowledge consciously known to the individual is tacit knowledge and understanding (Polanyi, 1973). Such knowledge is unformulated and remains so until it is first articulated (in speech or writing) when it can be subjected to conscious analysis and appraisal. The full process for the identification of experiential learning would record learning already known to individuals, enabling them to recognise and express hitherto tacit knowledge and understanding. The means by which prior learning is made visible clearly influences what is identified so that its application can be appraised. The means adopted shape the form taken by the learning.

4.2. Learning from experience

The process of identifying personal informal/non-formal learning requires individuals to engage productively in the processes of learning from experience. The capacity to do so can not be assumed, since such identification is itself a learned activity. To pursue a claim for recognition of non-formal and informal learning, as examples which follow will exemplify, individuals must:

- select/identify and be able to describe particular and relevant experience(s);
- compare/contrast experience derived from a range of settings and circumstances;
- extrapolate and synthesise elements of different experience;
- analyse, reflect upon, and 'make sense' of experience;
- show, as a result, a greater understanding of underlying and informing principles and practices;
- apply/transfer findings to other contexts;
- identify, through reflection, the ways in which such learning has contributed, and can contribute to personal professional practice;
- identify further professional development needs and opportunities;

- be able to demonstrate the results of these processes structured in one or more of the forms required for recognition (as detailed in following paragraphs).

4.3. The role of the counsellor

In the process of identifying informal and non formal learning the role of the tutor, or counsellor, is critical in providing guidance and support to the individual. Such a role is not simply one of providing information, but of eliciting information from the candidate and inducing reflection, by the individual, upon and across the range of experience identified as relevant. To that end, the support offered must enable the individual to articulate what has been learnt from experience. Such support requires a high level of tutor/counsellor skills, together with commensurate time in which to work with the candidate. Because of the close working relationship then established between claimant and tutor/counsellor, good practice suggests that assessment should be conducted either by someone other than the supporting tutor, or that any assessment made by the supporting tutor should be verified by others constituting a panel or jury.

4.4. Forms of identification of non-formal and informal learning

Analysis of the case studies shows the following specific forms, or mechanisms, adopted for the identification of non-formal and informal learning. All of these forms are specified, within the curricula from which they are extracted, as prescribed (rather than optional) means of identifying individual learning achievements. More than one form may be required of the individual applying for recognition of personal non-formal and informal learning:

- (structured) interview;
- direct observation of teaching competences;
- self analysis/self assessment of professional knowledge and skills;
- mapping of personal learning needs;
- preparation of individual learning plan;
- submission of detailed training plan taught by the individual;
- preparation of report on personal experiential learning;
- submission of a portfolio/dossier.

Each of these forms of identification appears several times in the separate case studies. In most cases full identification incorporates two or more of these specific forms. The following paragraphs address in more detail each of these forms of identification illustrated by particular case studies.

4.4.1. The interview

If the interview is to be a reliable form of identification – rather than an appraisal of personality – then it requires careful management. The purpose of the interview requires definition: 'a structured interview probing the prerequisite knowledge of the candidate' (BE2).

The interview may be conducted as a 'job interview' (DK1) where, in this case, it is an application to be admitted to a higher degree programme.

Examples of good practice show that the interview itself aims to elicit confirmation of experiential learning against specific targets. These may be expressed as learning outcomes and competences; but the interview itself is presented usually as a means of exploring evidence of prior learning supplied in one or more other forms. In the BE2 case referred to above, the interview is specifically intended to probe other documented forms of identification. The UK3 case incorporates 'a professional discussion with an accredited assessor' to explore and confirm evidence of experiential learning supplied in portfolio form.

The value of the interview appears to be its supporting function which allows for further exploration, rather than as the prime means of eliciting prior learning. The Ireland case (IE2) provides a good example of the interview in such a supporting role.

4.4.2. Observation of teaching competences

Direct observation and assessment of teaching competences is part of the procedures for several case studies (e.g. BE1, BE2, FI1, IE2, LT1).

In other cases, confirmation of teaching competences is incorporated into alternative forms of identification (most notably the portfolio) through, for example, assessments of practical teaching undertaken by the employing institution. Assessment of practical teaching competences may be a requirement for confirmation of prior learning or optional.

The Ireland case study (IE2) is of particular interest in that identification requires the applicant to submit a 'video [which] should demonstrate the applicant's competences in presentation skills, communications, handling of feedback and use of visual aids.' In addition, assessors 'will observe the applicant conducting a training activity in the field'.

4.4.3. Self-analysis/self-assessment of professional knowledge and skills

All identification of experiential learning necessarily involves description and is the first stage towards self-analysis or self-assessment. To some degree the analysis or assessment following descriptions of experience is implicit in most case studies submitted to the project. Case studies show differences in the extent to which there is an explicit requirement to engage in self-analysis and assessment.

In one of the Italian case studies (IT2), the intention was that the counsellors involved in the project should identify 'the competences acquired in their professional experience' and the process of validation 'was based on the evaluation guided by an operator'. In IT4, however, evaluation (submitted in the form of a report) was judged against sets of specific competences. In the one case, the individual identified personal outcomes; in the second, target outcomes were set by the institution, in the form of prescribed competences, towards which self-analysis had to be directed. Analysis and assessment of experiential learning can identify:

- the individual's development to date – that is, the knowledge, skills and competences which are already secure;

- how the individual has progressed over a period of time;

- what more the individual needs to achieve to claim the full range of knowledge, skills, and competences;

- individual development needs to progress to higher levels of professional achievement;

- the individual's orientation (including selection of pathway for further application and study or in order to draw up personal learning plan).

Two of the Ireland case studies (IE1, IE2) illustrate that a sense of self-development is what is being looked for in the individual's own analysis and assessment of prior learning. As well as detailing what has been learned in terms of knowledge and skills, the individual must show 'an understanding of what has been learned and the possible applications of that understanding (that is, learning as an indicator of 'personal growth').

Such 'personal growth', in the professional context of teaching and training, is a product of the capacity 'to reflect critically upon learning derived from experience' (UK2).

Critical reflection upon experiential learning may be demonstrated in a submission for a particular recognition (a certificate), or may be demonstrated throughout the duration of a programme of study which takes its shape from the prior learning of the individual. The Finnish case study (FI3) provides such an example of 'a continuous reflective and dialogic process with the teacher tutor'.

4.4.4. Mapping of personal learning needs

In many cases, mapping personal learning needs is implicit in the analysis by individuals of their prior learning. In other cases, identification of personal learning needs may be either a separate process or integrated in the individual's self-analysis and assessment of learning (both formal and experiential). Personal learning needs, when addressed directly, however, may be mapped against present or future professional roles and responsibilities. Mapping may be conducted against programmes of training and development for VET teachers and trainers – such programmes carry their own statements of learning outcomes and competences to be achieved.

The Finnish case studies (FI1, FI2) demonstrate, in the most fully-expressed form, identification of learning needs in a programme of training leading to a recognised professional award. In both cases the vocational teacher 'must analyse his/her own professional skills and knowledge, to map out the learning needs and analyse his/her own orientation'. Identification directly contributes to making an individual study-plan based on individual needs and monitoring progress throughout the programme of study.

4.4.5. Preparation of individual learning plan

The Finnish case studies (FI1, FI2) cited in the previous paragraph illustrate most explicitly this form of identification. The programme of training demands that the individual 'draw up an individual study plan and a plan for demonstrating his/her competence.' These requirements are set out more fully as follows:

> Both individual study plans and plans for competence demonstration are based on continuous and active observation and reflection on the student's own learning and knowledge in relation to the objectives and evaluation criteria set for vocational teacher education.

The third Finnish case study (FI3), a competence-based vocational teacher training programme, elaborates further this model through the design of an individual learning plan:

> The basic 'document' that steers the course of studies is the individual learning plan that is drawn up at the beginning of studies and modified in a continuous reflective and dialogic process with the teacher-tutor. Students always take the initiative within this plan on how to use their prior learning. The initiative and plan are then negotiated and finalised with the teacher-tutor.

Many other case studies (and all involving the submission of portfolios) allow individuals to address in personal ways the stated requirements for recognition of various kinds. An Italian case study (IT7) allows training managers to identify a personal training project to extend and enhance their range of competences held at the start of the programme of training.

4.4.6. Submission of training plan

The Irish case study (IE2) details a unique form of identifying prior learning. To register as an approved trainer on a national training register, trainers must submit a detailed plan for one of their delivered training programmes. The plan must indicate the:

- scope of the training,
- timetable for delivery,
- target population,
- training objectives,

- proposed evaluation procedure;

- an outline of context.

As noted in Section 4.4.2, submission of this training plan must be accompanied by a video of the delivery of part of it. Video and training plan must be accompanied by a critique showing how 'the filmed segment relates to the submitted plan and relate the training plan to each of the competences outlined in the Trainer Profile'.

4.4.7. Report on personal experiential learning

A recent Italian innovation (IT4) to recognise prior learning is available to those who have a minimum of five years' experience in training activities. To apply for University of Rome training credits, applicants must write a report based on their work experience as trainers. That report, prepared to a specific format, identifies knowledge and competences gained through non-formal and informal learning. It addresses four sets of competences in these domains:

- general and basic knowledge,

- methodological knowledge

- relational competences (e.g. communication, interaction) acquired through working with clients;

- knowledge related to social and legal contexts.

Such a report appears to be progressing toward self-assessment and self-analysis models but in fact it concentrates on the first dimension of such models (Section 4.4.3.), namely the identification of knowledge and competences already established.

4.4.8. Portfolio

Submission of a portfolio of one kind or another features in 19 of the 28 case studies. In addition to the portfolio (as named in 12 of the case studies), there are two variants: the dossier, and the *bilan de compétences*.

The dossier (BE1, DK1, FR2) is a collection of documentation which may include:

- the individual's curriculum vitae;

- letter of application;

- the individual's qualifications already gained (degrees/diplomas/certificates);

- work-related documents (contracts, job specifications);

- letters of confirmation (from e.g. employers/clients).

Contents of the dossier may then be 'tested' at interview to determine the appropriateness of the individual's application for exemption (BE1), or suitability of work experience (DK1). The French case (FR2) determines the candidate's suitability to be recruited as a counsellor in continuing training (*Conseiller en Formation Continue*) within the national ministry of education.

The portfolio is a more extensive and inclusive collection of documentation, the particular form and contents of which vary according to its purpose. One of the French case studies (FR1) provides a description of contents which typifies several other case studies. Such a portfolio:

- promotes descriptions of relevant experience;

- identifies the working situations which relate to the range of competences required;

- provides evidence of the experience cited (e.g. letters of confirmation from employers);

- maps non-formal and informal learning outcomes against the requirements of target competences through a description of the context and content of work-experience.

Some portfolio requirements (IE1, UK1, UK2, UK3) demand, in addition to the identification of experiential learning derived from informal and non-formal contexts, a demonstration of the ability 'to reflect critically upon learning derived from experience'. Such reflection, in these four case studies, is seen as an indication of 'personal growth'.

A somewhat similar intention informs one of the Slovakian cases (SK1). In this case 'personal growth' is shaped through the submission, within the portfolio documentation, of a 'personal development plan' to show how the individual intends to meet a set of required standards.

Personal development is also seen as the key purpose for those portfolios structured as work-in-progress following admission to a programme of training. All three of the Finnish case studies refer to 'evaluatory material' maintained by the individual throughout the programme of studies. The prime function of this form of portfolio is to promote the individual student's own assessment and analysis of personal development. The fullest description of such a portfolio is carried in FI1.

The portfolio contains reflective analysis on the students' development as a teacher and their learning challenges. It contains:

- an individual study plan;

- an individual plan for demonstrating prior learning;

- documentation relating to the development of his/her teaching (plans/feedback/self-assessment);

- learning assignments;

- a plan for a development project and a report on the project;

- a summarising self-assessment report which can contain part of a learning diary;

- other documents which report on the student's knowledge and learning;

- written descriptions of further development challenges and future plans as a teacher.

Located in a competence-based programme of training for vocational teachers, all of these documents draw on both prior experiential learning and the full range of learning (formal/informal/non-formal) accumulated throughout the training programme.

A similar conception is in a Lithuanian case study (LT1) relating to a modular programme for initial vocational teacher training. The portfolio here records 'theoretical and practical achievements' throughout this programme of part-time training, studied concurrently with practical teaching, and drawing on the participants' experiential learning at all points.

The *bilan de compétences* is described in a working document submitted by the Italian project members as 'the Italian way' (adapted from the French model) of designing a portfolio – and is characteristic of the Italian case studies only. In the French original the *bilan de compétences* methodology provides a largely formative function which 'combines the assessment of non-formally acquired competences with individual goals of the person undergoing the procedure. These goals may range from developing personal career orientations to increasing employability.' (Leney et al., 2005, p. 151).

There is no easy English equivalent for *bilan de compétences*. *Bilan* derives from the accountancy term for a balance sheet. Its figurative use then connotes a 'weighing up' of experience. In the Italian version of the *bilan* such 'weighing up' of experiential learning is intended to achieve results of three kinds.

First, the *bilan* method identifies relevant occupational and personal competences, including those acquired through non-formal and informal learning. Competence outcomes covering all the Italian *bilan de compétences* case studies can be identified in five broad categories:

- knowledge (connected with branches of learning such as psychology, pedagogy);

- basic competences (in the content of the training being delivered);

- technical competences (related to professional role such as, designing a training project, planning a lesson);

- behavioural competences (e.g. working with others);

- attitudinal competences (e.g. leadership qualities, empathy, patience).

The second result of the *bilan* procedure relates to personal development needs, especially in connection with job opportunities or career development, based on assessment (conducted by the individual in association with others). The outcome of such assessment 'orientates' the individual towards that vocational and personal development.

The third outcome of the *bilan* procedure addresses these formative outcomes by identifying specific activities intended to promote the individual's personal development. The final assessment made through the *bilan de compétences* method then records both the initial sets of competences and those additional competences acquired throughout the period of training, including on-the-job training.

4.5.   The individual and shared learning

There was a concern, expressed in the conference discussion (Thessaloniki, December 2005) of an earlier draft of this report, that some forms of identification detailed here might be seen as solitary activities for the individual vocational teacher/trainer. At best, the teacher/trainer would have contact with one other individual, acting as tutor/mentor to support and develop the individual's ability to identify and apply personal non-formal and informal learning. Where this is the case, there are two possible deficiencies to address. One relates to the fact that individuals then cannot share their personal experiential learning with other practitioners and, therefore, learn from and through the experience of others – to the mutual enhancement of all. Allied to this is the possible feeling for the individual of isolation from a community of teachers/trainers, and thus from a sense of belonging to a profession and its defining values and characteristics. It was argued that teachers/trainers undergoing traditional forms of training for teaching, in groups or classes of people following more or less the same processes of preparation and study at the same time, develop such a sense of social cohesion and professional identity.

In some instances, where experiential learning is integrated in training programmes shared with other learners, this is clearly not the case. The potential risks, however, appear greatest in cases where the solitary teacher/trainer prepares a claim for recognition of informal/non-formal learning, mediated by a single tutor. One practice which counters such possible limitations gathers groups of claimants together specifically for the purposes of sharing experience and learning from each other, thus enabling all participants to proceed with greater assurance to preparing their own claim for recognition. Such sessions are supported also by individual tutorials.

5. Recognition of non-formal and informal learning

Recognition of non-formal and informal learning (as outlined in Section 2.2.) refers to the outcome resulting from the assessment of experiential learning measured against external standards, requirements, or criteria.

Before engaging with the specific forms of recognition in the case studies, it is important to note that wide social recognition of non-formal and informal learning requires, at least, acceptance, or acknowledgement, of its worth and relevance. There can be reluctance among some stakeholders to accept that value, as noted in the Slovakia submission, and confirmed by other participants. Such reluctance is a refusal to accept that:

- non-formal/informal learning can achieve the same results as those gained through programmes of formal study and training;

- awards and qualifications built on, or incorporating non-formal/informal learning can have the same value as those achieved through formal study and practice.

Both objections raise the question of the validity of non-formal/informal learning as an alternative to formal programmes of study and training. In the case of awards and qualifications gained, in whole or in part, through non-formal/informal learning the question is then one also of comparability or equivalence.

Comparability or equivalence must be addressed in two ways. First, by ensuring that the same spread and depth of knowledge, skills, and competences applying to formally-achieved awards are present in those achieved, in whole or in part, through demonstrations of experiential learning. This is a question of curriculum content. The second aspect of trust must be addressed through the requirements and procedures adopted for the assessment of non-formal and informal learning. They must be shown to be founded on sound principles and operated by impartial procedures, both of which must be transparent.

5.1. Forms of recognition

Identification of prior experiential learning, through the process of assessment, leads to recognition of various kinds. The forms of recognition in the case studies are:

- institutional or enterprise recognition through selection and appointment as trainer;

- entry to a programme of study/training leading to a teaching qualification or higher degree;

- exemption from part, or parts, of a programme of study/learning leading to a teaching qualification;

- achievement of a professional award entirely through recognition of non-formal and informal learning;

- integration of experiential learning within units of study leading to a professional qualification;

- the personalisation of a training programme to meet individual needs;

- entry to a national/regional Register of approved trainers.

Two French case studies (FR2, FR3) are concerned with selection for appointment in a training role. The first (FR2) details recruitment procedures for appointment as a vocational training counsellor in ministry of education training centres. Based on the contents of the applicant's dossier, there follows an interview by four or five persons. The second case (FR3) concerns the appointment of in-house trainers in the large enterprise of SNCF (*Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer*). Many such trainers are recruited and promoted, from the workforce itself. Selection proceeds through interview, conducted by one or two persons, in which candidates 'defend' their application. There is also an associated psychometric test.

Recognition of experiential learning in an Irish case (IE1) concerns entry to a training programme for VET teachers/trainers. Each applicant submits a portfolio directed at specified learning outcomes. Assessment of that submission determines acceptance onto the programme and, if selected, the level of entry. It is an example of a very particular form of exemption, allowing entry to those who lack the formal qualifications normally required. The Danish case (DK1) allows experiential learning as exemption from the normal pre-requisites for entry to a masters programme in education.

Recognition of prior experiential learning as exemption from part, or parts of a programme of study/training features in 11 case studies (BE1, BE2, FI1, FI2, FR1, IT3, IT4, IT6, IT7, SK1, SK2, UK1). The extent of exemption varies from case to case. In FI2, exemption may be awarded up to a maximum of 10 % of the programme requirements (in 6 ECTS (^{3}) points out of the 60 comprising the award). In a Slovakian case (SK1), exemption may be awarded up to 80 % of the total programme. Within these lower and upper limits for partial exemption, other case studies show 25 % (IT3, IT5), 50 % (SK2, UK1), and up to 57 % (FI1).

Achievement of a professional award entirely through recognition of informal and non-formal experience features in two case studies (FR1, UK3). The French example is unique in that recognition as a trainer in apprenticeship centres can be achieved either in part or in full through the submission of a portfolio. The UK case study, however, identifies an award which can be gained only through the identification of experiential learning and on-the-job assessments of competences. There are no formal units of study or training to be achieved, though advice and support is available to the individual seeking the award.

(^{3}) European credit transfer and accumulation system.

Integration of experiential learning in units of study leading to a professional qualification is illustrated in all three Finnish case studies and in one of the Danish examples (DK2) and one of the UK examples (UK2). The Danish *paedagokikum* model of training for serving VET teachers integrates formal 'block' periods of study with normal teaching duties. These blocks enable teachers to incorporate on-the-job experience with their studies, allowing reflection and application of formal learning with experiential learning. In a sense this principle of in-service training where teachers/trainers undertake formal study and training towards a teaching qualification while teaching – either through part-time attendance or through flexible (including distance) modes of study. The difference in the Danish model is the scheduling of such studies in a block pattern. The Finnish examples (FI1, FI2, FI3) are constructed in a fully-integrated way through taking the identification of prior experiential learning as the starting point for the construction of an individualised programme of study (previously outlined in Sections 4.4.3., 4.4.4., 4.4.5., 4.4.8.). The UK2 case study makes critical reflection upon informal and non-formal experience the basis for the construction of a compulsory assignment whose completion counts towards the final award of a continuing professional development (CPD) foundation degree in education and training.

Entry to a national/regional register of approved trainers is exemplified in two case studies (IT1 and IE2). Recognition by the Italian Association of Trainers (AIF) confirms the individual's 'professional quality in training activities' through the submission of documentation directed to the standards which apply to a designated training role. The adjudication by the certification commission of AIF may be supplemented by a call for additional documentation, or interview, or both. Recognition as an approved trainer on the Enterprise Ireland register (IE2) again calls for the submission of materials (see Section 4.4.6.) together with assessment by interview and by observation of practical training sessions.

6.   Curriculum models

Of the 28 project case studies included for detailed analysis, 22 relate to the recognition of experiential learning which results in or leads to certification. As such they are of especial interest as working examples of the professional recognition of vocational teachers and trainers through the accreditation of their prior learning

Some of the individual curriculum characteristics of these cases have been described previously in Section 4 (Processes in the identification of non-formal and informal learning). The design of these case study curricula, however, merit further reflection upon some of the more general features which they illustrate. All of the cases are embedded in programmes of study and training from which different curriculum models may be extrapolated. Model, as used in this context, does not refer to a type of curriculum (e.g. product, content, process, spiral models) and all of the design features needed to construct a curriculum. Model is here employed in the narrow sense of a design which accommodates the principle ('of accrediting prior experiential learning and achievement') in ways which various examples illustrate in common. As such, these different extrapolations offer possible models through which curricula may be designed, or amended, to fit the purpose of the recognition of non-formal and informal learning.

The models offered are nominal, not absolute, since some case studies do not adhere strictly and exclusively to the ideal of one model. Within an overall construction there may well be one or more features derived from other designs for the construction of programmes of study/training. Nonetheless, each case study includes a predominant classifying feature. Additionally, from the distinctive features of each ideal model it is clearly possible to generate hybrid models whose construction will then best serve particular needs, objectives, and circumstances.

Case studies recognising the value of non-formal and informal learning for the purposes of certification operate on the broad principle either of exemption or integration. Within each principle there are different ways of organising a curriculum. Thus the first two curriculum models exemplify and emphasise different forms of exemption; the other three all illustrate different ways to integrate experiential learning:

- exemption,
- exclusive,
- integration,
- concurrent,
- contract.

6.1.   The exemption model

On the basis of a claim to recognise non-formal and informal learning, the candidate is exempted from a part, or parts of a programme of study/learning leading to an award. Confirmation of the claim may also be expressed as a number of credit points to count towards the total number of credit points required to achieve the target award or certificate. Exceptionally, as is the case for the French system of *Validation des acquis de l'expérience* (VAE), the whole of an award (certificate, diploma, title) may be gained through the submission of a claim based on experiential learning.

The exemption model is the most prominent among case studies submitted to this project and features in case studies submitted by all of the contributing countries to this project, with the exception of those from Lithuania. The amount of exemption varies from case to case (from 10 % to 80 %: see Section 5.1.).

The exemption model works by mapping achievement against pre-defined requirements (of learning outcomes and/or competences) specified within a qualification which can also be achieved through formal study. The learning outcomes to be demonstrated by the candidate applying for recognition of informal learning and non-formal learning are identical to those required by the formal route to the same qualification. In most cases the claimant is supported by a tutor or counsellor in the preparation of a claim.

While the exemption model is clearly effective for the purpose described, it is important to recognise its limitations. It will not, for example, necessarily enable or require the person to identify further learning/practice important to the realisation of personal development needs, and exemption relies heavily upon the production of evidence (or 'proofs') of achievement rather than reflection upon experience.

6.2.   The exclusive model

The whole of an award/qualification is attained through the submission of a portfolio of work, or a work-based assessment, or a combination of both. The award has been specifically constructed for achievement through identification and demonstration of competences acquired through experience. Thus the candidate is exempted from the need to pursue a formal course of study/training. In the example which follows, the award is not available through formal means of study.

This model of certification is illustrated in the UK3 case study, which is founded on the principles of the national vocational qualifications (NVQ) framework of 1986. In this case, the qualification aimed for by the candidate is a portfolio matched against target requirements, together with evidence to support the claim. Competences are assessed on-the-job by a qualified assessor. The portfolio may be re-submitted if it fails to demonstrate all the required competences. Tutorial support is offered to the candidate in compiling the portfolio.

The advantage of the NVQ system for the recognition of experiential learning and competence is that awards may be structured in ways which relate directly to the workplace and to different roles and occupations in a workplace. Further, a good deal of the assessment of competence is conducted at the workplace. A disadvantage of such awards is that, because they exist only in their own right, there is no benchmark of formal qualifications against which they can be measured. As a result, NVQ awards have taken several years to achieve wider stakeholder recognition and social acceptance.

6.3.   The integration model

An assignment based on reflection on experiential learning is compulsory for a certificated programme of study and carries with it an assigned number of credit points.

This model is exemplified in the UK2 case study. The form of the writing required is determined in the syllabus of the programme and must be met be all teachers/trainers on the programme. What is required, as specified in the programme documentation, is: 'reflective writing … and the conceptual analysis it contains that is at the centre of [a] claim for credit, because this evidences the learning you have achieved: mere description of an activity or process is not enough.' While the writing itself is individual, the task must meet specified criteria on which it will be assessed. The overall intention of the analysis and reflection undertaken is to contribute to personal professional development.

The advantage of this (as all integration models) is that the teacher/trainer must reflect on professional development through a review of prior learning and its application. In this particular form, it may also be argued that a centrally-set task of this kind means that all of the teachers/trainers on the programme, now in the role of learners, undertake the same task. There can be, therefore, common assessment criteria and a greater certainty that like is being compared with like. The disadvantage of this type of integration model is that the freedom to negotiate a personal task can be limited by the nature of the task set.

6.4.   The concurrent model

Programmes leading to professional certificates are organised so that experiential learning is supported by formal units of study. These units may be undertaken through sessions of study based on part-time regular attendance at the host institution, or at a distance (using ICT among other resources), while continuing work as a teacher/trainer. Alternatively, block periods of study may be organised when the teacher/trainer is released from work or is free to attend at times between teaching terms within the academic year.

To varying degrees the concurrent model applies to all cases for the certification of serving ('in-service') teachers and trainers. The units of study draw upon experiential learning gained while teaching/training and is illustrated in the Lithuanian (LT1) case study organised around

11 modules of study as an initial certificate for VET teachers. The mentor training programmes for serving VET teachers, also from Lithuania (LT2), is similarly organised. The Danish *paedagogikum* model (DK2) inserts formal periods of study into the normal pattern of the VET teacher's teaching duties.

The distinct advantage of the concurrent model of training and study is that it draws directly upon the individual's personal experience (learning-by-doing) and enables the immediate application of new learning to the context of the individual's own teaching/training. The gap between theory and practice can thus be reduced through the reciprocal influence of each upon the other. The disadvantage of this model is that it is still largely determined by and structured around the formal components of study.

6.5. The contract model

On the basis of self-assessment of learning needs, the individual constructs a personal project/assignment (as agreed with a supervising tutor) to promote professional development. That development will be expressed in terms of learning outcomes/competences.

The Italian case study (IT8), one of several based on the *bilan de compétences* methodology, assesses experiential learning against defined competences. Following that, 'a personal project of training' is identified which the individual then follows. The final assessment includes both competences demonstrated prior to the training activities and those gained as a result of the personal training project. All three Finnish case studies exemplify contract learning through the identification of learning needs and the proposal for a development project or individual study plan.

The decided advantage of the contract model for learning is that the identification of needs and proposed learning in support of those needs is both particular and individual. Analysis of, and reflection on, achieved learning and acquired competences is integrated within such a model in a more inclusive way than in the other curriculum models described. The processes of contract design, with the support of a tutor or counsellor, necessarily engages the individual in a thorough review of personal professional development. Further, such a learning contract enables actual targets for self-development to be set and monitored. A possible disadvantage of contract learning is that, precisely because it leads to different outcomes, assessment must somehow accommodate such diversity while maintaining comparability of results.

The foregoing sections are illustrative of each of these curriculum models, as are the case studies cited for each model. Their outlining here may provide curriculum designers with a range of options and (perhaps more importantly) a range of possible combinations of models to design fit-for-purpose curricula for the certification of VET teachers/trainers. The Finnish case studies provide such an illustration. While allowing for some exemption, the integration of study actually takes the form of contract learning. Curriculum design and, more particularly, flexibility of design may well be one important means of addressing an EU priority: that of bringing together learners and learning opportunities (European Commission, 2001) where the learners in question are themselves VET teachers and trainers.

7.　Assessment

The full process of validation requires that non-formal and informal learning is assessed to confirm the scope, levels, and application of knowledge, skills, and competences. Assessment is the process of 'measuring' learner achievement. As such, it uses various measuring methods or tools.

In the case studies assessment is used in four different functions to:

- confirm the learner's achievement of learning against specified learning outcomes and competences;

- identify what further learning needs to be developed and confirmed to meet specified learning outcomes and competences;

- measure what new personal learning, not defined in advance by statements of required learning, has in fact been achieved;

- confirm achievement of learning identified by the individual for his/her own personal professional development.

Assessment is subject to both general and specific principles attaching to particular practices and forms of assessment. The draft Conclusions on non-formal and informal learning (Council of the European Union, 2004a) ([4]) contain various guiding principles directed at issues of assessment. Trustworthy approaches and systems for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning, for example, raise the validity of assessments made. Where the validity of assessment can be questioned, confidence and trust in the process, procedures and criteria for the validation of experiential learning are put in doubt.

Such processes, procedures, and criteria must be 'fair, transparent and underpinned by quality assurance mechanisms.' Further, 'the process of assessment should be impartial and mechanisms should be put in place to avoid any conflict of interest.' Finally: 'the professional competence of those who carry out assessment should also be assured.'

Illustrations of good practice demonstrating of these guiding principles will be given later in this section. Examples of good practice will also be cited to exemplify assessment procedures and principles attaching to specific forms of assessment.

([4])　See also Annex 1.

7.1. Forms of assessment

There are three nominal forms of assessment: diagnostic, formative and summative. While each can be employed as an exclusive function, it is often the case that two (sometimes all three) may be present in any one assessment.

7.1.1. Diagnostic assessment

Diagnostic assessment enables a judgement to be made as to whether particular learning (skills or knowledge or competence) is present or absent. Diagnostic assessment is not simply 'fault-finding'. It is an important first assessment which can provide useful information to the individual as a means of directing development. Diagnostic assessment can highlight strengths as well as identify weaknesses.

To some extent, any application to recognise non-formal and informal learning has engaged the applicant, and possibly others, in diagnostic assessment. Diagnostic assessment is conducted wherever the individual is called upon to undertake self-analysis or self-assessment (see entries under Section 4.4.3. for examples). Such self-assessment may be aided through the provision of a tutor/counsellor/guide to enable first identifications of prior learning to be made visible, and then to make an assessment of learning to determine personal development needs.

Assessments made of the individual's practical teaching competence (for example BE1, BE2, FI1, IE2, LT1) may also serve a diagnostic purpose. They could identify the range of skills and knowledge present, or indicate what was missing from the event.

7.1.2. Formative assessment

Formative assessment is intended primarily to monitor the progress of an individual's learning and provide feedback. Feedback is essential to enhance learning and promote performance. Engagement with such feedback can provide an important basis for discussion between learner and tutor. Such practice is explicit in many of the case studies and is specifically detailed in two of the Finnish ones (FI1 and FI2).

It is possible for assessment to serve the dual function of diagnosis and formation. Diagnostic assessment might indicate, for example, that something was 'missing' and indicate how that missing skill or knowledge might be developed.

7.1.3. Summative assessment

Summative assessment provides an overall judgement at the end of a given process (course, assignment, for example). Summative assessment determines whether or not the learner has demonstrated the requisite knowledge, skills, and competences. It is the judgement made, for

example, in all cases involving the submission of a portfolio. Summative assessment may also be formative in those instances where the applicant's first portfolio submission was not accepted. Feedback may indicate what remains to be addressed to succeed later.

7.2. Questions of fairness

Several questions challenge the overall credibility of assessments. The first, questions of fairness, are usually challenges to the validity and reliability of an assessment. Good practice answers the questions: does the form of assessment adopted measure what it intends? And, is any form of assessment consistent from one case to another?

What is being assessed, in this project, is the content of those forms of identification of learning produced by the learner – the form in which learning and competences achieved are made visible (see Section 4). Assessment of each of these forms (interview, portfolio, practical demonstration, etc.) in good practice is made valid through clearly-stated criteria and requirements for assessment. The case studies show that assessment may include more than one form for demonstrating learning (e.g. portfolio and interview, portfolio and practical teaching) to ensure a valid coverage of target criteria or outcomes.

The reliability of an assessment is addressed in case study examples of good practice by ensuring some moderation of assessment results. In several case studies (e.g. FR1, IE1, IT3, UK2) results are adjudicated respectively by a jury, panel, committee or teaching team.

Questioning the reliability of assessment also questions the reliability of the assessors. Submissions to this project make it very clear that the assessors must meet specified requirements, which may be variously described as:

- expertise in the subject matter and programmes or curricula (BE1);
- experienced trainers of VET teachers/trainers and tutor for VAE *(validation des acquis de l'expérience)* (FR1);
- a range of (specified) knowledge, experience, and competences (IT3, IT3, IT5);
- certified trainer and member of team teaching the programme and approved by Certification Board (SK1).

In brief, good practice seeks to ensure assessors are competent to undertake the assessments required. An Irish case study (IE1) assures reliability by specifying that one of the assessors (in a team of three) will be external to the institution. A Slovak case study (SK2) similarly requires the appointment of independent assessors.

Concerning competence of assessors, the Lithuanian case study (LT2) merits special attention. It is the only contribution which deals with the role of the mentor in supporting VET student teachers. An essential part of that role is assessment of the student teacher's competence. Though the mentor training programme, for experienced VET teachers, involves formal

modules of study, the programme priorities are shaped according to the skills and abilities of the mentors.

In most of the cases in which prior learning is assessed through, for example, portfolio submission or the design and completion of a project, a personal tutor is appointed to assist and guide the learner. In such instances the tutor is involved in making a formative assessment. To ensure that the summative assessment is impartial, however, good practice suggests that persons in addition to the personal tutor should be involved. The introduction of a panel or external representative assures greater impartiality of assessment.

7.3. Quality assurance of assessment

Assessment is the core activity in validating non-formal and informal learning. The guiding principles of assessment are: fairness, transparency, and reliability. From a review of good practices in the case studies, it is possible to construct a set of practical applications to guide assessment.

Those practices can be summarised as:

- ensuring the form of assessment adopted is fit-for-purpose (that is, appropriate to the achieved learning being assessed);

- ensuring that clear and explicit criteria and requirements are set to assess each item and for all items overall (as in a portfolio);

- ensuring that clear outcomes are set for what can be achieved through the demonstration of informal/non-formal learning (for example, what can be exempted from formal study);

- ensuring all requirements, assessment criteria, and procedures are known in advance by all candidates;

- making available to each learner appropriate support/guidance to prepare an application for recognition of work based on or incorporating experiential learning;

- providing diagnostic (where appropriate) and formative assessment to enable the learner to target learning needs and further personal, professional development;

- ensuring appropriate specifications are set to appoint approved assessors;

- ensuring that summative assessment results are moderated/confirmed by a panel of appointed assessors;

- involving external representation on the panel or jury confirming results.

8. Conclusions

Of especial note here are those cases which, through the recognition of experiential learning, demonstrate that routes or pathways to pedagogical certification equivalent to a full initial teaching qualification can be offered. Such means, applying both to VET teachers and trainers, provide alternatives to conventional pre-service programmes of study and training. While case studies clearly identify ways in which such validation currently operates, there is also scope for further innovation and application. Both are needed for the initial and continuing education of VET teachers and trainers, given that the roles of both are changing and expanding.

Construction, in particular, of routes (or pathways) to certification made possible by the validation of experiential learning has particular advantages in terms of access to such certification by VET teachers/trainers. First, such access values what the learner has already achieved – thus serving as an important incentive to VET teachers/trainers to engage in further professional development. Second, such opportunities can reduce the time needed to achieve particular forms of recognition. Third, acknowledgement of prior learning can make possible construction of more flexible programme designs, enabling VET teachers/trainers to achieve professional recognition in ways more easily accommodated with their work commitments. This is especially the case where defined competences can be demonstrated and assessed in the workplace. This possibility deserves further exploration.

By valuing what the learner has already achieved, confirmed through assessment of appropriate kinds, the VET teachers/trainer is more likely to be encouraged to pursue professional certification, not only at initial levels of qualification but also at continuing professional development (CPD) levels. For teachers in countries with statutory requirements for initial qualification, the emphasis on CPD routes to further professional certification should promote developments in which experiential learning forms important component parts. There are case studies within this report, for example, of progression routes which enable non-graduate teachers/trainers to achieve graduate status and, by virtue of exemption for achieved learning, to engage in higher degree study.

There are also examples in this study of routes to additional ('stand-alone') CPD qualifications for teachers/trainers based on recognition of experiential learning and its integration with formal study and practice. The cases provided here of the accreditation of information technology skills, and of preparation of VET teachers for the role of mentor to student teachers, may serve as models to develop additional programmes to enhance teacher/trainer competence.

In the case of trainers working in and for enterprises there are, similarly, examples of national/regional recognition designed to promote the credibility of individuals accepted onto a register of approved trainers.

The findings of this project confirm validation of non-formal and informal learning as an alternative means of achieving professional recognition for VET teachers/trainers. To achieve wider social and stakeholder recognition of this alternative route towards recognition, validation of non-formal and informal learning must not be seen as promoting inferior or second-rate certification. The validity of qualifications achieved, in whole or in part through confirmation of prior experiential learning, must engender confidence and trust.

Wider stakeholder recognition, including that of social partners will be achieved largely through the credibility of assessment procedures attached to the confirmation of results. Assessment must be rigorous. The case studies provide established procedures to assure validity and reliability of assessment in the validation process. Collectively, they form a template against which current and prospective validation of non-formal and informal learning can be reviewed and consolidated on sound quality assurance principles and practices (see especially Sections 7.2. and 7.3.).

Nonetheless, project members and the wider TTnet community (as represented by views expressed during and following the annual TTnet conference, Thessaloniki 2005) recognise that further implementation and extension of the practices described here depends on the widest possible stakeholder involvement, negotiation, agreement, and promotion. Stakeholders, according to the various systems, include national and regional governments, ministries and their agencies, employers, chambers of commerce and industry, and training providers. Social partners, professional organisations and associations, teacher trade unions, and certificate-awarding bodies also need to be fully engaged with the processes of decision-making and representation. The diversity of stakeholder and social partner identities and their roles and responsibilities, in national and regional systems, is too extensive to be recorded here. Summaries for seven countries in this project (Belgium, Denmark, France, Ireland, Italy, Finland and the UK) are given in Cedefop, Colardyn and Bjørnavold (2005, p. 30-64), together with entries for another six Member States. Finally, to have real progress based on the practices presented in this report and their potential for greater application, there must be real and improved access to opportunity for VET teachers and trainers. For the role of the VET teacher and trainer 'is a dual one, combining that of stakeholder and professional' (European Training Foundation, 2005, p. 11). Teachers and trainers must themselves be included in the social dialogue that leads to innovation and change.

Alternative routes to professional qualifications for VET teachers and trainers made possible through the validation of non-formal and informal learning may serve to help recruit and retain mature entrants to vocational teaching and training. Validation of non-formal and informal learning, in this context, may lead to swifter professional qualification. Such innovation will be of particular interest to those countries/regions which, because of an ageing population among teachers, may expect teacher shortages within the medium term (OECD, 2005).

In promoting the VET teacher/trainer as a reflective practitioner various curriculum models which can be used to design specific forms of professional recognition (certificates, diplomas, degrees) are outlined. There is also potential to combine elements of these models to create new designs to deliver fit-for-purpose outcomes. While the exemption model for recognising non-formal and informal learning is well established, curriculum designers could use the results of this study to create opportunities for closer integration of achieved learning with the acquisition or development of new learning and competences.

Even where validation does not result in certification, the process of identification of prior experiential learning can achieve distinct professional development results. The engagement of the VET teacher/trainer in such identification promotes active analysis of the individual's professional level and their range of achieved learning and performance. That, in turn, promotes the model of the professional reflective practitioner. In so doing, the VET teacher/trainer becomes an active participant in the culture of lifelong learning, thereby serving as a model to those learners they teach or train.

There are, in any case, persuasive reasons why the validation of experiential learning should be promoted in its own right. Case studies in this project confirm the interplay of actual experience against set requirements and criteria produces a paradigm of learning which distinguishes itself from formal study. In this paradigm learning is personal, involving individuals in appraising their own learning achievements. In the best cases reviewed in this project, individual learners, to varying degrees, set their own 'programme' for professional development – rather than being directed by a formal pre-set syllabus.

Finally, there is a need, strongly expressed and fully endorsed by the TTnet network, to share further the collective experience and expertise of practitioners engaged in processes and procedures to validate non-formal and informal learning. Further opportunities, in the form of workshops among practitioners, are required to enable interested parties either to design validated applications for the recognition of experiential learning, or promote further developments and extensions of current provision. One particular outcome envisaged is to produce handbooks to guide the practice of those seeking to initiate or develop provisions by which VET teachers and trainers could be recognised for learning achieved informally and non-formally, especially within professional awards (certificates, diplomas, degrees).

9.   Key messages

9.1.   Key messages for policy-makers

The key messages in this report arise not only from the project findings themselves, but from extensive discussion on wider issues of experiential learning, its recognition and its validation, that were prompted by this TTnet project and its dissemination. The key messages which follow are fully endorsed by the TTnet community of practitioners and experts. Policy-makers should:

(a)   develop a culture of lifelong learning among VET teachers and trainers by ensuring they have access to and support for developing their professional roles through the validation of non-formal and informal learning;

(b)   develop, with other stakeholders, a higher level of trust and confidence in the recognition of experiential learning through wider understanding of the principles and procedures by which such recognition results;

(c)   promote, within such dissemination, a higher value of qualifications achieved via the alternative route of experiential achievement so that they can be seen as comparable qualifications or valid in their own right;

(d)   ensure VET teachers are valued professionally for the roles they undertake and require them (where it is not currently the case) to achieve recognised teaching and other professional qualifications;

(e)   exert influence on enterprises to encourage trainers to achieve recognised teacher qualifications. There is a principle of equity here not always acknowledged, namely that vocational learners should be entitled to parity of teaching/training competence from VET teachers and VET trainers as they move among and between schools, colleges, training organisations, and enterprise employers;

(f)   encourage, in pursuit of that aim, the development of pathways, through the recognition of informal/non-formal learning, leading to equivalent full teaching certification:

(i)   for VET teachers not currently included within systematic pre-service requirements via formal programmes of training;

(ii)   for VET trainers, including trainers in and for enterprises;

(g)   encourage and support the access of experienced trainers to initial programmes of teacher-training through exemption from part(s) of study by virtue of achieved prior experiential learning;

(h)   encourage, support, and create opportunities for serving teachers/trainers to undertake continuing professional development through the provision of experientially-based qualifications which:

(i) reflect the changing and expanding roles and responsibilities of VET teachers/trainers;

(ii) lead to higher academic qualifications (diplomas, degrees, higher degrees);

(i) consider setting up a national/regional register of approved trainers, especially in the case of trainers working within or for enterprises and organisations;

(j) invest in enhancing the quality of VET teachers/trainers through:

(i) developing mechanisms to provide VET teachers/trainers with entitlements to pursue both initial and continuing professional recognition via experiential learning;

(ii) supporting providers of teacher/trainer education and training (universities and other awarding bodies) in the design and implementation of innovative programmes of initial and continuing VET teacher/trainer awards based on the greater flexibility made possible by the recognition of informal/non-formal learning;

(k) sponsor working parties, drawn from the TTnet community of experienced practitioners, to assist in designing and developing methods and opportunities to validate non-formal and informal learning – especially in the case of those countries/regions which do not yet have such practices in place.

9.2. Key messages for providers

By providers is meant universities and other awarding bodies providing professional recognition, of various kinds (including certification) to VET teachers and trainers, both at initial stages of qualification and at continuing professional development levels. Providers should:

(a) review their provision of forms of recognition available to VET teachers/trainers by incorporating experiential learning;

(b) ensure that such provision includes the initial recognition of VET teachers/trainers and offers progression routes to higher levels of recognition;

(c) identify, from the expanding roles and responsibilities of VET teachers/trainers, shared development needs which could be met through the design of additional and specific certification (for example, in IT, counselling) based on experiential learning;

(d) work with enterprises to offer versions of programmes leading to initial teaching qualifications which take into account the particular contexts within which VET trainers operate, and to accommodate learning gained in such contexts;

(e) review their curriculum models which recognise informal/non-formal learning to design or re-design programmes which do not exempt qualifying candidates from certain requirements, and incorporate experiential learning in a more integrated way as the basis for further professional development;

(f) consider the full range of forms of identification which may be used, individually or in combination, to create the most appropriate assessments;

(g) review and monitor quality assurance systems and processes for assessing experiential learning in conformity with best practice;

(h) work with all stakeholders, and policy-makers especially, to promote wider understanding of the principles and practices for validating informal/non-formal learning, and so promote confidence and trust in professional recognitions gained in this way;

(i) seek funding for transnational workshops among practitioners to initiate or develop further opportunities to validate VET teachers' and trainers' non-formal and informal learning.

List of abbreviations

AIF	Italian Association of Trainers
APEL	Accreditation of prior experiential learning
APL	Accreditation of Prior Learning
CPD	Continuing professional development
CVET	Continuing vocational education and training
DEL	Danish Institute for Educational Training of Vocational Teachers
ECTS	European credit transfer and accumulation system
GPB	*Getuigschrift Pedagogische Bekwaamheid* Certificate of Pedagogical (Teaching) Competence
GPB (CAP) programmes	*Certificat d'Aptitude Pédagogique* Certificate of Pedagogical Qualification
GRETA	Ministry of Education continuing training centres
HRD	Human resource development
Isfol	*Istituto per lo sviluppo della formazione professionale dei lavoratori* Institute for the development of workers' vocational training
IVET	Initial vocational education and training
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
SNCF	*Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer* French National Railway Company
SNVQ	Scottish National Vocational Qualification
TTnet	Training of trainers network
VAE	*Validation des acquis de l'expérience* Validation of learning from experience
VAP	*Validation des acquis professionels* Validation of prior occupational learning
VET	Vocational education and training

Bibliography

Cedefop; Colardyn, D.; Bjørnavold, J. *The learning continuity: European inventory on validating non-formal and informal learning.* Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2005 (Cedefop Panorama series; 117). Available from Internet: http://www2.trainingvillage.gr/etv/publication/download/panorama/5164_en.pdf
[cited 24.9.2007].

Cedefop; Cort, P.; Härkönen, A. *PROFF – Professionalisation of VET teachers for the future.* Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2004. (Cedefop Panorama series; 104) Available from Internet: http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/ vetelib/eu/pub/cedefop/pan/2004_5156_en.pdf [cited 6.12.2006].

Cedefop; Tessaring, M.; Wannan, J. Cedefop synthesis of the Maastricht study: *Vocational education and training – key to the future: Lisbon-Copenhagen-Maastricht: mobilising for 2010.* Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2004. Available from Internet: http://www2.trainingvillage.gr/etv/publication/download/panorama/ 4041_en.pdf [cited 6.12.2006].

Cedefop; Tissot, P. *Terminology of vocational training policy: a multilingual glossary for an enlarged Europe.* Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2004. (Cedefop Reference series; 41). Available from Internet: http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/eu/pub/cedefop/ref/2004_0001_ml.pdf
[cited 6.12.2006].

Council of the European Union. *Draft conclusions of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on Common European Principles for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning.* Brussels: Council of the European Union, 2004a. Available from Internet: http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/04/st09/st09600.en04.pdf [cited 6.12.2006].

Council of the European Union. *Draft Council conclusions on quality assurance in vocational education and training.* Brussels: Council of the European Union, 2004b. Available from Internet: http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/eu/leg/eurodoc/2004/0108_en.pdf
[cited 6.12.2006].

Council of the European Union. *Education & training 2010: the success of the Lisbon strategy hinges on urgent reforms: joint interim report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the detailed work programme on the follow-up of the objectives of education and training systems in Europe.* Brussels: Council of the European Union, 2004c. Available from Internet: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/jir_council_final.pdf [cited 5.6.2007].

Council of the European Union - General Secretariat. *Presidency conclusions: Lisbon European Council of 23 and 24 March 2000.* Brussels: Council of the European Union, 2000. Available from Internet:
http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/eu/pub/council/2000_0001_en.pdf [cited: 4.5.2007].

Deret, É. Validation of experiential learning in the training professions. In *Pratiques innovantes en formation et enjeux pour la professionnalisation des acteurs = Innovative practices in the field of training and related professional development issues.* Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2005, p. 97-108. Available from Internet: http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/eu/pub/cedefop/pan/2005_5158.pdf [cited 6.12.2006].

European Commission Directorate General for Education and Culture. *Common European principles for teacher competences and qualifications.* Brussels: European Commission, 2005a. Available from Internet: http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/doc/ principles_en.pdf [cited 4.5.2007].

European Commission. *Declaration of the European Ministers of vocational education and training, and the European Commission convened in Copenhagen on 29 and 30 November 2002, on enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training = The Copenhagen declaration.* Brussels: European Commission, 2002. Available from Internet: http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/eu/pub/commission/dgeac/2003_0026_en.pdf [cited 6.12.2006].

European Commission. *Education and training 2010: the success of the Lisbon strategy hinges on urgent reforms: draft joint interim report on the implementation of the detailed work programme on the follow-up of the objectives of education and training systems in Europe.* Brussels: European Commission, 2003. Available from Internet: http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/eu/leg/com/com_2003_0685_en.pdf [cited 6.12.2006].

European Commission. *Maastricht communiqué on the future priorities of enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training (VET): review of the Copenhagen declaration of 30 November 2002.* Brussels: European Commission, 2004. Available from Internet: http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/eu/pub/commission/dgeac/2004_0018_en.pdf [cited 6.12.2006].

European Commission. *Making a European area of lifelong learning a reality: communication from the Commission.* Brussels: European Commission, 2001. Available from Internet: http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/eu/leg/com/com_2001_0678_en.pdf [cited 6.12.2006].

European Commission. *Teachers and trainers in vocational education and training: discussion document.* Brussels: European Commission, 2005b.

European Commission. *Testing conference on the common European principles for teacher competences and qualifications: 20 and 21 June 2005*. Brussels: European Commission, 2005c. Available from Internet: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/confreport.pdf [cited 6.12.2006].

European Commission, *The Helsinki communiqué on enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training*. Brussels: European Commission, 2006. Available from Internet: http://www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/vet2006/pdf/Helsinki_Communique_en.pdf [cited 4.5.2007]

European Training Foundation. *ETF yearbook 2005: teachers and trainers: professionals and stakeholders in the reform of vocational education and training*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2005.

Leney, T. et al. *Achieving the Lisbon goal: the contribution of VET: final report to the European Commission*. London: QCA, 2005. Available from Internet: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/studies/maastricht_en.pdf [cited 24.9.2007].

OECD. *Teachers matter: attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers*. Paris: OECD, 2005.

Polanyi, M. *Personal knowledge*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973.

Annex 1   A review of policies and principles

What follows is a highly-selective reference to European policy declarations which trace the main outline of those issues which both contextualise and specifically relate to the findings of this report.

From the Lisbon European Council strategic declaration of March 2000 onwards (Council of the European Union, 2000), vocational education and training (VET) had been perceived as the prime means of making the EU the 'most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion'. Improving the education and training of teachers and trainers was seen as a priority towards achieving the Lisbon goals.

The Copenhagen declaration (European Commission, 2002) identified strategies for improving the performance, quality and attractiveness of vocational education and training. Those processes were further identified and emphasised in the Joint interim report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the Lisbon strategy (Council of the European Union, 2004c). Developments proposed in that report were endorsed by the European Ministers responsible for vocational education and training, the European social partners and the European Commission at their joint meeting in December 2004. The resulting Maastricht communiqué (European Commission, 2004) again stressed the priorities for VET as the encouragement of reform, supporting the development of lifelong learning, and developing trust between key players and between countries. Of particular interest in the context of this present report is one of the priorities set in that communiqué, which should be directed at:

'the examination of the specific learning needs and changing role of vocational teachers and trainers and of the possibilities of making their profession more attractive including continuous updating of their professional skills. Teachers and trainers should be supported in their essential roles as innovators and facilitators in the learning environment.' (ibid, p. 4).

The recent Helsinki communiqué of the European Ministers for vocational education and training (European Commission, 2006), in reviewing its priorities and again calling for 'More attention [to] be paid … to the image, status and attractiveness of VET', identified a range of issues. Among those, specific attention was drawn to promoting the recognition of non-formal and informal learning to support career development and lifelong learning.

In relation to the priorities directed at meeting the need to improve 'the attractiveness and quality of VET', the same communiqué called for:

- highly qualified teachers and trainers who undertake continuous professional development;
- active partnership between different decision makers and stakeholders, in particular social partners and sectoral organisations at national, regional and local levels.

Addressing all of these issues requires the establishment of a participative learning culture – for all learners, including VET teachers and trainers. Indeed, such a learning culture can be seen as a prerequisite to the reforms, innovations, and developments which need to be put in place as an essential contribution to the Lisbon process. The European Commission Communication on Making a European area of lifelong learning a reality (European Commission, 2001) had previously acknowledged the need to create such a lifelong learning culture and had declared that:

'For strategies to foster a learning-for-all culture, direct measures are needed to motivate (potential) learners and raise overall participation levels by making learning more desirable in terms of active citizenship, personal fulfilment and/or employability.' (ibid, p. 13).

In terms of such 'valuing of learning', the following reflections from the same Communication have specific application to this present report:

'Creating a culture of learning requires that the question of how to value learning in formal, non-formal and informal settings, must be addressed in a coherent way. Enabling citizens to combine and build on learning from school, universities, training bodies, work, leisure time and family activities presupposes that all forms of learning can be identified, assessed and recognised. A comprehensive new approach to valuing learning is needed to build bridges between different learning contexts and learning forms, and to facilitate access to individual pathways of learning.' (ibid, p. 15).

All of these matters connect with the present study and provide reference points for the findings and conclusions presented. To these general reflections on the learning culture must then be added the specific dimension provided by the European Council Draft Conclusions on non-formal and informal learning (Council of the European Union, 2004a).

Among the Conclusions reached by Council and Representatives of the Governments of the Member States was a statement of Common European principles 'to encourage and guide the development of high-quality, trustworthy approaches and systems for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning.'

Those principles were gathered under the following four headings:

- individual entitlements: the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning should, in principle, be a voluntary matter for the individual. There should be equal access and equal and fair treatment of all individuals. The privacy and rights of the individual are to be respected;

- obligations of stakeholders: stakeholders should establish, in accordance with their rights, responsibilities and competences, systems and approaches for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning. These should include appropriate quality assurance mechanisms. Stakeholders should provide guidance, counselling and information about these systems and approaches to individuals;

- confidence and trust: the process, procedures and criteria for identifying and validating non-formal and informal learning must be fair, transparent and underpinned by quality assurance mechanisms;

- credibility and legitimacy: systems and approaches for identifying and validating non-formal and informal learning should respect the legitimate interests and ensure the balanced participation of the relevant stakeholders. The process of assessment should be impartial and mechanisms should be put in place to avoid any conflict of interest. The professional competence of those who carry out assessment should also be assured.

To the principles advanced and endorsed within this brief review of European policy, it is hoped that this TTnet study report on recognising and validating non-formal and informal learning will advance the practical application of such learning for VET teachers and trainers. In so doing the practices identified in this report, and further innovations derived from them, will create more opportunities for VET teachers and trainers to engage in their own professional development and be active role models for others within the culture of lifelong learning.

Annex 2 Briefing papers – description of case studies

For case study codes please refer to Annex 3.

Belgium

The two cases described for Belgium relate to a quite recent political initiative. An action plan for lifelong learning was proposed in 2000 for Flanders and a decree on the vocational certificates (*titre de compétence*) in 2004, both of which recognise the value of prior learning and experience. A new decree on the flexibilisation of higher education (2004) provides for AP(E)L.

Recruitment for teachers and trainers is made in accordance with national regulation which requires particular degrees or qualifications. Teacher training is delivered at universities and at high schools. An alternative third way to become a recognised VET teacher/trainer is to follow a *Getuigschrift Pedagogische Bekwaamheid* – GPB ['Certificate of pedagogical (teaching) competence'] course when at work to achieve a Certificate of teaching competence. Some organisations which employ VET trainers, such as the Flemish Public Employment Service (*Vlaamse Dienst voor Beroepsopleiding en Arbeidsbemiddeling* – VDAB) and the Flemish agency for entrepreneurial training (*Syntra Flanders*) adapt the training programme for the training of their own trainers.

For Belgium, to safeguard the future performance system of initial and continuing vocational training (IVET and CVET), it will be essential to revalorise the VET teacher's function in order to attract technicians and craftsmen from industry with work experience. It is therefore essential that these technicians and professionals can have access to a flexible and equally relevant training programme to prepare them for their new roles. The growing number of participants to the GPB (*Certificat d'Aptitude Pédagogique* – CAP [Certificate of Pedagogical Qualification]) programmes for adults proves that it answers the needs of the would-be trainers.

Shortfalls in specific training programmes and recognition of the adult trainer or further education trainer are being addressed currently through some major changes. The GPB programme, for example, is being reshaped into competence-based modules and new modules for the adult trainer are under construction.

The case studies supplied to this TTnet study are integrated in the above context. Of the two Flemish cases, one is directed towards obtaining a university diploma as an initial teaching award for VET teachers (BE2). The second, operating through the GPB programme, results in a certificate which has the same value as a university-based training (BE1).

The major influences upon the Belgian system for the recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning for teachers and trainers derive from both France and the UK. From France there is the influence of *validation des acquis de l'expérience* (VAE), and from the UK there is the influence of methods for the accreditation of experiential learning (APEL). We can observe, therefore, a 'French approach' (including terminology) in Wallonia and the Brussels communities, especially in the Decree Vocational Certificate for the Walloon region and the French community. However, a 'UK approach' can be observed in Flanders under the principle of *Erkenning van Verworven Competenties* – Recognition and validation of acquired competences.

In the first Belgian case study (BE1), the whole process of training (which may take up to four years) is under the responsibility of the GPB programme and its stakeholders (25 institutes of higher education delivering the GPB modular training in Flanders). The system of recognition can allow exemption from some of the modules for those adults already teaching in VET centres without a GPB certificate. This exemption can be obtained after an examination by the Management Board of a 'dossier' with work experience documents and information about prior studies (diploma, certificates or credits). If it is agreed that a first assessment may be done, then an interview takes place to allow the candidate to participate in the final examination session.

In the second case (BE2), the process is under the responsibility of an associate directorate of university and higher education institutions or an independent body under the authority of one or more association bureaux. Competence inquiry of candidates is conducted through a combination of methods (including interviews, direct observations, portfolio construction). The decision confirms exemptions expressed in study points towards achieving the diploma.

Denmark

In the Danish IVET system, teachers have to be skilled workers, must be graduates from an educational institution at tertiary level, and have at least two years (commercial training) or five years (technical training) of relevant work experience. Teachers with no formal teaching qualifications have to complete the post-graduate educational training programme (*Paedagogikum*) in the Danish Institute for Educational Training of Vocational Teachers (DEL).

Following recent policy for Adult Education within the fields of education reform (2001) and the Government action plan for 'better education' introduced in 2002, individuals who lack formal qualifications now have a right to have their 'real' competences validated.

The first Danish case (DK1) is about accrediting non-formal and informal learning leading to a tertiary level (master of education programme), and the second case (DK2) relates to obtaining the certificate in *Paedagogikum*.

The first case is under the responsibility of the Danish University of Education and concerns teachers as well as HRD and management personnel, school principals, and trainers who apply to be admitted to a master programme without meeting the formal entry requirements. Those requirements are, normally: a bachelor degree, a postgraduate diploma, a master degree or the completion of a medium-term higher education qualification (e.g. nurse, physiotherapist). Knowledge and experience in education, competence development and educational planning/administration are assessed within the context of a specific master programme (in terms of level and content). Proofs of experience are the basis of an interview during which the coordinator assesses the qualifications of the applicant.

The second case is an example of an integrated learning model. Teachers employed at vocational colleges are appointed on the basis of their formal and non-formal qualifications. The recruitment requirements are: skilled worker (VET) with at least two years (commercial training) or five years (technical training) of work experience; or graduates at tertiary level with at least two years of work experience. A special agreement allows teachers with formal/non-formal teaching skills to be exempted from the programme which are normally compulsory for all teachers employed at the vocational colleges. Teachers without formal teaching skills have to go through the postgraduate educational training programme within the first years of their employment. These teachers work and function as teachers while they follow the training programme, and the interaction between theory and practice plays an important role in the *Paedagogikum* and the way it is planned. The procedure is developed under the responsibility of DEL and vocational colleges. The teacher has to plan and carry out a teaching session and afterwards be able to reflect on his/her own performance. An assessment (pass/fail) is awarded based on a holistic assessment of the teaching, notes, and discussion with the teacher.

Finland

Becoming a teacher in Finland requires fulfilling the qualification requirements set in the legislation (Decree on the degrees in education and teacher training (576/1995)). For teachers of common core subjects (such as mathematics and languages) it specifies that it is necessary to have a master degree (300 ECTS) comprising studies in one or two subjects that are taught in different schools, together with teachers' pedagogical studies (60 ECTS). The pedagogical studies focus on didactics as well as teaching practice.

Vocational studies teachers should have an appropriate master degree or an appropriate polytechnic degree or, if such do not exist, the highest possible qualification in their own occupational field. In addition they must complete pedagogical studies with a scope of 60 ECTS as laid down in the Decree on vocational teacher training 357/2003. These studies comprise: (1) basic studies in pedagogy; (2) studies in vocational education; (3) teaching practice; (4) other studies.

In Finland recruitment is always by 'open recruitment', i.e. job-specific. For example, for teachers in upper secondary vocational education and training the employer is in most cases the education provider. The municipality advertises the individual posts and the selection is normally done together by the municipal authorities and the school principal.

There is no separate procedure for accrediting or recognising non-formal and informal learning. A Development Plan for Education and Research (1999-2004) had insisted on the importance of increasing the recognition of prior knowledge acquired in working life; and since 2000 there is a 'National plan for employment' stimulating methods and initiatives for assessing and recognising knowledge and know-how acquired earlier in working life, through civic and other activities. Such recognition and validation, however, concern mainly levels of education other than higher education. All teacher education is given at higher education level: general teacher education at universities, and vocational teacher education at the teacher education colleges in the polytechnics.

Universities and polytechnics enjoy a fairly high degree of autonomy in Finland. Each university pedagogical faculty and vocational teacher education college draws up its own education programmes within the limits of legislation and agreements made with the Ministry of Education.

For the three cases described in this study, recognising prior learning is embedded in the whole programme of the vocational teachers' pedagogical studies. The Helia case study (FI3) concerns teacher-trainees already working as teachers at vocational institutes. One aim of the programme is to provide different forms of teacher education (vocational upper secondary, adult education) for teachers who are not only good teachers and professionals in their field, but who will also develop and network their own organisations and region. Another aim is to obtain tools for coping with the changing teacher profession (projects, networking, special needs students, internationalisation, curricula development). The teacher tutor assesses the individual study plan and the demonstrations of competence. The student should demonstrate mature pedagogical thinking and development potential through a portfolio, reflective essays, project reports. Nothing is exempted in this programme: the students admitted to the programme must fulfil a certain set of criteria (vocational degree, professional experience, teaching experience). The programme is more flexible and can be taken in a relatively short time because of its competence-based construction. Both the individual study plan and the plan for demonstration of competence are based on a continuous and active observation and reflection on the student's own learning and knowledge in relation to the objectives and evaluation criteria set for vocational teacher education.

Jyväskylä Polytechnic, a vocational teacher education college, provides two case studies. The first (FI1) concerns persons who are already working as teachers but who lack the pedagogical studies required for a formal teacher qualification. The teacher education model requires the person to have a minimum of five years of teaching experience and that he/she has completed the basic pedagogical studies in education, adult education or vocational education (see the second Jyväskylä case study, FI2). These studies correspond to about 23

ECTS. The training enables the students to recognise and define their own expertise and their particular learning needs (including lifelong learning objectives). During the process, students have to follow four steps. They must:

- understand and reflect (in relation to themselves) the objectives, contents and principles of vocational teacher education as well as build a framework to demonstrate their knowledge/prior learning;

- analyse their own professional skills and knowledge, in order to map out personal learning needs and analyse their own orientation;

- design an individual study plan for demonstrating their competence;

- collect 'evaluatory' material for their 'competence-based' APL portfolio.

Students do not need to participate in some study modules if they can demonstrate that they have mastered the contents and practical application of that module. Equally, they do not need to produce separate learning assignments within modules; instead, they can demonstrate the knowledge and practical skills in their development project, in their demonstration lessons or in their portfolio.

France

In France there are two categories of teachers:

- teachers in mainstream education. Their entrance examination is based on academic knowledge in a particular discipline (such as history, mathematics, French, etc.);

- teachers in vocational and technical education. Their entrance examination is based on their professional knowledge and on previous professional experience in the relevant trade (accountancy, hotel management, cabinet-making, etc.). The minimum level of qualification required before taking the vocational and technical education entrance examination is Baccalaureate +3, although Baccalaureate +5 is preferred. A university doctorate is the equivalent of Baccalaureate +8, and is sufficient for teaching at a university. There is, however, no national regulation governing the status of trainers or other training professionals. Trainer is the generic term for anyone involved in continuing training. Those involved in continuing training in France are far from constituting a uniform body. Most trainers are private contractors, working full- or part-time. They are selected on the basis of their qualifications and/or skills and professional experience in a particular sector.

Apprenticeship, an employment contract intended for young people from 16 to 25 years of age, is a special case. This form of education is under stringent State control, and is provided by Apprentice Training Centres and enterprises. Teachers in apprentice training centres are often ex-tradesmen and women, experts in the field they are teaching (baking, engineering), and they may be employed on a contract (full- or part-time) in the Apprentice Training

Centre, or they may be self-employed. They must have a certificate of 'non–opposition to teaching', issued by a national apprenticeship inspector.

The principles of recognising and validating non-formal and informal learning have been in place for some 20 years, although they became effective only at the end of the 1990s. Since 2002, those principles have become incorporated into the system of *Validation des acquis de l'expérience* (VAE). The recognition of working and personal experience can be used to exempt the individual from requirements before entering a training course, and to be exempted from some of the assessments of units within a diploma. VAE specifies the particular evaluations used, as a final examination, to obtain some or all of the units of a diploma. It is a global approach to the outcomes of experience which are considered as efficient as formal training to obtain the learning outcomes.

The three cases proposed in this study include two cases of recognition via a professional qualification without certification (one for continuing training counsellors, FR2; the other for internal training in a national enterprise, FR3) and one case of VAE, the aim of which is to achieve the title of apprenticeship trainer (FR1).

Case study FR2 concerns the recognition of continuing counsellors in GRETA (Ministry of Education continuing training centres). Their recruitment is open to teachers or civil servants already working for the Ministry and for other professionals holding a higher diploma (Bac +3). To be recruited, applicants must create a dossier explaining their competences, through work analysis, together with the knowledge of and capacity to translate the link between work and training. The dossier is examined by a jury, composed of four or five professionals in continuing training in the academy and completed with an interview. Each academy has its own practice but uses the same criteria to select their employee. Selection allows entry to a one-year training with some theory delivered in the training centre, some in enterprise and some through tasks and activities within GRETA itself. At the end of this curriculum, there is an assessment confirming qualification and recruitment.

The second case (FR3) concerns the recognition of workers' experience in the national railway SNCF as appropriate to be appointed as trainers in the enterprise training centres. Experience in communication and in the training field are noted and recognised by the human resources team. No proof is required except for guarantees of occupational experience (employers' certificates, wages, contracts). Applicants have to demonstrate their capabilities through explanations presented in a dossier and given at interview.

In both cases the standards and content of competences required are defined by an internal process. The process is lighter than in the case of VAE. Both cases may result in job appointments and carry qualifications specific to either GRETA or SNCF which will not be recognised elsewhere.

The third case (FR1) relates to the processes of VAE and results in the applicant being awarded a title which is a recognised qualification within the field of apprenticeship centres. The procedure is available also to workers in those centres who have not the theoretical

background as workers, having a high academic level but not the pedagogical competences. The VAE procedure requires the help of a tutor to build a dossier and produce the proofs of outcomes from experience which demonstrate competences in understanding of the system, ability to work in partnership, and demonstration of pedagogical skills. Assessment combines portfolio description, proofs of work experience claimed, and observation of practice in action. The jury can decide to award the whole title or some of the units towards that title.

Ireland

To teach in any school within secondary level education, teachers must meet the criteria laid down by the Department of Education and Science and be eligible for registration by the Teaching Council. The minimum requirement for a teacher at this level is a first degree in the subject being taught together with a Higher Diploma in Education. All teachers employed in state-funded institutions must be named on the Teachers Register, which is maintained by the Teaching Council under the Teaching Council Act 2001 (registration does not apply to teachers employed in private schools and colleges).

There are no set criteria for the employment of trainers in Ireland other than the criteria set by a prospective employer. In public sector providers, some broad criteria are five years' industrial experience together with relevant technical qualifications and/or relevant instructional qualifications. Instructional qualifications may range from a foundation course to a diploma course in training and education from a recognised university (or similar qualification of equivalent merit). For trainers in the private sector there are no rules or regulations currently governing their qualification requirements. Each company/organisation employing a person as a trainer will specify their particular requirements as part of the job specification.

Principles for the recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning were defined in 1999 by the National Qualification Authority. The Awards Councils – the Further Education and Training Awards Council and the Higher Training and Education Awards Council – have specific policies to encourage providers to exempt learners from programme requirements, to obtain credits towards an award or to qualify for a full award within the Irish framework of qualifications.

The two cases proposed in this study are integrated within national policy and context. The first case (IE1) concerns tutors and senior lecturers who have not completed the Postgraduate Certificate in Third Level Learning and Teaching and who do not have one of the named 'equivalent' qualifications. By completing the required portfolio they can gain exemption from a course or courses normally set as entry requirements to the Diploma in Third Level Learning and Teaching. Through this APL procedure, 13 learning outcomes (theory of learning, design educational, educational technology …) may be evaluated by three assessors (one external and two internal).

This award is mainly for Dublin Institute of Technology staff but is becoming popular externally. The award is approved by the National Qualifications Agency of Ireland.

The second case (IE2) concerns trainers in training organisations. Trainers, in this context, may be individual trainers, sole traders, or trainers in training and educational companies, or in organisations involved in the provision and delivery of training and development programmes. They will not, however, have obtained the required qualifications or its Irish National Training and Employment Authority (FÁS) or Enterprise Ireland (EI) approved equivalent; but they will have at least 10 years experience as a trainer. By submitting themselves for assessment of their training competences, by undergoing the Training Competency Assessment procedure, they access recognition via registration as an approved trainer on the FÁS/EI training register. This National Trainers Register contains a list of approved trainers who may be used by organisations seeking grant aid towards training costs. Following application for recognition as an approved trainer, assessors will judge the application. That decision will take into account observation of the applicant conducting a training activity in the field, evaluated against the submitted training plan, and supported by an interview to establish that the candidate has demonstrated and achieved the required level of trainer competences. Assessment will rate the applicant's competence on each of the 15 aspects of the trainer profile (of competence standards).

Italy

Until 1997 the situation in Italy concerning recognising and validating competences (in general) was characterised by the absence of any clear approach. From that date many important laws were approved to introduce a system for such recognition. The reform of the education system (Law 59/97) and the law relating to the certification of training organisations (196/97: Article 17) were important legal steps aimed at identifying a more structured approach to the recognition of competences.

From the year before these statutory measures, and subsequently, various experiments were carried out in the field of training with a view to modifying the structure of training on offer. Isfol – *Istituto per lo sviluppo della formazione professionale dei lavoratori* [Institute for the development of workers' vocational training] developed a catalogue of training unit values based on the idea of competence units linked to credits.

It was clear that the possession of a formal degree alone could not guarantee the 'quality' of teachers or trainers. At the same time, the new Italian laws on education and training (e.g. Law 53/03 and Ministerial Decree 166/01) further developed an approach based on the recognition, in general, of competences. Several experiments were aimed specifically at designing a potential system which could be applied to the recognition of trainers' and teachers' competences.

The nine Italian cases proposed and analysed for this study were undertaken 1999-2004 and can be grouped into three main 'macro' types of innovation:

- projects aiming to renew organisation of regional training systems in which the recognition of trainers is one of the most important aims (e.g. IT1, IT3, IT5, IT6). In general these projects followed the two most important reforms in the field of training structures and certification (Law 196/97 and Ministerial Decree 166/2001). The projects were conceived as a practical application of these legal innovations, and were intended to develop clear approaches to guarantee the quality of the system. Each project was developed by consortium, which included the training organisations in a region. The design of each project referred to defining standards, the content of a portfolio, and the final assessment. At the end of the projects, applicants received certification confirming the professional quality required for teachers and trainers in the region;

- one project was aimed at identifying a methodology for formally recognising the competences of trainers and operators in employment services and agencies (IT1). This project was generally based on the same processes as above, the differences being that in this project the consortium was formed from private organisations and crossed regions. The quality references were taken from external organisations at European level;

- projects aimed at identifying a methodology useful for the award of training credits in university activities (related to training systems) and creating a personalised way of studying. In one case (IT90) work experience could be recognised through the award of up to 40 credits (the total number of credits to obtain the degree standing at 180). In the second case in this category (IT7) the university made the specific award of a 'certification of competence', resulting from analysis of the application submitted and a report on work experience in training.

In the Italian cases, the methodology used for recognition of non-formal and informal learning is based on two steps:

- identifying competences: the main toolkit used in these projects to identify the competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning is based on the *bilan de compétences* methodology. The 'Italian way' of this methodological approach is characterised by the aims to merge both developmental needs and actual competences acquired. This process is a mix between orientation and assessment (or self-assessment) activities;

- evaluating identified competences: the process of formal evaluation is connected with the identification of formal structures (e.g. Commissions) and procedures which lend themselves assessment activities.

Overall, these projects made a valuable methodological contribution in developing practical means of implementing the general aims embodied in laws and other formal declarations.

Lithuania

The White Book of vocational education will require a VET teacher to possess:

(a) the subject qualification, awarded by a higher education institution;

(b) at least three years of practical work;

(c) a didactical qualification.

Of the three Lithuanian practices selected for this project, the Vytautas Magnus University case study (LT1) is the one which most closely relates to learning outcomes and a student-centred approach. Developed by Vytautas Magnus University in partnership with Sheffield Hallam University and other EU partners in 1999-2000, the programme has been implemented for VET teachers in Lithuania from 2002 to 2004. The award of an initial teaching certificate or diploma for VET teachers already in employment is designed as a modular programme of vocational pedagogy. Assessment of learning achievements and acquired competences is portfolio-based (total number of credits: 41.5).

The programme aims to teach VET teachers how to address the main activities involved in teaching and learning. The teaching and learning processes within this programme of pedagogical study and training are themselves based on the practical experience of VET teachers following the programme – most of which will have been gained in non-formal or informal ways.

The programme itself consists of 11 study modules. Each module aims to integrate theory and practice. Theoretical studies are organised in the higher education institution as practical assignments to be carried out by the student-teachers in vocational schools.

The programme tutor and a mentor (overseeing practice) and the student all make comments and evaluate as part of the portfolio process. Cognitive achievements are checked by a test. Test tasks are formulated according to study (learning) outcomes that identify concrete competences. Psychomotor achievements are checked by various practical tasks that are also dependent upon competence. A competence is signed-off only when a student reaches not less than 80 % of the required outcomes identifying each required competence.

Being modular the programme is also flexible for assessing non-formal and informal learning, providing opportunities to combine the prescribed study modules with learning experience. Didactical competences can be acquired in an external way. Applicants (i.e. persons ready to prove their competences in an external way) prove possession of the competence when they pass a theoretical examination/test (of cognitive achievements) and fulfil the practical task (of psychomotor achievements). Possession of the competence is confirmed by a committee, consisting of three or more people, including a representative of the institutions for education management and a lecturer for a particular module within the programme. If an applicant receives a positive evaluation, he/she obtains a certificate proving that particular competence. Confirmation of all required competences leads to the award being confirmed.

Slovakia

Current Slovak educational laws and systems do not recognise the difference between VET teachers, lectures and trainers. VET in further education and all strategic documents use only the term 'VET teachers'. The terms trainer and training are recognised only as a part of management development training programmes mostly for private companies. The new reform of education in Slovakia is an opportunity for implementing the Common European Principles and common terminology for identifying and validating non-formal and informal learning overall. At present the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, as well as national certification for trainers and teachers, are new concepts which are not yet structured.

The two cases proposed for this study concern, in the first case (SK1), the use of APEL for delivering an Atena certificate in learning and training for VET trainers and personnel consultants, considered a full initial training qualification within these categories. Standards for the programme were defined by the Thames Valley University, London, or the American Society for Training and Development, USA, and all the processes follow the steps and content used for APEL, through which up to 80 % of the award can be accredited.

The second case (SK2) concerns VET teachers employed in different types of formal education institutions in Slovakia. The IT qualification is a part of full qualification for VET teachers, and is delivered by an awarding body approved through the Education Coordination Board. To obtain the certificate it is necessary to follow a specific course but work experience, demonstrating IT skills, can be evaluated and can lead to an exemption of up to 50 % of the award. The required sets of skills and knowledge are defined within modules composing the award. Recognition and validation of experience operate through a combination of APL and APEL, of which APEL is the most important (accounting for 80 % of exemptions granted). Each trainee is allocated a personal tutor, who helps to complete a personal development plan to achieve certification.

UK

It is now a requirement that teachers in further education, whether newly-appointed or already in a post, obtain a full teaching qualification (a Certificate in Education or a Post-Graduate Certificate in Education). The introduction of this mandatory requirement for VET teachers was the single most important policy innovation in the training of VET teachers/trainers legislated in England (2001) and Wales (2002). Training towards a full teaching qualification is provided by higher education institutions and by other awarding bodies for both pre-service and in-service teachers.

VET trainers, on appointment, will hold qualifications appropriate to their own occupational area of work, together with work experience. Such trainers may also either hold or study for a range of nationally-recognised training and development awards. All trainers with responsibility for assessing the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) competences of

their trainees must obtain a recognised assessor award. Trainers appointed to publicly funded enterprises included in this broad range of provision may also undertake programmes to achieve a full teaching qualification (Certificate in Education or Post-Graduate Certificate in Teaching).

For both sets of teachers/trainers there operate two distinct forms of recognition of previous experience:

- accreditation of prior learning (APL): this recognises formal learning through the achievement of awards previously gained. For the purposes of entry to a programme of either initial or continuing training, certain awards already held by the candidate will be recognised for exemption from a part or from parts of the programme of training applied for;

- accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL): this form of recognition credits the teacher/trainer for experience gained through non-formal and informal learning. Though not subject to legislation, such accreditation of learning is widely accepted and practised among providers of initial and continuing training for VET.

The three case studies for the UK are integrated within the context of APEL. The first case (UK1) concerns the use of APEL for VET teachers and trainers employed in further education colleges and in training enterprises, and leads to a Certificate or Post-Graduate Certificate in Education. In this case study the procedures are those operated by a higher education institution, the University of Greenwich. To apply for recognition of experiential (informal/non-formal) learning, the applicant must create a portfolio which:

- demonstrates the capacity to identify experiential learning derived from non-formal and informal contexts;

- demonstrates an ability to reflect critically upon learning derived from experience;

- provides a mapping of experiential learning to the learning outcomes of the target programme;

- provides evidence of the experience cited (through, for example, letters of confirmation from employers).

Up to 50 % of the individual courses (units) composing the award may be exempted.

In the second case (UK2), also relating to the University of Greenwich, APEL is used as a compulsory requirement integrated within a Foundation Degree award (which allows non-graduates to proceed to graduate status). Integration of informal/non-formal learning is integrated within a major assignment which all students on the programme must complete satisfactorily. Up to two further re-submissions of the assignment are permitted following the first submission where it is deemed not to have met the prescribed learning outcomes.

The third case (UK3) concerns a different target group: managers of training in the workplace, commerce, industry, and the public, private and voluntary sectors. Accreditation (APEL) in this case is integrated within the National Vocational Qualification (level four) for training managers. The process is controlled through a non-university awarding body (Chartered Institute of Personnel Development). Experiential learning, and the evidence to support that learning, are judged against current (two years) experience, and all competences identified by the national standards for each unit within the award are assessed on the job.

Annex 3 Summary of project case studies

	Case study	Brief description of case study	Target group	Outcomes
Belgium	**BE 1**	GPB training programme (Flemish community).	Unqualified, intending or serving teachers/trainers within further education colleges and enterprises. Open to graduates, holders of craft/trade qualifications, and those without prior formal qualification.	Award of GPB (Getuigschrift Pedagogische Bekwaamheid): Certificate of Vocational Competence having same value as university-based training programme.
	BE 2	Initial training programme for VET teachers (Flemish community).	Entrants to18 higher education institutions delivering programmes of initial training for vocational education teachers and basic education teachers.	Exemption from parts of study leading to teaching diploma.
Denmark	**DK 1**	Master of Education degrees at the Danish University of Education.	Serving teachers and trainers with bachelor or master degree, or medium-term tertiary education, or diploma and minimum of two years work experience.	Selection for Master of Education programmes with exemption from prerequisite entry requirements.
	DK 2	The Paedagogikum model of vocational teacher training, Danish Institute for educational training of vocational teachers.	In-service teachers, without teaching qualifications, employed in vocational schools.	Completion of post-graduate training programme.
Finland	**FI 1**	Certificate/diploma competence-based teacher education model (Jyväskylä vocational teacher education college).	Teachers without formal teacher qualifications but with a minimum of five years teaching experience who have completed basic pedagogical studies in vocational education.	Identification of prior experience in order to personalise the training programme and to achieve up to 57 % of the teaching qualifications through assessment of informal/non-formal learning.
	FI 2	Basic vocational teacher studies leading to certificate/diploma (Jyväskylä vocational teacher education college).	Teachers without formal teaching qualifications.	Assessment of informal/non-formal learning as part of selection process and up to 10 % of award achieved through accreditation of informal/non-formal learning.
	FI 3	Competence-based model of vocational teacher training (Helia vocational teacher education college).	Teacher trainees working as teachers in vocational institutions.	Demonstration of teaching competences integrated with informal/non-formal learning: flexible completion time.

	Case study	Brief description of case study	Target group	Outcomes
France	**FR 1**	National vocational certification (Level III) for trainers.	VET teacher/trainers working in apprenticeship centres.	Recognition as trainer in apprenticeship centres; award made in whole or in part through validation of experiential learning (VAE: *Validation des acquis de l'expérience*).
	FR 2	Recognition as vocational training counsellor.	Training counsellors in Ministry of Education Training Centre for Continuing Education.	Appointment and confirmation in post as Counsellors in Continuing Training (CFC: *Conseillers en Formation Continue*).
	FR 3	Selection as trainer within SNCF (Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer).	Workers in enterprise whose job involves some training element.	Selection and appointment as: • occasional trainer, • full-time trainer, • specialist consultant.
Ireland	**IE 1**	Access to postgraduate qualification in learning and teaching (Level 3).	VET teachers and lecturers employed in further and higher education institutions.	Level of entry to programme (certificate /diploma/MA). Exemption from course(s) normally required as entry requirements.
	IE 2	Registration as trainer on National Register of Trainers.	Private trainers and trainers within professional training organisations, companies, educational establishments.	Approval for national registration.
Italy	**IT 1**	Italian Association of Trainers (AIF) quality system to confirm practitioners' professional status.	For specific groups of vocational trainers in enterprises: • teacher/trainer, • project manager, • training designer, • training manager.	Recognition within Italian Association of Trainers (AIF) and certification valid for five years in specific role.
	IT 2	Project Formez (2001-02); a private centre for training.	Personnel employed in training centres within the Molise region aimed at requalification of professional trainers.	Certification of competences recognised in Molise region.
	IT 3	Project Icaro (1998-99), a consortium of training organisations, Emilia–Romagna region.	Trainers, counsellors and others employed within training organisations.	Certification integrated within a quality process of professional recognition for Emilia–Romagna region.
	IT 4	University of Rome, Faculty of Training Sciences: recognition of students' experience in training activities.	Students following degree programme with Faculty of Training Sciences, University of Rome.	Award of university credit points (to a maximum of 39) towards degree (180 credit points).

	Case study	Brief description of case study	Target group	Outcomes
	IT 5	Certification of training (2001-02) via requalification and upgrading, Sardegna region.	Personnel employed in varying training roles within training organisations.	Certification of competences integrated within a quality process of professional recognition for the Sardegna region.
	IT 6	Project SFIDE (2002-04) to recognise and endorse professional roles of trainers, Emilia-Romagna region.	Training operators with varying roles employed within training organisations.	Certification to upgrade competences and requalify for training role, achieved via exemption from up to 25 % of the training credits required.
	IT 7	Advanced training for training managers (2002-04), Turin University.	Managers in training organisations and employment services.	Assessment and certification of competences towards master degree (for graduate entrants) or award of 30 university credits (for non-graduates).
	IT 8	AT1 Veneto (2002-04) project, to develop specific training competences integrated with 'on-the-job' experiences.	Training operators within training organisations.	Certification of competences acquired by trainers and professional recognition within Veneto region.
	IT 9	Advanced training for training managers (2002-03), Venice University.	Managers in training organisations and employment services.	Certification of specific competences acquired and award of 40 ECTS credit points (European credit transfer system).
Lithuania	**LT 1**	Modular programme for initial training of VET teachers, Vytantas Magnus University (2002-04).	In-service VET teachers.	Award of teaching certificate or diploma.
	LT 2	Mentor training programme to support teacher trainees.	Mentors working with VET trainee teachers in schools.	Development of mentor expertise – particularly in assisting VET teachers to prepare their competence-based portfolios.
Slovakia	**SK 1**	Atena Centre (Society for non-formal education) providing full initial qualification for VET teachers and trainers.	VET teachers and VET trainers employed in training centres and enterprises.	Award of Certificate in Learning, Training and Personnel Development, with variable exemption achieved through recognition of non-formal and informal learning.
	SK 2	Infovek Accreditation of IT skills for VET teachers.	VET teachers employed mainly in primary and secondary schools.	Award of Certification in IT skills, recognised as part-completion of full initial qualification for VET teachers.
UK	**UK 1**	Post-Graduate Certificate in Education/Certificate in Education: full initial teaching qualification, University of Greenwich.	Graduate and non-graduate VET teachers/trainers employed in further education colleges and in training enterprises.	Exemption from part or parts of the programme leading to the award.

Case study	Brief description of case study	Target group	Outcomes
UK 2	Foundation Degree in Education and Training: a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) award.	Non-graduate VET teachers/trainers holding a full initial teaching qualification (Certificate in education) and employed in further education colleges and training enterprises.	Completion of unit of study based on experiential learning integrated within programme for the award.
UK 3	Non-university awarding body recognition of experiential learning.	Training managers working within industrial, commercial, and, voluntary enterprises in the private and public sectors.	Level Four (National Vocational Qualifications) award in Learning and Development, recognised in the UK as a vocational award for training managers.

Validation of non-formal and informal learning is a centrepiece of lifelong learning and has become a priority for national and European vocational education and training (VET) policies in the last decade.

Validation of non-formal and informal learning is not only a political challenge but also an ethical and especially a methodological question: how to measure, how to validate, how to assess. These developments have considerable impact on the professional development of VET teachers and trainers, as they are keys to improving the quality of education and training.

This report addresses the role of validation of non-formal and informal learning for enhanced professional recognition of VET teachers' and trainers' competences. It presents the outcomes of a study carried out by Cedefop's training of trainers' network – TTnet.

From nine countries, 28 examples are described and analysed in the report. They highlight developments and current practice by describing the aims and outcomes, the processes and methodologies of validation, as well as quality assurance mechanisms put in place.

PANORAMA

Recognition and validation
of non-formal and informal learning
for VET teachers and trainers
in the EU Member States

CEDEFOP

European Centre for the
Development of Vocational Training

Free of charge – On request from Cedefop

5174 EN

Publications Office
Publications.europa.eu

TI-82-07-438-EN-C