

Peer reviews at VET provider level

POLICY DEVELOPMENT**PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE** CROATIA

Timeline

2017 Implementation	2018 Implementation	2019 Implementation
2020 Implementation	2021 Implementation	2022 Implementation
2023 Implementation	2024 Implementation	2025 Implementation

ID number 28818

Background

The current transnational peer review (TPR) initiative builds on the peer review concept developed in the 2000s by revising the methodology for transnational peer reviews (TPRs) in line with the new developments in VET and in consideration of the EQARF and its additional components (EQAVET+) and the VET system development programme 2016-20 (goal 2.1., measures 2.2. and 2.4.).

Objectives

TPR is primarily aimed at strengthening the capacities of EQAVET national reference points (NRPs) and VET providers in quality assurance at European and national levels. It complements national quality assurance mechanisms and also drives reflection on the national quality assurance framework based on the transnational exercise.

Description

The Agency for VET and Adult Education (ASOO) is involved in a transnational peer review exercise in cooperation with three other EQAVET NRPs. In 2017, five quality areas along with the corresponding quality criteria were examined in one transnational peer review meeting and follow-up consultations. In 2018, four quality areas were revised (Pedagogical framework and planning the pedagogical process, Teaching and learning, Assessment and certification, and Learning results and outcomes) and a new one (Work-based learning outside the school) was drafted in two transnational peer review team meetings. A team of Croatian teachers was formed and trained, and conducted the first transnational peer review in one Croatian VET school, thus testing two revised quality areas. One Croatian peer reviewer also participated in a transnational peer review in Finland.

2017 Implementation**2018 Implementation**

2019 Implementation

From 2017-19, one TPR visit to a VET provider was conducted per participating country and a feedback report was delivered to the VET provider. In the period 2019-21, ASOO will continue the TPR initiative in partnership with Estonia, Slovenia and Finland. The consortium proposes to review a further 10 quality areas of the initial peer review concept from the 2000s in line with the latest developments in VET and EQAVET+.

2020 Implementation

ASOO continued the transnational peer review (TPR) initiative in partnership with Estonia, Slovenia and Finland. A TPR visit was conducted in one VET provider in each participating country. 10 quality areas were revised and piloted in TPR visits to VET providers; with the previous five quality areas revised from 2017-2019, the 15 quality areas now form an updated, comprehensive set of criteria for conducting TPRs.

2021 Implementation

ASOO continued the transnational peer review (TPR) initiative in partnership with Estonia, Slovenia and Finland. Six representatives of ASOO and vocational schools from Croatia participated in the final online conference on international peer review with national reference points from Slovenia, Finland and Estonia. An information brochure about international peer review was developed and published (online). A plan for the promotion of international peer review in national and European contexts was developed.

2022 Implementation

Collaboration with Estonia, Finland and Slovenia continued. The partners organised a training consisting of two sessions to train stakeholders in TPR. The training was attended by three members of ASOO and six representatives of vocational schools who would act as peers and/or hosts in the TPR. A total of two representatives from Croatia participated in TPR in Slovenia, one from ASOO in the role of observer and one from a vocational school in the role of peer. In 2022, as part of the EQAVET NRP activities, Croatia initiated its first national peer reviews based on the methodology, instruments, and quality criteria developed through the transnational peer review activity. The national peer reviews involved three IVET providers of different profiles (industry, manufacturing, and medicine). Eight national peers participated in the peer review visits, trained and supported by the Agency for VET and Adult Education, which acts as the EQAVET NRP and coordinating body responsible for self-assessment in VET in Croatia. During the final evaluation meeting, VET providers and peers expressed satisfaction with their involvement in the peer reviews, highlighting the benefits of peer exchange and mutual learning, which contributed to the development of a culture of quality at their schools. The pilot peer reviews in the national context confirmed that the peer review methodology represented a suitable form of peer evaluation, which could easily be adapted to examine specific areas of interest for VET providers.

2023 Implementation

In 2023, Croatia conducted a transnational peer review of a VET provider in the field of healthcare, focusing on the quality area of external relations. This involved continued collaboration with Estonia, Finland, and Slovenia, with a Finnish peer reviewer participating in the on-site visit to the Croatian provider. As a result of the peer review, the VET provider received useful feedback on cooperation with external stakeholders, with recommendations for improvement. The international perspective was seen as a specific added value of transnational peer reviews. The criteria for the quality area were discussed, emphasizing the importance of striking the right balance between specific, yet sufficiently broad, description of the criteria to ensure clarity of the criteria and possibilities for flexible interpretation that accommodates different perspectives.

2024 Implementation

In 2024, a new cycle of collaboration with Estonia, Finland, and Slovenia in transnational peer reviews began. Preparations started for reviews to be conducted in each participating country across 2025-2026. Based on the experience from previous years, a revision of quality areas and criteria for transnational peer reviews was initiated. Based on the feedback of peers, all quality criteria were revised in terms of the readability and clarity of criteria and indicators, especially regarding the criteria on sustainability. Simultaneously, the second cycle of national peer reviews involved commenced, involving six Croatian VET providers in peer reviews, which were held online and in-person planned for 2024-2025. The schools were organised in two clusters in the field of economics, trade and business administration and health care and social welfare. Peer reviews covered the quality areas of human resource management, external relations, internationalisation, and management of infrastructure, facilities and finances.

2025 Implementation

Based on the feedback from peers and VET providers participating in six national peer reviews in 2024, work is underway to prepare a handbook providing step-by-step guidelines for organising and conducting peer reviews. In March 2025, the School of Hospitality and Tourism Osijek hosted a transnational peer review, involving 5 peers and 5 observers from Croatia, Estonia, Finland, and Slovenia. This review focused on the quality area of 'equality and equal opportunities'. Indicators relating to sustainability were revised in the handbook for implementing European peer reviews and piloted during this transnational peer review in Croatia.

Bodies responsible

- Agency for VET and Adult Education (ASOO)

Target group

Education professionals

Teachers
School leaders

Entities providing VET

VET providers (all kinds)

Thematic categories

Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Further developing national quality assurance systems

European and international dimensions of VET

VET internationalisation strategies

Subsystem

IVET

Further reading

ARQA-VET, ASOO, EKKA, EDUFI, CPI (2021). European Peer Review Quality Areas and Criteria for Vocational Education and Training (VET).

Video on TPR experience of a VET provider in Croatia

European Peer Review Network

Gutknecht-Gmeiner, M. (ed.) (2007). European Peer Review Manual for initial VET. Vienna: Österreichisches Institut für Berufsbildungsforschung Austrian Institut for Research on Vocational Training.



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