

The NETINVET network for recognised learning mobility for VET learners



Countries covered: Belgium, Croatia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain and the UK (Northern Ireland).

Publication date: October 2019

NETINVET is a network of VET providers, with support of companies, promoting learning mobility in the areas of wholesale, international trade, transport and logistics and heavy vehicle repair.

Short summary paragraph

NETINVET focuses on promoting learning mobility by enabling transfer and validation of the learning outcomes acquired abroad.

To date, the network covers 13 countries: Belgium, Croatia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain and the UK (Northern Ireland).

ECVET principles are at the foundations of NETINVET. NETINVET members are encouraged to use ECVET documents and tools to facilitate the recognition of learning outcomes acquired during a mobility period.

Scope of project/initiative

European

When was the project/initiative implemented?

Since 2011

What were the source(s) of funding?

The network is mainly financed through its membership fees. It is an independent network which does not rely on European funding for its maintenance.

The NETINVET network was built on two European projects, COMINTER and RECOMFOR, which were previously funded under the Leonardo da Vinci strand of the Lifelong Learning Programme.

Learning mobilities, organised among the members of the network, are typically financed via Erasmus+ Key Action 1 Mobility of Individuals. However, NETINVET is not coordinating this aspect and it is up to the members to proceed with Erasmus+ applications.

Why was/is the project implemented?

NETINVET was developed with the purpose of overcoming the obstacles faced by students in higher VET around the recognition of learning acquired abroad.

NETINVET is built as a network of VET schools and companies. NETINVET takes forward the lessons learned from two European projects, COMINTER and RECOMFOR, in improving learning mobility.

The aim of COMINTER (2005-2007) was to produce a common qualification profile for the profession of import-export sales assistants. A finding of the COMINTER project was the lack of guaranteed work placements abroad and the insufficient mutual recognition between institutions.

RECOMFOR (2008-2011) was developed with the objective to overcome these obstacles. The RECOMFOR project was a platform of training centres and employers that shared the idea that mobility is an integrated part of training programmes. The has platform developed common quality criteria and helped its partners to build mutual trust.¹

The legacy of both COMINTER and RECOMFOR are the basis of the NETINVET network. NETINVET was initially composed by the members of both COMINTER and RECOMFOR. Since then, NETINVET has expanded the number of professions applicable to take part in the project, as well as the number of members to 79. In addition, the pan-European project now involves 13 different countries.

¹ <http://www.ecvet-projects.eu/Projects/ProjectDetail.aspx?id=17>

Which groups were targeted by the practice?

It is actively supported by four professional organisations. These are:

- ▶ CGI (French Confederation of Wholesale and International Trade, France),
- ▶ AFT (Organisation responsible for the development of professional training in the Transport and Logistics, France),
- ▶ S-BB (Samenwerkingsorganisatie Beroepsonderwijs Bedrijfsleven, Netherlands), and
- ▶ ANFA – French National Association for Automotive Training

What were the practice's main objectives?

VET students at EQF levels 4 and 5 in the areas of wholesale, international trade, transport and logistics, heavy vehicle repair are targeted by the project.

NETINVET aims to encourage the recognition of learning outcomes acquired during learning mobilities in the areas of wholesale, international trade, transport and logistics. Learning mobility is highly valued as it helps students to integrate their technical skills related to the profession with key soft skills. In order to do so, NETINVET developed qualification references for professional profiles at EQF levels 4 and 5 that allows the validation of the learning outcomes acquired during work placements abroad. Furthermore, NETINVET aims to build partnerships based on mutual trust. This is done through an eligibility criteria and compliance with quality charters.

What activities were carried out?

The NETINVET network has developed professional profiles at EQF levels 4 and 5 with respective shared references. The purpose of these references is to allow training programmes, developed across the NETINVET network, to be comparable and to facilitate the recognition of learning outcomes. With the guidance provided by the references, the programmes are built on the same format with the same descriptors for the learning outcomes.

NETINVET members can use these references to develop training units, composed of learning outcomes, and aligned with the legislation in the respective partner countries.

Currently, NETINVET provides frameworks for six professional profiles:

- ▶ Import and export sales assistant
- ▶ Transport and logistic manager
- ▶ Transport technician
- ▶ Warehouse operator
- ▶ Road freight driver
- ▶ Truck repair technician

VET schools and professional training centres can be part of the NETINVET network as members. The pre-requisite for a VET centre to be a member is to offer training at EQF levels 4 and 5 in the fields of international trade and/or transport and logistic and/or automobile services. Each request for membership is evaluated by a Scientific Committee² which assesses the quality and nature of the training courses.

The members of the network organise the learning mobilities in autonomy. The NETINVET portal provides members with an online Learning Agreement (LA) template, based on the ECVET LA. This LA covers all the fields requested for an Erasmus+ Key Action 1 application. During the learning mobility host teachers act as tutors helping students to find the right accommodation, they check if the company placement is going smoothly or if there are problems. Once the mobility is concluded, teachers are responsible for validating the units of learning outcomes acquired. NETINVET provides a personal transcript template that can be used for this purpose.

Companies are not direct members; however they support the network. However, their role is key as they facilitate the mobility of the students across the countries involved in the network. In order to participate, companies need to comply with the 'Quality Charter for companies in the NETINVET network'. Host companies are awarded with a 'international trainer' certificate, which recognises the quality of the service/support/... offered by the company.

² The role of the Scientific Committee is to cross check that candidates' VET institutions provide VET courses that are aligned with the shared references of NETINVET. Members of the Scientific Committee are appointed by the Steering Committee, which oversees the administrative management of the network. Admission of new candidates is confirmed by the Steering Committee based on the technical information provided by the Scientific Committee. Members of the Scientific Committee have expertise and knowledge of national education systems and European tools such as ECVET and EQF. They are composed of representatives from national ministries, VET providers and other experts.

What specific ECVET principles were/are used?

NETINVET offers additional support to learners through a dedicated webpage on the network website. Mobility participants are required to register an account on the website. This space provides learners with useful information and testimonials from other learners.

NETINVET has implemented a quality process based on two Quality Charters and respective awards:

1. The Quality Charter for VET training centres: this includes requirements concerning the content of the training programmes and the assessment methods as well as responsibilities linked to learners' daily life (e.g. preparation before and guidance during mobility, help to find accommodation). Training centres that meet the quality requirements are awarded a NETINVET label. Interim assessments are scheduled to check that the members meet the quality requirements.
2. The Quality Charter for hosting companies: it addresses social, intercultural and academic aspects of work placements. Companies complying with the quality standards are awarded a 'Quality Award'. The awarding certificate is issued to employers by the network members that are regularly involved in mobility. It highlights that host enterprises are compliant with the standards set out in the Quality Charter.

An informal feedback system is also in place to ensure that both members and companies are meeting the requirements indicated in the Quality Charters. Members can inform the NETINVET Steering Committee³ if there are issues or problems with other members or companies.

▶ **Principle 1: Qualifications should be composed of clearly defined groups of learning outcomes.**

The learning outcomes approach is the core element of NETINVET. In order to be part of the NETINVET network, VET providers need to ensure that qualifications are compatible with the shared references within NETINVET. Therefore, content and assessment methods of the learning outcomes are shared among the members of the network.

▶ **Principle 2: Groups of learning outcomes within a qualification should be capable of independent assessment.**

As part of the process of becoming members of the network, VET providers need to ensure that mobility units can be independently assessed. The assessment usually takes place in the host company, or by VET providers, and it is recognised in the home institution afterwards. Assessments methods differ from country to country as they need to be aligned to the requirements of the respective national legislation. It is a requirement for VET providers to share the assessment methods used when they decide to join the network.

▶ **Principle 3: The assessment of each group of learning outcomes should be properly documented.**

Hosting institutions need to properly document the learning outcomes acquired. A personal transcript, available on the members' area of the NETINVET website, can be used for this purpose. This template is shared among the members and is acknowledged by the home organisation. Additionally, the Europass Certificate Supplement is also used.

▶ **Principle 5: Individuals should have the opportunity to have their learning outcomes validated, irrespective of how and where they have acquired them.**

The principle of the NETINVET network is that learners will not have to validate the learning acquired abroad twice. Sending and hosting organisations have a common understanding of the content and assessment methods of the learning outcomes. Thus, the learning outcomes validated by the host organisation are recognised by the home institution.

³ The Steering Committee oversees the administrative day-to-day management of the network, such as resource management and admission of new NETINVET members. Between six to twelve members are elected to form the Steering Committee, for a three-year mandate.

What specific ECVET principles were/are used?

▶ **Principle 6: Individuals should have the opportunity to accumulate their assessed groups of learning outcomes towards a qualification.**

The NETINVET network builds on the mutual trust of its members where mobility is perceived as an integrated part of learning pathways. The principle at the heart of the NETINVET network is that learning outcomes are validated in the host organisation and recognised in the home country.

▶ **Principle 7: Individuals should have the opportunity to transfer their groups of learning outcomes validated from a context to another context.**

A NETINVET LA signed between institutions settles the objectives and learning outcomes to be achieved for the mobility. A personal transcript is also used for the documentation of the learning acquired. Mutual trust among the members of the network is a key aspect for this principle as it allows a smooth transfer of learning outcomes from host to home organisation..

▶ **Principle 8: Processes for development, assessment, validation and recognition of sets of learning outcomes should be transparent and underpinned by quality assurance.**

The NETINVET network has implemented a quality approach based on two Quality Charters for VET providers and hosting companies. The charters ensure that new members are reliable and have a complete understanding of criteria and requirements of the network. The charters highlight all phases of the mobility and responsibilities of hosting and sending organisations. Furthermore, NETINVET has an informal feedback system that ensures quality control among its members.

What was/is the added value of ECVET?

ECVET provides a conceptual framework for the description, assessment and validation of learning outcomes. Since RECOMFOR and COMINTER, ECVET has provided the tools to design the professional profiles and to define the units of learning outcomes. This allows training programmes to be comparable and, in parallel, to comply with the requirements of the national legislations. Assessment methods carried out across the members are also transparent.

NETINVET extensively uses ECVET tools, such as the Memorandum of Understanding and the LA. For example, an online LA is available for the members and can be used for Erasmus+ Key Action 1 calls for application.

Website

<https://www.netinvet.eu/en/> (EN only)

[Related presentation of Elly van 't Hof \(Annual ECVET Forum 2018\): How to develop international partnerships for long-duration mobility?](#)

[Related article on NETINVET in Issue 32 of the ECVET Magazine \(September 2018\)](#)

[Related article on NETINVET in Issue 26 of the ECVET Magazine \(October 2016\)](#)



Contact details for further information

Name/Job Title: Bernd Gruner, NETINVET Coordinator – International Trade

Organisation: NETINVET

Email: contact@netinvet.eu

Telephone: +33 1 44 55 35 00