



*European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for  
Vocational Education and Training*



*European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training*

# **Moving from Principles to Implementation Launching Conference**

*Brussels 17-18 November 2009*

**EQARF Workshops**

**Shawn Mendes, Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket)**

***The impact of EQARF on end users in Sweden***

**EQARF Workshop D:  
Implementation steps of EQARF,  
what does it mean for the final users?**

*The impact of EQARF on end users in Sweden*

## **Standards in Swedish VET**

- Broad education and training standards for both IVET and higher VET set by government and government agencies.
- High level of involvement of social partners through national Programme Councils to ensure relevance.
- Higher VET programmes may not even be offered without documented labour market need.
- When available, occupational certification usually administered by joint training boards.

## Vocational qualifications in Sweden

- There are relatively few formal qualifications in SE and those that do exist are issued by sectoral organisations with little, if any, input from government.
- Upper secondary IVET completers do not receive a qualification (*yrkesbevis*) or even a diploma.
- This makes SE open and flexible but not as transparent as it might be. ECVET It also makes it difficult to address the issue as we do not engage the issue of qualifications frequently in Sweden.

## EQF and ECVET need EQARF

- I borrowed this graphic from Lukas at Cedefop, because it shows the key roles that validation, guidance and quality must play if we are to achieve success with learning outcomes.
- Mutual trust must be increased through Quality (i.e. through EQARF) if we are to build a European space of learning outcomes and qualifications.



## **QA of validated qualifications in SE: generating mutual trust**

- National support and information through government agencies responsible for IVET, higher VET and access to higher education.
- Social partners heavily involved in validation in SE to ensure credibility and relevance.
- Vast majority of vocational certification occurs at joint training boards.

## **ECVET easy but without QA learning outcomes will not have currency**

- In Sweden, the largest VET form (upper secondary IVET) has 180 000 students in a course- and learning outcomes-based system built credits so implementing ECVET should not be difficult.
- But the validation of vocational skills focuses on end user (i.e. employers and their organisations) and this is why QA is so critical.

## **Assessment methods and processes**

- Validation of vocational skills in SE has focussed on end users assessing learning outcomes in a real world, rather than academic, setting.
- The challenge is introducing a more consistent national policy regime to implement the EQF and ECVET and then, most importantly, support assessment and QA.

## **The lack of formal qualifications in SE – strength or weakness?**

- If EQARF should support the implementation of the EQF, in particular the quality of the certification of learning outcomes, as well as other European instruments like ECVET and the common European Principles for the validation of non-formal and informal learning . . .then . . .

the fact that Sweden does not have a tradition of formal qualification is both an advantage (open) and disadvantage (difficult to introduce structure).

## **EQF and ECVET need EQARF**

- The Swedish E&T system is built on learning outcomes and credit units.
- In practice, credit units are the norm ► facilitates move to ECVET but culture of learning outcomes still more of a policy idea than a reality, esp. at HE and, in declining order, general, VET and adult education.
- Strong adult education system support LLL and validation of learning outcomes.

## **EQF and ECVET need EQARF**

- E&T system designed to facilitate transition between VET and HE. Works well from IVET to HE but less well from higher ET to HE.
- Transition is about cultural and institutional acceptance.
- In Sweden, the official line is: “We have developed the tools, now we need time to implement them/catch up, at the national level.

Thank you for your attention.