

**ANALYSES  
OF ADULT LEARNING EDUCATORS'  
PRACTICES IN PLANNING,  
ORGANIZATION AND CERTIFICATION  
IN ADULT NON-FORMAL TRAINING**

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

According to Eurostat, in 2024 11.0% in Latvia, 9.8% in Lithuania and 23% in Estonia adults have participated in learning in the past four weeks. According OECD, „Evidence suggests that countries with high-quality systems for formal and non-formal adult education tend to have higher participation rates in adult learning”. A Resolution on a renewed European Agenda for Adult Learning adopted by the Council (2021) highlights the need to significantly increase adult participation in formal and non-formal learning by enhancing the quality of adult learning by monitoring the impact of policies and improving the training provided by adult educators and others. Data shows that non-formal learning is more attractive and more actively used by adults comparing with formal education (VET, HE).

From 1st July 2024 till 30 June 2025 Foundation Smart minds (Latvia) with partners - Vilnius Vocational Training Centre of Technologies (Lithuania) and Valga County Vocational Training Centre (Estonia) implemented **Nordplus programme<sup>1</sup> project "Tools4Quality", project No. NPAD-2024/10248**. The main project objective is to improve knowledge of partner organizations staff and staff of adult learning providers by developing open education resources how to plan, organize and certify adult trainings, through international cooperation and experience of different countries and organizations involved in adult learning, by sharing knowledge about European Quality Assurance Reference Framework and proposing it's adaption to adult trainings thus strengthening quality assurance in all phases of non-formal adult training.

By increasing non-formal adult learning quality, all countries can considerably contribute in building qualitative, sustainable, inclusive and cost effective non-formal adult learning systems.

The purpose of this document is to identify needs of partner organizations' staff for ensuring quality of non-formal adult trainings, introduce with basis of European Quality Assurance Reference Framework, describe good practices on existing quality assurance tools in non-formal adult learning in partner organizations, define needs of partner organization staff for ensuring quality of non-formal adult trainings, introduce with basis of European Quality Assurance Reference Framework and provide recommendations for trainings needed at organization level.

The document can be used by other adult learning providers, their specialists and trainers for the same purpose. The document provides core ideas, aspects of quality in planning, implementation and certification of adult training in partner organizations and beyond.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nordplusonline.org/>

## 2. PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

**Vilnius Vocational College of Technologies and Engineering (TECHIN)** (Lithuania) is a non-profit vocational college and adult training institute, which has more than 200 employees. Stakeholders: Ministry of Education and Science and JSC Arginta Group. TECHIN provides more than 100 training programs: formal VET, informal VET and informal adult training through the 5 training departments: Metal Technologies, Construction Technologies, Energy Technologies, IT Technologies and Transport Technologies. In addition, TECHIN has Training organizing department, Research and innovation development department and others. TECHIN trains around 4000 people annually. In 2023 TECHIN joined UNESCO-UNEVOC and EfVET international networks as a full member.

**Valga County Vocational Training Center** (Estonia) is state educational institution of the Ministry of Education and Research. Valga County Vocational Training Center is the only vocational school in the county and the main activities are organization of vocational training in all forms and forms of study, organization of adult in-service training and retraining, organizing non-stationary secondary education and organization of professional information and counseling for county students and adults. There are seven curriculum groups in the school - construction, healthcare and social services, transport equipment, logistics, wood processing, trade and tourism, catering and accommodation service. In 2024 in the Valga County Vocational Training Center studied 1000 students, including 185 in vocational secondary education. In January 2024, the Valga County Vocational Training Center has 49 employees including 31 teachers. Valga County Vocational Training Centre is very active in implementing adult learning: for logistics, care workers and other trainings.

**The foundation Smart minds** (Latvia) is a nongovernmental organization which provides professional support for sectoral organizations, national organizations and European level organizations for improvement education, employment and work -related policies of Latvia and Europe. The main activities are implementation of trainings and other educational activities, research and analysis in social, education, employment and work-related policies, support of cooperation and knowledge transfer between employers' organizations, trade unions, companies, education institutions, state institutions and local municipalities in social, education, employment and work-related policies. More than 300 adults are trained by foundation Smart minds within last 4 years in soft skills, digital skills, trainings about labor market (sectors) needs.



### 3. PRACTICES IN PLANNING, ORGANIZATION AND CERTIFICATION OF LEARNING

All three partner organizations are very different in size, in experience, in diversity of adult training planning, implementation and organization, dealing with their national regulations in field of quality assurance in adult trainings.

From all partners, only TECHIN is having Quality Management System (ISO 9001:2015) and the environmental quality management system (ISO 14001:2015) implemented therefore most deeply will be showed TECHIN practices and procedures to be transferred to other partners organizations and beyond partnership.

#### 3.1. TECHIN

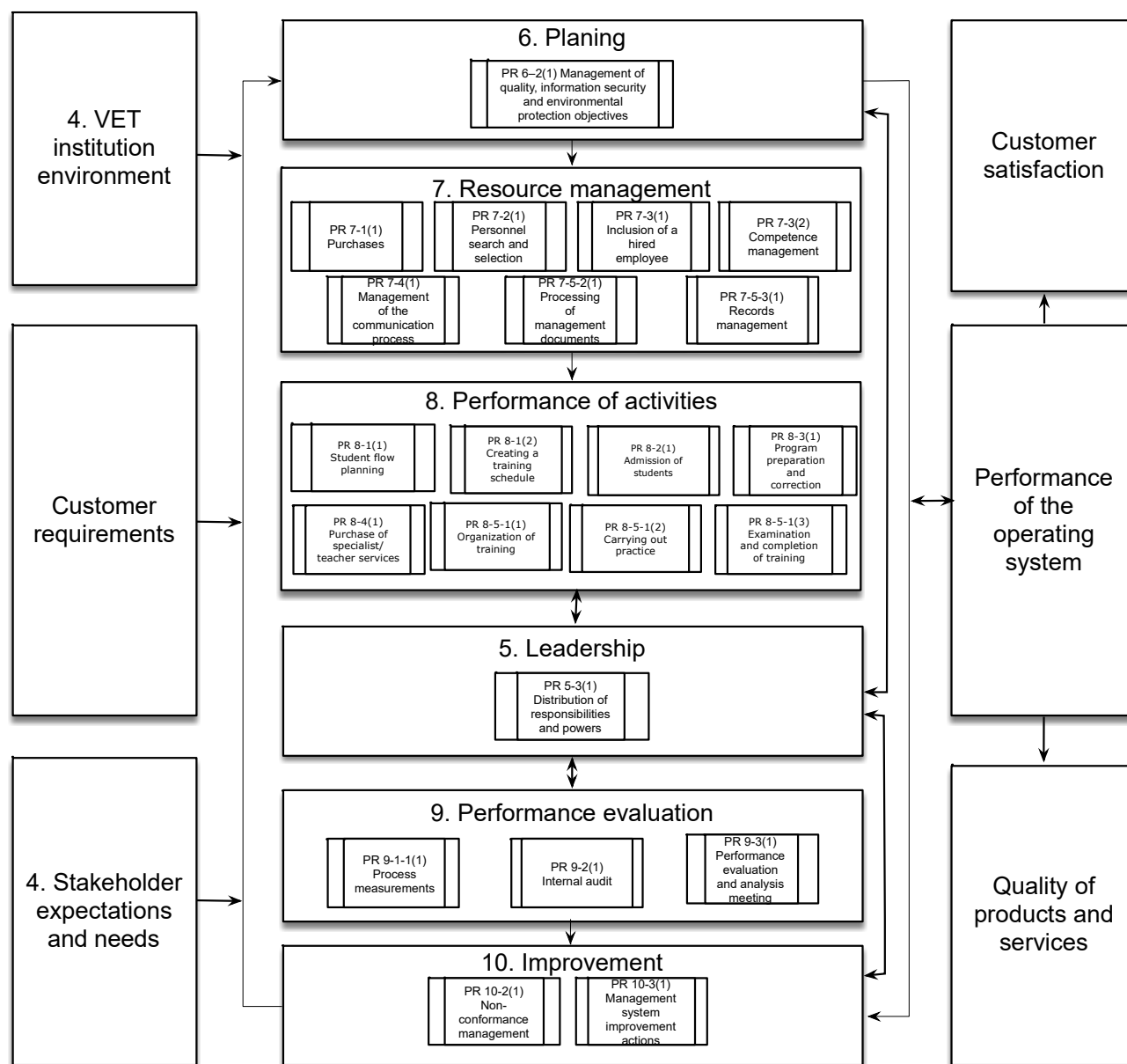
In order to properly manage the processes, set out and described in strategic plans for the management of adult education activities, TECHIN:

- identifies the prerequisites / conditions for the processes and the desired/expected outcomes of the processes;
- identifies the sequence of processes and their interactions;
- identifies and applies the management methods, measurement criteria and performance indicators required to manage the processes, measure their progress and ensure their effectiveness;
- identify and secure the resources required to carry out the processes;
- identify and designate the persons responsible for the management / oversight of the processes - the process owners;
- identify and define the risks that may affect the performance of the processes that need to be managed and the opportunities that need to be seized in order to maximize the effectiveness of the processes;
- evaluates processes and takes action to implement changes necessary to ensure or increase process efficiency and achieve the intended results;
- improves processes and Quality Management System (QMS);
- documents and stores information related to TECHIN QMS in accordance with established procedures.

TECHIN has defined, implemented, monitored / managed and continuously improved the following QMS process areas: management / leadership, planning, resource and document management, performance management, performance evaluation and measurement, improvement.

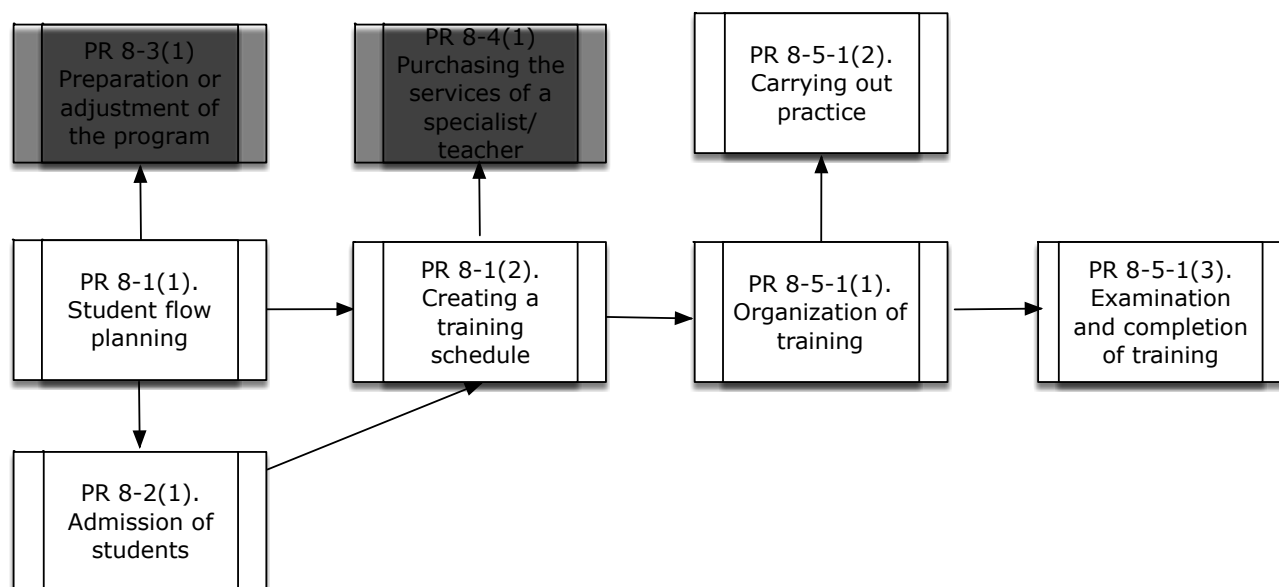


QMS process areas are detailed in the individual QMS chapters:



TECHIN QMS Process Map

TECHIN's adult education activities follow the procedures set out in the process map:



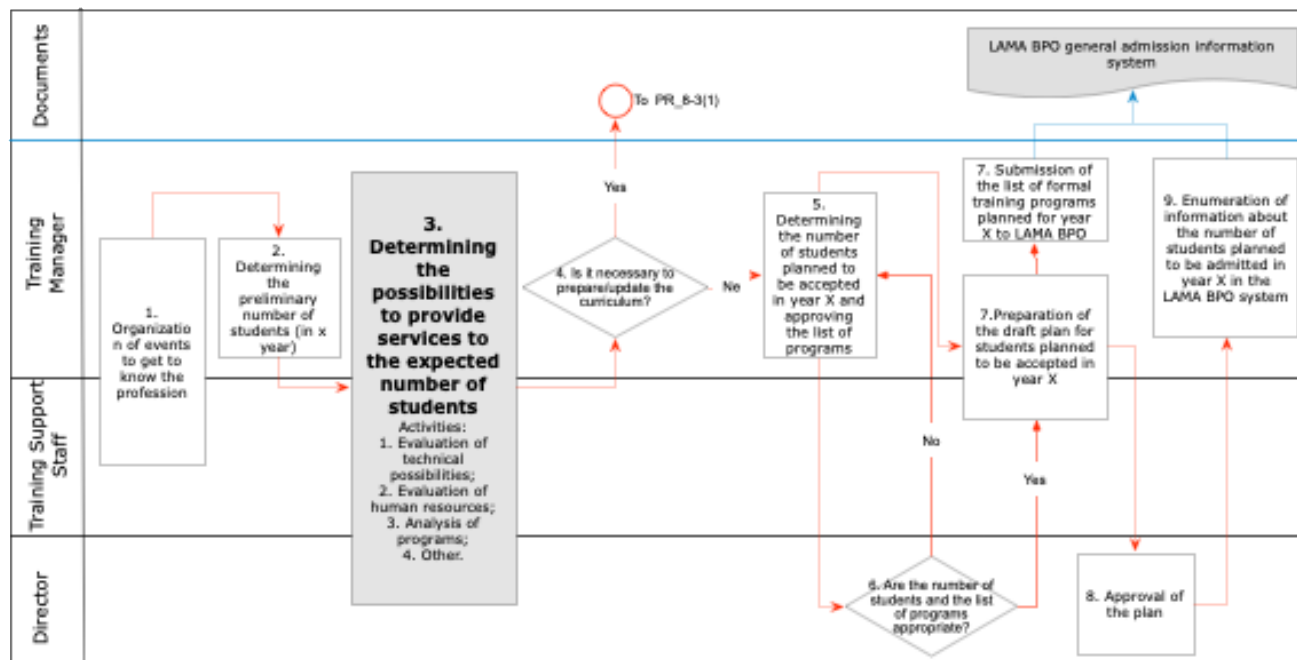
#### *A) Planning the delivery of adult training*

TECHIN's adult training service delivery processes shall be aligned with other QMS processes, and shall comply with the requirements of TECHIN's operating legislation, other QMS compliance documents, and customer requirements, provided that the latter do not conflict with the provisions of the service delivery legislation and documents.

TECHIN shall provide adult training services through the implementation of formal and non-formal adult training programs and / or non-formal training programs approved by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports of the Republic of Lithuania or the Center for the Development of Qualifications and Vocational Training, to which the Ministry has delegated the function of checking and validating training programs<sup>2</sup>.

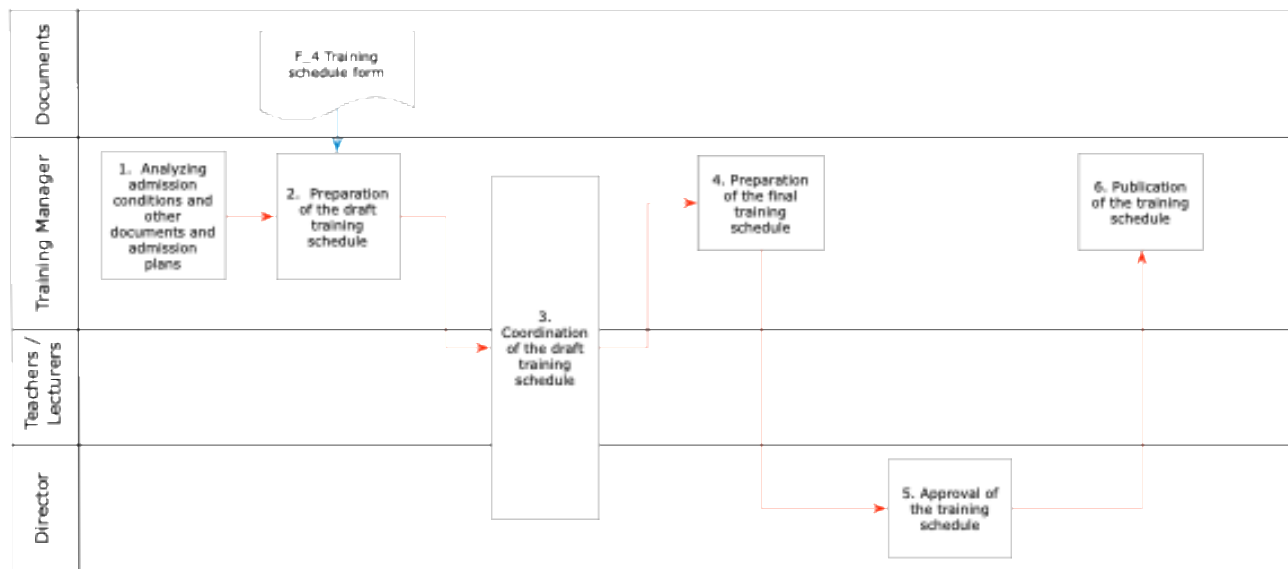
<sup>2</sup> <https://www.kpmc.lt/kpmc/en/>

The nature and scope of the training activities shall be planned in accordance with the procedures set out in the PR 8-1(1) process chart:



### PR 8-1(1). Students flow planning

TECHIN provides adult training in accordance with an annual training schedule. The training schedule shall be drawn up in accordance with the procedures set out in the PR 8-1(2) process chart:



### PR 8-1(2). Establishing a training schedule



Within their areas of specialization, TECHIN staff gather information on the sectoral areas of adult training services available through formal and non-formal training programs by means of a variety of contacts with potential clients and other means.

TECHIN may provide formal or non-formal training offers to potential clients, or it may provide offers to clients who contact TECHIN themselves. The conformity of the adult training activities carried out – through formal or non-formal training programs – for the sale of services with the requirements of TECHIN's VS and those of the clients and the QMS shall be evaluated in accordance with the procedures set out in QMS.

*B) Processes related to training service users (clients), hazard identification, risk assessment and management measures, legal and other requirements, performance management*

TECHIN's adult training service delivery processes shall be aligned with other QMS processes and shall comply with the requirements of the legislation governing TECHIN's activities, as well as with the requirements of the clients, provided that the latter do not conflict with the provisions of the legislation and documents governing the provision of training services.

The analysis of the provision of training services shall also include an assessment of TECHIN's capacity to meet: the requirements set by the client (including the pre-selection of TECHIN staff or TECHIN external experts (suppliers) who meet the client's requirements - the qualifications of the teachers / lecturers who will deliver the training service); the quality requirements; the requirements of the Information Security (IS) and the Environment Protection (EP); the requirements which are not specified by the client, but which are compulsory; the requirements of the law and the regulations for the sale of the training services; and any other requirements. In assessing TECHIN's ability to meet the requirements of the EP, the Training Manager shall analyse the future service and the factors affecting it. The assessment shall evaluate the impact of the EP on the planned service in relation to Summary of the determination of the significance of environmental aspects. If the planned service is found to be related to a previously unidentified EP aspect, the Summary shall be supplemented in accordance with the following methodology for assessing EP aspects (see Table 1):

Table 1. Methodology for assessing factors affecting compliance with environmental requirements

Requirements		
No.	Questions to determine materiality	EP significance rating, points
1	Assessment of legal requirements	0 - no legal requirements for EP
		1 - the are legal requirements for EP
		2 - there are quantitative or qualitative targets for EP impacts
2	Environmental risk assessment	0 - very low environmental impact
		1- environmental impact is moderate
		2- environmental impact is high
3	Estimating the duration of EP	0 – EP may occur under emergency conditions
		1 – EP is episodic under normal or abnormal conditions
		2 – EP is constant under normal conditions
4	Assessment of the impact of EP on the safety and health of workers	0 - no occupational safety risk
		1 - low risk to occupational safety
		2 - high occupational safety risk
5	Assessment of public and stakeholder reaction to the environmental impacts	0 - no complaints
		1 - complaints are infrequent (e.g. once a quarter) and there are no serious complaints
		2 - complaints are frequent and serious.
6	Financial risk assessment	0 - very low financial risk
		1 - financial risk medium (high pollution charges, fines, loss of customer, etc.)
		2 - financial risk is high (it is more profitable to invest in environmental protection than to pay high taxes or fines for pollution)
EP is significant when the sum of the EP is equal to or more than 5 points		Significant EP is denoted by SEP Not significant EP is denoted by - NEP

In assessing risks, the Training Manager shall gather information, using the methods and sources available to him / her, that is sufficient to determine whether the range of potential risks is acceptable and whether there is a need to plan the necessary mitigating measures. If the information available to the Training Manager is insufficient, a visit is made to the premises of the training (both theoretical and practical) and a risk assessment is carried out on-site

(particularly important in cases where the training is organised in the form of apprenticeship training and therefore the majority of the training is carried out on the premises of the employer, under real working conditions).

### *Principles of hazard identification and risk assessment*

Based on the EP aspects identified during the Performance Review and Analysis Meeting, the Training Manager shall prepare and submit to the Director for approval an Emergency Identification Plan.

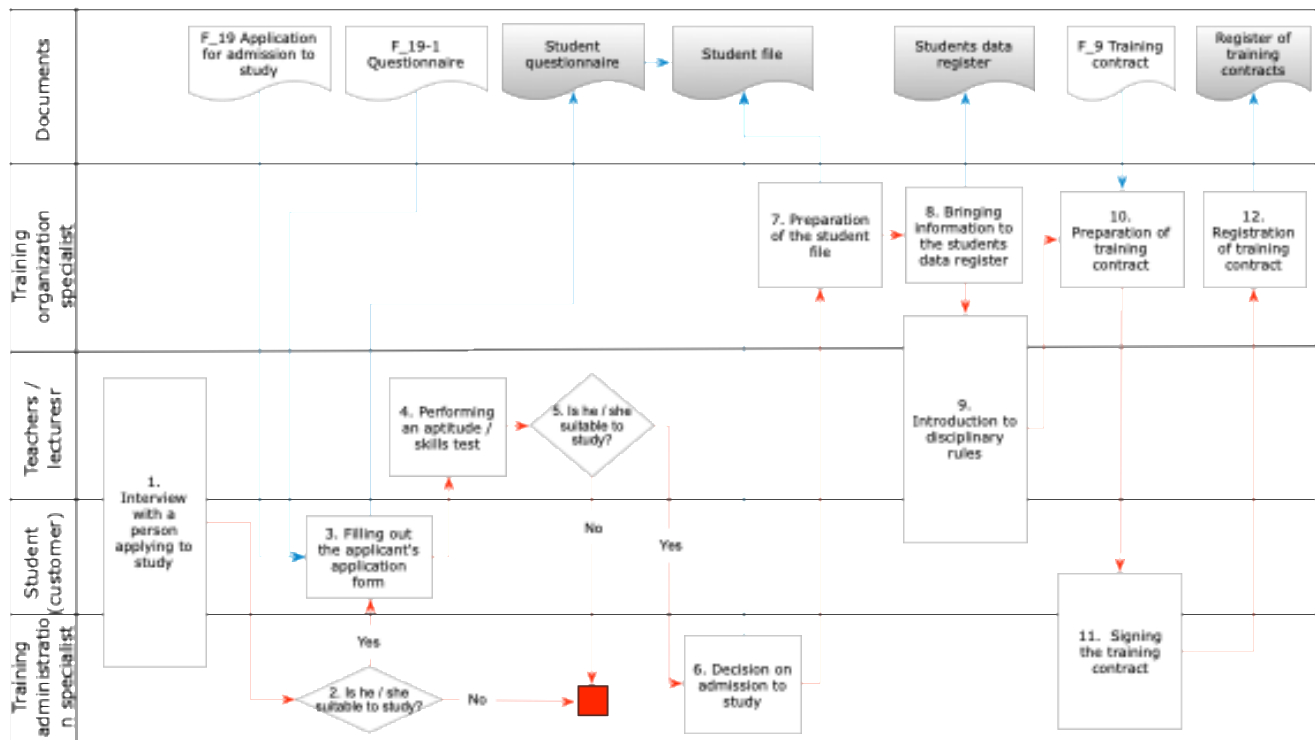
When planning to organize training services, it is the responsibility of the Training Manager to assess whether there are hazards other than those identified in the typical risk assessment card.

The level of risk shall be assessed on the basis of the measurement and monitoring results. If the level of risk EP is found to be excessive and difficult to manage, a decision is taken not to provide training in certain premises or not to provide training in the form of apprenticeship training in premises that do not meet the minimum EP requirements. The identification of hazards and risk assessment also includes an analysis and assessment of the requirements of laws and regulations, standards, staff contracts, etc., as well as an assessment of TECHIN's capacity and resources to meet these requirements.

Admission to formal and non-formal adult training programs shall be made in accordance with the procedure laid down in the legislation approved by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports of the Republic of Lithuania or the Employment Service.

Applicants for formal and non-formal adult training programs may be interviewed / tested prior to admission, unless this is prohibited by legislation approved by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports of the Republic of Lithuania or the Employment Service.

Other clients / apprentices shall be admitted to TECHIN in accordance with the procedure set out in the PR 8-2(1) process flowchart:

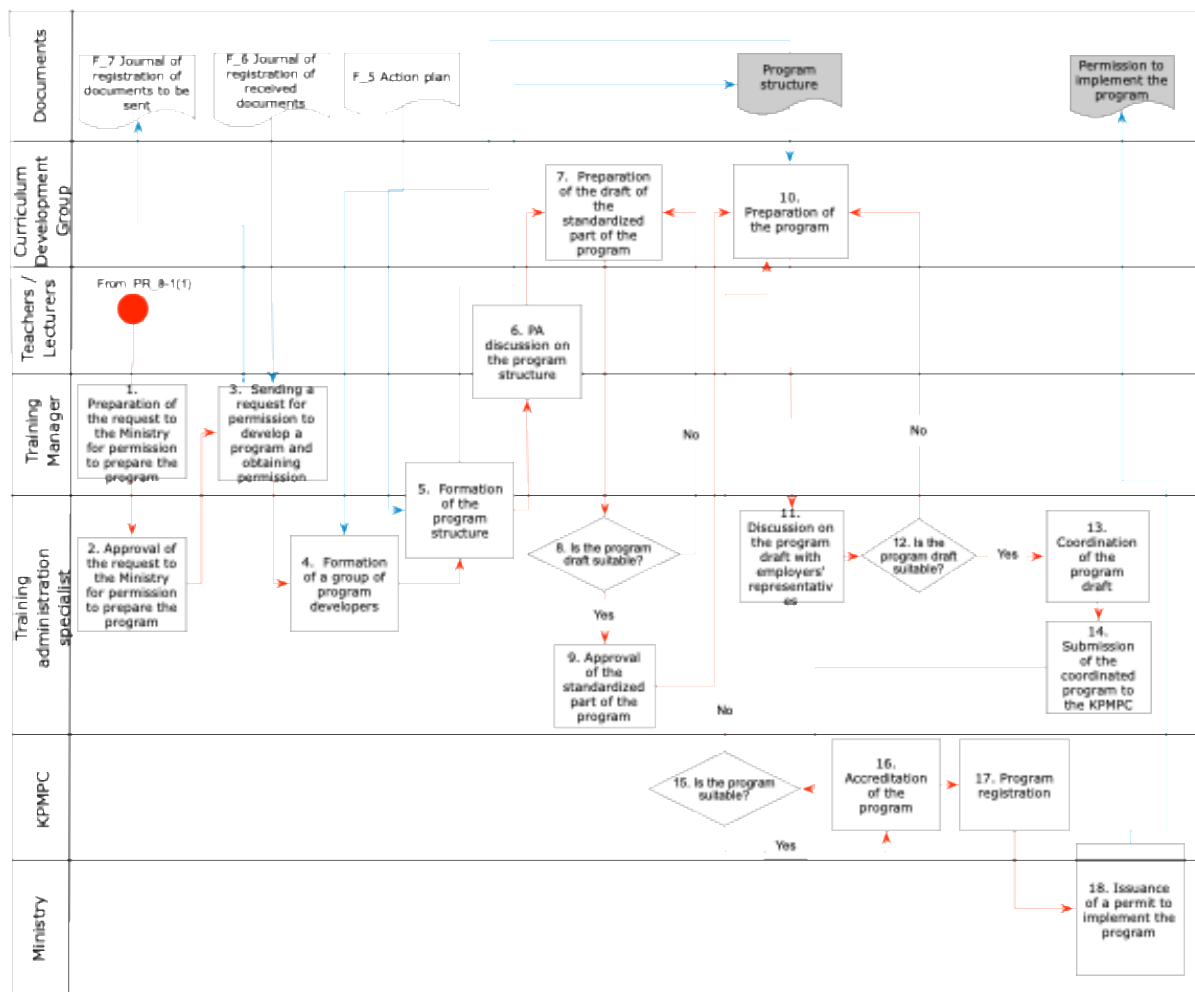


PR 8-2(1). Admission of pupils

### C) Developing and adapting training programs

TECHIN's certified area of activity is services: **initial and continuing, formal and non-formal training in formal or non-formal training programs. development of training programs.**

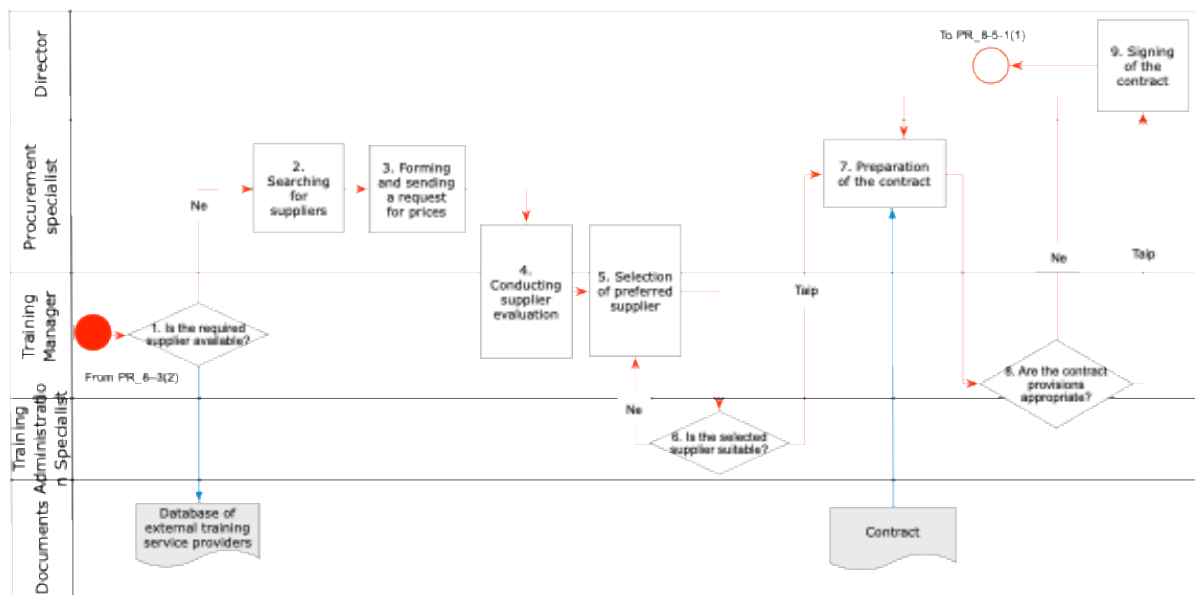
When the need is identified (e.g. change of professional standard, comments and suggestions from employers or apprentices) to adjust an existing curriculum or to develop a new curriculum, this shall be carried out in accordance with the legislation governing TECHIN's activities (including IS and EP regulations, etc.) in accordance with the procedures laid down in the PR 8-3(1) process flow chart:



PR 8-3(1). Preparation or adjustment of a program

#### D) Managing of external training services and products

If TECHIN does not have the necessary internal resources to fulfil the requirements set by the QMS and the client in the context of the task defined in the training contract, the services of qualified suppliers (specialists or trainers) shall be procured by TECHIN in accordance with the procedures set out in the process flowchart No. PR 8-4(1):



PR 8-4(1). Procurement of the services of a specialist / teacher

The requirements for teachers are described in the standard job description.

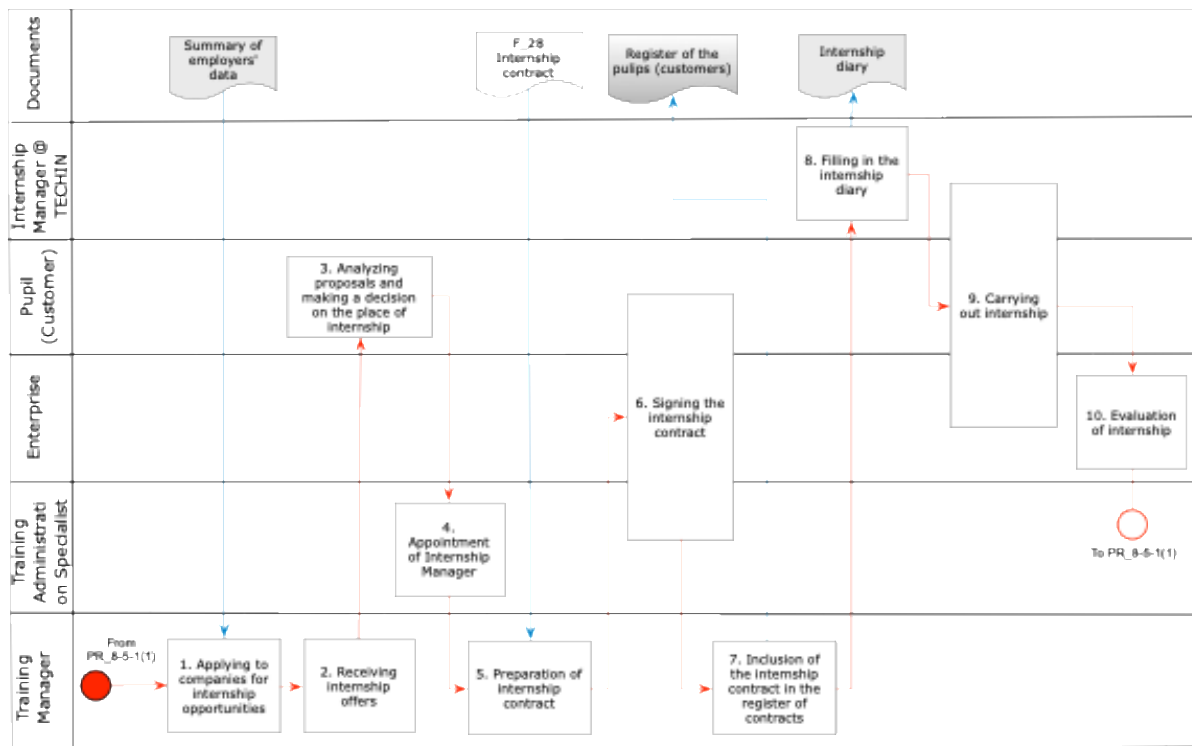
Depending on the nature of the training services, additional specific educational, qualification and experience requirements may be imposed on the professional teacher to be outsourced.

For lower risk areas, TECHIN may grant exemptions from the requirements for a professional teacher to training providers, depending on the impact of the procured training services on the implementation process or on the final outcome of the contract (e.g. in the case of the use of an unqualified trainee professional teacher). The Director decides on the application of the exemption. If the contract with a particular training provider lasts for more than half a year, the Training Manager is responsible for ensuring that this provider's compliance with the requirements is rechecked at least once a year. If the supplier is found not to be compliant, this shall be noted in the contract signed with the training provider and communicated to the Director, who shall decide on the conditions for further cooperation with that supplier. Before taking a decision on the choice of a training supplier, the Director shall ensure that the supplier has been re-evaluated and found to be still eligible.

Requirements for suppliers and subcontractors (where training is provided in the form of apprenticeship training)

Where adult training is provided in the form of apprenticeship training, the enterprises participating in the training scheme are tasked with fulfilling the requirements set out in the legislation governing IS and EP. In cooperation with a particular enterprise, the necessary management arrangements and compliance with the requirements must be ensured by the person delegated by the enterprise to be responsible for organising the training process. In the case of apprenticeship training, the Training Manager is responsible for ensuring that potential



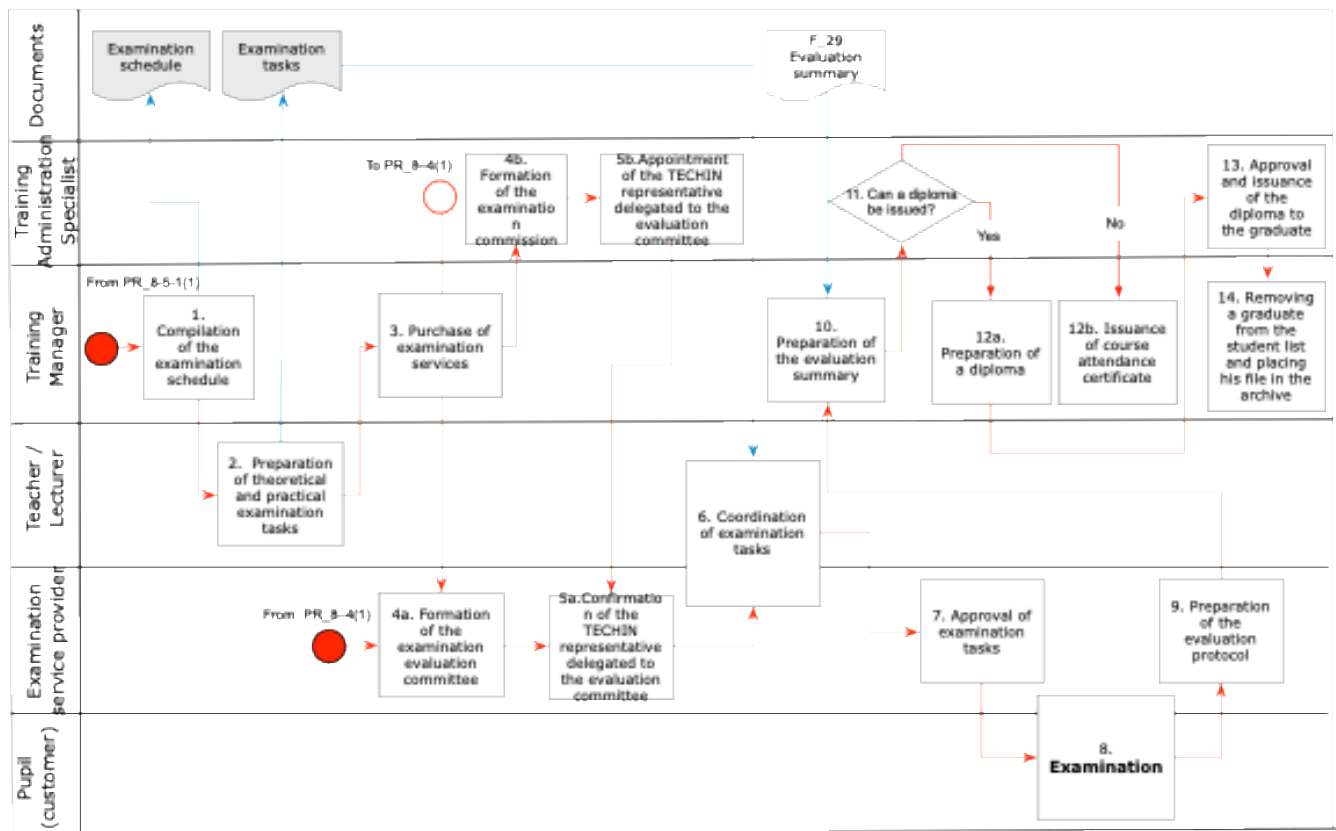


### PER 8-5-1(2). Conduct of the internship

Once the student has completed the curriculum and participated in all the midterm assessments, the Training Manager assesses the structured information and decides whether the student is eligible to sit the final exam.

The examination shall be conducted in accordance with the procedures set out in the PER 8-5-1(3) process chart:





### PER 8-5-1(3). Examination and completion of training

To ensure the quality of training services and compliance with the requirements of the IS and the EP, monitoring and evaluation of the performance of the services in relation to the IS and the client's requirements is carried out.

#### E2. Identification and traceability

Actions for the provision of vocational and other training services shall be identified by marking the relevant entries in accordance with the procedures set out in the process flowcharts of PR 8-5-1(1), PR 8-5-1(2) and PR 8-5-1(3).

#### E3. Client Assets

If the client's assets (e.g. tools, teaching aids, etc.) are used on TECHIN's premises in the course of the provision of services, the procedure for their use (TECHIN's rights and responsibilities) shall be governed by the relevant provisions of the service contract or by a separate agreement with the client. In the case of apprenticeship training, where the client's assets are used on the company's premises, the use of these assets shall be governed by the relevant provisions of the tripartite training contract (TECHIN, the company and the recipient of the training service) or by a separate agreement with the client.

#### *E.4 Preserving the results of training provision*

Once the training has been provided, the client/graduate is issued with a diploma or certificate of completion of the course/module to confirm the qualification awarded. A copy of the certificate shall be registered and kept in accordance with the procedures laid down by the Director. The retention of other information about the pupil shall be governed by legislation.

#### *E.5. Post-training actions*

If TECHIN issues a certificate of completion to a client (graduate), and certain actions are required as a result of the issuance of the certificate of completion by TECHIN, they shall be carried out in accordance with the procedures laid down in the legislation governing TECHIN's activities or in the supplementary agreements concluded with the client.

#### *E.6. Monitoring changes in requirements*

The compliance of TECHIN's provision of vocational and other training services with the requirements of the client shall be managed in accordance with contracts, written orders or other forms of agreements with the client.

### 3.2. VALGA COUNTY VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTER

Adult trainings in Valga County Vocational Training Center are implemented according Adult Education Act<sup>3</sup>. The curricula of all adult education are approved by the director of the training centre. The form and instructions on how to prepare the curriculum and what it must contain, including the assessment of knowledge and skills, including information on the document to be issued after the training and the procedure for issuing it, have been provided in Continuing Education Standard<sup>4</sup> which is under Adult Education Act. Internal quality control is: The curricula are written in collaboration with subject-area teachers. The quality manager occasionally observes lessons and provides teachers with feedback for improvement. At the end of each subject, they collect feedback from students regarding the lessons.

Valga has developed Procedure of the Support Group for Learners with Special Educational Needs at Valga County Vocational Training Center<sup>5</sup> within which support group is created and its main tasks are: identifying the student's special educational needs, and assessing their competencies and needs, determining the necessary support services and measures; preparing an action plan for support measures, making justified organizational proposals and changes based on the plan, and informing the teachers directly involved with the student; evaluating the effectiveness of support services and measures, and making changes if necessary; supporting the creation and implementation of students' Individual Study Plans and others.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/523052019003/consolide>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/519122016001/consolide>

<sup>5</sup> <https://vkok.ee/sites/vkok.ee/files/2024-08/Erivajadustega%20isikute%20tugir%C3%BChma%20t%C3%B6%20B6kord%202024.pdf>

### 3.3. SMART MINDS

Adult trainings in foundation Smart minds are implemented according Cabinet of Ministers "Procedures for Issuing and Cancelling Permits for the Implementation of Non-Formal Education Programs"<sup>6</sup> determine the requirements for the development of non-formal education programs for adults and obtaining permits, if the implementer needs one. Main quality criteria are set: The requirements are set for the educational program and the preparation of its implementer for the implementation of the program, namely the non-formal education program should include the learning outcomes to be achieved, the form, language, content, scope and material and intellectual resources necessary for implementation.

In accordance with the Law on Education, the education quality basic principles, main criteria are:

- (1) compliance with goals (educational results in accordance with the needs of students and the entire society),
- (2) teaching quality (learning process, teachers),
- (3) inclusive environment (physically and emotionally safe, positive environment, motivation),
- (4) good management (process efficiency).<sup>7</sup>

Several criteria are defined for each of the areas and quality indicators for each criterion which are fields to focus for adult learning provider.

Main areas	Criterion
Relevance of the aims	Equality and inclusiveness, Continuing of education and employability, Competences and achievements
Good governance	Support and cooperation, Professional capacity of management, Financial and administrative effectiveness
Inclusive environment	Infrastructure and resources, Safety and wellbeing, Accessibility

Main quality control is based:

1. In Planning - development of training content according needs of learner and trends in the society and national and EU policy;
2. In Organization of training: training place, comfort of learners, sufficient breaks and learning load; quality of learning materials;
3. In Certification: feedback collection of learners; feedback collection of organization who paid for trainings, tools for evaluation of knowledge.

<sup>6</sup> <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/343813-kartiba-kada-tiek-izsniegtas-atlaujas-neformalas-izglitiba-programmas-istenosana>

<sup>7</sup> Guidelines for ensuring the quality of education in general and vocational education 2022 (Internal regulations of the State Service of Education Quality, p. 1-2 - <https://www.ikvd.gov.lv/lv/akreditacija>)

## 4. NEEDS OF ORGANIZATION'S STAFF IN NON-FORMAL ADULT TRAINING

In September 2024 surveys of staff of partner organizations - TECHIN (Lithuania), Valga County Vocational Training Center (Estonia) and Foundation Smart minds (Latvia) were carried out with aim to determine their practice and needs for improvement of quality in planning, organization and certification of adult trainings. 37 staff were reached in total in three countries.

Main findings of organization staff survey:

- 61% of respondents agreed with the statement that there is sufficient information on quality assurance in planning, organization and certification of adult trainings *at organization level* while 39% indicated that additional information on quality assurance in non-formal adult training is needed.
- Most important quality criteria for adult trainings are: the relevance of training program content to achievable results (81% respondents), the training provider has sufficient material resources to implement the program (71%), the achievable results of the program are defined (68%), opinion of learners (graduates) is recognized and taken into account (59%), the instructors have at least 3 years of work experience in the field of the program (32%), while only 22% stated that it is important to provide inclusive education. Other answers: the content of the programs meets the needs of the labour market, interested and professional trainers, clear goal of the educational program.

*There is need for knowledge improvement:*

1. *In planning process* - finding the needs of learners, employers and labour market trends; defining achievable results of program and evaluation of them; definition of material resources needed for effective training; building the content of the curriculum according learning outcomes; trainers with concrete working experience; self – assessment procedures; developing of adult learning management model that is able to respond to the needs of different target groups
2. *In implementing process*: increased cooperation with companies; feedback gathering from learners for improvements; inclusive education
3. *In certification process*: Final evaluation of gained learners knowledge, validation

## 5. EUROPEAN QUALITY ASSURANCE REFERENCE FRAMEWORK

Common European reference framework for Quality Assurance stands for the Vocational Education and Training - EQAVET. The EQAVET emerged from the 2009 Recommendation of the European Parliament and Council, as a European-wide framework to support Quality Assurance in vocational education and training (VET) across Europe, and it was revised in the 2020 Council Recommendation on vocational education and training for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience.

The EQAVET is a reference framework to which the countries voluntarily commit themselves when they develop their national Quality Assurance concepts in accordance with the reference model.

EQAVET does not prescribe a particular Quality Assurance system or approach but provides a framework of common principles, indicative descriptors and indicators that may help in assessing and improving the quality of existing education systems.

EQAVET is based on a Quality Assurance and Improvement cycle which consists of four phases:

- 1) **Planning** – includes a set of clear, appropriate, and measurable goals and objectives in terms of policies, procedures, tasks and human resources.
- 2) **Implementation**, the procedures to ensure the achievement of goals and objectives are established (e.g., development of partnerships, involvement of stakeholders, allocation of resources, and organisational or operational procedures).
- 3) **Assessment and Evaluation** is in which the mechanisms for the evaluation of achievements are designed by collecting and processing data to make an informed assessment.
- 4) **Review** – includes the steps before the cycle starts again: develop procedures to achieve the targeted outcomes and/or new objectives: after processing feedback, key stakeholders conduct discussion and analysis to devise procedures for change.

The EQAVET Framework consists of indicative descriptors and set of reference indicators and both can be applied on adult education system.

### 5.1. Planning

Planning is associated with determination of clear and measurable goals, actions to achieve goals and indicators to assess the level of achievement of goals, preparation of relevant documentation to comply with legal acts, analysis of the competitive environment, identification of expectations and needs of potential customers – adults.

#### **Criterion 1: Clarity of Goals and Objectives**

Definition: This criterion evaluates the clarity and specificity of the goals and objectives set during the planning phase of non-formal education programs for adults.

Examples:

- Clearly defined objectives, such as specific skills or competencies learners should acquire
- Analysis and forecasting of adult training needs
- Measurable goals, with defined indicators for success.

### **Criterion 2: Stakeholder Involvement**

Definition: This criterion assesses the extent to which relevant stakeholders, including educators, learners, employers, and community members, are involved in the planning process.

Examples:

- Involvement of industry representatives in identifying relevant skills and competencies.
- Soliciting input from learners on their educational and career goals.

### **Criterion 3: Integration of Technology and Innovation**

Definition: This criterion evaluates the integration of technology and innovative teaching methods to enhance the learning experience.

Examples:

- Utilizing emerging technologies to stay relevant and competitive in the rapidly evolving job market.
- Incorporating e-learning platforms, virtual labs, or simulations to supplement traditional instruction.

## **5.2. Implementation**

Implementation encompasses a wide range of activities and processes. It is in this phase that the adult training program is prepared and implemented, the human, financial and material resources necessary for the high-quality implementation of the program are allocated accordingly, and staff qualification improvement activities are carried out.

### **Criterion 1: Stakeholder Engagement**

Definition: This criterion assesses the extent to which various stakeholders, including learners, educators, employers, and community members, are actively engaged and involved in the implementation process.

Examples:

- Seeking input from learners on their preferences for instructional methods and learning environments.
- Involving employers in designing curriculum and providing work placements for learners.
- The needs of the learner are clearly defined and understood by all provider staff.
- Publicizing the content of the program, making information available to interested groups.

### **Criterion 2: Resource Allocation and Utilization**

Definition: This criterion focuses on the effective allocation and utilization of human, financial, and material resources to support the implementation of the adult education program.

Examples:

- Ensuring that funds are allocated for necessary equipment, technology, and materials.
- Effectiveness of staff qualification development.
- Implementation of modern learning technologies in the educational process.

### **Criterion 3: Learner-Centered Approach**

Definition: This criterion assesses whether the implementation process prioritizes the needs, preferences, and learning styles of the learners.

Examples:

- Offering multiple learning pathways
- Providing opportunities for self-directed learning and individualized support.
- Use of modern assessment methods to achieve learning progress.
- Attractiveness of the learning process

## **5.3. Evaluation / Review**

In the assessment phase, it is determined to what degree the goals of the non-formal adult education program have been achieved at the learner and system levels. In general, the assessment phase consists of two stages: 1) data is collected and discussed and 2) a decision is made on the basis of that. In this phase, the strengths and weaknesses of program development and implementation activities are also revealed, which become guidelines for quality improvement.

### **Criterion 1: Data Collection Methods**

Definition: This criterion evaluates the effectiveness and appropriateness of the methods used to collect data during the assessment phase.

Examples:

- Regular and consistent collection of relevant data throughout the program implementation cycle
- Early warning systems are designed to help identify early warning of emerging threats to program quality.
- Use of surveys to gather feedback from learners and stakeholders.

### **Criterion 2: Inclusivity and Equity in Assessment**



Definition: This criterion examines whether the assessment process is inclusive and fair, ensuring that all participants have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their skills and knowledge.

Examples:

- Providing reasonable support for learners with specific needs during assessments.
- Ensuring that assessment methods do not inadvertently disadvantage any particular group.

### **Criterion 3: Transparency and Communication**

Definition: This criterion evaluates how transparent and clear the assessment process is for all stakeholders, including learners, educators, and external partners.

Examples:

- Clearly communicating assessment criteria and expectations to learners in advance.
- Publicizing learner feedback: testimonials, success stories.

## 5.4. Follow-up

The review completes the program quality cycle. Also, the results of the self-assessment must be discussed in detail with all interested parties.

### **Criterion 1: Action Planning and Implementation**

Definition: This criterion focuses on the development and execution of action plans to address identified areas for improvement or new objectives.

Examples:

- Creating a detailed action plan with specific tasks, responsible parties, and timelines for implementation.
- Allocating resources to support the execution of identified improvements, such as additional training for instructors or updated equipment.

### **Criterion 2: Monitoring of Changes**

Definition: This criterion assesses the establishment of mechanisms for monitoring and tracking the progress of implemented changes.

Examples:

- Using key performance indicators to measure the impact
- Validity and appropriateness of updating the content of the program and/or improving the implementation process.

### **Criterion 3: Stakeholder Engagement in Follow-up**

Definition: This criterion evaluates the level of engagement and involvement of stakeholders in the follow-up process, including their participation in discussions and analyses.



Examples:

- Convening regular meetings or forums with stakeholders to review progress and discuss the effectiveness of implemented changes.
- Organization of peer learning and peer assessment activities.
- Encouraging active participation from industry partners in evaluating the relevance of program updates.

## 5. MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF QUALITY ASSURANCE IN EACH PHRASE OF ADULT TRAINING

There is a consensus across all sectors of the economy that continuous adult training enables learning to become conscious and proactive rather than passive and reactive. This means that the individual must document and record the increasing skills, knowledge and experience gained throughout their career.

Further training for adults combines different learning methodologies, including training courses, seminars, conferences and events, webinars and online e-learning, learning programs, it can also involve sharing best practice methods, thoughts and ideas focused on personal development in the workplace.

In order to further improve the provision of further training services for adults, any of the types of training found in foreign countries or a combination of them can be applied:

- *structured further training* / active training. Typically involves interactive and participatory training. It is often proactive and may include training courses, workshops, conferences, e-mails, etc. attending training courses.
- *reflective non-formal further learning* / passive learning. Defines learning that often has a structured format but usually does not involve participatory interaction, making this form of training much more passive and focused. Examples include watching educational videos and tutorials, attending a non-interactive lecture, industry briefings, podcasts, case studies, etc.
- *non-formal continuing learning* / self-directed learning. Includes all unsupervised and unstructured learning. This includes discussions in forums, reading books, articles and publications; in print or online. Self-directed learning often does not have specific learning deadlines, is informal, and learning outcomes may vary from person to person.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to continuous improvement, but a blended approach to learning that includes many different types of adult training can increase the likelihood of retention and individual engagement. Based on assessments and participants'

experiences, at least 50 percent of adult learners should be experienced in a active learning environment.

Quality assurance in adult training is a vital but complex area. The main obstacle faced is the large investment required, both in terms of financial and human resources.

An effective quality assurance system requires specialized staff and robust physical and digital infrastructure. These resources are critical to implementing effective quality assurance measures. Given that the benefits of such investments are usually seen in the medium term, there may be hesitation to invest in quality assurance, particularly in times of financial stress or other immediate cost pressures.

Attempts to improve or modify quality assurance procedures may be met with considerable resistance. Institutions and individuals often fear policy changes because of potential disruptions and changes to familiar workflows and procedures. Concerns may increase if the benefits of the change are not clearly communicated or if stakeholders feel left out of the consultation process. Consequently, the evolution of quality assurance systems is often a slow and incremental process.

When an organization is rapidly expanding adult learning programs, it is critical to ensure that the existing quality assurance mechanism can effectively manage the potentially large volume. It is important to emphasize that no single quality assurance mechanism works well for all quality assurance needs. Each has its own unique strengths and can be more or less adapted to different contexts. Therefore, each organization may benefit from implementing the following quality assurance mechanisms for adult education services, which are best used in combination, taking into account the characteristics of the context of adult education provision in the organization and the characteristics of specific groups of service providers:

- *ensuring a consistent and effective approach to certification.* Certification is an important quality assurance mechanism for many adult training service providers. The main advantage is that after establishing clear quality standards, service providers can be certified by a third-party organization (for example, by recognizing the quality of service provision with a certificate confirming compliance with the requirements of ISO 9001 or another standard). This approach ensures consistency and simplifies assessment processes. Standardized criteria and efficient procedures help manage the increased number of service providers seeking certification while meeting minimum quality requirements.
- *empowering providers to carry out self-assessment.* Self-assessment can be useful when there are many providers. In self-assessment, providers evaluate their services and procedures using predetermined quality indicators or criteria. Empowering providers to take responsibility for their quality improvement efforts reduces the burden on external evaluators. Scalability and efficient management of a larger number of providers could be achieved through online platforms or automated systems, facilitating simplified self-assessment procedures.
- *cost management through the selection method for quality inspections.* Carrying out detailed quality checks on each supplier becomes difficult due to the high volume. Thus, the sampling method may be more economical. Quality checks can be performed using

a representative sample of providers selected using statistically sound sampling methods. This approach provides a reasonable assessment of overall quality without testing each supplier individually.

- *balance of benefits and costs of quality recognitions (signs).* Quality labels can raise awareness of quality standards in the adult training service sector. Used to recognize and reward those providers who excel in maintaining high standards, quality marks promote a culture of quality and continuous improvement among all providers. They also encourage competition and motivate service providers to achieve better results. Quality awards can also be an effective marketing tool, improving the reputation of awarded service providers and increasing their appeal to potential learners.

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