

FRANCE



National strategy paper

Introduction

The objective of the paper is to state the way that particular country can elaborate/adjust their national strategy. The strategy should be based on the outcomes of the project, and of national conferences on QA policy in VNFIL to debate the value of Peer Reviews with the national networks.

The national strategy papers should be drawn up between December 2017 and May 2018 in all partner countries. It will take up from the Synthesis report (O 1) and all the experiences and outputs of the project.

The national coordinators are responsible for writing them, the Lithuanian Education Trade Union (P 10) will guide the process, analyse country papers and compile a synthesis for the whole project.

1. Lessons learned / experiences from the project on the institutional and national level (max. 0,5 – 1 page)

The management and staff of CIBC Bourgogne Sud considers the experience with transnational peer visits to be the main direct added value of this project. It allowed the centre to analyse its strengths and weaknesses in the validation provision and to prepare an action plan. The main outcomes of the pilot phase for the validation practice of CIBC were the following:

- No structured documentation is available for candidates and counsellors, which affects the uniformity of the interviews and the style of work of the counsellor and can also be a danger for the homogeneity and quality of the practice: when counsellors are leaving CIBC, their experiences and know-

how is not preserved. New counsellors are trained exclusively based on the experience of the current counsellors.

- Few regional meetings are organized between counsellors for exchange ideas and experiences, which also does not allow sharing good practices and experiences. Team building could strengthen the team culture and culture of cooperation and mutual support among counsellors. Guided professional exchanges may enhance developing competences and the flow of information and know-how among counsellors.
- More investments should be done to “marketing” activities of the VNFIL towards potential beneficiaries. Experiment with new forms of information sessions for candidates (e.g. group workshops, written validation information) that would allow a more efficient targeting of new types of beneficiaries.
- There is a way for optimizing the VNFIL procedure by putting more focus on giving telephone information and/or providing beneficiaries with personalized information before the personal meeting with the counsellor.
- There is a lack of visibility in terms of tracing the drop-outs from the VNFIL process: there should be a structured feedback system from the certification bodies that would allow to track these beneficiaries and clarify reasons for this.

CIBC Bourgogne Sud has adopted a plan for the development and quality improvement of their VNFIL provision to address these issues:

- An internal methodological guide for counsellors was developed and shared between practitioners.
- Regular meetings between counsellors on regional level are organized (every 3 months) to share best practices.
- New marketing approaches were conceived: a webinar for HR professionals to inform them about this possibilities was organized after the peer visit and another one is planned.

Other non-tangible impact included better awareness of the counsellors concerning their practice and better organization awareness of the VNFIL provision within the company.

(For example, you can use outcomes of Synthesis report, PR reports and Meta evaluations, meetings, etc.)

2. Added-value of Peer Review (national and transnational) for VNFIL providers in the country (max. 0,5 – 1 page)

Stakeholders perceive very clearly the benefits of the Peer Review, namely the following: focus on quality improvement and professionalization, integration into quality cycle, formalization of the procedure and its outcomes). The transnational Peer Review that was realized in the CIBC Bourgogne Sud was perceived in a very positive way by regional stakeholders. The meetings initiated during the Peer Review and afterwards were the beginning of the process of creation a regional quality chart for initial phases of VNFIL that are realized by the publicly funded network of information and identification centres (“PRC VAE”). These centres are funded based on a contract of providers with the regional authority. The quality chart developed in the VNFIL project served as the inspiration for the creation of this quality chart.

However, the stakeholders also came to the conclusion, that Peer Review is currently very rarely used in France, and usually in cases of international cooperation and development (e.g. OECD policy assessment, nuclear security, employment services peer review). The culture of peer review is missing and most of the quality assurance systems are based on quality standards, audit procedures and certification. In the system where quality requirements are regulated by the law and where the provision is fragmented among different institutional partners, the Peer Review is difficult to implement on a large scale. Also, given the reform of the lifelong learning and lifelong guidance system in France, stakeholders agreed, that the benefit of the Peer Review in France is a valuable instrument to be used within regional networks of bodies working in the field of information and identification in the VNFIL process.

(You can use outcomes of the meetings with stakeholders, national conferences, etc.)

3. Potential and challenges for implementing Peer Review as a formative external evaluation for VNFIL into the QA system for VNFIL in the country (max. 1 – 2 pages) :

3.1. Basic validation features

QA is done mainly through national legislation: The 2002 Social Modernisation Act that introduced the current system defines the general process and rules for the RVC. There is, however, no quality assurance framework with precise quality standards and no formalised quality control processes.

VNFIL systems are very diverse in different countries and in France the main characteristics of the process are managed centrally by the ministries. Therefore potential of national impact is quite limited. The Peer Review can have impact on the quality of the first phases of VNFIL (information, identification), where the process is less legislated and some flexibility can be found due to regional funding and piloting.

3.2. Conditions for developing and implementing validation

Validation is a relatively well established procedure in France and the centralistic organization of the system limits the potential impact of Peer Review on its further development.

3.3. Validation contexts

The VNFIL process in France is long (up to 12 months) and necessitates guidance by a specialist. The process follows the classical structure (identification – documentation – assessment – certification) and the outcome of VNFIL is always a formal qualification – there is no distinction between certificate / diploma gained through formal education and a certification gained through validation. As mentioned previously, the potential impact of Peer Review is mainly limited to the identification and documentation phase, as well as on guidance and counselling.

3.4. Plans for further use of Peer Review for VNFIL in the country

Peer Review is planned to be used on the regional level in the Burgundy – Franche-Comté region. In terms of a larger scale impact, the peer review was implemented within the regional network of PRC VAE centres in this region. The merger of the two previously separated regions led to organizational changes in VNFIL provision that necessitated a harmonization of the practices. The peer-review will be first used as a first approach, but in a less formalized way (shorter duration, use of different documentation etc.) since September 2018.

3.5. Potential and challenges of building up a Peer Review Network in VNFIL on the European level.

An attractive accreditation/labelling procedure of Peer Review could increase the recognition of the process. However, there is currently little recognition in France of foreign quality awards – mainly given the linguistic barriers. Individual providers of VNFIL are motivated by transnational experiences in Peer Review, however, there needs to be a financial support that would cover the necessary costs of such enterprise. A possibility of organizing structured Peer-Review was invoked by stakeholders within the Erasmus+ mobilities (KA1).

(You can use information/outcomes of/from Business plan, Synthesis report, etc.)

4. Further dissemination of Peer Review in the country (including concrete activities and target groups) (max. 0,5 – 1 page)

The main focus of the dissemination efforts was on the regional level: the regional information and identification centres PRC VAE were targeted. Elements of Peer Review were integrated into the network during the merger of the Burgundy region with Franche-Comté region. The newly created regional network is currently composed of 20 counsellors from PRC VAE. The experience of CIBC Bourgogne Sud in Peer Review approach was presented during the meeting in October 2017.

The Peer Review experience will also be presented to representatives of the regional committees for lifelong guidance in Burgundy and Franche-Comté, so that the practice can be integrated in the quality assurance practice of the region. First regional Peer Reviews are planned for September 2018.

The Peer Review approach was disseminated to the National Federation of CIBCs, representing more than 250 centres of bilan de compétences. The current quality assurance system developed by this network is based on a quality chart and an audit process and applied only to the provision of lifelong guidance. However, in order to stimulate the quality development of the practice, the network considers organizing pilot Peer Review experiences between regional centres of career guidance and bilan de compétences. The real spread of the practice will depend on the perceived usefulness of this practice by the regional providers. The practice will be used in its simplified form: for example, given certain homogeneity of the context and of the practice, the initial self-evaluation will be made simpler.