

Quality Assurance Standards

A synthesis of quality standards across partner countries

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Contents

Tables and Figures	3
Partners.....	4
About this project	5
About this report	9
About quality assurance in career guidance.....	9
What is quality and quality assurance?	10
Quality assurance as policy.....	10
Typical features of the regulatory approach include:	11
Typical features of the advisory approach include:.....	11
Typical features of the organic approach include:	11
Typical features of the competitive approach include:.....	11
Overview of data collection	11
Findings	13
What types of labels were submitted?	14
Mentoring programme for career guidance practitioners	16
Certification procedure for career guidance professionals.....	18
Quality development framework for organisations providing guidance	19
Audit/labelling procedure for organisational providers of career guidance.....	22
Discussion.....	27
Conclusion.....	29
References	31
Appendix 1. Audit template.....	33
Appendix 2. Standards submitted	39

Tables and Figures

Table 1. Submissions by country.....	12
Table 2. Partner countries and quality standards submitted.....	13
Table 3. Quality label target group	14
Table 4. Certification level of the quality standard.	15
Table 5. Level of standard.....	16
Table 6. Quality standard assessment type	23
Table 7. Resources listed to support quality standard process.....	23
Table 8. Audit methods.....	24
Table 9. Accreditation length.....	26
Table 10. Content analysis of the frameworks	26
Figure 1. Summary of outputs	8
Figure 2. Hooley and Rice model of QA certification.....	11
Figure 3. Reflective practice and action research cycles.	22

Partners

Association for Career Guidance and Career Development, Slovakia (ZKPRK) – coordinator of the project initiative, association of career professionals and service providers in Slovakia (www.rozvojkariery.sk)

BKS Uspech, Slovakia – applicant organisation, career guidance and training provider, ISO certification expert (www.bksuspech.sk)

Teamwork for a better future, Slovakia – non-profit association working in career guidance (www.ozbuducnost.sk)

NOLOC, Netherland - Dutch association for career professionals with about 2850 members (www.noloc.nl)

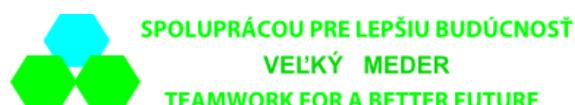
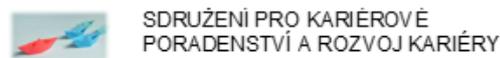
German National Guidance Forum in Education, Career and Employment, Germany (nfb) – creator/coordinator of the national QA system for guidance (www.forum-beratung.de)

International Centre for Guidance Studies (iCeGS), England - applied research centre specialising in career development and employability (<http://www.derby.ac.uk/research/icegs/>)

ABIF, Austria - independent social science research and consulting institute with a clear focus on practical application of research (www.abif.at)

Association for Career Guidance and Career Development, Czech republic – newly created sister organisation of ZKPRK in the Czech republic

Inland Norway University of Applied Science (INN), Norway – research institution



Executive Summary

QUAL-IM-G is an Erasmus + funded project which aims to build on the experience of different projects in the field of quality assurance for career guidance. It recognises that countries will have varying traditions in developing quality standards to support individual practitioners and organisational procedures. The project will review current national and transnational quality assurance processes, develop a certification/accreditation procedure for career guidance practitioners, and create a quality assurance framework for provider organisations.

This report presents an analysis a range of transnational and national quality assurance (QA) practices in career guidance within partner countries, 21 quality activities were assessed. The report focuses on identifying the variation of different approaches, the factors that enable these approaches and the impact of these different approaches.

Project headlines

- Most labels submitted were for individuals and organisations predominantly addressing all age needs, although specialist awards were identified that have a focus on SEND. Certification processes tended to be organisational focused, with smaller numbers addressing individual counsellors or both.
- Most of the labels examined were national standards and were voluntary except in the UK where the standards were linked to accessing public funding.
- Only 14% of quality standards provide mentoring as part of the support resources for organisations and individuals. The mentoring relationships identified focused on goal related (instrumental) support which was aimed a predefined goal or psychosocial (developmental) focused on supporting competence and effectiveness within professional practice.
- Quality development frameworks support quality assurance and enhance guidance services within organisations. NOLOC and CMI in The Netherlands have recently consolidated their quality development frameworks to create on national standard.
- Assessments of quality standards tend to include both internal and external elements. A range of resources are available to support the process and include workshops, mentoring, portfolios, case studies and webinars for example. Audit methods predominantly include the production of portfolios of evidence and or assessment visits. Often a number of methods were used.
- Accreditation lengths lasted on average for 3 years but the longest being 5 years and shortest 1 year. 67% of quality labels had associated costs, these varied between €262 and €7500.
- Most quality assurance standards addressed multiple and inter-related aspects of provision including, professionalism, CPD, evaluation, partnerships, LMI, client satisfaction and leadership.

There are many challenges with quality systems as there is often little backing from government and limited financial and personal resources available. However, quality is a policy issue and is the collective responsibility of service providers, policy makers and other

stakeholders. Strong professional association play an important role in developing professional standards for career guidance.

About this project – Improving the implementation of quality assurance in career guidance (QUAL-IM-GUIDE)

Introduction

This Erasmus + funded project was established to build on the experience of different projects in the field of quality assurance for career guidance. It recognises that countries, depending on the history in the field of careers will have varying traditions in developing quality standards to support individual practitioners and organisational procedures.

The goal of this project therefore is to:

- review current national and transnational quality assurance processes,
- develop a certification/accreditation procedure for career guidance practitioners, and
- create a quality assurance framework for provider organisations.

The project also seeks to develop a programme of support for individuals and providers including a mentoring programme for career guidance practitioners and resources for providers to ensure they are working toward or maintaining the award through audit and/or recognised certification procedures. The terms quality label, quality mark and quality award are often used as the recognition of having achieved a recognised quality standard.

For the purpose of this project, we started with the definitions of quality developed as part of the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN, 2014) project. As this project has evolved so too have the definitions. The Intellectual Outcome 4 paper 'Designing a quality development Framework (QDF) for organisations providing career guidance' presents a comprehensive and useful set of definitions addressing all aspects of quality.

The terms we have used within this research are:

Quality assurance: refers to activities involving planning, implementation, evaluation, reporting, and quality improvement, implemented to ensure that guidance activities (content of programmes, design, assessment and validation of outcomes, etc.) meet the quality requirements expected by stakeholders. The terms quality assurance and quality management are often used interchangeably when discussing quality related activities.

Quality Standard: refers to a defined degree of quality, which an organization or a public authority sets for the service provision they are responsible for. It defines what an organization or the public authority expects of the provider and his employees in delivering these operations or a client can expect when using the service. A Quality Standard usually is described by a number of dimensions, criteria, and (measurable) indicators. The quality standard can be defined by law or other normative regulations or it is the result of a common process of understanding by the actors and stakeholders involved. Depending on its legal status a quality standard can be binding (e.g. for members of an association or for service providers and professionals receiving public funding) or it can be just a

recommendation to the professional community (practitioners and/or providers) that is supported by voluntary self-commitment.

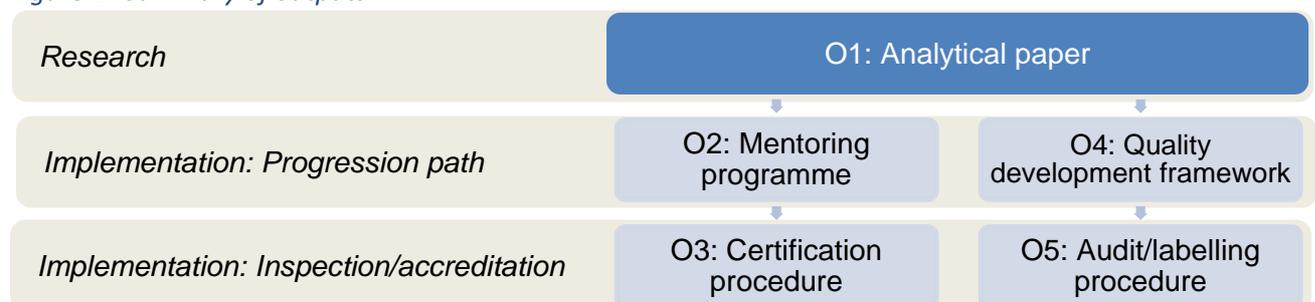
Project outline

The project consists of five work packages with the following intellectual outputs:

- **O1: Analytical paper on impact and success factors of different QA approaches in Europe:** Through qualitative and quantitative research, the current state of different trans-national and national QA practices in CG will be analysed. Focus will be on identifying the success factors and impact of these different approaches. This output will be the basis for the development of other outputs.
- **O2: Mentoring programme for CG practitioners:** A non-formal mentoring/training programme that will allow practitioners to comply with a quality standard. O2 will contain general recommendations as well as examples of training modules and other activities that allow the counsellor to develop skills and competences in areas required in most of the QA practices focused on individual counsellor.
- **O3: Certification/accreditation procedure of CG practitioners:** procedure for the accreditation of counsellors (recommendations and examples of evaluation/assessment tools and procedures, of possible required evidence, example of personal portfolio...)
- **O4: Quality development framework for providers:** model that supports service providers with quality development and assurance. It will be focused on the development of quality in indicators that are most commonly present in different standards.
- **O5: Audit/labelling procedure for providers:** possible form: pre-audit process, self-evaluation questionnaire/checklist, audit plan, certification/labelling system

Figure 1 details these outputs and shows how they relate to the key aims of the project. The report is the first of five outputs of the ongoing Erasmus+ project.

Figure 1. Summary of outputs



About this report

This report analyses a range of transnational and national quality assurance (QA) practices in career guidance within partner countries. It focuses on identifying the variation of different approaches, the factors that enable these approaches and the impact of these different approaches. The conclusions from this work will be used to develop four outputs (O2-05) in order to strengthen the implementation of different quality standards in partner countries.

The report will present findings and recommendations for the following points:

- What is the usage and spread of different trans-national quality standards and quality frameworks for individual counsellors (European Career Guidance Certificates, NICE etc.) and for institutional providers of career guidance (e.g. Quality Label “Bilan de compétences)
- What is the real impact of these standards for the professionalisation of career guidance provision?
- How are different quality assurance approaches used in selected European and non-European countries?
- How are different guidelines for career guidance strategies and policies implemented in different countries? What are the main challenges and how are they dealt with in different countries?
- What best practices can be found that illustrate the main approaches in quality assurance in career guidance?
- What are the main areas addressed by these quality standards, and which areas are often or always ignored?
- What mechanisms are used to foster the implementation of quality assurance in career guidance for individual counsellors (e.g. mentoring)?
- What mechanisms are used to foster the implementation of quality assurance in career guidance for organisations providing career guidance (e.g. the provision of quality development and self-evaluation tools)?
- What specific policy recommendations can be inferred from these findings?

About quality assurance in career guidance

This project builds on the experience of previous projects and initiatives in the field of quality assurance in career guidance. The Resolution of the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN) Council 2008/C 319/02 on better integrating lifelong guidance into lifelong learning strategies led to the development of different quality standards for individual counsellors and organisational providers of career guidance.

The ELGPN (2012) recommended that quality assurance should be one of the key features of a lifelong guidance system, recommending that there should be:

- clear professional standards established for guidance practitioners working in a variety of different roles in different sectors;
- standards linked to career progression routes for guidance practitioners; which include progression to and from related occupations;
- organisational quality standards;
- citizen/user involvement in the definition of quality and the design, implementation and evaluation of guidance services;
- a clear and public statement of citizen entitlement to guidance services; and
- the ongoing development of the evidence base in career guidance.

These recommendations build on the experience that in many countries (especially those with little or no tradition of providing career guidance) there is little formal management of quality. However, such recommendations are relevant both for countries which are new to career guidance and to those with a strong tradition of career guidance.

What is quality and quality assurance?

When we think of quality we often think of goods or services delivered to a high standard (Hooley and Rice, 2018). However, Sultana (2018) argues that the term 'quality' is difficult to operationalise because it is a complex and contested concept. A definition of quality in general and abstract terms without context is difficult. Sultana (2018) suggests that quality is subjective and means different things to different people. Individual differences exist in the *expectation* of career guidance services as well as individual differences in the *experience* of career guidance services.

Sultana suggests that quality concepts have both political and power dimensions. Community and societal values are influential in determining expectations and experiences of career guidance services. What we think of as high-quality products and services depend heavily on our values which may vary at the macro level from society to society or at the group level within society. As a result, it is important to be mindful of who is defining and constructing quality as well as considering for whose benefit different approaches to quality work.

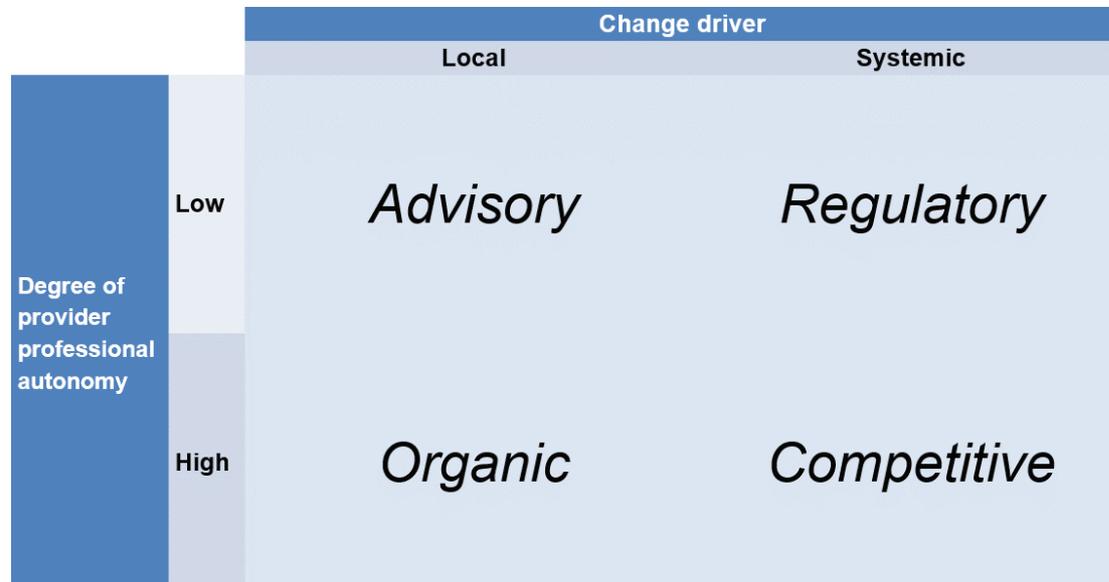
Quality assurance as policy

When career guidance is part of national or international policy there are often differences between the initial policy directive and how it is delivered in practice (Hooley and Rice, 2018). Quality assurance processes can help to provide checks that career guidance services are delivered consistently and that they fulfil the original policy aims.

Hooley and Rice (2018) present a model to distinguish between frameworks and systems that offer greater and lesser amounts of professional autonomy and models which place the responsibility for quality locally in contrast to those that view it at a higher level e.g. nationally. Their approach parses out the nuances of systems where it is compulsory to have

a quality assurance label in order to deliver versus systems where quality assurance labels are voluntary certification. The model is also useful in understanding the mechanisms of standard certification.

Figure 2. Hooley and Rice model of QA certification.



The **regulatory approach** typically sets out clear legal requirements and formal standards and polices them through inspection regimes. Practitioners may be required to be qualified or registered and there may also be regulations around tools, resources, facilities and outputs (e.g., a requirement that a school or career guidance facility must provide a certain number of individual counselling sessions per year).

The **advisory approach** typically focuses on practice improvement around clearly articulated, but non-binding, standards. As such it will often include models, benchmarks and exemplars of good practice and advice and support for providers and professionals. Such an approach will make use of moral rather than legal pressure.

The **organic approach** is where quality is defined by the provider and the professional and driven by professional values and the desire to do a good job. Mechanisms associated with organic quality assurance approaches include quality circles, supervisory arrangements, peer observation and mentoring, the use of professional networks and communities of practice, local self-evaluation processes and the involvement of users as co-producers.

The **competitive approach** seeks to drive quality based on performance and the provision of information about performance to customers. Typical mechanisms that are used include consumer feedback, the development of league tables, a strong focus on outcomes and the use of payment by results approaches.

Overview of data collection

The first output of the project is completion of an analytical paper synthesizing information on quality assurance (QA) processes used in partner countries. Findings from the report will

inform the development of the four subsequent outputs. Data collection protocols were agreed during the October 2017 launch meeting of the project in Bratislava, Slovakia.

An audit template (Appendix 1) was created to gather qualitative data about QA processes in each partner organisation's country. Partner organisations were asked to complete one template for each quality standard available in their country. Table 1 lists the number of submissions received by country.

Table 1. Submissions by country.

Partner Country	Number of Submissions
The Netherlands	4
Germany	6
Norway	1
Czechia	3
England	2
Slovakia	2
Austria	3
<i>Total</i>	21

A total of twenty-one templates were collected for analysis. Some data were inputted into excel for ease of analysis. Content analysis was used to synthesise the qualitative findings. In some instances, descriptive statistics were used to best make sense of the data.

Findings

The following section details the results from the audit template. Table 2 details the partner countries and the standards audited. Some countries completed the template for international standards, many for their own national standards and one partner country audited a standard also used in France (Qualite Totale CIBC).

Table 2. Partner countries and quality standards submitted.

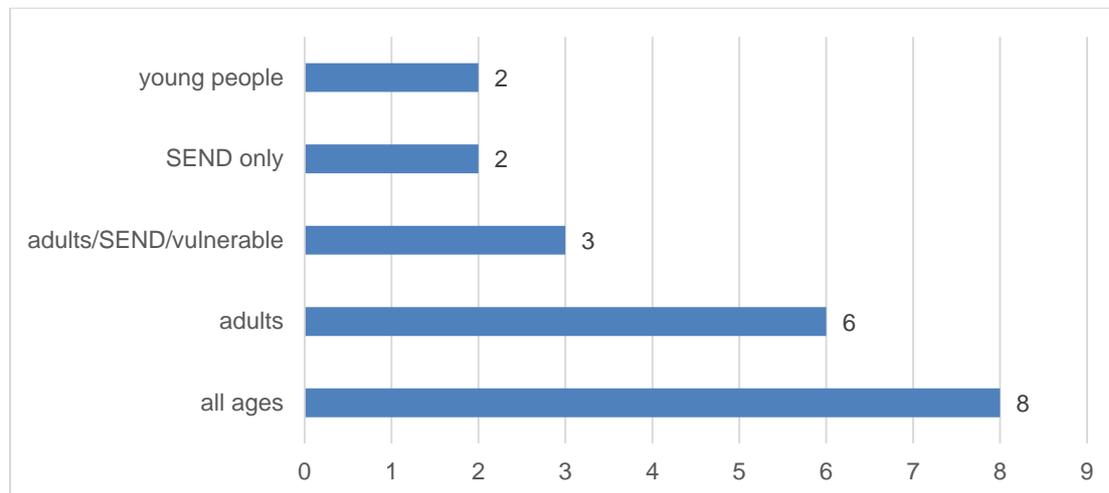
Partner Organisation Country	Quality Standard
<i>The Netherlands</i>	Noloc Erkend Loopbaanprofessional (Noloc Acknowledged Career Professional)
	OVAL
	Blik op Werk Keurmerk
	Register Loopbaanprofessional / Registered Career Guidance Professional
<i>Germany</i>	BerufsBeratungsRegister (Career guidance register)
	Quality Frame Berliner Model
	Kundenorientierte Qualitätstestierung für Beratungsorganisationen
	BeQu Standard
	Quality Standards for Guidance Practitioners in the Area of Education, Career and Employment
	Certified provider of educational guidance and counselling
<i>Czech Republic</i>	Euroguidance National Career Guidance Award
<i>Slovakia</i>	Quality standards of supported employment
	IMPROVE – project Improving Validation of Not-Formal Learning in European Career Guidance Practitioners
<i>Norway</i>	Recommendations for guidance in schools
<i>International</i>	Qualité Europe Bilan de Compétences
	Qualite Totale CIBC (French standard)
<i>Austria</i>	European Career Guidance Certificate
	Certified Adult Educator
<i>United Kingdom</i>	The Matrix Standard
	Quality in Careers

What types of labels/quality standards were submitted?

Partner organisations estimated the number of individuals and organisations accredited with each label if the specific number was not known. Most quality standards submitted were for organisations with an average of 415 organisations per standard. There was a large range and variation with one label having one organisation and another having 1823 organisations. Seven labels were for individual practitioners with an average of 448 individuals certified under the label. Again there was a large amount of variation where the smallest amount certified was 40 individuals under one label and 1400 individuals certified under another.

Most of the labels submitted were for individuals or organisations working with all ages or adults only. Only two labels were targeted for services with young people and two labels certified providers of career guidance for special education needs and disability (SEND) clients.

Table 3. Quality label target group



Most quality labels (67%) had costs associated with the quality assurance process. The average cost per quality label was up to €3267 with a range running from €262 to €7,500 Euros.

Purpose of the standard: Individual or organisational

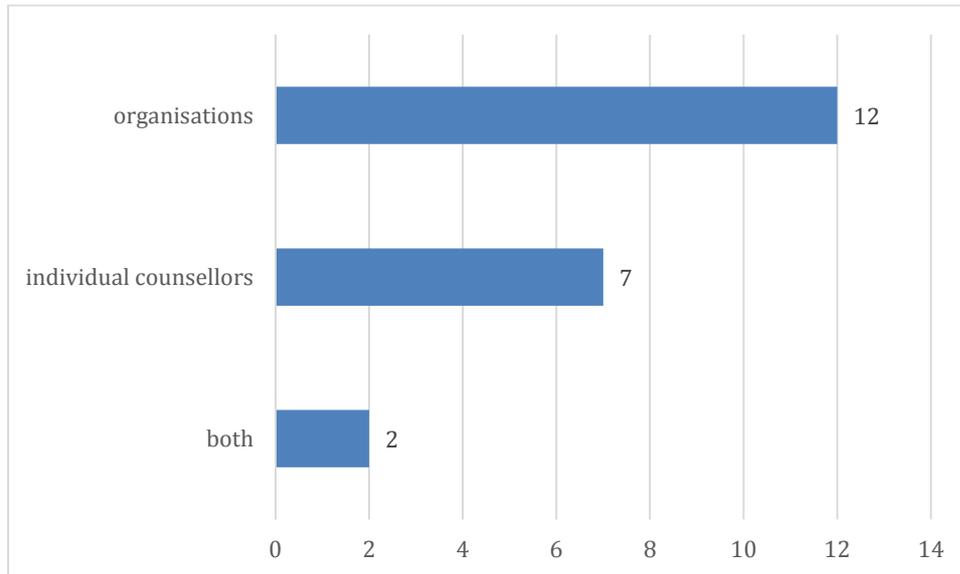
We asked questions to determine whether quality labels in partner countries were labels to quality assure individuals or organisational provision.

- Two labels were procedures aimed at certifying features both in the organisational and individual levels (National Career Guidance award - Czech republic and Recommendations for guidance in Schools – Norway).
- Nine examples of certification procedures at individual level (e.g. Qualité Europe Bilan de Compétences – counsellor – France, and BBR BerufsBeratungsRegister (Career guidance Register, Germany)).

- Ten examples are aimed specifically at the organisational level (e.g. Quality in Guidance and Counselling in the field of Education, Career and Employment – Germany, and the Matrix Standard – England).

Table 4 below details certification levels for each of the quality standards.

Table 4. Certification level of the quality standard.



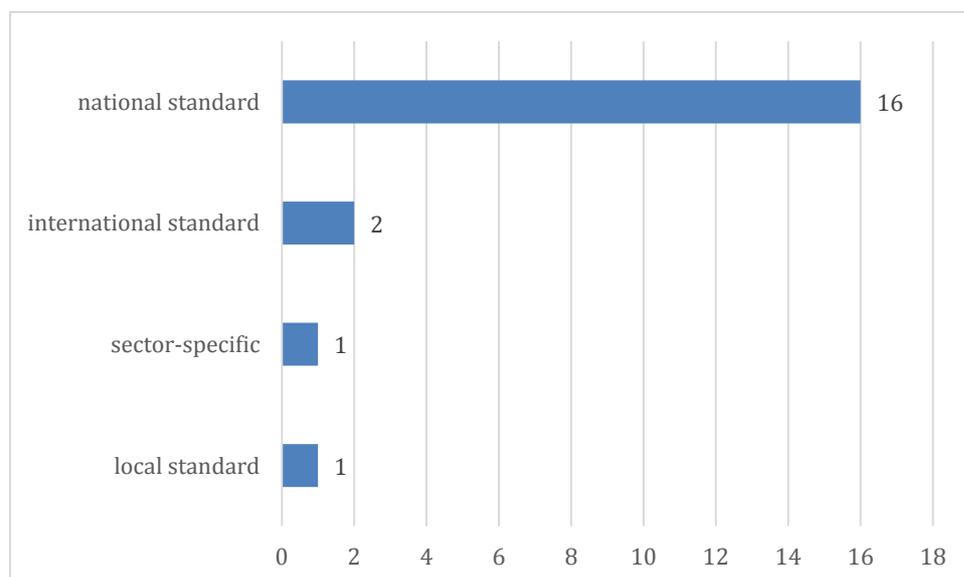
The certification procedures collected in the templates were primarily focussed on quality assurance in the organisation and people domains. This implies that their main focus is on helping determine whether provider organisations are designed, resourced and managed in a way that enables quality delivery. They also ensure that delivery staff adhere to professional standards of the sector. In five countries (The Netherlands, Austria, Germany, Czech Republic and England), there are procedures for certification of both organisational and individual level, but these are separate quality labels rather than incorporated into the same label.

Is the standard awarded nationally, internationally or locally and is it compulsory?

Most quality labels analysed were voluntary to undertake. Two standards were compulsory. For the Matrix Standard in the UK, all organisations which received public funding must meet the requirements of the standard.

Most quality labels used in partner countries were national standards while some standards were local or sector specific. Two labels used in partner countries were international standards however there seems to be a focus on national standards in partner countries rather than ensuring accreditation with international labels.

Table 5. Level of standard.



In appendix 2 we detail each standard, the level at which it accredits and whether it is compulsory.

Mentoring programmes for career guidance practitioners

Mentoring relationships come in two primary forms:

- **Goal-related (instrumental) support.** This type of mentoring relationship focusses on mentee success and advancement in relation to a set of goals articulated prior to the relationship.
- **Psychosocial (developmental) support.** This type of mentoring relationship focusses on the supporting the mentee as they develop their sense of identity, competence and effectiveness as a professional (Allen, Finkelstein and Poteet, 2009).

Allen, et al. (2009) suggests that a needs assessment should be completed prior to designing a mentoring programme. Questions from the audit template provide a useful starting point to discuss the needs required for a quality standard mentoring programme. We collected data on a variety of topics including information about quality standard implementation challenges and types of resources made available for each standard. This information will be used to help inform the creation of a mentoring programme that can be accessed as part of the quality standard process.

Most quality standards in the partner countries did not use mentoring as a part of their resources to support individuals or organisations through the accreditation process. Three out of 21 completed forms stated they had a mentoring programme.

Only 14% of quality standards audited had a mentoring programme as a part of the accreditation journey for individuals and organisations.

Although most quality standards audited did not explicitly state the use of a mentoring programme to support individuals or organisations through the journey, most quality standards audited did have bespoke resources to guide the process. These resources will be discussed further in the section on audit and labelling procedures.

There are several common elements to consider when developing effective mentoring programmes:

- **Context.** The location of mentor-mentee meeting (Karcher, Kuperminc, Portwood, Sipe, and Taylor, 2006). Will the mentoring programmes be face-to-face at the organization? Will the mentoring be conducted online? Will the mentoring programme be a blend of the two?
- **Structure.** The nature of the mentor-mentee relationship. Will the mentoring be one-to-one or group mentoring?
- **Goals.** What are the goals for the programme? Is it successful implementation of the quality standard (instrumental) or will other elements of professional development (developmental) be included?
- **Infrastructure.** The infrastructure for a mentoring programme refers to the recruitment, training and ongoing support for mentors.
- **Dosage.** This refers to the amount (total hours of contact time), intensity (relevant to developmental mentoring) and duration (total length) of the mentoring programme.

In the Netherlands, Career Management Institute (CMI) Netherlands provides a mentoring programme for those seeking the quality label. CMI mentor regulation documents were provided in order to further understand the quality standard's mentoring programme. The document provides useful information on the infrastructure of a quality label mentoring programme. The document details how mentors are recruited, mentor competencies, mentor responsibilities and mentor training.

The CMI mentoring programme is an example of goal-related mentoring support. CMI provides mentors to enable candidates to achieve one of three types of quality labels available.

For Type A, the CMI quality label focuses on the client. The following documents and evidence are required:

- Recent CV
- 2 examples of ethical conduct
- Education at higher professional education / university level, supplemented with professional knowledge.
- Per knowledge sector 1 described example.
- 3 descriptions of relevant life experiences
In relation to the exercise of the profession

- Work experience: 7 years of work experience of which 3 years of specific work experience as a career professional
- 5 signed satisfaction statements from ex-clients
- Demonstrate: 3 of 8 tasks within the task areas outplacement, career counseling and career coaching to practice
- examples of the 5 specific competences at level A
- Case studies Professional development
2 integral guidance programs.
The case studies should be written at the A level

Summary of CMI Mentoring Regulations

Who are mentors?

Registered career professionals who are certified at a determined level (C Level). Mentors are invited by a council. A representative for the board responsible for mentors will assess the potential mentor and put a vote to the board. Prospective mentors must submit information about their visibility in the field. Mentors serve for a period of three years and can be appointed twice.

What do mentors do?

Mentors advise at the request of the board. They serve two functions: they supervise candidates and assess candidates however they cannot both supervise and assess the same candidate.

How are mentors trained?

Mentors are trained in group sessions. They attend at least one review session as an observer. New mentors complete one reflection of their assessment. Mentors can access training opportunities several times a year with mandatory attendance of at least one training per year. Mentors must attend two joint meetings a year with the council

Certification procedure for career guidance professionals

In the collected templates, partners were asked to describe certification procedures for career guidance professionals and/or career guidance organisations. Hooley and Rice (2018) argues that the development of quality standards, including certification procedure, be part of a holistic quality assurance system. There are six key domains in which quality and the certification procedure may be enacted in the delivery of career guidance:

- **Policy.** Quality assurance can help ensure career guidance is delivered in a consistent manner in line with current policy requirements.
- **Organisation.** Quality assurance can help determine whether provider organisations are designed, resourced and managed in a way that enables quality delivery.
- **Process.** Quality assurance can provide blueprints on the way organisations or individuals can reduce errors in client experience.
- **People.** Quality assurance can ensure compliance that delivery staff adhere to professional standards of the sector.

- **Output or outcome.** Quality assurance can focus on defined and measurable outcomes of clients using the service.
- **Consumption.** Quality assurance can be driven by customer satisfaction of the career guidance service.

Quality development framework for organisations providing guidance

Quality development in career guidance and counselling often implies organisational development. This means that a quality development framework “enables organisations to activate and integrate both the individual perspectives of staff members and the perspective of the organisation to develop and safeguard solutions for assuring or enhancing the quality of guidance, which suit the organisation” (NFB, 2012, p. 9).

The quality development framework also functions to operationalise national quality assurance standards into the local organisational level. Therefore, a quality development framework supports the quality assurance and enhancement of guidance services within organisations.

Providers of guidance services can use the quality development framework:

- for a systematic introduction of quality development into daily work,
- to improve existing quality approaches with respect to aspects, which are specific for career guidance and counselling,
- to document and communicate their quality development efforts to funders and responsible policy makers (NFB, 2012, p. 8).

The review of national systems through the collected templates show few examples of developed quality development frameworks. This corresponds with another recent review at the European level concluding that quality development frameworks for organisations providing career guidance are currently available in very few countries (Haug, 2018). In the collected examples in this project, the main approach seems to be “preparation systems”, which focus on preparation for concrete accreditation and quality assurance assessments.

In a European context, initiatives have been taken and recommendations have been given on the importance of frameworks designed for the implementation and continuously quality development on an organisational level (ELGPN, 2012; 2015).

In the Netherlands, there has been a consolidation of quality development frameworks to help support the creation of one national standard.

Noloc and CMI joining forces: towards one Dutch national quality framework for career guidance professionals

With her mission of improving both the quality of career guidance in the Netherlands as well as increasing the number of qualified guidance professionals, in 2011 Noloc implemented her own quality assurance framework for individual career guidance professionals. The ‘Noloc erkend’ quality mark nowadays is one of the two quality marks for individual career guidance professionals in the

Netherlands. Some 1,500 career guidance professionals have obtained the Noloc quality mark (January, 2019).

Besides the Noloc quality mark for career guidance professionals, the Career Management Institute (CMI) offers an additional quality mark for more experienced career guidance professionals. Some 330 of them have obtained the CMI quality mark 'Register Loopbaanprofessional' (January 2019). Noloc has adopted this CMI quality mark as the quality mark for her more senior members.

Agreeing that it would be better if there were one, strong national quality framework for career guidance professionals in the Netherlands, since the end of 2016 Noloc and CMI are in the process of looking for possibilities to join forces. The aim of this process is to develop a national quality standard for individual career guidance professionals on different levels of seniority and specialization.

In April 2018, Noloc and CMI agreed that from July 2020 on, there will be just one Dutch national quality framework for career guidance professionals based on the mutual strengths of both organizations. In order to reach this ambitious goal, it was also agreed that the Noloc and CMI organizations will merge, and the new quality framework will be carried out under the responsibility of Noloc. To guarantee the objectivity of the certification process of individual career professionals willing to obtain the new national quality mark – either Noloc member or not – a number of safety valves will be implemented.

Another recent national example in these matters (not included in the templates) is Ireland's example of 'A Whole School Guidance Framework' (NCGE, 2017). It is intended to be a resource for schools to support the planning, design and delivery of the whole school guidance programme in line with the requirements of The Education Act that schools provide students with "access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices" (section 9c). Here the recommended role for the quality development framework to support and complement national legislation/quality standards is exemplified (ELGPN, 2012).

A continuum model for the school guidance programme, similar to the school support model of the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), is presented in the framework – guidance for all, guidance for some and guidance for a few. The continuum comprises a whole school approach to guidance through guidance-related learning to individual support for students. The framework identifies three areas of learning to facilitate students' development in eight areas of competence. The areas of learning include: learning related to oneself (personal/social development), educational opportunities (educational development) and career decision making (career development).

In the Norwegian context, work is underway with Skills Norway as the leading partner to establish a national quality framework based on an understanding that all involved parties have a different role to play in a comprehensive lifelong guidance system. This includes:

quality standards for practitioners - what skills are needed? (*process*); a Framework for Career Management Skills – individual learning goals for guidance (*output*); Ethical standards and guidelines (*process*); and Quality Indicators/ Benchmarks/Data Gathering (*output*). Norway is also developing a web-based guidance service (Skills Norway, 2018).

There are Erasmus + projects relevant to these matters. One example is the MyFuture Erasmus + project. One of the outputs consisted of a handbook for school managers, teachers, decision makers and stakeholders in the field of education and career services (Sultana, 2018). The handbook presents a Quality Framework for career guidance which aims at helping schools and career guidance providers improve the quality of their services for students. In their handbook, they argue that “the quality of career guidance products and services can improve if we pay attention to

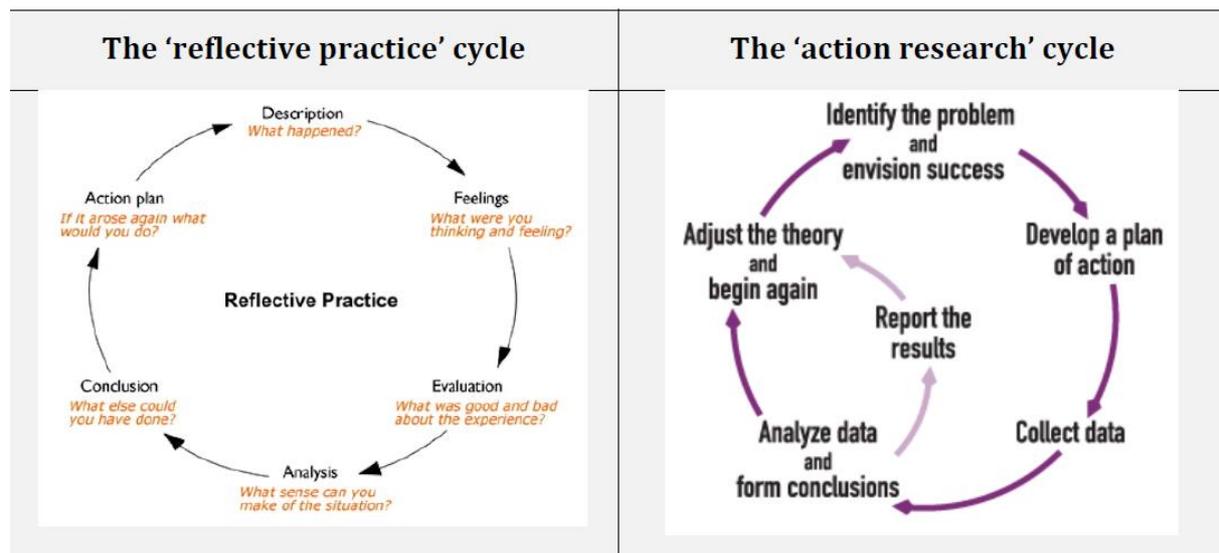
- our career learning programmes,
- the career information made available,
- the personalised support offered through career counselling ,
- the provision of a well-organised and accessible career resource hub ,
- the development of partnership input in career education and
- the formation of reflective practitioners who make the attainment of high standards a Habitual goal.” (Sultana, 2018: 4).

The handbook is based on different procedural principles of the ongoing development of quality which include their understanding of what quality and quality assurance is informed by:

- a trust in the competence and good will of professionals,
- valuing the student voice,
- Focusing on fitness for purpose and
- Enhancing quality through action research and adoption of the reflective.

If ‘reflective practice’ is the hallmark of quality, then ‘participative action research’ is the corresponding hallmark of quality assurance (Sultana, 2018). The two notions are linked in philosophy and approach and both acknowledge the professional’s competence in awareness of situations, critical analysis and the strategic renewal of action and systems in relation to sought after outcomes (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Reflective practice and action research cycles.



Audit/labelling procedure for organisational providers of career guidance

There are a variety of ways in which quality standards audit organisational practice. Audits usually focus on three areas:

- organisational structure,
- organisational process and
- organisational outcomes.

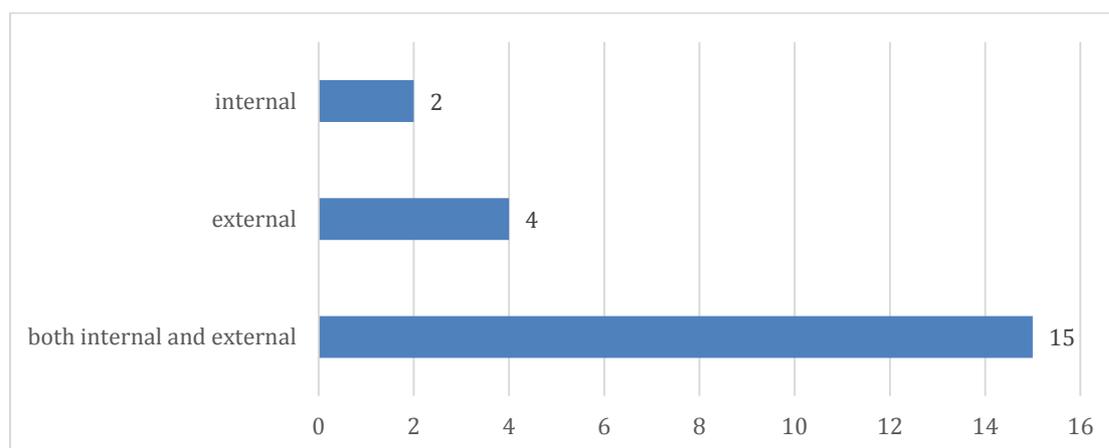
Audits can sit on a continuum of formality where audits can be internal only or assessed by an outside accrediting body through a series of external professional visits.

Types of assessments

Many quality labels submitted completed information about their audit and labelling approach. Most (71%) standards used a mix of both internal and external assessment types (see table 6). BeQu a quality standard in Germany has an innovative audit approach some of which was described earlier. BeQu was one of two standards that use an internal assessment approach only. Their approach is a participative process of assessment. The organisation management alongside practitioner staff decide on both their assessment indicators based upon their priority quality development areas. They then complete an open process of coordination with a large group of stakeholders which includes experts, practitioners, policymakers as well as nfb and university staff.

The most common type of auditing procedure was a mixture of both internal and external audits. This typically involves completing an in-house assessment against the quality label criteria prior to external assessment. In some instances, internal assessments were also taken into consideration during decision making.

Table 6. Quality standard assessment type



Resources to guide the audit

Most quality assurance standards had bespoke resources to guide individuals or organisations through the audit process. One quarter (25%) of quality standards audited offered more than one resource to support the auditing process. Five templates did not provide information on resources available to support individuals or organisations through the quality standard accreditation process.

The most common resources provided to support the accreditation process was guidance documents (35%) followed by workshops (20%). Table 8 below lists the variety of resources mentioned and the frequency in which they were mentioned. Resources such as mentoring, self-assessment tools and advisors, case studies of practice, webinars, telephone and email support, and one day consultancy were provided less often.

Table 7. Resources listed to support quality standard process.

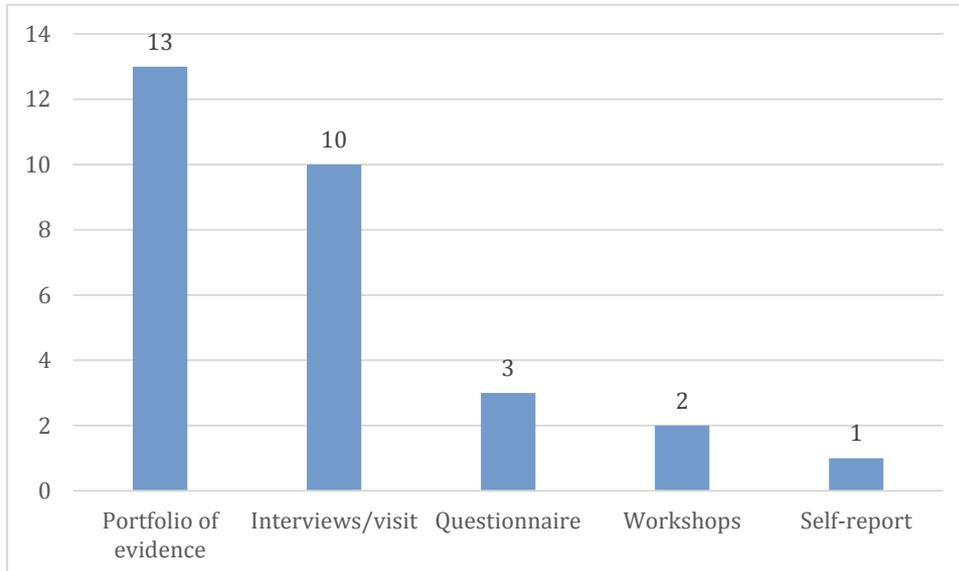
Resource Type	Frequency Mentioned
Guidance Documents/Checklists	7
Workshops	4
Mentoring	3
Self assessment tool/online portfolio	2
Advisor/supervision	2
Case studies	1
Webinars	1
Telephone/email support	1
One day Consultancy	1
Preparation courses	1

Audit tools

Nineteen (19) templates recorded relevant assessment tools use during the audit. Of the nineteen, 63% used more than one type of assessment to make a decision whether to award the quality standard. Most quality standards (68%) used a portfolio of evidence to

make decisions about whether or not an organisation or an individual met the criteria of the quality standard. Seventy-seven percent (77% or 10 out of 13) of quality awards that required portfolios of evidence used them in conjunction with other assessment methods.

Table 8. Audit methods.



A case study of auditing practice

FECBOP – Fédération Européenne des Centres de Bilan et d’Orientation Professionnelle / European Federation of Centres of Career Guidance and Bilan de Competences

A specific quality standard and quality assurance procedure were developed by the European network of career guidance providers influenced by the “bilan de compétences”(skills audit) methodology with some 100 members in 10 European countries. The quality standard contains 11 criteria and is delivered by the European Labelling Committee that is an elected body within FECBOP with 5 members (currently 1 from France, 2 from Italy, 1 from Belgium, 1 from Czech Republic).

The quality assurance process is as follows:

1. The organization sends the candidature sheet to the FECBOP Executive Bureau of the Federation. This sheet contains basic information about the candidate (activities, statistical data, motivation for obtaining the label).
2. The Executive Bureau assigns the auditor: three auditors are currently working for FECBOP, trained by the French network of skills audit centres. The auditor sends the candidate the necessary documents (Audit agreement, guide for

internal audit and requirements for the agenda of the audit visit. An internal audit guide allows the organization to prepare for the audit visit, collect all necessary evidence and send it beforehand to the auditor.

3. The auditor agrees with the candidate organization on the time schedule (date of the visit, deadline for submission of internal audit guide, foreseen date of the meeting of the meeting of European Labelling Committee (1-3 months after the audit))

4. The audit takes 2 days and contains meeting with an official representative, consultation of documents (final reports from bilan de competences, competence portfolios), consultation of the library of methods, meeting with a group of beneficiaries and with a group of counsellors.

5. The auditor prepares the audit report within 15 days after the audit. A draft of the audit report is sent to candidate for eventual comments and corrections (if necessary) and then submitted to the European Labelling Committee.

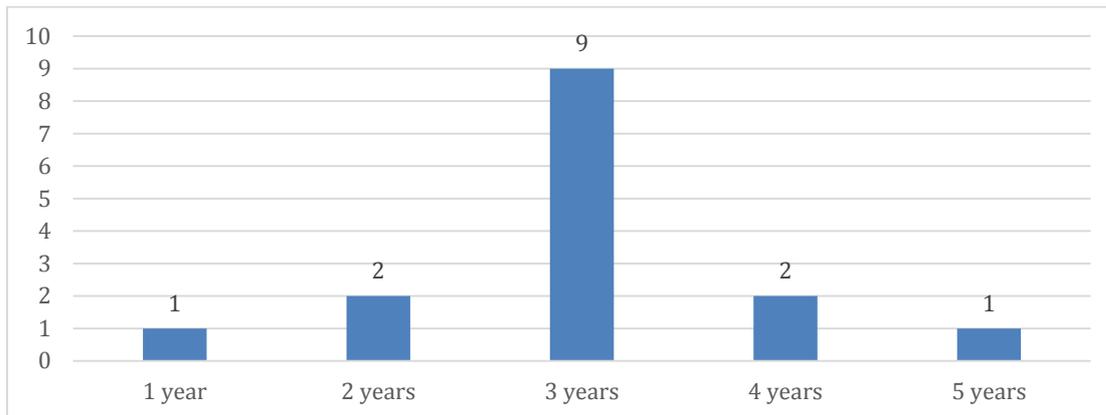
6. The European Labelling Committee meets and decides about awarding the quality label (usually 1-3 months after the audit). The auditor presents the report and additional questions can be asked by the committee members to the candidate during the meeting.

Currently, 25 centres in 8 countries successfully obtained the quality label and 5 – 7 audits are realized every year by FECBOP auditors. The audit is realized every 5 years.

Accreditation length

Once an organisation is accredited with a quality assurance standard it lasts approximately three years on average (see table 9). Depending on the standard there may be periodic checks throughout the accreditation life. For example, the Matrix Standard in the UK conducts continuous improvement checks at 12 and 24 months within the accreditation cycle. These checks are conducted remotely between the organisation and its assessor. A self-reflection tool is sent to organisations detailing the areas for continuous improvement identified in the initial assessment. The organisation sends in evidence that it is working on the areas identified. This is discussed in a telephone interview facilitated by the assessor. After this process the assessor makes a decision upon the evidence provided in a manner similar to the initial assessment.

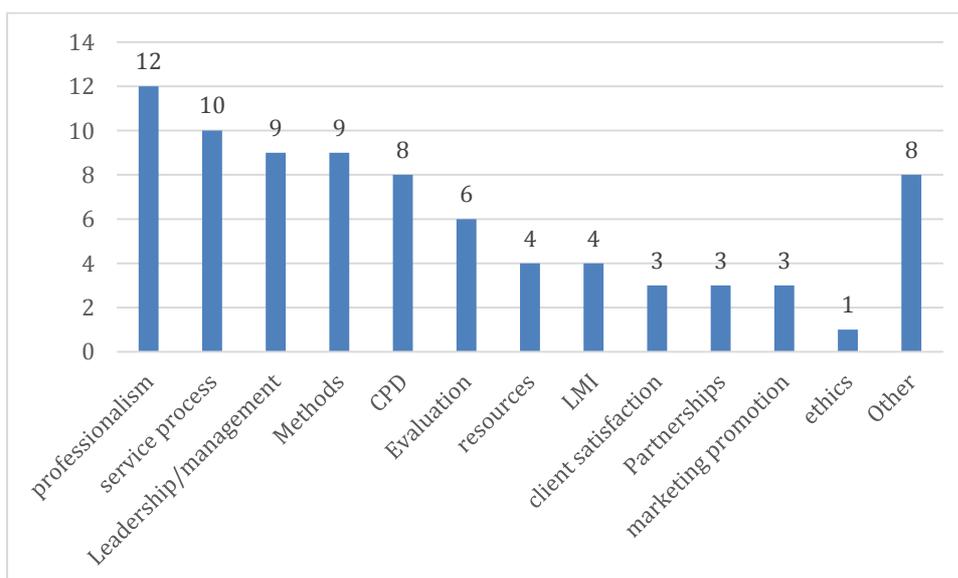
Table 9. Accreditation length



Content of the frameworks

Most quality assurance standards explored within the research a multiple focus on inter-related aspects of provision. As can be seen in Table 10 the thematic areas reflect the individual and the organizational focus. Practitioner related aspects such as, professionalism, CPD and ethics are regularly addressed within the framework, as are organizational requirements such as leadership, service process and marketing. Continuous quality improvement is also represented in terms of evaluation and assessment of client satisfaction. It is interesting to note that ethics is only referred to in one standard as this a central component of professionalism. It may be that it is only explicitly identified but implicitly included within professionalism for other standards. The 'other' section included contextually relevant components such as employer satisfaction and safety and security

Table 10. Content analysis of the frameworks



Discussion

At the outset of the project many questions were articulated to help guide project outputs. This section will attempt to answer these questions through the data while also suggesting where more evidence is needed.

What is the real usage and spread of different trans-national quality standards and referentials for individual counsellors (European Career Guidance Certificates, NICE etc.) and for institutional providers of career guidance (e.g Quality Label “Bilan de compétences”) What is the real impact of these standards for the professionalization of career guidance provision?

The data suggests that in partner countries there is a priority for national quality labels with very little engagement with transnational quality labels. This includes both quality assurance at both the organisational and individual level. Career guidance still seems to be driven largely through national policy agendas and those agendas may be fragmented within partner countries.

From the ELGPN (2015) recommendations, present several potential areas for improvement in the development of quality assurance standards. One of their recommendations concerns the need for clear professional standards established for guidance practitioners working in a variety of different roles in different sectors. They suggest that continuing improvement of the design and implementation of guidance services and of guidance tools and products should be promoted through client involvement and through the application of entitlements. In the collected templates, the German example (BeQu) stands out as the most comprehensive system.

How are different quality assurance approaches (focused on policy, organisation, process, people, outputs/outcomes, consumption), used in selected European and non-European countries?

The certification procedures collected in the templates were primarily in connection with the organisation and people domains of Hooley and Rice (2018) six domain typology. This implies that their focus on helping determine whether provider organisations are designed, resourced and managed in a way that enables quality delivery. Further, on ensuring compliance that delivery staff adhere to professional standards of the sector. In five countries (Netherlands, Austria, Germany, Czech Republic and England), there are procedures for certification of both organisational and individual level, but these are not incorporated within the same standard. As seen in the example from England, quality assurance can provide blueprints on the way organisations or individuals can reduce errors in client experience and therefore be seen as covering the process domain.

How are different guidelines for career guidance strategies and policies implemented in different countries? What are the main challenges and how are they dealt with in different countries?

Most quality labels submitted from the partner countries were advisory. In the UK, the Matrix Standard approves providers of career guidance that receive government funding for

their services. This is to ensure that the policy is delivered consistently across providers. For most other partner countries there is no regulatory system requiring specific quality labels.

What best practices can be found that illustrate the main approaches in quality assurance in career guidance?

This report highlights several areas of practice that are useful to illustrate approaches to quality assurance. In the Netherlands, CMI offer mentoring to enable achievement in the quality label. In Germany BeQu engages providers with a participatory approach to auditing.

Content analysis of quality standards: What are the main quality areas in quality standards for career guidance counsellors and for organizational providers of career guidance?

The quality assurance frameworks reflect the contextual and multivariate needs of the providers with a strong focus on practitioner professionalism and organizational delivery structures such as process and management.

Analysis of the relative weight of different components of quality standards: Which content elements/quality areas are key for the implementation of quality assurance in career guidance? Which ones are the most “difficult” to observe for individual counsellors and organizations?

The templates were quite clear that certain components were not more or less important to achieving the quality label. Each of them must be met and be given equal importance.

Most templates noted that providers had difficulty articulating how the competencies were met. This does not mean they cannot meet or even observe these competencies but that the process defined by the label may cause providers difficulty. For most labels submitted the audit process requires a written portfolio of evidence. This assessment type may be one cause of problems for providers. Although written evidence is the assessment method it is often not what is being assessed. More work could be done to ensure this assessment type does not create barriers to successful accreditation.

What mechanisms are used to foster the implementation of quality assurance in career guidance for individual counsellors and organizations (e.g. mentoring)?

Regulatory approaches are used within the UK adult guidance sector to ensure quality. For most other labels, it is the acknowledgement of the label as a standard of quality both to those within the sector and external stakeholders that encourage providers to take up the label.

In terms of practical resources most labels make available guidance documents to providers wishing to pursue or adhere to the label. Some labels provide workshops (four labels). Other forms of support (e.g. webinars, telephone support, mentoring) are available to some. Consistent support with a variety of modes of support are only available to a few labels submitted.

What specific policy recommendations can be inferred from these findings?

The findings revealed strengths and fields of improvement for quality assurance processes. Seventeen audit templates provided a list of challenges to implementing their quality standard. There were a variety of challenges listed. These challenges were coded thematically into three broad themes:

- Successful completion of audit and documentation.
 - articulating how competencies are met,
 - ensuring documentation and all components are completed,
- Improving motivation and interest by individuals and organisations in the quality standard.
 - formalizing the certification
- Improving services
 - increasing client satisfaction.

There are policy recommendations that can help overcome these barriers. This could include providing multiple modes of support to complete the audit, particularly if the audit includes developing a portfolio of evidence. Policy can also determine the value of particular labels. For many partner countries quality labels are voluntary. If labels are part of the policy on career guidance, then it could help increase motivation and interest on the part of providers. In order to improve services labels which, adopt a continuous development approach should be prioritised by policy to embed a consistent cycle of improvement for providers.

Conclusion

The notion of quality is a contested and complex concept. It appears in different levels or domains of policy (Hooley and Rice, 2018). Different national approaches are informed both by the national context and current policy initiatives. When trying to summarise some general recommendations, it is useful to include the reflections from the German partner NfB which aligns with our interpretations of the data.

In the first partner meeting, Karen Schober from Germany held a presentation. Based on her experience from the German context, she concluded with the following difficulties and pitfalls with quality assurance processes:

- Challenges to implement a **cross-sector-approach** throughout education (school and adult) and employment,
- **Little backing from governments** and little willingness to provide funding for the implementation process,
- **Hesitation by provider organisations and professional associations** who hold up their own sectoral standards and/or certificates,
- **Competition of credentials** and
- **Limited financial and personal resources** of those providers who have a strong interest in implementing the QDF-process and the standards in their organisation.

These national difficulties combined with experience from other countries led her to the following summary.

- Quality development in career guidance in many European countries has been largely influenced, promoted and supported by international and **European activities**.
- Quality development in career guidance has become a **policy issue** in achieving important social and economic policy goals.
- Quality in career guidance does not only depend on the qualification and competences of guidance practitioners. It is likewise the **responsibility of service providers, policy makers and other stakeholders** involved in guidance provision as well as clients and users, which have to be addressed equally.
- **Strong professional associations** play an important role in the development of professional standards for career guidance.

To utilise this learning and to progress quality standards, the following recommendations are made:

- The definition and development of quality goals and criteria require a common understanding of the issue among the relevant actors and stakeholders – it is a **negotiating process**.
- Developing (new) quality standards or guidelines needs to be **connected** to existing quality concepts and credentials
- Scrutinizing the **compatibility** of different quality development systems and acknowledging them as compatible standards/ guidelines as appropriate
- Seeking legislative or **mandatory solutions**, since government funding usually does not guarantee sustainable quality development
- The termination of most of the project or programme funded guidance provision inhibits sustainable development of quality and professionalism in career guidance. **Quality needs continuity** and security to grow and sustain.
- A **return** from short term project funded guidance provision to legally grounded service provision by regular **public institutions who have a legal mandate** for career guidance seems to be necessary.

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Appendix 1. Audit template.

This template was created as a data collection tool to inform the analytical paper on quality assurance practices in career guidance across Europe. The analytical paper will inform the development of the additional outcomes of the project including the quality development framework, mentoring program, certification procedure and auditing and labelling procedure.

For the purpose of this template we will use the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN) adopted definitions to guide our work on quality assurance systems.

Quality assurance are activities involving planning, implementation, evaluation, reporting, and quality improvement, implemented to ensure that guidance activities (content of programmes, design, assessment and validation of outcomes, etc.) meet the quality requirements expected by stakeholders

Quality standards are the standard(s) that an organisation sets for all of its key business operations and that help clarify what an organisation expects of its employees in delivering these operations or a client can expect when using the service. They can refer to the systems and procedures developed by career practitioners and stakeholders in the career sector that:

- define the career sector, its membership and its services;
- recognise the diverse skills and knowledge of career practitioners;
- guide practitioner entry into the sector;
- provide a foundation for designing career practitioner training;
- provide quality assurance to the public and other stakeholders in the sector;
- create an agreed terminology for the sector.

Please complete a form **for each quality standard in career guidance** recognised in your country. If the standard is for both individuals and organisations, please fill in one for each procedure.

1. Quality standard Name:

2. Is this standard for:

- individual counsellors
- organisational/institutional providers

3. Is the standard awarded nationally, internationally or locally?

- International standard
- National standard

- local standard
4. Is this standard compulsory for providers of career guidance?
- yes
 no
5. How many individuals or organisations have this quality standard? (*Approximate if necessary*)

6. What are the target groups (end users) for this quality standard?

- young people (18 and under)
 adults (19 and over)
 individuals with special educational needs
 other (please specify)

7. What is the main function of this quality standard to support the achievements of goals and objectives? (For example, to support public spending, service efficiency, ensure client satisfaction). Please list and describe.

03: Certification procedure for career guidance professionals and 04: Quality development framework for organisations providing guidance

8. What organisation manages the quality standard?

9. Does this quality standard use internal assessment, external assessment or a mix of both?

- internal assessment only
 external assessment only
 both internal assessment and external assessment

10. If the quality standard uses internal assessment procedures, what types of internal assessment are in place?

- self-assessment
- assessment by colleagues
- supervision by management

11. Please list any additional details about the type of assessment used by the quality standard.

12. What are the main assessment indicators of quality for this standard? *(Please attach any supporting documents about the standard)*

05: Audit/labelling procedure for organisational providers of career guidance

13. What are the main assessment tools for this quality standard?

14. What is the auditing cycle for the quality standard?

15. How long are organisations or individuals accredited with the quality standard?

16. How frequently are individuals or organisations assessed?

17. What is the price of the assessment (in Euro)?

18. What is the typical recertification procedure for the standard?

19. In what ways does recertification differ from the initial certification of the quality award?

02: Mentoring programme for career guidance practitioner.

20. Do individuals or organisations generally adhere to the processes of the quality standard?

- Always
- Mostly
- Rarely
- Never

21. What are the most challenging aspects of the quality standard to implement?

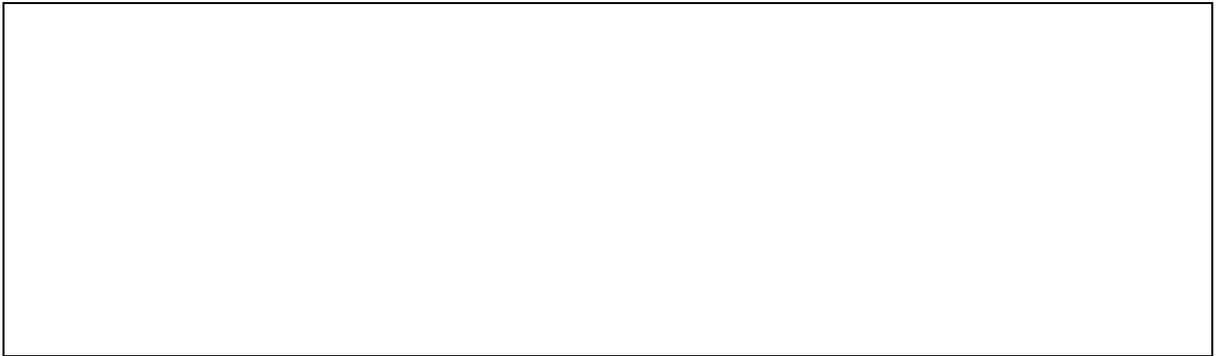
22. What assessment indicators of the quality standard are considered the most important to implement by individuals and organisations obtaining the quality award?

23. What assessment indicators of the quality standard are considered the most important to implement by the organisation that manages the quality standard?

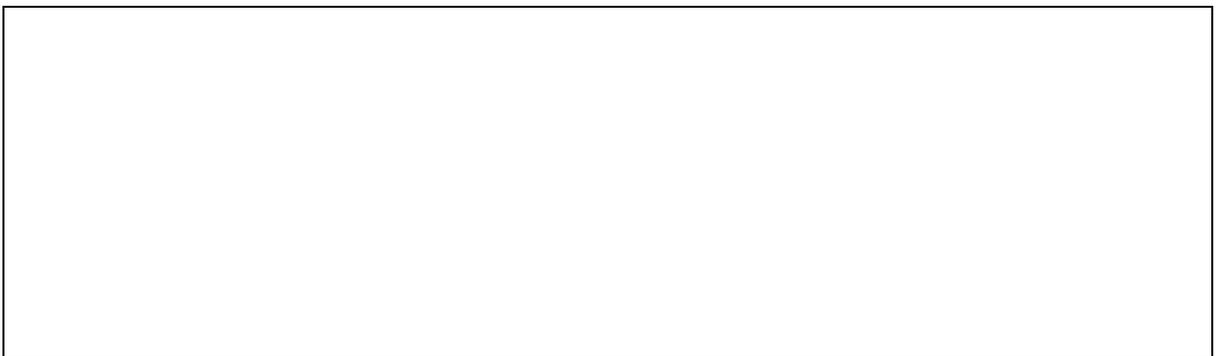
24. What types of resources are used to ensure successful implementation of the quality standard (e.g. mentoring programme or guidance documents)? *(If possible, please attach or link to these resources after describing them)*

25. In what ways does this standard contribute to the standard of the career guidance profession in your country?

26. How does achieving this quality standard effect the reputation of career guidance professionals outside the profession?



27. What is the motivation for individuals or organisations to achieve the quality standard?



28. What support/funding is available to organisations to implement the quality standard?



Appendix 2. Standards submitted

Name of standard	Country	Description	Compulsory?
Euroguidance National Career Guidance award	Czech Republic/Slovakia/the Republic of Serbia	National Career Guidance Award is not a typical quality standard. It is a contest focused on quality in CCG services which has own defined criteria. The main goal of the National Career Guidance Award is to map, identify and award good practice in career guidance and counselling, but also to support and inspire guidance and counselling providers. A points system is used to evaluate against agreed assessment criteria including benefits to society, innovation, development of Career Management Skills and access.	No
National register of qualifications	Czech Republic	<p>The standard consists of three awards qualifications which support practitioners working with clients of any age;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Employment Career Counsellor - ● Career Adviser for Academic and Professional Career - ● Career counsellor for endangered, vulnerable and disadvantaged groups of the population. <p>The qualifications recognise existing practice and experience. Assessment is through production of a portfolio, practical and oral assessments.</p>	No
IMPROVE – project Improving Validation of Not-Formal Learning in European Career Guidance Practitioners	Czech Republic	This standard utilises the IMPROVE guidelines which recognise previous experience and learning. Assessment is through an initial oral examine of 40 questions, a second interview and a development plan.	No
Noloc Erkend	The Netherlands	This standard quality assures professional working of	No

<p>Loopbaanprofessional (Noloc Acknowledged Career Professional)</p>		<p>career guidance professionals in the Netherlands. To achieve the quality mark, professionals, have to submit their CV, show that they have an initial qualification on EQF-6 level, a relevant qualification and training in career counselling, that they have at least three years general work experience and at least one year (750 hours) of careers practice. They also have to prove they master at least 5 relevant career counselling techniques. They then have to produce a case study including a commentary reflecting on their experience and their practice. To achieve reaccreditation, they have to show they are keeping up with CPD. Noloc also has a tribunal process that can hear cases of malpractice and potentially discipline members or strike them off of the register.</p>	
<p>Register Loopbaanprofessional / Registered Career Guidance Professional</p>	<p>The Netherlands</p>	<p>The quality standard awarded by the Career Management Institute Netherlands is an indicator of the quality and professional level of career guidance professionals. Two assessment activities are required for certification. These include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of documents produced by the candidate meet the criteria • An interview with the review committee, consisting of two members: a Registered Career Guidance Professional (RL) and an independent chair, being an academic professor in the field of career guidance. <p>Registration is recognised at three levels and reaccreditation is required every three years. ``</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>OVAL Kwaliteitseisen</p>	<p>The Netherlands</p>	<p>The focus for the standard is on organisations working</p>	<p>No</p>

(OVAL quality standards)		with work-related guidance for adults, clients with special needs and refugees. The standard addresses four strands; people, suppliers, processes and client satisfaction. Assessment is every two years through an external audit process.	
Blik op Werk Keurmerk (Blik op Werk Quality standard)	The Netherlands	Blik op Werk provides its quality mark to organizations that have proven to deliver quality in delivering their services, and in promoting sustainable labour participation and integration. Holders of the Blik op Werk quality mark are included in a quality register, being visible to the public on the Blik op Werk website. Clients are varied and can include employers, branch organizations, municipalities, insurance companies, and organizations assisting refugees who need to integrate. Assessment is annual and conducted through audits and questionnaires.	No
External quality insurance for vendor indifferent vocational counselling in Austria	Austria	The main function of the IBOBB certificate is to ensure guidance services provided by organisations that are independent of training providers. The assessment addresses 4 areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The guidance organisation and the offered services are oriented towards the needs and the interest of clients • The organisation must have the resources, competences, locations and organisation to provide the offered services fully and to tailor them to the respective target audience • The organisation is obliged to utilize means to ensure equality between the participants. 	No

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The organisation must commit to continuous quality improvement 	
Austrian Academy of Continuing Education (WBA) certificate “Certified Adult Educator”/WBA diploma “Graduate Adult Educator (with focus on counselling)”	Austria	The WBA certificate / WBA diploma is a trans-institutional, European-oriented adult education qualification which can be acquired whilst working and gaining practical experience. The award contributes to the professionalization and increased quality of adult education. The award requires submission of evidence of competence and experience in additional completion of a test, a thesis and an oral exam.	No
European Career Guidance Certificate (ECGC), e.g. academic degrees Academic Expert and Master of Arts (MA) in Educational and Vocational Guidance	Austria	The European standard for certification in career guidance recognises and accredits professional practitioner experience. Practitioners are awarded with a degree or masters award through passing a series of practical assessments of counselling and guidance skills, general social and skills and knowledge relevant to the field.	No
Matrix Standard	England	The matrix Standard is owned by the Department for Education and used to quality assure all providers of information, advice and guidance services, including, but not limited to, providers of career guidance. The Standard has been in existence since 2000 and built on pre-existing quality standards. The Standard is voluntary, but in some cases (such as the National Careers Service) organisations are required to hold the Standard if they wish to access government funding. The Standard requires organisations to demonstrate effective: leadership and management; resources; service delivery; and continuous quality improvement. The matrix Standard requires organisations to establish	yes – for those that receive government funding

		clear outcomes and monitor themselves against them, rather than specifying particular benchmarks for service delivery.		
Quality in Careers Standard	England	The Quality in Careers Standard is a standard that schools and colleges can use to assure the quality of their careers provision and relate it to the Gatsby Benchmarks. The Quality in Careers Standard has existed in various forms since 1992 and has now evolved to be a single national quality award delivered by a number of local, regional and national awarding bodies. The Standard is governed by a Consortium comprised of the leading professional associations for school and college leaders as well as the leading careers professional bodies in England. The Standard is currently held by around a quarter of English schools and colleges and is 'strongly recommended' by government in its statutory guidance to schools, although it remains voluntary. Institutions pay to be assessed against the Standard and this is commonly connected to some consultancy provided alongside the accreditation process. The Standard has recently been fully aligned to the Gatsby Benchmarks to the extent that no organisations will be able to hold the Standard without meeting the Benchmarks.	No	
BBR-BerufsBeratungsRegister (Career guidance Register)	Germany	This counsellor focused standard registers and certificates practitioners working with clients of all ages who are able to demonstrate they can meet professional requirements. Assessment is through evidence of relevant employment, qualification, a self-report and commitment to ethical standards.	National	No

KQB – Kundenorientierte Qualitätstestierung für Beratungsorganisationen	Germany	This special needs focused quality standard aims to structurally align the organisation to the needs of the client. This is achieved through contributing to organisational identity, systemising work processes, improvement of external brand and support practitioner self-reflection. Accreditation is through self-assessment and external review.	National (special needs)	No
“QBM - Quality frame Berliner Modell” based on the “Quality concept for guidance” from k.o.s GmbH	Germany	The focus of the standard is to improve guidance and counselling, assure customer focused services and ensure professional standards are maintained. Assessment is via a quality report and advisory board review.	Local	No
Certified provider of educational guidance and counselling“– Quality Standards for the certification of educational guidance providers	Germany	This standard focuses on both organisational and individual professional practice. It addresses transparency, ethics, client satisfaction and professionalisation of staff. An outstanding characteristic of the quality standard is that the audits are completed by peers a pro bono status and are therefore totally independent.	National/local/sector specific (adult)	No
Quality Standards for Guidance Practitioners in the Area of Education, Career and Employment	Germany	The standard is aimed at adult guidance practitioners working in Hesse wanting to obtain a vocational qualification (within the dual system). The qualification focuses on quality, consumer protection, client satisfaction and safety and security of public employees. Assessment follows a three-day seminar where practitioners have to write a composition, produce two case studies and pass an oral exam.	National/local/sector specific (adult)	No
BeQu-Standard (Beratungsqualitaet in Bildung, Beruf und	Germany	The BeQu-Concept is a comprehensive framework for quality assurance that has been established by the nfb and the University of Heidelberg to support the	National	Yes, in one federal

Beschaeftigung/ Quality in Guidance and Counselling in the field of Education, Career and Employment		development of quality in career guidance in Germany. The development of the framework was funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, but this support has not resulted in the framework being required by policy makers across the country. The framework is seen as a 'bottom up' initiative that has provided an important organising structure for conversations about quality in the country.		state
Recommendations for guidance in Schools (secondary and upper secondary)	Norway	To quality standard aims to support practitioners and school owners in the up-skilling of guidance service delivery and ensure that pupils have a mandatory right to sufficient guidance. The right includes pupils in primary school, lower and upper secondary school. The responsibility for delivering this guidance is allocated to the school owners. In Norway, most school owners are communities and counties. The assessment is undertaken by a survey with pupils, teachers and school owners exploring a range of topics including; workload of guidance career guidance practitioner, engagement with CPD and how guidance is integrated in the school plan. The surveys are collected twice a year and assess how schools are meeting their legislative requirements.	national, sector specific	No
Quality standard of the National Federation of CIBCs (Interinstitutional Centres of Bilan de Compétences) – Qualité Totale CIBC	France	Quality standard used in the French network of guidance centres for adults (CIBCs). The standard contains 8 main quality areas and 29 quality criteria for organizations. Beside usual quality criteria, the standard also includes requirements concerning the involvement of social partners, territorial role of the centre, diversification of services etc. Every quality criterium contains indicators on 4 quality levels.	National	Yes

		The quality certificate is recognized by the national Committee for Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance (CNEFOP) as one of the mandatory quality certificates required for providing state-funded guidance services.		
Standard for supported employment	Slovakia	Developed in 2009 for private providers of employment services for people with disabilities. The standard contains three separate set of criteria (organizational-operational standard, personal/staff standard, procedural standard) with strong focus on accessibility and availability of the service, as well as specific technical equipment.	National	No