

## The E-benchmarking tool is ready to be used by Lithuanian VET institutions.

Lithuanian VET institutions may already use the electronic quality comparison tool on the site [www.bequal.info](http://www.bequal.info) to evaluate themselves at national and European level. The site is now available in the Lithuanian language, so filling in an electronic questionnaire which enables a comparative analysis of the quality of the processes will not be difficult.

In a four-part questionnaire the planning, performance, evaluation, feedback and process improvement are evaluated. In the "My Statistics" section each institution may view its own results, and compare their strengths and weaker areas with other training organizations in Lithuania and other European countries.

BEQUAL statistics summarise the data, categorising it by country or by type of organization and etc. If the answers from a VET institution place it among the best 20 percent, the institution may present their best practice example and for 18 months may advertise for free on the site, that operates in 11 different languages.

The operation of national versions of the site and opportunities of using all facilities of the site were discussed in the second meeting of the project TOI EXPAND QUALITY ASSURANCE IN VET (BENCHMARKING TOOL) LLP-LdV-TOI-2012-LT-0117 by partners from Lithuania, Poland, Austria and the United Kingdom on 23-24 May in Lodz.

Six months after the first meeting in Greece it was important to evaluate the performance of the first half of the year, to discuss the problems in adapting and improving the benchmarking tool in individual countries, to define a single set of best practice criteria, and to plan the tasks for the next six months.

According to the project's coordinator Ausra Giedriene (VET chief specialist from Kaunas Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts), the project partners are Greek training and consulting company "IDEC" (who implemented the original BEQUAL project), Kaunas Vocational Training Centre for Service Business Specialists, Norton Radstock College (United Kingdom), The Faculty of Management of The University of Lodz (Poland) and the BEST continuing vocational training institute (Austria).

Brochures in all of the project partners' national languages (including Lithuanian) have been published. These brochures present to VET institutions the EXPANDVET project's innovative content, opportunities to evaluate themselves in a broad context and opportunities to estimate the strengths and weaknesses of their quality processes.. It is also possible to connect to the European educational institutions network, to interact with colleagues from other countries, and to participate in discussions via social networking, to share the best practices.

Project EXPANDVET transfers innovation to Lithuania, Poland, Austria and the United Kingdom coming from Greece, France, Germany, Romania, Italy, Spain, Bulgaria and Turkey. The quality assurance tool and e-platform are taken from the previous transfer of innovation project BEQUAL+, therefore it is planned for EXPANDVET representatives to participate in final conference of that project to ensure the continuity of innovation.

**The TOI EXPAND QUALITY ASSURANCE IN VET (BENCHMARKING TOOL) LLP-LdV-TOI-2012-LT-0117 project objectives:**

- *To examine the existing approaches for quality assurance in participating countries*
- *To transfer, adapt and pilot the benchmarking tool in Lithuania, Austria, Poland and United Kingdom.*
- *To develop the Lithuanian and Polish language versions of the thematic portal.*
- *To enrich the thematic portal with various content, documents, links, articles, videos.*
- *To disseminate and promote the benchmarking tool at regional, national and European level.*
- *To collaborate in development of products and quality assurance practices.*

*The project is implemented by 6 partners from 5 EU countries. The consortium is based on the objective of using the best European practice in the field of quality assurance systems in VET.*

***The following outcomes of the project are expected:***

- *An on-line benchmarking tool, which offers VET institutions the possibility to compare their quality processes and practices and to identify their strong points and processes to be improved compared to competing institutions. The core of the benchmarking tool is a multiple choice questionnaire to be filled in by VET providers. Each institution has to self-assess its state of fulfilment of the indicator in question and to compare its results with similar institutions operating in the same country and/or in other countries. The tool offers VET stakeholders, policy makers and consultants information on which indicators have a good degree of fulfilment by the majority of VET institutions concerned and which points need to be further enhanced. The benchmarking tool is hosted in the thematic portal.*
- *A web based quality sharing network and good practice centre establishing a Community of Practice (CoP) in the field of quality assurance in VET. The establishment of the CoP also involves a series of networking activities for VET stakeholders and practitioners, blogging in the thematic portal, and creation of profiles on Facebook and Twitter.*
- *A thematic portal on quality assurance in VET, hosted at the address [www.bequal.info](http://www.bequal.info). The portal includes the following functions: Online benchmarking tool, the good practice centre, statistics, blogs, news and news feeds, links, library, resources and articles, polls, the on-line login module and information on the project. The portal is multilingual. The national versions are not identical to the English one.*

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