OPEN ECBCHECK
LOW COST, COMMUNITY BASED CERTIFICATION FOR E-LEARNING IN CAPACITY BUILDING

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Quality and standards play a crucial role if e-learning should have its share of contributing to any nations, organisations or individuals development or well being. The quality of opportunities to improve individual capabilities to actively participate in the development of their own lives, the organisation they work in and the nations they call their home is our major concern.

Quality of e-learning in our understanding thus goes further and reaches beyond question of learning material far into improving opportunities for individual biographies.

This publication is presenting the background work for the international Open ECBCheck Standards for Courses and Programmes, and outlines a vision how organisations and individuals can work together in sharing communities in which they help to validate and improve their practices in order to provide better capacity building to those in need.

The motivation to publish this background work has its origin in numerous discussions during the last few years with colleagues from all over the world in which the need surfaced to explain the architecture of the quality framework and the establishment of the different dimensions and criteria suggested.

Open ECBCheck is a common effort of many hands, and not a single one could have left out to come to the international agreed version which we are holding in our hands today. The discussion with colleagues all over the world, from the so-called developing countries and the developed countries gave us the chance to learn that quality for e-learning on the one hand is of utmost importance and on the other hand is a field of great uncertainty. How to achieve high quality e-learning experiences is often still subject to investigations and highly dependent on the context considered. During several voyages through different organisations’ and countries’ quality landscape we had the opportunity to look at successful models and learn from sophisticated strategies. We picked out the best and most efficient and wove them into the Open ECBCheck criteria frameworks. The publication in that way is intended to be a travel diary in the best sense of the term. It covers the state-of-the-art of current burning questions and discussions around the field of quality in e-learning in capacity building in order to help stakeholders in the capacity building e-learning scene in their every day quest for quality.

The Open ECBCheck is intended to provide guidance for organisations, learners, professionals, and educational practitioners, to facilitate researchers’ investigations and help policy makers in their decision making towards a 21 centuries’ learning society.

Establishing a community based quality framework is a collaborative exercise because it brings together practitioners, researchers and experts to form a discussion community. We have been able to synthesize work in this publication which partly was supported through the InWEnt gGmbH, Germany. The support through resources and intensive contacts and inspiring discussions was complemented by the help of wonderful colleagues from all over the world, from many organisations which decided to join the initiative and support the development of an international standard for e-learning in capacity building. To all of them goes our thanks and gratefulness.

Apart from the contributions and comments we also would like to thank all persons and organisations without whom this project would not have been realised. The originally vision of an international quality scheme for capacity building was conceived together with Dr. Till Schönherr from InWEnt gGmbH who died during the project time and who was an outstanding personality, connecting people all over the world into a network of confidence and competence. Jochen Joosten worked as a keyperson on all research aspects and has authored most of the documented parts of this book as his final thesis.

Many hands worked to realise the final result – thanks to all of them: http://www.ecb-check.org.

Bonn, May 2010

Ulf-Daniel Ehlers
1 INTRODUCTION: A RISING NEED FOR QUALITY

Information, knowledge, competencies and education are nowadays considered crucial elements for progress in developing countries and serve to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) agreed on the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000 by the international community of states. The agreement comprises a number of measurable goals that include the aims to significantly decrease poverty, disease, hunger, illiteracy, harm to the environment as well as the discrimination against woman by the year 2015. Among others, the ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (OECD) (2006, pp. 7) views the lack of adequate country capacity as one of the main obstacles to meet the MDGs on time, even if the funding of development efforts is increased considerably during the following years. This position is also supported by reports of the COMMISSION FOR AFRICA (2005, pp. 135) and SACHS (2005, p. 99). The importance of Capacity Building is now largely accepted by both donor organisations and partner countries and has been explicitly articulated in the “Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness” (n. d. 2003) which is based on the prior declaration of the High-Level Forum on Harmonisation in Rome (n. d. 2003) as well as the results from the Marrakech Roundtable on Managing for Development Results (n. d. 2004).

Furthermore, the development community largely agrees on the idea that information and communication technologies (ICTs) are crucial for development progress and for reaching the MDGs. Since the publication of “The missing Link”, a report of the Independent Commission for World-Wide Telecommunications Development, the importance of ICTs for developing countries has been more and more accepted. At that time, the focus of interest has been put mainly on the development of (phone) infrastructure but potential applications, including education, have already been mentioned: “The telecommunications system in a developing country can be used not only to disseminate information of immediate importance on a national scale, but also as a channel for education, for strengthening the social fabric, for enriching the national culture” (Independent Commission for World-Wide Telecommunications Development 1984, p. 10). The importance of ICTs has since been discussed not only in terms of infrastructure but also in terms of building the capacities for the participation of developing countries in a modern information society and in digitalised economies. The Millennium Declaration dating from 2000 acknowledges the importance of ICTs as a fundamental tool to achieve the MDGs that is especially helpful in the alleviation of poverty and the improvement of education and health as well as in improving the accessibility of government services (InWEnt 2005, p. 4). The World Summit on the Information Society with a first phase held in Geneva in 2003 and a second phase in Tunis 2005 lead to the agreement on a broad front that ICTs are vital for development progress and that on the one hand primary education and literacy in ICTs are essential to enable people to take an active role in the information society and that on the other hand the use of ICTs should be strongly promoted in all stages of education and human resources development according to the INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION (ITU) (2003, pp. 4). Within this context the ITU reports, among others, about a number of successful applications of e-Learning in developing countries with a focus on education and learning (ITU, 2007).

However, the application of e-Learning in Capacity Building is still considered to be in the transition between an experimental state and sustainable implementation and e-Learning is not yet widely used (Ehlers et al. 2007, p. 7). One important drawback in the application of e-Learning for Capacity Building is definitely the situation of infrastructure and access to ICTs that is needed to effectively use e-Learning, especially in rural areas that are considered to be one main potential beneficiary. For instance, DELA PENA-BANDALARIA (2007, pp. 1) mentions access to ICTs, divided into physical access to hardware/software and the pre-requisite skills that are needed to use technology as well as the cost of access as two main limiting factors for the use of ICTs in developing countries. More specifically, JOHNSON and THOMAS (2007, p. 456) highlight these constraints within the context of Capacity Building with electronic distance education for local governments in Africa.
1.1 The Gap in eCapacity Building

One potential for e-Learning in Capacity Building which has been identified in a recent study (Ehlers et al. 2007, p. 58) is the field of quality management. So far, there is neither transparency about the quality of e-Learning programmes for Capacity Building nor about the quality of the organisations that offer e-Learning in Capacity Building according to EHLERS et al. The study argues that quality certification, developed in consensus with a network of Capacity Building Organisations, could lead to higher trust in the still developing market of e-Learning for Capacity Building. Observations by the OPERATIONS EVALUATION DEPARTMENT OF WORLD BANK (OED) and WHYTE support this view. In a report the OED states that “many projects have capacity building activities embedded in their major operational components, but the objectives of these activities tend to be ill defined and their achievement is poorly tracked and reported” (2005, p. vii). WHYTE (2004, p. 9) who conducted a so-called landscape analysis of donor trends, also agrees that Capacity Building activities “are often embedded in other programmes and are not tracked separately”.

This book argues that for certain requirements none of the existing approaches for quality management or quality certification can be applied one-to-one to e-Learning in the field of Capacity Building. To fill this gap and to support the application of e-Learning in Capacity Building the aim of this book is to develop a quality label based on existing quality approaches that fits the special requirements in the context of Capacity Building. This could lead to higher trust in e-Learning for Capacity Building as well as to higher effectiveness of e-Learning programmes and thus to a broader application of e-Learning in Capacity Building with a higher impact on development progress.

1.2 Methodology of the Development of Open ECBCheck

In this book we aim to explain the background for the development of a quality label for e-Learning in Capacity Building in a number of consecutive steps. First, the context factors for the quality label are analysed. An extensive literature review assesses the state of the art of Capacity Building, and e-Learning for Capacity Building. Secondly, to make sure that all important context factors are included and to find out about requirements for a quality label by experts of the field, a study is conducted by means of a questionnaire and follow-up qualitative, explorative interviews with experts of Capacity Building Organisations with a final analysis of the results. The contextual factors derived from literature and interviews form the requirements for the development of a quality label. In a third step, a number of existing quality concepts, that are UNIQUe, EFMD CEL DELAN DELZert and ISO/IEC 19796-1, are analysed if they (partly) fulfill the requirements to find out if parts of the existing approaches may be used as best practice for the newly developed quality label. In the last step, based on this context factors and requirements as well as input from existing approaches, a concept for a quality label for e-Learning in Capacity Building is developed. The basic architecture of the label is suggested followed by the description of the concept of quality for, on the one hand programmes, and on the other hand institutions. The final part of the quality label consists of a description of the governance system, including the certification process for institutions and programmes. Throughout the book this newly developed concept will be referred to as Open ECBCheck.

1.3 Preview of the Book

Chapter 2, Analysis of State-of-the-Art Theory, Research and Terminology fulfils two requirements within this book. On the one hand, the fundamental concepts of Capacity Building and Capacity Building Organisation are defined and characteristics are discussed based on a review of existing literature on the topic. On the other hand, first requirements for the development of a quality label for e-Learning in Capacity Building are derived from this context analysis.

Chapter 3, Stakeholder and Market Evaluation, describes the methodology and overall design of a study to obtain information on Capacity Building Organisations’ requirements by both a questionnaire and a series of extensive expert interviews and presents the results as well as the findings on requirements. Based on the key results on requirements from chapters 2 and 3, an overall conclusion on requirements for a quality label for e-Learning in Capacity Building is deduced.

Chapter 4, Assessment of Existing Standards and Certificates, provides the analysis of selected current state-of-the-art quality labels or certificates that are later in parts used and adapted against the requirements within the development of the quality label. Each quality approach is first described including context, relevant governance bodies, the certification or accreditation process as well as the areas covered by its quality criteria. In a second step, each approach is analysed for whether it fulfills the requirements from the overall requirements model and whether parts may be used as a best practice.

Chapter 5, Development of the Certificate, describes and reflects on the development of the quality label for e-Learning in Capacity Building based on an adaptation and adoption of the best practice approaches analysed in chapter 4 against the requirements. The architecture and organisation of the label with an open, community based approach is developed, methods used for quality development within the concept are reflected, the governance structure including governing bodies and a certification process are conceptualised and the methodology of selection, adoption and development of quality criteria catalogues is reflected.

Chapter 6, Conclusion, summarises the key findings of this book and provides an outlook on further research questions as well as a critical acclaim of the achievements of the book.
2 THE STATE OF THEORY, RESEARCH AND TERMINOLOGY FOR QUALITY IN ECAPACITY BUILDING

This chapter analyses the context of Capacity Building and Capacity Building Organisations to derive requirements for the development of a quality label for e-Learning in Capacity Building. The term Capacity Building is defined and the current practice of Capacity Building is characterised in four dimensions, organisational embedding, time frame, geographic scope as well as educational sector where a model of "e-Learning territories" (MENON Network 2007, pp. 34; Delrio and Fischer 2007, p. 4) is adapted for the context of Capacity Building. Furthermore, Capacity Building Organisations are characterised in terms of type and scope of the organisation and a model of innovation theory is used to describe how e-Learning is integrated in Capacity Building Organisations (Ehlers et al. 2007, pp. 44). Based on the findings of the analysis a preliminary conclusion on requirements is drawn.

The book argues that for certain requirements, existing approaches for quality management cannot be applied one-to-one to the field of e-Learning in Capacity Building. One important source to derive requirements towards a quality label for e-Learning in Capacity Building is a detailed analysis of the context where the label will be applied. Two concepts need to be discussed in more detail for this analysis, Capacity Building and Capacity Building Organisations. First, the concept of Capacity Building needs to be defined and, based on an extensive literature research, it is analysed how Capacity Building works in practice and in which educational sectors it can be found. Four dimensions are used for this analysis: organisational embedding differentiates between Capacity Building activities that are integrated into larger development programmes and stand alone activities, time frame considers the duration of Capacity Building, geographic scope covers the distinction between local, regional and international Capacity Building activities and finally a model of "e-Learning territories" (MENON Network 2007) is used to identify main educational sectors where Capacity Building can be identified. Secondly, it is important to analyse the target group for the quality label. Thus, the term Capacity Building Organisation is defined and organisations are characterised by the type of organisation, the scope of activities of an organisation and, with the help of a model of innovation diffusion, by how e-Learning is integrated into the organisation. Furthermore, possible interests that these Capacity Building Organisations may have in quality management are suggested and discussed. Additionally, the terms programme and course have to be distinguished and defined for the context of Capacity Building, to identify exactly what will be the object of quality assurance and improvement efforts. Based on this discussion, first insights on requirements are drawn and used for the design of a small study (chapter 3) that focuses on the requirements that Capacity Building Organisations have towards a quality label.

2.1 Capacity Building

This chapter introduces the context of Capacity Building, discusses different current definitions of Capacity Building and agrees on one comprehensive definition as the foundation for this book. Furthermore, a three level approach of Capacity Building is described (UNDP 1998, pp. 11) and the crucial concept of ownership (OECD 2006, p. 7) is discussed.

Strategies and approaches for economic development in developing countries have changed considerably over time. During the beginning of development assistance the focus was on providing financial capital as well as engineering capabilities to support development. Later in the 1970s, it has been realised that not only the pure amount of support is the key to development but that also the efficiency of investments plays an important role. Key determinants of this efficiency of investments are the (economic) incentives that result from economic policies in the partner countries and thus, reform of existing policies came to the fore. Not long after it has been realised that policies are set on an existing foundation of political, state and social institutions and that weaknesses in these institutions are potential pitfalls for policy change and thus for economic development (Levy 2004, pp. 4). Thus, (state) Capacity Building became of central importance for development efforts. In their 2005 evaluation of World Bank support for Capacity Building in Africa the OPERATIONS EVALUATION DEPARTMENT OF THE WORLD BANK states that the performance of the public sector has to be improved to achieve the goals set for economic growth, poverty reduction as well as improvements in service delivery for citizens. To achieve this, countries are required to complement any reforms with Capacity Building (2005, p. vi). Among others, the OECD supports this position in their latest report on Capacity Building by stating "capacity is important because of its
relationship to the performance of country systems, particularly in delivering basic goods and services, and providing a suitable policy and regulatory environment for development to take place” (OECD 2006, p. 12). WHYTE (2004, p. 4) also includes universities, research centres as well as private (start-up) enterprises and service organisations into the context of Capacity Building. WHYTE emphasises that Capacity Building is crucial for “achieving economic growth, reducing poverty and equalising opportunity” and sees a renewed interest by the actors in development cooperation (2004, pp. 4).

Definitions of Capacity Building

In this context, capacity refers to the “ability of people, organisations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully” according to a definition by the OECD (2006, p. 12). A further definition by the UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP), the United Nations (UN) organisation responsible for Capacity Building issues, highlights that capacity has long term relevance and that human resources are a key in Capacity Development “capacity is defined as the ability of individuals and organisations or organisational units to perform functions effectively, efficiently and sustainable”. This implies that capacity is not a passive state but part of a continuing process and that human resources are central to Capacity Development (UNDP 1998, p. 10).

The efforts of donors and partner countries to strengthen capacity are called Capacity Building or Capacity Development, a term that can be used as a synonym for Capacity Building according to EHLERS et al. (2007, p. 15). Nevertheless, in some cases, the term Capacity Development is considered to be the more comprehensive as it includes the development of whole organisations or countries opposed to the term Capacity Building that mostly refers to education and training (Ehlers et al. 2007, p. 15).

There are a numerous definitions for Capacity Building or Capacity Development by different organisations, subsequently, some will be discussed briefly as they contain useful insights into the characteristics of Capacity Building that will be used later on. The German organisation INTERNATIONALE WEITERBILDUNG UND ENTWICKLUNG (INWENT) refers to Capacity Building in the context of international development cooperation as further education, human resources and organisational development. According to INWENT, Capacity Building aims at strengthening abilities of partners to enable them to plan and implement sustainable development strategies and policies. Further education is in this case seen as one part of human resources development which has the ability to influence the development of complete organisations (2006, p. 1). The definition of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) stresses the results of the changes in Capacity Development in targeting three levels that will be discusses in more detail later on in this chapter: ‘The GTZ sees capacity development as the process of strengthening the abilities or capacities of individuals, organisations and societies to make effective and efficient use of resources, in order to achieve their own goals on a sustainable basis’ (Gómez 2003, p. 3). The definition of OECD as well incorporates the three levels of individuals, organisations and society but also stresses a long term aspect as capacity has not only to be created but also adapted and maintained over time: “capacity development is understood as the process whereby people, organisations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time” (2006, p. 12).

EHLERS et al. (2007, p. 16) try to concentrate different definitions of Capacity Building in literature and propose the following definition: “Capacity Building means further education for individuals to empower them to shape and take part in their living spaces as well as giving them the chance to develop competencies that are needed at their workplace. It refers likewise to the empowerment of organisational learning, the development of management structures as well as the design of legal and political frameworks, to strengthen the capacity for independent advancement”. This comprehensive definition will be used for this book.

Levels of Capacity Building

Capacity Building efforts were in most cases focussing on the development of organisations or individuals in the past. As these approaches have failed in many cases or did not produce the desired outcomes because they did not take into account the influence of the broader environment, a more comprehensive approach to Capacity Building is proposed by the development community. The UNDP (1998, pp. 11) proposes three interconnected levels that have to be taken into account if Capacity Building is considered to be successful.

The first and highest level is the system, or the so called enabling environment that could cover a whole society or country if a policy-programme is of national scale (e.g. governance) and has to be defined at the beginning of a programme. The system can comprise formal and informal organisations that are included in the defined borders according to the UNDP (1998, p. 9).

The second and middle level is called the entity or the organisation. A system could consist of several organisations. These organisations may be formal (government organisations, ministries), a private sector organisation (e.g. companies) or informal organisations (e.g. volunteer organisations). The UNDP approach identifies mission and strategy, culture/structure and competencies, processes, human resources, financial resources, information resources and infrastructure as the
dimensions of capacity on organisation level. According to the UNDP, older approaches to Capacity Building only focused on human resources, processes as well as organisational structure. To be more successful all dimensions should be taken into account for Capacity Development (1998, pp. 12).

The third and last level is the individual person or the member of an organisation. The majority of Capacity Building initiatives focus on the individual person or small groups of individuals. These individuals can either be members of the organisations that are carrying out the capacity initiative or people that are affected by the initiative as receiver or in any other way (UNDP 1998, p. 14).

This three level approach to Capacity Building is used by numerous organisations that state to follow this multi level approach even if the three levels are labelled or defined slightly different. INWENT (2006, p. 2) for example uses the three levels individual, organisation and system to describe their multi level approach. The GTZ uses the levels people, organisations as well as institutions and policies (Gómez 2003, p. 3). Most organisations also state that the interconnection between the three levels of Capacity Building is crucial. INWENT for example states that further education as well as human resource and organisational development are used on all three levels. According to INWENT, these levels are interconnected in a systemic way to achieve the best possible results (2006, p. 2).

Ownership

During recent discussions the idea of ownership has emerged as yet another important element for the success of Capacity Building. According to the OECD, ownership means that the roles of donors and partner countries are redefined and that Capacity Building is to be seen as an endogenous process that has to be lead from within the partner country. Donors have to play a supporting role in this process. Thus, political leadership in the partner country as well as the existing political and governance system are very important parameters for all efforts to develop capacity (OECD 2006, p. 7). WHYTE (2004, p. 9) mentions one main reason for this trend: in many cases donors had to observe that the organisations they had been supporting failed by the moment the external assistance from donors was withdrawn; “factors such as leadership, local ownership and nonviable business models” have been identified as important elements for success in further analysis. This agreement is also fixed in the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (n. a., 2005). According to the declaration, developing countries have the obligation to lead all processes of Capacity Development. This is to be realised by setting detailed objectives in the form of national development plans. Donors, in their supporting role, have committed themselves to add financial as well as analytical support aligned to partner countries’ development plans and objectives. Existing capacities in partner countries have to be used and donors are committed to harmonise all support that is directed to Capacity Building (n. a., 2005). A potential challenge for this approach is also discussed by the OECD: A premise for country ownership of development efforts is the existence of adequate capacity in the country. If there is no sufficient capacity in the partner country, ownership will not emerge (OECD 2006, p. 13).

The relevance of Capacity Building is not only reflected by the general agreement of partner countries and donor countries that Capacity Building is central for economic and political development but also by the amount of funds that
2.2 Building blocks of What we Call Capacity Building

This chapter analyses the current practice of Capacity Building activities in four dimensions, organisational embedding, time frame, geographic scope as well as educational sector where a model of “e-Learning territories” (MENON Network 2007, pp. 34; Delrio and Fischer 2007, p. 4) is adapted for the context of Capacity Building. Based on this characterisation, first requirements are suggested that are later summarised in chapter 2.6.

To derive requirements for a quality label for e-Learning in the field of Capacity Building it is necessary to characterise how Capacity Building works in practice and what methods are used in Capacity Building. These requirements form the context which the quality label and certification process has to be adapted to. For Capacity Building four dimensions of differentiation can be identified: organisational embedding, time-frame, educational context as well as geographic scope. An overview of these dimensions is provided in figure 2.

Within the following four chapters, these four dimensions of Capacity Building are discussed in more detail.

2.3.1 Building Block 1: How CB is Embedded in an Organisation

The dimension organisational embedding differentiates between e-Learning for stand-alone Capacity Building activities and e-Learning for Capacity Building that is embedded in larger development programmes.

In many cases, issues of Capacity Building are embedded in larger development programmes and not addressed as the main or the only task. The World Bank for instance has Capacity Building activities included in most of their development projects in Africa but does not specify special Capacity Building targets for the projects according to the OPERATIONS EVALUATION DEPARTMENT OF WORLD BANK (2005, p. viii). Furthermore the OED states that “many projects have capacity building activities embedded in their major operational components, but the objectives of these activities tend to be ill defined, and their achievement is poorly tracked and reported” (2005, p. viii). Nevertheless the OED identifies that there is a small number of World Bank projects that “address capacity building as the primary project objective, such as the new generation of multisector capacity building projects” (2005, p. XV). WHYTE (2004, p. 9) who conducted a landscape analysis of donor trends, also agrees that Capacity Building activities “are often embedded in other programmes and are not tracked separately”. For the purpose of the quality label the Capacity Building part of a larger programme could be seen as a programme itself as long as there are defined Capacity Building targets within the larger programme.

Besides embedded Capacity Building one can also identify stand-alone Capacity Building Activities that are not included in larger development programmes and offered to e.g. employees or public servants for further education. Examples are the International Leadership Training programmes from INWENT (2008b) that are offered to experts and executives from...
companies and organisations from developing countries to enable them to initiate and manage change processes in their countries.

2.3.2 Building Block 2: Time Frame

Furthermore, Capacity Building can be differentiated by the time frame. Here, one can identify short term and mid/long term Capacity Building initiatives.

Especially if Capacity Building is embedded in larger, long term development projects Capacity Building programmes also tend to be long term because they accompany the overall project progress. Also funding for Capacity Building indicates the long term orientation. The OED (2004, p. XVI) mentions that the Institutional Development Fund (a World Bank programme) supports Capacity Building initiatives for maximum three years. WHYTE also concludes that Capacity Building is a long term process (2004, p. 9). But not only programmes included in a larger long term background have a longer duration. INWENT for instance offers different International Leadership Training (ILT) programmes that last for about two years (half a year preparation, one year training based in Germany and half a year knowledge transfer supported by coaching) and that are supported by e-Learning through for instance virtual working groups during the preparation phase as well as e-Coaching during the knowledge transfer phase (InWEnt 2008b).

Nevertheless, individual programmes can be significantly shorter: INWENT for instance states that their further education programmes may last shorter than one week (InWEnt 2006, p. 4). WHYTE (2004, p. 28) also identifies a number of different modalities that are used by donors in Capacity Building efforts where the individual activities range from short term trainings up to long term advisors (that also care for training to empower people to take over responsibilities when the advisor leaves the organisation) as well as degree courses from linked universities (one developing country university is linked with another university in donor countries).

2.3.3 Building Block 3: Educational Sector

Another important way of categorising Capacity Building is to differentiate the educational sectors in which Capacity Building can be found. A quality label has to be either able to include all of these sectors or it has to be limited to a selected number of sectors. The conclusion by WHYTE (2004, p. 10) stating that Capacity Building initiatives today tend to combine a number of activities (probably from different educational sectors) within a single initiative already suggests that a quality label should be able to cover various educational sectors. WHYTE (2004, pp. 10) also summarises a large number of methods that are used for Capacity Building: "Broadly they fall into training and award programmes, study tours and conferences, twinning arrangements, Centres of Excellence, research or training networks and institutional support to libraries, ICT, infrastructure, etc.". Relevant for the development of a quality label for e-Learning in Capacity Building are the education related activities.

Usually, education is classified according to educational levels/stages and/or fields of education. As education is very dependent on the country and the local culture most classifications only apply to single countries. A renowned international educational classification is the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), last revised in 1997, which is used for "assembling, compiling and presenting statistics of education" (UNESCO 1997). Nevertheless, there are reasons why ISCED is not well suited to categorise e-Learning in Capacity Building. On the one hand, most activities in Capacity Building belong to further education and not to school and degree studies at university which are largely covered by ISCED. Another problem is that the multitude of new e-Learning applications does not fit into the range of traditional classifications. Furthermore DELRIO and FISCHER (2007, p. 1) argue that on the one hand many other divisions of e-Learning are possible ("e.g. by sector, purpose and target group") that lead to a growing differentiation of e-Learning and that on the other hand the development of technology allows for an increasing number of scenarios for the use of e-Learning that do not completely fit into traditional categories. Based on these observations a model of e-Learning territories is introduced by the HELIOS Consortium (MENON Network 2007, pp. 34; Delrio and Fischer 2007, p. 4) to systematise e-Learning activities.

The model that has been developed to systematise different fields of e-Learning used in Europe can also be helpful if it is applied as a tool for categorisation in the context of e-Learning for Capacity Building. Still it has to be kept in mind that some of the territories defined in this model are not observable in the field of Capacity Building and potential adding of new territories for the use of e-Learning in Capacity Building might have to be considered. In a first step, the e-Learning territories are described according to the HELIOS report (MENON Network, 2007) and in a second step the model is
adapted to the context of Capacity Building.

The report differentiates twelve e-Learning territories (see figure 3) that are clustered by different means including the purpose of e-Learning, the sector of education or training where they are observable and others that are of “transversal” nature. Each territory itself can be in a different stage of development, some still emerging fields others already in a stage of consolidation (Delrio and Fischer 2008, pp. 2). The differentiation of the stage of development of the territories is especially important for Capacity Building as Capacity Building and e-Learning can be observed in some of the territories and in others, so far, no Capacity Building or e-Learning takes place at all. In this chapter, each of the territories is analysed for whether e-Learning for Capacity Building already emerges, whether Capacity Building takes place in a territory without the use of e-Learning (possible areas where e-Learning could be introduced as an innovation) and whether there are territories where no Capacity Building takes place at all.

All territories can be graphically represented in a coordinate system according to two dimensions. The first dimension is a continuum from formal learning to informal/non-formal learning. The second dimension is formed by a continuum from intra-muros (the transition of a learning group that is formed in presence into a virtual environment) and extended learning context that includes for an expansion of “learning contexts, settings, persons and organisations involved” (Delrio and Fischer 2008, pp. 2). An overview is provided within figure 3.

Figure 3 e-Learning Territories according to the HELIOS Report (MENON Network 2007, p. 34)
The territory e-Learning at the Workplace includes the use of ICT for learning in both private companies as well as in agencies and public administration. E-Learning or learning is carried out in the form of "structured training programmes fully online or blended schemes (...) e-learning chunks on demand/on the job". The authors consider return on investment, flexibility in training delivery, contribution to organisational change as well as knowledge management important issues in this territory (MENON Network 2007, pp. 51). Another territory is the use of ICT for Learning Purposes within Tertiary Education. The territory implies the use of ICT for learning in universities, colleges as well as in research centres. The application of e-Learning in this field includes single lectures placed online, courses in a mixed mode between online and offline and whole degrees that can be obtained online (MENON Network 2007, pp. 44). Virtual Professional Networks are virtual communities that are aimed at professionals or are used to facilitate a dialogue on certain issues. These networks are usually inter-organisational and used as a means to distribute information and to stay in contact with professionals on a certain field. Within these communities, learning in the community’s field of interest is an intended target for participants. Sometimes, as a side effect, non-professionally related learning is as well generated (MENON Network 2007, pp. 75). A related territory is defined by Non-professional e-Learning Communities. Here, learning is transferred to the virtual space. The creation of this type of e-Learning could be initiated by training providers which try to complement courses as well as by grassroots initiatives that share one or some interests that are in some cases non-professional. Within these communities, the purpose of learning is recognised by all of its members. For Capacity Building, especially the complementation of courses through online communities is one possible application (MENON Network 2007, pp. 82). The territory Inter-organisational Development through e-Learning includes the use of the networking capabilities of e-Learning for cooperation between different organisations that rely on neither market nor hierarchical mechanisms for coordination. The authors of the HELIOS report state that collaboration between different organisations has come into focus because it has been recognised that innovation and sharing of ideas is crucial for success in a global economy (MENON Network 2007, pp. 78). Another territory of e-Learning is Communities generating e-Learning as a Side Effect. This territory comprises virtual communities that do not have learning as a main objective but regard the connection to other members as their first goal. Members of these groups share common interests, values that result from “either geographical or intellectual proximity, demographic similarity, common hobbies, and belonging to the same non-governmental organisation (NGO) or charity, to name a few”.

As a primary result of e-Learning in this case, informal and in many cases not intentional learning takes place. Often, chat rooms, forums as well as blogs are the main tools in this territory (MENON Network 2007, pp. 85). ICT for Virtual Mobility of Learners is considered to be an instrument of internationalisation, within the HELIOS report especially aimed at contributing to the ongoing integration of the European countries. “Constituting elements of virtual mobility are: transnational lectures and/or learning materials, cross-border recruitment of students, intensity of communication flows, the international accreditation of learning achievements, the multilingualism, complementary to both physical mobility and conventional learning” (MENON Network 2007, p. 35). The territory Evolved Distance Education includes all educational settings where a teacher and his/her students are divided by geographical distance and technology and possible meetings are the means to bridge the gap. Many times, distance education is used to provide adults with a second chance in obtaining a qualification, reaching people disadvantaged by time, distance or disabilities as well as updating the knowledge base of workers by on-the-job training programmes. Traditionally ICTs are just used as a means of delivery but a wider use of ICTs is becoming more and more widespread (MENON Network 2007, pp. 59). The territory Training of Teachers on (and through) e-Learning includes two major parts. On the one hand, teachers (and trainers) are probably going to use more ICTs in classrooms and trainings and need to be prepared to be able to use ICTs. On the other hand, e-Learning is one tool that could be utilised in the further education of teachers and trainers (MENON Network 2007, pp. 62). The territory ICT for Learning Purposes within Schools includes different types of schools from primary to secondary education where e-Learning could be used in class, for home assignments or for twinning classes or complete schools (MENON Network 2007, pp. 38). Another territory is Individual Development through e-Learning. This field comprises “the integration of the ‘e’-component in individual daily life processes within wider societal aspects aiming at individual development and enrichment, personal growth and active citizenship” (MENON Network 2007, p. 35). The territory ICT for Learning Purposes in VET Institutions includes all education and trainings that “prepare learners for careers of professions that are historically non-academic, but rather related to a trade, occupation or ‘vocation’ (Vocational Education and Training)” (MENON Network 2007, pp. 48).

In the following, the e-Learning territories according to the MENON Network are assessed, whether e-Learning for Capacity Building can be already observed and examples are given. Moreover, it is analysed if Capacity Building takes place in one of the territories that is not yet supported by e-Learning.

There are a number of e-Learning territories defined by MENON Network that are not relevant for a quality label for e-Learning in Capacity Building. The territory ICT for Learning Purposes within Schools is not relevant for the case of Capacity Building as the rather narrow definition for Capacity Building of this book does not include basic or advanced
school education. This does not mean that there are no e-Learning initiatives within schools in developing countries resulting for instance from the further education of teachers in this field. Also the territory Individual Development through e-Learning does not fall into the field of e-Learning for Capacity Building considered in this book. Still, learning in this context may be supporting Capacity Building by developing individuals but this learning is generated mainly by informal and non-formal learning outside of any programme or institutional arrangement that could be covered by a specialised quality label for e-Learning in Capacity Building (MENON Network 2007, pp. 68). ICT for Learning Purposes in VET Institutions is as well not an area that is covered by the definition of Capacity Building. It includes all education and trainings that “prepare learners for careers of professions that are historically non-academic, but rather related to a trade, occupation or ‘vocation’” (MENON Network 2007, pp. 48). The last territory that is not relevant for a quality label for e-Learning in Capacity Building is Communities generating e-Learning as a Side Effect.

In the remaining territories, Capacity Building can be observed that is in many cases already supported by e-Learning. However the territory Training of Teachers on (and through) e-Learning is not as formal as in the European context and it thus needs to be repositioned within the grid. Provided these changes are applied to the e-Learning territories according to the MENON Network the following picture (figure 4) emerges, brighter territories are not relevant for e-Learning in Capacity Building.
In the remaining territories Capacity Building can be observed that is in many cases already supported by e-Learning or ICTs in general. Within the following paragraphs, examples for each territory are provided. Evidence on the territory e-Learning at the Workplace is not documented extensively but a number of examples can be identified. One possible example is the Information Management Resource Kit (IMARK) developed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). IMARK consists of a number of learning modules accessible online or on CD-ROM that focus on, amongst others, different ICT related topics and are available for free. These fully electronic modules are aimed at a professional audience in (government) organisations related to agriculture and are therefore very likely to be used at the workplace for further education (FAO 2008a, FAO 2008b, FAO 2008c). There are some Capacity Building initiatives in the field of ICT for Learning within Tertiary Education but these in many cases include twinning of universities to support the partner university (trainings, technical assistance, and scholarships) or enable students from universities in developing countries to study in western countries (Whyte 2004, p. 30). These activities do not fall into the scope of Capacity Building as defined above. Still, Capacity Building is used within the context of tertiary education for building tertiary education institutions. An example is the support for the establishment of a “Masters of Biodiversity Conservation” in Cambodia (Fauna & Flora International, n. d.). Virtual Professional Networks that rely on ICTs can also be found in the field of Capacity Building and development cooperation. One important example is Knowledge Management for Development (KM4Dev), a community of professionals in international development dealing with topics of knowledge management and knowledge sharing. The community makes use of a mailing list, a website as a resource base, “knowledge expeditions” (learning alliances) as well as a wiki for sharing knowledge. The community is also linked to an e-journal (KM4Dev Journal) that is described as “peer-reviewed and open access” (KM4Dev n. d.). This initiative is supported by the Bellanet International Secretariat which has the mission to promote and facilitate effective collaboration within the international development community, especially through the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs)” (Bellanet International Secretariat, 2006). The related territory, Non professional e-Learning Communities can as well be observed in the field of Capacity Building or Development. Here, learning is transferred to the virtual space. The creation of this type of e-Learning could be initiated by training providers which try to complement their courses as well as by grassroots initiatives that share one or more interests that are in some cases non-professional. Within these communities, the purpose of learning is recognised by all members of the community. For Capacity Building, especially the complementation of courses through online communities is one application (MENON Network 2007, pp. 82). Examples for this territory can be found within the courses offered by InWEnt that are complemented by an online learning community that also serves as a retention function for Alumni (InWEnt 2008a). ICT for Virtual Mobility of Learners is also a territory that is relevant for Capacity Building. In the original definition, this territory is considered important for the ongoing integration of the whole European Union. If the underlying ideas are considered, a number of these elements can also be found in Capacity Building, “transnational lectures and/or learning materials, cross-border recruitment of students, intensity of communication flows, the international accreditation of learning achievements, the multilingualism, complementary to both physical mobility and conventional teaching” (MENON Network 2008, p. 35). Inter-organisational Development through e-Learning is another field that could be relevant for Capacity Building in developing countries. The territory includes possible cooperative relationships between Capacity Building Organisations and others that are supported by ICTs and e-Learning rather than by market or hierarchy. One example could be electronic workspaces that are used by two or more organisations to work together on a mutual project. However, this territory might not be too relevant for a certification with a label for e-Learning in Capacity Building. Evolved Distance Education and the use of ICTs in open and distance education (ODE) are issues of importance in developing countries. One may argue that Capacity Building related activities can be identified in this territory as qualifications obtained in ODE are in many cases useable at the workplace and thus suitable for further development of individuals. By definition, updating the knowledge base of workers is an integral part in this territory. Some prominent examples can be identified where ODE is explicitly used for Capacity Building: The Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC), coordinated by the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) is specialised in the delivery of “postsecondary, skills-related courses” that aim at “strengthening (their) educational capacity and outreach” and alleviating the digital divide (COL n. d.). Another important example is the African Virtual University (AVU) that offers one degree programme as well as a number of certificate courses that “are convenient online courses designed to increase individuals’ knowledge and skills within a one-year timeframe” and “that are delivered in a distance-learning format, which accommodates multiple learning levels, while creating flexibility to suit individuals’ work or life schedules” (AVU n. d.). Training of Teachers on (and through) e-Learning has been on the agenda of Capacity Building for some time and with e-Learning emerging also training of teachers and trainers on (and through) e-Learning becomes more important. The UNESCO (2002, p. 3) states that “for education to reap the full benefits of ICTs in learning, it is essential that pre- and in-service teachers are able to effectively use these new tools for learning”. Within the “Education for All” initiative that includes six education goals to be reached by 2015 “to meet the learning needs of all children, youth and adults” (UNESCO 2007) the UNESCO even published a handbook (UNESCO 2005) for teachers on how to effectively use ICTs in school. Also (ITC enabled) Open Distance Education is considered to be of high importance to meet the challenge of education and skill
upgrading of the vast amount of teachers that need to be trained (an estimate of 3 million additional teachers is needed in Africa to provide basic education for all children plus further education for in-service teachers according to SHABANI (2005, p. 95)) as well as teacher training in rural and remote areas (Shabani 2005, p. 98). Reported examples of teacher training on and through ICT show the emerging character of this field. Many examples report presence workshops with learning by doing character that also sometimes do not focus on the use of ICT for learning but on basic ITC knowledge for teachers or self study with CD-ROMs (Janssens-Bevernage et al. 2005). An example from Tanzania also shows that the use of ICTs for teacher training still faces a number of problems. MAHENGE (2006, pp. 148) describes a proposal for action to use ICTs for distance education of teachers (pre-service as well as in-service) by the Open University of Tanzania to overcome problems in timely delivery of materials as well as contact to students. Ironically at that time, the university itself did not have access to internet as well as a sufficient supply of computers (headquarters as well as 22 regional centres). ACZEL et al. (2007) also analyse the (perceived) challenges of six non governmental organisations based in Africa, the Middle East and Asia in supporting teachers and trainers with the use of ICTs in education in developing countries.

### 2.3.4 Building Block 4: Geographic Scope

The dimension geographic scope differentiates Capacity Building in activities that are local, regional (e.g. Africa) and international (a number of different countries).

Capacity Building activities can be found on a local level in different countries, especially when considering bilateral activities between a single donor organisation or country and one developing country.

Capacity Building can also be identified on a regional level where regional does not refer to a region within a country but for instance to the whole of Africa. Again, International Leadership Training from InWEnt is an example in this case. The courses offered are explicitly directed towards and adapted to one (and seldom more than one) of the regions Africa, Asia, Latin America or Middle East (InWEnt 2008c).

In many cases, Capacity Building can be found on an international level. This means Capacity Building initiatives are implemented in a multitude of different countries and cultures around the world with an emphasis on countries in Africa and Asia. Furthermore, these Capacity Building initiatives are carried out in cooperation between partner countries and different players in Capacity Building, including “national governments, bilateral agencies, multilateral development banks, private philanthropies as well as new actors from public, commercial and non-profit sectors” (Whyte 2004, p. 6). This probably leads to international teams who work on Capacity Building issues and also in some cases to a mixture of international participants in trainings or workshops. One case is the International Leadership Training by InWEnt that is carried out in a number of regions (InWEnt 2008c).

The often international character of Capacity Building yet leads to another conclusion that has to be taken into account when a quality label is intended to be created. Capacity building efforts face very different situations in partner countries including large differences in infrastructure (especially relevant for ICTs), culture, development progress (least developed countries up to developing countries and sometimes emerging countries) as well as existing policies and organisations. This may lead to the conclusion that the development of a quality label is biopational. On the one hand, possible criteria or processes could be defined less detailed thus leaving the space for country particularities or on the other hand a label has to include criteria catalogues that as a consequence offer minimum criteria that indicate solid quality of a programme or institution and are relevant to all organisations in all contexts and excellence criteria that demonstrate exceptional quality achievements of an organisation or programme.

### 2.4 The Landscape of Capacity Building Organisations

This chapter analyses the multitude of organisations that are involved into Capacity Building in three main areas that are type of organisation, scope of organisation as well as the integration of e-Learning within the organisation, where a model from innovation theory is used (Ehlers et al. 2007, pp. 44). Furthermore, requirements for the development of a quality label are derived based on this analysis.

Within the field of Capacity Building one can identify a multitude of different organisations that are involved; these organisations will be referred to as Capacity Building Organisations within this book. One main characteristic, shared by most if not all Capacity Building Organisations, is that they are not providers of learning services that offer their services to customers on an open market but that their services are an integral part of larger Capacity Building programmes (Ehlers et al. 2007, p. 47). EHLERS et al. (2007, p. 18) restrict the term Capacity Building Organisation to development cooperation organisations that have independent Capacity Building offers and that actively carry these out. This excludes for instance organisations that focus on research and studies (for instance the Center for Development Research (ZEF), University of Bonn) and organisations that provide only financing for development projects (for instance KfW Bankengruppe (KfW) in Germany). This restriction will be used for this book as well as only organisations that offer Capacity Building independently
and do comprise the target group of organisations that could be interested in certifying programmes with e-Learning elements or their whole organisation. Nevertheless, institutions that e.g. finance Capacity Building may be the only or one main addressee for this quality label if they have to decide about the distribution of funds and use a certification as one indicator for choosing institutions to spend money on and also as a tool for legitimisation.

To systematise the different organisations and to assess possible driving forces for these organisations to gain a certification, four possible main sources of interest in a quality certification are described and matched to the different kinds of Capacity Building Organisations. Organisations are classified by the scope and type of organisation including legal constitution and the source of funds that also influences their timeframe for Capacity Building programmes (Whyte 2004, pp. 49). Secondly, the existing classification of Capacity Building Organisations by a model of innovation theory by EHLERS et al. (2007, pp. 44) is used to derive the suggestion that a quality label should consist of two parts, one to certify programmes and another to certify whole organisations as organisations could be interested in these different types of certification according to their e-Learning strategy. An overview of the characteristics of Capacity Building Organisations can be found in figure 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF ORGANISATION</th>
<th>SCOPE OF ORGANISATION</th>
<th>E-LEARNING STRATEGIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Governmental Organisation (GO)</td>
<td>• Bilateral</td>
<td>• Project Orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Non-governmental Organisation (NGO)</td>
<td>• Multilateral</td>
<td>• Systems Orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Foundations</td>
<td>• International</td>
<td>• Potential</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Private Companies</td>
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<td>• Church Related</td>
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<td>• Organisations</td>
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Figure 5: Systematisation of Capacity Building Organisations

A number of sources of interest in quality certification can be identified. First, organisations could be interested in quality certification as an instrument of legitimisation for the use of funds or to obtain more financial resources for Capacity Building. Especially governmental organisations that receive funds from national budgets and thus from the tax-payer have to ensure accountability towards the citizens of their country. This source will be referred to as legitimisation. Secondly, organisations could be interested in a quality certificate to foster quality and innovation within the organisation. Quality certification could in this case provide a benchmark to assess if the organisation or the offered programmes are excellent. Also, the certification process could provide a framework to systematically think about quality in an organisation. This source will be referred to as quality/innovation. This area includes measuring and improving cost and impact efficiency of e-Learning as well as guaranteeing success. Connected to this issue is the aim of organisations to be able to benchmark their current activities in the field of e-Learning. Furthermore compliance with legal standards is a possible source of interest for organisations where a quality label could be of assistance. The last field of interest is marketing or public perception. Two aspects might be relevant in this area. On the one hand the certification of an organisation or a programme provides an external marketing/public perception effect. Marketing could on the one hand be directed towards possible partner organisations as well as future participants. On the other hand, the marketing effect could be directed towards current or future employees to document a corporate culture of quality and innovation.

2.4.1 Type and Scope of Organisation

Capacity Building Organisations can first be differentiated by the type of organisation and furthermore by the scope of operation range. The type of organisation is, among other characteristics, closely related to the sources of funding and the legal form and has influence on the sources of interest in quality certification. The type of organisation has also effects on the planning horizon and the influence of the organisation on the discussion about Capacity Building. The following
groups can be distinguished: governmental organisations (GOs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), foundations, private companies as well as church related organisations.

For this classification, all organisations that are by legal form governmental organisations, mainly owned by one or more governments or with governmental representatives as members in official bodies of the organisation are considered as governmental organisations. These organisations are also likely to receive most if not all of their funds from governments. This would include for instance InWEnt, by legal form a private company, with the German Federal Republic being one of the owners and represented in the directorate and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development accounting for about 80% of turnover/budget (InWEnt 2008, p. 16). These organisations have probably a high interest in quality certification for legitimisation reasons as the source of funds are taxes.

Non-governmental organisations are all legally constituted organisations that have been created by private persons or organisations where no government is represented at all. Nevertheless, these organisations might receive funds from governments. In many cases also donations from private persons as well as companies are sources for funds for non-governmental organisations. Thus the issue of legitimisation might be a strong incentive for obtaining quality certification.

Governmental organisations and non-governmental organisations can further be characterised by the scope of organisation leading to the division into bilateral and multilateral organisations. Bilateral relations refer to relations between two states; bilateral organisations are thus organisations that are funded only by one state and work together with partner countries in bilateral projects. As much diplomacy is conducted in a bilateral manner, also much development cooperation is provided bilateral. Bilateral governmental organisations are for example the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) or the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) as well as many other bilateral donor organisations (Whyte 2004, pp. 41). Multilateralism refers to international relations between several countries that work in concert on a given issue. Multilateral organisations have a multitude of countries as members and source of funding. The most prominent multilateral governmental organisation is the United Nations system that includes a number of specialised agencies and programmes (e.g. UNDP) that work on Capacity Building issues (Whyte 2004, pp. 35). Funds for the UNDP come from different sources (multilateral donor resources, bilateral donor resources, local resources channelled through UNDP as well as regular (core) resources) but the origin of these funds are in the end member countries of the UNDP (UNDP 2008, p. 34) and thus governmental. Another differentiation considers whether organisations work on a regional, local or on an international scale.

Another category of organisations that is active in Capacity Building is made up by foundations. Foundations are typically non-profit organisations with usually charitable purposes that in most cases have a stock of assets that generates an income that may be used for the foundations purpose. According to WHYTE (2004, p. 49) most foundations that are active in international development are US based foundations. Although the amount of funds that is provided by foundations is considerably lower than those by governmental and non-governmental organisations, WHYTE (2004, pp. 49) views one advantage in foundation work for Capacity Development as they are considered to be able to invest on a longer term than other organisations. Examples for foundations active in Capacity Building are for instance Rockefeller Foundation, Ford Foundation as well as Carnegie Corporation of New York. Some only provide funds for activities of other organisations and are not included in the above definition of Capacity Building Organisations (still they are a potential addressee) but others like the Rockefeller Foundation run own activities in Capacity Building.

Private companies are organisations with the primary aim to generate profit. They may be active in Capacity Building for instance as contractor delivering services to governmental or non-governmental organisations or they might be active in Capacity Building for instance in Public Private Partnership arrangements. For private companies the legitimisation of fund usage might not be as strong as the quality/innovation and marketing/public perception schemes.

2.4.2 E-Learning Strategies of Capacity Building Organisations

Besides the type of organisation as a characteristic to derive requirements for and possible interests of organisations in a quality label for e-Learning in Capacity Building, the way how organisations currently use e-Learning for Capacity Building leads to interesting conclusions. EHLERS et al. (2007, pp. 44) use a model from innovation theory to assess how e-Learning is integrated in Capacity Building Organisations. The model divides the diffusion of innovation in three main phases, project orientation, systems orientation and potential orientation. These phases should be understood as a continuum and organisations may change their status over time, sometimes even rapidly. Figure 6 illustrates this continuum.
Project orientation includes all organisations that have made first experiences with e-Learning in one or more projects. The focus lies on single projects and the organisation does not provide any additional services besides content generation. Neither broadening the application of e-Learning nor strategic approaches for e-Learning are planned in these organisations. E-learning is not included in the organisation’s strategy nor is there any e-Learning strategy. Nevertheless it is considered possible that a project leads to an isolated application of e-Learning.

Systems orientation means that e-Learning is used in a systematic way and capacities for e-Learning as well as own applications are built in an organisation (e.g. economic, technical, didactical and organisational capacities). Responsibilities and roles for e-Learning are defined within the organisation and in some cases it may be possible that a department or an e-Learning centre is established within the organisation. Additional services e.g. tutoring, consultancy, etc. are offered additionally to content. Still, e-Learning remains an additional component for the Capacity Building activities of an organisation. E-learning is integrated as a part of the organisation’s strategy but no specific e-Learning strategy exists for the organisation.

Potential orientation refers to the strategic integration of e-Learning in both organisational processes of an organisation and within all Capacity Building activities that are carried out. The organisation possesses an own strategy for information and communication technology or e-Learning. The organisation offers full fledged, tutored e-Learning as well as blended learning and full Capacity Building programmes by means of e-Learning. There is an own department for e-Learning issues (or an e-Learning centre) and the organisation runs an own learning management system. E-learning is considered to be an added value for Capacity Building and each programme is analysed for ways of implementing e-Learning in a meaningful way.

A different stage of an organisation in this innovation continuum suggests an interest in a different kind of certification that reflects the status of e-Learning in the organisation. Capacity Building Organisations that are in a project orientation stage could be more interested in obtaining a quality label for single e-Learning projects/programmes or the e-Learning component of projects/programmes because of a general interest in quality improvement, legitimacy reasons towards funding agencies or tax-payer or because of demand by partner organisations. A certification of the whole organisation might not be of interest as e-Learning is not yet considered to be of enough importance and the effort of one or a few certifications of programmes is considered to be significantly lower than to certify the whole organisation. The e-Learning parts of Capacity Building might be uncertified or other means of quality assurance are applied.

In contrast, organisations that are in the stage of potential orientation could be more interested in certifying the whole organisation than just a programme/project as e-Learning is an integral part of their strategy. E-Learning is used in
most Capacity Building initiatives and the effort to certify the whole organisation is potentially lower than to certify each programme/project of this organisation. There might be also an interest to be seen as a high quality organisation in e-Learning for Capacity Building which could be signalised by a certification of the whole organisation as an organisation of excellence in the field of e-Learning for Capacity Building.

The categorisation of organisations with the innovation model by EHLERS et al. suggests that a quality certification model should thus consist of two parts to suit best the different needs of organisations. One part can be used to certify the quality of single e-Learning programmes; this certification should only be valid for the unique programme that has been certified. The second part should be able to certify the quality of whole organisations in the field of e-Learning for Capacity Building. If an organisation as a whole is certified, all e-Learning programmes that are carried out by this organisation should also be considered as certified. Later, it will also be discussed if the certification of organisations is to be divided into two parts, one that represents a minimum standard agreed on by all organisations and one excellence level that takes into account more specific requirements of certain types of organisations that have proceeded further.

2.5 Do we Talk About Programmes or Courses?

This chapter provides a definition of the term programme including a distinction to the term course for the context of this book to ensure that this unit of certification for the label is clearly understood.

Throughout this book the terms programme as well as course will be widely used and as especially the term programme is applied with very different meanings in a number of contexts a clear definition for this book has to be provided. WIRTH (2005, p. 39) for instance identifies loan or support programmes, political agendas, training programmes as well as educational software as possible connotations for programme. Within this book, the term programme refers to an educational offer that consists of several content modules that again may consist of a number of lessons. These modules or lessons will in many cases build upon one another or enlarge the topic of the programme. A programme furthermore includes recurring and/or final summative assessments or recurring formative assessments of student achievements and leads in many cases to either a formal degree or certification/confirmation about the achieved results (Wirth 2005, pp. 39).

With regard to the workload and scope of a programme the definition for this book will follow the specification of at least 100 hours of total workload (including participation, self study, preparation for assessments as well as the assessments itself) that is for instance used by the European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD) within their accreditation scheme „Programme accreditation for teChnology-Enhanced Learning“ (CEL) (EFMD n. d.a, p. 9) to reach a certain complexity in terms of didactics as well as organisation. WIRTH (2005, p. 41) notes that the definition of 100 hours workload as a minimum for programmes may be considered as rather randomly defined but with lack of alternatives has to be considered sufficient.

Opposed to a programme the term course refers to a much shorter educational offer, for instance a short learning unity that consists of only one module that might sometimes have a number of separate lessons and that is finished within several hours. Formative or summative assessment of student achievement is not often observed. For both programmes and courses it is required to be at least 20 % computer based to be considered technology enhanced to belong into the scope of the label that will be developed.

2.6 A Summary of Requirements for Quality in Capacity Building

This chapter concludes on the findings on requirements for a quality label for e-Learning in Capacity Building that could be derived from an analysis of the state-of-the-art theory, research and terminology. These findings will then be used within chapter 3 as a foundation for a study on requirements that stakeholders have towards a label.

The discussion of the context of e-Learning for Capacity Building has shown the diversity and internationality of the target group of organisations in the field that focus on activities that in many times can be found in the educational territories e-Learning at the Workplace and Evolved Distance Education. Further important activities are Virtual Professional Networks and Non-professional e-Learning Communities. While the former can be addressed with quality tools or a quality label for courses/programmes the latter could only be covered by a label on the institutional level. An important distinction can be made at this point between tools and instruments for quality development on the one hand (which are frequently used in organisations’ internal quality development processes) and quality labels or a quality certification which is a more comprehensive approach covering different aspects of a programme or a whole institution on the other hand.

Furthermore a differentiation between a label for institutions on the one hand and a label for courses/programmes on the other hand can be understood in analogy to the continuum from e-Learning activities with project orientation to e-Learning activities with potential orientation. It can be considered a valid assumption that organisations exploring the advantages of e-Learning on project level would probably be more interested in a label for single programmes while organisations that have already included e-Learning as an integral part of their strategy would probably aim at a certification on institutional level. Furthermore, the internationality and diversity of organisations and activities suggest that
a label both for institutions and for courses/programmes should offer a minimum level of criteria that is relevant for all organisations within the context and an excellence level of criteria for organisations that have proceeded further with the integration of e-Learning within the organisation and their activities.

The analysis of the state-of-the-art theory, research and terminology has provided on the one hand clear definitions of the terms used within this book and on the other hand important insights on requirements for the development of a quality label for e-Learning in the context of Capacity Building. Furthermore, it is important to find out about interests, requirements and constraints that Capacity Building Organisations in the field have towards such a label and the process of development. The following chapter describes the methodology and overall design of a study to obtain information on Capacity Building Organisations’ requirements through both a questionnaire and a series of extensive expert interviews and presents the results as well as the key findings on requirements. Chapter 3 concludes with an overall synopsis of requirements derived from theory (chapter 2) and through the study (chapter 3).

3 QUALITY IN E-LEARNING: A STUDY OF THE NEEDS AND REQUIREMENTS OF THE STAKEHOLDERS

This chapter describes the methodology and overall design of a study to find out about requirements and constraints that Capacity Building Organisations have towards a quality label for e-Learning in Capacity Building. A two step approach is suggested consisting of a questionnaire designed to correspond to the requirements of the target group combined with a follow-up interview in form of a semi-structured expert interview. The results of both the questionnaire and the interviews are described in detail and are analysed to derive further requirements for the development process. The chapter concludes with an integrated presentation of the requirements derived from the context analysis (chapter 2) and the study (chapter 3).

The analysis of the context of Capacity Building and Capacity Building Organisations being the target group for a quality label has provided first important insights on the requirements for the development of a quality label for e-Learning in this field. Furthermore, it is important to find out about interests, requirements and constraints that these Capacity Building Organisations have towards such a label and the process of development. Thus, the research question to answer is “What are requirements and constraints that Capacity Building Organisations have towards a quality label and certification process for the field of e-Learning in Capacity Building?”. The study to answer this question is conducted by means of a questionnaire and a series of extensive expert interviews based on the insights of chapter 2. The requirements that are derived will later be used for on the one hand the analysis of selected current best practice labels (chapter 4) and on the other hand as foundation for a construction process of a quality label for e-Learning in Capacity Building (chapter 5).

3.1 Methodology and Overall Design of the Study

This chapter describes the methodology and overall design of a study to find out about requirements and constraints that Capacity Building Organisations have towards a quality label for e-Learning in Capacity Building. The study consists of two major parts, first a questionnaire designed to correspond to the target group’s constraints and that is followed by a semi-structured expert interview in case a filled in questionnaire is returned by a participant. First, results of the questionnaires are presented and analysed and in a second step, the analysis of the interview results is outlined based on the methodology of qualitative content analysis developed by MEYRING (2002, pp. 114).

The study focuses on the needs and requirements that organisations have towards a quality label for e-Learning in Capacity Building. As the requirements of Capacity Building Organisations towards such a label have not yet been researched, the study has a rather explorative character. Still, there are some assumptions that can be derived from the analysis from chapter 2 and that are used in the design of a questionnaire and an interview guideline. The study is conducted in a two step approach that is described subsequently.
First, all participants, that are international experts and decision makers in the field of Capacity Building, receive a questionnaire (see Annex 1) by e-mail that is especially designed to correspond with the target groups constraints. The questionnaire asks for possible interests and motivation to obtain a quality label as well as for the organisation's current activities in the field of quality development for e-Learning. For each question, a list of possible answers is provided to choose from, based on the results from the analysis in chapter 2 (for instance one question asks, if the label would be of more interest on a programme or institutional level, this choice is derived from the innovation diffusion model described in chapter 2) and most questions offer the possibility to add own answers (“other”). Fortnightly and about four weeks after the questionnaire has been sent, all participants that did not respond are kindly reminded of the questionnaire and the study. The results are analysed within chapter 3.3.1, original data can be found in Annex 3.

In a second step, all participants that filled in the questionnaire are asked for a short follow-up interview that is conducted in the form of a semi-structured expert interview based on a number of prepared questions in an interview guideline (see Annex 3) as well as on the answers given in the questionnaire. The interview guideline does not contain any pre-defined answers that can be selected by the interviewer during the interview. Within the interview, participants are asked in more detail about their current activities in e-Learning, about their general opinion on a specialised label for e-Learning in Capacity Building, their possible requirements and how such a label could support them in their daily operations. Furthermore, participants are asked about current quality initiatives/projects in their organisation, the resources dedicated to these activities and their general opinion about a possible certification process for obtaining the label.

For further analysis, all interviews are recorded digitally and analysed sequentially according to the qualitative content analysis method developed by MEYRING (2002, pp. 114). First, all interviews are transcribed not word by word but according to the significant content relevant for the research question. For instance, reception, introductory conversation or closings of a conversation have not been transcribed (for all original transcriptions please refer to Annex 4). In a second step, transcribed contents are paraphrased. Information that is mentioned several times within one interview is merged and potentially incomprehensible parts are rephrased. In a third step, categories are derived in an inductive process based on main categories suggested by the research questions (for instance, one main category is requirements towards a label that is divided into sub categories, for instance governance). In a last step, all interview transcriptions are processed line by line with the finalised category system and all answers in one category are pooled to be able to rate the importance of the arguments (e.g. “most organisations stated that”, “only a few organisations are interested in...”) to support the analysis and interpretation to derive further requirements.

### 3.2 Choice of Sample

This chapter describes the target group for the study and the chosen access to the target group via an existing research cooperation between the University of Duisburg-Essen and InWEnt. Furthermore, the response rates are calculated based on DIECKMANN (2001, pp. 359).

The population for a study about requirements towards a quality label for e-Learning in Capacity Building includes all Capacity Building Organisations according to the definition in chapter 2.4 that could possibly be interested in obtaining such a label. Also, related organisations that work together with these Capacity Building Organisations could be possible addressees for a label and thus should be integrated into a study. Within these organisations experts that are responsible for either quality management/development and/or e-Learning are the target group for the questionnaires and interview.

The best possible access to such experts has been provided through an existing research cooperation between the University of Duisburg-Essen and InWEnt providing contact to several organisations from the context of Capacity Building that are interested in the field of quality in e-Learning. From each organisation, one or, if available, more experts were chosen to be contacted.

The questionnaire has been sent to in total 25 people that belong to different Capacity Building Organisations or Capacity Building related organisations. Of these 25 experts 16 have sent back a filled in questionnaire and of these 11 have participated in a follow-up interview. According to DIECKMANN (2001, pp. 359) the response rate for the questionnaires RQ can then be calculated as follows:

\[
R_Q = \frac{\text{Number of analysed Questionnaires}}{\text{Initial Sample}} \times 100
\]

\[
R_Q = \frac{16}{25} \times 100 = 64\%
\]
As the expert interviews have been conducted only with experts that have returned the questionnaire, the response rate for the interviews \( R_I \) can be calculated on the basis of an initial sample of 16 returned questionnaires:

\[
R_I = \frac{\text{Number of analysed Interviews}}{\text{Adjusted Initial Sample}} \times 100
\]

\[
R_I = \frac{11}{16} \times 100 = 69\%
\]

None of the experts had to be excluded from the initial sample thus the adjusted initial sample equals the initial sample with 25 for the questionnaire and 16 for the interviews.

### 3.3 Description and Analysis of Results

This chapter describes both the results of the questionnaires (chapter 3.3.1) and the semi-structured expert interviews (chapter 3.3.2). Based on these results, further requirements for the development of a quality label for e-Learning in Capacity Building are derived and combined with the results from chapter 2, overall requirements are outlined.

In a first step quantitative results derived from the questionnaires are presented and analysed and are in a second step enriched by the presentation and analysis of results of the expert interviews that are based on the qualitative content analysis developed by MEYRING (2002, pp. 114). Of interest for the development of the label are the current activities in the field of e-Learning for Capacity Building, the requirements that these Capacity Building Organisations have towards the label and furthermore, the current investments that are directed towards quality assurance and development and how a certification process for the label in development could be like.

#### 3.3.1 Results of the Questionnaires

The first question (“The Open ECBCheck will be a quality label for e-Learning in Capacity Building. Please tell us if your organisation in principle would be interested to obtain such a quality label.”) focused on the general interest of the organisation to obtain a quality label for e-Learning in Capacity Building/Capacity Development. Participants could choose between “yes”, “no” and “not sure” in their answer. All questionnaires have been filled in correctly and the number of valid answers is \( n=16 \). Of these, 11 (69 %) have answered that the label would be in principle of interest to obtain for their organisation, 3 (19 %) answered that to obtain the label would not be of interest and 2 (13 %) participants answered that they were not sure. However, in two of three questionnaires stating that the organisation would not be interested to obtain a specialised quality label for e-Learning in Capacity Building it has been mentioned that such a label would be of interest for partner institutions. In general, the answers to the first question demonstrate a high interest in a quality label for e-Learning in Capacity Building. An overview on the results can be found in figure 7.

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**Figure 7** “The Open ECBCheck will be a quality label for e-Learning in Capacity Building. Please tell us if your organisation in principle would be interested to obtain such a quality label.”, \( n=16 \)
The second question ("In case you are interested in obtaining a quality label for your e-Learning activities. Please tell us what kind of label you/your organisation would be interested in.") targeted finding out what level the quality label could aim at. Participants could choose one or both options of “programme level” and “institutional level”. Out of 16 questionnaires two did not provide any answer to this question, all other answers have been valid and thus n = 14, the results are illustrated in figure 8. A quality label only on programme level is of interest for 6 (43 %) participants and a label only on institutional level for 4 (29 %). Four (29 %) participants do believe that a quality label would be interesting on both programme and institutional level.

![Quality Label on Program or Institutional Level](image)

Figure 8 “In case you are interested in obtaining a quality label for your e-Learning activities: Please tell us what kind of label you/your organisation would be interested in.”, n=14

Question number three of the questionnaire offered a number of scenarios how the quality label could possibly be used by organisations ("There are a number of scenarios how the Open ECBCheck can be used in the field of Capacity Building. Which ones would be interesting for you?"). Possible answers were using the label for quality certification of own e-Learning programmes or of the own institution as well as quality certification for partner institutions or of e-Learning programmes of partner institutions. Another option has been to use Open ECBCheck not as a certification scheme but as a quality guideline for e-Learning in Capacity Building. The last option was that organisations would have a motivation to be part of an Open ECBCheck professional community of practice in the field of e-Learning for Capacity Building. This question has been answered correctly in all returned questionnaires and thus n = 16. It was allowed to choose multiple options. Most participants (13, equalling 81 %) have stated that they have an interest to be part of a professional community around Open ECBCheck. Ten participants (63 %) have seen a possible application of Open ECBCheck as a quality guideline or benchmark for their activities and nine as a quality label for their own e-Learning programmes (56 %). Half of all participants (8, equalling 50 %) have mentioned the possibility to use a label for e-Learning programmes of partners. The option to use a label for quality certification of partner institutions as well as a label for their own institution has been chosen by the smallest number of participants (7, 44 %).
The next question focused on the current activities of an organisation in the field of quality (“Now we are interested if you already have quality guidelines/standards for one or more of the following fields?”). All questionnaires have been valid and n = 16. In this question it has again been possible to choose more than one answer. The results (illustrated in figure 10) show that most organisations are somehow working on quality issues but with very different means. Most activities focus on the area of content quality which has been mentioned 10 times (62 %) as well as the fields of e-Learning pedagogy and e-Learning technology with each 7 nominations (44 %). About 38 % of all participants have standards or guidelines in place for eTeaching/eTutoring. The least participants stated that their organisation has a process oriented quality management system in place with only 4 answers (25 %). The results based on the follow-up interviews on the questionnaire will show that design and scope vary significantly. Quite a number of participants also told that their organisation has other means for quality development in place (6, 38 %). These include “evaluation and accreditation”, the development of quality standards for training and education based on the ISO standard, “other General standards also applicable, for instance an e-Learning quality model developed for national assessment purposes” or “pedagogical quality guidelines for WBI (World Bank Institute’s) learning programmes”. The last question focused on possible motives that could be the driving
force to obtain a quality label like Open ECBCheck ("In the following we list motives for obtaining the Open ECBCheck label. Please tell us from your perspective which of them would be relevant to your organization."). This question had two steps to be completed. First, participants had to choose all motives that they perceive as relevant for their organisation. The following options could be chosen: marketing, legitimating the use of funds, compliance with legal requirements, improve or measure impact efficiency, improve or measure cost efficiency, benchmark with other organisations and guarantee success of e-Learning programmes. Participants had also the option to specify other motives that might not have been included in the given list. In a second step, participants were asked to rate the three most important options from 1 (most important) to 3 (third most important). This question aimed at identifying priorities as participants might just choose a high number of options in the first step as all might sound like a possible motive and the choice has not been limited.

Within the possible motives for obtaining a label like Open ECBCheck for quality in e-Learning for Capacity Building most organisations (15; 94 %) rated the measurement and improvement of impact efficiency of e-Learning as a relevant motive. Also benchmarking with other organisation is regarded an important motive with 15 nominations (94 %) as well. The third most important motive with 12 nominations (75 %) is the field of marketing. The analysis of the follow-up interviews shows that most organisations seem to focus on marketing towards donor organisations rather than marketing towards possible participants which is probably caused by the market structure. Also mentioned by many participants is the motive to measure or improve cost efficiency of e-Learning (11; 69 %). A fairly important motive with 8 nominations (50 %) is to guarantee the success of e-Learning programmes. The last two given options, compliance with legal standards (6; 38 %) as well as legitimation (e.g. the use of funds) have not been mentioned as a motive very often (5; 32 %). Only one participant mentioned a not yet listed option (1; 6 %) which has been "evaluation and accreditation". An overview of the results is provided in figure 11. In the second step participants have been asked to rate the priority of the chosen

![Motives for Obtaining Open ECBCheck](image)

**Figure 11** *In the following we list motives for obtaining the Open ECBCheck label. Please tell us from your perspective which of them would be relevant to your organisation. - Mark all relevant motives with an “X” in column “Relevant?”* 

items ("Please rate the three most important in column "Importance" from 1 to 3"). To analyze the results and compare the priority of all options directly, a simple point system is used: If a motive receives first priority three points are added to a priority sum, if a motive is rated second, two points are added and for a ranking on third priority, one point is awarded. As some participants have not chosen the top three priority motives but rated each motive from one to three, only n = 12 questionnaires can be included in the analysis. Using the described system of points for relevance, the following priorities (that do not completely correspond with the number of nominations above) can be derived from the answers in the questionnaires. An overview is provided in figure 12.

By far the most important motive to obtain a quality label like Open ECBCheck is to measure or improve impact efficiency of e-Learning. This result corresponds to the number of nominations in the first part of the question. Also very important according to the priorities, it is to guarantee success of e-Learning programmes as well as benchmarking with other organisations. The former being much higher rated compared to the position if only the number of nominations is taken into account. The last fairly important motive is marketing, that is not as relevant as the number of nominations in the first place indicated. Rather unimportant are compliance with legal requirements, measurement or improvement of cost
efficiency, legitimisation and other factors. Compared to the number of nominations in the first part of the question the most striking difference comes up in the area of measuring or improving cost efficiency. With eleven this motive receives a rather high number of nominations but takes only a minor role if priorities are considered.

3.3.2 Results of the Interviews

The following chapter presents and analyses the results from the conducted expert interviews. The interview questions can be divided into three main areas, the first focussing on current activities that organisations have in the area of e-Learning for Capacity Building and the second on the organisation’s requirements towards a quality label to find out how it would best suit the organisation’s needs. The last area focussed on the questions, how a reasonable investment of time and money would look like and how organisations believe a process of certification could be made up of. Answers to the questions are analysed grouped into these areas.

3.3.2.1 Current activities in the Field of e-Learning

The results of the first question in the interviews (“Can you please tell me briefly about your organization’s current activities in the field of e-Learning for Capacity Building?”) show that the current activities of Capacity Building Organisations in the field of e-Learning are very diverse and that some organisations are just in the very beginning of using e-Learning.

A number of organisations currently provide electronic learning materials on CD-ROM including digitally recorded lectures from university synchronised with the corresponding PowerPoint slides or interactive courses that are text and image based. The distribution of materials on CD-ROM is motivated by lack of adequate internet connections in developing countries. Sometimes these electronic resources are also provided via a learning management system like Moodle. An example is a faculty of a university offering their course materials in open access for all students. Some organisations also use collaboration tools based on learning management systems or wikis for their work or research in or with students from developing countries. Another organisation is providing full online courses with duration of about 6 weeks to replace face to face courses. These online courses are accompanied by online tutors and technology experts. Only a few organisations offer many distance courses or degree studies of which a large part or all are e-Learning based (e.g. AVU). The last area that can be identified is the use of blended learning concepts where traditional face-to-face courses are supported or enriched by online preparation, follow-up work, communities of practice or networking possibilities.

There are a number of organisations included in the study that do not offer e-Learning themselves but are interested in a quality label for partner institutions or have an interest into Open ECBCheck on a broader level to support or observe the development process.
organisation already works with ISO and that ISO is also proposed for e-Learning within the organisation. The participants already mentioned that the work with ISO will lead to a quality guideline as well and another that the technologies. A few organisations have started to work on a project to use ISO standards in their organisation, one of found within the participants organisations. One organisation mentioned internal research on the most appropriate developing content. Some organisations also mention to have simple checklists to ensure that basic needs will not be forgotten. Also, peer-reviews of materials and quality circles as well as courses on how to use e-Learning for staff can be benchmarking. Organisations would like to be part of the community that is developing the label. Also, these organisations are interested in such a label for their partner institutions, many times in developing countries. They would either promote a label in their network or stated that “if certain quality criteria come up we might have our partners to meet these standards”.

Many times it has been mentioned that organisations would rather prefer having a quality guideline that they can apply to their courses or institutions than having a label with a full certification process in place. Furthermore, it has been mentioned that a certification process should be well guided and supported by a community to support organisations to achieve quality development and in the end a successful certification.

Furthermore, marketing has been mentioned as an important motivation to obtain a quality label. Organisations would like to “use a label as marketing tool to stand out in the crowd” in competition. It is also perceived that donor organisations would rather invest funds into organisations that at least fulfil some basic quality criteria that are assured by having a label. One organisation mentioned that a label “could raise the prestige of an organization with donors and partners (an organisation that takes learning seriously)”. Interestingly, very few of the organisations offering e-Learning mentioned possible students or participants as a target group for marketing with a quality label. Related to this, one organisation mentioned that they would like to ensure high quality content to retain students. They believe people will turn away if they do not offer high quality content. Strikingly, none of the participants mentioned that a label would help to improve the impact efficiency in daily operations although over 90 % have mentioned this as a motive in the questionnaire and this factor has the highest priority according to participants. Organisations that have been interested in the label for programmes or partner institutions, many times in developing countries. They would like to use a label as a means to select partners or would make a label obligatory for all partners.

 Asked about current activities in the field of quality development for e-Learning (“Please tell us which activities you are currently implementing in areas related to quality development for e-Learning (e.g. do you have quality criteria catalogues, programmes or projects in this field, initiatives?)”) organisations showed a variety of approaches and activities. Many times, organisations use or actively develop quality guidelines or manuals showing “the best way how to do it”. These guidelines are not compulsory to follow but rather an advice to the internal audience of educators, teachers or people who are developing content. Some organisations also mention to have simple checklists to ensure that basic needs will not be forgotten. Also, peer-reviews of materials and quality circles as well as courses on how to use e-Learning for staff can be found within the participants organisations. One organisation mentioned internal research on the most appropriate technologies. A few organisations have started to work on a project to use ISO standards in their organisation, one of the participants already mentioned that the work with ISO will lead to a quality guideline as well and another that the organisation already works with ISO and that ISO is also proposed for e-Learning within the organisation.
3.3.2.3 Investment into Quality and Process of Certification

The last area of interest during the interviews has been the opinion of the interview partners about a possible process to obtain the quality label as well as the current effort that these organisations dedicate towards quality management as an indicator how elaborate a process of certification can possibly be.

The answers on the first question (“If you think about current quality (management) initiatives/projects in your organization, can you estimate how many resources are dedicated towards these initiatives?”) have been few and rather diverse. A number of organisations has been mainly interested into the label for partner programmes or institutions and has not answered this question. Some other participants stated that they do not have the necessary information to respond to this question. The participants that have answered gave very different responses. In one organisation, up to 30 % of resources are currently dedicated towards the development of learning objects and quality of content. On the contrary there are organisations where only very few employees work and where quality management is one of many duties of one person and thus only a few resources are dedicated towards quality management. It has also been mentioned that resources are scare, especially if organisations are operating or based in developing countries.

The second question (“Please think about the process of obtaining the quality label, how could a process of certification look like in your point of view?”) resulted in many more answers that highlighted very different key points.

It has been mentioned as important by more than one participant to present peer-approved ideas for criteria to a group of stakeholders and agree on them first to on the one hand increase legitimisation of these criteria (and the label) and on the other hand to obtain first hand experience from a kind of pilot application that can be included into the further development of quality criteria.

Another issue that has been mentioned largely is the type and the legitimisation of an organisation or body that is awarding the certificate. One participant told that “the real issue to me is who is going to do this; who is going to judge what other people are doing”, an issue connected to this is also how to enforce such a quality label. Two different models for such an organisation have been proposed by participants of the study: One has been to create a kind of a membership organisation of professional providers where you have to apply to become a member and to be accepted you have to fulfil certain quality criteria. The opposing model has been an external body that is responsible for the certification process, again raising the issue who this organisation could be. In this context is has been told that the model of a membership organisation would probably be the easier option to realise as there would not be as many problems with legitimisation issues.

It has also been mentioned that a certification process bears huge political issues and that “in certain parts of the world there are huge problems with corruption on that”. Related to the issue of a possible process of certification one organisation mentioned that they would already find a kind of checklist for organisations to measure themselves a huge step even if these criteria are not enforced or certified. This corresponds with the view of some organisations in chapter 2.3.2.2 stating that they would prefer a kind of quality guideline instead of a label with a certification process.

For many organisations, the cost of a process of certification is also an issue, especially for organisations that are based or operating in developing countries and that do not have as many resources in time and money to spend on quality development. Still, one participant mentioned that people in general are willing to put effort into something they expect to be valuable.

3.4 A Snapshot Summary of the Needs for Quality

This chapter summarises the requirements and remarks that can be derived for the development of a quality label for e-Learning in Capacity Building from the study on requirements and needs of Capacity Building Organisations.

Most of the organisations that have participated in the study can be considered quality conscious as there are numerous quality initiatives, guidelines, standards etc. already in place. Based on the current quality approaches one may conclude that a quality label should be able to incorporate these current approaches and not force organisations to abandon their manifold quality activities as this would be a high barrier to obtain a label or participate in a community of practice.
Organisations in the target group also tend to have rather less sophisticated quality approaches in place and do not have endless resources that can be dedicated towards quality initiatives. Combined with the finding from the questionnaire about organisations being highly interested in measuring and improving impact efficiency and guaranteeing the success of e-Learning programmes one may conclude that the target group does not focus on excellence in their concept on quality but rather on the effectiveness of e-Learning programmes and the effective application of resources to achieve the highest possible impact for progress in developing countries. A quality label for this context should consider this concept of quality. Still, there are a few organisations that are advanced in the utilisation of e-Learning in their Capacity Building operations. This supports the idea from chapter 2.6 that it might be useful to have a quality label offering two possibilities for an institutional or programme/course certification, first a basic level that all organisations may agree on and a level of excellence for organisations that focus on e-Learning.

Furthermore interview results strongly suggest that governance is an issue of high importance for the target group of Capacity Building Organisations. They have on the one hand a high interest to be included into the development of the label and many have suggested an interest in a quality guideline instead of a label during the interviews. On the other hand a number of (political) issues have been raised on the question who could be a legitimate organisation to award such a label in the context of international development cooperation. Together with the result that most organisations would like to be part of a professional community around the label and are as well aiming at benchmarking and even sometimes interested into sharing best practice it is thus possibly the best result to aim at an open, community based (for instance community of practice) approach of mutual recognition of quality with a bottom-up agreement on criteria and the system itself. This view is also supported by a number of organisations that are not offering e-Learning themselves but work together with numerous partner organisations and would like to use the label to support these partners in quality development much rather than choosing partners based on a label.

Still, there should be in place some form of (self-) commitment towards quality as the organisations would in many cases like to use the label or a membership in a community of practice for marketing towards other organisations or donors (interestingly not towards possible participants) and thus there is a need to demonstrate that organisations involved into the quality label take quality issues seriously.

3.5 “Make it low cost and community based!” - Overall Requirements for a Quality Label

Through the context analysis (see chapter 2) as well as the study on requirements and constraints of Capacity Building Organisations towards a quality label for e-Learning in Capacity Building (see chapter 3) the distinct characteristics of the field could be elaborated and a number of unique requirements could be derived. These requirements can be systematised in two major domains. The first is concerned with the fundamental architecture of the label, concerning the quality dimensions, criteria and methods of assessing and validating them and the second with the governance system and processes, concerning the way the label is awarded. An overview of the main aspects in both areas is given in figure 13.
Subsequently, the core requirements are listed and described:

**Architecture of the quality label**

1. **Coverage of e-Learning programmes as well as e-Learning institutions:** The label should offer the possibility to cover both single programmes and institutions as certification entity to consider different e-Learning strategies of organisations. A quality label for single programmes is considered of more interest for organisations that are in the stage of integrating e-Learning rather project oriented and a quality label on the institutional level is considered to be of more interest for organisations that have advanced to integrate e-Learning strategically in internal organisational processes as well as all Capacity Building activities.

2. **Broad coverage and applicability through minimum and excellence criteria:** The label should offer the distinction between minimum criteria that indicate solid quality of a programme or institution and are relevant to all organisations and excellence criteria that demonstrate exceptional quality achievements of an organisation or programme. While all organisations would be required to meet at least the minimum criteria in order to guarantee that they are conformant to the set standards, they can create their own excellence profile through scoring high on the excellence criteria. The employed methodology for evaluation is going back to the method of Qualitative Weighting and Summation, described for the evaluation of learning software for the first time by BAUMGARTNER et al. (2002) (see also chapter 5.2 for a more elaborated explanation of this method).

3. **Educational territories:** For the study and the development of the label the concept of educational territories rather than educational segments has proven valid. It emphasises that e-Learning is not an own educational territory but a transversal component which creates many different educational contexts, some covering the traditional distinction between educational segments, some creating new learning spaces. Considering the educational territories, Capacity Building Organisations focus their e-Learning activities largely on activities in the educational fields e-Learning at the Workplace and Evolved Distance Education (see chapter 2.3.3 for the terminology used). Further important activities are Virtual Professional Networks and Non-professional e-Learning Communities. While the quality criteria which will be developed for the quality label can potentially be used for internal assessment and as guidelines by organisations or individual organisation actors, the quality label will cover especially those activities which are explicit and formal e-Learning programmes. However, informal activities like professional networks and community oriented learning processes are more and more important in Capacity Building Organisations. The way employees deal with technology in order to form learning relevant contexts like communities then plays an important role for the assessment of the institutional readiness of Capacity Building Organisations.

**Governance of the quality label**

4. **Quality certification as an open, community driven process:** The special characteristics of the Capacity Building community suggests an open, community and learning based approach of mutual recognition of quality with a bottom-up agreement on criteria and the governance system as the fundamental architecture of Open ECBCheck. While this is sometimes perceived as a contradiction because quality certification appears often as instrument of competitive distinction and not as open, community and consensus oriented concept, the analysis’ results show a clear preference for open models, oriented towards peer-review processes. Transparency of the evaluation processes on basis of peer-review has been stated as an important factor for acceptance.

5. **Governance of the quality label:** The specific context of Capacity Building and of Capacity Building Organisations has to be taken into account. It is not following primarily market logic with free flowing capital in which customers have to be attracted, but rather a closed market structure which follows clear rules and regulations. This has consequences for a governance system of a quality label. Capacity Building Organisations on the one hand have a clearly identified need for proving their effectiveness and efficiency and need to work with transparent quality standards, however, these quality standards can not be easily imposed on them from the outside. Due to the specific constraints of this group of organisations quality rules and regulations have to be developed in a consensus process and a certification processes as well. This requires developing a certification system around a community of organisations in which Capacity Building Organisations should be represented. The representation of those who want to be certified within the system of certification is posing specific constraints towards the governance system to be developed. In order to avoid conflict of interest, the different acting bodies of a quality certification system have to be clearly identified and separated from each other, so that decisions are based on consensus of many rather than on interests of only few. Such a certification system then would ensure high acceptance of the system within the community of Capacity Building Organisations.
6. Low cost certification system: Furthermore, the certification system has to be constructed in a way that it can be operated on a low cost level to be affordable for the majority of Capacity Building Organisations and their clients in developing countries. Developing a low cost system demands an exchange of services between the stakeholders rather than a flow of capital for buying those services. For Open ECBCheck a thorough conceptualisation of the costs factors of a certification process has to be taken into account. Within the development of open ECBCheck two concepts will therefore be explored. First, for assessment purposes a combination of self-assessment and peer-review of a self-assessment report will be developed and secondly the peer-review services will be exchanged between those organisations undergoing certification processes.

7. Learning for improvement: The interview results show that the certification process should not only lead to a certification of a programme or institution but should be conceptualised as a learning activity. Also in this case, self-assessment and peer-review of a self-assessment report will be explored. First, the self-assessment allows an organisation a systematic analysis of strengths and weaknesses of the institution or a programme. Furthermore, the peer-review of the resulting self-assessment report will not only provide the organisation with a feedback on the self-assessment and provided information, but also include a learning report that focuses on the possibilities for improvement that have been identified during the review.

Through the context analysis (see chapter 2) as well as the study on requirements and constraints of Capacity Building Organisations towards a quality label for e-Learning in Capacity Building (see chapter 3) the distinct characteristics of the field could be elaborated and a number of unique requirements in the two major domains architecture and governance system and processes could be derived. These requirements will in the following be used for the development of a quality label. The methodology that is used for the development itself is based on an analysis of selected current state-of-the-art quality labels or certificates (see chapter 4) that are in parts used and adopted against the requirements (see chapter 5).

4 HOW OPEN ECBCHECK IS ROOTED IN SUCCESSFUL INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS AND CERTIFICATES

In this chapter, selected existing quality standards and labels in the field of e-Learning are analysed in order to assess if and how they can be adopted to meet the previously described requirements for a quality label in the field of Capacity Building.

Within chapters 2 and 3, the focus has been on analysing the requirements of Capacity Building Organisations that need to be considered within the development of a quality label for e-Learning in Capacity Building. The methodology that is now being used for the development itself is based on an analysis of selected current state-of-the-art quality labels or certificates that are in parts used and adopted against the requirements that have been derived within the previous chapters. Within this chapter, existing labels or certificates are first described and then discussed on basis of the requirements. The following chapter 5 then describes how the open ECBCheck label is designed and how quality criteria are selected and/or newly constructed. This methodology has a number of advantages: First, it is effective to use existing parts and best practice of existing approaches instead of developing Open ECBCheck completely from scratch. Furthermore, the processes, methods as well as criteria of these existing approaches have already been validated and have proven in practice.

Each label is first described including context, relevant governance bodies and the certification or accreditation process with the methods used. Furthermore, an overview is given on the areas covered by the quality criteria. In a second step it is analysed if the label could be used within the field of e-Learning for Capacity Building by comparing step by step the requirements from the overall requirements described in chapter 3.5 with the relevant characteristics of the discussed label. During the analysis, it is highlighted whether parts of the label are potential best practices for the development of Open ECBCheck. Finally, chapter 4.5 summarises the findings of the analysis.
As there is an abundance of possible quality approaches that could be used as a potential best practice (WIRTH (2006, p. 98) for instance summarises different publications on quality approaches for the educational sector that, depending on the scope and definitions, report as many as over 140 available quality approaches) one needs to select carefully. As best practice for the development of a quality label for e-Learning in Capacity Building qualify only quality approaches that fulfill three main characteristics. Firstly, these approaches need to cover e-Learning and secondly they need to be international in scope. Thirdly, they need to be agreed on by networks or consortia and do not come from one organisation only, to guarantee that there has been a consensus process in place. Four potential best practice labels have been identified which all meet the three selection criteria: UNIQUe, EFMD CEL, D-ELAN DELZert as well as ISO/IEC 19796-1.

- **EFMD CEL** (teChnology-Enhanced Learning accreditation) is specialised on the accreditation of management education courses and programmes and is supported by the European Foundation for Management Development, the Swiss Centre for Innovations in Learning (SCIL) as well as the Spirus Applied Learning Solutions AG. (EFMD n. d.a, pp. 2).

- **UNIQUe** (European University Quality in eLearning) is a European initiative for quality of e-Learning in institutions of higher education that is co-financed by the European Socrates programme. It has been developed within the scope of the European Bologna process that includes the objective to establish a “European dimension in quality assurance with comparable criteria and methods” (Bijnens and Nascimbeni 2007, p. 1).

- The D-ELAN D-ELZert has been developed by a D-ELAN (Deutsches Netzwerk der E-Learning Akteure e.V.) expert committee for quality as an instrument for on the one hand certification of courses/programmes as well as institutions but on the other hand for the support of sustainable quality development and quality assurance. The label itself has a focus on Germany, however, the development has included a wide range of existing international quality approaches (D-ELAN n. d., pp. 2).

- **ISO/IEC 19796-1** is a standard provided by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) that aims to provide a common framework that allows to “describe, specify and understand critical properties, characteristics, and metrics of quality” (ISO 2005, p. 1). The so called Reference Framework for the Description of Quality Approaches (RFDQ) is a process model that is able to describe, compare as well as analyse existing quality management or quality assurance approaches (ISO 2005, p. 7).

### 4.1 EFMD CEL

Within the following chapter, the label EFMD CEL is described (chapter 4.1.1) and analysed, for whether it meets the requirements derived in the requirements study (chapter 4.1.2) and which parts could be a best practice for the development of Open ECBCheck.

#### 4.1.1 Description of EFMD CEL

EFMD CEL (teChnology-Enhanced Learning accreditation) is specialised in the accreditation of management education courses and programmes and is supported by the European Foundation for Management Development, the Swiss Centre for Innovations in Learning (SCIL) as well as the Spirus Applied Learning Solutions Aktiengesellschaft. (EFMD n. d.a, pp. 2).

The governance structure of EMFD CEL (EFMD n. d.a, pp. 4) consists of five bodies that each have distinct tasks and roles within the accreditation process and for the development of the label. The power of decision is divided between all these bodies. The strategic development of the whole EFMD CEL system is driven by the EFMD CEL Supervisory Board that consists of representatives of the organisations that initiated the label. The Supervisory Board decides on the eligibility of candidates for the accreditation process, recruits new auditors, is responsible for the quality assurance for all auditors and advises the Awarding Body. The EFMD CEL Awarding Body is the body that on the one hand certifies official auditors for EMFD CEL. The EMFD CEL Advisory Board that brings together experts from the area of technology-enhanced learning has the task to give feedback and advice on the quality framework as well as the accreditation process to support the further development of the label. Further input for the development of the label is given by the EFMD CEL Research Unit that consists of researchers of the Swiss Centre for Innovations in Learning to assure that the quality criteria as well as the procedures are continuously improved based on scientific insights. Furthermore, the Research Unit conducts market research for EFMD CEL. Finally, the EFMD CEL Executive Office is responsible for the daily business and located at the University of Sankt Gallen.
The EFMD accreditation process (a graphical overview is provided in figure 14) is rather extensive and consists of eleven steps that form a circle due to the need for reaccreditation after three years time. Organisations that would like to obtain the label start with a first inquiry and are provided with first information on the process and the eligibility of the discussed programme(s) (EFMD n. d.a, p. 8). In a second step, the organisation applies on a formal basis with a filled data sheet about the programme that allows for a first assessment of the programmes quality. If need be, further information may be requested (EFMD n. d.a, p. 8). In a third step, it is decided, whether the programme is eligible to start the EFMD CEL accreditation process. Eligibility implicates that on the one hand the application to enter the accreditation process has been accepted and that EFMD CEL will support the institution/manager of the programme with the target of accreditation as well as quality improvement and on the other hand that the programme is considered to have a realistic possibility of accreditation within the next years. The step of eligibility is considered important to ensure that any organisation that enters the process is aware of the criteria and process and has assumable chance of accreditation within a timeframe of three years to prevent frustration or disappointment. The final decision is taken by the EFMD CEL Supervisory Board. If an organisation is decided not to be eligible or decides to not yet start the process, EFMD CEL offers the possibility to offer strategic advice for a certain fee (EFMD n. d.a, pp. 8).

An organisation that has been declared eligible may continue the process of accreditation with a self-assessment, necessary support will be given. Based on a “Guideline for Self-Assessment” (EFMD n. d.c) the organisation is asked to draft a “Self-Assessment Report”. According to the Introductory Guide, the self-assessment “is intended to be self-critical rather than promotional and analytical as well as descriptive” (EFMD n. d.a, pp. 12) as the report is supposed to support the accreditation process. Furthermore, the Self-Assessment has also a learning dimension “to help the programme management gain a clearer understanding of its strategic position by assessing its strengths and weaknesses, by measuring the principal constraints and opportunities determined by its environment, and by looking realistically at the coherence between its ambition and its resources” (EFMD n. d.a, p. 12).

As soon as the “Self-Assessment Report” is finished it will be reviewed by the auditors as a preparation to an on-site audit team visit. If the report is not comprehensible, the organisation can be asked to fill the gaps during an extended deadline. Furthermore, the auditors conduct interviews with participants of the programme in advance (EFMD n. d.a, pp. 12). When this step is finished, the “Audit Team Visit” follows as next step. Provided with all documentation so far as well as a guideline on how to conduct the audit visit, two auditors come to an on-site visit. During the visit, the auditors meet and interview a range of people connected to the programme including participants, administrative personnel as well as teachers/instructors. At the end of the Audit Team Visit the auditors meet with the programme management and present their preliminary conclusions as well as recommendations for improvement of the programme. Based on these insights, audit team and programme management will agree on (measurable) goals for quality improvement, which will be recoded in the Audit Team Report. Again, this demonstrates the important learning aspect within the EFMD CEL accreditation process (EFMD n. d.a, p. 13). After the Audit Team Visit, the chairperson of the Audit Team produces the Audit Team Report, including the Audit Team’s assessment results of the programme that are based on the EFMD CEL quality criteria, a description of the goals and next steps that have been agreed on with the programme’s management as well as a recommendation whether the programme should be accredited (EFMD n. d.a, pp. 13). To ensure the commitment of the programme’s management the draft of the Audit Team Report is sent by the Executive Office to the institution for confirmation (EFMD n. d.a, p. 14).

The final Audit Team Report as well as the recommendation for accreditation are presented to the EFMD CEL Awarding Body that takes the decision whether a programme is accredited or not. If questions arise regarding the final report of the audit team, the chairman of the Awarding Body will have the option to decide to send the report back to the audit team for a revision (EFMD n. d.a, pp. 14).

If the Awarding Body decides positively, the CEL accreditation will be awarded and will be valid for three years. After 18 months, the institution has to submit a “Reporting on Results” document to document how the recommendations and goals agreed on in the Audit Team Report are fulfilled. The results provided will be taken into account if the organisation seeks to re-accredit the programme after three years. This re-accreditation may start immediately with the self-assessment (EFMD n. d.a, pp. 15).
EFMD CEL provides criteria for six different areas that are programme profile, pedagogy, economics, organisation, technology as well as culture (EFMD n.d.a, p. 6). Programme profile includes criteria that cover information of participants, target group orientation, qualification of staff as well as programme objectives and strategic aspects (EFMD n.d.b, p. 2). Pedagogy is concerned with criteria for learning, added value of technology-enhanced learning, structure, content, interaction of participants, course development and design, feedback for participants as well as assignments as well as assessments (EFMD n.d.b, p. 2). The relatively small area economics covers that the organisation has to make sure that there are enough resources to achieve the programme objectives and that resources are directed to both the support of the running programme as well as the advancement of the programme (EFMD n.d.b, p. 3). The next area, technology, includes criteria to evaluate if the chosen technology is appropriate for the concept of the programme, if there is a strategy for ICTs, if reliability is monitored and documented, if accessibility and usability are taken into account and if future reuse of content and information is fostered by technology (EFMD n.d.b, p. 3). Organisation covers criteria for the infrastructure and support for a programme, human resources development for staff operating the programmes, definition of processes that need to be transparent for all staff involved, existence of continuous evaluation for programme improvement as well as the responsiveness of an organisation to complaints (EFMD n.d.b, p. 3). The last area, culture, includes criteria for the leading management’s commitment to the programme, the consideration that is given to the effects of workload, compensation and intellectual property rights ownership on the staff’s commitment as well as expectations towards learners as well as staff. Furthermore a criterion exists that demands an explicitly stated philosophy of co-operation, innovation as well as change (EFMD n.d.b, p. 4).

4.2.1 Assessment of EFMD CEL

The specialisation of EFMD CEL on the accreditation of management education courses and programmes in Europe already suggests that EFMD CEL might not be applicable to the context of e-Learning in Capacity Building one to one. However, a number of useful insights for the development of a label may be derived.

If EFMD CEL is analysed against the requirements (chapter 3.5), a number of restrictions can be identified. With regard to the architecture, EFMD CEL provides programme criteria, however, there are no criteria provided for the institutional level that...
has been suggested. There is also no distinction between minimum and excellence criteria. However, the quality criteria of EFMD CEL may be used as a foundation for the set of quality criteria for programmes/courses of Open ECBCheck as the quality framework “represents a conclusive system of relevant factors based on substantial research” (EFMD n. d.a, p. 6) and it seems to be advisable to rely on a set of already tested and scientifically based quality criteria instead of developing quality criteria from scratch.

With regard to the importance of learning that has been highlighted within the requirements, one may derive a number of useful insights for the design of the blueprint of the label from EFMD CEL. The process of accreditation includes measures to support learning and quality improvement within the organisation that applies for the label. On the one hand, the extensive self-assessment allows the organisation to gain a clear understanding of strengths and areas of possible improvement. On the other hand, the programme’s management agrees on improvement steps after the audit team visit that are also taken into account for a possible reaccreditation. These ideas correspond with the requirements and may be transferred, however, the only possibility to profit from these learning possibilities is to start the process of accreditation. Additionally, EFMD CEL does not include a community that allows for learning within a group of organisations nor for sharing of best practice and benchmarking.

In terms of the resources that are demanded for a successful accreditation with EFMD CEL it is rather apparent that the minimum fee of 12,500 Euros for the first programme and 8,750 Euros for each further programme (EFMD n. d.a, p. 17) plus the time and resource consuming audit team visit on site as well as a very extensive preparation do not match with the requirements from chapter 3.5 (EFMD n. d.a, p. 18). Furthermore, advice from EFMD CEL experts costs 1,900 Euros per day, not including expenses (EFMD n. d.a, p. 18), which is most probably too expensive for most of the Capacity Building Organisations within the scope of this book.

With regard to the accreditation process, EFMD CEL is an external label with the use of external auditors and hence does not fulfil the requirements of the interviewed organisations that demanded a much stronger focus on the professional community, mutual recognition of quality, sharing of tools and best practices and raised the question on the legitimacy of an external, not community based, body for awarding the label.

A vital insight from the EFMD CEL accreditation process is the importance of an eligibility check in the beginning to make sure that the organisation clearly understands the implications of the process that it seeks to embark on to prevent frustration and only such organisations that fit into the scope of the label apply. Furthermore, the governance system suggests that it is advisable to divide the decision powers for the eligibility decision from the final decision on awarding the label and the peer-reviewers. It also seems advisable to include a kind of advisory board as well as scientific guidance into the further development of the label.

4.2 European University Quality in eLearning (UNIQUE)

Within the following chapter, the label UNIQUE (European University Quality in eLearning) is described (chapter 4.2.1) and analysed (chapter 4.2.2), whether it meets the requirements derived in the requirements study and if not, which parts could be a best practice for the development of Open ECBCheck.

4.2.1 Description of UNIQUE

UNIQUE (European University Quality in e-Learning) is a European initiative for quality of e-Learning in institutions of higher education that is co-financed by the European Socrates programme. It has been developed within the scope of the European Bologna process that includes the objective to establish a “European dimension in quality assurance with comparable criteria and methods” (Bijnens and Nascimbeni 2007, p. 1). UNIQUE aims at supporting “institutions of higher education to measure how successful they are in technology-enhanced learning and to allow for continuous improvement” (UNIQUE Project Team 2007, p. 2). The certificate aims at accrediting whole institutions with the philosophy that only a top-level institution will be capable of delivering the highest quality in learning.

The UNIQUE organisational structure consists of three main bodies, the Supervisory Board that decides whether a university is eligible to start the process of accreditation, an Advisory Board that does not have any executive role but advises on the further development of the UNIQUE label and the Awarding Body (consisting of renown experts) that decides independently about the awarding of the label based on the input from a self-assessment and subsequent peer-review. Additionally a UNIQUE Executive Office exists that coordinates all activities around the UNIQUE label (UNIQUE Project Team 2007, pp. 7).

UNIQUE covers three main areas with its quality criteria, learning/institutional context, learning resources and learning process. The area learning/institutional context includes criteria for strategy and e-Learning, commitment to innovation and openness to the community. The field learning resources covers criteria for resources for learning, students, university staff
as well as technology equipment. The last area, learning processes, covers criteria for IPR management, quality of the offer and personal development/HR development (UNIQUe Project Team 2007, pp. 2).

The UNIQUe accreditation process (illustrated in figure 15) is similar to the process of EFMD CEL and consists of six steps that are inquiry, application, eligibility, self-assessment, peer-review, awarding body and continuous improvement (UNIQUe Project Team 2007, pp. 3). Being part of the first step inquiry, the initial contact between an organisation that would like to obtain the accreditation and the UNIQUe Executive Office to inform about the whole process of accreditation is to be pointed out.

If an organisation wants to start with the accreditation process, it has to proceed to step two, application, and fill in an “application data sheet” that asks for basic information about the organisation that allows for a first assessment whether the UNIQUe accreditation fits to the organisation and if the organisation would in general be eligible. Criteria for this decision are whether a university falls into the range of UNIQUe, has technology enhanced learning in place and a reasonable prospect to fulfill the UNIQUe quality criteria in a certain time frame. The decision on the eligibility of an organisation may lead to a negative decision that results in a strategic advice for an organisation and the possibility to apply later or to a positive decision that leads to step three, eligibility. If an organisation advances to step three, eligibility, the application has been accepted and the organisation may proceed with the accreditation process as well as a process of quality improvement together with UNIQUe. In this step, the organisation’s management will get to know more details about the following process by the UNIQUe Executive Office including a briefing about the following self-assessment.

The self-assessment is considered to be a critical stage of the accreditation process. It is supposed to help the organisation gain a clear view on the own strategic position by assessing strengths, weaknesses, constraints and opportunities as well whether the resources that are available to the university correspond with its targets related to technology enhanced learning. The self-assessment results in a written self-assessment report that will be used as a foundation for the following peer-review. Tools to support the self-assessment process are provided by UNIQUe. It is noted that the self-assessment phase requires a continuous dialogue between the different stakeholders of a university.

The self-assessment results are used by the peer-review team as one foundation for the preparation of a peer-review visit at the university. The peer-review team will also receive all other documents that have been created during the process so far and rely on an extensive documentation in a peer-review guide. During this peer-review visit, stakeholders of the university are interviewed by the peer-review team to validate the self-assessment results. In the end of the peer-review visit, the university’s management receives preliminary conclusions as well as recommendations for quality improvement from the peer-review team. Based on these recommendations, future steps for improvement are agreed on with the university and become one part of the peer-review report. This report includes also the assessment of the university against the UNIQUe criteria.

The peer-review report will be made available to the Awarding Body that will finally decide on the accreditation of a university or raise questions that have to be answered before the decision is taken. The awarding body is independent in its decision and may disagree with the opinion of the peer-review team. The result of the decision may be accredited, not accredited or candidate for accreditation with some time for improvement.

The last stage of the UNIQUe accreditation process is continuous quality improvement. This implies that an organisation has to provide a report on the progress of the steps of improvement included in the peer-review report that will be considered in the re-accreditation of the university after three years.
4.2.2 Assessment of UNIQUe

The UNIQUe label is focused on the accreditation of Universities (thus institutions) in the European context. This focus already suggests the conclusion, that UNIQUe also cannot be transferred one to one to the context of Capacity Building.

If UNIQUe is analysed against the requirements (chapter 3.5) a number of restrictions for the application in the area of Capacity Building can be identified. With regard to the architecture, UNIQUe offers criteria for institutions but no criteria for programmes/courses that have been required. The criteria do not offer a minimum and excellence level as required. Just as well as the quality criteria of EFMD CEL may be used as a foundation for the course/programme part of Open ECBCheck, the quality criteria of UNIQUe are a possible foundation for the institutional criteria of Open ECBCheck. While incorporating the criteria, one has to be aware that they have been developed with a focus on universities; there are probably a number of specialised criteria for universities that cannot be transferred as well as possibly some areas relevant for Capacity Building Organisations that are not yet covered.

UNIQUe is very similar to EFMD CEL with regard to the governance structure and process of accreditation, thus very similar insights can be derived. The process of accreditation also includes measures for learning and quality improvement within the organisation as well as the agreement on steps for improvement with the university management in the end with the achievement taken into account for reaccredidation. UNIQUe also requires an eligibility check for each university that would like to obtain the label and has a similar governance structure where decisions are divided between the different bodies. Additionally, UNIQUe offers the participating organisations a Virtual Learning Community for exchange, such a community could also be used to support the discussion, learning, sharing of best practices and tools within the Open ECBCheck community. However, the UNIQUe process includes a peer-review visit instead of audit team review.

With regard to required investment of resources, there is not yet a final answer possible, as the UNIQUe project is within a pilot stage and no information on costs is available yet. However, there is also an extensive peer-review visit planned and the described governance structure will at least have to be sustained, two factors that suggest a certain level of costs.

4.3 D-ELAN DELZert

Within the following chapter, the label D-ELAN DELZert is described (chapter 4.3.1) and analysed (chapter 4.3.2), whether it meets the requirements derived in the requirements study and if not, which parts could be a best practice for the development of Open ECBCheck.
4.3.1 Description of D-ELAN DELZert

The "Qualitätsplattform Lernen" has been developed by a D-ELAN (Deutsches Netzwerk der E-Learning Akteure e. V.) expert committee for quality as an instrument for on the one hand certification of courses/programmes as well as institutions but on the other hand for the support of sustainable quality development and quality assurance (D-ELAN n. a., p. 2). The "Qualitätsplattform Lernen" integrates a number of established tools for quality development or certification as the "Leitfaden für die Begutachtung von Fernlehrgängen" for distance education in Germany, the quality labels "E-Learning QSEL", Artset LQW, EFQM, the quality label of the British Learning Association, TUD-Gütesiegel, criteria of WebKolleg and Gütesiegelverbund NRW as well as PAS 1032-1 and ISO/IEC 19769-1 (D-ELAN n. d., p. 2). The "Qualitätsplattform Lernen" includes three parts, the first (A) aiming at courses/programmes, the second (B) at basic quality of institutions and the last (C) at excellence for institutions (D-ELAN n. a., p. 3).

The governance in terms of bodies of D-ELAN DELZert is not complex; the label has been initiated by the Deutsches Netzwerk der E-Learning Akteure e.V. (German Network of E-Learning Protagonists) but the whole accreditation process, the workshops as well as the awarding of the label are provided by a company called DELZert Deutsche E-Learning Zertifizierungsgesellschaft GbR, that is closely related to Deutsches Netzwerk der E-Learning Akteure e.V. because board members are partners of the company.

The certification process itself consists of four steps that are illustrated in figure 16. The first step, registration, includes basic coordination of next steps, the definition of targets and requirements for the certification as well as time scheduling during an obligatory kick-off workshop.

In a second step, the organisation executes a self-assessment of a course/programme or the institution itself based on guidelines that are provided. The self-assessment may be supported by an optional workshop and is considered to be a large and crucial part of the process. If an organization has already obtained a label that has been included into D-ELAN DELZert these criteria will not have to be assessed a second time but they are accepted for the certification process.

In a next step, the self-assessment is reviewed and open questions within the self-assessment as well as areas for improvement are identified. Based on this review, a catalogue of possible improvements is provided. This step includes at least one workshop.

In the final step, the organisation needs to document the accomplishment of improvements and the label is, if the requirements are met, awarded. The label is valid for two years; afterwards, a reaccredidation is needed (DELZert n. d.a).

![Figure 16 "Qualitätsplattform Lernen" Certification Process (DELZert n. d.)](image-url)
Each of the three parts of the label (course/programme, institution basic, institution excellence) provides associated quality criteria. The first, for courses/programmes, includes criteria for information about the course/programme, target group and learning targets, structure, content, didactics, media (digital as well as print), communication and collaboration, roles and activities, tasks, assessments and assignments, technology as well as evaluation. The basic institutional level focuses on the institution by assessing the three areas of processes, learner orientation as well as results. The third level, institutional excellence enlarges the scope of criteria and adds the areas policies and strategy, management, resources, management of employees, innovation and finally public perception (D-ELAN n. d., p. 3).

4.3.2 Assessment of D-LAN DELZert

D-LAN DELZert has been developed in a German context, however due to the design and the high number of adopted international standards, may be also an important best practice for the development of Open ECBCheck and cannot be transferred one to one.

As required DELZert offers criteria and a certification process for both programmes and institutions, however, there is only a distinction between minimum and excellence criteria for institutions. The catalogues of quality criteria of D-ELAN DELZert are of rather high interest for the development of Open ECBCheck for different reasons. During the development of the label, numerous existing, accepted and proven standards, labels as well as certificates have been included and thus the quality criteria catalogues are most probably comprehensive and of assumable high quality. A further indicator of assumable high quality of the criteria is that scientists from the field of quality development and e-Learning have been involved in the development. Furthermore, the quality criteria already offer a basic as well as an excellence level for institutional quality as the results of the requirements study suggests for the development of Open ECBCheck.

However, when considering the governance structure of DELZert, a number of critical features can be identified. With regard to costs, D-LAN DELZert comes with different pricing for the three levels, for a programme or course from 450 Euro to 1.500 Euro, for basic institutional certification 2.500 Euro to 6.500 Euro and for institutional certification on excellence level 4.750 Euro to 11.500 Euro not including travel, additional workshops. A re-certification costs 30 % of this (DELZert n. d.b). These are again probably too high costs for the target group of Capacity Building Organisations especially those based and operating in third world countries. Also, no possibility for a representation of the Capacity Building Organisations is given.

Furthermore, within the process of certification the audit and awarding of the label is carried out by an external agency, hence the question of acceptance of the process and label within the international community of Capacity Building Organisations is raised. The participating organisations demanded also a by far stronger focus on the professional community of Capacity Building Organisations, mutual recognition of quality, sharing of tools and best practices, factors not explicitly supported by DELZert. There is no information about possible community tools for exchange between organisations that would like to or already have obtained the quality label. However, again the notion arises that the target of D-LAN DELZert is not only the certification but also quality assurance and development; further there is a definition of a catalogue of possible improvements (there is no information, whether the accomplishment of these improvement possibilities is considered within a re-accreditation).

4.4 ISO/IEC 19796-1

In this chapter, the reference process model ISO/IEC 19796-1 is described (chapter 4.4.1) and analysed (chapter 4.4.2) whether it meets the requirements derived in the requirements study and if not, which parts could be a best practice for the development of Open ECBCheck.

4.4.1 Description of ISO/IEC 19796-1

ISO/IEC 19796-1 is a standard provided by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) that aims to provide a common framework that allows to "describe, specify and understand critical properties, characteristics and metrics of quality" (ISO 2005, p. 1). The so called Reference Framework for the Description of Quality Approaches (RFDQ) is a process model that is able to describe, compare as well as analyse existing quality management or quality assurance approaches. The process model consists of seven process categories which each include a number of relevant sub-processes. The process categories are Needs Analysis, Framework Analysis, Conception/Design, Development/Production, Implementation, Learning Process, and Evaluation/Optimization. Processes are in many cases interconnected, for instance results of evaluation of demands and general conditions are the foundation for the design processes (ISO 2005, p. 7).

The category Needs Analysis includes all processes that aim at identifying the demands, aims and requirements of all stakeholders. Four sub-processes are included: Initiation, Stakeholder identification, Definition of objectives and Demand analysis (ISO 2005, p. 8). The second category, Framework Analysis, includes processes to identify and document the general conditions under which the learning offer is developed. Processes that can be covered in this area are Analysis of the external context, Analysis of staff resources, Analysis of target groups, Analysis of the institutional and organisational
context; Time and budget planning as well as the Environment analysis (ISO 2005, p. 9). Based on the input of the first to process categories the third category Conception/Design includes processes for the development of a concept for the learning offer. Included are Learning objectives, Concept for contents, Didactical concept/methods, Roles and activities, Organizational concept, Technical concept, Concept for media and interaction design, Media concept, Communication concept, Concept for tests and evaluation as well as Concept for maintenance (ISO 2005, p. 10). The fourth category is called Development/Production and contains all processes that are needed to transfer the concept into a product. Includes are Content realization, Design realization, Media realization, Technical realization as well as the Maintenance (ISO 2005, p. 11). The next process category, Implementation, includes all processes that are necessary to transfer the learning materials etc. from a development environment into the runtime environment. Included are processes for Testing of learning resources, Adaptation of learning resources, Activation of learning resources, Organization of use and Technical infrastructure (ISO 2005, p. 12). The sixth category, Learning Process, includes all processes for realisation of a learning offer. Included are the processes for Administration, the Activities itself as well as the Review of competency levels (ISO 2005, p. 13). The last category, Evaluation/Optimization, includes all processes that are needed for a systematic evaluation of quality and usability of a product. Included are processes for Planning, Realization, Analysis and Optimization/Improvement (ISO 2005, p. 14).

4.4.2 Assessment of ISO/IEC 19796-1

ISO/IEC 19796-1 offers a process model that allows for the description, comparison as well as analysis of existing quality management or quality assurance approaches. It does, however, not offer own normative criteria or a governance model with a certification process that could be included as best practice in the construction of Open ECB Check and thus ISO/IEC 19796-1 has to be excluded from the group of best practice quality approaches used within the process of development. However, it offers a very valuable method for the validation of the developed label. The quality criteria catalogue for programmes/courses can be mapped against the process categories and associated sub-processes to analyse which areas are covered by the criteria and if any area has been not covered. Furthermore, it could be used during the process of developing the criteria catalogues to compare the existing approaches to identify similarities and particularities. Both possible scenarios for the use of ISO/IEC 19796-1 are described within the standard (ISO 2005, p. 5).

4.5 Conclusion on Assessment of Existing Standards and Labels

This chapter summarises the results of the analysis of existing standards and labels and provides an overview, which requirements have been fulfilled or not.

The description and analysis of selected quality approaches against the requirements that have been derived for a quality label (chapter 3.5) has shown that all included quality approaches are useful for quality assurance and development in their respective field and offer certain advantages and best practice insights for the development of a quality label for e-Learning in Capacity Building. Apart from the process model ISO/IEC 19796-1, there are a number of overlapping characteristics between the analysed approaches including for instance the use of extensive self-assessments as both a learning opportunity for the organisation and the foundation for the accreditation or certification process. The definition of (or agreement on) steps for improvement as the result of the process besides the decision if a certification or accreditation is granted is as well a similarity. However, some distinct differences can also be observed, mostly resulting from the special context of the respective quality approach. For instance EFMD CEL is specialised on the accreditation of management education programmes and thus does not offer any quality criteria for institutions. In contrast, UNIQUe aims at quality assurance and development for universities on an institutional level and does not offer any quality criteria for the assessment of programmes. Furthermore, EFMD CEL and UNIQUe rely on a peer-review of the self-assessment results whereas D-ELAN DELZert includes an audit.

There are a number of requirements that are not met by all discussed quality approaches. There is no approach that offers criteria on minimum and excellence level for both programmes/courses and institutions. Furthermore, all approaches focus on the certification or accreditation process and do not offer the open, community and learning based approach of mutual recognition of quality as required by the international community of Capacity Building Organisations. Furthermore, the representation of Capacity Building Organisations within the governance system and certification process is not secured. All discussed approaches require a rather high investment of money and time into the certification process that is most probably too high for the resource constraints of Capacity Building Organisations especially when operating in developing countries. Hence, none of the existing approaches can be applied one to one to the context of Capacity Building. However, all approaches offer valuable best practice as a foundation for the process of developing Open ECBCheck within the next chapter. The following table provides an overview which of the four quality approaches
Discussed within this chapter meets which of the requirements for a quality label in Capacity Building (see chapter 3.5).

Table 1 Overview on Assessment Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>EFMD CEL</th>
<th>UNIFIqe</th>
<th>D-ELAN DELZert</th>
<th>ISO/IEC 19796-1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e-Learning</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International scope</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>inclusion of international standards within the development</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreed on by networks</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coverage of programmes and institutions</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum and excellence Criteria</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes for institutions</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality certification as an open, community driven process</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representation within governance system</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low cost certification system</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning for improvement</td>
<td>self-assessment, peer-review, commitment on steps for improvement with accreditation</td>
<td>self-assessment, peer-review, commitment on steps for improvement with certification</td>
<td>self-assessment, review process catalogue of possible improvement</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The description and analysis of selected quality approaches against the requirements (see chapter 3.5) has shown that all selected quality approaches are useful for quality assurance and development in their respective field and each offers certain advantages and best practice insights for the development of a quality label for e-Learning in Capacity Building. However, none of the labels or standards could fulfil all requirements and thus be used for the context of e-Learning in Capacity Building. The following chapter develops a concept for a quality label based on the requirements (summary in chapter 3.5) and best practices from the analysed labels and certificates (chapter 4) that are used and adopted against the requirements.

5 DEVELOPMENT OF THE CERTIFICATE

This chapter describes and reflects on the concept for a quality label, including the fundamental architecture of Open ECBCheck as an open quality community, a reflection on selected methods that are used for quality development, the governance structure consisting of governing bodies and certification process as well as the development of the quality criteria catalogues for both programmes and institutions.

In chapters two and three, requirements of organisations towards a quality label for e-Learning in Capacity Building have been identified. The analysis shows that organisations have in general a high interest in quality development in the field of e-Learning and also supports the idea of a professional community besides the label itself that allows members access to guidelines, tools as well as best practices. In the following the process of construction of a quality label is described and
a concept for the label is suggested. First, an overview of the suggested fundamental architecture of Open ECBCheck as an open quality community and a low cost quality label with the corresponding certification process is provided (chapter 5.1). Secondly, the methods that are used for quality development and the certification process of Open ECBCheck are discussed (chapter 5.2). Thirdly, the governance structure of Open ECBCheck is developed consisting of the relevant bodies as well as the certification process for both programmes and institutions (chapter 5.3). Finally, the development of the quality criteria catalogues for programmes/courses and institutions are described and an overview of the relevant criteria areas is given (chapter 5.4).

5.1 Architecture and Organisation of the Open ECBCheck Quality Label as a Community Based Peer-Review Process

This chapter describes the fundamental architecture and organisation of Open ECBCheck that combines elements of an open professional community, self-assessment, benchlearning and external peer-reviews within the community to achieve quality certification and development.

The analysis of the context and requirements of the Capacity Building Organisations has provided a number of valuable insights in the fundamental architecture and the governance structure that is required by these organisations. Based on the interview results it becomes apparent that the governance structure has proven to be one of the most sensitive aspects for the overall organisational acceptance within the conceptualisation of the Open ECBCheck label. On the one hand, a clear certification requires clear governance that includes external reviews to foster legitimacy. On the other hand, the stakeholder analysis has shown that the acceptance of an external certification agency or an external label would be too low to guarantee a successful introduction of the label within the international community of Capacity Building Organisations. Furthermore, the architecture needs to consider that Capacity Building Organisations are on the one hand very interested into quality assurance and development but on the other hand face constraints when resources are considered.

Therefore a new concept has been developed, combining elements of an open professional community, self-assessment, benchlearning and external peer-reviews within the community to achieve quality certification and development (for an overview, please refer to figure 17). This approach ensures a high acceptance of the label within the international community of Capacity Building Organisations. Furthermore, the suggested governance system is designed to be operated at low cost to correspond to the resource constraints of many Capacity Building Organisations.

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**Figure 17 Architecture of Open ECBCheck**
Following the requirements (chapter 3.5) the basic and essential element of Open ECBCheck will be a professional community of organisations that are interested in quality issues in the field of e-Learning for Capacity Building. Organisations will be able to join this community by signing a declaration of intent (Annex 5) that demonstrates their interest and self commitment in the area of quality in e-Learning. This community offers an environment in which members can professionalise their own quality practices up to the point of certification of their programmes or even their whole institution. One possible activity within this community concerns the sharing of experiences and best practices and aggregating these experiences into benchmarking and benchlearning processes. Organisations which are in addition to this also interested in a more formalised review of their practices can undergo a structured certification process that, if successfully completed, will lead to the awarding of a label. In order to allow this progression, a three level approach is suggested.

- **Level 1**: Organisations may become members of a professional community to demonstrate their interest in quality by signing a declaration of intent (Annex 5). All members of this community gain access to guidelines, tools as well as best practices for both programmes and institutions. This includes the access to the criteria catalogues and Self-assessment questionnaire for the self-assessment (the development of the criteria is explained in chapter 5.4, the full Self-assessment questionnaire can be accessed online, and the criteria catalogues are available in Annex 7 and 8).

- **Level 2**: In a second level, member organisations can actively get involved into quality development and professionalisation of their quality practices. They may get involved into the sharing and adoption of best practices and aggregating these into benchmarking and benchlearning processes together with other organisations from the field. They also have the possibility to use and adopt the provided Self-assessment questionnaire for a self-assessment to identify strengths and areas for improvement within single programmes or the whole institution. It is the unique characteristic of the architecture that Open ECBCheck offers all these measures for quality improvement without the need to enter a certification process, thus responding to the requirements of the international community of Capacity Building organisations. To provide information, support the sharing of best practice as well as discussion between member organisations, there should be an online resource centre for Open ECBCheck including a collaborative workspace.

- **Level 3**: In a third level, organisations who are also interested in a more formalised review of their practices can undergo a structured certification process that, if successfully completed, will lead to the awarding of a label. This process (discussed in more detail in chapter 5.3.1) is based on an extensive self-assessment supported by the Toolkit provided before. The self-assessment is supposed to be rather self critical to assist the organisation in working on quality issues rather than promotional. As soon as the organisation has finished the self-assessment process, the results of this process are validated through a peer-review with another organisation from the community which has already obtained the label before. To make sure that there are always enough organisations available as a peer-review partner, it will be a requirement for obtaining the label to volunteer as a peer-review partner for another organisation.

Figure 18 illustrates an exemplary life-cycle of an organisation within the Open ECBCheck community. It is not compulsory that an organisation completes the formal certification process, however it is recommended to benefit from all possibilities for quality development that are offered by Open ECBCheck.

![Figure 18 Exemplary Life-Cycle of an Organisation within the Open ECBCheck community](http://www.ecb-check.org)
To sum up, the focus of Open ECBCheck will be supporting organisations in benchmarking their quality practices, improving their tools and learn from each other in a community based exchange.

5.2 Selected Methods for Quality Development in Open ECBCheck

This chapter reflects on the methods of benchmarking, benchlearning, peer-review, self-assessment as well as qualitative weighting and summation that are used within Open ECBCheck for quality evaluation and validation.

The conceptualised Open ECBCheck label makes use of five central methods for quality evaluation and validation that all have distinct characteristics and potential advantages and disadvantages. These methods, that are benchmarking, benchlearning, peer-review, self-assessment as well as qualitative weighting and summation, need to be discussed briefly as a foundation for the further development of Open ECBCheck.

Benchmarking

KAMISKE and BRAUER (2003, pp. 10) summarise benchmarking as the process of measuring and comparing one’s products, services or processes with the best competitors or with acknowledged market leaders (“best in class”). The target of benchmarking is to learn by comparing with others, to identify best practice and to adapt these methods, processes etc. for the own organisation to achieve improvement and in the long term market leadership or excellence. Benchmarking originates from the field of reverse engineering that is related to physical products, but the concept has been transferred to services and processes. CAMP (1989, pp. 15) highlights that benchmarking leads to objectives when best practices are transferred into targets that may in many cases be on the one hand of qualitative nature and on the other hand indicate a direction of development in a longer term rather than exact (quantifiable) short-term operational targets.

According to CAMP (1989, pp. 16), benchmarking is divided into four main stages, planning, analysis, integration and implementation with a concluding fifth phase maturity. Planning includes the identification of the benchmarking object, organisations that should be included into the comparison as well as definition of methods for and execution of data collection. This phase includes a self-analysis or self-assessment that is already considered to be helpful to identify areas for improvement (Lemmergaard 2009, p. 172). In a second stage, gaps are identified and possible future performance levels identified. The third phase, integration, includes communication of results and setting of targets for the next phase, implementation. Within this phase, a plan for implementation is developed, the implementation is executed and results are checked. The closing phase, maturity, includes aiming at a leading position and integration of benchmarking into the organisation’s processes (Kaminske and Brauer 2003, pp. 15).

There are, however, a number of restrictions associated with benchmarking. First, learning from benchmarking is mostly concerned with the past as the “best in class” organisation or competitor has already achieved this level before. Secondly, it is argued, that there is a high uncertainty in identifying the “best in class” organisation or best practice. Only a step by step approach towards a relatively well performing organisation is supposed to be possible (Kaminske and Brauer 2003, p. 18). LEMMERGAARD (2009, p. 172) suggests that benchmarking only focuses on current best practices and is not a source for innovation and possible future best practices. BECKER and GERHARD (1996, pp. 784) also argue that one implicit assumption has to be made to consider benchmarking successful; best practice cases are not specific for one organisation but they need to be generalisable to be transferable.

Benchlearning

Connected to benchmarking is the term benchlearning. According to FREYTAG and HOLLENSEN (2001, pp. 26) who define benchlearning as the “process of learning from the ‘best in class’ with the purpose of integrating these best practices in all organizational levels of the company” benchmarking is the foundation and benchlearning is the learning process that follows after benchmarking. There, thought needs to be given to the issue if and how these identified best practices could be transferred to the own organisation as well as how skills and processes could be improved (2001, p. 30). They furthermore distinguish benchaction as the actual implementation of all changes that have been set as targets (2001, p. 31).

Peer-review

Peer-reviews have high practical relevance for external evaluation as well as quality assurance and development according to GUTKNECHT-GMEINER (2008, p. 19). They are central within research and publishing of scientific papers (Weingart 2001, 284), on different levels within the field of education (educational systems, institutions, or level of individual learner or teacher), in the fields of medicine, nursing, social work and as well in business related professions, for instance auditing (Gutknecht-Gmeiner 2008, pp. 60).
GUTKNECHT-GMEINER regards the classification of peer-review as a method of evaluation as rather complex (2008, p. 51). Normally, peer-review refers to an external evaluation by experts that belong to a different organisation or, in some cases, may also be colleagues within the same organisation (for instance many cases of peer-review of teaching). This review is supposed to support an organisation or individual in its efforts on quality assurance and development. In contrast to other external evaluators, peers act on the same level as they possess similar knowledge, experience and competencies as the evaluated individuals/members of an organisation and origin from similar organisations or contexts (Gutknecht-Gmeiner 2008, pp. 51). An example is the evaluation of teachers by teachers or the fundamental peer-review culture in scientific publishing. GUTKNECHT-GMEINER also mentions the synonym “critical friend” (2008, p. 52) for a peer-reviewer that demonstrates the special relation. Peer-review is also clearly classified as a qualitative method (that, however, may also include quantitative data as a foundation for analysis). Furthermore GUTKNECHT-GMEINER summarises that a peer-review may be used for both formative and summative evaluation purposes, depending on the specific review’s design (2008, p. 51).

The design also includes the question about exactly is reviewed by the peer-reviewers and there are a number of options that differ in how close the review is to the subject of interest (e.g. an institution). First, a review could focus on the self-assessment report/results to assess if the report has been drafted well. Secondly, the review could be more detailed and comprises also a review of the data that is provided to proof the conclusions in the self-assessment report and/or additional on site visits and interviews with stakeholders could be performed by the peer-reviewers to gain further data. Finally, the peer-review could target on the subject of interest itself, for instance whether a teacher observes a colleague within a teaching situation (Gutknecht-Gmeiner 2008, pp. 51).

HARTZ and MEISEL (2004, p. 48) highlight that peer-review does not focus on data collection but on a competent review of existing data to derive core issues, however, peer-reviewers may collect additional data by a peer-review visit or interviews. GUTKNECHT-GMEINER (2008, pp. 51) summarises that in practice, despite the fact that there are numerous possible designs for peer-reviews, the following procedure for a peer-review is well established: The basis for the review is formed by an extensive self-evaluation by the institution or individual, followed by the external evaluation that is in, many cases, accompanied by an on-site visit and leads to a final review report by the reviewers.

Peer-reviews are associated with a number of advantages. First, if conducted in a formative way, peer-reviews include a (mutual) learning possibility as the work together with the external expert may provide insights for improvement and development on both sides. Furthermore, peer-reviews are considered to have a relatively good cost-benefit ratio compared to an evaluation by potentially expensive and especially trained auditors. It is also supposed that colleagues or experts from the same field of expertise are perceived as more acceptable than external evaluators with possibly no expertise in the evaluated subject matter (Gutknecht-Gmeiner 2008, pp. 23).

However, there are also a number of disadvantages and open questions discussed. SRCIVEN (1991, p. 255) considers peer-reviews to be “extremely shaky” and mentions among others halo-effects, a possible secret-contract bias or the fear of possible retaliatory action as problematic factors. However he sees a lot of potential for improvement. Furthermore it is questionable whether peers always possess the necessary qualifications in the field of evaluation as well as communication, social and personal skills and whether they are in all cases as objective as reviewers who are not subject matter experts (Gutknecht-Gmeiner 2008, pp. 23; Beywl and Speer 2004, p. 19).

Self-assessment

Both benchmarking as well as a peer-review require a prior self-assessment by the organisation. KAMISKE and BRAUER (2003, p. 18) consider (in a broader context) a self-assessment to be a regular and systematic analysis of strengths and weaknesses of a company or organisation to determine one’s position, to identify areas for improvement and to transfer these insights into implementation. The initiative for a self-assessment is supposed to come from the organisation itself and the organisation that conducts the assessment is also responsible for the process. Usually, the self-assessment is conducted against a set of criteria as for instance in the standards discussed in chapter 4.

The EUROPEAN FOUNDATION FOR QUALITY MANAGEMENT (EFQM), that offers the EFQM Excellence Model as a reference point for a self-assessment, summarises the advantages for an organisation in executing a self-assessment against the criteria as learning about strengths as well as areas for improvement, about how close an organisation is to excellence as well as where resources should be directed to achieve the maximum benefit (2003, p. 12). It is stressed, that “the primary purpose of undertaking a self-assessment should be to drive improvement” (EFQM 2003, p. 11).

The EFQM manual discusses a number of data collection methods that could be used for self-assessments that differ in comprehensiveness of results as well as in time or resources required. First, questionnaires are introduced as a method that is on the one hand easy to use and on the other hand not very resource consuming and can be adjusted in
elaborateness they are suggested for the first experiences with self-assessment. Furthermore, questionnaires could be used as a foundation for more sophisticated methods. It is also suggested that an organisation should rely on already proven questionnaires (EFQM 2003, p. 35). As a second method, an assessment workshop is suggested where after a phase of some weeks of data collection (for instance with the help of a questionnaire, controlling etc.), the self-assessment team presents and assesses the data collected and aims at reaching a consensus on steps for improvement (EFQM 2003, pp. 38). Furthermore, for the context of EFQM, it is suggested to use an “Award Simulation” to conduct a self-assessment. The organisation completes the full documentation that would be needed to enter the so called “European Quality Award” but instead of submitting the results a group of trained assessors from the organisation itself or from outside the organisation.

**Qualitative Weighting and Summation**

BAUMGARTNER ET AL. (2002) describe the method of Qualitative Weighting and Summation as a method for (product) evaluation based on criteria catalogues. They argue that the currently dominant method of Numerical Weighing and Summation (first, each criterion is weighted according to importance, secondly the evaluand is rated in all criteria and finally the products of all ratings with the corresponding weighting are summed up to one final score that indicates the relative rank of a product, organisation or service) has a number of disadvantages, including problems arising because of the existence of minimum criteria, existing interconnections between criteria, the assumption of linear scales and, as the main factor the question what are the relevant criteria and how should they be weighted (Baumgartner et al. 2002). Furthermore, it is considered to be problematic that the procedure of weighting is unrepeatable.

As an alternative the method of Qualitative Weighting and Summation is proposed by BAUMGARTNER ET AL. (2002) and described in the context of the evaluation of learning management systems. In a first step, all criteria are weighted as well but based on non numeric characters to avoid the effects of interval or ratio scales. BAUMGARTNER ET AL consider the division into “Essential (E) / Very Valuable (*) / Valuable (#) / Marginally Valuable (+) / Zero (0)” as a proven best practice (2002). All criteria that are rated with “Zero” are excluded from the further analysis as they have been considered irrelevant. In a second step, only criteria that have been weighted as essential are assessed. This approach has a number of advantages. First, all products that do not fulfil the essential criteria can be excluded from the further analysis thus significantly reducing the time and effort needed for the further analysis. Secondly, products that do not fulfil the essential criteria but possibly score very high in other less important areas do not distort the evaluation results. The following third step is only completed with products that fulfilled all essential criteria and that now only differ in criteria weighed from “Very Valuable” to “Marginally Valuable”. All remaining products are rated only with help of the remaining criteria and besides the rating it is indicated if the evaluator has experienced any uncertainty within the rating process to ensure traceability in further steps of the analysis. The ratings in the three different importance levels are then summarised resulting in three aggregated values for each product (Sum Very Valuable (*) / Sum Valuable (#) / Sum Marginally Valuable (+)). If no clear ranking can yet be observed at this stage of the analysis, it is necessary to compare individual products on a case by case comparison to reach a final conclusion.

In this context, BAUMGARTNER ET AL. (2002) mention two main disadvantages of this method. On the one hand, the method is, compared to numeric weighing and summation, relatively complex and, more importantly, does not offer a definite decision algorithm on the other hand. Thus, the method of qualitative weighting and summation sometimes needs to be applied several times in an iterative process to reach a final conclusion.

This chapter has provided a reflection on strengths and weaknesses of central methods for quality evaluation and validation within the Open ECBCheck label. Benchmarking and the connected concept of benchlearning are concerned with learning and improvement by comparing with other “best in class” organisations or products and adopting these identified best practices within the own organisation. Self-assessment is described as a usually regular and systematic analysis of strengths and weaknesses of a company or organisation to determine ones position, to identify areas for improvement that is usually conducted with the help of criteria catalogues. A peer-review is characterised as a qualitative method for external evaluation by an expert on the same level that is in many cases based on a prior self-assessment and focuses on a review on existing data. Peer-reviews are considered to offer a mutual learning opportunity (“critical friend”) additionally to the review itself and are regarded to offer a relatively good cost-benefit ratio. Finally, qualitative weighting and summation is introduced as a method for (product) evaluation based on criteria catalogues that offers a solution the disadvantages of the currently dominant method of numerical weighing and summation.

These methods will now be used in chapter 5.3 where the governance of the Open ECBCheck label is described in two parts. First, the organisational structure of the label is described with all relevant bodies and secondly, the certification process to obtain the label is conceptualised.
5.3 Governance of the Open ECBCheck Label

This chapter describes the governance structure of the Open ECBCheck label in two main parts. First, the organisational structure, consisting of an International Advisory Board, an Administrative Office, an Awarding Body as well as a group of peer-reviewers is outlined. Secondly, the certification process to obtain the Open ECBCheck label is conceptualised making use of the methods self-assessment, peer-review and qualitative weighting and summation that have been discussed before (chapter 5.2).

The analysis of requirements has shown that the governance of the quality label is of crucial importance for the development and acceptance of Open ECBCheck. It has been shown that the label needs to be developed with the inclusion of and operated by the community of Capacity Building Organisations itself. Furthermore, the governance structure needs to consider the resource constraints of many Capacity Building Organisations, especially when operating in developing countries. In the following, the development and the structure of the suggested governance system for both programme/course certification and institutional certification is described and discussed. The development is based on the adoption of existing governance systems and certification processes that have been analysed discussed within the assessment of existing standards and certificates (see chapter 4) and that are compliant with the requirements of Capacity Building Organisations. First, the official bodies including their formation and rights as well as responsibilities are described. In a second step, the process that organisations have undergone if they seek for obtaining the Open ECBCheck label for either the institution or a programme is conceptualised and described.

5.3.1 Organisational Structure of Open ECBCheck

The assessment of existing standards and certificates in chapter 4 has shown that for a label the distinction between the assessing body and the awarding body is of high importance to guarantee independence of the awarding decision, to improve reliability and to foster credibility of the label. Furthermore, it is suggested to be important to incorporate scientific support on quality criteria and the methods used for evaluation into the construction as well as the further development of the label. The final area that needs to be covered is that all processes related to the label, including the awarding process, the improvement of the label, meetings of bodies, information for member organisations as well as the community need at least a basic level of coordination and administration. Based on these requirements, the governance of Open ECBCheck relies on four distinct bodies or groups that are the Open ECBCheck International Advisory Board, the Open ECBCheck Administrative Office, the Open ECBCheck Awarding Body and a group of Peer-Reviewers which are described in the following section in more detail:

1. The Open ECBCheck International Advisory Board consists of 30 organisations that are either deeply committed organisations from the field of Capacity Building or expert organisations in the fields of e-Learning and Quality (e.g. research centres, universities). Each organisation may have one representative in the Advisory Board that needs to appoint a deputy if the or she is unable to attend a meeting or not able to carry out a duty. The “Open ECBCheck International Advisory Board” is responsible for the strategic development of Open ECBCheck to continuously adapt the label to the communities needs. The board also drives the development of the quality criteria for both institutions and programmes/courses as well as the criteria for institutions based on current insights from research. Finally, the Advisory Board is also a potential pool for peer-reviewers with expert knowledge.

2. The Open ECBCheck Administrative Office is responsible for the smooth operation of the OpenECBCheck community label. This responsibility includes to be the first access point for all parties involved into the label, especially the first contact to and information for organisations that are interested in joining the initiative or obtaining the Open ECBCheck label. The Administrative Office is also responsible for all coordination processes for the Open ECBCheck label, e.g. follow up on running accreditation processes or organisation of meetings etc. Furthermore, the Open ECBCheck Administrative Office is responsible for the administration of the OpenECBCheckweb pages as well as all collaborative tools used by members and bodies of the community. Administration of the webpage includes another important task, the Administrative Office is as well responsible to update the official list of programmes/courses as well as organisations that have successfully obtained the label published on the web pages of Open ECBCheck. This list is the only reliable source for external parties to be sure a member organisation has obtained the label. Another important responsibility of the “Open ECBCheck Administration Office” is to keep an overview of the available peer-reviewers, this includes keeping track of their OpenECBCheck peer-review experience, providing information on the peer-reviewers to organisations that start the peer-review and all necessary coordination processes for the peer-review.

3. The Open ECBCheck Awarding Body takes the final decision whether a label is awarded for a programme/course or institution. This group consists of a mix of experts from the fields of e-Learning and Quality as well as of members of the Capacity Building community. The members are elected by the Advisory Board and cannot be members of
the Advisory Board at the same time. The Awarding Body receives a peer-review report on the self-assessment from the peer-reviewers together with a recommendation whether the label should be awarded or not. Based on this information, the Awarding Body decides with a majority decision about awarding the label. The division between the bodies responsible for the decision and review of the self-assessment is important to guarantee independence of the awarding decision, to improve reliability and to support credibility of the label itself. This separation of responsibilities also requires that none of the appointed peer-reviewers is a member of the Awarding Body.

4. The Peer-reviewers are of crucial importance for the process of awarding the Open ECBCheck label and for providing the reviewed organisation with a learning opportunity. They are responsible for the peer-reviews of institutional or programme related self-assessments and write a self-assessment review report for the Awarding Body as well as the learning report for the institution. The analysis has shown that it is crucial that peer-reviewers are members of the community of Capacity Building Organisations, however they cannot be members of the Awarding Body of Open ECBCheck. Details on how the peer-review is conducted are provided within chapter 5.3.2.

This chapter has outlined the organisational structure of ECBCheck that relies on four distinct bodies or groups that each has specific rights and duties within the Open ECBCheck framework. Within the next chapter the certification process, used for the certification of both programmes and institutions, is conceptualised including the

### 5.3.2 Certification Process

The analysis of existing standards and labels in chapter 4 has shown a number of best practices for the process of awarding a label for programmes/courses as well as institutions. It is considered important to include an eligibility check in the beginning of the process to allow only institutions or programmes/courses into the process that are covered by the scope of the label and to sensitise for the seriousness of the process. Furthermore, existing certification processes rely on extensive self-assessments that provide both a learning opportunity for the organisation itself as well as the foundation for a peer-review or audit resulting in an independent audit body decision as well as the agreement on steps for improvement. In the following, the certification process for both institutions or programmes/courses for Open ECBCheck is suggested based on these best practices that are adopted and adapted to the requirements derived before (chapter 3.5). This process is divided into six steps that are described in more detail in the following section.

![Figure 19 Certification Process of Open ECBCheck](image)

Figure 19 Certification Process of Open ECBCheck
First the organisation that seeks for obtaining a label for either the whole institution or a program/course needs to contact the Open ECBCheck Administration Office for a first inquiry (0. in figure 19). In this step, the applying organisation is informed by the Administration Office about the process that needs to be completed to obtain the label as well as about all costs and tasks. If the institution decides to continue the process, the eligibility application will follow.

In the second step (1. and 2. in figure 19) the applying institution has to fill in a first brief questionnaire (see Annex 9) either for the institutional process or the process for a program/course to find out whether the institution or programme/course meet the scope of Open ECBCheck and the organisation or program/course have a realistic chance to obtain the label. This application form is evaluated by the Administration Office and it is decided whether the institution or programme/course is eligible. If it is decided that the institution or programme/course is not eligible, the Open ECBCheck Administrative Office provides the institution with feedback on the reasons as well as advice on the question whether a reapplication would be an option in the future and what issues would have to be changed before. If the organisation is decided eligible the process can be taken further. As the analysis of existing standards and labels has suggested, this eligibility application is of importance to make sure that a programme or course falls into the scope of Open ECBCheck for the case of programme certification, that an organisation understands that the process needs at least a certain level of seriousness to be completed and that the programme or institution has the potential to successfully complete the certification process.

The next step (3. in figure 19), self-assessment of the organisation, is very crucial. The organisation will be provided with a Toolkit (the Toolkit is based on Microsoft (MS) Excel and provided in digital form online) that is the foundation for the institution to perform an extensive self-assessment based on a catalogue of quality criteria (overview in chapter 5.4, the full list of criteria is provided in Annex 7 for programmes/courses and in Annex 8 for institutions). The criteria and the full Toolkit are available before starting the process due to the community architecture described in chapter 5.1, this allows for a good preparation prior to the process. This self-assessment is evidence based and thus organisations that conduct the assessment are not only required to record self-evaluations for each criterion within the Toolkit but they are also required to provide proof for their rating. This proof may be provided in form of protocols, concept papers, curricula, information brochures or any other document that may proof the self-rating.

The self-assessment has two targets. On the one hand, it is an assessment of the quality of programmes/institutions and forms the foundation for the decision if a label will be granted and thus needs to be thorough, extensive and enough proof has to be added to the self-assessment report, which will be the result of the self-assessment. On the other hand, the self-assessment has a learning function for the organisation and will provide the organisation with the possibility to identify areas of improvement as pointed out in the methodology chapter (5.1). If the organisation performing the self-assessment for either the institution itself or a program/course believes that the self-assessment report is finished, it can be submitted to the Open ECBCheck Administration Office.

During the self-assessment phase, the Administrative Office also proposes two peer-reviewers that will receive the self-assessment report for review. These peer-reviewers are as well members of the Open ECBCheck community and should belong to Capacity Building Organisations that already have successfully completed the certification. While assigning peer-reviewers the Administrative Office has to take into account that there are no known potential interest conflicts (e.g. the institution of the peer-reviewer may be a competitor of the institution providing the self-assessment; also the institutions may be close partners, a sign of possible positive prejudice). Furthermore, the assessed institution may object to one of the proposed peer-reviewers in case significant reasons exist; institutions are also obligated to inform the Administrative Office about any possible positive prejudice.

When the self-assessment report is finished and the peer-reviewers are set, the peer-review process begins as the next step (4. and 5. in figure 19) based on a peer-review guideline (see Annex 10). For each criterion, the reviewers assess whether the rating of the organisation is reasonable with regard to the provided proof and description by the organisation. Within the process, it is not only assessed whether the required documents and proof are provided but also the provided information itself is reviewed on comprehensibility and possible areas for improvement are identified. These criteria need to be satisfied for a positive result of the peer-review: clarity of provided information, comprehensiveness of provided information and validity. Clarity of information relates to the question, if the provided information on a criterion is clearly understandable. Comprehensiveness relates to the question if all necessary information has been included to back up the rating of a criterion within the self-assessment. And finally, validity is related to the question, if the rating of a criterion is reasonable in light of the provided proof. However, not the programme/course or the institution are reviewed directly. Also, no peer-review team visit at the organisation is included as such a visit would likely be too time and resource consuming for most of the Capacity Building Organisation, especially smaller ones operating in developing countries. If data or details are unclear or unsatisfactory, peer-reviewers will have to ask the organisation via the Open ECBCheck Administrative Office to provide missing or update incomplete parts of the self-assessment report. The additional data or details have to be provided...
within an acceptable timeframe defined by the Administrative Office. Depending on the amount of revision necessary the timeframe is suggested up to two weeks.

The peer-reviewers then write a peer-review report based on the provided self-assessment and materials to proof the results. This peer-review report contains three main areas. Firstly, the reviewers provide the organisation with a summary of the self-assessment review including most importantly all criteria where the peer-reviewers disagreed with the self-assessment rating with a corresponding reason. Secondly, the peer-review report includes a recommendation, whether an institution or a program should be awarded with the Open ECBCheck label that is considered by the Open ECBCheck Awarding Body. Thirdly, the peer-reviewers write a detailed learning report that highlights those shortcomings and contains improvement possibilities and suggestions. As learning is one main goal of Open ECBCheck, the learning report should go, both in coverage and detail, beyond the steps agreed on for improvement that are included with for instance UNIQuE or EFMD CEL and provide the receiving institution with advice and best practice for each of the criteria where improvements are suggested. As soon as the peer-review report is completed it is submitted to the attention of the Administrative Office.

In the final step (6. and 7. in figure 19) the Awarding Body will be provided with the anonymous peer-review report for a programme/course or institution. The decision whether a label is granted will be taken by simple majority vote of the Awarding Body and does not need to correspond with the suggestion of the peer-review report. If the peer-review report is not satisfactory to decide, the Awarding Body will have to send back the report for a revision via the Administrative Office. Again, the Administrative Office has to set an appropriate deadline. If the decision is positive, the Awarding Body will inform the institution about the completion of the process and the Administrative Office to update the official register of institutions or programmes/courses that obtained the label. Furthermore, the Awarding Body forwards the learning report from the peer-reviewers to the organisation for further improvement. After awarding, the label is valid for three years and an organisation needs to report on achievements based on the learning report (8. in figure 19) and also may re-apply (9. in figure 19) for certification. If the decision is negative, the Awarding Body will inform the institution about the reasons for not awarding the label and will as well provide the learning report for possible improvements. Any institution or program/course will need to wait for about one year before a re-application will be possible and the Awarding Body has to offer advice to the organisation what would be the minimum required changes to make a reapplication reasonable. The Administration Office has to be informed about the rejection to make sure that there is no reapplication before the one year waiting period.

5.4 Selection, Adoption and Development of the Quality Criteria Frameworks

This chapter describes the development methodology of selecting, adopting and adapting existing quality criteria from best practice approaches (an analysis of these approaches has been conducted within chapter 4) into one comprehensive catalogue of quality criteria for programmes and one for institutions and provides an overview of these quality frameworks. A detailed list of all criteria for programs/courses is provided in Annex 8, the corresponding list for institutions is provided in Annex 9.

5.4.1 Development Methodology for Quality Criteria Catalogues of Open ECBCheck

To develop quality criteria catalogues for both institutions and programmes two principle approaches may be used. The first one would be to derive quality criteria from scratch from existing theory about quality in e-Learning. The second option is to use existing criteria from closely related standards or labels that have been identified as possible best practice in chapter 4. These quality criteria need to be selected, adopted and adapted into one comprehensive catalogue of quality criteria for the context of Capacity Building. For the development of Open ECBCheck the second approach is chosen as it offers the advantage to base the development on already proven and validated criteria catalogues from existing approaches. In the following, the methodology for this process consisting of four consecutive steps is described and reflected. figure 20 illustrates the increasing filter effect for criteria during this process.
The first step (Selection and Harmonisation: Criteria Frameworks) has been to identify related criteria catalogues (chapter 4) that could be used as the foundation for the process. For the quality of courses or programmes, EFMD CEL as well as D-ELAN DELZert have been chosen, for quality of institutions, UNIQUe as well as D-ELAN DELZert. As D-ELAN DELZert already integrates numerous other quality labels or norms, there are indirectly more sources of criteria (for an overview, please refer to chapter 4.3.1). ISO/IEC 19769-1 has not been chosen as this standard does not offer a normative framework but a process model that allows for the description, comparison as well as analysis of existing quality management or quality assurance approaches. It has, however, been integrated to demonstrate the compatibility with important international standards.

In a second step (Selection and Harmonisation: Criteria) the quality criteria catalogues of the existing standards or labels have been compared and integrated into one comprehensible catalogue for both programmes/courses and institutions in a summative and analytical process to make sure that no important area of quality criteria is left out. The focus has been to identify a core of mutual dimensions and corresponding criteria that are considered of importance for quality in e-Learning in general. Criteria that exist double are unified into one criterion and criteria that are too specific for the special context of only one of the best practice labels have been deleted from the new criteria catalogues. For instance, UNIQUe includes a number of criteria that are only relevant for the context of universities and hence to specific for the context of Capacity Building Organisations. The process has been supported by the reference model of ISO/IEC 19796-1 that offers the possibility to map the criteria of a label against the process categories to assess which areas are covered and which are not. Additionally, the criteria have been rephrased for or adjusted to the context of e-Learning in Capacity Building where necessary.

As the criteria, that are rather abstract constructs, are used as the foundation for the self-assessment possibly conducted by staff of Capacity Building Organisations, not yet having experience with the application of quality criteria, reliability and validity of the self-assessment results are issues to consider. To ensure a high reliability and validity organisations need to be supported with further information on the criteria to guarantee the full understanding and correct application. Hence, additional information on each criterion needs to be added for each criterion within the provided Toolkit. A further description for each criterion in the context of Capacity Building is added. This description should support the correct understanding of each criterion and thus the reliability of self-assessment results. Reliability and validity of the evaluation results should also be supported by the addition of guidance and guiding questions that help organisations to assess criteria as well as the additional guidance what kind of document could be useful to prove that a certain criterion has been met.

Step three (Expert Validation) focuses on the validation of the generated criteria catalogues with experts. The criteria catalogues have been validated two times in an expert discussion (expert validation) with an expert from the field of quality in e-Learning and furthermore within one workshop with experts and Capacity Building Organisations. Within the two expert discussions, each criterion has been analysed for whether it is relevant for the context of e-Learning in Capacity Building, whether it is phrased well, whether it is grouped into the right category and whether the division into basic and
excellence criteria is reasonable. It has also been assessed, if the further description is phrased well and if the developed guidance and guiding questions (that should support the organisation with the self-assessment) are relevant for the criteria. After each expert validation, the two criteria catalogues have been revised in detail. Furthermore, the criteria catalogues have been validated within a workshop of about 30 experts from Capacity Building Organisations as well as universities and international organisations (a full list of participants is provided in Annex 6). Within the workshop all experts have been divided into small groups and provided with a part of the criteria list. Each group could decide about agreeing or disagreeing with the provided criteria (regarding the relevance of the criterion for e-Learning in Capacity Building as well as the comprehensibility) or whether they are unclear in their decision. Moreover, the groups could add comments, rephrasing suggestions and questions for e.g. wording or unclear terms. After a certain time frame, groups have been rotated for a number of times to ensure that each criterion has been reviewed by a number of experts. In the end of this process, all criteria that were rated as unclear by a majority of experts have been given to the groups to work on suggestions for improvement. These suggestions have been discussed within the whole group of experts in the end. After the workshop, the collected feedback and the generated suggestions on the quality criteria have been included into the criteria catalogues in another revision.

The fourth (User validation: Pilot Trials) and last step of validation has been conducted with a smaller group of volunteering institutions that have been present in the above mentioned workshop. These six institutions have been provided with the MS Excel based ToolKit including all quality criteria to support them with the application of these to one or more of their courses or programmes and, if applicable, to their institution. The aim of this pilot phase has been to assess if the ToolKit, that was developed to assist quality development and the self-assessment process is understandable, easy to use and supports the assessment. Furthermore, the phrasing of the quality criteria has been assessed again. The evaluation results as well as comments on both single criteria have been sent back by the institutions. Two sources of information could be used for the following revision of the criteria catalogues and ToolKit. On the one hand, institutions have provided direct feedback on their experience with the quality criteria and ToolKit while assessing their programmes. On the other hand, institutions have provided their evaluation results. If evaluation results for one or more criteria suggest that these criteria have not been understood correctly this could be another indicator for necessary improvement of criteria catalogues.

The feedback received from the pilot application suggests that the criteria have been well understood and the MS Excel based ToolKit has overall proven to be useful. The results from the pilot application show also some areas for improvement. First, as none of the assessed programmes has fulfilled all predefined minimum criteria one may conclude that the configuration of the Open ECBCheck Quality Criteria is so far very demanding. Thus, the configuration of minimum and excellence criteria needs to be reviewed if all criteria that have been defined as minimum are really this crucial or if some of the minimum criteria should possibly be changed into Excellence criteria within the criteria catalogues. Secondly, the rating rules for minimum and excellence criteria have not been applied correctly in all cases. Some organisations used the scale for Excellence criteria from 0 = not realised to 3 = realised excellently as well for minimum criteria. To assist organisations in the use of the ToolKit, input fields have been edited and now contain a drop down menu that allows only choosing ratings from the appropriate scale.

5.4.2 Quality Criteria for Programme Certification

This chapter provides an overview of the areas that are covered by the programme/course quality criteria of Open ECBCheck that are divided into seven main areas (for an overview, please refer to table 2).

The first area, Information About and Organisation of the e-Learning Programme, is concerned with the basic information that is provided about the programme for learners as well as the general programme organisation and qualification of staff. It is important that (potential) participants are well informed about a programme to be able to on the one hand choose the right programme on the other hand to allow for a good orientation. Thus, participants need information on learning methods and forms, intended learning outcomes, contact persons as well as requirements in terms of connection and computer configuration. Connected to this is a realistic time schedule and workload of a programme ensuring that no participant is overburdened. Furthermore, an appropriate staff qualification is required to ensure that the programme is delivered in high quality.

The second area Target Group Orientation highlights the importance to include the learners perspective at all times, while developing, running and evaluating/improving a programme or course. First, a programme needs to reflect the requirements of the target group (stakeholders and more importantly participants) and to achieve this, stakeholders need to be involved within the development process. Secondly, during the programme duration, learners need to be supported by counselling services, attention to low achievers as well as complaints management to be able to achieve the best possible learning.
experience. Finally, it is vital to include evaluation results from earlier programmes to improve the programme according to participants needs.

The third area Quality of the Contents is concerned with the quality of provided materials including a gender/diversity perspective on the provided content. If content is to be professionally balanced and corresponds to the current state-of-the-art in science, it is important to apply principles/guidelines for content development. Furthermore, gender aspects and cultural differences need to be taken into account. To achieve excellent quality it is also important that a programme offers the possibility for self directed learning through the content.

The fourth area, Didactical Design, focuses on the quality of the learning experience based on the general learning design, the question on how learning materials support learners, the quality of eTutoring (learner support) as well as how assignments and exams are designed and used within the programme or course. Here it is important to note that there is no didactical design that guarantees learner success or quality in all cases but it needs to be considered which kind of didactical design supports the programme specific learner needs and learning objectives best. Accordingly, the criteria do not propose one design but demand that the didactical design needs to reflect the learning objectives, is adequate for the target group, requires networked thinking, supports motivation of participants and supports the aspired social learning goals. Furthermore, the sequence of self-learning, online-learning and presence phases needs to be meaningful for the programme’s design. Another crucial area for success of e-Learning programmes is the availability and quality of eTutoring for optimal learner support. Learners should receive regular feedback from eTutors that possess the necessary educational qualifications. Furthermore, this area highlights the importance of collaborative learning and demands an explicit and didactically justified use of collaborative learning forms. Finally, it is vital to include assignments and exams to allow students for a regular self-assessment of their achievements and to monitor participants’ progress to identify possible weaknesses where support is needed.

The criteria for Media Design focus on accessibility and usability of the media provided to learners. This is important to on the one hand ensure that as many people as possible are able to access and on the other hand to ensure the ease of use of the learning environment. Of interest in this area are, among others, navigation support, and structure of pages/media.

The area Technology: Equipment & Infrastructure is concerned with the question on how technology supports an optimal learning experience, also including the reliability of all systems that are used. Within this field, the requirement that the chosen technology needs to be flexible and is able to support different learning scenarios is the most crucial. This is important with regard to the didactical design that needs to correspond to learners’ needs and thus, technology needs to act as an enabler and not as a limiting factor. Additionally, accessibility from different platforms, stability and optimisation of download speed are included within this field.

The last area, Evaluation & Review, comprises all factors that ensure a continuous improvement of a programme or course as well as the review on whether learners have met the desired learning outcomes. It is considered of importance that learner achievements are regularly assessed through assignments and exams. This serves on the one hand the purpose to allow learners to assess their strengths and weaknesses and on the other hand allows finding out when students need extra support or a programme has to be improved to suit learners’ requirements better. Furthermore, it is considered crucial that the organisation has an evaluation plan in use for a programme to support continuous improvement. A regular review of instructional materials is considered vital as well.
### Table 2 Overview of Criteria for Programmes and Courses

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<th>Areas</th>
<th>Sum</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Excellence</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Information about and organisation of the e-Learning Programme</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A.1 General description, objectives and programme organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>A.2 Technical and organisational requirements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>B Target Group Orientation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>B.1 Target Group Orientation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td><strong>C Quality of the Contents</strong></td>
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<td>C.1 Quality of the Contents</td>
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<td>Sum</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>D Didactical Design</strong></td>
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<td>D.1 General Learning Design</td>
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<td>D.2 Motivation</td>
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<tr>
<td>D.3 Learning Materials</td>
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<tr>
<td>D.5 Collaborative Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>D.6 Assignments &amp; Learning Progress</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>D.7 Exams</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E Media Design</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.1 Media Design</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>F Technology</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F.1 Technology</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>G Evaluation &amp; Review</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.1 Evaluation &amp; Review</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>55</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A detailed list of all quality criteria for programmes and courses can be found in Annex 7. Every criterion is listed including a more detailed description for a better understanding, guidance on how this criterion can be evaluated as well as suggestions on how to meet this criterion could be documented. Furthermore, it is stated if a criterion is also relevant for courses and if it is a minimum or excellence criterion in the standard configuration that is used for the process of awarding a label.

5.4.3 Quality Criteria for Institutional Certification

This chapter provides an overview of the areas that are covered by the programme/course quality criteria of Open ECBCheck that are divided into three main areas being characterised in this chapter (for an overview, please refer to table 3).

The area Education & Learning is concerned with the quality of factors that are directly connected with the learning experience of the learner including the resources that can be used by learners, how learners are supported by the organisation through staff and services, qualification and information of staff as well as the participation of learners/target group orientation in development of programmes or courses. An overview on the areas and number of corresponding criteria is provided in table 2. Criteria in this area stress the importance of including stakeholders and more importantly participants to achieve quality, beginning with a needs assessment and participation of learners as a foundation for the development of programmes or courses continuing with processes for monitoring learning progress to be able to react to participant’s needs during programmes up to the evaluation of the participants learning experience to allow for further improvement of the programme during and in the end of a programme. It is furthermore considered important for the context of Capacity Building to support students in acquiring the necessary ICT skills to take part in an educational offer. Besides, learning support services are crucial in this field, including possibilities for communication among students and staff, technical and pedagogical support to students, an optimal learning environment as well as clear procedures for dealing with complaints. Besides the support for participants this area highlights the importance to provide support to staff to deliver better quality. Staff needs to be qualified and given opportunities for professional development and technical support needs to be available. Furthermore, it is considered that design and delivery guidelines are available as reference. Regarding the learning resources, it is considered significant to base learning resources on a pedagogical model and to apply content quality standards as well as to introduce procedures for tests and regular updates for all resources.

The second area, Organisational Strategy & Innovation is concerned with how quality of e-Learning and e-Learning itself are embedded into or represented in the institution’s strategy and on how innovation is fostered. It is considered important that e-Learning is at least present within mission statements or strategic documents of an organisation if not being an integral part of the strategy. This idea is also supported by the assumption that rather organisations on a potential orientation level (see chapter 2.4.2) are seeking for a certification on institutional level. E-Learning is in this case used to change/innovate/improve educational practice. Additionally it is highlighted that the organisation has to have on the one hand a policy in place for educational quality, a clear definition of successful education as a foundation and on the other hand has to have processes in place that ensure the continuous transfer of evaluation results are into teaching or management practice. In terms of innovation, the existence of procedures for Intellectual Property Rights and Copyrights are considered crucial.

The third area Organisational Processes focuses on the quality and documentation of all processes (organisational processes as well as processes for development of e-Learning programmes/courses) of an organisation that are related to e-Learning. In this area it is considered of importance that an organisation has clearly defined and documented processes and procedures in all areas that are related to e-Learning to allow for a constant quality of services. This is connected to the requirement, that all staff that is involved within e-Learning has clearly defined roles and responsibilities that are transparent and thus documented.

The last area, Technology: Equipment & Infrastructure is concerned with the question on how technology supports an optimal learning experience, including the reliability of all systems (e.g. backup) as well as data security. This area stresses that ICTs employed by an organisation are a means to support an optimal learning experience of participants and thus need to be on the one hand reliable and secure and on the other hand flexible enough to allow for multiple didactical scenarios to be able to react to students needs. Furthermore, the learning system needs to correspond to usability requirements of learners.
### Table 3 Overview of Criteria for Institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>Minimum Criteria</th>
<th>Excellence Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Education &amp; Learning</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.1 Students’ Learning Experience</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.2 Learning Support Services</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.3 Staff (Teachers, Tutors, Facilitators)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.4 Learning Resources</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sum</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B Organisational Strategies &amp; Innovation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.1 Strategy (eLearning &amp; IPR)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.2 Commitment to Innovation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.3 Openness to the Community</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sum</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C Organisational Processes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.1 Organisational Processes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sum</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>0</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D Technology: Equipment &amp; Infrastructure</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.1 Technology: Equipment &amp; Infrastructure</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sum</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>33</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A detailed overview of the quality criteria for institutions can be found in Annex 8. Every criterion for institutions is listed including a more detailed description for a better understanding, guidance how this criterion can be evaluated as well as suggestions how meeting this criterion could be documented. Furthermore, it is stated whether it is a minimum or excellence criterion in the standard configuration that is used for the certification process.
6. FINAL CONCLUSIONS

This book conceptualised a quality label for e-Learning in Capacity Building to foster the application of e-Learning in this field as suggested by a recent study. Because of the distinct characteristics of the community of Capacity Building Organisations it was assumed that none of the existing approaches for quality management or certification can be applied one-to-one to this context. However, the chosen methodology for the development of a quality label valued existing approaches through an analysis of selected current state-of-the-art quality labels or certificates that were adopted and adapted against the requirements. These were derived by this book through an analysis of state-of-the-art theory, research and terminology (chapter 2) a subsequent study based on a questionnaire and follow-up expert interviews (chapter 3) and systematised in two domains, the architecture of the label and, more crucially, the governance system and processes. The following analysis of EFMD CEL, UNIQUe, D-ELAN DELZert and ISO/IEC 19796-1 (chapter 4) confirmed the assumption, that the studied approaches offer valuable best practice insights but cannot be used one-to-one in the context of Capacity Building as they do not meet all requirements. The quality label (chapter 5) was, based on the requirements, conceptualised as an open, community and learning based approach of mutual recognition of quality with representation of Capacity Building Organisations to ensure high acceptance. This community allows for access to guidelines and tools and learning from each other in benchmarking and benchmarking processes. To avoid interest conflicts, the different acting bodies of Open ECBCheck were clearly identified and separated from each other. The certification process was especially designed as a learning activity and comprises extensive self-assessment as well as a peer-review of a self-assessment report as methods for quality evaluation and validation. Organisations are not only provided with feedback on the self-assessment but also with a learning report that highlights areas for future improvement. These methods, together with the exchange of peer-review services between the members, ensure also that the demand for a low cost label is met. The quality criteria frameworks for both institutional and programme quality with minimum and excellence criteria allow for a broad coverage of activities. A pilot application of the quality criteria and self-assessment Toolkit provided an in general positive feedback from the target group including suggestions for improvement. Further research is suggested to evaluate how well Open ECBCheck supports Capacity Building Organisations in practice.


Deutsches Netzwerk der E-Learning Akteure e.V. (D-ELAN) (n. d.): Qualitätsplattform Lernen vorgelegt vom D-ELAN Fachausschuss Qualität.


Annex 1: Declaration of Intent for organisations wanting to join the Open ECBCheck Community

Open ECBCheck Declaration of Intent

Open ECBCheck is a professional community of organisations interested in quality development in the field of e-Learning for Capacity Building that offers its members an environment in which they can professionalise their quality practices up to the point of certification of their programmes or even their whole institution. To become a member it is necessary to agree to the following declaration of intent.

We, the authorised representatives of [Name of Organisation] declare our intent to work together with the Open ECBCheck community to achieve quality improvements within the application of e-Learning in the field of Capacity Building. In this context, we

• state the intent of our organisation to become a member in the Open ECBCheck community.
• confirm that the concept of Open ECBCheck as been presented to and approved by the senior management of or organisation and that a membership is supported from within the organisation.
• state the intent of our organisation to get actively involved into exchange of best practice, experience and tools within the community of Capacity Building Organisations.
• commit ourselves support another organisation within the peer-review by providing peer-review capacity if our organisation successfully receives the Open ECBCheck certification for a programme/course or the whole institution.

Annex 2: Quality Criteria for Programmes/Courses

See: http://www.ecb-check.org

Annex 3: Quality Criteria for Institutions

See: http://www.ecb-check.org
Annex 4: Eligibility Application for a certification process

Open ECBCheck Eligibility Application Form

To be eligible to begin with the Open ECBCheck certification process for either a programme/course or the full institution, an organisation needs to demonstrate that the prerequisites for an certification process are fulfilled. To support the decision on eligibility an organisation is required to fill in the following application form and return it to the Open ECBCheck Administrative Office.

1 Information on applying organisation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name and address of the organisation</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name, function and contact details of staff responsible for the submitted application. These contact details will be used for communication during the certification process.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certification is sought on ...</td>
<td>Programme/course level (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of application</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 Application for Certification on Programme or Course Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic information on the programme or course</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of the programme/course that is sought to be certified</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name and contact details of the person in charge of the programme/course.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year the programme/course has been run/published the first time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of times the programme has been running</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of the programme in total (months)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of participants actively taking part in the programme or number of users of a course</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligibility of the programme or course</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the programme/course used within the field of Capacity Building (yes/no)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many hours of total participant learning effort are required to complete the educational offer? (&gt;100 programme criteria apply, &lt;100 course criteria apply)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the programme or course technology enhanced, thus using either interactive media or computer supported collaboration for more than 20% of the overall duration? yes</td>
<td>Please describe the methods that are used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has the programme run before? yes</td>
<td>How many times?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 2 Application for Certification on Institutional Level

### Eligibility of the institution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The institution needs to support at least 20% of their programmes/courses with technology, thus using either interactive media or computer supported collaboration</th>
<th>Number of programmes/courses in total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of these that are technology supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total number of participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total number of participants in technology supported courses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Scope of activities of the institution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information and communication technologies used to support learners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### IS which areas are information and communication technologies used to support learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrollment and administrative procedures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information and guidance on the organisation’s offers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production of learning materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery of lectures or materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring and support of participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration/interaction between students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration between staff and contractors and partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration/interaction between participants and staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment of participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection of feedback from participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Is the use of information and communication technologies for learning integrated within the strategy of the organization (please describe)?

### Does an specialised e-Learning strategy exist (please describe)?
Annex 5: Peer-Review Guideline for mutual peer-review of organisations’ self-assessments

Open ECBCheck Peer-Review Guideline

1 Introduction

The Open ECBCheck Peer-Review Guideline is designed to assist the peer-review process and provides information on the significance of the peer-review within the certification process of Open ECBCheck, on the peer-review process itself and on the method how to analyse the provided self-assessment data and proof for a programme or institution that would like to receive the Open ECBCheck label.

2 Relevance of Peer-review within Open ECBCheck

The peer-review of the self-assessment as well as the provided proof is of central significance within the Open ECBCheck certification process. The peer-review serves three main targets:

- First, the peer-review provides the candidate organisation with a feedback on the self-assessment and provided proof including clarity of information, comprehensiveness of information as well as validity of the rating.
- Secondly, the peer-review will lead to an overall appraisal and recommendation for certification of the candidate programme or institution that is provided to the Awarding Body and included within the decision process.
- Thirdly, the peer-review is important to provide the organisation with a learning opportunity based on the peers’ experience and suggestions. During the peer-review, a number of possibilities for improvement will be identified. These improvement possibilities are enriched with suggestions and included in a learning report.

Hence, it is important that the peer-review is conducted thorough, fair and valuing the achievements of an organisation. Furthermore, areas of improvement need to be elaborated together with suggestions for future improvements.

3 Process of peer-review

The process of peer-review within the Open ECBCheck framework has four main steps:

1) Appointment of peer-reviewers

The Open ECBCheck Administrative Office appoints two peer-reviewers for a peer-review that are chosen from organisations that have prior completed the certification process. Peer-reviewers that may have interest conflicts within the process are required to announce this to the Administrative office and to withdraw from the process.

2) Provision of self-assessment data and deadline

The Open ECBCheck Administrative Office provides the peer-reviewers with the filled in ToolKit that includes the self-assessment as well as all proof documents that have been added by the organisation. Furthermore, the Administrative Office defines a deadline for the peer-review results to be returned.

3) Peer-review

After the materials have been received, the peer-review itself is conducted (please refer to chapter 4 for a more detailed description of the method). If the information provided by the organisation is not comprehensible the peer-reviewers may ask for a revision of the material through the Open ECBCheck Administrative Office.

4) Preparation of peer-review report

After the review is completed, the peer-reviewers prepare the peer-review report that consists of the reviewed ToolKit, an overall appraisal and recommendation for certification as well as the learning report. All these documents need to be forwarded to the attention of the Open ECBCheck Administration Office within the defined time frame.
4 Method of peer-review

The foundation for the peer-review is provided by an evidence based self-assessment where an organisation assesses and rates to which extent the quality criteria have been met and also provides the necessary evidence through documents. These may, for instance, be protocols, concept papers or brochures describing a programme or institution.

The peer-review assesses the self-assessment provided by the organisation and not the institution or a programme itself. Three criteria need to be satisfied for a positive result of the peer-review: clarity of provided information, comprehensiveness of provided information and validity.

- Clarity of information relates to the question, if the provided information on a criterion is clearly understandable.
- Comprehensiveness relates to the question if all necessary information has been included to back up the rating of a criterion within the self-assessment.
- And finally, validity is related to the question, if the rating of a criterion is appropriate in light of the provided proof in form of documents.

Each criterion within the Self-assessment questionnaire is assessed in light of these criteria including the provided proof documents. During the assessment, it is on the one hand assessed, if the rating within the self-assessment is reasonable or not. This is documented in the column “Evaluation Results after Peer-Review” within the Self-assessment questionnaire and any remarks on the rating or provided proof are added in the column “Peer-Review Comments”. Furthermore, the peer-review team needs to prepare an overall appraisal and recommendation for certification (template can be found in chapter 6.1).

5 Peer-review report

After the peer-review is finished, the following documents need to be provided to the Open ECBCheck Administrative Office:

1) The Self-assessment questionnaire that contains all Peer-Review Comments as well as the Evaluation Results that have probably been adjusted.

2) Overall appraisal and recommendation for certification

Following the peer-review based on the provided data and their professional experience, the peer-review team is required to prepare an overall comment/evaluation of their findings and make a final recommendation as regards the suitability of the candidate programme or institution to be certified. This report is a single, consolidated document, which incorporates jointly, the judgments and considerations of both peer-reviewers. A template is provided in chapter 6.1.

3) Learning Report

The learning report is supposed to provide the organisation with concrete possibilities to improve the programme or the institution that have been subject to self-assessment and peer-review. For each area of possible improvements the following information has to be provided: the Open ECBCheck criterion that is related, the current situation, a scenario or vision how the future situation should look like and suggestions how this improvement may be achieved. A template can be found in chapter 6.2.

6 Tools

6.1 Overall appraisal and recommendation for certification

Following the peer-review based on the provided data and their professional experience, the peer-review team is required to prepare an overall comment/evaluation of their findings and make a final recommendation as regards the suitability of the candidate programme or institution to be certified. This report is a single, consolidated document, which incorporates jointly, the judgments and considerations of both peer-reviewers. The lengths of the appraisal and recommendation can be estimated by the size of the corresponding template boxes.
Overall appraisal and key notes by the peer-review team:


Remarkation for certification by the peer-review team:
6.2 Learning Report Template

The learning report is supposed to provide the organisation with concrete possibilities to improve the programme or the institution that have been subject to self-assessment and peer-review. For each area of possible improvements the following information has to be provided: the Open ECBCheck criterion that is related, the current situation, a scenario or vision how the intended situation should or could look like and key actions how this improvement may be achieved.

The learning report then consists of an introduction agreed on jointly by both peer-reviewers that concludes briefly on the main areas for improvement and a number of concrete suggestions that each follow this template:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nr.</th>
<th>Related Open ECBCheck Criterion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Current Situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intended Situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Key actions for improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AG</td>
<td>Aktiengesellschaft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVU</td>
<td>African Virtual University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD-ROM</td>
<td>Compact Disc Read-Only Memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIDA</td>
<td>Canadian International Development Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COL</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DELAN</td>
<td>Deutsches Netzwerk der E-Learning Akteure e.V.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DELZert</td>
<td>Deutsche E-Learning Zertifizierungsgesellschaft GbR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFQM</td>
<td>The European Foundation for Quality Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFMD</td>
<td>The European Foundation for Management Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFMD CEL</td>
<td>EFMD TeChnology-Enhanced Learning accreditation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g.</td>
<td>for example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>et al.</td>
<td>et alii (and others)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. V.</td>
<td>eingetragener Verein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAO</td>
<td>Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GbR</td>
<td>Gesellschaft bürgerlichen Rechts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gGmbH</td>
<td>gemeinnützige Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GO</td>
<td>Governmental Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GTZ</td>
<td>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and Communication Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IEC</td>
<td>International Electrotechnical Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILT</td>
<td>International Leadership Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMARK</td>
<td>Information Management Resource Kit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>InWEnt</td>
<td>Internationale Weiterbildung und Entwicklung gGmbH/Capacity Building International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISO</td>
<td>Organization for Standardization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISCED</td>
<td>International Standard Classification of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITU</td>
<td>International Telecommunication Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KfW</td>
<td>KfW Bankengruppe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KM4Dev</td>
<td>Knowledge Management for Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LQW</td>
<td>Lernerorientierte Qualität in der Bildung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDGs</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS</td>
<td>Microsoft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n. a.</td>
<td>no author</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n. d.</td>
<td>no date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non-governmental Organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OED</td>
<td>Operations Evaluation Department of World Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODA</td>
<td>Overseas Development Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODE</td>
<td>Open and Distance Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<td>ZEF</td>
<td>Center for Development Research, University of Bonn/Zentrum für Entwicklungsforschung, Universität Bonn</td>
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