



Newsletter n°8 – Special issue: Greece



Last phase for the QualiCert Project

As already seen in the previous country-specific issues of the QualiCert newsletters, the project is entering the last phase of its activities and a series of so-called **implementation workshops** will be organised in order to make sure a common approach for certification/equivalent qualification of RES installers be adopted in each of the 5 countries initially tackled by the project (i.e. Austria, France, Greece, Italy and Poland). Examples on how it could be possible to do so are given by the QualiCert recommendations which will be presented once more during these events.

In order to provide our QualiCert readers with an overview of the status of certification/equivalent qualification of RES installers in the countries that will host implementation workshops, a series of country-related special issues of the QualiCert newsletter will be published before each event.

The three issues presented the situation in Italy, Poland and France, respectively.

This number is meant to give insights on the **Greek state of the art**.

Enjoy your reading...

...and do not forget visit the [QualiCert website](#) should you have missed the previous issues!



Still have to read the QualiCert Manual?

Click [here](#) to download it!

What is QualiCert about?

QualiCert stands for “Common approach for certification or equivalent qualification of installers of small-scale renewable energy systems in buildings”. The project started in July 2009.

QualiCert was launched in anticipation of the implementation of Article 14 of the Directive on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources (2009/28/EC), obliging Member States to develop and mutually recognize certification or equivalent qualification schemes for installers of small-scale renewable energy systems (e.g. biomass boilers and stoves, solar photovoltaic and solar thermal systems, shallow geothermal systems and heat pumps) by December 2012.

The project has identified a number of key-success criteria that should be taken into account when designing a certification or equivalent qualification system. Any certification or equivalent qualification scheme needs to be embedded in the national training and quality framework of the Member State. Therefore, the development of one European scheme that could be applied to all EU Member States is inappropriate.

The approach taken by this project is in line with the requirement of Art. 14 of the European RES Directive asking Member States to provide such schemes by 31st December 2012. The project involves the national stakeholders of 5 core countries (Austria, France, Greece, Italy and Poland), the other EU Member States being involved through a wide dissemination activity.

Greece: where we stand with certification/equivalent qualification of RES installers

Status of professional installers

A number of professions in Greece, among which some of the technical ones (e.g. carpenters, smiths, welders, etc.), do not require either a work permit or vocational training background/“credentials”.

For some professions formal training exists (e.g. in the tourist sector), while for others either empirical learning or informal training is usually applied. Of course, many companies ask for certifications or work permits, mainly for the professions/specialties that their holders undertake critical work tasks (e.g. electricians, machine operators, etc.).

In the cases that no statutory professional license is required, then the ad-hoc ascertainment (provided e.g. by managers of companies) of the knowledge and prowess adequacy, irrespective of their origin and without asking for a diploma, is usually enough. It is worth mentioning that, since 2000 there is a certain process for a technician to obtain various types of a ‘Work Permit’ and to become assistant technician, technician of certain class (A & B), and installations technician of Class A and B.

Key findings regarding the Greek situation

Each manufacturer and/or importer of RE systems or any other kind of equipment or systems possesses its own group of installers for installing its own equipment. Also no specialized in the installation of RETs companies currently exists in Greece.

Most of private companies instruct recruits within the company or re-train the existing employees mainly in the issues they should be familiar with, in order to meet their daily obligations (mostly using internal trainers). Companies’ employees have the opportunity to participate in training programs of the continuing vocational training type, which are usually financed by bodies outside the company.

Continuing Vocational Training, by which the “life-long learning” of the productive human resources is meant, is provided by vocational training centres (KEK). These structures are usually interested in training programs that lead to a certification or equivalent qualification; they don’t need accreditation of structures or trainers, as they are operating and monitored according to the rules set out by the Greek State (they have to be accredited by the National Accreditation Centre for Continuing Vocational Training - EKEPIS).

Another possibility is the courses for the small scale RES systems installers to form part – in a longer term perspective – of the official curricula of the Vocational Training Institutes (IEKs), which are the structures that provide formal VET in Greece (1st cycle of specialization that provides basic knowledge and skills for preparing the entrants to the labour market). IEKs are functioning under the auspices of the National Organization for the Certification of Qualifications (EOPP). One of the 145 specialties officially approved by EOPP for IEKs curricula is/was the “Renewable Energy applications technician”, which is however not offered by any IEK up to now!

Another important information is that there is currently ongoing a procedure carried out by EKEPIS for defining and accrediting the *job profiles* of various professions. In these profiles the exact pre-requisites for being e.g. an installer of RES systems will be clearly defined, including the training ones. This is the only “official” procedure for doing that!

However, the most important info of the last days is that, in November 2011, EKEPIS, EOPP and the National Centre for Vocational Guidance (EKEP) are merged into a single entity, EOPPEP, the National Organisation for Accreditation of Qualifications & Vocational Guidance, under the supervision of the Minister of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs. This is expected to simplify a lot the certification of persons’ procedure, as many overlaps of jurisdictions will cease to exist.

Barriers identified

- Problem 1: To persuade the existing installers / technicians that their certification in a “new” field will be of added value for both themselves and the society. Up to now their associations are strongly opposed to any new way of proving their skills, although they agree that the existing system of issuing work permits should be changed and are very positive in training of their members in new technologies / techniques in their field of activity!
- Problem 2: The RES systems manufacturers and other companies in the field are afraid that the “surveillance” (i.e. audits) and “re-certification” procedures will mean some “costs” that will be transferred to the «final product» (and the clients).
- Problem 3: The authority responsible for the transposition of RED into the Greek legislation is the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change. But, the authority responsible for issues related to certification of qualifications, vocational education & training, and lifelong learning is the Ministry of Education and Lifelong Learning. These two authorities have to form asap Committee(s) for implementing Article 14 of the RED!

More information on the situation in Greece was given during the Greek Implementation workshop, on the 2nd December 2011 in Athens.

The QualiCert implementation workshops

Italy: 11th November 2011, in Rome

Poland: 23rd November 2011, in Poznan

France: 1st December 2011, in Paris

Greece: 2nd December 2011, in Athens



Save the date: Launch Meeting for Geotrainet European Education Board on 15/2/2012, in Brussels

EGEC wishes to inform you about the current status and next steps of the shallow geothermal training program which is under development as an outcome of the Geotrainet project supported by the EC in the ALTENER framework. The project ended with a final conference in January this year, on which occasion a definite need for training and for a common European training framework was confirmed.

As a first step for establishing such a framework, a workshop was held on 14 October 2011 in Brussels. The workshop produced a roadmap for setting up a Geotrainet follow up program. EGEC, in partnership with EFG, is following that part and invites you to join in.

On behalf of EGEC and the Geotrainet preparatory group, we invite you to study the roadmap and next steps, to prepare your contribution by discussing and selecting representative organizations and persons in your country, and to schedule your participation in the meeting on 15 February 2012 in Brussels (Renewable Energy House). Please indicate your interest by emailing: com@egec.org