



European
**drug prevention
quality standards**

Phase II

European drug prevention quality standards

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Needs Assessment
Summary Report and
Toolkit Development Plan



With financial support from the Drug Prevention
and Information Programme of the European Union

Introduction

The Manual on the European Drug Prevention Quality Standards (EDPQS), published by European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) in 2011, was the major outcome of Phase I of the EDPQS Project. It provides a rich and comprehensive explanation of quality standards for drug prevention activities as proposed by the European Prevention Standards Partnership. One of the major outcomes from the work of the current EDPQS Phase II Project is the writing and production of toolkits that will help to promote the application of the quality standards by those who have responsibility for developing, undertaking, supporting or funding prevention work. The necessity to provide support material that would allow the Manual to be accessible and for quality standards to be applied appropriately by different agents of prevention was always anticipated. The development of toolkits to facilitate this is the focus of the Phase II work of the Project.

Before developing the toolkits, it was important to consult with key people and organisations, particularly from the Partnership countries but also internationally, to obtain their views and needs about what would be the best way forward for the proposed EDPQS toolkits. The Partnership therefore undertook two pieces of work to inform the development:



Online survey

An **online survey** which consulted a range of people working within the prevention field. This included policy makers, commissioners, programme managers, programme developers, researchers and evaluators, as well as trainers and practitioners. It addressed the general issue of quality standards as well as more specific feedback on the European Drug Prevention Quality Standards. The survey also focussed on seeking information as to the priority target groups for the proposed toolkits; the key priority areas for content; and the most desirable formats for providing the content to ensure they would be relevant, accessible and used.



Discussion groups

A **series of discussion** groups with a smaller group of people active in the prevention field but also with a wide range of responsibilities. This ranged from policy makers to practitioners who provided further in-depth input on the particular issues of: priority target groups; key content areas; dissemination and format; and to help identify other key issues that might help to promote both the uptake of the toolkits and the inclusion of quality standards within the field of drug prevention.

The online survey

The online survey was undertaken by eight members of the European Prevention Standards Partnership in Austria, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy (two regions), Poland and UK.

In total, 505 individuals completed the survey. At a country level, participant numbers ranged from 49 respondents (in Hungary) to 90 respondents (in Greece). Although most respondents were from the seven project partner countries undertaking the survey, there were also 60 respondents from other countries within and outside Europe. In total, respondents from over 30 countries participated in the survey.

The majority of respondents self-identified as working in the areas of health, education, youth and/or drug-focussed issues. A few respondents worked in the area of criminal justice (law enforcement, prison, justice). Most respondents (44%) self-identified as being trainers (defined as “those delivering training on drug prevention issues”). Overall, the respondent sample appeared to represent those working directly in the field or related disciplines.

A full report on the online survey is available upon request. The following offers a very brief summary of some of the major findings.

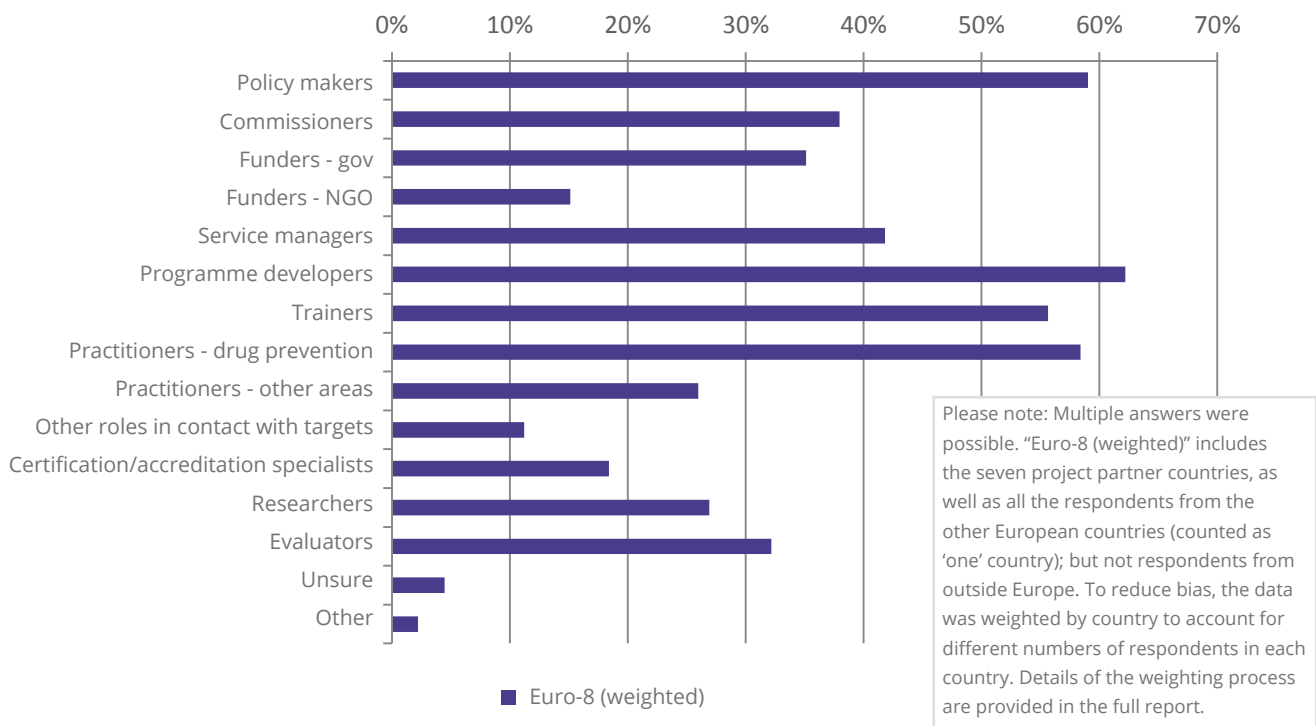
With respect to providing guidance on the development of the toolkits or support materials three focus areas of support were identified:

- Guidance on how to informally/formally review activities using the EDPQS
- Guidance on how to plan/design prevention activities using the EDPQS
- Guidance on how to deliver workshops/training on the standards.

As shown in the figure below, the main **target groups** were identified as:

- Policy makers;
- Programme developers;
- Trainers; and
- Practitioners with a focus on drug prevention.

In your view, who would benefit the most from support materials in your country?



The preferred format of the toolkits:

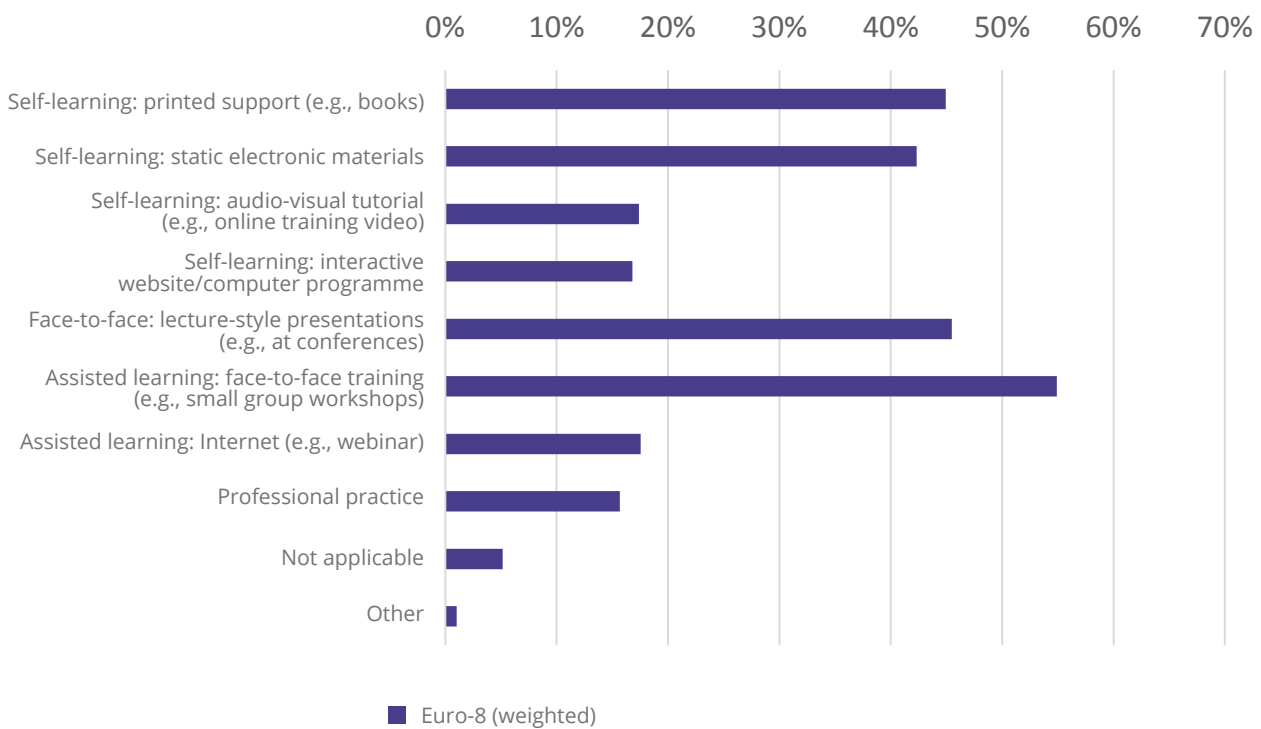
- Clear (simple language)
- Concise (quick to read)
- Easy-to-use (practice orientated)
- Available in respondents' own language

The following methods to engage people were proposed:

- Small group workshops
- Self-learning using printed and static electronic materials (e.g., books, journal articles, static websites)
- Face-to-face lecture-style presentations
- Format not to be limited to 'electronic or print'
- Accessible information in the form of checklists, quick guides, leaflets, brochures tailored to key target audiences.

The following chart illustrates the preferred formats/methods for the toolkits.

What would be your preferred method to learn about the EDPQS?



Survey participants also had the opportunity to provide general comments about the topics addressed in the survey. The following offers a sample of interesting comments from different countries (translations were provided by project partners as applicable):

“ Appropriate use of the standards (considering cost / benefit ratio) **(Austria)**

“ To develop professional practice, ambitious efforts are required to transfer knowledge. Authorities must fund the dissemination of standards and a real supportive system. Ideally, standards should be discussed in cross-institutional arenas and supported by local champions/ referents. The standards should be validated and promoted by drug prevention policy bodies and by agencies involved in promoting quality in health interventions. **(France)**

“ Prevention agencies need to be equipped with practical tools for evaluating their doings and for promoting their work in the community and to stakeholders. Yet, no consistent top-down effort has been made to that direction. **(Greece)**

“ We should achieve that the policy/decision makers in the field working in important positions are committed to up-to-date, scientifically grounded, and most of all democratic and pluralist policy approaches. **(Hungary)**

“ Presentation of experiences in which the standards have been used successfully, but also in ‘critical’ situations in order to learn from experience on which are things to avoid. **(Italy)**

- “ In my opinion, emphasis should be placed on disseminating the standards and highlighting their importance at local and regional level, particularly among decision-makers responsible for funding prevention work at local government level. Although at national level the EDPQS are clearly noticeable, the local level misses comprehensible information on the EDPQS for people responsible for planning, financing and implementing drug prevention work. There should be more information in the form of leaflets, brochures which would promote manuals and finding out more about the subject. **(Poland)**
- “ Ensure they are accessible (in terms of technology, understanding, time and resources required) to people working on the ground. **(United Kingdom)**
- “ There are big differences, not only between countries in Europe but also between people working in different fields of drug prevention and between people working for big or very small (grass root) organisations. This last group is difficult to convince and explain the value of working with these kind of standards. The supporting materials should be practice based, easy to use and it should be possible to use them in a ‘flexible way’. **(Other European Countries)**
- “ Training of trainers; just in time support to implementers on topics ranging from selection, adoption, adaptation implementation, evaluation, etc.; clear practice manuals with back-up/practice information such as written vignettes or videos; evaluation support that provides National, regional and/or local archival data on risk and protective factors; connection to program developers and researcher; etc **(Countries outside Europe)**

Discussion Groups

The discussion groups were undertaken by the same eight Partners from seven of the participating countries. The groups were convened to inform the development of toolkits to support uptake of the EDPQS. Sixteen groups were involved in the discussions, normally two in each country. In total, 151 individuals participated in the discussion groups, including policy makers, practitioners, researchers and other professionals with a stake in drug prevention.

A synthesis of the country reports on the work and outcomes from the discussion groups is available upon request. The following is a very brief summary of some of the findings from the discussion groups.

The findings of the discussion groups confirmed and deepened the results gained through the earlier online survey. The feedback informed the proposed content of the toolkits along with other helpful comments and suggestions.

For example, a list of recommendations to be addressed to **promote optimum use** of the toolkits emanated from the groups:

- ✓ Involve stakeholders in toolkit development
- ✓ Be clear on what EDPQS should be used for and how
- ✓ Make materials user-friendly and attractive
- ✓ Include additional information of interest to target audiences
- ✓ Emphasise practice orientation and practical applicability of EDPQS
- ✓ Highlight practical benefits of EDPQS
- ✓ Clarify resource implications (time, money) of using the EDPQS
- ✓ Offer endorsement and promotion of EDPQS by “opinion leaders” and “champions”
- ✓ Provide EDPQS as a “shared” tool, not a “top-down” instrument
- ✓ Embed in existing structures
- ✓ Offer training and support materials
- ✓ “Relentless” marketing.

With respect to **target groups** the following were proposed:

- ✓ Policy makers
- ✓ Funders (governmental, non-governmental)
- ✓ Commissioners
- ✓ School directors (head teachers)
- ✓ Local government
- ✓ Key stakeholders as EDPQS 'opinion leaders', 'champions', advocates or 'gatekeepers'
- ✓ Programme developers
- ✓ Service managers
- ✓ Trainers
- ✓ Practitioners with or without drug prevention focus
- ✓ School teachers delivering drug prevention/ education
- ✓ Certification/ accreditation specialists
- ✓ Researchers/ evaluators
- ✓ Young people and their parents; general public

Amongst the wealth of information provided by the groups, delegates made the following recommendations on how to make the **EDPQS readily understandable and usable**, which the Prevention Standards Partnership will use as a checklist during toolkit development:

Layout

- Materials need to be concise; key information should be presented in a 1 page overview
- The EDPQS could be broken up into smaller parts (e.g., as modules)
- To simplify the EDPQS, they should be translated into a list of essential key standards or principles
- Toolkits should provide 1 page checklists of key standards or principles that allow users to quickly understand if they are doing 'the right thing' and if not, how they can improve
- Use of pictures to make materials more appealing
- Professional layout

Language/contents

- Available in target audience's own language
- The language should be accessible to non-academics (clear, simple – but not simplistic)
- Toolkits should avoid referring to "programmes" and "interventions" (as this can be understood to refer to manualised, structured activities only) and focus on drug prevention key principles instead
- Materials should be tailored to target audiences (professional language, concepts/ideas, examples used)
- Right balance between too generic and too specific contents

Instructions/usage

- Clarity on what EDPQS/toolkits should be used for, by who and how; provide tutorials on how to use the toolkits
- Toolkits should provide easy-to-follow step-by-step instructions
- It should be possible to use toolkits independently of the EMCDDA Manual (i.e., without having to read or refer to it); this would be in contrast to already available checklists (e.g., the quick guide; Brotherhood & Sumnall 2013) which have been designed to be read in conjunction with the EMCDDA Manual
- Highlighting that, to start with, it is sufficient if activities are informed by the standards, even if it not (yet) possible to meet the EDPQS

Practical relevance

- Not too much theory
- Provide practical examples relevant to target audiences' everyday work
- Present only the standards that are most relevant to the target audience in question
- Easily adaptable to specific circumstances of the individual user
- Checklists and other tools that can be applied in practice
- Indicators should be connected with real objectives of prevention activities

Next steps: Toolkits under development

With the wealth of information provided through the needs assessment phase of the Project's work, it is proposed that there will be three toolkits developed by the Partnership. **The precise content and format of these three toolkits is still at the early stage of the development process as Partners collaborate to provide a workplan for each of the toolkits.** However, based on the information obtained the following toolkits are suggested to be developed (see overleaf).

The current phase of the project is to refine these initial plans and to produce detailed workplans that will form the basis of the development and writing work to be undertaken by the Partners. The development of the toolkits will commence in July 2014, with first drafts expected by September 2014. At all stages of the development, there will be consultation and collaboration of all nine Partners active within the Project as well as with the six Associate Partners.

It is also a feature of the development phase that there will be **active engagement with relevant stakeholders in each of the countries, as well as internationally, to request feedback and input to the work.** Many of these are people who have provided input to the survey and discussion groups in the needs assessment phase of the Project's work, although any member of the prevention community is welcome to contribute. To become a stakeholder in the development of the toolkits, please contact the EDPQS Project Manager Jeff Lee at j.t.lee@ljmu.ac.uk.

Once final drafts of the toolkit have been prepared, they will be piloted through training courses in Partner countries. The final toolkits are due to be published by April 2015. The challenge then, of course, will be to ensure that this work is sustained and the toolkits used and disseminated within Europe.

Proposed Toolkit #1

Draft title	Selecting programmes for funding and other support
Suggested target audience	<p>Funders / Policy makers</p> <p>Commissioners</p> <p>School head teachers</p>
Purpose	<p>Based on the EDPQS, this toolkit will support users to identify whether a project is worthy of (financial or other) support. For example:</p> <p>The toolkit could support funders to choose the best projects from a number of projects which have applied for grant money</p> <p>The toolkit could help commissioners to select the most appropriate programmes to meet local needs</p> <p>The toolkit could help school directors choose external providers to deliver prevention activities to school pupils</p> <p>The toolkit could help identify whether a project is considered worthy of general support and backing with resources other than money (e.g. formal endorsement)</p>
<u>Possible contents</u>	<p>Introduction to EDPQS and high quality prevention</p> <p>Introduction to effectiveness and evidence-based prevention</p> <p>Considerations around funding systems and programme selection</p> <p>How to determine what programmes are needed (i.e., introduction to needs assessment)</p> <p>How to select a programme/provider to fulfil the identified needs, based on evidencing achievement of the EDPQS</p>

Proposed Toolkit #2

Draft title	Quality Standards and self-improvement
Suggested target audience	<p>Programme developers</p> <p>Service managers</p> <p>Practitioners with or without drug prevention focus</p> <p>School teachers delivering drug prevention/ education</p> <p>(to a lesser extent) Researchers/ evaluators</p>
Purpose	<p>This toolkit will support users to review and improve their own prevention work, based upon the EDPQS. For example, the toolkit could support prevention programme developers to identify areas in their programmes which could be improved.</p>
<u>Possible</u> contents	<p>Introduction to high quality prevention and how EDPQS can support this; programme design; “what works” in prevention</p> <p>More detailed information about EDPQS standards (in comparison with the other toolkits)</p> <p>How to conduct self-review with the EDPQS (possibly using checklists to evidence achievement of the EDPQS)</p> <p>How to use EDPQS to identify areas for further development</p>

Proposed Toolkit #3

Draft title	Disseminating Quality Standards
Suggested target audience	<p>EDPQS ‘champions’ (i.e., individuals and organisations wishing to promote and disseminate the EDPQS in their region or among their networks)</p> <p>Those who have little time or require only general information about quality standards in prevention (e.g., policy makers, school teachers, general public)</p> <p>Trainers (including University teachers) who wish to include some information about EDPQS in existing courses</p>
Purpose	<p>This toolkit will support users to tell others about the EDPQS – and to use the EDPQS to share the vision of high quality prevention.</p> <p>This toolkit can be used to raise awareness about the importance of quality in prevention, and evidence based prevention in general.</p> <p>This toolkit can be used for advocacy work – to justify use of the EDPQS and evidence based prevention.</p>
<u>Possible contents</u>	<p>PowerPoint presentations which can be used to present information about EDPQS to others</p> <p>“One page summary” of EDPQS key principles, core components and why quality in prevention is important</p> <p>Position paper on prevention</p> <p>Adaptation guidelines on how to develop (national) quality standards based on EDPQS</p> <p>Materials to support general training on EDPQS (e.g., for use in seminars, workshops)</p>

For further information, including a list of all project partners, please see www.prevention-standards.eu or contact EDPQS Project Manager Jeff Lee at j.t.lee@ljmu.ac.uk.

July 2014

The title of this research project is "Promoting Excellence in Drug Prevention in the EU-Phase 2 of the EU Drug Prevention Quality Standards Project". The project receives financial support from the Drug Prevention and Information Programme (DPIP) of the European Union. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of the authors and can in no way be taken to reflect the official views of the European Commission or the project partner institutions.



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