Towards minimum quality criteria for mentoring-to-work programmes

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MENTORING TO WORK
TOWARDS EFFECTIVE AND QUALITATIVE MENTORING PRACTICES

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TOWARDS MINIMUM QUALITY CRITERIA FOR MENTORING-TO-WORK PROGRAMMES

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Labour market integration is considered a key indicator of migrants' success in a host country and a crucial step in terms of social integration (Konle-Seidl & Bolits, 2016; Newman *et al.*, 2018; Valtonen, 2001). At the same time, studies indicate that labour market integration is not an easy task (Eggenhofer-Rehart *et al.*, 2018; Hooper *et al.*, 2017). Data from Eurostat shows that in 2019, the labour market participation of non-EU born immigrants was ten percent lower than that of native-born populations in the EU-28 (64% versus 74%) In countries such as Germany, the Netherlands or Belgium, the employment gap is 15, 18 or 19% respectively (Eurostat, 2020). Although a variety of policies and programmes exist around the integration of migrants into the labour market, they do not seem to provide a sufficient answer to the many difficulties migrants face (see De Cuyper, 2019). In this context, it therefore seems necessary to develop new strategies and instruments to promote the integration of migrants into the labour market.

An increasingly popular yet out-of-the-box intervention in this context is 'mentoring-to-work'. Mentoring in itself is not new and comes in various different forms. Particularly in the Anglo-Saxon world, there is a long tradition of mentoring: mentoring for young people, mentoring in the work-place, mentoring in education, etc. Mentoring-to-work is a relatively new phenomenon and is mainly emerging in Europe and Canada. In France, like in Canada, mentoring-to-work has been around for a while. Specifically as a result of the refugee crisis (2015-2016), other European countries (Germany, Spain, Sweden and Belgium) have gradually developed further mentoring-to-work projects.

Mentoring-to-work can best be seen as an intercultural (and intercontextual) bridge between new-comers and a local labour market. It can be used for various target groups but, in the context of this paper, it means matching an immigrant job-seeker (mentee) and a volunteer who is familiar with the local labour market (mentor). The mentor helps the mentee in his or her search for employment.

The potential of mentoring-to-work is recognised at both national and international level. The OECD regularly mentions mentoring-to-work as a good practice for social and labour market integration (OECD, 2014).

Points of attention when developing mentoring-to-work

This increased interest in mentoring-to-work for migrants, however, also has a potential downside. It brings with it a multitude of initiatives that fall under the label of mentoring-to-work (e.g. job coaching, career guidance and job placement). Mentoring-to-work is thus in danger of becoming a catch-all term. This, in turn, risks losing the specificity of mentoring-to-work and the instrument's strength and credibility.

To clarify what mentoring-to-work is about, we defined the concept of mentoring-to-work on the basis of a literature review and consultation with practitioners. We thus formulated the following **definition** (De Cuyper & Vandermeerschen, 2018, p. 16):

> *A person with more experience (mentor) provides guidance to a less experienced person (mentee), with the aim of supporting the mentee to make sustainable progress towards/on the labour market. To this end, both mentor and mentee commit themselves voluntarily and have contact on a regular basis. The relationship is initiated, facilitated and supported by a third actor (organisation). Although asymmetrical, the mentoring relationship is reciprocal in nature.*

Apart from the need for a clear definition of mentoring-to-work, it is also important that it is implemented in a qualitative way. An exploratory study by Vandermeerschen and De Cuyper (2018) evaluating several start-up mentoring-to-work initiatives, showed that mentoring practices were not always optimal. However, this is important because research shows that mentoring can also have negative effects (Rhodes, 2002). Furthermore, outcomes depend on the design of the programme (Escudero, 2018) so a focus on quality is important.

<u>Context and objective of this paper</u>

In order to ensure that mentors and mentees can benefit from quality mentoring, regardless of the specific approach of the project, we developed minimum quality criteria for mentoring-to-work projects. This was realised within the transnational project 'Towards effective and qualitative mentoring practices for migrants' funded by the European Social Fund (ESF, see box 1). This paper reports on this development and not only offers insights into (minimum) quality of mentoring, but also aims to provide a framework for reflecting on quality mentoring.

In addition to minimum quality criteria, this paper contains:
- a reflection on what quality can mean within the broader field of mentoring. Related to this, it focuses on the different dimensions of quality in mentoring;
- an overview and discussion of existing quality criteria within the broader mentoring field;
- an exhaustive list of quality criteria that can be applied to adult mentoring projects;
- a method (and accompanying online exercise) to reflect on mentoring quality. This reflection is applicable at the organisational level, within a certain field of mentoring, for a certain region, etc.

Box 1: the ESF project 'Towards effective and qualitative mentoring-to-work practices for migrants'

Building up knowledge and expertise was the starting point of the **transnational project 'Towards effective and qualitative mentoring-to-work practices for migrants'** funded by the European Social Fund (ESF). Together with Flemish stakeholders (VDAB -public employment service in Flanders, Flemish mentoring organisations and Beyond the Horizon) and three Finnish universities,[1] several products were developed to promote the development of qualitative and effective mentoring-to-work projects and, in turn, a qualitative mentoring field. This led to the following outputs:

1. an analytical framework based on human capital theory to measure the impact of mentoring-to-work. This analytical framework describes where the potential added value of mentoring-to-work lies and how it can be measured (see De Cuyper & Vandermeerschen, 2021);
2. a set of minimum quality criteria for mentoring-to-work that ensures that mentors and mentees can benefit from quality mentoring, regardless of the specific project modus operandi. This paper reports on this work package;
3. guidelines or standards on *what works* to achieve effective mentoring-to-work practices. The quality criteria, as referred to above, describe 'what' a programme must do to be qualitative, but not 'how' or through which modalities. A third output is therefore guidelines for mentoring-to-work organisations on effective mentoring practices (see Op de Beeck & De Cuyper, 2021).

These outputs can be found on mentoring2work.eu.

<u>Structure of the paper</u>

This paper consists of three parts.

The first part comprises two chapters. The first chapter deals with the concept of quality. The different dimensions of quality are discussed and the link with quality of mentoring is made. In Chapter two, we introduce organisations and projects from the broader field of mentoring that work with quality criteria. The third section provides a comparative overview of the quality criteria used by those organisations/projects.

The second part focuses on investigating whether the existing quality criteria in the broader field of mentoring are applicable to mentoring-to-work programmes.

In the third and final part of this paper, some reflections and conclusions for the broader mentoring field are formulated.

- PART 1 DIMENSIONS OF QUALITY AND EXISTING QUALITY CRITERIA -

1 | Dimensions of quality and their applicability to mentoring

In this chapter, first we will explore several dimensions of the concept of quality. We will then focus on one specific quality dimension, the process dimension. Second, we will describe the components that make up the mentoring process. It is on these components that we will base our quality criteria.

1.1 Dimensions of quality

Quality is a catch-all term that can refer to very different aspects and dimensions as quality can be approached from different angles. An interesting distinction in this context is made by Aaltonen (1999) (in: De Cuyper, 2001). He distinguishes four perspectives: a client perspective, an organisation perspective, a result perspective and a process perspective, where quality has a different meaning within each of these dimensions (see Table 1.1). In what follows, we will discuss each of these perspectives in more detail.

Table 1.1 The four quality perspectives according to Aaltonen (1999)

Client-perspective	Organisation perspective	Objective and result perspective	Process perspective
Quality satisfies the needs or expectations of clients.	Quality is seen from the perspective of the organisation and employees, which set the desirable level of quality.	Quality is the continuous and measurable attainment of defined objectives.	Quality assessment is not only objectives and results, the process itself is also important.

Source Aaltonen (1999), p. 133

The *client perspective*. This perspective starts with the client as the touchstone for quality. This perspective often concerns the extent to which the service meets the needs of clients (see e.g. Murto, 1995).

The *organisation perspective* relates, among other things, to the personnel (quality of work, HRM, etc.), and the management structure (accounting, finances, etc.).

Results perspective. This perspective focuses on results and sees quality as the achievement of predefined objectives.

The *process perspective* relates to the process of service provision itself. De Cuyper (1998) speaks of three dimensions in this respect: the quality of the relationship (relational quality), the content of the programme and the methods used.

It is important to note that the multiple dimensions of quality may be at odds with each other. The objectives, as applied to mentoring, for example a larger professional network, may be achieved, but the mentee may still not be satisfied because he or she has not found a job. Aaltonen (1999) also emphasises that the classification is not absolute: for example, customer satisfaction can also be part of the results. The disadvantage of this model is that it does not provide a hierarchy and correlation

between the perspectives, for example, the assumption that the processes that are in place will also lead to better results.

We must distinguish between the various dimensions of quality so that we can properly determine the dimensions of quality on which we will focus in this paper. <u>When we talk about quality in this paper, we are talking about the quality of *the process*.</u> By choosing to focus exclusively on the process, we do not in any way want to detract from the importance of the other dimensions. However, much work has already focussed on these other dimensions. As far as results or effects of mentoring are concerned, we refer to De Cuyper (2021) who developed a framework to measure the impact of mentoring. This same paper also addressed client satisfaction. With regard to the organisational perspective, we refer to work of Carrette (2019); this provides some guidance on organisational management and financial sustainability for mentoring-to-work organisations. The explicit choice for the process perspective is also inspired by the expectation - as mentioned above - that an optimisation of the process is necessary to achieve predefined results or effects.

1.2 Components of the mentoring process

The dimension onto which we wish to graft our quality criteria is the mentoring process. Broadly speaking, each mentoring-to-work programme has the same structure with different modalities (see Figure 1.1).

As the basis of a mentoring programme, we distinguish the following components:
- **guidance and recruitment of mentors and mentees**: These activities are aimed at guiding mentors and mentees into the programme;
- **selection and screening of mentors and mentees**: determining whether the mentors and mentees are eligible for the programme and assessing the characteristics and needs of mentors and mentees in order to achieve a good 'match';
- **'matching'** of mentors and mentees: the process of determining the most suitable match for mentees and mentors;
- **the actual mentoring relationship**, in which mentor and mentee contact each other at regular intervals and for a certain duration in order to achieve the defined objectives;
- **closing**: the (formal) ending of the mentoring;
- **providing follow-up and support for mentor and mentee by the coach/mentoring organisation**;
- organising training for mentors and mentees.

Figure 1.1   The mentoring process

Source De Cuyper (2019)

2 | Selected mentoring organisations with quality criteria

The previous chapter set out what 'quality' can include and stressed that this paper is about the quality of the process. The components of the mentoring process were also described. Before we go into detail on the specific quality criteria that apply to each of the process components, a selection had to be made of mentoring organisations or umbrella organisations for mentoring organisations that have developed and use quality criteria. Below, we introduce the mentoring organisations whose quality criteria we have drawn upon. We will also clarify how and why we have chosen these mentoring organisations.

2.1 Approach

A first step towards establishing minimum quality criteria was to explore existing quality criteria within the field of mentoring-to-work. This was done through an internet search as well as by tapping into the network of practitioners and researchers affiliated to the European Centre for Evidence-based Mentoring.

In our search for these criteria, it soon became apparent that, apart from TRIEC (cf. infra), there are no specific quality criteria when it comes to mentoring-to-work. This is probably due to the fact that mentoring-to-work is a relatively new phenomenon. Moreover, hardly any research has been done so far on the 'active ingredients' in mentoring-to-work.

In order to gain insights into existing quality criteria, we had to broaden our view to include 'state-of-the-art' quality systems and criteria in the broader field of mentoring. We can thus effectively exploit the expertise built up in these other mentoring domains and identify which elements recur. This is independent of the context and without losing sight of the specificity and unique challenges of mentoring-to-work.

In the search for the quality criteria used in the broader field of mentoring, we focused on (umbrella) mentoring organisations and projects in Europe and the USA. As mentioned before, we chose to focus on 'state-of-the-art' organisations and projects. In essence, this means that they have been established for some time and that their quality criteria are partly based on scientific evidence. Specifically, the organisations are Scottish Mentoring Network, MENTOR and the National Council for Voluntary Organisations. We have combined this with more recent quality systems that focus specifically on working with migrants. Some of these organisations and projects have a 'quality label' attached to their quality criteria and the corresponding compliance, including the Scottish Mentoring Network, that has a 'quality award' (see below).

It was not our intention to be exhaustive in terms of the number of organisations with quality criteria, but to reach a saturation point in terms of these criteria. Since most quality criteria used by organisa-

tions refer to or are derived from 'state-of-the-art' systems, we believe to have reached this saturation point. In what follows, we present the selected systems.[2]

2.2 Selected mentoring organisations with quality criteria

2.2.1 MENTOR

MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership is an umbrella organisation in the USA for projects involving mentoring of children and young people. This organisation regularly publishes an updated version of the 'Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring', with quality guidelines (benchmarks) to ensure that *'youth mentoring relationships are safe, effective, and well-managed to produce positive outcomes for the young people involved'* (Garringer, Kupersmidt, Rhodes, Stelter & Tai, 2015, p. 2). They make a distinction between standards that are evidence-based and those which are referred to as enhancements or practices that are not yet evidence-based but are promising.

What is interesting is the underlying process and methodology. Whereas, in the first edition, input from practitioners was the main point of departure, in the fourth and most recent edition the standards were drawn up on the basis of more than 400 peer-reviewed scientific articles and input from over 200 practitioners and mentoring organisations. In this respect, this publication can be considered a work of reference and, on the basis of this publication, the National Quality Mentoring System (NQMS) was developed. This system consists of a self-assessment survey to be completed by the mentoring programme; this is then discussed with a MENTOR staff member and a work plan to improve the mentoring programme is drafted. The self-assessment instrument consists of the 'elements of effective practice' that are formulated in a questionnaire format.

In the overview of quality standards, we have adopted the criteria that are relevant in the context of mentoring towards work. Criteria that are specifically aimed at children and young people, such as parental consent to participate in a mentoring programme, have not been included.

2.2.2 Scottish Mentoring Network

The Scottish Mentoring Network (SMN) is an organisation with a long tradition that unites mentoring projects in Scotland and acts as a knowledge centre and interest group for mentoring projects. They have developed a quality award which offers a quality standard for mentoring projects. The award assesses and certifies mentoring programmes that work in a safe and effective way and is supported by a good practice guide that contains the elements necessary to achieve the quality standard. The quality standards are based on six key elements that organisations must meet in order to receive the award, specifically (1) matching purpose with performance, (2) managing resources and accountability, (3) putting the client first, (4) providing committed mentors, (5) employing skilled staff, and (6) active safeguarding. The quality standard is aimed at every possible type of mentoring project, including mentoring-to-work projects. Organisations must complete a number of questions about their programme via an online tool and attach supporting documents. For example interview: for the quality criteria concerning the screening of potential mentors, interview questions, selection criteria or references are suggested as evidence. The SMN criteria are rather general with the intention to further specify them according to the type of mentoring project.

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2 AFEV France also developed a quality system in 2020. This was not yet available at the time of finalising this paper and was therefore not included. The system is mainly based on the criteria of the Coordinadora Mentoría Social.

2.2.3 Aktion Zusammen Wachsen[3]

'*Aktion Zusammen Wachsen*' (further abbreviated as AZW) is a recent programme by the German Ministry for Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ), which supports mentoring programmes for children and young people with a migration background. The aim of this programme is to bring different mentoring organisations together in order to promote the exchange of knowledge and experience, with a view to further developing the quality of mentoring projects. In this context, they issued a quality framework together with the Ministry for Migration, Refugees and Integration.[4] Although this framework is quite recent, it focuses on young people and children, and there is no clarity about the details on which the quality criteria are based, we still include the overview given that it has a specific focus on the migration background. It is also interesting that three ambition levels are proposed for the standards, whereby the criteria below the 'simple' ambition level can be considered as minimum criteria and the 'high' ambition level as something to which organisations that are further along in their development can aspire. We found this idea valuable in a new, developing field such as mentoring-to-work. On the contrary, we found its elaboration less successful in the sense that the minimum criteria are very minimal, and the maximum criteria are often about standardising and documenting the processes. As the target group is children and young people, we have only retained the criteria that are relevant in the context of mentoring-to-work projects. Also, the distinction between the three levels of ambition was not made, as the overview would otherwise be too complex.

2.2.4 National Council for Voluntary Organisations

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) is the umbrella organisation for voluntary organisations in England. Among other things, it offers services in the field of mentoring and befriending. It also offers a quality label for organisations that guide mentoring and befriending projects, organises a national training programme for organisations, and provides support with the development of projects. The Approved Provider Standard (APS) is the national quality standard for mentoring and befriending projects and was established with the aim of improving the effectiveness and quality of such programmes. The quality standard consists of ten requirements (formulated as questions), divided into four domains: (1) management and operation, (2) service users, (3) mentors and befrienders, and (4) the mentoring and befriending relationship. The concrete requirements are formulated in a rather general way, as they concern mentoring and befriending organisations with different target groups (homeless, school students, refugees, etc.) and objectives. The quality standard used to be linked to a seal of approval, but this is no longer issued as, ultimately it was difficult to offer a label that was both affordable for mentoring projects and which could be rigorously evaluated.[5]

2.2.5 Coordinadora Mentoría Social[6]

Coordinadora Mentoría Social (further abbreviated as CMS) is a Catalan mentoring network which now also has partners in the rest of Spain. Currently the network consists of fourteen organisations and twenty mentoring projects. The network is open to a wide range of mentoring projects with the common denominator of focusing on vulnerable people. An important part of its operation is to promote quality standards in mentoring projects. Thus, all organisations that wish to become part of the network must comply with these standards. Other organisations are also encouraged to imple-

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3 For more information on *Aktion Zusammen Wachsen* and the mentoring field in Germany, see Reidsma en De Cuyper (2021).

4 https://www.aktion-zusammen-wachsen.de/fileadmin/redaktion/07-Publikationen/Publikationen_barrierefrei/19-05-23_FINAL_Poster_Qualitaetssicherung_barrierefrei.pdf.

5 https://www.thirdsector.co.uk/ncvo-close-standard-mentoring-schemes/management/article/1521233.

6 For information on the functioning of the *Coordinadora Mentoria Social*, see Reidsma en De Cuyper (2021).

ment the standards in their mentoring projects. The MENTOR and APS quality standards (see above) have been incorporated into the CMS standards, drawn up based on the systematic study of quality indicators in the literature, on the one hand, and the knowledge and experience of the CMS, on the other. There are ten requirements, each of which consists of several concrete standards. These standards are in turn subdivided into several substandards which every organisation must meet, and a number of additional substandards which give access to the '+' seal. Here too, minimum and more extensive criteria are used. In the overview, we will only discuss the minimum criteria. Because the projects within the network can be very different in terms of content and target group, the quality standards are also described in rather general terms.

2.2.6 Toronto Immigrant Employment Council

TRIEC mentoring partnership (further: TRIEC) is an organisation that focuses specifically on mentoring-to-work and is an umbrella organisation for other mentoring projects in Canada. While the above-mentioned organisations focus on a broad group of mentoring projects with different target groups and objectives, TRIEC focuses on mentoring-to-work programmes for highly skilled newcomers. In contrast to the quality criteria of other programmes, these criteria are therefore more concrete.

2.2.7 Talent2Connect

Talent2Connect is a Belgian platform for different organisations from the social, public and private sectors who join forces to guide 'hidden' talents (e.g. low-educated young people, elderly people and refugees) towards employment. One of the solutions they propose is a digital tool to help connect mentors and mentees. The mentoring organisations involved in this project have set some quality criteria in a workshop to access the digital platform. As will become clear from the overview, these criteria are rather minimal in terms of concept and elaboration; we have nevertheless integrated them in order to build on existing efforts.

3 | Overview and comparison of existing quality criteria

This chapter elaborates on the existing quality criteria used by the previously introduced mentoring organisations and projects. In what follows, we describe and provide an overview of the quality criteria that are used by them, analyse the similarities and differences and, based on our expertise on mentoring-to-work, examine which of these quality criteria could be applicable to the specific field of mentoring-to-work. In a next phase (described in the following chapters), we will present these retained quality criteria and put them forward for further review by practitioners. This chapter is structured according to the components of the mentoring process described earlier.

3.1 Approach

After having selected the mentoring organisations and projects, we examined and compared their quality criteria. As these are mainly mentoring organisations and projects from the broader field of mentoring, it is important to emphasise that the discussion of these is from a mentoring-to-work perspective. In other words, it is the relevance to the specific field of mentoring-to-work that will determine whether or not a criterion will be retained in order to be presented for discussion to practitioners at a later stage (see next chapters). The selection is based on insights from previous research on mentoring-to-work (Van Dooren & De Cuyper, 2015; De Cuyper & Vandermeerschen, 2018; De Cuyper *et al.*, 2019; Purkayastha & De Cuyper, 2019; Vandermeerschen & De Cuyper, 2018). In addition to a written discussion, the criteria from the different mentoring organisations and projects are each presented in an overview table.

3.2 Comparative overview of existing quality criteria according to the components of the mentoring process

3.2.1 The recruitment and referral of mentors and mentees

Without mentors and mentees no duos can be formed. Therefore, one of the challenges for coaches is to recruit and refer suitable mentors and mentees. Because quality criteria for both target groups differ, we will discuss the recruitment and referral of mentors and mentees separately. In what follows, we will first discuss the recruitment and referral of mentors followed by the mentees.

3.2.1.1 The recruitment and referral of mentors

Two elements emerge from the comparison of the different, selected mentoring organisations with respect to the recruitment of mentors (see Table 3.1). On the one hand, there is the nature of the information that needs to be provided to the mentors and, on the other, the methods and strategies to recruit mentors.

The information provided must be both sufficient and realistic, in order to enable mentors to decide whether or not to participate. This criterion is used in MENTOR, CMS and SMN. It is also present in TRIEC, but it is part of the training programme rather than the recruitment strategy.

A second quality criterion that is mentioned is the fact that multiple methods and strategies to recruit mentors must be used. CMS, Mentor and AZW all give examples of multiple channels. AZW and TRIEC emphasise the use of partner organisations in the recruitment of mentors. MENTOR also points to using experienced mentors for recruitment.

Every mentoring project must correspond with an adequate recruitment strategy. A recruitment strategy, however, is context and project-specific so we retain the principle of an adequate recruitment strategy as a criterion, but do not elaborate on it. A second quality criterion concerns the provision of correct information: what is the mentor's role, what is expected in participation and is this also clearly documented? This element is also retained. After all, a mentor who enters the project with inaccurate expectations and a role that differs from expectations will have a direct impact on the results of the mentoring.

Table 3.1   Recruitment of mentors

MENTOR	Scottish Mentoring Network (SMN)	Aktion Zusammen Wachsen (AZW)	TRIEC	Talent2Connect	Approved Provider Standard (APS)	Coordinadora Mentoría Social (CMS)
Programme engages in recruitment strategies that realistically portray the benefits, practices, supports, and challenges of mentoring in the programme. Programme recruits mentors whose skills, motivations and backgrounds best match the goals and structure of the programme. E: Programme communicates with to mentors how mentoring and volunteering can benefit them.* E: Programme has a publicly available written statement outlining eligibility requirements for mentors in the programme.	Provides clear guidance information about its mentoring service which can be assessed by potential mentors.	Standardised processes and materials - which can be adapted to individual circumstances - for communicating with potential mentors are available.			Is the recruitment and selection process for potential mentors and befrienders safe and effective?	The strategies for the recruitment of mentors introduce the objectives and activities as well as the challenges and supports of being a mentor so that the interested people can make an informed decision about their participation.
Programme utilises recruitment strategies that build positive attitudes and emotions about mentoring.						

MENTOR	Scottish Mentoring Network (SMN)	Aktion Zusammen Wachsen (AZW)	TRIEC	Talent2Connect	Approved Provider Standard (APS)	Coordinadora Mentoría Social (CMS)
		Communication with potential mentors is carried out in cooperation with experienced mentors or project partners (e.g. schools, colleges, companies, migrant organisations, local city offices).	Recruitment is through several channels. Community Partners must recruit regularly and on basis of occupation/ sector needs.			
E: Programme uses multiple strategies to recruit mentors (e.g. direct ask, social media, traditional methods of mass communication, presentations, referrals) on an ongoing basis.		The project uses appropriate methods of direct communication with potential mentors, employing a range of suitable channels (e.g. personal letters/emails, information sessions, workshops, media articles, posters in educational institutions, network meetings).				The programme uses multiple strategies to mobilise mentors (leaflets and pamphlets, posters, media advertisements, web pages, information sessions, press releases, volunteer fairs or information desks, personal or word of mouth recommendations, audiovisual material, social media, mailing).
Programme encourages mentors to assist with recruitment efforts by providing them with resources to ask individuals they know, who meet the eligibility criteria of the programme, to be a mentor.						
				As a mentor has expressed interest in the programme it should take max. 1 week to personally contact them.		

* The 'E' stands for 'Enhancements' or practices that are not yet evidence-based but are promising (cf. supra).

3.2.1.2 The recruitment and referral of mentees

When it comes to the recruitment of mentees, it is surprising that very few quality criteria are put forward (see Table 3.2). AZW emphasises that there should be standardised processes and materials for communicating with mentees and that referrals should be made through stakeholders. MENTOR, SMN and CMS are more specific about this communication, stating that it should create clear expectations about the programme. CMS adds that this information should enable mentees to make an informed decision about whether the programme is for them.

When looking at the criteria for the recruitment of mentees, we see relatively few criteria. There is also little consensus among the projects so the choice for minimum criteria is not clear. The evaluation of mentoring-to-work pilots (Vandermeerschen & De Cuyper, 2018) found that a mismatch between the expectations of the mentees and the objectives of the programmes was often problematic. Some mentees hoped to be given a job at the end of the mentoring, while this was/is not the objective of the programme. This resulted in dissatisfaction with the programme and early drop-out. Based on this observation, we decided to retain the criterion of the realistic presentation of goals, activities, and so on.

Table 3.2   Recruitment of mentees

MENTOR	Scottish Mentoring Network (SMN)	Aktion Zusammen Wachsen (AZW)	TRIEC	Talent2Connect	Approved Provider Standard (APS)	Coordinadora Mentoría Social
Programme engages in recruitment strategies that realistically portray the benefits, practices, supports, and challenges of being mentored in the programme.	Provides clear guidance information about its mentoring service which can be assessed by potential clients and referral agencies.	Standardised processes and materials - which can be adapted to individual circumstances - for communicating appropriately with mentees are available.			Is there a clear process for the identification and referral of service users?	The strategies for the recruitment of mentees introduce the objectives and activities as well as the challenges and supports of being mentored so that the interested people can make an informed decision about their participation.
Programme recruits mentees whose needs best match the services offered by the programme.	Provides the client (and carers as appropriate) with the information they need to understand what the mentoring service offers them.					
		Other stakeholders are being involved (e.g. day nurseries, schools, associations, refugee facilities).				
				As a mentor has expressed interest in the programme it should take max. 1 week to personally contact them.		

3.2.2 The selection and screening of mentors and mentees

The selected mentoring organisations may also have different criteria for the selection and screening of both mentors and mentees. Often, these involve conditions the candidates have to meet. How and to what extent these are fulfilled by the quality criteria will again be discussed first for the mentors (see Table 3.3) and then for the mentees (Table 3.4).

3.2.2.1   The selection and screening of mentors

All selected mentoring organisations, except for Talent2Connect and APS, state that they work with clear criteria when selecting mentors. For some mentoring organisations, these criteria are very well defined. The underlying principle is that mentors must be able to achieve the programme's objectives with their skills, e.g. they must be able to deal with young people, have intercultural competences, have a professional network, etc. CMS focuses on character traits that the ideal mentor must possess, e.g. adaptability, responsibility, empathy and assertiveness. In addition, the ability to commit for a certain period of time and with a certain frequency is seen as a selection criterion by MENTOR, TRIEC, Talent2connect, and CMS. Interestingly, at CMS, prior training for mentors is also part of the selection process; through the training they gain insights into the qualities of the candidate mentor. All selected mentoring organisations set a prior individual interview with the mentor as a quality criterion.

There is also a significant focus on reference checks. MENTOR, SMN, TRIEC AND CMS include this as a (possible) quality criterion. For quite a few of the selected mentoring organisations, this relates to the fact that mentors work with vulnerable young people and children. TRIEC also proposes reference checks for mentors who are recruited individually, but not for mentors coming from employer partners.

A criterion that only applies to SMN, is to refer mentors to more suitable opportunities if they do not qualify for mentoring. As the pool of volunteers is not unlimited, we think this is an interesting criterion.

There is consensus among the different selected mentoring organisations on the following criteria: clear selection criteria in line with the programme's objectives, an individual screening interview (online or otherwise) using a screening instrument, and the mentors' commitment to being active for a certain period of time with a certain frequency. These criteria are therefore retained. As reference checks are often used as a quality criterion, we have also retained this criterion for mentoring-to-work projects, without specifying the precise details. The TRIEC system seems to be an option for mentoring-to-work projects, where no reference check is needed if it concerns partners/employers with whom TRIEC has structural arrangements. For individual mentors, however, a reference check is still needed. Finally, the SMN's criterion of referring mentors who are not eligible for the programme to other volunteer programmes is also worth considering.

Table 3.3   Selection and screening of mentors

MENTOR	Scottish Mentoring Network (SMN)	Aktion Zusammen Wachsen (AZW)	TRIEC	Talent2Connect	Approved Provider Standard (APS)	Coordinadora Mentoría Social
Programme has established criteria for accepting mentors into the programme as well as criteria for disqualifying mentor applicants.	Carries out a structured assessment of potential mentors and their suitability for the service and applies clear selection criteria.	Selection is made on the basis of defined criteria (e.g. criminal background check, previous volunteer experience, intercultural competence, maturity).	Mentors must meet all outlined eligibility criteria: - 2 years' work experience; - established network of professional contacts; - current industry knowledge; - available for 18 hours over 3 months; - good attitude (open-minded, good listener and communicator, etc.).		Is the recruitment and selection process for potential mentors and befrienders safe and effective?	A selection of criteria for mentors has been defined, including adaptability, responsibility, empathy, and assertiveness. There is a publicly available statement of the selection criteria for the acceptance/ disqualification of mentors in the project (it is understood that it is publicly available if the organisation provides the statement whenever someone requests it).
	Has a process to signpost individuals to more suitable opportunities if appropriate					
Programme conducts reference check interviews with multiple adults who know an applicant (ideally, both personal and professional references) that include questions to help assess his or her suitability for mentoring a youth.			Reference checks only for individual mentors, not for mentors recruited through employer partners.			

MENTOR	Scottish Mentoring Network (SMN)	Aktion Zusammen Wachsen (AZW)	TRIEC	Talent2Connect	Approved Provider Standard (APS)	Coordinadora Mentoría Social
Programme conducts at least one face-to-face interview with each prospective mentor that includes questions designed to help the programme assess his or her suitability for mentoring a youth.		Selection is made on the basis of individual selection interviews with standardised questions.	All individual mentors must be interviewed in-person.	Minimum 1 hour intake consisting of an 'open questions' interview.		At least one face-to-face selection interview with the candidates to be mentors is carried out in which the suitability of their profile for mentoring is evaluated (considering the possibility of rejection of candidates).
Programme conducts a comprehensive criminal background check on prospective adult mentors.						In the event of intervening with minors, the programme requests information regarding the lack of a record for crimes of a sexual nature. In case of not working with minors, the programme requests information regarding the lack of a record for crimes of a sexual nature.
Prospective mentors agree in writing to participate in face-to-face meetings with their mentees that average a minimum of once a week and a total of four or more hours per month over the course of the relationship, or at a minimum frequency and amount of hours that are required by their mentoring programme.				Mentors have the intention to be available for 12 duo meetings, this is twice a month for a 6-month mentoring programme and every week for a 3 month programme.		The selected mentors agree in writing to establish a mentoring relationship of the minimum duration required by the project and to meet with their mentees at least as often and as long as the programme requires.

MENTOR	Scottish Mentoring Network (SMN)	Aktion Zusammen Wachsen (AZW)	TRIEC	Talent2Connect	Approved Provider Standard (APS)	Coordinadora Mentoría Social
Prospective mentors complete a written application that includes questions designed to help assess their safety and suitability for mentoring a youth.						People interested in being mentors complete a written application to participate in the project, which includes questions aimed at assessing the suitability of their profile for mentoring and at determining whether to accept the candidate.
						The programme uses training as a phase in the selection process to further assess whether the mentors are suitable to mentor a person.
				Create safe environment.		

3.2.2.2 The selection and screening of mentees

The quality criteria for mentees are in line with those for mentors (see Table 3.4).

Most mentoring organisations state that there should be clear selection criteria that are in line with the programme's objectives. MENTOR also elaborates on the content of these criteria and states that mentees must agree to a minimum commitment of a certain number of hours per week for a specified period of time. MENTOR links this to a written confirmation of the mentee's commitment. CMS also elaborates on which selection criteria are important, but mainly emphasises key aspects such as the motivation, stability and responsibility of the mentee.

TRIEC mainly focuses on the lead times in the process, more specifically between recruitment and screening, and between screening and the final decision to enter the programme. Another important element is that ineligible persons should be referred to other organisations/services. This element is also present at SMN. CMS also emphasises the need for procedures to deal with rejections but is less specific than TRIEC. We would like to present both the lead times and the referral of persons who are not eligible for the programme as quality criteria to the mentoring-to-work organisations that will then provide their input.

TRIEC, Talent2Connect and CMS all propose an interview for screening the mentee. CMS refers to a face-to-face interview; AZW speaks of a standardised process in which an interview is one of the options, alongside a questionnaire, a conversation with the teacher, and so on. SMN states that a structured assessment must take place but does not specify the specific format. From practice we know that face-to-face contact with mentees is considered very important by coaches in relation to the matching process. In this respect, we retain an interview as a quality criterion, according to a certain system (a checklist, questionnaire, etc.), and present this to the practitioners for review.

Table 3.4   Selection and screening of mentees

MENTOR	Scottish Mentoring Network (SMN)	Aktion Zusammen Wachsen (ASW)	TRIEC	Talent2Connect	Approved Provider Standard (APS)	Coordinadora Mentoría Social
Programme has established criteria for accepting youth into the programme as well as criteria that would disqualify a potential youth participant.	Carries out a structured assessment of client needs and their suitability for mentoring support.	Selection is made in accordance with the specific objectives of the project (e.g. promoting highly talented mentees or support mentees with poor academic achievement). Selection is made only when the mentee actively wants to have a mentoring relationship and if there are no criteria for exclusion (e.g. mental illness, need for professional advice).	Applicants accepted into the programme meet all the criteria. Applicants are screened for suitability and mentoring-readiness 3-5 days after application.		Are the needs of the service users assessed in determining how mentoring and befriending can help?	The selection criteria established to integrate new mentees in the project includes motivation, stability, and responsibility. In case of underage mentees, responsibility may be linked to the existence of a close adult figure.
Parent(s)/guardian(s) and mentees agree in writing to a one-year (calendar or school) minimum commitment for the mentoring relationship, or the minimum time commitment that is required by the mentoring programme.						

MENTOR	Scottish Mentoring Network (SMN)	Aktion Zusammen Wachsen (ASW)	TRIEC	Talent2Connect	Approved Provider Standard (APS)	Coordinadora Mentoría Social
Parents(s)/guardian(s) and mentees agree in writing that mentees participate in face-to-face meetings with their mentors that average a minimum of once a week and a total of four or more hours per month over the course of the relationship, or at a minimum frequency and amount of hours that are required by the mentoring programme.						
	Has a process to signpost individuals to more suitable support services if appropriate.		Applicants not accepted are referred to appropriate services within 3 business days.			There are procedures to deal with inappropriate acceptances of mentees and to manage their rejection.
			Clear process timelines: For example, applications should be screened with 3-5 days of registering, a coach must review it within 14 days, applications not meeting the eligibility criteria are informed within 3 business days.			

MENTOR	Scottish Mentoring Network (SMN)	Aktion Zusammen Wachsen (ASW)	TRIEC	Talent2Connect	Approved Provider Standard (APS)	Coordinadora Mentoría Social
E: Mentees provide written assent agreeing to participate in their mentoring programme.						People interested in being mentored complete a written application to participate in the project. In case of underage applicants, it can be done by their parents/guardians or the organisation that refers them.
		Standardised processes for the selection of mentees are available (e.g. questionnaire, individual interview, consultation with teacher) and the boundaries of the mentoring project are defined.	Screening must include an interview.	- Open questions interview. - Checklist of min. info. - Minimum 1h intake. - Create safe environment.		At least one face-to-face selection interview with the candidates to be mentored is carried out and documented, in which the suitability of their participation in the project is evaluated (considering the possibility of rejection of candidates). In case of underage applicants, the interview can be carried out with their parents/ guardians.

3.2.3 Training

As far as training of mentors is concerned, we see that a great deal of emphasis is put on this. All selected mentoring organisations prioritise an induction and/or training session. The different organisations list a number of minimum elements that need to be addressed. It is mainly about clarifying the framework and expectations:

- what is mentoring/what is the nature of mentoring?
- modalities of the programme: length, initiation of contact frequency, duration of meetings, what if someone does not show up, end of relationship;
- expectations, roles, which tasks are possible and which are not;
- contact with the coach and expectations with regard to monitoring;
- where to go for support;
- confidentiality and anonymity;
- expenses and travel.

This type of training is a kind of starter package, which provides the necessary information to adjust expectations and understand the modalities of a programme. In addition, more substantive training can also be provided (think of training on coaching skills, intercultural competences, etc.), as is the case at SMN, for instance. This organisation puts training for mentors first, to 'develop their skills' and 'stimulate their long-term commitment'. AZW also mentions training opportunities for project-related topics, with intercultural competences or the living conditions of refugees as examples. While TRIEC, Talent2Connect and CMS primarily emphasise training as an introduction, substantive (post) training is also clearly put forward by SMN, AZW and MENTOR.

Some organisations also specify a minimum number of hours of training, such as MENTOR (2 hours, but preferably 6 hours) or CMS (6 or 8 hours). A notable element that we find in MENTOR is the use of this training as a means to further screen and detect any problems.

It is worth noting that the training of mentees is only given a limited place in the programmes. While training for mentors is provided by all screened organisations, training for mentees is only mentioned at AZW and at MENTOR (as an enhancement).

When referring to mentoring-to-work programmes, all elements mentioned are relevant or at least relevant enough to present to the practitioners. More specifically, there is pre-match information session/training and a content training course for mentors. We also present the training for mentees to the practitioners.

Table 3.5   Training

MENTOR	Scottish Mentoring Network (SMN)	Aktion Zusammen Wachsen (AZW)	TRIEC	Talent2Connect	Approved Provider Standard (APS)	Coordinadora Mentoría Social
Mentor training						
Programme provides a minimum of two hours of pre-match, in-person, mentor training (appendix 1 for a list of topics).	Provides mentors with training and guidance which is relevant to the client group they will work with and is delivered by recognised mentoring partners. Incorporates personal safety guidance into its client preparation and staff and mentor training including confidentiality/ disclosure responsibilities (e.g. personal safety policy, and data protection policy).	Induction training for new mentors takes places on a regular basis. Mentors are informed about their tasks and the objectives of the project as well as about the concept of mentoring as such.	Within 3 days of a match, coaches must schedule an in-person orientation session for both with the following elements: (1) clarifying mentor and mentees expectations, (2) clarifying roles and responsibilities, (3) review supports and resources available during the partnership, (4) provide an opportunity to be introduced to each other, encourage mentor (5) and mentee to access coaching support. Differentiation between in person orientation sessions, online orientation sessions.	Organise collective training for mentors new to mentoring.	Do mentors and befrienders receive appropriate induction and training to provide effective support to service users?	Prior to the assignment, a minimum of 6 hours/ minimum of 8 hours of face-to-face training is provided to mentors on the following topics: - introduction to mentoring; - initiation and development of the relationship; - closing of the relationship; - expectations of the mentor; - project objectives and specific purpose of the mentoring; - role of the mentor; - rights and obligations; - commitments of the mentors, - procedures and policies of the project (ethical issues); - preparation of the initial meeting; - resources offered by the programme to support the mentors.

MENTOR	Scottish Mentoring Network (SMN)	Aktion Zusammen Wachsen (AZW)	TRIEC	Talent2Connect	Approved Provider Standard (APS)	Coordinadora Mentoría Social
Programme provides one or more opportunities per year for post-match mentor training.	Provides opportunities for mentors to develop their skills and knowledge and encourages their longer term involvement.	Training opportunities for project-related topics are offered (e.g. teaching education, intercultural competence, the living conditions of refugees).				
						There is an evaluation procedure of the training for mentors aimed at maintaining and improving its quality and effectiveness.
E: programme provides additional pre-match training opportunities beyond the two-hour, in-person minimum for a total of six hours or more.						
E: Programme uses training to continue to screen mentors for suitability to be a mentor and develops techniques for early troubleshooting should problems be identified.						
Mentee training						
E: Programme provides training for the mentee on a list of topics (see appendix 1).					At least one meeting is held with each mentee prior to assignment to address the following issues: programme performance, commitment, limits, expectations and questions, and initial meeting.	

3.2.4 Matching and the start of the duos

In essence, all selected mentoring organisations state that the best possible match should be sought, taking into account the characteristics and needs of the mentees (see Table 3.6). Mentor, CMS and AZW also state that the preferences of mentors should be considered. Whereas some organisations remain vague about what the match should be, TRIEC, MENTOR and CMS are more concrete. For TRIEC, it is about professional agreements, availability and location. For CMS and MENTOR it is about age, personality, but also ethnicity, preferences, goals, etc. The quality criteria do not answer the question of what makes a good match, however. Exactly what criteria should be used in mentoring-to-work projects will depend on the programme. What is important is that they are set out clearly.

In terms of how the matching should take place, only CMS is concrete. CMS states that at least two coaches must be involved in the matching process.

With respect to the start of the mentoring relationship, CMS and MENTOR state that the meeting must be prepared and initiated by the mentoring programme. SMN states that the mentor must be aware of the characteristics of the mentee at the first meeting. MENTOR, CMS and AZW all state that the first meeting between mentor and mentee must take place in the presence of a coach. This criterion is not found in the other programmes. This may have something to do with the fact that these programmes are more youth-oriented. There is a fairly large consensus that some kind of agreement/contract has to be signed between the mentor and mentee. MENTOR is quite detailed on what this agreement can contain, such as frequency of contact, duration of meetings, roles of each person, etc.

Another interesting point is that TRIEC pays attention to people who are difficult to match. This is partly due to the fact that they specifically match on function or sector. As a quality criterion, they state that if mentees cannot be matched within a certain period of time, they are referred to other services. AZW proposes a 'probation period' as a quality criterion, i.e. that the match can be 'terminated' and that there is verification, after a certain period of time, that the mentoring relationship is going well and that there is indeed a good match between both parties.

We find all mentioned quality criteria relevant or at least relevant enough to present to the practitioners. An exception is the 'group matching' within MENTOR. This can be seen as a specific matching method rather than a quality criterion.

Table 3.6 **Matching and the start of the duos**

MENTOR	Scottish Mentoring Network (SMN)	Aktion Zusammen Wachsen (AZW)	TRIEC	Talent2Connect	Approved Provider Standard (APS)	Coordinadora Mentoría Social
Programme considers the characteristics of the mentor and mentee (e.g., interests; proximity; availability; age; gender; race; ethnicity; personality; expressed preferences of mentor, mentee, and parent or guardian; goals; strengths; previous experiences) when making matches.	Matches clients with mentors with the most appropriate profiles to help them achieve their goals	The knowledge and skills of mentors as well as the needs of mentees are recorded and taken into account for the purposes of matching. The first meeting between the mentors and mentees take place in a protected environment, accompanied by the coordinator. Mentors are asked about their expectations of the mentoring relationship using a standardised questionnaire in order to include these in the matching process.	Coaches are required to ensure the quality of matches by checking mentor and mentees professional compatibility, availability and location.	Starting from the mentees and their needs, instead of starting from available mentors. More than a good match on paper.	Is there a clear and consistent place for matching service users with mentors and befrienders?	The programme takes into account the characteristics of the mentor and the mentee to make the assignments (interests, proximity, availability, age, gender, race, ethnicity, personality, expressed preferences of the mentor and mentee, goals, strengths, past experiences, etc.).
E: Programme sponsors a group matching event where prospective mentors and mentees can meet and interact with one another, and provide the programme with feedback on match preferences.						
						At least two members of the technical team of the programme participate in the assignment process.

MENTOR	Scottish Mentoring Network (SMN)	Aktion Zusammen Wachsen (AZW)	TRIEC	Talent2Connect	Approved Provider Standard (APS)	Coordinadora Mentoría Social
Programme arranges and documents an initial meeting between the mentor and mentee as well as, when relevant, with the parent or guardian.	Ensures that the mentor is appropriately informed about the circumstances of the clients they are matched with.					The programme organises and documents a first mentor/mentee meeting or a group matchmaking event.
Programme staff member should be on site and/or present during the initial match meeting of the mentor and mentee, and, when relevant, parent or guardian.						The technical team of the project is present during the first contact between the mentor and mentee to make the introductions.
Mentor, mentee, a programme staff member, and, when relevant, the mentee's parent or guardian, meet in person to sign a commitment agreement consenting to the programme's rules and requirements (e.g., frequency, intensity and duration of match meetings; roles of each person involved in the mentoring relationship; frequency of contact with programme), and risk management policies.	Ensures that there is an agreement with the client about what the mentoring relationship is intended to help them achieve.	An agreement between mentors and mentees concerning the format of the mentoring relationship is encouraged.	Confirmation is only after both participants accept a match.	Draw up mentor-mentee contract.		

MENTOR	Scottish Mentoring Network (SMN)	Aktion Zusammen Wachsen (AZW)	TRIEC	Talent2Connect	Approved Provider Standard (APS)	Coordinadora Mentoría Social
		A timed probationary period exists for new mentoring matches (e.g. a match can be ended by either party after 3-4 meetings without given reasons).				
			Clear timeline for matching process - match within 2 weeks, contact within a week.			
			Managers ensure that applicants in hard to match occupations are referred to alternative programmes and services.			

3.2.5 The mentoring relationship

It is worth noting that there are few criteria regarding the mentoring relationship itself. This concerns matters such as the intensity (how often mentors and mentees are expected to be in contact), the location where the meeting takes place, the nature of the contact (online, ...), the duration of the mentoring programme itself, i.e. the ideal or minimum duration of a programme, the activities that mentor and mentee perform, and so on. This may relate to the fact that the selected mentoring organisations focus on a very diverse group of mentoring projects. One exception is CMS, which states that the mentoring relationship must last at least six months, with mentor and mentee seeing each other for at least two hours every month. Talent2connect stipulates (a minimum of?) 12 meetings although it is not a quality criterion. We know that TRIEC stipulates 3 months as the duration of the mentoring relationship.

Although the duration of mentoring programmes and the frequency of meetings is not often mentioned in quality labels, we would like to introduce this criterion to the practitioners. Mentoring-to-work is indeed goal-oriented, and we assume that the job search lasts a certain limited time. In this respect, it seems relevant that mentoring-to-work projects can set a certain duration and frequency as a minimum but also as a maximum.

Table 3.7   The mentoring relationship

MENTOR	Scottish Mentoring Network (SMN)	Aktion Zusammen Wachsen (AZW)	TRIEC	Talent2Connect	Approved Provider Standard (APS)	Coordinadora Mentoría Social
				Intention to be available for 12 pair meetings.		After the initial meeting, and except in the case of an early closure, the meetings between mentors and mentees occur with a minimum frequency of once a month and a total of 2 or more hours a month for at least 6 months.

3.2.6 The follow-up and support of the mentor and mentee by the mentoring organisation/coach

In this section, we will discuss the follow-up and support of the mentor and mentee. The follow-up focuses on keeping in touch with the matched duos, seeing if it goes well, etc. whereas support is mainly about supporting mentors and mentees during the mentoring process in order to ensure a more effective relationship. In practice, the two elements may well merge.

3.2.6.1 Follow-up of mentors and mentees

Follow-up encompasses both practical (or more procedural) and substantive criteria. The practical part mainly concerns the frequency and timing of the follow-up of the mentoring duos. MENTOR and CMS state that the coach must follow up twice a month in the initial period and once a month thereafter for both mentors and mentees. TRIEC stipulates once after 10 days and once after 40 days. Talent2connect implements a follow-up in the first month, the third and the sixth month. CMS and MENTOR stress that the duos should be evaluated regularly to see if an intervention is needed. An intervention could involve working on motivation or ending the mentoring relationship early, for example. SMN argues that there should be regular contact with the duos, but leaves it up to the individual programmes to make this more concrete.

Besides frequency, the content of the follow-up is important as well. One element that is mentioned by most of the selected mentoring organisations, is that during the follow-up, the progress made (in relation to the mentoring targets) needs to be monitored. MENTOR and CMS make the content of the follow-up quite concrete by stating that it should cover the quality of the relationship, the impact of mentoring, the activities carried out, etc. They suggest standardised instruments to monitor the progress of the mentee and standardised instruments, preferably with scientifically validated tools. TRIEC and AZW also work with/suggest standardised instruments.

AZW and MENTOR also focus on the retention of mentors. MENTOR mentions, among other things, that mentors should receive feedback on a regular basis about the impact of the mentoring process on their mentee.

All discussed criteria seem relevant to present to the practitioners for review, i.e. regular follow-up of the duos, the fact that there must be a clear idea of what these follow-up discussions should entail and that this is done via 'standardised' instruments or checklists and the retention of mentors.

Table 3.8   Follow-up of mentors and mentees

MENTOR	Scottish Mentoring Network (SMN)	Aktion Zusammen Wachsen (AZW)	TRIEC	Talent2Connect	Approved Provider Standard (APS)	Coordinadora Mentoría Social
Programme contacts mentors and mentees at a minimum frequency of twice per month for the first month of the match and once a month thereafter.	Maintains regular contact with the client throughout the mentoring relationship to assess their individual progress.	Regular support and supervision meetings are held without time pressure. Mentors report regularly about the mentoring relationship. Guidelines/questionnaires serve as support (e.g. regarding the quality of the relationship).	Coaches provide support to mentor/mentee for the duration of the partnership and respond to requests in a timely manner.	As a mentoring organisation, support the duo for 3 or 6 months.	Are the mentoring and befriending relationships regularly monitored to ensure progress is being made and outcomes are achieved?	The project team contacts the mentors and mentees at least twice during the first month of the relationship and then once a month to assess how the mentoring relationship is progressing.
At each mentor/ mentee monitoring contact, programme staff should ask mentors/mentees about mentoring activities, mentee outcomes, child safety issues, the quality of the mentoring relationship, and the impact of mentoring on the mentor and mentee using a standardised procedure.	Carries out regular reviews with the mentor to evaluate the progress of the mentoring relationship and address any related issues.	Mentors and mentees are asked for feedback on how things are going after the probationary period.	A 'check in' survey is provided at 10 days and 40 days after the start of the partnership. The coach contacts mentor/ mentee for follow up if non-responsive.	Have a structured follow-up at 1-3-6 months post-match.		
Programme documents information about each mentor-mentee meeting including, at a minimum, the date, length, and description of activity completed.		Conversations taking place during support and supervision meetings are documented. Actions for all parties involved (mentor, organisation, and mentee) are accordingly defined.				The team of the project documents information about each mentor/ mentee encounter, including, at least, the date, duration, and description of the completed activity.

MENTOR	Scottish Mentoring Network (SMN)	Aktion Zusammen Wachsen (AZW)	TRIEC	Talent2Connect	Approved Provider Standard (APS)	Coordinadora Mentoría Social
Programme follows evidence-based protocol to elicit more in-depth assessment from mentors and mentees about the quality of their mentoring relationships, and uses scientifically-tested relationship assessment tools.						The project team collects quantifiable data regarding the quality of the mentoring relationship on a regular basis, facilitated by the mentors and/or mentees, using a scientifically proven assessment tool.
Programme regularly assesses all matches to determine if they should be closed or encouraged to continue.	Coordinators look into rematches when needed, check and report on progress.					The programme periodically assesses the mentoring relationships to determine whether an intervention by the team of the programme is needed: initiate closure, reinforce motivation, provide resources, etc. (at least bimonthly/at least monthly).
Programme provides mentors with feedback on a regular basis regarding their mentees' outcomes and the impact of mentoring on their mentees to continuously improve mentee outcomes and encourage mentor retention.						
Programme conducts a minimum of one in-person monitoring and support meeting per year with mentor, mentee and when relevant, parent or guardian. (E)						

MENTOR	Scottish Mentoring Network (SMN)	Aktion Zusammen Wachsen (AZW)	TRIEC	Talent2Connect	Approved Provider Standard (APS)	Coordinadora Mentoría Social
Programme thanks mentors and recognises their contributions at some point during each year of the mentoring relationship, prior to match closure. (E)		Volunteers are regularly thanked for their commitment, they are treated in a friendly and attentive manner and meetings with the coordinator are made pleasant.				
		The project offers special activities for volunteers (e.g. joint excursions, celebrations, museum and theatre visits).				

3.2.6.2 Support of mentors and mentees

In addition to regular monitoring of the duos, there may also be a need for additional substantive support for mentors and mentees. The support included in the criteria of the selected mentoring organisations concerns, among other things, access to content-related sources (expert advice, publications, referrals to the right services, etc.). This is mentioned by MENTOR, AZW and CMS. AZW also states that mentors and mentees must have a clear point of contact, or in other words a fixed contact person (the coach) they can turn to. This contact person must also be able to assist mentors in dealing with needs that have arisen during the mentoring relationship or in case of conflicts. Finally, both MENTOR, AZW and CMS recommend group activities in which mentors and mentees (for AZW only the mentees) can participate together.

The discussed criteria seem relevant for mentoring-to-work programmes, but one could ask whether they are relevant as 'minimum' criteria. This is the case when it concerns the fixed contact person, but less so when it concerns the provision of content resources and group activities. We take these criteria on board and present them to the practitioners.

Table 3.9   Support of mentors and mentees

MENTOR	Scottish Mentoring Network (SMN)	Aktion Zusammen Wachsen (AZW)	TRIEC	Talent2Connect	Approved Provider Standard (APS)	Coordinadora Mentoría Social
Programme provides mentors with access to relevant resources (e.g., expert advice from programme staff or others, publications, Web-based resources, experienced mentors) to help mentors address challenges in their mentoring relationships as they arise.		Mentors have a permanent contact person who can be reached if needed for queries or discussion and in case of problematic or conflict situations (e.g. by telephone). Information resources on teaching/education and intercultural competences are available to mentors. Mentors receive suggestions for activities with the mentees.			Is support provided to mentors and befrienders to help them develop their role?	The programme provides mentors with access to resources to help them address challenges that may arise in their mentoring relationships (expert advice from programme staff or others, articles, resources from their website, experienced mentors).
Programme provides mentees and parents or guardians with access or referrals to relevant resources (e.g., expert advice from programme staff or others, publications, Web-based resources, available social service referrals) to help families address needs and challenges as they arise.		Mentees have a permanent contact person, in the form of the coordinator, who provides support and supervision if required.				
	Has procedures to deal with emergencies involving clients/mentors.					

MENTOR	Scottish Mentoring Network (SMN)	Aktion Zusammen Wachsen (AZW)	TRIEC	Talent2Connect	Approved Provider Standard (APS)	Coordinadora Mentoría Social
						The programme provides mentors with feedback on possible changes in attitudes or behaviours of their mentees to reinforce the positive results of the mentoring relationship.
E: Programme hosts one or more group activities for matches and/or offers information about activities that matches might wish to participate in together.		For mentees: activities in small groups are offered (e.g. group discussions and get-to-know-meetings with other mentees).		Organise workshops for mentors & mentees.		The programme organises one or more group activities for the participants (mentees and mentors) and/or offers information on activities to be carried out during their mentoring meetings.
						After the assignment, mentors are offered the opportunity to participate in exchange or training sessions with other mentors (at least once/more than once).

3.2.7 Closure of the mentoring relationship

Most mentoring organisations pay attention to the end of the mentoring relationship, except for Talent2connect and APS. SMN states that the end of the mentoring relationship has to be 'managed' and that the mentee must be considered. TRIEC is very specific and states that the mentoring relationship must end after 90 days. An important issue in most quality standards is early termination, MENTOR and CMS provide a procedure to assign a new mentor.

The modalities of closure are also important. A final interview is often suggested; in the case of MENTOR and CMS, this is an exit interview conducted by the coach with mentor and mentee. In AZW it is a closing meeting with mentor and mentee, with the coach present. SMN also speaks of a 'closure meeting' between mentor and mentee in which the coach can be present.

As for the content of the closing meeting, AZW, MENTOR and CMS state that there should be 'checklists' or guidelines. MENTOR and CMS are also very specific about this. At CMS the following topics, among others, are central in the closing talk: how the mentor and mentee feel about the termination, the reason for termination, positive experiences and challenges within the mentoring relationship.

An element that we find in MENTOR, AZW and CMS is that there must be a process/policy in place in case the mentor and mentee wish to continue contacting each other after the programme has ended.

All of the listed criteria seem relevant to propose to the practitioners.

Table 3.10   Closure of the mentoring relationship

MENTOR	Scottish Mentoring Network (SMN)	Aktion Zusammen Wachsen (AZW)	TRIEC	Talent2Connect	Approved Provider Standard (APS)	Coordinadora Mentoría Social
Programme has a procedure to manage anticipated closures, when members of the match are willing and able to engage in the closure process.	Manages the ending of the mentoring relationship at a time most appropriate for the client		Partnerships are automatically completed after 90 days.			The programme has a procedure to verify whether the mentor and the mentee have dealt with the closure of the relationship in their encounters and, if not, to intervene to the possible extent.
		The reasons for early endings of mentoring relationships are captured, reviewed and evaluated. Early termination of a mentoring relationship: the coordinator conducts a concluding conversation with the mentor and the mentee. The reasons for the termination are discussed and documented. Early termination of a mentoring relationship: the outcomes of the concluded mentoring relationship, taking into account person-sensitive data, are documented and evaluated by responsible persons.	Coaches cancel partnerships that have reached an impasse and note the reasons for the impasse.			The programme has a procedure for managing early closures, including a process to assign a new mentor, if pertinent.
Programme conducts exit interview with mentors and mentees, and when relevant, with parents or guardians.	Supervisor may be present and participate in the closure meeting.	The coordinator takes part in the concluding conversation.				

MENTOR	Scottish Mentoring Network (SMN)	Aktion Zusammen Wachsen (AZW)	TRIEC	Talent2Connect	Approved Provider Standard (APS)	Coordinadora Mentoría Social
Regardless of the reason for closure, the mentoring programme should have a discussion with mentors and mentees that includes the following topics of conversation.*		Mentor and mentee carry out a concluding conversation. Guidelines for concluding conversations are available. Ideas for joint final activities are available.				Regardless of the reason and timing of the closure, the team of the programme holds a conversation with the mentors to address the following topics: feelings about the closure, reasons of the closure, positive experiences and challenges in the mentoring relationship, revision of the rules of the programme for post-closure contact, if applicable.
Programme has a written policy and procedure, when relevant, for managing rematching.			Coach contact mentor within 10 days to the mentors to ask if they will be mentor again.			
Programme has a written public statement to parents or guardians, if relevant, as well as to mentors and mentees that outline the terms of match closure and the policies for mentor/mentee contact after a match ends (e.g., including contacts using digital or social media).		The coordinator supports agreements on further contact between mentor and mentee if desired.				
		The coordinator clearly expresses recognition (e.g. letter, certificate, or souvenir photo).				

MENTOR	Scottish Mentoring Network (SMN)	Aktion Zusammen Wachsen (AZW)	TRIEC	Talent2Connect	Approved Provider Standard (APS)	Coordinadora Mentoría Social
		A joint activity at the end of the project/match is offered (e.g. excursion, meal, theatre visit).				

* a. Discussion of mentors'/mentees' feelings about closure.
  b. Discussion of reasons for closure, if relevant.
  c. Discussion of positive experiences in the mentoring relationship.
  d. Procedure for mentor notifying the mentee and his or her parents, if relevant, far enough in advance of the anticipated closure meeting to provide sufficient time to adequately prepare the mentee for closure/procedure for notification of mentor, if relevant, about the timing of closure.
  e. Review of program rules for post-closure contact, f. Creation of a plan for post-closure contact, if relevant.
  g. Creation of a plan for the last match meeting, if possible.
  h. Discussion of possible rematching, if relevant.

3.2.8   Additional criteria

In addition to the criteria already discussed, there are some issues that are not directly related to the mentoring process but are nevertheless directly relevant for quality assurance. More specifically, this concerns the evaluation of the mentoring programme. Most organisations have criteria for monitoring and evaluating the relationships. We have already discussed the evaluation during the programme. However, AZW, TRIEC and Talent2Connect also pay attention to an evaluation after the relationship has ended. AZW keeps it rather general and only mentions documenting and evaluating the relationships, while TRIEC and Talent2Connect have specified how (namely through surveys), when and how often the post-relationship evaluation should take place. TRIEC assumes four surveys over a period of one year. Talent2Connect uses two surveys; one immediately after the end of the process and one after six months to measure the impact of the relationship.

In short, conducting an evaluation afterwards is also a possible quality criterion. Although a final interview is planned, a survey at the end of the process and then six months afterwards, for example, offers the opportunity to measure the impact of mentoring, which may be important with a view to quality improvement in the longer term.

Table 3.11   Evaluation of the programme

MENTOR	Scottish Mentoring Network (SMN)	Aktion Zusammen Wachsen (AZW)	TRIEC	Talent2Connect	Approved Provider Standard (APS)	Coordinadora Mentoría Social
Programme theory of change and a formal logic model.	Uses a structured internal and/or external evaluation process to identify ways to improve its service.	The outcomes of the concluded mentoring relationship, taking into account person-sensitive data, are documented and evaluated by responsible persons.	Follow up survey at close, 3 months, 6 months and 12 months after completion. If mentees don't complete the survey, coaches contact them within 7 days.	Send an evaluation survey at the end of the mentorship to the mentees and mentors. Post-evaluation at 6 months after the close to gauge the impact of the mentorship according to a set of predetermined criteria.		
Evaluation plan	Ensures that feedback from its mentors is used to influence the direction and development of the service.					

3.3　Inventory of existing quality criteria applicable to mentoring-to-work

The overview below is the result of the analysis of the quality criteria used by the selected mentoring organisations which, after a comparative analysis conducted by us, were regarded as potentially applicable to the field of mentoring-to-work. As the overview below shows, the comparative analysis of the quality criteria clarified that almost all the quality criteria related to adult mentoring may also apply to mentoring-to-work. In this respect, this overview can be seen as a fairly exhaustive list of quality criteria which could be applied to any mentoring project working with adults. This overview provides the basis for reflecting with practitioners on which of these quality criteria are applicable to mentoring-to-work.

Table 3.12　Proposed quality criteria applicable to mentoring-to-work

Recruitment and referral mentors	The (mentoring) programme provides accurate and realistic information about the content, benefits and challenges of the programme. The programme provides information about who is eligible to be a mentor, the role of the mentor, and the expectations with respect to the mentor position. This description is publicly available.
Recruitment and referral mentees	The programme provides accurate and realistic information about who is eligible to be a mentee, the content of the programme, and what benefits one can (potentially) expect when participating in the programme.
Selection and screening mentors	The programme has explicit and clear selection criteria and ensures that they are aligned with the objectives of the project. The programme provides minimum one face-to-face conversation with the mentor as part of the selection/screening that, at a minimum, elaborates on the willingness to commit to the programme for a certain period of time and with a certain frequency and tests for realistic expectations about the programme. In doing so, the programme works with a standardised screening instrument. The programme conducts reference checks for (individually) referred mentors and also makes explicit how those reference checks are conducted. The programme refers ineligible mentors to other volunteer programs.
Selection and screening mentees	The programme makes the selection criteria explicit and clear and ensures that they are aligned with the objectives of the programme. The programme provides minimum one face-to-face conversation with the mentee as part of the selection/screening that, at a minimum, elaborates on the willingness to commit to the programme for a certain period of time and with a certain frequency and tests for realistic expectations about the programme. In doing so, the programme works with a standardised screening instrument. The programmes refers ineligible mentees to more appropriate assistance. The programme has set clear deadlines between application/screening mentee and decision.
The matching and start of the duos	The programme seeks the best possible match in terms of the objectives pursued and uses clear criteria to do so. Possible criteria are availability, location, age, professional similarities, objective, ... The programme ensures that the first meeting between mentor and mentee takes place in a neutral location and with a coach present. As part of the programme, a contract or commitment statement is concluded between the mentee and mentor that includes among others duration, frequency of contact, roles, ... The programme provides a policy for more difficult to match profiles. If a 'match' is not provided for a mentee within a predetermined time, the programme refers them to other appropriate services. After a certain period of time, the programmes verifies whether the mentoring relationship is going well and if there is a good 'match'. Proposal presented is after 1 month or after 2 contact moments. The programme also provides a possibility to end the mentoring relationship.

The mentoring relationship	The programme has determined a minimum and maximum duration of the mentoring relationship. Proposal presented is minimum 3 months and maximum 1 year. The programme provides a minimum number of contact moments. Proposal to be discussed.
Follow-up and support by coach/ organisation	The programme follows up with the duos on a regular basis. Proposal presented is minimum every three months. The programme has determined the topics to be discussed during the follow-up and provides a checklist for this purpose. (topics to be specified in consultation with mentoring organisations). The programme provides a fixed point of contact for the mentors and mentees for questions, in case of possible conflicts, … The programme provides supporting material for mentors and mentees, these include guidelines, expert advice, … The programme provides group activities for mentors and mentees to participate in. The programme works on the retention of mentors.
Conclusion	The programme has clear criteria regarding the termination of the mentoring process. (e.g. at the request of the mentor or mentee, after a certain period of time, after a number of conversations, when it can be extended). - And provides a procedure/policy for early termination of the mentoring relationship, at a minimum asking for the reason for the early termination. - Provides a clear policy and framework for matches who wish to continue working after the formal conclusion of the relationship. The programme provides a final meeting with mentor and mentee. The programme has a checklist for the final meeting.
Training	The programme has a prematch training/information session for mentors on the following topics: - what is mentoring/uniqueness of mentoring; - programme requirements (match length, initiation of contact, contact frequency, duration of visits, protocols for missing or being late to meetings, match termination); - expectations/roles/which tasks are possible and which are not; - contact with the coach and expectations in terms of monitoring; - resources available for mentors; - confidentiality and anonymity; - expenses and travel. The programme has a training/information session for mentees with the same topics.
Evaluation	The programme provides an evaluation sometime after the conclusion of the mentoring process.

- PART 2 TOWARDS MINIMUM QUALITY CRITERIA FOR MENTORING-TO-WORK -

4 | Review of the quality criteria identified by mentoring-to-work programs

4.1 Approach

In order to develop (minimum) quality criteria for mentoring-to-work, the retained quality criteria (see earlier section) were submitted for review by various Flemish and international practitioners. The review had the following objectives: (1) to test, from a practitioner's perspective, the extent to which they are applicable to mentoring-to-work projects, (2) to find out which criteria are missing, (3) to create a consensus on minimum criteria in mentoring-to-work or, in other words, criteria that every mentoring-to-work project should meet. These must also be feasible and realistic for start-up mentoring organisations.

The review was organised in two rounds, each time a group of practitioners was brought together to exchange ideas and views.

In the first round, this set of criteria was tested with the (international) partners involved in the ESF project *'towards effective and qualitative mentoring practices for migrants'*. In addition, a test was organised with Flemish and Brussels stakeholders. On this basis, the criteria were refined and additional points were considered.

In the second round, the adapted criteria were presented to 5 mentoring-to-work organisations that are subsidised by the Flemish public employment service (VDAB). We consider the last workshop as the final touchstone for the criteria and, for this reason, provide an extensive report on this event. On this basis, a final set of criteria was then drawn up.

The workshops were used to refine not only the criteria but also the reviewing method for the workshops themselves (cf. appendix 2). Initially, this method was developed to shape the review of quality criteria within the specific set-up of this ESF project. It was a way to make the practitioners who participated in the assessment rounds reflect on the quality criteria, to capture their input as systematically as possible and to come to a consensus on (minimal) quality criteria. However, the review method can also be used as a self-reflection instrument within mentoring organisations. The focus then is mainly on checking what is important with regard to quality within the organisation and detecting possible gaps in the existing approach. This review method can also be applied more broadly. As the list of quality criteria is exhaustive, the method can also be used within other mentoring fields that focus on adults.

4.2 Reviewing the criteria with mentoring-to-work practitioners

4.2.1 Workshop with the ESF-partners

The first workshop focussed on mentoring-to-work projects within the ESF-project 'towards effective and qualitative mentoring practices for migrants'. More specifically, VDAB, Beyond the Horizon, Ostend Economic House and the Finnish universities of Lathi and Turku were each setting up their own mentoring project. We discussed the input we received from them for the different quality criteria

An initial question for clarification was whether these criteria apply to 'mentoring-to-work' or to 'migrant mentoring'-to-work. It was clarified that this was about 'migrant mentoring', but after reviewing the criteria, they can also be used more broadly for mentoring-to-work projects targeting other groups. The participants of the workshops agreed on most of the criteria. There was no full agreement about the following topics:
- when it concerns the criteria related to selection and screening of mentors, the reference check was not retained. The reasoning behind this was that it might deter mentors. A minor addition to the selection and screening criteria was that the intake meeting between coach and mentor/mentee doesn't necessarily have to be physical, but also can take place online.
- regarding the matching process and the start of the duos, it was stated that it is not necessary that this happens in the presence of a coordinator. This was retained as a criterion but not as a minimum criterion. What is important, according to the participants, is that there has been contact with the mentor before the mentoring relationship starts. In addition, it was argued that the first meeting

between mentor and mentee can also take place at a collective event, so this does not have to be an individual meeting in the presence of the coach.
- an addition to the existing criteria was that there needs to be a clear policy about when information can be exchanged between mentor and mentee and about GDPR.
- with regard to the follow-up of the duo's, the suggestion was to not work with a frequency of every few months, but to work on the basis of 1/3 of the term or half of the term, for example.
- for the final interview it was suggested that this could also be done by means of a questionnaire or an e-mail. The evaluation sometime after completion was seen as an additional quality criterion, not as a minimum criterion.
- as far as training is concerned, first of all, it was argued that a distinction should be made between providing information and actual training for mentors and mentees. What is part of the criteria now is the provision of information. Training, however, is the development of skills such as intercultural skills. Providing information was seen as a minimum criterion for both mentees and mentors. Training was seen as an additional criterion. It is also worth noting that the organisations mentioned that this information does not necessarily have to be provided in an information session but can also be provided within an individual conversation. The fact that the information is provided is more important than the way it is provided.

In general, participants agreed to see most of the criteria as quality criteria with the exception of the reference check. However, not all criteria were seen as minimum criteria. The reason given by the participants is that some of the criteria were not feasible for start-up organisations. This includes the presence of the coach when the duos start out and the final interviews. The importance of working efficiently was also stressed; it is important to have personal contact between the mentor and mentee before the match takes place but this can be at different moments, i.e. during the information session, or an event with mentors or mentees or during 'formal' screening. This can also be combined, for example an information session can be combined with a screening.

4.2.2 Input from Flemish mentoring organisations and funders

Four Flemish mentoring-to-work organisations participated in a second workshop: Connect2work, Mentor2work, AIF and Mentoring@Work. VDAB (public employment service of Flanders) and Actiris (public employment service of Brussels) also participated as contracting parties of mentoring-to-work projects. Time was limited for this workshop so we decided to focus on the criteria on which there was no consensus. In this workshop we introduced the idea of 'very important criteria'. The organisations were thus able to indicate if the criterion is applicable, if it is a minimum criterion but also if they consider it as 'very important'. A maximum of 3 criteria could be considered as 'very important'.

A first observation was that no additional criteria were mentioned. On most of the criteria, the workshop participants agreed. There was discussion about the following topics:
- the provision of at least one face-to-face meeting with the mentor to screen him/her was not questioned as such, but it was argued that this does not necessarily have to be a physical meeting; it can also be done by phone or online. This face-to-face contact was considered very important by one mentoring organisation and one tendering organisation;
- in this workshop, questions were also raised about reference checks. Therefore, this criterion was not retained;
- for matching and the start of the duos, there was largely agreement on the quality criteria. There was a discussion on the criterion to 'provide a policy for profiles that are difficult to match'. The mentoring organisations did not see this as a minimum criterion. VDAB did, however, because they think you cannot make mentees wait too long for a match. The organisations mainly stumbled

over the way it was formulated, the fact that you need to have a 'policy' around this. They did agree that you should think about what to do with mentees for whom you do not find a match. The wording was adapted accordingly. An important difference with the Finnish mentoring organisations was that all participants in this workshop regarded the fact that the first meeting between mentor and mentee must take place at a neutral location in the presence of a coordinator as a minimum criterion. One organisation saw this as a very important criterion;

- when it comes to the mentoring relationship, everyone agreed that there must be a minimum and a maximum duration. On the other hand, there was disagreement with the suggested time span of minimum 3 months and maximum 1 year. Both VDAB and FOREM indicated that they thought 3 months was too short. In addition, the question was raised of whether one year is enough for very vulnerable groups;
- regarding the follow-up, there was agreement that the coach should contact the duos soon after the start. The organisations agreed that the coach should contact them after 2 contacts or 1 month. For one organisation, this was a very important criterion. One party indicated that this contact should be made sooner;
- there was also a consensus on closure. All organisations agreed that a closing meeting should be provided. In contrast to the previous workshop, it was stated that this should be a conversation, not an e-mail or online questionnaire; two parties considered this to be very important;
- a final criterion concerns training. Here, too, a distinction was made between information and training. This was adjusted in the criteria. The fact that there must be an information session was labelled 'very important' by five organisations. It was worth noting that 1 organisation did not retain this criterion because they considered it important that the basic information as described in the quality criteria was provided, but that this did not necessarily have to take place via an information session. This organisation provided this information through the intake. In the discussion about this criterion, it also transpired that the majority of organisations consider the provision of the described information to be a minimum criterion. This was not the case for mentor training, which was seen as a quality criterion, but not as a minimum criterion.

In this workshop we saw the same tendencies as in the workshop with the ESF-partners. Most of the criteria were agreed upon, with the exception of reference checks. During this workshop, it was also mentioned that a distinction should be made between training and information and the fact that information can be provided in different ways. Differences in the two workshops concerned the presence of a coach at the first meeting between mentor and mentee, and in the closing interview. In this workshop, this was seen as a minimum criterion.

4.2.3 Input learning network mentoring

The adapted criteria were tested among the participants of the 'learning network mentoring-to-work'. Organisations that have been awarded a subsidy under the 'mentoring-to-work' subsidy scheme by the VDAB took part in this learning network. In the period 2020-2023, they will set up 1,500 trajectories for job-seekers of foreign origin. This concerns the following mentoring organisations: DUO for a JOB, Randstad RiseSmart, FDMO West-Vlaanderen, Mentoring@Work and GATAM.

The learning network showed that, with a few exceptions, there was a consensus about the quality criteria being applicable to mentoring-to-work projects, and that they were mostly considered as minimum quality criteria.

An overview of the findings:
- there is little discussion on the quality criteria with regard to the referral and recruitment of mentees/mentors; these are considered minimum quality criteria except for one organisation.
- with respect to the selection and screening of mentors/mentees:

- all organisations agreed that the selection criteria should be explicit and clear and in line with the project's objectives. There was some discussion about having a standardised screening instrument. The term 'standardised' was understood by some organisations as a scientifically based instrument and therefore not seen as minimal. Some mentoring organisations do use a questionnaire or a uniform document, but this is not scientifically based. It was clarified that this does not need to be a scientifically based instrument and, after this clarification, all organisations but one agreed to keep this as a minimum criterion.
- all organisations considered a face-to-face screening/interview (can be online) as a minimum quality criterion for both mentors and mentees. For two mentoring organisations, this was seen as a very important quality criterion for mentors, for three as very important for mentees.
- also within the organisations participating in the learning network, there was little support for carrying out reference checks on mentors. Three organisations did not see this as a quality criterion. They believe that mentors volunteer to take part in a mentoring-to-work programme and clear criteria are agreed, so it is mainly a matter of trust. However, the mentoring organisations find it important to know what experience the candidate mentor has and what skills and qualities he/she could bring to the programme. There are, however, methods for uncovering this information, without using reference checks. Practical experience shows that candidate mentors tend to offer this information spontaneously, that this is discussed in an interview or that the information is already 'checked' because some mentors are referred by companies that guarantee a qualitative referral.
- referring mentors whose expectations do not match with mentoring-to-work programmes to other volunteer programmes was seen as a quality criterion by most organisations, but not as a minimum. One organisation explicitly did not consider this a quality criterion, another organisation considered it very important. Thus, there is no consensus on this criterion. The same picture emerged for the referral of mentees.
- a clearly agreed time between screening and admission to the programme was seen by three organisations as a minimum quality criterion. For one organisation, it is indeed a quality criterion, but not a minimum criterion. It was argued that this period is too dependent on (external) factors for this to be regarded as a minimum criterion. For another organisation, it is not a quality criterion at all, and no such time limit is used in their programme. After all, in some circumstances and after the screening, a mentee could decide to first complete another action, such as training, and then enter the mentoring programme. There was a clarification that this criterion applies to mentees who are interested in entering the programme directly. In order to reach consensus, the wording was changed to aim for the shortest possible period between application/screening and decision.
- quality criteria on matching are considered by the majority of organisations as minimum quality criteria. The following points were discussed:
  - one organisation stated that the criterion that matching must take place 'on the basis of transparent and clear criteria that are in line with the objective of the programme' feels very limited. They clarified this by stating that they not only match on hard criteria such as sector or location, but also on soft criteria such as personality. It was further explained that these are also matching criteria and that it is especially important that organisations think about which criteria are important to them when it comes to matching, without imposing which criteria it should be.
  - another point of discussion was the fact that the first meeting between mentor and mentee must take place in a neutral setting and in the presence of a coach. One organisation did not agree with this criterion because the first meeting between mentor and mentee in their operation takes place on using a 'speed date' scenario, in the presence of coaches. This does not, however, contradict the quality criterion and is more method of implementation as the meeting takes place in a neutral location and in the presence of a coordinator.

- some mentees' profiles are more difficult to match than others. Having a strategy for dealing with this target group is seen by two organisations as a minimum criterion and by two as a quality criterion but not as a minimum criterion; one organisation did not see this as a criterion because they have no experience with it. We do not consider the latter an argument for not considering it a criterion.
  - a final point of discussion is the commitment statement between mentor and mentee. One organisation stated that they draw up separate commitment statements with the mentor and the mentee but there is no commitment statement drawn up between the two; another organisation argued that this agreement is one between the supporting organisation, mentor and mentee. What seems most important here is that the commitment statement clearly sets out that mentoring is voluntary but not without obligation and also defines the expectations. This can be done through an agreement with or between mentor and mentee.
- each organisation agrees that there should be a minimum and a maximum duration and a minimum number of contact moments. They agree on the suggested duration of between 3 and 12 months. One organisation does state that it has no minimum duration. As for the number of contacts between mentor and mentee, there is a consensus that this should be at least once every two weeks.
- the quality criteria concerning the follow-up and support of the mentoring process by a coach were seen as minimum quality criteria by most organisations. All the organisations did consider these criteria as quality criteria. Two organisations did not consider the provision of support material for mentors and mentees as a minimum criterion, the same applies to group activities and a checklist for follow-up conversations. There was a consensus among the organisations that at least one monthly follow-up is advisable. It was emphasised that this does not always have to be intensive, but can be done by telephone, email, but also, for example, during a group meeting.
- quality criteria that apply to the closure of mentoring were considered to be minimum quality criteria by almost all mentoring organisations.
- the quality criterion of offering (an) information (session) to mentors with a number of defined topics was considered minimal by all organisations. It is worth noting that this is also the case for training for mentors, and training in certain skills such as intercultural skills. Only one mentoring organisation does not see this as a minimum criterion. There is more differentiation when it comes to offering an information session for mentees: three organisations see this as a quality criterion, but not as a minimum. One organisation sees this as very important.
- quality criteria concerning evaluation were unanimously seen as minimum quality criteria.

In this workshop with modified criteria, we saw little difference from the previous workshop, although there were more questions for clarification. Also in this workshop the reference check was not considered a minimum criterion. It was notable that in this workshop training was seen as a minimum criterion by many participants. Finally, an important finding is that here too, no additional quality criteria were formulated.

4.3   Discussion and final set of quality criteria

The review of the quality criteria in the workshops had three functions: (1) to find out which criteria were missing, (2) to test from a practitioner's perspective to what extent they can be applied to mentoring-to-work programmes, (3) to come to a consensus on 'minimum' criteria for mentoring-to-work, i.e. criteria that every mentoring-to-work project should fulfil, but at the same time ensuring these are feasible and realistic for start-up mentoring organisations.

The initial observation is that no more criteria were added after the first workshop. In this respect, we think we have reached a saturation point of applicable quality criteria for mentoring-to-work projects. The criteria that were added are: there must be a policy on GDPR and about when to

exchange contact info between mentor and mentee. There was also a suggestion to distinguish between providing information and 'training'. A number of criteria were also made more concrete. There was a consensus that the coach should follow up the duos at least monthly and that there should be contact between the duos at least every two weeks. These criteria were included in the final set of quality criteria.

A second observation is that there was consensus on the applicability of the criteria for mentoring-to-work projects. An exception was the reference check, this criterion was therefore dropped.

There was further discussion about what should or should not be considered a minimum criterion. The first set of discussions concerned modalities. There was also discussion about whether face-to-face contacts could also be online, whether the first contact between mentor and mentee in the presence of a coach could also take place at a group event, and whether the information at the information sessions for mentors and mentees could also be provided during the intake sessions. These discussion points did not touch upon the core of the criteria but rather on how to meet the criteria, i.e. more on the 'how' than on the 'what'.

There were also criteria on which there was no consensus. The review exercise mainly took place with Flemish mentoring organisations, but also with a number of start-up Finnish organisations. These Finnish organisations mainly remarked on the feasibility of certain criteria, including the presence of the coach at the start of the duos and the final interviews.[7] We opted to keep these criteria as minimum criteria because they are present in almost all quality labels and the focus is primarily on quality criteria in the Flemish context. Nevertheless, it is important to test the quality criteria more extensive to see to what extent they are feasible in other contexts and for start-up mentoring-to-work initiatives.

There were also a few criteria on which there was no consensus among the Flemish mentoring organisations. These included referring mentors and mentees whose expectations do not match the programme, having a strategy with regard to profiles that are more difficult to match, providing support material and group activities. Due to the fact that there is no consensus on these criteria, we do not consider these criteria as minimum criteria.

We end this discussion by repeating the previous table (see Table 3.12), but with the adapted criteria. The criteria that were not retained are crossed out in the table, the criteria that are not minimal are marked with an 'E' for 'extension', and new criteria are underlined. We consider the remaining criteria to be minimum quality criteria.

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7   An additional workshop was organized for 8 Finnish mentoring organizations. These organizations had a broader scope then mentoring-to-work so it was difficult to draw conclusions for mentoring-to-work organizations. It was however remarkable that the presence of a coach at the start of the duos and the closing interview were not seen as minimal.

Table 4.1   Modified quality criteria for mentoring-to-work

Recruitment and referral mentors	The (mentoring) programme provides accurate and realistic information about the content, benefits and challenges of the programme. The programme provides information about who is eligible to be a mentor, the role of the mentor, and the expectations with respect to the mentor position. This description is publicly available.
Recruitment and referral mentees	The programme provides accurate and realistic information about who is eligible to be a mentee, the content of the programme, and what benefits one can (potentially) expect when participating in the programme.
Selection and screening mentors	The programme has explicit and clear selection criteria and ensures that they are aligned with the objectives of the project. The programme provides minimum one face-to-face conversation with the mentor (<u>online or otherwise</u>) as part of the selection/screening that, at a minimum, elaborates on the willingness to commit to the programme for a certain period of time and with a certain frequency and tests for realistic expectations about the programme. In doing so, the programme works with a ~~standardized~~ screening instrument. ~~The programme conducts reference checks for (individually) referred mentors and also makes explicit how those reference checks are conducted.~~ The programme refers ineligible mentors to other volunteer programmes. (E)
Selection and screening mentees	The programme makes the selection criteria explicit and clear and ensures that they are aligned with the objectives of the programme. The programme provides minimum one face-to-face conversation with the mentee (<u>online or otherwise</u>) as part of the selection/screening that, at a minimum, elaborates on the willingness to commit to the programme for a certain period of time and with a certain frequency and tests for realistic expectations about the programme. In doing so, the programme works with a ~~standardized~~ screening instrument. The programmes refers ineligible mentees to more appropriate assistance. (E) <u>The programme strives for the shortest possible time between application/ screening mentee and decision.</u>
The matching and start of the duos	The programme seeks the best possible match in terms of the objectives pursued and uses clear criteria to do so. Possible criteria are availability, location, age, professional similarities, objective, <u>personality</u>, ... The programme ensures that the first meeting between mentor and mentee takes place in a neutral location and with a coach present. As part of the programme, a contract or commitment statement is concluded between the mentee and mentor that includes among others duration, frequency of contact, roles, ... The programme provides a <u>strategy/approach</u> for more difficult to match profiles. If a 'match' is not provided for a mentee within a predetermined time, the programme refers them to other appropriate services. The programme verifies <u>at the latest 1 month or 2 contact moments</u> after the start whether the mentoring relationship is going well and if there is a good 'match'. The programme also provides a possibility to end the mentoring relationship.
The mentoring relationship	The programme has determined a minimum and maximum duration of the mentoring relationship <u>depending on the objectives and target group of the programme</u>. The duration is between 3 months and 1 year. The programme provides a minimum number of contact moments between mentor and mentee. <u>Specifically, a minimum of bi-weekly contact between mentor and mentee is prioritised.</u>

Follow-up and support by coach/ organisation	The programme follows up with the duos on a regular basis and does this <u>minimum once per month.</u>
	The programme has determined the topics to be discussed during the follow-up and provides a checklist for this purpose. (E)
	The programme works on the retention of mentors. (E)
	The programme provides a fixed point of contact for the mentors and mentees for questions, in case of possible conflicts, ...
	The programme provides supporting material for mentors and mentees, these include guidelines, expert advice, ... (E)
	The programme provides group activities for mentors and mentees to participate in. (E)
Conclusion	The programme has clear criteria regarding the termination of the mentoring process. (e.g. at the request of the mentor or mentee, after a certain period of time, after a number of conversations, when it can be extended).
	- And provides a procedure/policy for early termination of the mentoring relationship, at a minimum asking for the reason for the early termination.
	- Provides a clear policy and framework for matches who wish to continue working after the formal conclusion of the relationship.
	The programme provides a final <u>face-to-face</u> meeting with mentor and mentee (<u>can also be done online</u>).
	The programme has a checklist for the final meeting.
Training	The programme provides information to mentors about the following topics:
	what is mentoring/uniqueness of mentoring;
	- programme requirements (match length, initiation of contact, contact frequency, duration of visits, protocols for missing or being late to meetings, match termination;
	- expectations/roles/which tasks are possible and which are not;
	- contact with the coach and expectations in terms of monitoring;
	- supporting material available for mentors;
	- confidentiality and anonymity;
	- expenses and travel.
	This information can be provided either through an information session or through an individual conversation.
	<u>The programme provides a training for mentors before or during the process on skills that can enhance the quality of the mentoring relationship, such as intercultural skills (E).</u>
	The programme provides (a) information (session) for mentees about the same topics (E OR NOT).
Evaluation	The programme provides an evaluation some time after the conclusion of the duos.

5 | Final set of quality criteria

The set of criteria that was finally retained is presented below. We distinguish between minimum criteria, i.e. criteria that any mentoring-to-work programme should meet, and criteria that were not retained as a minimum but as applicable quality criteria.

Minimum quality criteria

1. The (mentoring) programme provides accurate and realistic information about the content, benefits and challenges of the programme to potential mentors.

2. The programme provides information about who is eligible to be a mentor, the role of the mentor, and the expectations with respect to the mentor position. This description is publicly available.

3. The programme provides accurate and realistic information about who is eligible to be a mentee, the content of the programme, and what benefits one can (potentially) expect when participating in the programme.

4. The programme has explicit and clear selection criteria for mentors and mentees and ensures that they are aligned with the objectives of the project.

5. The programme provides at least one face-to-face conversation with the mentor and the mentee (online or otherwise) as part of the selection/screening that, as a minimum, elaborates on the willingness to commit to the programme for a certain period of time and with a certain frequency and tests for realistic expectations about the programme. In doing so, the programme works with a screening instrument.

6. The programme strives for the shortest possible time between application/screening mentee and decision to admit into the programme.

7. The programme seeks the best possible match in terms of the objectives pursued and uses clear criteria to do so. Possible criteria are availability, location, age, professional similarities, objective, personality, ...

8. The programme ensures that the first meeting between mentor and mentee takes place in a neutral location and with a coach present.

9. As part of the programme, a contract or commitment statement is concluded between/with mentee and mentor that includes among others duration, frequency of contact, roles, ...

10. The programme provides a strategy/approach for more difficult to match profiles. If a 'match' is not provided for a mentee within a predetermined time, the programme refers them to other appropriate services.

11. The programme has determined a minimum and maximum duration of the mentoring relationship depending on the objectives and target group of the programme. The duration is between 3 months and 1 year.

12. The programme provides a minimum number of contact moments between mentor and mentee. Specifically, a minimum of bi-weekly contact between mentor and mentee is prioritised.

13. The programme verifies, at the latest 1 month or 2 contact moments after the start, whether the mentoring relationship is going well and if there is a good 'match'. The programme also provides an option to end the mentoring relationship.

14. The programme follows up with the duos on a regular basis and does this at least once per month.

15. The programme provides a fixed point of contact (coach) for the mentors and mentees for questions, in case of possible conflicts, ...

16. The programme provides information to the mentors about the following topics: what is mentoring/uniqueness of mentoring, programme requirements (match length, initiation of contact, contact frequency, duration of visits, protocols for missing or being late to meetings, match termination; expectations/roles/which tasks are possible and which are not; contact with the coach and expectations in terms of monitoring; supporting material available for mentors, confidentiality and anonymity; expenses and travel. This information can be provided either through an information session or through an individual conversation.

17. The programme also provides information about the above topics to the mentees.

18. The programme has clear criteria regarding the termination of the mentoring process. (e.g. at the request of mentor or mentee, after a certain period of time, after a number of conversations, when it can be extended).
    - And provides a procedure/policy for early termination of the mentoring relationship which, at the very least, asks for the reason for the early termination.
    - Provides a clear policy and framework for matches who wish to continue working after the formal conclusion of the relationship.

19. The programme provides a final face-to-face meeting with mentor and mentee (can also be done online). The programme uses a checklist for this purpose.

20. The programme provides an evaluation some time after the conclusion of the duos.

Applicable quality criteria

1. The programme refers ineligible mentors to other volunteer programs.

2. The programme refers ineligible mentees to more appropriate assistance.

3. The programme has determined the topics to be discussed during the follow-up and provides a checklist for this purpose.

4. The programme works on the retention of mentors.

5. The programme provides supporting material for mentors and mentees, these include guidelines, expert advice, ...

6. The programme provides group activities for mentors and mentees to participate in.

7. The programme provides a training for mentors before or during the term of the programme on skills that can enhance the quality of the mentoring relationship, such as intercultural skills.

This set of criteria is a starting point. It is a source of inspiration, a stimulus to think about the (process) quality of mentoring-to-work. The quality criteria and the underlying method can be a starting point for a reflection process within mentoring organisations. It can also be used by contracting authorities or sponsors as requirements they can set when awarding/supporting mentoring projects.

- PART 3 CONCLUSION -

6 | Concluding notes

Mentoring-to-work is increasingly being used as an instrument to promote integration in the labour market. This is not only the case in Flanders, but also on a European level. The most remarkable example is the French *'1 jeune, 1 mentor'* in which 200,000 young people receive a mentor with the aim of helping them in their school career or with their first steps in the labour market. However, mentoring-to-work can only be successful if it is of a suitable quality. Indeed, it can be assumed that a good quality mentoring-to-work project realises much better results reflecting on quality is therefore crucial.

However, quality is a catch-all term that can encompass many concepts and ideas. In order to clarify the concept of quality, we approached it from different perspectives. More specifically, we distinguish four quality perspectives: quality from (1) the client perspective, (2) the organisational perspective, (3) the objective and result's perspective and (4) the process' perspective (Aaltonen, 1999). Each of these dimensions is essential. In our view, good quality mentoring equates to process quality, satisfied mentees (and mentors), a result that is in line with the defined goals, and an organisation that is well managed.

In this paper we have focused on **process quality**. However, by focusing exclusively on the process, we do not want to detract from the importance of the other dimensions. Some recent research has been conducted on these other dimensions of mentoring-to-work. For outcomes or effects of mentoring, we refer to De Cuyper & Vandermeerschen (2022) who developed a framework to measure the impact of mentoring-to-work.[8] In the same paper, client satisfaction is also discussed. Regarding the organisational perspective, we refer to the work of Carrette (2019) that provides some guidance on organisational management and financial sustainability for mentoring-to-work organisations. The explicit choice for the process perspective is also inspired by the expectation - as mentioned above - that an optimisation of the process is necessary to be able to achieve predefined results or effects.

On the basis of a 'quick scan' of existing quality criteria, it appeared that there are almost no mentoring-to-work organisations that have established process quality criteria. Therefore, we started from other mentoring domains that do work with quality criteria. Our objective was not to make an inventory of all possible organisations working with quality criteria, but to reach a 'saturation point' when it comes to quality criteria. Based on these existing quality criteria, an exhaustive list of criteria that apply to adult mentoring programmes was drawn up. This was the basis on which, through an iterative process, we first made the shift towards mentoring-to-work and then to minimum criteria. The minimum criteria are vital for quality mentoring but also feasible for start-up mentoring programmes. These criteria were discussed with both practitioners and procurers of mentoring projects. A method was developed to facilitate discussion and reflection on quality. The result is a set of minimum criteria applicable to the mentoring-to-work domain in Belgium. This set of criteria builds on both scientific and practical expertise in other fields of mentoring. In this respect, the result of this paper is not only **a set of minimum quality criteria applicable to the field of mentoring-to-**

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8 See Cuyper *et al.* (2021) for an evaluation framework focusing on buddy projects for newcomers.

work, but also a systematic overview of existing quality criteria and a starting point and **method to develop these criteria within other (national) contexts and domains of mentoring**.

During the process of drawing up minimum quality criteria, two questions arose: (1) **To what extent are quality criteria 'universal'?** Do they differ for mentoring-to-work projects in other regions? Do they differ for adult mentoring projects with different objectives?, (2) **How are these quality criteria best applied?** As tools for reflection? As criteria that are imposed?

With regard to the **first question**, it became clear from both the comparison of the various existing quality criteria and the workshops that there is often agreement on what constitute minimum or important quality criteria, but not necessarily on how exactly these criteria should be substantiated. An example is the 'follow-up' of the mentoring duos. There is a broad consensus on the fact that duos need to be followed up, but not on how often this should be done, using which method (face-to-face, telephone, e-mail, etc.), and whether or not there should be fixed moments. The modalities of the criteria often depend on a number of factors such as (1) the target group and programme approach, (2) the values and norms of a mentoring programme, (3) the requirements of possible funders and (4) the financial resources. Broadly speaking, we believe that minimum universal criteria are possible regardless of the type of mentoring programme, but that the actual implementation is context-dependent, taking into account the factors outlined above. In addition to a number of recurring 'universal' principles, we also see differences depending on the nature of the mentoring programme. In this respect, a set of 'universal' criteria that apply to all projects supplemented by 'subsets' seems a possible option.

In order to take further steps in developing these criteria, it is necessary to carry out a more systematic analysis of existing criteria and to identify which criteria recur in different kinds of mentoring projects. More scientific research is therefore necessary. This also applies to the study of 'active ingredients' in mentoring. Many impact studies currently focus on the impact or effects of mentoring programmes, but not on what the 'active ingredients' of mentoring programmes are. Research that makes the link between process quality/project design, and programme impact is important. Finally, we think it is important not only to set criteria, but also to offer (innovative) ways for mentoring organisations to efficiently meet these criteria.[9]
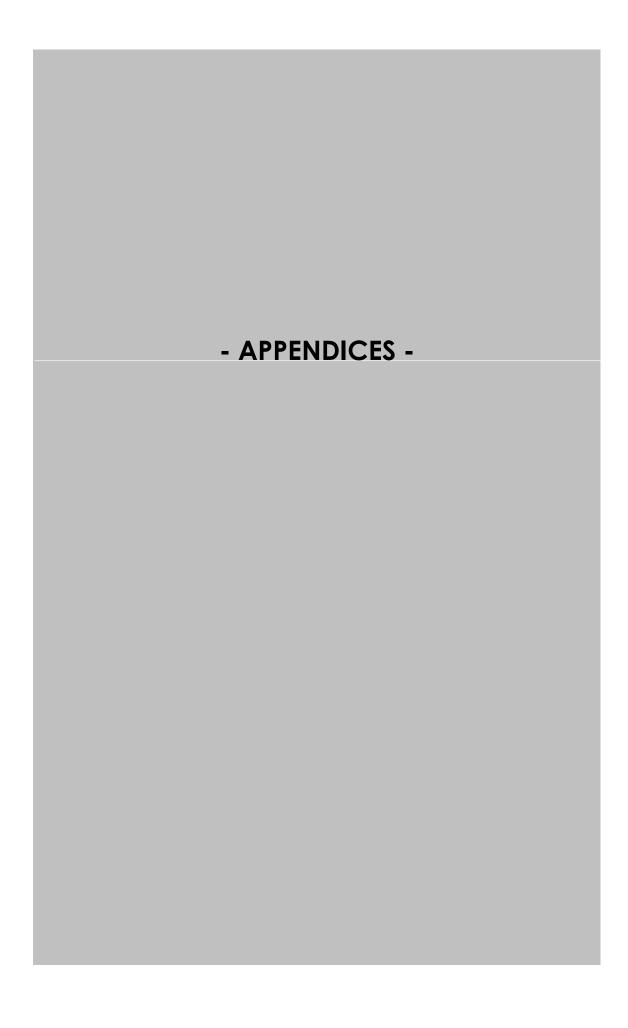
A **second question** is how best to work with the quality criteria. When it comes to how to implement quality criteria within mentoring programmes, a distinction must be made between individual organisations and the organisation-wide level.

When it comes to quality at the organisational level, it seems particularly important that quality criteria are supported by all staff members. As far as we are concerned, the process of reflection on quality seems to be as important as the quality criteria themselves. A structured quality exercise can help with this (see link). It is important, however, that this quality exercise is not only conducted by the organisation's managers but also by the practitioners. This consensus on quality can then be formalised in a quality manual or a quality charter and can be processed in training courses for practitioners.

It is a different story when quality criteria are introduced on an organisation-wide level, e.g. as a condition for becoming a member of an umbrella organisation or imposed by a contracting authority. It seems important to us to do this in consultation with the mentoring organisations. The challenge

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9   Within the mentoring-to-work field some initiatives have been taken to help mentoring organisations to meet the quality criteria- see Op de Beeck en De Cuyper (2022) for guidelines and the project 'Supermentor' (https://super-mentor.eu) in which a free, partly online training is developed for mentoring-to-work projects. Another example is the The Scottish Mentoring Network who also works with a best practices guide.

when imposing quality criteria or working with quality labels is that these often remain very procedural without necessarily realising a culture of quality. In order to avoid this, the number of criteria must be limited so as to avoid a long list that is hard to remember and the general criteria must be partly specified by the organisations themselves. The organisation-specific translation should initiate a reflection process within the organisation. The process should also work as much as possible with context-specific subsets so that an organisation is accurately reflected within the various criteria.

- APPENDICES -

appendix 1 Suggested topics for a mentor training

Programme provides pre-match training for mentors on the following topics:
- programme requirements (e.g. match length, match frequency, duration of visits, protocols for missing sessions, being late to meetings and match termination);
- mentors' goals and expectations for the mentee, parent or guardian, and the mentoring relationship;
- mentors' obligations and appropriate roles;
- relationship development and maintenance;
- ethical and safety issues that may arise in relation to the mentoring relationship;
- effective closure of the mentoring relationship;
- sources of assistance available to support mentors;
- opportunities and challenges associated with mentoring specific populations of young people, (e.g. children with an incarcerated parent, youths involved in the juvenile justice system, youths in foster care, high school early leavers), if relevant;
- initiating the mentoring relationship;
- developing an effective, positive relationship with mentee's family, if relevant (p. 35).

The programme provides training for the mentor on the following risk management policies that are matched to the programme model, setting, and population served:
- appropriate physical contact;
- contact with mentoring programme (e.g. who to contact, when to contact);
- relationship monitoring requirements (e.g. response time, frequency, schedule);
- approved activities;
- mandatory reporting requirements associated with suspected child abuse or neglect, and suicidal/ homicidal tendencies;
- confidentiality and anonymity;
- digital and social media use;
- overnight visits and out of town travel;
- money spent on mentee and mentoring activities;
- transportation;
- emergency and crisis situation procedures;
- health and medical care;
- discipline;
- substance use;
- firearms and weapons;
- inclusion of others in match meetings (e.g. siblings, mentee's friends);
- photo and image use;
- evaluation and use of data;
- grievance procedures;
- other relevant topics.

The following enhancements were added:
- how developmental functioning may affect the mentoring relationship;
- how culture, gender, race, religion, socioeconomic status, and other demographic characteristics of the mentor and mentee may affect the mentoring relationship;
- topics tailored to the needs and characteristics of the mentee;
- closure procedures.

An enhancement is also the training for mentees. The following topics are presented:
- purpose of mentoring;
- programme requirements (e.g. match length, match frequency, duration of visits, protocols for missing sessions or being late to meetings, match termination);
- mentees' goals for mentoring;
- mentors' obligations and appropriate roles;
- mentees' obligations and appropriate roles;
- ethics and safety in mentoring relationships;
- initiating the mentoring relationship;
- effective closure of the mentoring relationship.

The programme provides training for the mentee on the following risk management. Under this heading the topics are repeated that also apply to the mentor.

Source: Garringer, M., Kupersmidt, J., Rhodes, J., Stelter, R., & Tai, T. (2015). Elements of effective practice for mentoring (4th Edition). Boston: MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership.

appendix 2 Quality excercise

Minimal quality criteria

Dit is de section van de pagina in LANDSCAPE (DWARSE PAGINA).

Before you start

- The exercise **starts with the question whether any quality criteria are missing from the overview**. If additional criteria are mentioned, they have to be completed in the overview by adding them with post its.

- In the next step the participants **"score" the criteria by using coloured post its**. Four options are possible:

It is a **minimal quality criterion**.By minimum, we mean a criterion that every programme should meet, regardless of whether it is a more experienced or a starting programme.

The quality criterion is **applicable but not minimal**: add a yellow post it.

The quality criterion is **not applicable**: add a red post it.

It is a **very important quality criterion**: add a blue post it. Maximum three criteria can be marked as very important.

- If the exercise is done within your organization then **add your name to the post it**, if the exercise is done with several mentoring organizations then **add the name of your organization**. This will facilitate the discussion;

- Scoring is an **individual exercise**. If several participants represent the same mentoring organisation, they have one vote.

- Once the colour scores are assigned on an individual basis, the **results are discussed in plenary**. The discussion mainly **focuses on the quality criteria for which the colour scores differ**. The moderator takes a supportive role in helping the participants to reach consensus.

Quality criteria recruitment and referral mentors

The (mentoring) program provides accurate and realistic information about the content, benefits and challenges of the program.

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The program provides information about who is eligible to be a mentor, the role of the mentor, and the expectations with respect to the mentor position.

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Quality criteria recruitment and referral mentees

The program provides accurate and realistic information about who is eligible to be a mentee, the content of the program, and what benefits one can (potentially) expect when participating in the program.

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Quality criteria selection and screening mentors

The program has explicit and clear selection criteria and ensures that they are aligned with the objectives of the project.

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The program provides minimum one face-to-face conversation with the mentor as part of the selection/screening that, at a minimum, elaborates on the willingness to commit to the program for a certain period of time and with a certain frequency and tests for realistic expectations about the program.

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In doing so, the program works with a standardized screening instrument.

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The program conducts reference checks for (individually) referred mentors and also makes explicit how those reference checks are conducted.

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The program refers ineligible mentors to other volunteer programs.

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Quality criteria selection and screening mentees

The program makes the selection criteria explicit and clear and ensures that they are aligned with the objectives of the program.

The program provides minimum one face-to-face conversation with the mentee as part of the selection/screening that, at a minimum, elaborates on the willingness to commit to the program for a certain period of time and with a certain frequency and tests for realistic expectations about the program.

In doing so, the program works with a standardized screening instrument.

The programs refers ineligible mentees to more appropriate assistance.

The program has set clear deadlines between application/screening mentee and decision.

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Quality criteria the matching and start of the duos

The program seeks the best possible match in terms of the objectives pursued and uses clear criteria to do so. Possible criteria are availability, location, age, professional similarities, objective, ...

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The program ensures that the first meeting between mentor and mentee takes place in a neutral location and with a coach present.

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As part of the program, a contract or commitment statement is concluded between the mentee and mentor that includes among others duration, frequency of contact, roles, ...

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The program provides a policy for more difficult to match profiles. If a 'match' is not provided for a mentee within a predetermined time, the program refers them to other appropriate services.

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After a certain period of time, the programs verifies whether the mentoring relationship is going well and if there is a good 'match'. The program also provides a possibility to end the mentoring relationship.

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Quality criteria the mentoring relationship

The program has determined a minimum and maximum duration of the mentoring relationship. Proposal.

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The program provides a minimum number of contact moments. Proposal to be discussed.

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Quality criteria follow-up and support by coach/organisation

The program follows up with the duos on a regular basis.	The program has determined the topics to be discussed during the follow-up and provides a checklist for this purpose. (topics to be specified in consultation with mentoring organisations).	The program provides a fixed point of contact for the mentors and mentees for questions, in case of possible conflicts, ...	The program provides supporting material for mentors and mentees, these include guidelines, expert advice, ...	The program provides group activities for mentors and mentees to participate in.	The program works on the retention of mentors.
stick your post-it here	stick your post-it here	stick your post-it here	stick your post-it here	stick your post-it here	stick your post-it here

Quality criteria closure

The program has clear criteria regarding the termination of the mentoring process. (e.g. at the request of the mentor or mentee, after a certain period of time, after a number of conversations, when it can be extended, ...).

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and provides a procedure/ policy for early termination of the mentoring relationship, at a minimum asking for the reason for the early termination.

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provides a clear policy and framework for matches who wish to continue working after the formal conclusion of the relationship.

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The program provides a final meeting with mentor and mentee.

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The program has a checklist for the final meeting.

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Quality criteria training

The program has a prematch training/information session for mentors on the following topics:
- what is mentoring/uniqueness of mentoring;
- program requirements (match length, initiation of contact, contact frequency, duration of visits, protocols for missing or being late to meetings, match termination);
- expectations/roles/which tasks are possible and which are not;
- contact with the coach and expectations in terms of monitoring;
- resources available for mentors;
- confidentiality and anonymity;
- expenses and travel.

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The program has a training/information session for mentees with the same topics.

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Quality criteria evaluation

The program provides an evaluation some time after the conclusion of the mentoring process.

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Additional criteria

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