



BLOCKCHAINED YOUTH WORK

# Comparative Report on the Blockchain Platform Testing

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## Executive Summary

This report presents a comprehensive synthesis of four national testing reports examining the piloting of a blockchain-based platform designed to support quality assurance, visibility, and recognition of youth work education and training. The testing was conducted in Slovenia, Serbia, Austria, and Croatia during the first half of 2025 and involved youth organisations, training providers, and youth workers with varying degrees of experience in non-formal education, digital platforms, and quality frameworks.

Across all four contexts, the platform was recognised as a promising innovation with strong potential to enhance the credibility, transparency, and cross-sectoral recognition of youth work learning outcomes. Participants consistently valued the introduction of common quality standards, the structured syllabus template, and the possibility of verifiable certificates supported by blockchain technology. At the same time, the reports highlight significant challenges related to terminology, usability, platform flexibility, technical maturity, and the need for clearer alignment between standards, templates, and real-life youth work practice.

A recurring theme across countries is the tension between ambition and readiness: while the conceptual foundations of the platform were broadly welcomed, its successful adoption depends on simplification, clearer guidance, better user experience design, and stronger integration into existing organisational processes. National differences emerged in emphasis—ranging from conceptual understanding and standardisation in Serbia, practical system integration in Austria, usability and youth-friendly language in Croatia, and platform governance and quality embedding in Slovenia—but these differences largely reinforce one another rather than contradicting each other.

The findings point to a clear need for iterative development, stronger onboarding and support mechanisms, and a future-oriented strategy that positions the platform not only as a technical tool but as a shared quality ecosystem for youth work education.



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## 1. Context and Methodological Overview

The four national testing exercises followed a broadly comparable methodology, combining facilitated workshops, hands-on platform testing, and structured feedback collection. However, the scope and focus differed slightly by country.

In Slovenia, a multi-day in-person testing session engaged representatives from seven youth-related organisations, with a strong emphasis on quality standards, platform usability, and long-term recognition mechanisms. Serbia's testing, coordinated by NAPOR, placed greater emphasis on understanding the quality framework, the conceptual role of blockchain, and the usability of the syllabus template, revealing deeper uncertainties about technological added value. Austria's testing was adapted into a series of individual online sessions due to logistical constraints, focusing mainly on certificate verification, system integration, and data protection concerns. Croatia hosted a two-day structured testing event that paid particular attention to platform usability, clarity of language, accessibility, and alignment with youth work values. Despite these contextual differences, all four reports provide rich qualitative data that allows for cross-national comparison and synthesis.

## 2. Synthesis of Key Findings Across Countries

### 2.1 Understanding and Application of Quality Standards

Across all four countries, participants generally perceived the quality standards as meaningful and valuable. They were seen as a useful framework for structuring training programmes, clarifying learning outcomes, and supporting internal reflection on quality. In Slovenia, participants demonstrated a strong grasp of the standards and actively engaged in interpreting and debating them, even proposing mergers of overlapping parameters to reduce redundancy. Similarly, Serbian participants reported that most standards were understandable, though terminology complexity and repetition caused confusion, especially where assessment-related standards appeared in multiple categories.

Croatian participants viewed the standards as a constructive checklist that could support both verification and programme improvement, while also suggesting that labour-market relevance and employability skills should be more explicitly embedded. Austrian participants did not focus



extensively on the standards themselves, as most had previous exposure through aufZAQ workshops, but they implicitly linked quality assurance to the credibility of certificates and verified learning outcomes.

A shared challenge across contexts was the abstract nature of some standards and the lack of concrete examples. Participants repeatedly called for glossaries, visual representations, and practical illustrations to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

## 2.2 Platform Usability, Design, and User Experience

User experience emerged as a critical determinant of acceptance. Croatia and Austria reported generally positive impressions of the platform's interface, describing it as intuitive and visually clean, though still in need of role-based customisation and clearer navigation structures. Slovenia's participants emphasised the importance of UX-conscious design, including mouse-over explanations and better integration of standards into the interface itself.

By contrast, Serbian participants were more critical, highlighting an outdated visual design, insufficient mobile compatibility, and the need for clearer explanations of platform functions and blockchain processes. Mobile accessibility was identified as essential in both Serbia and Slovenia, where login issues and inconsistent language settings undermined usability.

Across all countries, there was a strong call for embedded guidance: video tutorials, walkthroughs, tooltips, and downloadable manuals were consistently requested to support onboarding and reduce reliance on external documentation.

## 2.3 Syllabus Template: Structure, Language, and Flexibility

The syllabus template was widely recognised as a helpful structuring tool, particularly for less experienced training providers. Serbian participants explicitly noted that completing the template helped them better conceptualise their programmes and clarify learning outcomes.

Slovenian participants offered highly detailed feedback on improving the template's structure, terminology, and alignment with the quality framework, proposing clearer workload breakdowns, defined delivery formats, and stronger links between objectives, methods, and assessment.



Croatia’s report highlighted a different but complementary issue: the template was perceived as overly formal and academic, with terminology such as “students” seen as misaligned with youth work practice. Participants advocated for simpler, youth-friendly language, clearer distinctions between mandatory and optional fields, and better explanations of complex sections through examples or alt-text.

A recurring cross-national concern was flexibility. Experienced providers in Serbia and Austria found the template insufficiently adaptable to diverse training formats, while Austrian participants stressed the need to integrate existing certificate templates, branding elements, and workflows rather than forcing a complete system change.

### 3. Key Takeaways from National Reports

#### 3.1 Slovenia

The Slovenian testing underscored the importance of embedding quality standards directly into the platform architecture rather than treating them as external reference documents. Participants strongly supported the idea of expert-defined minimum thresholds and transparent quality indicators, as well as future pathways towards micro-credentials and learner profiles that aggregate certificates and competencies over time. Slovenia also highlighted governance-related questions, such as who defines quality, who certifies training, and how recognition mechanisms can evolve sustainably.

#### 3.2 Serbia

The Serbian report revealed the most pronounced tension between conceptual ambition and practical clarity. While participants valued the standards and appreciated the structured template, many struggled to understand the concrete added value of blockchain technology beyond secure storage. Time constraints, terminology complexity, and perceived redundancy in standards hindered deeper engagement. NAPOR’s supporting documentation was repeatedly identified as crucial, suggesting that strong national intermediaries play a key role in mediating complex frameworks and technologies.



### 3.3 Austria

Austria's findings centred on system integration, data protection, and credibility. Participants were enthusiastic about reliable, verifiable certificates but raised serious concerns about language settings, data access, public blockchain perceptions, and post-project hosting and costs. The inability to align diploma layouts with organisational branding was seen as a potential risk to credibility rather than a neutral design issue. Austrian feedback highlights the importance of trust, ownership, and institutional continuity for long-term adoption.

### 3.4 Croatia

Croatia's testing emphasised usability, accessibility, and communication. Participants saw strong potential in the platform as a quality label and promotional tool but stressed that this requires clearer language, better accessibility features, and stronger alignment with youth work values and EU Youth Goals. The Croatian report also foregrounded the platform's role in linking training outcomes to employability and social relevance, framing quality assurance as both an educational and societal contribution.

## 4. Key Takeaways for the Future

Taken together, the four national reports paint a coherent picture of a platform with significant transformative potential but also clear developmental needs. For the future, several overarching takeaways emerge.

First, quality standards must remain central, but they need to be simplified, illustrated, and operationalised through examples, glossaries, and visual cues. Without this, standards risk being perceived as abstract or duplicative rather than empowering. Second, user experience is not a secondary concern but a prerequisite for quality assurance: mobile compatibility, intuitive navigation, role-based interfaces, and embedded guidance will determine whether the platform is used consistently and meaningfully.

Third, flexibility and integration are essential. The platform must accommodate diverse national contexts, organisational practices, and levels of experience, allowing providers to integrate existing workflows, branding, and certification systems rather than replacing them wholesale. Fourth, the value proposition of blockchain must be communicated more clearly, focusing on trust, verification, and recognition rather than technology for its own sake.



Finally, the platform's long-term success depends on governance, sustainability, and positioning. Clear responsibility for certification, transparent cost models, data protection assurances, and strategic promotion as a recognised quality label will be critical. If these conditions are met, the platform can evolve from a pilot tool into a shared European infrastructure that strengthens the visibility, credibility, and impact of youth work education well beyond the project's lifespan.

### **Key recommendations:**

- Simplify and clarify quality standards through glossaries, examples, and visual aids.
- Embed quality standards and indicators directly into platform workflows and templates.
- Improve user experience through mobile optimisation, role-based interfaces, and clear navigation.
- Develop comprehensive onboarding materials, including tutorials and downloadable guides.
- Increase flexibility of the syllabus template to accommodate diverse youth work practices.
- Ensure compatibility with existing organisational systems, branding, and certification processes.
- Clarify data protection, governance responsibilities, and long-term hosting arrangements.
- Define a sustainable financial model to support post-project maintenance and development.
- Position the platform as a recognised quality label for youth work education and training.



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