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SKILLeD
Sustainable Skills
for Local Developer

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TRANSNATIONAL SKILLS VALIDATION METHODOLOGY FOR THE EESLD

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SKILLeD
Sustainable Skills
for Local Developer

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This document has been produced respecting gender equality. The reference to male and female gender is always implicit.

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FIRST PART

1. ANALYSIS OF NATIONAL CONTEXTS RELATED TO COMPETENCES VALIDATION METHODOLOGIES

1.1. DEFINITIONS

'learning outcomes' means statements regarding what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process, which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and responsibility and autonomy;
'knowledge' means the outcome of the assimilation of information through learning. Knowledge is the body of facts, principles, theories and practices that is related to a field of work or study. In the context of the EQF, knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual;
'skills' means the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems. In the context of the EQF, skills are described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) or practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments);
'responsibility and autonomy' means the ability of the learner to apply knowledge and skills autonomously and with responsibility;
'competence' means the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development;
'validation of non-formal and informal learning' means the process of confirmation by a competent authority that an individual has acquired learning outcomes acquired in non-formal and informal learning settings measured against a relevant standard and consists of the following four distinct phases: identification through dialogue of particular experiences of an individual, documentation to make visible the individual's experiences, a formal assessment of those experiences and certification of the results of the assessment which may lead to a partial or full qualification;
'formal recognition of learning outcomes' means the process of granting official status by a competent authority to acquired learning outcomes for purposes of further studies or employment, through (i) the award of qualifications (certificates, diploma or titles); (ii) the validation of non-formal and informal learning; (iii) the grant of equivalence, credit or waivers;
'credit' means confirmation that a part of a qualification, consisting of a coherent set of learning outcomes has been assessed and validated by a competent authority, according to an agreed standard; credit is awarded by competent authorities when the individual has achieved the defined learning outcomes, evidenced by appropriate assessments and can be expressed in a quantitative value (e.g. credits or credit points) demonstrating the estimated workload an individual typically needs for achieving related learning outcomes;
'credit systems' means a transparency tool for facilitating the recognition of credit(s). These systems can comprise, inter alia, equivalences, exemptions, units/modules that can be accumulated and transferred, the autonomy of providers who can individualise pathways, and the validation of non-formal and informal learning;
'credit transfer' means the process of allowing individuals who have accumulated credit in one context to have it valued and recognised in another context.

1.2. EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE

Qualifications are the formal outcome of an assessment and validation process by a competent authority and typically take the form of documents such as certificates or diplomas. They determine that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards. Those learning outcomes may be achieved through a variety of paths in formal, non-formal or informal settings, whether in national or international contexts. Information on learning outcomes should be easily accessible and transparent.

In its report to the European Parliament and the Council of 19 December 2013 on the evaluation of the EQF, the Commission concluded that the EQF is widely accepted as a reference point for developing national qualifications frameworks, for implementing the learning outcomes approach, and for improving the transparency and recognition of skills and competences. It emphasised that the Union should make it possible for learners and workers to make their skills and competences more visible no matter where they acquired them.

Transparency and recognition of skills and qualifications is one of the new priorities under the 2015 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020). That report stresses that the EQF should be further developed in order to make qualifications more transparent and comparable.

Trust in the quality and level of qualifications that are part of national qualifications frameworks or systems referenced to the EQF (hereafter ‘qualifications with an EQF level’) is essential in order to support mobility of learners and workers within and across sectoral and geographical borders.

Credit systems can help individuals to progress in learning by facilitating flexible learning pathways and transfer across different levels and types of education and training and across national borders, enabling learners to accumulate and transfer different learning outcomes acquired in different learning contexts, including online, non-formal and informal learning. The learning outcomes approach can also facilitate the design, delivery and assessment of full qualifications or components of qualifications.

For vocational education and training, the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training is being developed in accordance with the recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET).

The main features of the EQF, namely its learning outcomes approach, the definition of level descriptors, and the establishment of referencing criteria as developed by the EQF Advisory Group, have been a source of inspiration for the development of national and regional qualifications frameworks throughout the world.

A European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations classification (ESCO) is being developed by the Commission. Used on a voluntary basis, it could support a better link between education and employment.

This recommendation does not replace or define national qualifications frameworks or systems. The EQF does not describe specific qualifications or an individual's competences and particular qualifications should be referenced to the appropriate EQF level by way of the relevant national qualifications systems. [Council Recommendation, 22.05.2017]

1.3. QUALIFICATION RECOGNITION PROCEDURES IN EU MEMBER STATES

For the recognition of the professional qualifications under the 2005/36/EC Directive, there are three recognition systems, namely:

- The Automatic Recognition System, based on the preventive harmonization of the training and provides automatic recognition, applicable to certain professions such as nursing, dental, veterinary, midwife, architect, pharmacist etc.
- The General System of Recognition, based on mutual trust between the member states, applicable to a large number of professions, that may be different in the member states. It applies in the case where the profession is regulated in the resident country and if the migrant has exercised or is entitled to practice the resident country. In this system, the recognition is not automatic, but it is based on a comparison of training courses - provided in the two countries and the possibility, if differences exist, to impose compensatory measures.
- Recognition of professional experience Annex 4, in which the recognition is based on the experience gained in the resident country. The system applies to hand-made, commercial or industrial type professions, listed in Annex IV of the 2005/36/EC Directive, and provides automatic recognition if they meet the conditions laid down for each professional category.

In the case of negative decisions, the applicant can appeal in court, through the SOLVIT system.
For the recognition by the General System, the request is addresses to the Competent Authority from the resident country for each profession and for each country. This request must be sent with a series of documents and certifications listed in Annex VII of the 2005/36/EC Directive.
Usually, the requested documents in the analysed countries for the EU citizens that are seeking for recognition are:

1. Proof of citizenship, usually through a copy of identity card or passport;
2. Certificate of professional competence or qualifications, which provides access to the profession (where the profession is regulated in the resident country);
3. A certified copy of some specific documents that are requested for the profession concerned, indicating the exams needed to determine the possible existence of significant difference towards the resident country;
4. Other certificates, diplomas, etc.. relevant to the profession
5. A certified copy of the submission to the Profession Register of the country in which the title was obtained, if applicable;
6. A certificate stating that there are no criminal or professional obstacles in the pursuit of the profession, issued by the competent authority of the resident country;
7. Certificate that details any occupation in the resident country, as a completion of the qualification for which the recognition is sought (including the period of practical training conducted);
8. Contact details: name, address, telephone number and email. If someone sends documents on behalf of the applicant, such as a company or a trustee, the sender's name, address, phone and e-mail are requested;
9. Specific conditions will be explicitly mentioned in this chapter, for each profession (the belonging to a professional association in the resident country, etc.).

All the documents written in a foreign language must be accompanied by a translation in the language of the host country, certified in accordance with the original text, issued by the diplomatic or consular authorities of the host country that issued the diploma, or by an official translator from the host country.
The procedural steps for the qualification recognition in the host country can be summarized as below:

1. Informing the migrant by the contact point of the host country, referred to in the next subsections, for each analysed country;
2. Submitting the requested documents at the Competent Authority, who can notify the applicant in maximum four weeks, for any additions;
3. Processing the file, in maximum 4 months;
4. Applying compensatory measures, if any:

a. Skill test, preceded, possibly, by a preparatory training offered by institutions authorized by the competent authority;
b. Training by an accommodation period;
c. Evaluating the language skills, by analysing the evidence or by an interview, oral/written test, if needed;

5. Fees – available on the websites of the competent authorities, regularly updated;
6. Release of the certificate;
7. Appeal to SOLVIT or in court, in case of a negative decision.

[https://vdocuments.net/forestry-field-expert-profession.html]

The SOLVIT system

The SOLVIT system is a problem-solving network, in which the EU member states work together to solve the problems resulting from improper application of the law by the public authorities. Among the areas in which the issue frequency is high and there are complaints to be dealt by SOLVIT, there is also the professional recognition of qualifications and diplomas, along with other areas such as access to education, residence permits, voting rights, social security, free movement of capital and payments etc.
In each EU member state there is a SOLVIT centre, that provides these services, free of charge. For the analysed countries and for Romania, the data regarding the SOLVIT centres.
The complaints can be submitted on-line, on the documents available on the SOLVIT websites from each country. Any complaint through SOLVIT implies four stages to resolution:

- the case is accepted, the legal base is being checked, if the documents that were included in the base by the origin centre are not sufficient, additional documents are required;
- obtaining the solution: the competent authority that is involved in the case is contacted and it cooperates in order to obtain a solution that is a fair, in accordance to European legislation;
- solution proposal (implemented or not) – the solution must be real, practical and in accordance to European legislation;
- monitoring the implementation of the applicant's proposal to solve the case.

SOLVIT potential is still insufficiently exploited as a problem solving key instrument at a national/European level, partially because of the insufficient staff from different SOLVIT centres and also because of the insufficient information received by the European citizens regarding the competencies of these centres.

[https://ec.europa.eu/citizensrights/front_end/data_protection/index_en.htm]

1.4. PROJECTS THAT DEALT WITH THE ISSUE OF METHODOLOGIES FOR VALIDATION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

AUSTRIA

PROVE *(PROfessionalization of Validation Experts),* https://tinyurl.com/yckprwr3
Austrian partner: ÖIBF (Österreichisches Insitut für Berufsbildungsforschung) & Verband Österreichischer Volkshochschulen

According to a CEDEFOP study (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training), very different approaches to the professionalization of validation personnel exist in EU countries. In addition, many EU countries have no or only limited regulations regarding the requirements for the competencies of the personnel responsible for carrying out validations.
The aim of the project was to develop a standardized competence model for validation professionals through following measures:

a) Competence model
b) Self evaluation tool
c) Learning tool kit

The competence model developed in PROVE and the self-evaluation procedure provide validation practitioners with an orientation on important competences for their validation practice as well as on competences that might need further development. The Learning Tool Kit offers a variety of learning resources. In this way, validation practitioners have access to high-quality learning and teaching materials for their professionalization.

TRANSVAL-EU *(Validation of transversal competences in Europe);* https://www.transvalproject.eu/
Austrian partner:

- Ministry of education, science and research through Austrian Agency for International Cooperation in Education & Research (OeAD-GmbH)
- 3s Research Lab
- Chamber of Labour Salzburg
- oeibf – NQF Service Body

There is a need to make explicit the validation processes for transversal competences acquired in non-formal and informal settings and to integrate the lessons learned into validation and guidance policies. The TRANSVAL-EU project addresses the complex issue of validation of transversal competences. The activities are divided into Research, Curriculum development, Field trials and Policy & sustainability
During the course of the project, the project partners develop and test the following:

a) a research base of good practices on validation of transversal competences
b) a set of training toolkits and programmes for validation/guidance practitioners
c) standardised competence profiles for validation/guidance practitioners with a specific focus on transversal skills

ROMANIA

DEMAL Project (*Design, monitoring and evaluating adult learning classes - Supporting quality in adult learning*) (http://www.demalproject.eu/)
Romanian partner: "Institutul de Ştiinţe ale Educaţiei din Romania"

There are established common European principles for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning.
Developing Validation of Adult Trainers' Competences
(http://www.demalproject.eu/documents/O5_EN_181130.pdf)
The project's guideline helps adult educators to:
a) become aware of these competences,
b) demonstrate them to potential employers or other stakeholders,
c) to have them validated by competent bodies where such bodies exist.
The project's validation framework is based on:

- a portfolio where the user assembles evidence for his/her competences (collection of documents, certificates, etc. giving evidence of the competences);
- a self-assessment test;
- a competence-based interview.

These methods should be viewed as separate, but interdependent at the same time, and applied in a way which reflects the individual specificity, as the tools need to be fit for purpose.

1.5. QUALITY ASSURANCE OF QUALIFICATIONS

GREECE

Formal Vocational Education and Training

The Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs holds overall responsibility for education, VET and LLL. More specifically, the General Secretariat for VET, Lifelong Learning and the Youth, holds responsibility for policy making and the issues concerning VET and LLL. Under the provisions of Law 4283/2014, the following vocational education and training qualifications are specified along with the respective levels:

- Level 3 Vocational Training School (SEK) Certificate
- General Upper Secondary School Certificate, awarded to General Lykeio (GEL) graduates
- Level 4 Vocational Upper Secondary (EPAL) School Certificate, awarded to Vocational Lykeio (EPAL) Grade 3 graduates upon in-school examinations
- Level 4 Vocational Upper Secondary School (EPAL) Degree, awarded to Vocational Lykeio (EPAL) Grade 3 graduates upon in-school examinations
- Level 5 Vocational Upper Secondary School Degree, awarded to EPAL Apprenticeship Class graduates
- Level 5 Vocational training Diploma, awarded to vocational Training Institute (IEK) graduates

Non-Formal and Informal Vocational Education and Training

Lifelong learning policy in Greece is part of a wider development plan. Law 4763/2020 aims at further reforming LLL structures and facilitating the implementation of LLL policy. The General Secretariat for Vocational Education, Training and Lifelong Learning and Youth plans the public policy of LLL and youth. Non-formal education can lead to certifications recognised at national level. Lifelong learning is provided at:

1. Scholeia defteris efkairias (second chance schools - SDE)
2. Institouta epangelmatikis katartisis (vocational training institutes - IEK)
3. Epangelmatikes Scoles Katartisis and Epangelmatikes scholes Mathitias OAED (vocational training schools, ESK and vocational training apprentiship schools, EPAS of OAED)
4. Kentra dia viou mathisis (lifelong learning centres, KDVM)
5. Kollegia (colleges).

Certification and validation of qualifications

The National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) is the legislative body for the development and implementation of the HQF in correspondence with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). Moreover, EOPPEP is the National Coordination Point for EQF in Greece (NCP).
EOPPEP develops the monitoring framework for the certification of qualifications, i.e., the learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning, in response to labour market needs and priorities and in connection with the accreditation of inputs, i.e., providers, trainers, occupational profiles and curricula standards.
EOPPEP's key areas of responsibility comprise of the following:

- Development of a National System for the Certification of Qualifications
- Development of a model system for the accreditation of outputs and setting the respective legal framework.
- Designing a system for the recognition and certification of qualifications acquired via non-formal and informal learning and establishing the framework for licensing awarding bodies.
- Inspection, monitoring and evaluation of awarding bodies.
- Implementation of certification processes by EOPPEP.

The accreditation of vocational training and the certification of the vocational training institutes (IEK) graduates embeds a national accreditation exam procedure conducted at national and regional level and based on the vocational training exam regulation framework per specialty.
EOPPEP organises at national level the accreditation examinations for IEK graduates of all specialties. Upon successful examination results, IEK graduates are awarded the Vocational Training Diploma recognised both in Greece and in EU member states (for lower secondary education graduates) or the Certificate Level I (for upper secondary education graduates).
Trainers for adults are required to possess a teaching qualification awarded upon accreditation in order to fulfill eligibility conditions for public funded non-formal education programmes, pursuant to Law 3879, article 19.3 (GOG 163/A/21.09.2010) on “Development of Lifelong Learning”.
EOPPEP currently accredits Awarding Bodies certifying computer skills upon legislated criteria and specifications. The accredited awarding bodies conduct the evaluation procedure in examination centres via an automated exam system and award the certificate for computer skills.
EOPPEP is the National Reference Point for Quality Assurance in VET and represents Greece in the European network for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET).

Accreditation/Licensing of Providers of Non-Formal Education

EOPPEP accredits and licenses Providers of non-formal education encompassing initial and continuing vocational training upon legislated criteria for infrastructure, trainers & curricula, as well as enacted specifications for the organisation and operation of the provider, employed staff and provided services.

EOPPEP licenses Free Studies Workshops (EES), which provide services of non-formal education in a wide spectrum of learning options.
Additionally, EOPPEP licenses Private Vocational Training Institutes (IIEK), which provide services of initial vocational training in a broad range of specialties, aiming at the integration & reintegration of learners into the labour market, their professional mobility and development, as well as their personal development.
EOPPEP accredits Vocational Training Centres (KEK), which provide services of continuing vocational services complementing, updating and/or upgrading knowledge, skills and competencies of the labour force aiming at the integration & reintegration of learners into the labour market, job security and professional as well as personal development.
EOPPEP accredits Special Centres, which provide comprehensive services of training and support to social vulnerable groups and especially, to people with disabilities and ex-drug addicts, aiming at their social and professional integration.
EOPPEP accredits occupational profiles with the active contribution of the social partners in the process of their development. An occupational profile is defined as the job functions and the required knowledge, skills and competencies for exercising an occupation or specialty.
Based upon accredited occupational profiles, EOPPEP is planning to develop standards and specifications for modularised curricula with credits.

TURKEY

Turkey adopted its NQF in 2015. The TQF has eight levels and includes all types and levels of qualifications and certificates.
The Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA), the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) and the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) jointly developed and are implementing the framework.
Turkey is a member of the EQF Advisory Group and participates in the European higher education area (the Bologna process). The framework was referenced to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and self-certified to the framework of qualifications for the European higher education area (QF-EHEA) in 2017.
Implementation structures, main working methods and instruments are established and the TQF is a reference point for the use of learning outcomes, for the continuous revision and renewal of qualifications, and the allocation of qualifications to levels.
There are nearly 29,000 qualifications, the great majority outcomes-based, already placed in the TQF Database. Inclusion of qualifications in the TQF itself started in 20201. The implementation of the TQF is progressing at different speeds in the different subsectors of the qualifications system, so that while some aspects of the TQF such as the levels, level descriptors, learning outcomes and quality assurance approaches are operational, the TQF overall is in the activation stage.
In 2018, the “Regulation on the Quality Assurance of Qualifications to be Included in the TQF5 was adopted. It stipulates that quality assurance systems shall meet the following criteria:

a) a qualification form is prepared and approved.
b) valid and reliable assessment and evaluation process is carried out;
c) certification processes are conducted in a transparent and impartial way;
d) processes related to the qualifications are subject to self-assessment and external evaluation;
e) units, teams or bodies conducting the external evaluation are subject to regular review;
f) improvement activities are carried out in the light of the findings of self-assessment and external evaluation; g) involvement of stakeholders is maintained in the processes related to the qualifications;
g) processes related to qualifications are implemented based on explicit and measurable objectives, criteria and guidelines;
h) allocation of sufficient and appropriate resources for all processes are maintained;
i) feedback mechanisms are established and implemented;
j) electronic accessibility to the outcomes of all processes is maintained.

The TQF primarily includes:

- qualifications awarded under the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), spanning its respective Directorates for Basic Education, Special Education and Guidance Services, Secondary Education, Vocational and Technical Education, Lifelong Learning, and Religious Education;
- qualifications awarded under the mandate of the Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA) by the 239 authorized certification bodies (frequently called by their acronym ACBs);
- higher education qualifications awarded under the coordination and supervision of the Council of Higher Education (CoHE). In time, the TQF will include other qualifications awarded under the mandate of certain responsible institutions. Currently, the TQF database includes 51 other qualifications types which are not yet formally included in the TQF i.e. many qualifications are developed and used but not counted for the NQF.

1.6. LEGISLATION REGARDING VALIDATION OF COMPETENCES

AUSTRIA

Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research

Adult educators can have their formal, non-formally and informally acquired competences recognized. The Academy of Continuing Education Austria (WBA) is the certification body in adult education. It is an institution of the Cooperative System of Austrian Adult Education, funded by the European Social Fund and the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research.
In doing so, it pursues the goal of setting uniform, provider-independent standards and advancing the professionalization and quality development of adult education.
The WBA certificate forms the broad basic qualification: for this, seven competences relevant to adult education as well as relevant practice must be proven. The WBA certificate concludes with participation in a three-day assessment (certification workshop) conducted by the Federal Institute for Adult Education, in which important competencies are tested.
The WBA diploma builds on the certificate and represents a specialization. There are four areas of specialization to choose from: Teaching/Group Leadership/Training, Educational Management, Counselling, and Librarianship. In-depth competencies must be demonstrated in the chosen emphasis. In a written thesis, candidates reflect on their own practice with reference to theory. The final examination is a colloquium.
Certification takes place within three steps:

- Location determination – based on the following:
  - Evidence of your education: school or apprenticeship certificates, university degrees
  - Evidence of further education and training: Certificates of attendance, ECDL driver's license, language diplomas
  - Evidence of your practical experience in the field of adult education: Service certificates, work confirmations
  - Other relevant evidence such as professional stays abroad, volunteer work, participation in supervision/coaching
- WBA certificate (based on: pedagogy, didactics, management, consulting, media, social, personal)
- WBA diploma (specialization in one out of four special fields)

The Cooperative System of Austrian Adult Education shapes the educational and strategic concerns of the WBA. The Cooperative System is a joint initiative of ten nationwide non-profit adult education

associationszehn and the Federal Institute for Adult Education and is supported by the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research.
The aim of the Cooperative System is the professionalization and quality development of adult education. The in-service qualification of adult educators and the recognition of non-formally and informally acquired competences are to be promoted.

Strategy for the validation of non-formal and informal learning in Austria (2017)

The development of a national strategy for validation of non-formal and informal Learning (NFIL) in Austria is based on the Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning (2012/C 398/01).
The strategy for validating non-formal and informal learning aims to record competences and make them visible. In the long term, it aims to create social awareness of the importance of competencies.
Strategic goals:

- Upgrading of non-formally and informally acquired competences.
- Creating access to validation
- Improving opportunities for education and work
- Improvement of permeability in the Austrian education system
- Strengthening validation as an integral part of the Austrian education system
- Promoting learning outcomes orientation and quality assurance

GREECE

As a matter of fact, in Greece, the national policy for the validation of non-formal and informal learning is not as developed compared to other countries of the European Union, as a holistic strategy. However, with the enactment of laws 3879/2010 on the development of lifelong learning and 4115/2013 on the organization and operation of the National Organization for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) intends to promote lifelong learning through the recognition of alternative forms of education and the development of a national system for the validation of learning outcomes acquired in non-formal and informal learning environments.
In Greek legislation non-formal education includes the initial vocational training, the continuing vocational training, the general adult education (law 3879/2010, no. 2, par. 4) and the post-secondary year-apprenticeship of the vocational high school (law 4186/2013, no.7, par. 1).
There has been slow progress in Greece in developing a framework for validation that can incorporate non-formal and informal learning acquired through work experience. This system remains one of the strategic objectives of EOPPEP. Once implemented, certification of learning outcomes will track criteria and processes that will guarantee that these outcomes will lead to qualifications that match the requirements of the relevant professional profiles.
Continuing vocational education and training (CVET) has been the policy priority with the major progress. A regulatory framework has been developed for the operation of lifelong learning centres (KDBM), which offer continuous vocational training, general adult education, vocational guidance and lifelong counselling. According to Law 4186/2013, the General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning of the ministry of education is responsible for licencing and monitoring institutes of vocational training (IEK) and EOPPEP is responsible for accreditation of their training programmes, to boost quality assurance and enable progression pathways.
During 2018, around 40 IEK programmes were accredited, by decision of EOPPEP's Board ofDirectors. Legislative provision for a new type of diploma at level 5 of the HQF and EQF has recently been prepared. This relates to the development of two-year, post-secondary vocational training programmes (KEE) provided by universities, in 10 specialisations as of September 2018. The curriculum provides specialised knowledge and skills for highly qualified technicians. Access to these programmes is foreseen just for upper secondary school leaving (EPAL) graduates. According

to Law 4485/2017 and Law 4521/2018, these training programmes lead to level 5 qualifications: they are not described as short cycle HE programmes and their qualification type descriptors have not yet been developed. These programmes will be accredited by HE directly (the council of each university will submit them to the ministry of education for final approval).
The criteria for EPAL graduate enrolment to the programmes will be decided by each council; in addition to the final degree grade, their working experience and other social criteria will be considered an example of validation of non-formal learning in Greece started since 2014, with adult trainers in non-formal learning. These trainers need to have certified educational competence/proficiency to train in non-formal learning programmes funded by public resources. More specifically, enrolment for the examinations means meeting certain criteria regarding educational attainment or proven professional experience. The updated system foresees three pathways:

a) direct certification of conditions and criteria;
b) participation in an assessment process, and then certification;
c) enrolment in training programmes and subsequent certification

On a final note, the apprenticeship year attached to IVET (Mathiteia IEK) has been initiated and a quality framework has been developed. Although these are significant steps for the country, validation of non-formal and informal learning is not yet as developed in Greece as in other EU countries. Even though informal and non-formal learning is gaining importance, such learning is not adequately valued and recognised in society. A cultural shift would also be required in favour of learning outcomes, to support steps towards recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning.

Governance and institutional arrangements

The ministry of education is the competent authority, responsible for coordinating and monitoring the HQF. The National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) was set up in 2011 to develop and put the HQF into practice, link the HQF to EQF, as well as put the HQF and procedures for validation of learning outcomes into practice and assure quality in lifelong learning. EOPPEP operates as the national coordination point (NCP) for EQF and is the awarding body in relation to one qualification type in the framework: vocational training diploma, level 5. EOPPEP cooperates with HQAAA on quality issues in higher education and is the EQAVET national reference point (NRP), so there is coordination of the respective activities of the two national points regarding the quality subjects that arise from the implementation of NQF. The work programme of the national coordination point (NCP) 2018-20 will include an integrated communication strategy developed among EOPPEP and quality assurance agencies such as HQAAA. An advisory committee, comprising representatives from public administration, the education and academic community, social partners and external consultants, was established to support EOPPEP in developing and implementing the HQF. The members of the advisory committee were appointed by the ministry of education, by social partners, by the National Centre for Public and Local Administration and by Cedefop.
Greece is planning to reform the HQF advisory committee, which will be consulted for further development. A new advisory committee will be formalised by the Greek ministry of education. Till then, the main work of HQF's implementation is done by EOPPEP. An independent administrative authority, the Authority for Quality Assurance in Primary and Secondary Education (ADIPPDE), has been established and is responsible for quality assurance both in general and vocational education. It is fully operational (qualifications at levels 1, 2, 3, 4) and is working closely with the ministry of education. Involvement of social partners is very important for the framework. Their representatives are members of the governing board of EOPPEP, the Central Examination Board for the Certification of Vocational Training (KEEPEK) responsible for the accreditation of post-secondary IVET, as well as of the committees for the development of occupational profiles/VET curricula. Social partners also take part in the new National Apprentice Coordination Body (ESOM), an advisory body on apprenticeship issues established by Law of 26 February 2018. ESOM can cooperate with chambers, foundations and research organisations and other bodies to fulfil its purpose. The

National Council of Education (ESYP) has been reformed into the National Council for Education and Human Resources Development (ESEKAAD). ESEKAAD now includes many representatives closely involved with VET issues. Its mandate has been extended to the overall link between education and the labour market. A significant number of private education bodies have engaged with EOPPEP and expressed interest in the inclusion of their awards (from formal or non-formal education) in the framework. A dialogue has also started with the Greek recognition and equivalence committees and competent authorities on the role and contribution of the framework to the recognition and equivalence of awarded qualifications.
Institutionally law 3879/2010, which has been initiated for LLL, sets the benchmarks for quality standards in VET and LLL, introducing a requirement of teacher and trainer competences and professional development for teachers and trainers in adult education and stipulating continuous monitoring and evaluation of the national lifelong learning network.
Other relevant legislative initiatives in Greece aiming to upgrade the quality of VET, include, indicatively, the following:
The provisions of the law 3848/2010, on upgrading the role of teachers and trainers.
The establishment of the National Adult Trainers Certification System and of the national Register of Certified Adult Trainers, via the provisions of the Ministerial Decision 20082/23.10.2012 (GG B' 2844/2012), following the mandate of the law 4186/2013.
The provisions of the law 4115/2013, regarding the establishment of IVET and CVET adult trainers' obligation to hold a national teaching competence certificate, in order to enroll co-funded training programmes.
Furthermore, the provisions of the law 4485/2017, as it was amended by the article 68 of the law 4623/2019 and by the law 4722/2020, re-affirmed that starting from September 2021, the certification of teaching competences of VET teachers and adult trainers will become a prerequisite for their enrolment in training programs partly funded by the State.
The provisions of the law 4368/2016, regarding the establishment for a mechanism for the anticipation of labor market needs.
The joint Ministerial Decision 4146/2021 on the quality framework for Apprenticeship and the implementation of the Post-Secondary EPAL Apprenticeship Class. Concerning the anticipation of skills needs, the National Institute for Labour and Human Resources (EIEAD), under the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, represents the national competent authority with the mandate to coordinate the development of the mechanism of labour market needs diagnosis. A coordination committee consists of representatives from the Ministries of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Finance, EOPPEP, representatives of OAED and the social partners. EIEAD has been publishing reports every six months and the results of the forecasting system inform the development of new occupational profiles and curricula. The National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance, (EOPPEP), as the National Reference Point (NRP) for EQAVET2, has collaborated closely with the National Institute for Labour and Human Resources (EIEAD), the responsible body for the skills forecasting mechanism and conducted two surveys, relating to VET graduate tracking in Greece. These surveys aimed to develop a model linking VET systems to labour market needs by identifying the placement rate of IVET graduates, as well as the degree of satisfaction of employers and IVET graduates (EQAVET indicators 5 and 6). The surveys and the published study are available via EOPPEP/NRP of EQAVET webpage: http://eqavet.eoppep.gr/drastiriotita Finally, following the recent legislative reform regarding VET and LLL, introduced via the law 4763/2020, the below landmarks should be highlighted:

a) Establishment of new effective VET and LLL governance bodies, consulting national bodies and regional committees, for linking VET to labour market
b) Establishment of 'model' Upper Secondary Vocational Schools (EPAL)
c) Establishment of 'Thematic' or 'Experimental' Vocational Training Institutes (IEK)
d) Extensive IVET Curricula reform
e) Reinforcement of permeability between VET and tertiary education, elimination of 'dead ends.'

In VET, under the provisions of the law 3879/2010, providers are required to implement self-assessment. Additionally, law 3879/2010 (Articles 18 & 19) foresees incentives for the development of lifelong learning and updating of the knowledge, skills and abilities of the country's human resources, including subsidies for lifelong learning providers. VET providers are supported by public funds based on their effectiveness. Regarding CVET, many providers develop and maintain quality assurance systems on a voluntary basis. Both IVET and CVET providers are required to assess and address labour market needs at regional and local level, as stated by Greek law.

ITALY

Italian National Regulatory Framework

At national level until 2011 there was no national system on the subject of identification and validating of non-formal and informal learning.
However, there were regional validation and certification systems which, ahead of national times, had given rise to experimental services.
It is only since 2012, therefore only 10 years ago, on the push of the EU to the comparability of learning outcomes and to the creation of a system of certification and recognition of skills common and transferable among countries, that also in Italy at national level are launched important legislative changes aimed at acquiring and implementing the validation process but also at harmonizing what has already been experimented in the regions.
The following are the national steps toward a national system on the subject:

State-Regions Agreement of the 19th April 2012 (*Accordo Stato Regioni del 19 aprile 2012*)
It relates to the definition of an apprenticeship certification system and defines qualification as a process of assessing the skills that can be acquired through formal, non-formal, informal methods.

Government-Regions-Local Authorities Agreement of the 20th December 2012 (*Accordo Governo-Regioni-Enti Locali del 20 dicembre 2012*)
Concerning the definition of the national system on permanent guidance.
An interinstitutional group on permanent guidance is established.
In the Agreement, it can be found:
Art.1: definition "[...] process aimed at facilitating knowledge of oneself, of the training, employment, social, cultural and economic context of reference, of the strategies implemented to relate and interact with these realities, in order to promote maturation and development of the necessary skills to be able to autonomously define or redefine personal and professional goals that adhere to the context, elaborate or re-elaborate a life plan and support the relative choices "
Art. 2: National system of permanent orientation. Objectives: development of linkage / partnership mechanisms. Centrality of the person and his needs. Networking of services, development of a common culture and language.
Art. 3: National working group for permanent guidance with the task of drawing up the Guidelines by June 2013 (published in December 2013).

Law 92/2012 "Reform of the labour market with a view to growth"
The law is a first attempt to deal with the subject of the certification of skills in a comprehensive and systematic way and lays the foundations for the construction of a national certification system.
In it, the individual is considered an active protagonist of their own learning which results in the acquisition of skills that can be validated and certified even in informal and non-formal contexts, in an intentional and unintentional way.

In art. 4, paragraphs 58 and 68, there are provisions on the reform of the labour market with a view to the socio-economic growth, which provides for the implementation of a public system of certification of skills based on homogeneous minimum service standards throughout the country.
The law delegates the Italian Government to adopt (within 6 months) one or more Legislative Decrees to define the general rules and the minimum service standards for the process of identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning with reference to the national system certification of skills.
Furthermore, the law gives an indication of the criteria to be respected:

- IVCC are services to be requested by the individual
- recognition of work experience
- recognition of learning as training credits
- carrying out checks and tests (national rules, territorial comparability)

and the standards to be guaranteed:

- homogeneous process, suitable feedback, equal opportunities
- essential levels of performance
- simple, transparent procedures, compliant with quality systems
- recognizability and usability.

Legislative Decree n.13 / 2013
(Certification Decree) on the definition of general standards and essential levels of performance for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning and the minimum service standards of the national skills certification system.
The Legislative Decree implements the Law no. 92/2012, introduces the right to lifelong learning and the recognition and certification of skills and defines the essential levels of performance and minimum service standards of the national skills certification system.
The Legislative Decree is divided into two priority lines of action:

- construction of the national repertory of education and training qualifications and professional qualifications
- definition of the minimum standards of the certification service (process, attestation and national certification system), or the essential principles and institutional responsibilities of the new system.

Inter-ministerial decree of the 30th June 2015
As regards the first line of action identified by Legislative Decree 13/2013, this decree of 2015 subsequently established the QNQR, or the national reference framework for regional qualifications and related competences, which defines a framework of common references for the operation of the services for identifying and validating and certifying competences of regional ownership and implements the first line of intervention for the construction of the national repertory of education and training qualifications.
The NQF is a part of the National Directory, provided for by art. 8, d. lgs. 13/2013.
It is a database organized into 24 professional economic sectors (SEPs), each divided into production processes, areas of activity (ADA) and individual work activities that make up the ADAs.
It constitutes the unitary operational reference both for the recognition of regional qualifications in terms of supervised professional contents and for the identification, validation and certification of skills. It is an open tool, it can be modified and updated.
As regards the second line of intervention identified by Legislative Decree 13/2013, relating to the definition of the minimum standards of the certification service (process, attestation and national certification system), this decree contains the description of the service standards of the national system as designed by the Technical Skills Group (which Regions and Public Administrations belong to).

Regional Italian Legal Framework

In Italy, from a subsidiary and complementary perspective, the regions are the bodies responsible for the development of a regional system of validation of the skills acquired in any case related to the professional profiles of processional training. They are therefore responsible for the implementation of the validation process of the skills acquired in non-formal and informal contexts referring to profiles present in the national repertoire.
However, although significant experiments have been launched in recent years, to date the Italian system is still fragmented both from a geographical point of view and above all from a sectorial and systemic point of view: state schools and universities have not yet adopted a model of overall validation and certification for their qualifications; the IVCC system relating to the profiles of vocational training, a matter under the legislative competence of the individual regions, has reached a good level of definition and structuring although significant regional differences remain.
Piedmont is one of the most active Italian regions on the subject and has managed to lay the foundations for the construction of the regional certification system well in advance, consistent with the requirements of national legislation and the guidelines of the European Union.
Since the early 2000s, the Piedmont Region has built its own skills training system within which the processes of recognition of acquired skills find space.
With a twenty-year tradition in the processes of recognition of the skills gained at school, in the workplace or in free time, the Piedmont Region "institutionalized" this experience in 2016, giving the opportunity to operators of services for work, guidance and training, accredited by the Region itself, to provide free services for identifying, validating and certifying the skills acquired in non-formal contexts (in civil and voluntary service, for example) and informal (in working, family and social life), which allow , for example for unemployed people with significant work experience to have their skills recognized thanks to a professional qualification certificate, useful for relocating to the labour market or accessing a training course with credit recognition.
The work of the Piedmont Region has proved to be among the most consistent with the approach of the European Union and the guidelines identified (procedures, tools, standards, awards, creation of a feedback loop from professionals) guarantee a VPL system (Validation of Prior Learning for education and the labour market), able to meet the needs of all potential end users.
In Italy, the Directory of Competences - which is the reference for the IVCC process - built by the Piedmont Region, is among the best and most structured.
In 2019 (Berlin, 7-8 May), during the international competition of the Biennial of the validation of skills, the first prize (in the "Policy" category) was awarded to the Piedmont Region for the "Guidelines on the validation of skills acquired in non-formal and informal ". Made up of representatives from UNESCO, the European Commission, Cedefop (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training) and other experts in the field of lifelong learning, the jury of the Biennale chose Piedmont from among 36 candidates from 20 countries around the world, based on criteria such as innovation, sustainability, transferability and impact of policies (https://vplbiennale.org/vpl-prize/).
Il lavoro della Regione Piemonte si è dimostrato tra i più coerenti con l'approccio dell'Unione Europea
As of April 2022 in Piedmont there are:
58 the entities entitled to provide the service
493 qualified operators to give support to those who want to request certification of their skills
166 offices where the service can be used throughout the region.

Resolution of the regional council no. 152-3672 of the 2nd of August 2006 and its subsequent additions and amendments (Deliberazione di giunta regionale n. 152-3672 del 2 agosto 2006 e sue successive integrazioni e modifiche)
It defines the regional system of training standards broken down by skills.
The DGR follows the Decision no. 2241/2004 / EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 December 2004, according to which the right of the person in any context to the recognition and

enhancement of their skills wherever acquired and the consequent duty of systems and institutions to guarantee this right is guaranteed, safeguarding the unity of the person.
This right is guaranteed by the transparency of the certification of skills relating to a single Community framework for the transparency of skills and qualifications - Europass).
With this resolution, the Region approves the general provisions on standards
training by skills and the regional system of training standards is declined by skills.

Annex A (Training Standards Reference Framework)
Annex H (PCV)
Annex L (Part 2 certification authorized)

Executive Resolution no. 134/2007
(Determina Dirigenziale n. 134/2007)
Approval of the standard of competencies of the certification system objective - direction of certification operations

Executive Resolution no. 172/2011
(Determina Dirigenziale n. 172/2011)
Approval of the manual for the certification of skills and the recognition of credits.

Regional Council Resolution n. 18-6464/2013
(Delibera Giunta Regionale n. 18-6464/2013)
Partial revocation of DGR 152-3672 / 2006 and indications for the certification of skills and updating of the Piedmontes repertoire of training standards.

Executive Resolution no. 819 of the 18th of December 2013
(Determina Dirigenziale n. 819 del 18 dicembre 2013)
Approval of the Manual for the identification, validation and certification of skills acquired in non-formal and informal contexts - 1st part

Executive Resolution 34 of the 27th January 2016
(Determina Dirigenziale 34 del 27 Gennaio 2016)
Definition of the Guidelines for the identification, validation and certification of skills acquired in non-formal and informal contexts "(achieved thanks to an innovative experimentation).
The Piedmont Region was among the first regions in Italy to have approved guidelines.

Regional Council Resolution n. 48-3448 of the 6th of June 2016
(Delibera Giunta Regionale n. 48-3448 del 6 giugno 2016)
Approval of the new criteria of the regional system of certification and attestation of competences.

Executive Resolution no. 420 of the 1st of July 2016
(Determina Dirigenziale n. 420 del 1 luglio 2016)
Approval of the operational indications for the issuance of certificates and of the new formats of attestation of competences.

Regional Council Resolution n. 52-4526 of 29th of the December 2016
(Delibera Giunta Regionale n. 52-4526 del 29 dicembre 2016)
Approval of the authorization procedure for the provision of services for identifying, validating and certifying the skills acquired in non-formal and informal contexts, not funded in the regional directives.

Executive Resolution no. 849 of the 18th of September 2017
(**Determina Dirigenziale n. 849 del 18 settembre 2017)**
Approval of the "Unified Act (Testo Unico) of the Piedmontes system for the certification of skills, the recognition of credits and the figures in charge of the system".

Following the changes at national level in the field of certification, introduced with Legislative Decree 13 of January 16 2013 and with the interministerial decree of June 30 2015, the Piedmont Region has collected in a single administrative act the operational indications to certify skills in the formal and non-formal and informal fields: it is the Unified Act for the certification of skills, the recognition of credits and the figures in charge of the system.
The Unified Act is the organic document which, taking up the documents developed over the last few years (2013 Manual and 2016 Guidelines), identifies the procedures related to the IVC process of the skills acquired by the individual in the non-formal and informal context .
In line with the Unified Act, for the recognition of credits and the certification of skills acquired in formal contexts, the Region makes use of a system figure specially trained and authorized to access the dedicated certification computer system. For this purpose, the regional list of Operators authorized for certification operations (OC) has been established.
For the certification of skills acquired in non-formal and informal contexts, the Consolidated Law provides for the provision of services for the identification, validation and certification of skills. These services can be carried out exclusively by the Entities that have within them the figures of the Adequately Trained Operator (OAF – Operatore adeguatamente formato) and the Expert in Certification Techniques (ETC – Esperto in Tecniche di Certificazione) (D.D.n.17 of January 15, 2018) and who are included in a periodically updated regional list.

Executive Resolution no. 17 of the 15th of January 2018
(Determina Dirigenziale n. 17 del 15 gennaio 2018)
Update of the regional list of Qualified Bodies and related Experts in Certification Techniques (ETC).

ROMANIA

METHODOLOGY on the criteria and procedures for the assessment and certification of professional evaluators, evaluators of evaluators and external evaluators issued by Ministry of Education (9 June 2021) and published in Monitorul oficial (5 July 2021)
The methodology contains some key issues like the following.
Quality assurance in the system of assessment of competences obtained informally and informally is achieved through three components:

- ensuring institutional quality;
- ensuring the quality of the evaluation process;
- ensuring the quality of the human resource involved.

The involved evaluators are as follows:

- evaluators of professional skills in the quality of the evaluation process;
- evaluators of evaluators in the quality and control of the human resource involved;
- external evaluators in institutional quality and control.

In order to register for selection, the interested persons will submit to the National Authority for Qualifications the following documents:

a) curriculum vitae;
b) letter of motivation;
c) personal portfolio proving professional experience;
d) statement on one's own responsibility regarding the veracity and conformity of the information in the documents submitted to the file.

In order to prove the professional experience, the following documents will be submitted, as the case may be: individual employment contracts, civil contracts, certificates regarding the length of work service, recommendations of current and/or previous employers, extract from General Registry of Employees, personal works.
[An evaluator must have a university degree. An evaluator must have followed an evaluators study programme. An evaluator must have some professional experience in the areas he/she evaluates.

In order to proceed to the evaluation of competencies obtained informally or non-formally, an evaluator must have performed at least 10 assessments of those professional competencies.]
[After the selection, the evaluator takes a written test from the literature (previously communicated) and a professional interview. In the process of selecting, evaluating and certifying evaluators, there must be steps to resolve ambiguities and set appeals.]
The certification as an evaluator is valid for 4 (four) years and can be renewed, at the request of the interested person, following a recertification process (based on submission of portfolio and giving professional interview).
The evaluator of evaluators carries out his/her activity based on a contract concluded with National Authority for Qualifications, according to the legislation in force.
The evaluator of evaluators draws up a report, which also includes recommendations and proposals on the situation found, which he presents to the management of National Authority for Qualifications within 5 working days from the end of the monitoring.
An evaluator must demonstrate in his work:

- concern for quality;
- professional competence in the field;
- integrity;
- objectivity;
- privacy;
- independence;
- ethics and professional integrity.

ORDER no. 468/2004 for the approval of the
PROCEDURE for the assessment and certification of professional competences obtained in ways other than formal ones, issued by Ministry of Education and Scientific Research and Ministry of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family (8 September 2004) and published in Monitorul oficial (5 October 2004)
Persons wishing to be assessed in order to have recognized professional competencies obtained in ways other than formal ones, based on an occupational standard / standard of professional training, apply to an authorized centre for the respective occupation / qualification.
Each candidate is assigned to a professional skills evaluator who is responsible for implementing the entire evaluation process.
The evaluator of professional competences presents to the candidate the evaluation methods that will be used and establishes the program for carrying out the evaluation process in agreement with the candidate.
Before entering the evaluation process itself, the candidate analyses, assisted by the professional skills evaluator, his own professional performance in relation to the content of the occupational standard / professional training standard.
The evaluator of professional competences explains and details, upon request, the content and provisions of the occupational standard / standard of professional training.
Depending on the result of the self-assessment, the professional skills assessor recommends the candidate to enter the assessment process for all or part of the standard or not to enter the assessment process.
The decision to enter the evaluation process belongs to the candidate, who attaches to the application submitted the units of competence for which he/she wishes to be evaluated, from the list of units of competence of the standard made available to him/her by the professional competence evaluator.
It is mandatory that the written test and the practical demonstration of competence be part of any combination of methods chosen by the centre / evaluator of professional skills.
The proofs of competence produced by the candidate during the evaluation process are analysed and judged by the evaluator of professional competences in relation to the requirements of the occupational standard / professional training standard. The decision on the candidate's competence is established for each unit of competence for which the candidate has been evaluated.

If, following the evaluation, the candidate is not satisfied with the "not yet competent" decision, reported to certain units of competence, he/she has the right to appeal.
The persons declared competent following the assessment process receive a certificate of professional competence for the units of competence in which they have been declared competent.

SPAIN

References and Legal Bases of the Recognition System

Within the guiding principles of social and economic policy established in the Spanish Constitution (in Article 40), the commitment of the public authorities in the promotion of professional training and rehabilitation is required, both instruments being of essential importance to realize the right to work, the free choice of profession or trade or promotion through work.
On the other hand, in the European Union there are coordinated strategies for employment that favour the training of a qualified labour force, which is suitable for the free movement of workers, so necessary in a single market.
The background to European coordination in this field is referenced by: the Lisbon Summit of 2000, the Communication of the European Commission on Lifelong Learning of 2001, the Copenhagen Declaration of 2002 and, most importantly, that corresponding to the Council conclusions on common European principles for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning in 2004. In 2005-2007, the European Inventory for the validation of non-formal and informal learning was drawn up. In 2009, inspired by common European principles, the European Guidelines for Validating Non-Formal and Informal Learning were developed.
The professional qualifications, included in the National Catalogue of Professional Qualifications, CNCP provide, among other possibilities, the basis for the training necessary to improve the standard and quality of life of people and, as a consequence, to promote social and economic cohesion, as well as the promotion of employment.
The National System of Qualifications and Vocational Training facilitates the integration of the different forms of certification and accreditation of professional competences and qualifications. The System, following the principles of equal access to vocational training, promotes lifelong learning and accreditation.

The Workers' Statute considers the promotion and vocational training at work to be a right of workers.

Organic Law 5/2002, of 19 June, on Qualifications and Vocational Training, states in article 8.4 that "The Government, after consulting the General Council of Vocational Training, shall establish the requirements and procedures for the evaluation and accreditation of competences, as well as the effects thereof". This Procedure constitutes one of the instruments of the National System of Qualifications and Vocational Training (Art. 4.1.b.).

RD 1128/2003, of 5 September, which regulates the National Catalogue of Professional Qualifications, establishes that this Catalogue will develop the function of evaluating, recognising and accrediting professional competences, in order to facilitate training throughout life and the accumulation of learning acquired in different areas.

RD 1224/2009, of 17 July, on the recognition of professional competences acquired through work experience, amended by **RD 143/2021**, of 9 March, develops the principles previously expressed in Organic Law 5/2002 of 19 June on Qualifications and Vocational Training.
This Royal Decree indicates the instruments to support the Evaluation, Recognition and Accreditation Procedure that guarantee its homogeneity and reliability, being the Procedure Manual, one of them:
Article 9. Support instruments.

1. The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour and Immigration, in collaboration with the Autonomous Communities, shall develop instruments to optimise the procedure and ensure its homogeneity and reliability. At least the following instruments shall be provided:

f) A procedural manual that will include a guide of the candidates and guides for the figures of the advisor and the evaluator.
g) Self-assessment questionnaires of the competence units.
h) Evidence guides of the units of competence as technical support to carry out the evaluation process, and whose basic structure is specified in Annex I.

2. The competent administrations of the Autonomous Communities may supplement these support instruments in order to adapt the assessment methodology to their specific needs."
At Regional Level in Valencia Community

Resolution of July 21, 2021, of the Autonomous Secretariat of Education and Vocational Training
A procedure is convened permanently open, for the evaluation and accreditation of all the units of professional competence included in the existing offer of Vocational Training in the Valencian Community linked to the National Catalogue of professional qualifications, that have been acquired through work experience or non-formal training channels (DOGV No. 9136, of 27.07.2021).

TURKEY

The TQF was formally established by the “Regulation on the Procedures and Principles on the Implementation of the Turkish Qualifications Framework”, adopted by the Council of Ministers via Decision 2015/8213, and published in the Official Journal of 19 November 2015. A second key legal act is the “Regulation on the Quality Assurance of Qualifications to be included in the TQF”, adopted in 2018. Some institutional arrangements predate the TQF legislation.
The Vocational Qualifications Authority Law no 5544 (2006) was amended in 2011 to adapt it to NQF developments, notably designating VQA the responsible body for developing and maintaining the NQF. Quality assurance of qualifications and consistency in the use of the TQF and the placement of qualifications in the framework are key objectives of recent legislation. A number of legislative arrangements were in the approval process at the time of writing, reflecting new developments.

Governance and Institutional Arrangements

The Ministry of National Education (MoNE) is responsible for development of qualifications under its mandate. MoNE has launched a curriculum reform in secondary education, for both general and vocational and technical schools. Vocational curricula are modularised and MoNE has a database of more than 3,500 modules that are also used for the licensing and certification of adult learning.
Modules based on learning outcomes are used for learning, but they are not separately assessed and often lack an assessment component. VQA accredits the authorised certification bodies (ACBs), which conduct assessment, evaluation and certification of candidates for the Vocational Qualification Certificate type mentioned above. These ACBs are first accredited by Türkak, the Turkish accreditation agency that deals with accrediting conformity with international industry and service standards, using the ISO 17024 standard on personnel certification.
The Council of Higher Education (CoHE) coordinates and supervises development of higher education qualifications awarded by Higher Education institutes. The higher education qualifications framework is a sub-framework within the TQF that is already functioning. National working groups for different fields of learning define common outcomes as a guideline for qualification and curriculum developers.
The Ministry of National Education initiated the TQF’s development in 2005, responding to the first EQF consultation. Since the VQA was established, it has managed and coordinated the framework, cooperating most closely with the Ministry of National Education and the Council of Higher Education. Each of these three entities is responsible for the quality assurance of the qualifications

under its authority. For higher education, the Turkish Higher Education Quality Council of Turkey (THEQC) was founded in 2015 as a public legal entity with administrative and financial autonomy, with the aim of evaluating the quality levels of higher education institutions' education and research activities and administrative services in accordance with the national and international quality standards.

THEQC is actively using the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) in HE. TQF Quality Assurance Criteria are fully compatible with the ESG and EQF Quality Assurance Principles. Quality assurance for qualifications outside the scope of MoNE, CoHE, higher education institutions and VQA responsibility will be ensured by the other institutions and organizations specified in related legislation. There are two bodies which oversee and determine implementation of the TQF, the TQF Coordination Council and the TQF Council.

VQA houses the TQF Secretariat that supports both councils. The TQF Coordination Council is the highest decision-making body. It consists of the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of National Education, the President of the Council of Higher Education, and the Director of the Vocational Qualifications Authority.

The TQF Coordination Council evaluates and approves proposals for procedures, principles, and decisions submitted by the TQF Council. The TQF Council is a technical body which consists of twenty-two members, including:

- 5 members from MoNE, all of whom are heads of the Ministry's Directorates;
- 4 members assigned from CoHE, one Executive Board member, one university dean by rotation, two THEQC board members, and one representing the National Student Council;
- 3 members from VQA, one of whom is the vice president;
- 1 member from the Union of Chambers and Exchange Commodities of Turkey;
- 1 member from the Confederation of Turkish Tradesmen and Craftsmen;
- 1 member each from the three largest confederations of trades unions;
- 1 member each from the education unions within the trade union confederations;
- 1 member from the largest employers' confederation.

The TQF Council prepares the action plans for TQF implementation and a communication strategy to raise awareness about the TQF. It prepares principles, procedures, and criteria for issues such as quality assurance of the TQF, the Qualifications Database, progress routes, credit accumulation and transfer, validation of non-formal and informal learning, updating, modification and withdrawal of qualifications. The Turkish Qualifications Framework Department within MoNE has acted as the TQF Secretariat since 2016, in line with the Vocational Qualifications Authority act. The Secretariat comprises the head of unit, four experts and a secretary, who are VQA staff. The staff of the Secretariat is supported by temporary national and international experts.

The Secretariat:

- assists the technical and administrative tasks of the Coordination Council and TQF Council;
- drafts action plans, annual work plans and activity reports under the management of the Council;
- ensures the implementation of the communication strategy;
- develops and maintains the Qualifications Database;
- prepares or performs background research, draft procedures;
- carries out other tasks requested by the Chairman of the Council.

According to the TQF Regulation, a TQF Consultation Committee with broad participation of relevant stakeholders should convene annually as a negotiation platform to evaluate the issues regarding the TQF and for stakeholders to present their views. The members of the TQF Consultation Committee are identified and invited by the TQF Council. The Committee has met once to date, at Ankara in late 2019, with the participation of more than 100 representatives from ministries, public institutions, professional organizations, trade unions and nongovernmental organizations. Due to the COVID 19, crisis the meeting planned for 2020 was postponed.

1.7. ACTIONS IN THE FIELD OF METHODOLOGIES FOR VALIDATION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL COMPETENCES

GREECE

In Greece, the national policy for the validation of non-formal and informal learning is not as developed compared to other countries of the European Union, as a holistic strategy to promote this issue has not yet been implemented. However, with the enactment of laws 3879/2010 on the development of lifelong learning and 4115/2013 on the organization and operation of the National Organization for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) it shows its interest to promote lifelong learning through the recognition of alternative forms of learning and the development of a national system for the validation of learning outcomes acquired in non-formal and informal learning environments respectively.
In Greek legislation non-formal education refers to education provided in an organized educational context outside the formal education system and can be done in obtaining nationally recognized certifications. It includes the initial vocational training, the continuing vocational training, the general adult education (law 3879/2010, no. 2, par. 4) and the post-secondary year-apprenticeship of the vocational high school (law 4186/2013, no.7, par. 1).
Non-formal education activities and in particular general adult education activities will be implemented in KDVM. The KDVM are addressed to unemployed adults and workers, regardless of gender, educational level, country of origin, religion, place of residence, young people, students, etc., with the sole condition that they are interested in knowledge and active participation.
To ensure equal access to general adult education activities, special care will be taken for members of socially vulnerable groups, migrants and residents of remote - inaccessible areas.
The General Adult Education programs that will be provided are related to the following thematic areas:

- Economy - Entrepreneurship,
- Quality of Life - Environment,
- New Technologies,
- Language and Communication,
- Social Skills and Actions
- Culture and Art,
- Parent Counseling
- Programs for Vulnerable Social Groups
- Learn Greek for Immigrants

Other objects that will arise from the investigation of the educational needs of the trainees, will be suggested by the trainees or will be proposed by the Municipalities and the beneficiaries in synergies at local and regional level with bodies of the Ministry of Education or others.
The educational services will be provided through life and / or through e-learning in the KDBM of the first-degree local authorities.

Validation methods

Based on the description above, three of the four stages of validation take place: documentation, assessment, certification. Identification is the exception. Overall, the focus lies in assessment methods. Regarding the certification of adult trainers of nonformal learning by EOPPEP, e-portfolios are developed and used as a documentation 22 method. E-portfolios may include teaching programme planning, development of teaching material, video-taped teaching of the applicant and

electronic files from eLearning teaching experience. When applying for the certification process for adult trainers, individuals need to provide documentation that proves, among others, their minimum teaching experience. Assessment in Greece traditionally involves written tests. This seems to be the main methodology in most relevant (although not comprehensive) processes of validation that one can currently find in the country.
Nevertheless, for IVET graduates, professionals of private security without formal qualifications and adult trainers of nonformal learning, assessment also entails a practical part, which involves oral tests, case studies' analysis, demonstration of skills and competences and also teaching simulation. In the assessment stage for adult trainers, the practical part also involves a presentation of a teaching plan (simulation of teaching, through a 20-minute implementation of a teaching plan by the examinee in a group of nine co–candidates, who undertake the role of 'trainees').
The presentation is assessed in situ by two competent assessors. A video is recorded in case the candidate should be reassessed. After the presentation, the examinee is interviewed by two Assessors and the Supervisor. Examinations for other forms of non-formal learning, include the theoretical and practical examinations for IEK graduates. For CVET programmes examinations take place exclusively through written tests, while Language Certificates are awarded through both oral and written tests. The following table presents the main methods used, under each validation stage that leads up to certification.

	Identification	*Documentation*	*Assessment*
Debate			
Declarative methods			
Interview			X
Observation			X
Portfolio method		X	
Presentation			X
Simulation and evidence extracted from work			X
Tests and examinations			X
Other (e.g. e- learning methods) – please specify			

Greek policy for the validation of non-formal and informal learning

In Greece, the national policy for the validation of non-formal and informal learning is not so developed compared to other countries of the European Union, as a holistic strategy for the promotion of this issue has not yet been implemented. However, with the enactment of Laws 3879/2010 on the development of lifelong learning and 4115/2013 on the organization and operation of the National Organization for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (E.O.P.P.E.P.), the interest of the state in promoting lifelong learning through the recognition of alternative forms of learning and the development of a national system for the validation of learning outcomes acquired in non-formal and informal learning environments, respectively, is evident.
In Greek legislation there are differences in terminology compared to that used internationally in the field of validation of non-formal and informal learning. In particular, instead of the term 'validation' in Greece the term 'accreditation' is used and instead of the term 'non-formal learning' the term 'non-formal education' is used.
Non-formal education refers to education provided in an organised educational context outside the formal education system and may lead to the acquisition of nationally recognised certificates. It includes initial vocational training, continuing vocational training, general adult education (Law 3879/2010, no. 2, para. 4) and the post-secondary vocational lyceum apprenticeship class (Law

4186/2013, no. 7, para. 1). In Greece, initial vocational training offers basic vocational knowledge, competences and skills in specialisations with the aim of integration, reintegration, professional mobility and personal development of the individual and includes Vocational Training Institutes (IEK) and Vocational Training Schools (VET Schools) (Law 4186/2013).
However, in policy documents in Europe, initial vocational training is referred to as 'Initial Vocational Education and TrainingIVET' and refers to education and training provided in upper secondary and tertiary education (e.g. vocational colleges), before trainees enter the labour market, with the aim of providing skills that are relevant to labour market needs in order to achieve a smooth transition of new trainees from education to the workplace (European Commission, European Commission, European Parliament, European Council, European Parliament, European Parliament, European Parliament, European Parliament and the Council of Ministers). The national strategy for the development of a system of certification of learning outcomes acquired through alternative learning pathways, is designed by the National Agency for Qualifications and Vocational Guidance Certification whose main responsibilities are the certification of the inputs and outputs of non-formal education and informal learning (Law 4115/2013, no.14, par.1).
Currently, the certification of inputs has a higher level of application than the certification of qualifications acquired through non-formal education and informal learning, which has not yet been recognized as a right of every citizen, as the E.O.P.P.E.P. certifies specific qualifications for which the Greek state has shown interest because they are in demand in the labor market. Specifically, graduates of VET and IEK, graduates of the post-secondary year-apprenticeship course, participants in the seminars for the training of adult non-formal education instructors provided by Lifelong Learning Centres and professionals in private security services are certified (CEDEFOP, 2016).
As for the certification of informal learning, it is in an initial stage of development and a formal framework for its implementation has not yet been designed. The certification outcome offers individuals full employment rights, but does not give access to higher education. Certification in Greece seems to be aimed only at enhancing the employability of the individual (CEDEFOP, 2016).
In this context, this study explores the reasons why the certification of non-formal education and informal learning in Greece is more related to enhancing the employability of the individual and less to promoting his/her social inclusion, as well as the prospects of linking the certification of non-formal education and informal learning with higher education in Greece.

ITALY

The Piedmont's IVCC Process

Through the Unified Act (Testo Unico) of September 2017, the Piedmont Region establishes that the IVC actions on the non-formal and informal skills acquired are provided by public and private services accredited by the Piedmont Region for vocational training, guidance and employment services.
Accreditation with the Region implies the existence of a logistical and organizational structure, the ability to anticipate spending and the presence of professional resources or figures overseeing the system.
The professional figures involved in the IVCC process are:

- ETC (Expert in certification techniques)
- OAF-PC (Operator adequately trained on the processes of identification, validation and certification of skills)
- EM / F - EM / L (Expert in the field of vocational training or work)
- Examination board (where possible) for the recognition of the qualification.

Every individual over 18 can take part in the IVCC process.
There are no particular requirements of nationality, residence, educational qualification or employment status.
It is useful to underline that all European citizens have the right to have their formal, non-formal and informal skills recognized.

Each person can voluntarily decide to undertake the path or can be sent by public services, employment services or companies.
The IVCC course is free for citizens.
The beneficiary user can therefore act only by obtaining an external financing that determines the activity as formally valid (e.g. a company that decides to have its employees certified, an interim agency that wants to have the skills certified by its members, project financed by public funds, etc.).
Furthermore, in order for the skills certification process to be valid, the project must be presented during the opening of one of the two annual branches provided by the Piedmont Region.
According to the law, in providing the path it is required to use standardized tools and specific computerized procedures.
In particular, the "Citizen's Dossier" is used, a tool divided into two separate sections:

- the Dossier of experiences: it collects the skills and abilities of the person who undertakes the IVC path
- the Dossier of the evidences: it contains the "proofs" supporting the experiences (certificates, declarations, photos, videos, operator reports).

The skills possessed by the person, in fact, are not limited to those acquired in education, but also include what is learned in every context of daily life.
The certifiable units (totally or partially) are the professionalizing skills of non-regulated profiles and objectives (foreign languages, IT, orientation, etc.) included in the Directory of qualifications and training standards of the Piedmont Region.
To be considered as such, however, they must be proven, i.e. certified, through a defined process: the so-called IVCC process.
This process is divided into 3 main phases:

- identification
- validation
- certification.

ROMANIA

Methods And Instruments of Evaluation And Proofs Of Competence Of The Evaluated Employee

[https://legislatiamuncii.manager.ro/a/5701/metode-si-instrumente-de-evaluare-dovezi-de-competenta-ale-angajatului-evaluat.html]
The evaluation method is the technique by which evidence of competence is collected. Methods for evaluation professional skills can be:

- self-assessment;
- direct observation;
- oral questions;
- written test;
- drafting a project;
- simulation or structured demonstration;
- reports from other people;
- the portfolio of works carried out prior to the evaluation.

Description of methods
Self-assessment
Through self-assessment, the candidate acknowledges his/her own professional performance through a more objective analysis of his/her own professional capacities and results.
Direct observation
Direct observation represents the activity of investigation, perception and interpretation through which information is collected in direct contact with concrete situations of activity.
Oral questions

The method of evaluation by oral questions consists in the administration of a series of structured questions, based on a pre-established protocol, establishing a dialogue between the evaluator and candidate.
Using this method, the evaluator can appreciate the candidate's way of thinking and expressing, level of knowledge and ability to operate with them, opinions and attitudes, way of solving logical problematic situations, ability to argue, etc.

Written test

The written test is a standardized evaluation method (content, writing, identical scoring for all) that allows the determination of candidate's level of knowledge and how he/she operates with them. The written test aims to obtain, in a relatively short time, quantifiable information, independent of the subjectivity of the evaluator.

Project

The project aims the making of a physical object/system or solving a problem in principle and involves: documentation, research, conception and creation, design, evaluation, implementation, etc.

Simulation

Simulation is a substitute for direct observation. This evaluation method consists in applying some knowledge and proving some skills in situations similar to reality, in experimental conditions.

Reports from others

Reports from other people represent reasoned appreciation from colleagues, beneficiaries, collaborators, employers, etc. They are used as an additional valuation method, associated with the portfolio. The reports can be requested both by the candidate and by the evaluator.

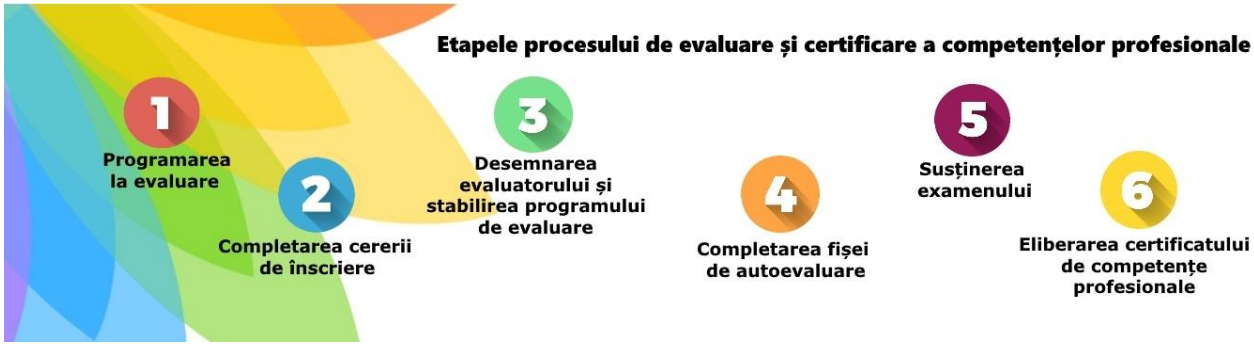
Portfolio

The portfolio is an evaluation method that allows the analysis of some exceptional results obtained by the candidate in a period prior to the evaluation, but also the analysis of some documents (correspondence, works, journals, notebooks, information and documentation sheets, essays, certificates, diplomas, etc.) which can be argued as a favorable premise for the successful exercise of assessed competencies.
The methods used in the evaluation must highlight the fact that a candidate has the knowledge and skills necessary to perform the work activities and, especially, has the ability to obtain the expected results after performing these activities.

Foundation for Vocational Training and Pre-University Education "FUTURE" [https://www.calificat.ro/lang/ro.html]

The stages of evaluation of professional competences are:

- Programming to evaluation;
- Filling the registration application
- Assignment of an evaluator and setting the evaluation programme
- Filling the self-evaluation form
- Examing
- Awarding the certificate of professional competences



"Back to Work" Association

[https://inapoilamunca.ro/]

The advantages of the professional competence assessment process for the candidate (client):

- The costs of a professional skills assessment process are halved compared to vocational training courses.
- The duration of a professional skills assessment process is a maximum of 30 days, much shorter than vocational training courses.
- The certificate of professional competences obtained following a process of assessment of professional competences is recognized at national level and in the EU member states.
- Certificates can be issued faster than in the case of professional training courses, even in a maximum of 48 hours.
- Evaluations can be carried out throughout the country, even in counties / regions where there is not a branch yet.
- As the evaluation process can be carried out when there is at least one registered candidate, it is much more efficient, without the need to gather a group (as in the case of professional training courses).
- The award of the competence certificate is based on the evaluation of what the candidate is able to do in real working conditions.
- Competence evaluation helps to increase self-confidence and self-assessment ability.
- The certificate of competence provides recognition of a person's competencies, regardless of how they were acquired, which means that it is not necessary to take a qualification course before taking the assessment.
- The certificate of competence can be granted regardless of the candidate's age without restricting access to the assessment.
- The competence certificate is a guarantee of a person's ability to work in an occupation / qualification and highlights the competencies transferable from one occupation to another. Therefore, obtaining a certificate of professional competence increases the chances of employment and the possibilities of developing a career.

SPAIN

In Spain, it is the Regional Government that is responsible for the validation of competences and for this purpose they publish regulations to initiate procedures and carry them out.
In the case of Valencian Community, the following process is now in effect (https://sforms.gva.es/sformssistemaexplotacion/servletObtenerXMLns/ObtenerXMLorig?formulario=60450)

Name of the procedure

Permanent procedure, for the evaluation and accreditation of all the units of professional competence included in the existing offer of Vocational Training in the Valencian Community linked to the National Catalogue of Professional Qualifications, which have been acquired through work experience or non-formal training channels.

Purpose of the procedure

The purpose of this procedure is to convene the evaluation and accreditation of units of professional competence, acquired through work experience or through non-formal training channels, through a procedure open permanently, in which all the units of professional competence included in the existing offer of Vocational Training in the Valencian Community are offered, linked to the National Catalogue of Professional Qualifications.

Interested / Applicants

Aimed at people residing in the Valencian Community, with work experience and insufficient non-formal training in any of the professional families in the National Catalogue of Qualifications, but who

do not have any Vocational Training Qualification or Certificate of Professionalism related to such experience and training.

Requirements

Persons wishing to participate in the procedure must meet the following requirements:

1. Nationality: possess Spanish nationality, have obtained the certificate of registration of Community citizenship or the family card of a citizen of the Union, or be the holder of a residence, residence and work authorization in Spain in force, in the terms established in the Spanish regulations on aliens and immigration.

2. Age: be 20 years old at the time of registration, for competence units of level II and III qualifications, and 18 years for competence units of level I qualifications. 3. Minimum work experience or non-formal training related to the professional sector in which recognition of professional competence is requested:

a) Work experience: justify in the last 15 years prior to registration in this call, for units of competence of level II and III, at least 3 years, with a minimum of 2000 hours worked in total. And for level I competence units, at least 2 years, with a minimum of 1,200 hours worked in total.

b) Non-formal training: justify in the last 10 years prior to registration in this call, at least 300 hours for level II and III competence units, and 200 hours for level I competence units. In cases in which the training modules associated with the competence unit that is intended to be accredited contemplate a shorter duration, the hours established in said modules must be accredited.

Deadlines for submission

Term open permanently from the publication of the registration link on the website of Professional Qualifications of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport (http://www.ceice.gva.es/es/web/cualificaciones-profesionales)

What documentation must be submitted?

The applicant will present in the first interview with an advisor, a copy of the following documents:

a) Documentation to prove the participation requirements

a.1) For work experience

- As a salaried worker:

  Certification of the General Treasury of the Social Security, the Social Marine Institute or the mutual society to which they were affiliated, stating the company, the labor category (contribution group) and the contracting period, and the employment contract or certification of the company where they have acquired the work experience, which specifically states the duration of the periods of provision of the contract, the activity carried out and the time interval in which the activity has been carried out.

- As a self-employed or self-employed person:

  Certification of the General Treasury of the Social Security or the Social Institute of the Navy of the periods of registration in the Social Security in the corresponding special regime and description of the activity carried out and time interval in which it has been carried out, and that must contain the same data as those of the AUTONOMOUS DECLARATION model.

a.2) For non-formal training

A certification from the organizing entity in which the contents, the hours of training and the date of this are recorded.

Candidates who meet the requirements of work or training experience and who cannot justify them through the documents indicated above, if they are over 25 years of age, may also request their registration in the procedure, but in that case, they will present the justification of their work experience or non-formal learning, by means of some evidence admitted in law. The advisory staff of the procedure will study the documentation and determine, if appropriate, its definitive registration in it.

a.3) To prove age and residence.

- In case of Spanish citizen: DNI or passport in force

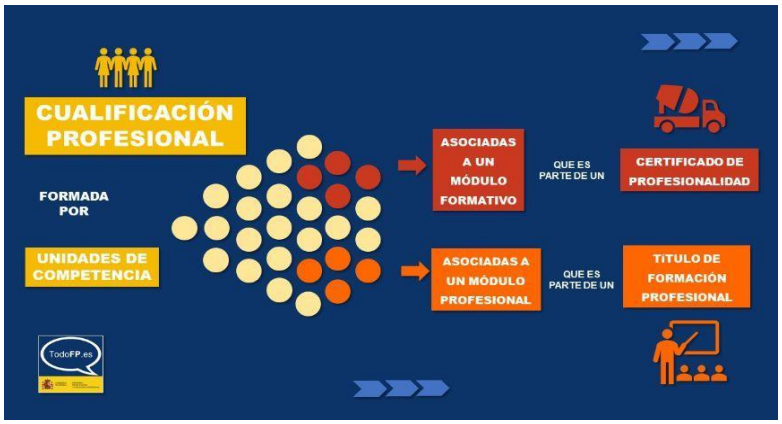
- In the case of a community citizen: Certificate of registration of a community citizen
- In the case of a family member of a community citizen: Family member card of a citizen of the European Union
- In the case of a non-EU citizen: Residence permit or residence and work authorization

In application of the provisions of article 28 of Law 39/2015, of October 1, applicants will be responsible for the veracity of the documentation provided, being able to present original or copy. If there are doubts about the veracity of any copy, the participant may be required to provide the original documents to verify it.

The models to justify the participation requirements will be found on the professional qualifications website: https://ceice.gva.es/es/web/cualificaciones-profesionales

Steps

1. The interested person will register through the link that will be in this same procedure and will choose a professional family and headquarters. A copy of the registration must be saved and printed for delivery in the next step.
2. Once the request has been received at the headquarters, an advisor will be assigned, who in due course will contact her and summon her to a first meeting, in person or telematically according to personal and health circumstances, in which she must provide a copy of the documentation that accredits the participation requirements.
3. Analyzed the documentation by the advisor will inform the candidate about whether or not he meets the requirements of participation, about whether he is in the appropriate headquarters and about the fees that correspond to pay in the case of continuing with the advice.
4. In the counselling process, you will be helped to define the professional qualifications to opt for recognition and to collect evidence of your professional competence. Finally, you will be proposed the Units of Professional Competence that must be evaluated.
5. After the advice phase, she will be assigned an evaluator who will eventually contact her and summon her to a first meeting, face-to-face or telematic according to personal and health circumstances, in which she must provide a request for units of competence and proof of payment of the corresponding fees.
6. In the evaluation process, the acquisition of the units of professional competence of the proposed qualifications will be evaluated, based on the professional and training trajectory and the appropriate means of contrast.
7. After this phase, the competent body will officially accredit and send to the candidate, the units of competence acquired.



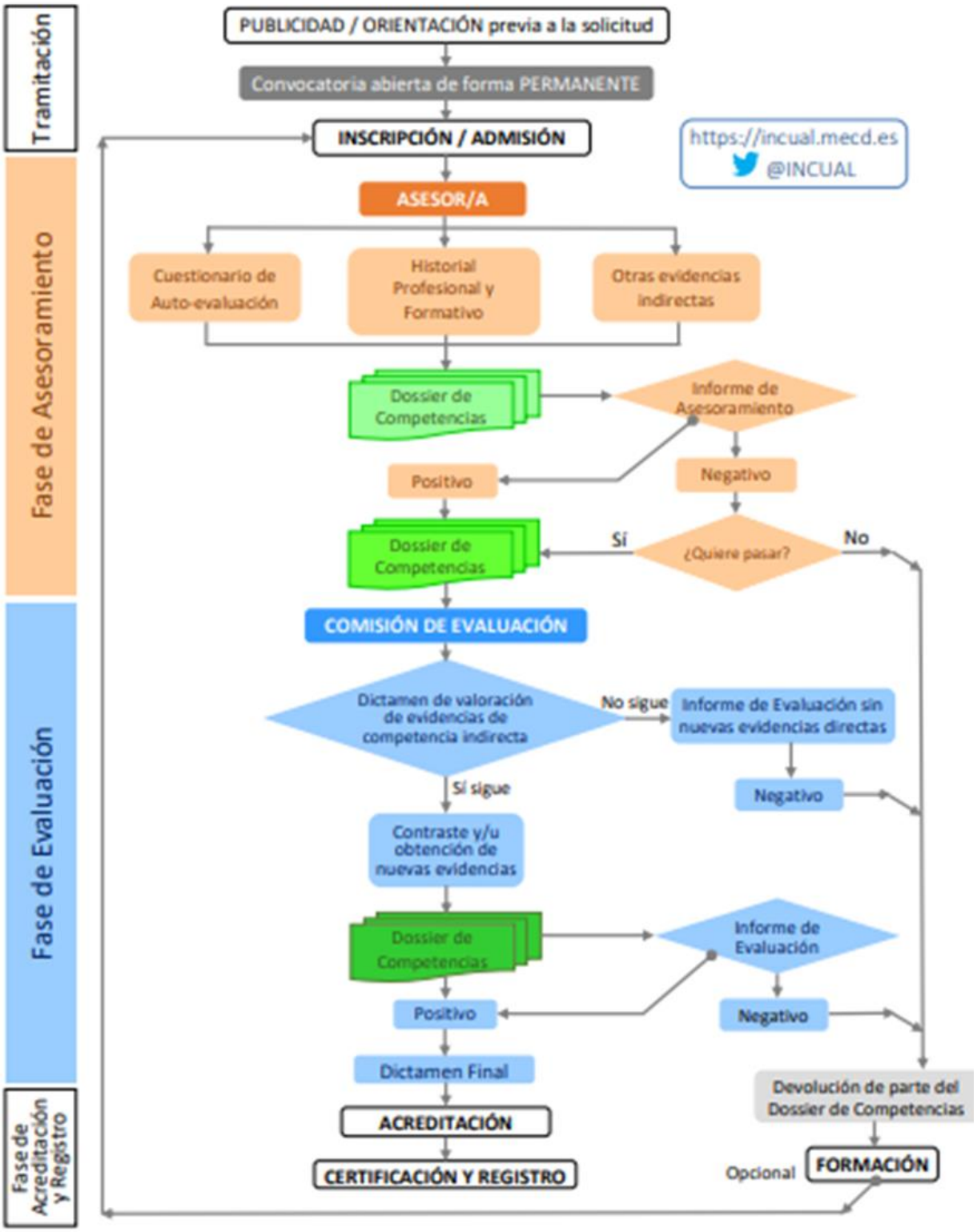
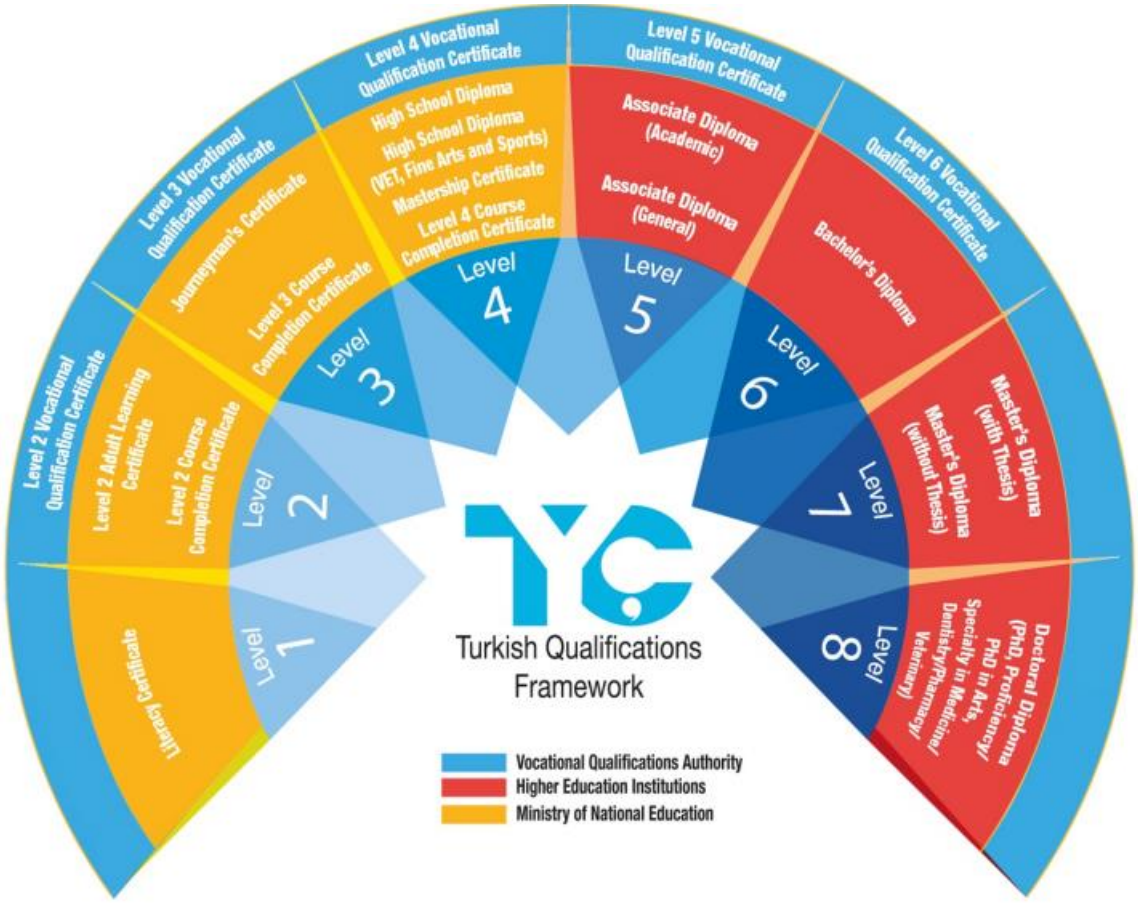


Diagram of procedures flow

TURKEY

The TQF Regulation includes provision for Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning (VNFIL), stipulating that all qualifications included in the TQF can be obtained through VNFIL. Learners should be able to use validation of non-formal and informal learning to access programmes, sit exams, obtain exemptions, obtain certification of units, and accumulate and transfer credits.
VNFIL legislation has been updated, notably the October 2017 regulation on principles and implementation of VNFIL, regarding accreditation, measurement and evaluation, and the March 2018 revisions to the regulation on secondary education, which allows for use of validation in the sector.
The 2014-2018 Lifelong Learning Strategy Document promoted extensive use of VNFIL, including via EU projects. A new lifelong learning project is planned to start in 2021. Piloting is also advancing through Erasmus projects such as the EQF-oriented assessment tools for prior learning in adult education, coordinated by the Çorum Public Education Centre.
In January 2019, VQA published a Turkish version of the European Guidelines on validation. VQA plans to develop a procedure for the validation of non-formal and informal learning in line with the TQF regulation by the end of 2021. The responsible bodies - VQA, MoNE and the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) - will be responsible for applying these general principles and procedures for the qualifications within their respective remits.
VQA has organized and supported the implementation of a VNFIL system to award national vocational qualifications to adults; the ACBs conduct the assessment, evaluation, and certification of such candidates. The involvement in VNFIL of stakeholders such as employer organisations, through their presence in the ACBs, has created visibility and trust in the VQA qualifications and the validation process.
Validation has been given a huge quantitative boost by the law requiring certification for 143 designated occupations. More than 1.3 million certificates have been issued thus far, of which 1.2 million have been awarded for qualifications in occupations defined hazardous. However, this use of validation as a compulsory measure differentiates Turkish practice from the generally voluntary European approach to VNFIL, in which it is the learner who initiates the process and seeks certification or other validation. Despite the huge number of people certified so far, female participation in validation is only 2%11. This is because most validation has been of workers employed in the 143 occupations defined in the regulation, which are male-dominated. Steps to improve access for women, and other categories such as migrants, are being taken by VQA, the ACBs and MONE, which are developing new validation arrangements.
As indicated above, MoNE Department of Lifelong Learning has established a database of modular programmes to support non-formal learning, which are also used for the certification of adult learning12. Ensuring that these modularized programmes are obtainable through validation will widen the possibilities for lifelong learning, as it will allow for recognizing part qualifications. VNFIL was legally introduced to the Turkish higher education system in 2011 but there has been only slow progress in that sector. To realise a fully national system for VNFIL, CoHE is expected to align with the initiatives pursued by the VQA and MoNE.
The Ministry of National Education's Strategic Plan (2015–19), the Vocational and Technical Education Strategy Paper and Action Plan (2014–18), the National Lifelong Learning Strategy (2014– 18) and the National Employment Strategy of Turkey (2014–23) comprise the framework within which Turkey pursues VET reform, including the implementation of the TQF.
The Employment Strategy and its Action Plan3 attribute a core role to the Turkish Qualifications Framework in strengthening the link between education and employment and the quality of the VET system. Turkey's lifelong learning strategy and Action Plan (2014-2018) paid particular attention to improving access to lifelong learning beyond the formal education system and promoted Validation of NonFormal and Informal Learning (VNFIL). However, there is not yet a new strategy for lifelong learning, while Education Vision 2023 does not allocate much space to lifelong learning.



Turkish Qualifications Framework

SECOND PART

2. SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE ON VALIDATION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

2.1. COMPETENCE VALIDATION – GENERAL ASPECTS

The analysis of the specialized literature (official literature at the level of the European Union, national reports, scientific articles, etc.) reveals a very important aspect. Competence validation is generally the focus of the Union and there are consistent efforts to unify competence validation methodologies. Regarding the validation and recognition of the competencies acquired through formal learning, substantial results were obtained. An eloquent example is the Bologna Agreement, aimed at ensuring comparability in the standards and quality of higher-education qualifications. The Bologna Agreement allows for the mutual recognition of university diplomas, but also of subjects completed, through the ECTS system.

The situation is not as advanced in terms of non-formal and informal learning. Some countries have already implemented their own systems and methodologies for validating non-formal and informal learning skills. Then there are states that have implemented European recommendations in this direction and states that have only just begun the implementation process. The aim is that these systems and methodologies should evolve (converge) towards a unity that ensures the recognition of the results of validation at European level.

In the new millennium, many different initiatives at a national and European level for validation of non-formal and informal learning have been implemented and have conducted to a significant advancement, particularly in terms of creating policy frameworks and validation methods and procedures (Harris et al., 2014; Diedrich, 2013; Andersson et al., 2004; Colardyn and Bjørnavold, 2004). Still, this validation presents a mosaic aspect with some countries not yet having started the process (Haasler et al., 2018). While continued efforts at different levels, as well as the development of common European principles for this validation, are aimed to move from fragmentation to stronger unity. [Laudenbach & Lis, 2019]

As it will be shown below, even the definitions of the validation process in general or the definitions of the validation process of non-formal and informal learning are not identical at the level of European states.

Basically, validation means a process of confirmation by an authorised body that an individual has acquired learning outcomes measured against a relevant standard. According to Council of European Union (2012), competence validation is “a view to offering individuals the opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned outside formal education and training – including through mobility experiences – and to make use of that learning for their careers and further learning, and with due regard for the principle of subsidiarity.”

But at the level of European states, there are official definitions that emphasize nuanced aspects. The following example refers to two states in Central and Eastern Europe: Poland and Romania. In Poland, the Parliament (2015), defined validation as “assessment whether the person applying for a

given qualification, regardless of the person's learning method, has achieved a separate part or all of the learning outcomes required for that qualification". But in Romania, the National Education Law stipulates that validation is "the process by which it is confirmed that the learning outcomes evaluated, acquired by a person, correspond to the specific requirements for a unit of learning outcomes or a qualification." (Romanian National Education Law, 2011)

Another aspect to be discussed is the terminology used in the context of the recognition, validation and certification of competencies obtained by non-formal and informal learning. Experts have proposed different terms and concepts that only partially overlap and therefore do not allow for an effective approach.

Validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL) deals exclusively with validation of skills, knowledge, and attitudes acquired outside the formal learning process. *Validation of prior learning (VPL)* or *recognition of prior learning (RPL)* is referring to the process acknowledgement and validation of learning acquired during and throughout an individual's lifetime. Formal, non-formal and informal learning can be evaluated, recognised and accredited together for different purposes in an individual's education or professional life. [Tuomainen, 2018]

An example of *validation of prior learning (VPL)* is in France. Validation of Experience Acquisitions (VAE) refers to "Anyone engaged in the labour market has the right to validate the acquired experience, particularly professional, for the acquisition of a diploma, a title with a professional goal or a qualification certificate listed on a list drawn up by the national joint committee on the employment of a professional branch, registered in the national directory of professional certifications referred to in Article L. 335-6 of the Education Code". [French Parliament, 2002]

Italy and Spain (the Mediterranean Context) have a regionalized system but refer to a National Qualification Framework. The two countries are characterised by a quite similar migratory dynamics and common labour market dynamics, and in recent years the economic crisis has marked local developments and enterprises strategies. Despite a formalized framework, the implementation of the validation process is at an early stage. Between the two countries, we can see some differences, especially in terms of professional profiles under accreditation and in terms of application procedures. Few remarks on application with migrant populations. Generally speaking, in both countries, labour active policies are characterized by the presence of measures, in some cases targeted to migrants in general (and not to refugees) or more frequently at the general population of job seekers.

In Italy, at a national level, until 2012/13, despite the wide awareness on the topic of validation of non-formal and informal learning, a national system did not exist. Now, after a four-year activity, a validation process exclusively on VET professional profiles is going to be well structured, although different levels of implementation among regions remain. Some regions have already a definitive legislation, six are about to finalize it, one region has not yet complied with national directives. On the side of educational system, public schools and universities have not adopted a validation and certification process regarding their qualifications, yet.

In Piedmont Region, more specifically, the VET regional system was a consolidated, well-structured and coherent one with a professional profile description based on competences, abilities and knowledge. Some practices, carried out through specific projects, on the recognition credit system were implemented and represented the stepping stone on which the new guidelines have been created. After a period of solid production of manuals and institutional prescriptions ("Manual for identification, validation and certification of competences acquired in a non-formal and informal context" – first part in Dec. 2013; "Guidelines for identification, validation and certification of competences acquired in a non-formal and informal context" – second part in Jan. 2016), in September 2017, an essential law in Piedmont designs and defines the validation and certification process (Piedmont System Essential law on competence certification process, credit recognition and experts involved).

In order to avoid a pros and cons analysis of the two concepts, it will be taken into account that for the evaluation of accumulations in formal education there are well-developed and recognized procedures within the European Union. Therefore, the focus will be on *Validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL).*

Before concluding this chapter, two other aspects should be mentioned as relevant. First of all, any methodology for validating competencies should be developed in such a way as to allow full or partial recognition of a qualification (European Council, 2012). Therefore, the validation methodology will have to allow the case in which only some competencies of those included in the profession specification will be validated through an official document.
Secondly, there is the case of occupations that are not yet registered in the ESCO or in the national registers. In some countries (such as Austria), it is possible to obtain certificates that do not correspond to an occupation in the national register. Therefore, it is necessary to analyse whether the national legislation allows the issuance of certificates for unregistered occupations in national register. It is possible that there are legal provisions that oblige the issuer of such certificates to start the procedures for the introduction of the new occupation in the national register.

2.2. THE AIM OF THE VALIDATION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

The aim of validation of non-formal and informal learning is manifold:

- efficient integration of population into the labour market;
- employment and providing income for disadvantaged segments of the population;
- ensuring labour mobility in the European space;
- validation of competencies that initially cannot be formally validated;
- shortening the learning cycles for educational programmes at higher EQF levels;
- stimulation of European citizens to involve in lifelong learning;
- focus on learning outcomes and not on learning processes and systems;
- empower the active citizens to cope with the permanent changes in the required competence system.

Europe has a great diversity of education and training institutions and systems. The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) reflects a strong agreement that education and training must be able to respond to learning necessities at local, regional and national levels. [Bjørnåvold, 2007]
The knowledge-based economy, new technologies, the increasing speed of technological changes and globalisation all impose the need to improve the population's skills and competences [Colardyn, & Bjørnåvold, 2004] and also increased the consistency of degrees and enhanced cooperation, networking and mobility [Tuomainen, 2018].
Validation of competencies no matter their sources or functions on various economic, social, educational and psychological levels and the recognition processes aim to meet the needs of all – individuals, organisations and society.
Validation of non-formal and informal learning should lead to eliminating barriers between education, training and learning institutions and systems and to promote access, transfer and accumulation of learning outcomes. Furthermore, it shall allow individuals to improve their employment potential and employers to recruit proper employees (Boswell and Geddes, 2011; Fassmann and Lane, 2009).
Such endeavours are meant to enable individuals to obtain validation of skills and competences that have been acquired during work, during various voluntary activities undertaken outside the formal educational system, thus also capitalizing on the value of such knowledge, skills and competences.
Validation of non-formal and informal learning is one of the ways how citizens can access social benefits and improve their economic prospects. Notably, it is addressed to the unemployed, migrant workers, refugees and individuals with restricted labour-market and learning opportunities.
The Council of the European Union recommended the enhancement of "employability and mobility, and increasing motivation for lifelong learning, particularly in the case of the socio-economically disadvantaged or the low-qualified" [Council of Europe, 2016]. It could be said that validation of non-formal and informal learning it is a second chance offered to certain categories of the population.
So, validation of non-formal and informal learning is seen and conceptualised as an instrument to enhance social inclusion and labour-market mobility of individuals of all age groups. At the same

time, it increases the transparency and usability of informal learning outcomes. This can be a means of overcoming uncertain employment and working conditions. [Laudenbach & Lis, 2019]
According to some expert comparisons, in France, Romania and Poland, the system is used especially for socio-economically disadvantaged or the low-qualified [Silvestru, & Silvestru, 2019]. Also, in Romania, the validation system is also addressed especially to adults and persons who do not tend to return to the formal system. Validation is linked with the occupational standards related to continuous vocational and educational training qualifications. Thus, the level of government intervention is high, including regulations (primary, up to tertiary), standards, and institutional mechanisms set in place. [Romanian National Authority for Qualifications]
In general, the validation of non-formal and informal learning and their recognition at the European level is linked to free movement. Free movement shall allow individuals to improve their employment potential and employers to recruit suitable employees [Boswell and Geddes, 2011; Fassmann and Lane, 2009; Laudenbach & Lis, 2019].
Migration is not a simple phenomenon, considering that labour migration is usually framed by a dualism that defines good labour migration of higher-skilled migrants and rather unwanted migration by low-skilled migrants [Boswell and Geddes, 2011; Laudenbach & Lis, 2019].
“Horizontal mobility refers to the movement of people from one country to another and includes their aim to obtain equal entrance, equal pay and, at the same time, full recognition of their qualifications/competences in the host country. Vertical mobility, in contrast, refers to the upward movement of persons from being unskilled to being skilled and thus having their competencies officially validated.” [Laudenbach & Lis, 2019]
Another aim is to obtain the validation of the competencies acquired through forms of training that have not been or cannot be formally certified. in labour-market sectors where competence gaps are an issue of concern, the validation of already existing competencies of individuals can bring qualified people into work more quickly [Bohlinger and Münchhausen, 2011; Schröder, 2011.
In Poland, amendments to the Act on Higher education from 2014 introduced regulations on validation of non-formal and informal learning for access to higher education, to recognize prior learning in cases where relevant professional experience may shorten the learning cycles for programs EQF levels 6 and 7. In such cases, in addition to demanding the diploma from the previous level of education, there are different requirements in terms of professional experience of at least five years before access to a Bachelor degree programme, while three years professional experience are requested for a Master degree. In such cases, the university senate has the responsibility to organize the process of recognition of learning outcomes.
The emphasis on informal and non-formal competences contributes to stimulating citizens to lifelong learning. Lifelong learning policies should enable and determine all citizens to be part of lifelong learning.
In association with lifelong learning, validation of non-formal and informal learning can be seen to generate a bond between different systems of learning, areas and stages of life [Tuomainen, 2018]. The processes of recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning aim towards supporting lifelong learning, reducing overlapping education or training, increasing regional, national and international mobility, and more flexible approaches to working and studying [Pokorny & Whittaker, 2014; Werquin, 2010].
The strategy of lifelong learning strengthens the notion that a person is learning throughout here/his entire life and in every context of life. To take account of this multi-dimensionality, education policies started to address and to develop strategies, programmes and qualification frameworks that could support the validation and recognition of competencies obtained throughout the duration of life [Bohlinger and Münchhausen, 2011; Laudenbach & Lis, 2019].
In lifelong and life-wide learning, ‘validation’ is a crucial element to ensure the visibility and to indicate the appropriate value of the learning that took place anywhere and at any time in the life of the individual. [Colardyn, & Bjørnåvold, 2004]
The ongoing developments in the field of validation of non-formal and informal learning can be characterised in the following way: Validation of non-formal and informal learning is seen as a centrepiece in strategies on lifelong learning. These strategies, formulated at national as well as at European level, recognises that learning takes place in a range of different institutional – formal,

non-formal and informal – and that there is a need to reconcile the education and training in specialised institutions with the experience-based learning from practical working as well as life situations. [Bjørnåvold, 2007]
Informal learning has gained great importance in the context of vocational and adult education: it is described as being as important as formal learning [Severing, 2015; Laudenbach & Lis, 2019]. A common statement in the field of validation is that results (or outcomes) matter, less so the processes and systems leading to these results (or outcomes). [Bjørnåvold, 2007]
The purpose is to make visible the entire range of skills, knowledge and experience held by an individual, irrespective of the context where the learning originally happened. The transfer of knowledge and skills are a cardinal aspect of the agendas for lifelong learning policies. [Staboulis, & Sytziouki, 2021]
Validation of non-formal and informal learning empowers the active citizens to cope with the permanent changes in the required competence system. Change in competencies through the life span and career transition have become core concepts in today‘s policy discourse for education and employment. Lifetime employment becomes an exception since the majority of employees change jobs and careers several times in their work lifespan. [Staboulis, & Sytziouki, 2021]
If validation of non-formal and informal learning is not performed or it is performed poorly, it appears situations like the following. The skilled workforce is under-used. Access to specific educational programmes is denied, even if the candidate is morally entitled because s/he complies with enrolment requirements, but in an informal way.
In addition to the mobility and flexibility perspectives, validation of non-formal and informal learning should be seen as an essential learner and learning-centric approach that validates individual skills and knowledge and enhances self-awareness and self-esteem (UNESCO, 2012).

2.3. SPECIFIC ELEMENTS OF VALIDATION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

According to French Law, the validation of non-formal and informal learning is related to prior experience for anyone who has worked for at least one year in a professional, salaried, non-salaried or voluntary activity related to the subject of her / his application. This may request the validation of her / his prior experience to justify all or part of the competencies required to obtain a diploma or title or certificate of professional competencies issued on behalf of the French State. [Silvestru, & Silvestru, 2019].
It can be challenging to recognise and validate non-formal and informal learning in its multitude and variety. The wide variety of sources of expertise should be taken into account. The learning outcomes must be formulated in such a way as to allow an objective, transparent and, as far as possible, quantified assessment. Competent evaluators must be available. The evaluation process should not take too long. An up-to-date occupational standard must be available. Learner expectations can be another problem in assessing non-formal and informal learning where ability, proficiency or performance are evaluated against set learning outcomes. This manner of evaluation can be perceived as restrictive by candidates [Garrett, Portwood & Costley, 2004; Pokorny, 2011]. Low participation of social partners and competent bodies in the validation process and thus low acceptability by employers and higher education institutions.
European principles on validation of non-formal and informal learning are the following [Bjørnåvold, 2007]:

- Validation must be voluntary
- The privacy of individuals should be respected (The results are confidential.)
- Equal access and fair treatment should be guaranteed.
- All stakeholders should be involved.
- Stakeholders should establish systems for validation.
- Validation systems should be developed according to laws.

- Validation systems should contain a mechanism for guidance and counselling of individuals.
- Validation systems should be transparent.
- Validation systems should respect the legitimate interests of stakeholders and seek balanced participation.
- Validation systems should be underpinned by quality assurance.
- The process, procedures and criteria for validation should be fair, transparent and underpinned by quality assurance.
- The process of validation must be impartial and avoid conflicts of interest.
- The professional competencies of those who carry out assessments must be assured.

Principles for implementing validation of non-formal and informal learning [Cedefop, 2015]:

1. The validation arrangements are linked to the National Qualifications framework and are in line with the European Qualifications Framework.
2. There is information on the benefits and possibilities of validation, as well as the relevant procedures.
3. Disadvantaged groups, including the unemployed and those at risk of unemployment, are likely to benefit from the validation arrangements, as validation can enhance their participation in lifelong learning and facilitate their access to the labour market.
4. Under national law and national particularities, the unemployed and those at risk of becoming unemployed can be subject to "skills control" to determine their knowledge, skills, and abilities within a reasonable period.
5. Validation of non-formal and informal learning is supported by accessible appropriate guidance and advice.
6. Transparent quality assurance measures are implemented, in line with the existing framework, supporting reliable, valid and certifiable methodologies and assessment tools.
7. The development of the staff's professional skills involved in the validation process in all relevant areas is foreseen.
8. Professional qualifications or, where applicable, partially acquired professional qualifications obtained through the validated learning experiences meet the agreed standards that are identical or equivalent to those achieved through formal education programmes.
9. Promotes the use of Union Transparency tools, such as the Europass framework and Youthpass, to facilitate recording the learning outcomes.
10. There are synergies between validation arrangements and credit schemes applied in the formal education and training system, such as ECTS and ECVET [Cedefop, 2015].2

Based on a case study, Staboulis & Sytziouki [2021] support the idea of validation of non-formal and informal learning on a constructivist basis.

2.4. RELATIONSHIP OF VALIDATION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING WITH NATIONAL OCCUPATION REGISTERS

The French "Validation of Experience Acquisitions" (VAE) may be utilized for any occupation listed in the national repertory of vocational occupations, as long as the candidate fulfils the minimum requirements for eligibility. The national register covers the following types of qualification: initial VET, post-secondary VET, and sectorial professional certificates delivered by commerce and higher education chambers. [Silvestru, & Silvestru, 2019]

In Poland, validation is closely linked with the national qualifications framework, focusing on vocational learning and training in general. The Polish law also establishes the requirements for the bodies that perform the validation and certification, the rules for obtaining the certification authorization, and the principles for quality assurance. [Silvestru, & Silvestru, 2019]

2.5. METHODOLOGY OF VALIDATION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

According to Werquin [2010], there are typically five steps in any process that aims to recognise an individual's relevant non-formal and informal learning: identification, assessment, validation, certification, and social recognition. These steps can be seen to comprise most recognition processes in European Higher Education, even if different assessment methods are utilised. In the case of validation of non-formal and informal learning, existing methodologies do not emphasise the step of social recognition.

Validation of non-formal and informal learning has the following phases [Council of European Union, 2016]:

1. Identification – through a dialogue of particular experiences of an individual;
2. Documentation – to make visible the individual's experiences;
3. Formal Assessment of these experiences;
4. Certification of the assessment results – which may lead to a partial or full qualification"

Identification aims to highlight the skills and competencies that the candidate possesses, whether she/he is aware of them or not. In addition, the candidate does not have the necessary training to know the competence system. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that the candidate should be assisted in the step of identification by a professional counsellor. This recommendation already applies in many countries such as France or Romania. In Romania, In the stage of identification and documentation, public information and counselling services are provided by the National Agency for Employment and its structures at the county level for any registered job seeker. Such services are designed for registered job seekers. In the case of using private sector assessment centres, counselling services may also be provided within such centres. [Silvestru, & Silvestru, 2019]

In the stage of **documentation**, the candidate needs to prepare a file that displays the competences. In addition, one may benefit from a competence audit, which is used to support workers (and some jobseekers) in analysing and documenting competences, aptitudes and motivation. In the stage of assessment, the candidates meet a jury or a commission. The process of self-assessment and reflection is essential and should accompany the validation.

The **formal assessment of these experiences** is performed by a commission/jury. Although it is not generally applied, it is recommended that the commission debates with the candidate. This clarifies all aspects, and the candidate can better explain certain aspects than were understood from the file. The candidate also has a better understanding of improving her/his file. And last but not least, the evaluation process should be transparent.

When the candidate debates with the commission/jury, the evaluation methods used may vary depending on the provider and the type of qualification concerned (each awarding authority has the right to decide which techniques will be used. Other techniques used are observing actual or simulated work activities. For example, as part of the procedure used in the ministry in charge of employment, the evaluation includes a simulation of the work environment before a jury, which also evaluates the file submitted by the candidate.

As for **certification**, the decision of the commission/jury related to total validation provides the holder with certification of the same value as that obtained through formal education and training. In the case of partial validation or refusal of validation, the candidate may receive additional support from the professional development counsellor.

In the stage of certification, the candidate may receive a certificate of competences for either partial or full competences of an occupational standard. Usually, the certificate has national recognition. If the candidate demonstrated the full range of competences, the certificate is equivalent to a similar certificate obtained through formal education.

Assessment of candidates' non-formal and informal learning is carried out using techniques like:

- portfolios;

- declarative;
- interviews;
- examinations;
- project-based evaluation;
- learning diaries;
- assignments;
- observations;
- simulations;
- evidence extracted from work;
- + **combinations of the above.**

There are assessment institutions that allow candidates to choose the technique to be evaluated and are offered two options, as in Finland [Haapoja & Heikkilä, 2009]. But is it feasible to have options? The cost would be considerably higher. And some candidates may think that those who have opted for the other technique have been favoured.

Portfolios are the most commonly used techniques, and their use has many advantages. It is made up and improved over time. It presents a complete and diverse image of the candidate. It can be done with the help of counsellors. By developing the portfolio, the candidate gains confidence and presents herself/himself better in front of the assessment commission.

But there were observed some drawbacks related to the use of a portfolio. Self-reported estimates regarding portfolios made by candidates indicated an underestimation of the actual amount of informal learning because of the embedded and tacit nature of the learning [Livingstone, 2006]. Another source of concern with portfolios and/or narrative interviews compared to examinations can be the reliability of the assessment of the candidates' learning. Stenlund [2010] has questioned the use of portfolios for validation of non-formal and informal learning because of their potential for bias in the scoring and interpretation of the results. Some candidates have found the portfolio process to be very demanding, lasting several months and involving constant reflection. And it should not be forgotten that some candidates belong to the disadvantaged segments of the population.

In the **declarative** technique**, c**andidates declare and justify (orally and in writing) that what they can do corresponds to certain parts of the curriculum taught in the formal education or training programmes for which they would apply. A commission gives the final verdict. [Colardyn, & Bjørnåvold, 2004]

The **interview** may be conducted by an evaluator or the entire evaluation commission. The interview may be performed as a discussion focused on the evidence presented in the candidate's file or may include questions aimed at the direct assessment of professional competencies.

In the **examination** technique**,** candidates answer questions (oral or written) on a qualification domain. They can focus on a specific domain or be interdisciplinary in nature. Questions can be open or closed (essay, multiple-choice). Also, case studies can be used, because it is crucial to know the candidate's opinion about the situation and how she/he will act. The case studies can be in the form of written or oral contributions. An examination is recommended for their cost-efficacy, fairness and applicability.

Hamer [2013] has argued that recognising non-formal and informal learning in formal ways such as examinations can seriously limit the evaluation of the knowledge required and leave out much of the learner's own interpretations of experience.

Project-based evaluation is an alternative to tests that allow candidates to engage more concretely. Instead of merely answering to more or less theoretical questions, a hands-on project asks candidates to apply what they know from non-formal and informal learning to an in-depth exploration of a field. However, project-based evaluation requires commission to be flexible in assessment and experienced in such a technique.

A **learning diary** is a collection of notes, reflections, thoughts and other relevant materials built up over time and is the result of the candidate's experience. Its purpose is to substantiate the candidate's competencies through the process of writing/thinking about her/his learning experiences.

An **assignment** starts with selecting the topic. The topic can be given by the commission or can be proposed by the candidate and approved by the commission. The assignment should illustrate that some key competencies of the sought qualifications were used when drafting the text.

The **observation** requires that the evaluator follows specific rules and strict techniques. The evaluator observes the candidate in situ and judges whether s/he has the competence described in a standard. Observation is a more demanding exercise than people can imagine. Methodology and training are required for the evaluator to collect relevant and reliable observations properly. Direct observation of competences is used to evaluate a practical work situation. So, the observation of activities should occur in real work settings. [Colardyn, & Bjørnåvold, 2004]

Examples of **simulation** techniques are well-known since airplane pilots are partly trained that way. The candidate is placed in a context that present all the characteristics of the real work (or other) situation and can then demonstrate her/his competences. The simulation requires a large number of studies and task analysis to be properly prepared. The major difficulty is the task analyses and studies needed before a simulation can actually be valid and reliable. [Colardyn, & Bjørnåvold, 2004]

In the **evidence extracted from work** technique, the candidate collects evidence of skills and competences in the real work situation (or social, family or cultural setting). The collection should be done according to the descriptions in the occupational and assessment standards [Colardyn, & Bjørnåvold, 2004].

Standards occupy a central place in the evaluation procedure. Summative validation of non-formal and informal learning is likewise unthinkable without a clearly defined and agreed reference point, the occupational standard. The credibility and impact of validation of non-formal and informal learning depends very much on this standard and how it is defined and interpreted. A too narrow standard may clash with the non-standardised but in many cases highly relevant learning taking place outside schools. [Bjørnåvold, 2007]

Standards express, in a codified manner, the fundamental objectives pursued by users (individual citizens, employers) and providers (education and training organisations, certifying institutions) of qualifications. Qualifications – and validation of non-formal and informal learning – relate to two main categories of standards: occupational and education-training standards. These two categories can also be described as employment and teaching/learning specifications respectively and operate according to different logics, reflecting different sets of priorities, motivations and purposes.

Occupational standards are classifications and definitions of the main jobs that people perform. Following the logic of employment, these standards will focus on what people need to do, how they will do it, and how well they do it. Occupational standards thus have to be written as competencies and formulated in terms of outcomes. Occupational standards need to focus on learning outcomes to be truly useful in validating skills, especially those acquired non-formally and informally.

Education-training standards, following the logic of education and training, will focus on what people need to learn, how they will learn it, and how the quality and content of learning will be evaluated. The main interest is thus formulated in terms of input (subject, syllabus, teaching methods, process and assessment). Educational standards are normally written as teaching specifications and qualification specifications.

A key issue in the validation of the non-formal and informal learning is the duration of the process. It should last enough to allow the candidate to collect the evidence and properly prepare her/his file, but not too much to discourage the candidate from starting the process. In some countries, the whole process lasts between eight and twelve months, from the definition of the project (identification) to the validation tests before the commission.

Another key issue is the help the candidate receives from a third party. In some countries (like Romania), the validation procedure includes the obligation of the evaluating institution to provide a counsellor. Also, in the case of an employee, a citizen may seek the help of the employer. However, one is not required to notify the employer that s/he has started the validation procedure.

For non-formal and informal learning assessment methods, Butterworth [1992] identified the credit exchange model and the developmental model. The first refers to evidence being provided by the applicant of her/his competence, and credits are awarded if the required competencies meet the candidate's learning outcomes. Osman [2004] has regarded this credit exchange model, typically involving performance testing or examinations, as a straightforward way for candidates to obtain equivalent credits. However, the credit exchange model has also been critiqued for the lack of reflection, as candidates in this type of process 'have not learned anything they did not know before' [Butterworth, 1992]. Regardless, this development model is difficult to be applied. In some countries,

the format of occupational standards includes a training programme for completing the missing skills and knowledge.
In Germany, in vocational education, a candidate can take the formal examination to obtain the certificate/diploma if she/he has not completed the formal education programme but has more than 1.5 times the seniority in the respective profession training. An option in Germany, especially for foreign workers, is this: The recognition process is, in the first place, based on evaluating relevant evidence such as training certificates, certificates of capability and proof of relevant domain-specific work experience obtained. Complementary competency assessment is also achievable based on practical tests, proof of work and interviews [Laudenbach & Lis, 2019].

2.6. DIGITAL FORMS OF ASSESSMENT IN VALIDATION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

Digital forms of assessment in validation of non-formal and informal learning were introduced because they provided several benefits, among which the most important are the following:

- supportive character of digital tools for users;
- easy and all-time access;
- facilitating administrative processes in terms of time effectiveness;
- cost-efficiency (given a large number of tests);
- whole or partially automated assessment.

Not only the candidates can benefit from the use of digital forms of assessment in the validation of non-formal and informal learning, but also job counsellors and employers, as pointed out Luomi-Messerer [2019] in her report.
The aims of digital assessment that can be found for the individual include, in particular, supporting labour market integration of those outside employment or in transition (including professional self-development of the individual and career planning or job applications) and educational advancement of those willing to (re)integrate into education and training (including certification or receiving credits for parts of a qualification) [Luomi-Messerer, 2019]
There are two types of digital assessment used for validation:

- self-assessment (automated or supervised);
- peer assessment.

Different types of learning outcomes are included in digital forms of assessment e.g., occupation-specific knowledge, abilities and competences, transversal ones (including creativity, entrepreneurship, learning-to-learn), key competences for lifelong learning, etc.
The expected added value of employing digital tools for (self-) assessment in validation processes lies on the one hand in the fact that a high number of individuals can use these tools at different locations. The results can usually be stored for later use or printed (e.g., as an attachment to a job application). Although their conception and maintenance costs need to be considered, their usage is less costly than face-to-face sessions [Luomi-Messerer, 2019].
Digital instruments can be used [Luomi-Messerer, 2019]:

- for the identification of competencies (digital assessment tools can support this since some people may be confronted with new skills they had not considered earlier);
- for the documentation of competences (supporting the recording of identified competencies);
- as an emerging form of assessment in the validation (including self-assessment);
- as an objective basis for certification.

However, Luomi-Messerer [2019] found out that digital assessment, in most cases does not yet play a significant role in certification processes. Most of these tools concentrate on supporting the identification and documentation of competencies. Different digital tools comprise at least these two phases of validation, for example: “My Competence Portfolio” (DK).
In some cases, the digital tools supporting identification and documentation focus on helping people to capture their competencies and to develop clear documentation. First of all, the systematic

recording creates an orientation on the current state of competencies to identify gaps or, if necessary, propose further training recommendations. These approaches, therefore, focus on the identification and documentation of competencies and can form the basis for further phases in the validation process. [Luomi-Messerer, 2019].
An example is the Acredita system (Spain). Acredita is an ICT-based assessment technique to help candidates identify their competences. Applicants are invited to choose from a list of activities they believe they can carry out (for each activity there is a self-assessment test), and indicate any training completed (for IVET, occupational certificates, or training developed by the public employment service). Once the form is completed, the platform provides a report with the following elements: competence units that do not need to be accredited, competence units that can be accredited, complementary training the candidate must undergo to obtain various IVET diplomas or occupational certificates [Country report].
Digital tools supporting identification, documentation, and assessment are more complex than non-digital ones. Tools like skills passports or portfolios are designed to document the competencies of individuals for different purposes. Although digital tools do not always focus on assessing competencies that lead to certification, digital assessment can serve as the first step in this respect, as the Finnish example ‘Osaan’.
The Finnish e-tool, namely Osaan combines the identification and documentation of competences. Candidates can use the tool to reflect on the progress made in their competence development related to a specific vocational qualification. The e-tool comprises all ‘Competence-based Qualifications’ and the related evaluation criteria. Candidates may conduct a self-assessment to verify if they have the required competencies to take the competence tests to demonstrate their command of the vocational skills requirements. [Luomi-Messerer, 2019]
A special case of digital tools is the use of blockchain technology. Even this technology is famous for supporting the virtual currency and can help other services such as badges or credits. Technically, it is a database that is distributed across many computers and servers without central control. Everything is distributed, public, synchronized and encrypted. Each 'block' is transparent but tamper-proof. A 'block' has a timestamp for recording transactions and provides indelible proof of all. Blockchain is a distributed ledger that offers a way for information to be recorded and shared by a community. In this community, each member maintains his or her own copy of the information, and all members must validate any updates collectively. The information could represent transactions, contracts, assets, identities, or practically anything else that can be described in digital form [Luomi-Messerer, 2019].

2.7. QUALITY ASSURANCE IN VALIDATION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

There is a preconceived opinion that formal education and training learning is structured and its quality is assured. The learning outside formal education institutions is unstructured, haphazard, and not subject to quality assurance. Consequently, the assessment of these competencies is also outside the scope of quality assurance. The opinion must be combated in particular by how the validation process is organized.
Quality assurance must target both the organizational system (especially the procedures) and the evaluators. The application of the procedures must be done according to the same methodology and must lead to objective and replicable results for the same conditions. The assessment must be authentic, valid, transparent and reliable to ensure the quality and validity of the system. Evaluators must be competent in the professional field for which non-formal and informal learning is validated and in education, particularly in the milieu of non-formal and informal learning.
In Romania, recent tertiary legislation has been issued, further establishing a quality assurance system for validation of non-formal and informal learning regarding the minimum certification criteria for staff involved in the validation (e.g., evaluators of professional competencies, evaluators of evaluators, external evaluators) [Silvestru, & Silvestru, 2019].

2.8. ENTITIES RESPONSIBLE FOR VALIDATION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

In countries like France, the central government shares the responsibility for the validation of non-formal and informal learning with employers, trade unions, educational institutions, and employment services. Because of the existence of many actors, a coordination activity is required. The coordination of actions is basically a ministerial responsibility (most frequently involving ministries of Education and Employment, to a lesser degree Economy-industry, and others) [Colardyn, & Bjørnåvold, 2004].
In other countries like Romania, the typology of actors involved is slightly different: public sector ones, private sector ones and the third sector. The interest in the validation in its various steps varies from one type of actor to another. Thus, the legal framework covers all steps in the public sector. The third sector is more focused on identification and documentation because of raising awareness concerning the benefits of validation of non-formal and informal learning. The private sector is more concentrated on assessment to measure progress. In the public sector, the legal framework covers all stages, whilst in the private sector, the human resources departments are more focused on assessment in the recruitment phase and use assessment to measure progress.
In Romania, private actors (companies) obtain authorization from a designated state organisation as assessment centres in the framework set for validation. The interest is closely related to the market. Each centre obtains authorization for a specific occupation; people would not be interested in using such services if the market does not request it. Thus, the orientation of the policy towards the market is relatively high.
Usually involved in formal education and training, social partners are also involved in the validation of non-formal and informal learning. Moreover, with non-formal and informal learning, other actors exert a strong presence. The practical implementation of policies on validation of non-formal and informal learning involves agencies and bodies related to the public organisations, as well as the social partners: the relevant range of actors is broader than with the traditional tripartite approach. The stakeholders concerned are numerous and diverse: from ministries and agencies to education and training providers, as well as NGOs. [Colardyn, & Bjørnåvold, 2004].

2.9. CANDIDATES IN VALIDATION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

Usually, the people who are thinking at validation are those who came up at significant turning points in their lives and focus on episodes of learning. Episodes of learning can occur before or after validation of non-formal and informal learning, but most often before.
“A turning-point can be defined as a certain point or period where a person has undergone a fundamental change about their self-understanding of their life roles. These turning points can comprise changes in career, marriage, and parenthood [divorce, illness, unemployment, change in accommodation]. Thus, a turning point involves a crucial change in the ‘direction in the life course, concerning a previously established trajectory.” The turning points are described by a high degree of uncertainty and insecurity and require a solid capability to navigate within the system of lifelong learning from the individual. Transitions are characterized as high-risk, are diverse and open about their course and outcome. [Laudenbach, & Lis, 2019].
Validation of non-formal and informal learning comprises an empowering effect on an individual's capacity to integrate into the labour market. “[One] interviewee explained how encouraging the validation of non-formal and informal learning process was for her: ‘I didn’t even know that I have so

many qualifications already. If I could deal with so many different tasks until now, I was able to do anything' " [Laudenbach, & Lis, 2019].
The most important positive effects of the validation of non-formal and informal learning processes on individuals who certified their qualifications were [Laudenbach, & Lis, 2019]:

- the opportunity to look at their previous education and professional history;
- a sense of higher value in the labour market;
- generally, a greater awareness of what a person could do and in which areas s/he could develop in the future;
- an increase about the awareness of the individuals in the area of further educational and professional opportunities.

Because validation is a significant opportunity for many people, it is expected that many people will embark on the process in the following years. As evidence is the fact in France, in 2017, almost 40.500 candidates went through the validation procedure, of which over 24.000 received a full validation. More nearly half of them were granted by the Ministry of Education [Silvestru, & Silvestru, 2019].

2.10. CONCLUSIONS FOR THE SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

The validation process of non-formal and informal learning is particularly complex. The following conclusions have been drawn to support the development of the project *Skilled: Sustainable Skills for Local Developer*.
Each project partner should verify national legislation on the following issues:

- Is it allowed to issue certificates for occupations that are not registered in the national register?
- What conditions must an organization meet to validate non-formal and informal learning for a particular occupation?
- Does there have to be an occupational standard associated with that profession?

Issues to consider when designing the validation methodology:

- The results (learning outcomes) matter and not the process/system by which they were obtained.
- Many of the candidates will belong to the disadvantaged and low-skilled segments and for them, the validation process is a considerable challenge.
- Guidance and counselling for candidates should be provided.
- What measures need to be taken to ensure the quality of the competency validation process?
- How long will the validation process take? (It should take enough time for the candidate to document her/his competencies, but not too long.)
- A procedure for validating the competence of evaluators and/or counsellors must also be carried out.
- Is it necessary to design a validation document only for some competencies in the EESLD competency set? And if so, what kind of document: certificate, attestation, sheet ...?

It should not be forgotten the recommendation of the Council of European Union [2016] for the number of phases of validation of non-formal and informal learning:
1. Identification;
2. Documentation;
3. Formal Assessment;
4. Certification of the results of the assessment.

And the techniques that can be employed for the assessment of non-formal and informal learning are:

- portfolios;
- declarative;
- interviews;
- examinations;

- project-based evaluation;
- learning diaries;
- assignments;
- observations;
- simulations;
- evidence extracted from work;
- + **combinations of the above.**

THIRD PART

3. INNOVATIVE TRANSNATIONAL SKILLS VALIDATION METHODOLOGY

3.1. DEFINITION OF THE TRANSNATIONAL STANDARDIZED PROFILE

3.1.1. General description

This methodology is used to validate the competencies of the European Expert in Sustainable Local Development (EESLD) and the EESLD mentors. The methodology includes:

- An initial assessment of the candidates for the EESLD certificate;
- The conditions under which the EESLD certificate may be awarded - directly or through a course and passing an examination;
- The conditions under which a candidate can obtain EESLD mentor status.

The EESLD profile was established first (curriculum for the expert of sustainable local development – EESLD**,** Table 3.1 [IO1 Curriculum, 2022]), and then the competencies of EESLD graduates (Table 3.2) and EESLD mentors (blue colour in Table 3.2 [IO1 Curriculum, 2022]) were found to implement the methodology for validation of the expertise. The initial assessment (students and mentors) and the final assessment (students only) are based on an assessment grid. Competencies are assessed based on eight descriptors grouped into four categories, each having three levels.

Table 3.1. Profile of EESLD [IO1 Curriculum, 2022]

Profile **European Expert in Sustainable Local Development - EESLD**
EQF Level obtained after passing the final exam 5 EQF Level - Non-university tertiary vocational training
Length of course 1800 hours; - 1080 hours: classroom training (even in “blended” mode) - 720 hours: internship or project work (for employed people) The training course structure includes the typical setting of higher technical training, where internship or work activities have to be at least 30% of the total training path.
Certification obtained after passing the final exam Certificate of Higher Education EUROPASS diploma supplement **Please, for the Europass Diploma supplement see the link below: https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/it/documents/european-skills-passport/diploma-supplement**
Pre-requirements - At least a 4 EQF level certification. - Holding English language - level B1. - Level 3 (intermediate) in at least 2 of the 5 areas of digital competence defined at European level ✓ *Area of competence 1: Information*

- ✓ *Area of competence 2: Communication and cooperation*
- ✓ *Area of competence 3: Digital content-creation*
- ✓ *Area of competence 4: Safety*
- ✓ *Area of competence 5: Problem - solving*

Ref. ITA : file:///C:/Users/ospite/Downloads/DigComp2-1_ITA.pdf
Ref. Eu: https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/publication/eur-scientific-and-technical-research-reports/digcomp-21-digital-competence-framework-citizens-eight-proficiency-levels-and-examples-use

Other general pre-requirements:

- Good development of the main soft-skills or interest to empower them: communication, self-motivation, leadership, responsibility, teamwork, problem - solving, decisiveness, ability to work under pressure, time management and flexibility.
- Good writing skills, both in the native language and in English.
- Personal interest in active citizenship and sustainable, green, circular development and economy.

Pre-requirements will be verified through an entrance-test.

The **European Expert in Sustainable Local Development - EESLD** supports and takes part in designing and managing activities to support, promote, encourage and empower the economic, social and environmental development of a territorial system. S/he works with an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary team with the support of Public Administrations and various local actors (companies, associations, subjects operating in research, culture, training, or citizens). The EESLD refers to supporting and participating in designing and implementing projects and local development plans.

The EESLD takes part in the elaboration and promotion of territorial development plans and projects related to:

- progress and competitiveness of entrepreneurial activities;
- raising and qualifying employment levels;
- training of human resources;
- enhancement of environmental, cultural, architectural, tourism and other assets.

This professional profile can support some sectors of his/her institution, or of other local entities, in the preparation of development initiatives, but he/she can carry out even more executive tasks, such as:

- monitoring of funding opportunities (at different levels);
- analysis of calls and trends;
- filling in forms;
- drafting or revision of design documents;
- support for reporting and management of the database of projects activated in the area.

Finally, this professional figure is taking on particular importance in territorial animation, organizing events and initiatives to spread knowledge of the techniques and tools available to promote local development and encourage purchases.

Knowledge of the most relevant experiences conducted in other contexts and the ability to rework them in a local key are also advantageous.

S/he must also show precision in writing to produce various document types (analyses, proposals, projects, or invitations), a good knowledge of English, essential in international projects, and familiarity with basic IT tools.

His theoretical knowledge is extensive, including the basic principles of economics (especially development economics), law (especially public), sociology (especially work) and statistics.

The EESLD requires considerable logical, conceptual and relational skills. S/he makes extensive use of both analytical approach and problem-solving skills. It elaborates initiatives and, to this extent, must possess an accurate ability to conceive, possibly finding ways to make more tools interact to achieve a certain goal.

Focusing on his mediation and communication skills, he/she must be able to build moments of discussion and networks of cooperation between local actors who, as we know, can belong to different worlds, by using sector-specific languages or represent competing interests.

More generally, he/she must be able to involve, listen, synthesize and propose his/her own ideas, sometimes speaking with a technical language, or transferring technical contents with a language more appropriate to the interlocutor.

The professional profile masters the basic professional skills typical of collaborative project design and project management for integrated development policies and must simultaneously have the ability to promote forms of resilience and social innovation related to circular economy, sustainable tourism, urban regeneration and second welfare.

The EESLD is a superior technical profile and for this reason does not have strategic decision-making roles which are in any case entrusted to other profiles with EQF level equal to 6 or higher. The EESLD therefore

participates in decision-making activities and working groups, providing technical support, from the analysis phase to projects drafting and animation at local level.

COMPETENCIES

The training course includes two groups of competencies that have to be improved:
• general and key-competencies (linguistic, communicative and relational, scientific and technological, legal and economic, organizational and managerial)
• technical-professional competencies connected to the applications required by the labour market and the territory, to respond to different situations and contexts.

GENERAL BASIC SKILLS COMMON TO ALL COURSES OF HIGHER TECHNICAL TRAINING
Hours : 120

1 Linguistic, communicative and relational field

MINIMUM SKILLS

- Master the language tools and information and communication technologies to interact in life and work contexts
- Use technical English (micro-language), related to the technological area of reference, to correctly and effectively communicate in the contexts in which it operates
- Concert, negotiate and develop activities in working groups to address problems, propose solutions, help produce, order and evaluate collective results
- Prepare technical and regulatory documentation that can be managed through computer/data transmission networks
- Manage communication and relational processes within and outside the organization both in native language and in English
- Assess information flows with respect to the effectiveness and efficiency of the management of production or service processes, also by identifying alternative solutions to ensure their quality

2 Scientific and technological field

- Use mathematical and statistical tools and models both in the description and simulation of the different phenomenologies of the area of reference, in the application and development of the appropriate technologies
- Use tools and methodologies belonging to experimental research for the applications of the technologies of the area of reference

3 Legal and economic field

- Find the sources and apply standard and rules that regulate the company and its external relations at national, European and international level
- Know the company constitutive factors and the impact of the company in the territorial context of reference
- Use negotiation strategies and techniques with reference to the contexts in which the companies operate in order to strengthen their image and competitiveness

4 Organizational and management environment

- Knowing and contribute managing quality organizational models fostering innovation within the companies of the sector of reference
- Recognize, evaluate and solve critical situations and work problems of different nature such as: technical-operational, relational, organizational
- Know, analyze, apply and monitor, in specific contexts, management models of production processes of goods and services

- Manage relationships and cooperation within the organizational structure in work contexts, evaluating their effectiveness
- Manage external relationships and cooperation – both interpersonal and institutional - evaluating their effectiveness
- Organize and manage, with a good level of autonomy and responsibility, the working environment, the human context and the technological system of reference in order to achieve the expected production results
- Analyze, monitor and control the production processes in order to formulate proposals, identify solutions and alternatives to improve the efficiency and performance of both technological and human resources for a continuous improvement

Table 3.2. Competences of EESLD and EESLD mentor. [IO1 Curriculum, 2022]

Competence n. 1
UNDERSTAND, ANALYZE AND APPLY SUSTAINABLE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES
Hours: 300

- Understanding dimensions and principles of the Local Development between Government and Governance
- Know the policies supporting Local Development and sustainability of local territorial systems
- Understanding the local dimension in sustainable development processes
- Knowing how to implement territorial governance - Tools and procedures
- Participate in the definition of local tools to support strategic planning of the territories
- Participate in defining the territorial marketing strategies in a sustainable manner
- Know the different levels of welfare and the actors involved
- Map and analyze the stakeholders' network

Focus on interconnected policy areas:
- *Integrated policies of sustainable tourism*
- *Rural development and mountain and peripheral areas safeguard*
- *Sustainable urban and territorial regeneration*
- *Circular economy*
- *Generative welfare and social innovation*
- *Communities resilient to hydro geological risks*
- *Sustainable mobility*

Competence n. 2
PROJECT AND CO-PROJECT: FROM COMMUNITY POLICIES TO STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT
Hours: 300

- Know the European policies for cohesion, competitiveness and cooperation.
- Know the EU support framework and implementation tools
- Understand national and regional policies and tools supporting Local Development
- Understand policies and tools supporting Local Development promoted by private entities
- Master and apply Project management techniques
- Master methods of analysis and writing of projects. Participate in the different phases of a project and/or an application dossier writing
- Master budget design techniques and reporting rules: analysis of expenditure items and scenarios. Participate in the drafting of a budget
- Know the main reporting rules, typically related to the use of structural funds and, in general, of public funding
- Understand and know the principles of feasibility and sustainability of a project
- Analyze and use Collaborative Design and Systemic Design techniques for the design of sustainable local development interventions
- Know the main participatory planning techniques and direct involvement of the beneficiaries

Competence n. 3
RECOGNIZE, MAP AND EXPERIMENT WITH FINANCING RELATED INTERVENTIONS, IMPACTING AT LOCAL, MARGINAL AND PERIPHERAL LEVEL
Hours: 150

- Analyze and participate in the implementation phases of public-private partnerships: guidelines for partnerships development
- Map the main financial actors
- Know the general principles of public finance
- Map and know the main "classic" financing tools
- Map and know the main innovative tools (financial and non-financial) - Impact investing.

Competence n. 4
USE SPECIFIC DIGITAL TOOLS TO UNDERSTAND AND ANALYZE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF TERRITORIES AND COMMUNITIES, TO FOSTER AND STRENGTHEN THE PARTICIPATION OF THE DIFFERENT ACTORS AND CREATE NEW DEVELOPMENT SCENARIOS
Hours: 130

- Know the basics of statistical analysis and statistical data research at different levels
- Know the basics of marketing and digital marketing
- Know the evolution of social innovation through digital - Know and use tools and applications to support the participation of Local Communities
- Know and use the basic functions of the GIS - Geographic Information System tools
- Know and use main tools for project management - CPM

Competence n. 5
KNOW AND APPLY THE MAIN CURRENT REGULATIONS, IN PARTICULAR CONCERNING RURAL DEVELOPMENT, URBAN AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT
Hours: 80
Know and apply European, national and regional regulations

ADDITIONAL COMPETENCES FOR MENTORS

Competence n. 6
USE OF SCIENTIFIC AND PSYCHOPEDAGOGICAL METHODS AND TECHNIQUES FOR TEACHING, FACE-TO-FACE, BLENDED LEARNING OR E-LEARNING

- To lead the teaching-learning-evaluation process and to capitalize on the specialized scientific, psycho-pedagogical and methodological knowledge at a high level;
- To prove professional authority recognized by students and specialized teachers;
- Demonstrate that they can work with students of different ages and motivate them to achieve the proposed objectives;
- To train students in key competencies (1-5);
- To have knowledge of psychology and methodology.

Competence n. 7
TEACHING ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT

- To comply with the legislation in the field of education;
- To be receptive to the new and creative;
- To be able to coordinate various activities;
- To be able to self-evaluate periodically and to make changes following self-evaluation;
- To make the diagnosis, forecast and design of activities for the discipline for which he is a teacher;
- Possess the ability to assign and prioritize tasks;
- To manage correctly the time budget of those with whom he communicates;
- The ability to establish links between theory and practice;
- The ability to renew the contents in accordance with the new acquisitions of science in the respective field (but also the adjacent fields).

Competence n. 8
COMPETENCES ON OBJECTIVE EVALUATION OF STUDENTS

- To elaborate and use the evaluation tools specific to the instructive-educational process and the level of preparation of the students;

- To master the techniques of control, appreciation, guidance, improvement, self-improvement;
- To have capacities of analysis and synthesis, to build alternatives, to make optimal decisions depending on the given context;
- To respect the specifics of each type of lesson;
- To be able to apply the norms of professional deontology;
- To master the techniques of verifying the fulfilment and observance of decisions, measures and guidelines.

Competence n. 9
MAKE APPROPRIATE DECISIONS AND COMMUNICATE THESE DECISIONS

- To establish variants of the decision and to choose the most appropriate one when communicating some aspects;
- To work in a group or in a team;
- To motivate the student to follow him as a leader;
- To show flexibility and courage in making the right decision at the time of evaluation;
- To take responsibility for all the assessments and recommendations made, the actions taken;
- To know / master the legislation, in general and the school legislation, in particular.

Competence n. 10
RELATIONSHIP AND STUDENTS COUNSELLING SKILLS

- To show trust and respect towards those they educate;
- To communicate openly with students and to show fairness in relations with them;
- To collaborate with students and teachers;
- To advise students on various issues;
- To have organizational capacity, persuasion and resistance to stress.

PROCEDURE AND EVALUATION CRITERIA OF THE RESULTS

- Theoretical-practical test
- Written test
- Oral test

3.1.2. Conclusions regarding EESLD competences

Competence n. 1
UNDERSTAND, ANALYZE AND APPLY SUSTAINABLE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Competence n. 2
PROJECT AND CO-PROJECT: FROM COMMUNITY POLICIES TO STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

Competence n. 3
RECOGNIZE, MAP AND EXPERIMENT WITH FINANCING RELATED INTERVENTIONS, IMPACTING AT LOCAL, MARGINAL AND PERIPHERAL LEVEL

Competence n. 4
USE SPECIFIC DIGITAL TOOLS TO UNDERSTAND AND ANALYZE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF TERRITORIES AND COMMUNITIES, TO FOSTER AND STRENGTHEN THE PARTICIPATION OF THE DIFFERENT ACTORS AND CREATE NEW DEVELOPMENT SCENARIOS

Competence n. 5
KNOW AND APPLY THE MAIN CURRENT REGULATIONS, IN PARTICULAR CONCERNING RURAL DEVELOPMENT, URBAN AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT

ADDITIONAL COMPETENCIES FOR EESLD MENTORS[1]
Competence n. 6
USE OF SCIENTIFIC AND PSYCHOPEDAGOGICAL METHODS AND TECHNIQUES FOR TEACHING, WITH PHYSICAL OR ONLINE PRESENCE

Competence n. 7
TEACHING ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT

Competence n. 8
COMPETENCES ON OBJECTIVE EVALUATION OF STUDENTS

Competence n. 9
MAKE APPROPRIATE DECISIONS AND COMMUNICATE THESE DECISIONS

Competence n. 10
RELATIONSHIP AND STUDENTS COUNSELLING SKILLS

3.2. GENERAL STRUCTURE OF EVALUATION PROCEDURE

3.2.1. Evaluation procedure for students

Figure 3.1 shows the flowchart of the evaluation procedure for EESLD graduates.
The EESLD candidate submits an application online to the registration office in the organizing/partner country. After a preliminary examination of the file, an assessment of the skills acquired in a formal, non-formal or informal setting is carried out. The candidate receives the NA mark, as presented in paragraph 3.3.5.1. Depending on his / her competencies, the candidate can take the whole course, only certain modules or receive the EESLD certificate directly.

3.2.2. Evaluation procedure for mentors

Figure 3.2 shows the flowchart of the evaluation procedure for EESLD mentor applicants. After a preliminary examination of the file, an assessment of the skills acquired in a formal, non-formal or informal setting is carried out. The candidate receives the N_A mark, as presented in paragraph 3.3.5.1.

[1] These competencies have been added to the competencies of the EESLD in order to obtain the competencies of the mentors

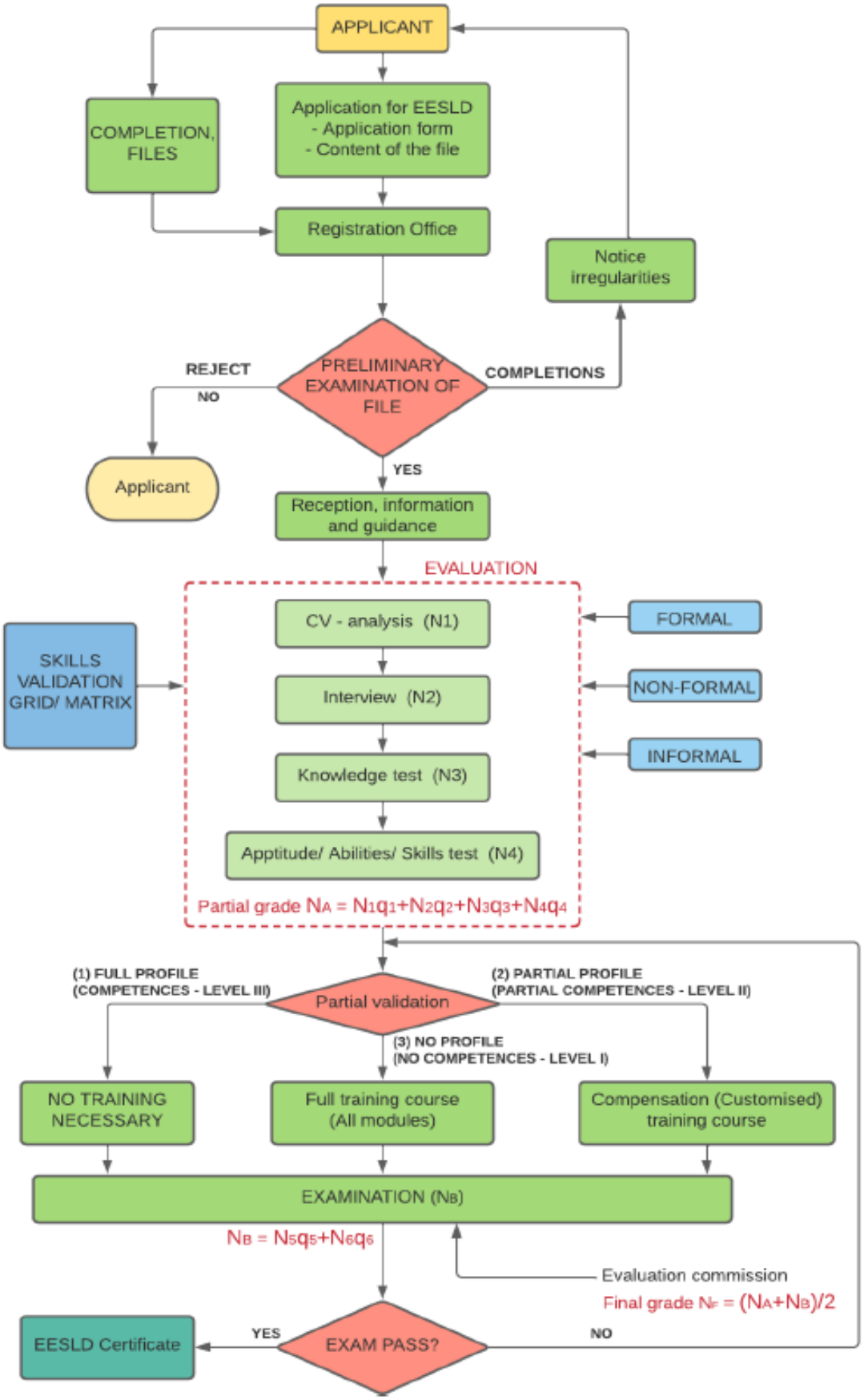


Figure 3.1. The flowchart of the evaluation procedure for EESLD graduates

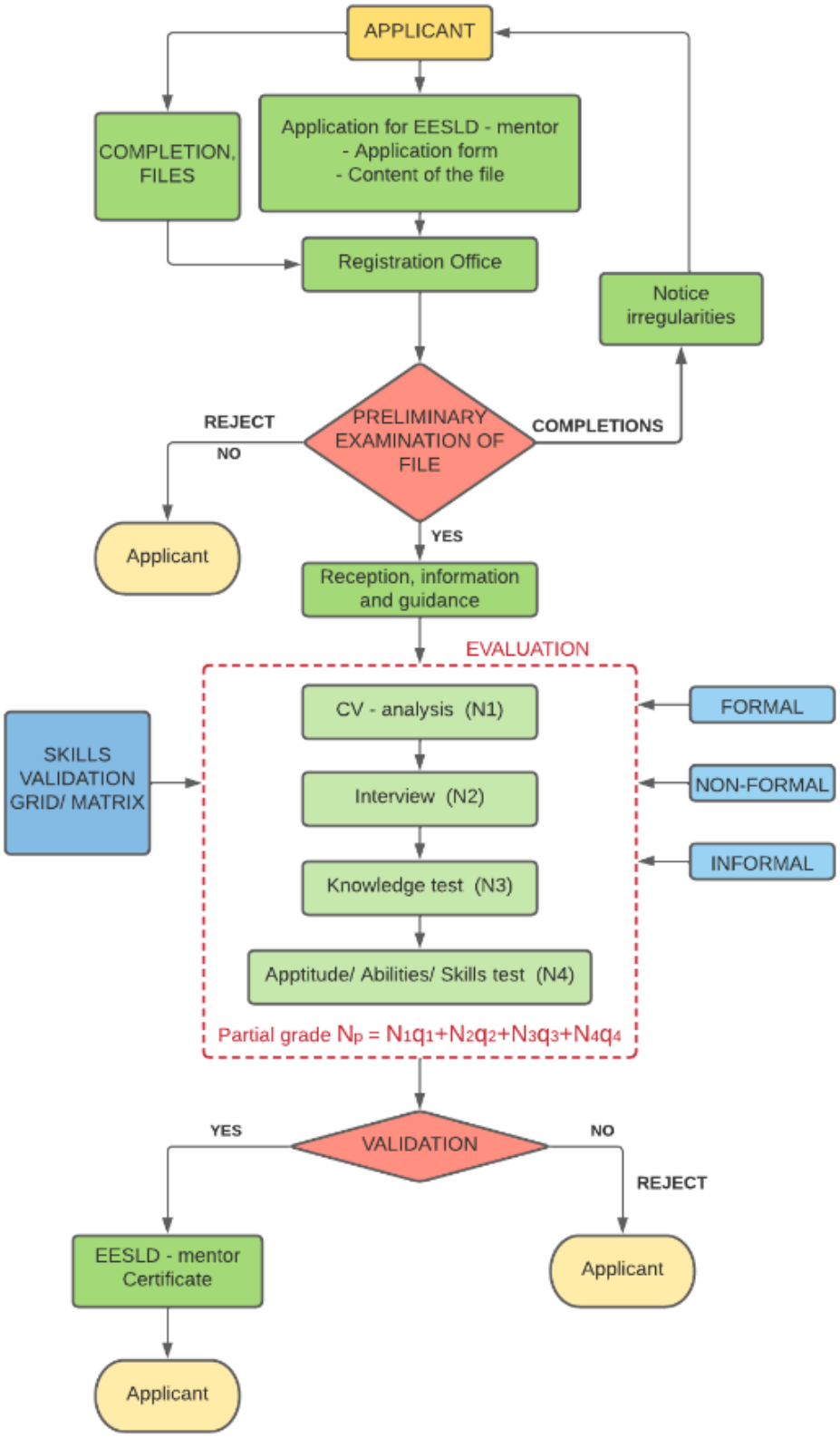


Figure 3.2. The flowchart of the evaluation procedure for EESLD mentors

To be admitted as a mentor, the candidate must obtain an advanced level ($N_A \in [8.5; 10]$), following the evaluation based on the grid presented in paragraph 3.3.5.1. Otherwise, the candidate is rejected.

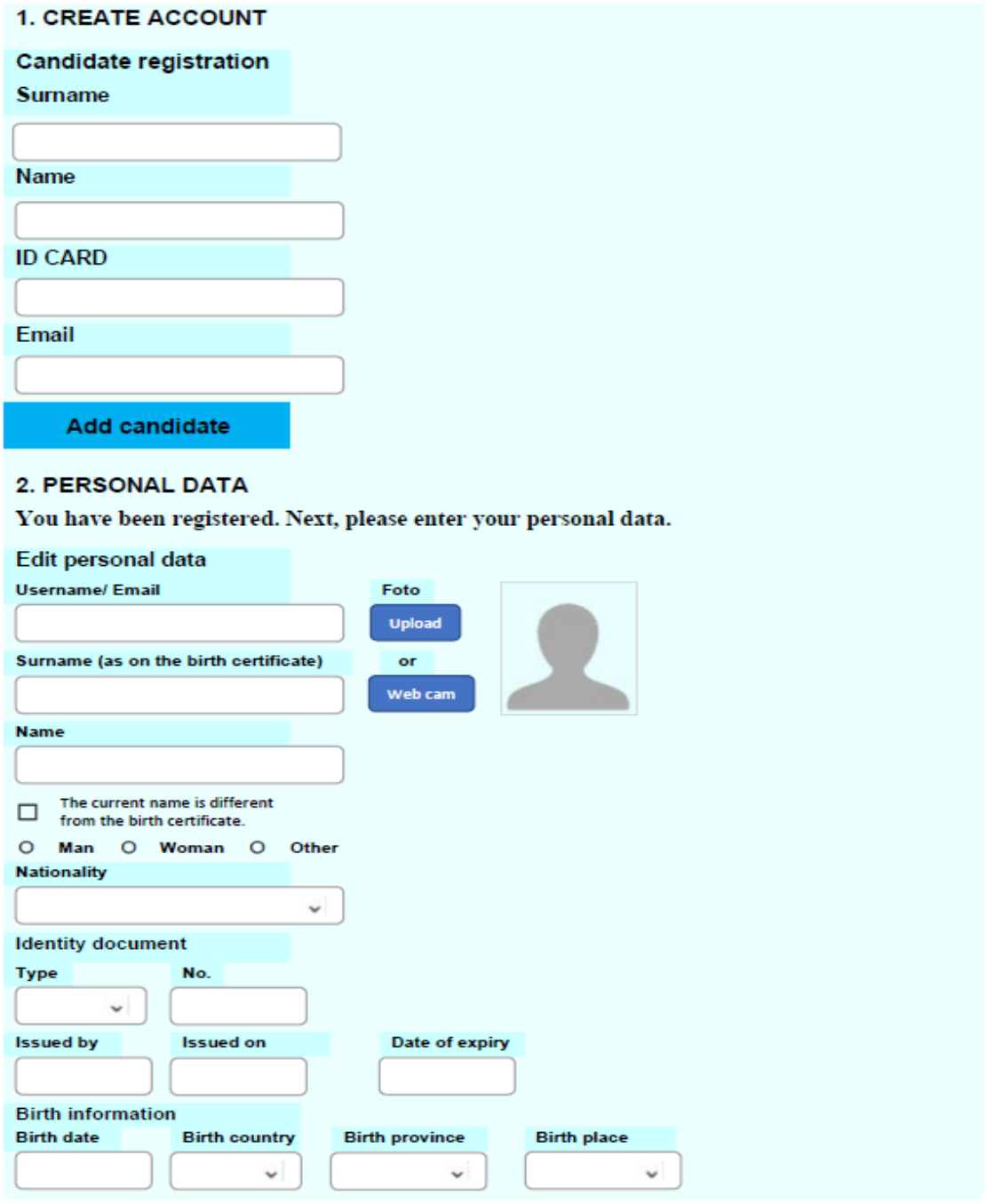
3.3. VALIDATING SKILLS ALREADY ACQUIRED

3.3.1. Registration of the candidate

3.3.1.1. Application form

Both EESLD Certificate Candidates and EESLD Mentor Candidates can apply by completing an online application which is as follows.

APPLICATION FORM FOR EESLD



Residence address

Country	Province	Locality

Zip code	Street	No.	Bl.	Sc.	Et.	Ap.

☐ The actual address is different from the permanent address.

Phone

3. PREVIOUS STUDIES

Pre-university studies

Country	Locality	High school

Profile	No. years of study	Graduation year	Form of Education

Graduation document

- ○ Baccalaureate Diploma
- ○ Other

Issuing institution

Series	No.	Issue year	Records transcript no.	Final grade

Other (please mention)

University studies

☐ I have Bachelor studies.

EESLD previous Competences

☐ I have previous EESLD competencies, proven by the documents uploaded at point 5.

4. REGISTRATION OPTIONS

☐ I do not have EESLD competences/ skills and I want to be taught the whole course.

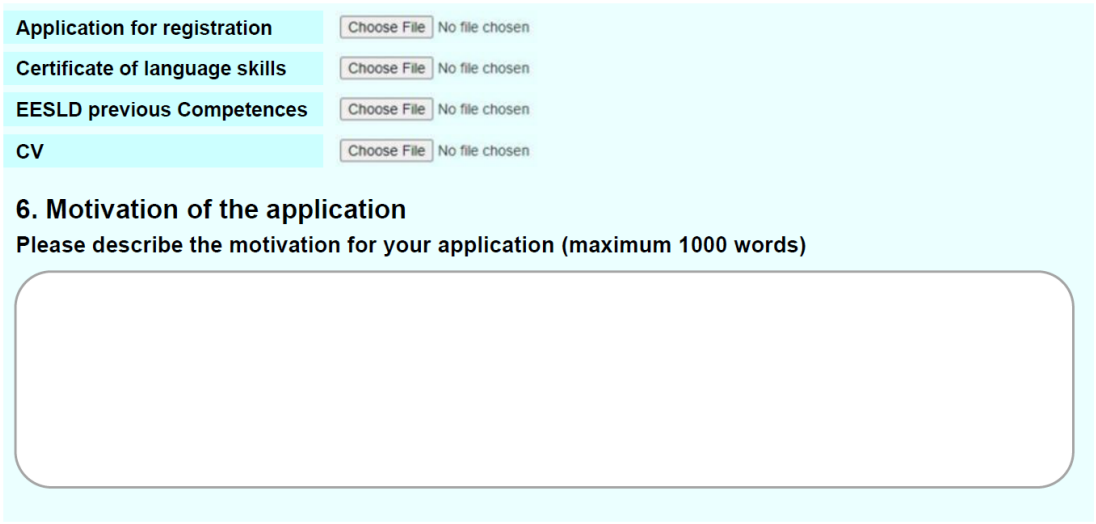
☐ I have partial EESLD competences /skills and I want to be taught only certain modules that will be established after the admission interview.

☐ I consider that I have all the competencies of EESLD and I request to participate in the final exam, without being taught the course.

5. UPLOAD DOCUMENTS

Documents required for registration

Birth Certificate	Choose File No file chosen
ID	Choose File No file chosen
High School Diploma	Choose File No file chosen
Results of previous studies	Choose File No file chosen



3.3.1.2. Registration Office

In order to obtain the EESLD certificate or to obtain the status of EESLD mentor, each country will establish which authority manages the recognition and/or training process. For the countries represented by the project partners, the authorities are as follows:

- **Austria**: *ARGE Bildungsmanagement GMBH, Arbeitsgemeinschaft Bildungsmanagement Wien Verein*
- **Greece**: *EOPPEP -Greek National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications*
- **Italy**: CFIQ - *Consorzio per la Formazione, l'Innovazione e la Qualità – Via Trieste 42 10064 Pinerolo (TO) - Italy*
- **Romania**: *National Agency for Qualifications (ANC)*
- **Spain**: *SEPE (Servicio Público de Empleo Estatal) Calle Condesa de Venadito Nº 9, 28027 Madrid*
- **Turkey**: *The Vocational Qualifications Authority (MYK) -Turkey, National Qualifications Framework (NQF) of European Training Foundation*

3.3.1.3. Preliminary examination of the file

For preliminary examination of the file (for EESLD student candidates and for EESLD mentor candidates), the following checklist will be used:

- Are personal data uploaded?
- Are previous studies information uploaded?
- Are registration options uploaded?
- Are documents required for registration uploaded?
- Are documents required for registration uploaded?
- Did the candidate upload the motivation for the application?

3.3.2. Reception, information and guidance

After the preliminary verification of the file/application and after any completions that may be requested, the candidates will receive by e-mail the following information:

- How the initial assessment will be performed;
- Scheduling the candidate for the initial assessment;

- The conditions under which candidates may take the course (in whole or in part) or receive the EESLD certificate directly - in the case of candidates for the EESLD certificate;
- Conditions under which candidates will be admitted as mentors - in the case of candidates seeking EESLD mentoring.

3.3.3. Initial evaluation of the candidate

The initial evaluation of the candidates is done by calculating the weighted average of four grades: **N_1**-based on the analysis of the candidate's CV; **N_2** - following an interview, **N_3** - based on a knowledge test and **N_4** - based on an aptitude test, as shown in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3. The initial evaluation- grades, criteria and points:

GRADES NA Initial evaluation	Description of the grade	Maximum number of points	No. points awarded
N_1	Analysis of the candidate's CV	10	
N_2	Interview - **For mentors/For students**	10	
N_3	Knowledge test	10	
N_4	Aptitude test	10	

The people/professional profile involved in the validation process (in general and, for EESLD project), are presented in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4. The people/professional profile involved in the validation process

Partners	General Description	For ESSLD Project	General profile description for each partner
Austria	Consultant/Expert for Sustainable Regional Development	Karmen MENTIL	Alpine Pearls is an association of municipalities, focusing on holidays with eco-friendly mobility in the Alps. Since its foundation in 2006, Mrs. Mentil (external Consultant) was in charge of managing the association including numerous tasks in Marketing, Finance, EU-Projects etc. She established strategic partnerships with organisations who share the same values as Alpine Pearls.
Greece	Consultant/Expert for Sustainable Regional Development	Vasileios BELLIS Lamprini TRIANTOU	Development Agency of Karditsa (AN.KA. s.a) is a non-profit development company of local authorities. The key element of the identity of ANKA S.A is the implementation of programs and projects. These are the distinct parts for intervention. It is the result of a complex process of planning, documentation and claiming. Through the programs and projects, the development of both rural and urban areas is sought

Partners	General Description	For ESSLD Project	General profile description for each partner
			by highlighting and utilizing all kinds of resources (natural, human, cultural), proposing as a driving force the local initiative and entrepreneurship. The development concept of AN.KA SA for the past 30+ years focuses on "capacity building" and the "empowerment" of the local population, especially the disadvantaged groups as well as the avoidance of social exclusion. The programs and projects are designed and implemented to serve a coherent and integrated vision for local development. Each one meets specific needs, satisfies an individual goal of this vision, which is constantly updated and enriched through social consultation. All of the above create an increased demand for planning, management and operational adequacy, because, on the one hand, the programs must obey the strategies compiled by all local bodies (most of which are shareholders of AN.KA) and on the other hand, they must be in line with national and Community policies.
Italy	Experts/staff involved are Certification Techniques Experts (ETC); adequately trained on certification processes operator (OAF) and experts from enterprises or VET systems – Piedmont Region	Manuela AUDENINO Greta BRAIDA Experts from enterprises or VET systems	Certification Techniques Experts (ETC); Adequately trained on certification processes operator (OAF)
Romania	Experts of Center for Advanced Technologies - CTANM	Nicolae IONESCU Andrei DUMITRESCU Manuela-Roxana DIJMĂRESCU	The Center for Advanced Technologies (CTANM) is a research and training unit with financial and functional autonomy inside PUB, established in 1996, acting for defining and implementing both b-Learning current internal procedures and university's LLL far-future development strategy (www.ctanm.pub.ro)

Partners	General Description	For ESSLD Project	General profile description for each partner
Spain	F.P.T & IFESCOOP Experts in VET, teaching, curriculum development and evaluation.	Carolina YAGÜE Isidoro GARCÍA Fernando BENAVENTE Emilio SANZ	IFESCOOP as an entity related with enterprises, public authority, trades union and training process and FPT as a VET centre carries out the orientation and pre-assessment of the students interested in the certification of their training and professional background in order to guide them to the certification process, which is only carried out by the educational authority.
Turkey	Experts for sustainable development	Cagri BULUT Serpil KAHRAMANA	Yasar University was established in Izmir, Turkey in 2001 with the mission of creating sustainable value through superior education and research and contributing to society by cultivating those innovative individuals who will shape the future. Yasar University has a clear vision for becoming a world-class university dedicated to designing and redefining the future. Yasar University has nine faculties, three vocational schools, and a graduate school. About 10K students are enrolled in Yasar University Programs. Besides, formal undergraduate and graduate education programs, Yasar University has a number research centers. The open and distance education center of Yasar Uiverity provides life long learning programs and more than 8K learners over more than hundred countries have participated in the LLP Programs. Yasar University is engaged to sustaianbility, which is also one pillar of its strategic plan, and Yasar University has been ranked in Times Higher Education's Impact Factor Index based on the achivements on the SDgs of the UN.

3.3.3.1. N_1 - CV analysis

For both EESLD candidates and mentors, the CV assessment is based on the scores presented in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5

No.	Criterion	Sub-criterion	Maximum number of points	No. points awarded
1.	***General structure of CV; complying to Europass structure***		**2.0**	
2.	***Professional Experience***	Correct presentation of information	**0.5**	
		Relevant experience in relation to EESLD competencies	**2.0**	
3.	***Education and training***	Correct presentation of information (*including the presentation of foreign languages known according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages - Self-assessment grid*)	**0.5**	
		Relevant education concerning EESLD competencies	**2.0**	
		Knowledge of at least two foreign languages	**1.0**	
4.	***Personal skills and competences***	Correct presentation of information	**0.5**	
		Relevant personal skills and competences in relation to EESLD competences	**1.0**	
5.	***Additional Information***	Relevant additional information in relation to EESLD competences	**0.5**	
	Total (Grade N_1)		**10.0**	

3.3.3.2. N_2 - Interview

A. For students (applicants for EESLD Certificate)

Interview Guide

Date……..
Candidate's name:……
Interviewer:…….

Section I. Motivation (2 points)
Q1. How did you hear about the EESLD occupation?
……..
Q2. Do you know the skills of the EESLD?
…… ..
Q3. Why do you want to get the EESLD certificate?
……
Q4. Where, when and how do you think you will use the certificate obtained?
……
Section II. Academic achievements and vocational training experiences (3 points)
Q1. What studies do you have? What qualification? In which country was it obtained?
…… ..
Q2. Do your studies include curricula, courses, or course modules that have learning outcomes included in the required EESLD competencies?
……....
Q3. Do you have documents/diplomas attesting to your studies?

……..
Q4. What foreign languages do you know? At what level (written, read, spoken)?
…… ..
Q5. What are your ICT skills? What software are you able to use?
.
Q6. Do you have training in national/European legislation? At what level?
……..

Section III. Professional experience (3 points)
Q1. Where have you worked so far? What positions did you hold? What were your duties?
……..
Q2. Do you have administrative experience?
……
Q3. Do you have experience in sustainable local development?
……..
Q4. Have you been involved in local development projects?
……..
Q5. Do you know the legislation on rural, urban, local, national, and regional development?
……

Section IV. Personal skills and competencies (1.5 points)
Q1. How do you rate your ability to work under stress?
…….
Q2. Do you consider yourself an adaptable, flexible person?
……..
Q3. How do you appreciate the relationship between autonomy and responsibility in the jobs you previously held?
……..
Q4. Have you been involved in activities in which written and oral communication skills have played an important role?
……..
Q5. Did you work as a team? How do you appreciate your ability to interact with colleagues, clients, and the local community?
……

Section IV. Other information. Hobby (0.5 points)
Q1. Do you have a hobby? How do you spend your free time?
……
Q2. Do you play a sport? Are you an amateur? Are you legitimate at a club?
……
Q3. Did you volunteer? When? Where?
……
Q4. Are you a member of a professional association?
……..
Q5. Can you give a brief description of your personality?
……

The signature of the Interviewer:…….

Based on the interview, the candidate for EESLD certificate will obtain an N_2 grade (on a scale of 1 to 10).

B. For mentors

Interview Guide

Date……..
Candidate's name:……
Interviewer:…….

Section I. Motivation (2 points)
Q1. How did you hear about the EESLD mentor occupation?
……..
Q2. Do you know the skills of the EESLD?
…… ..
Q3. Do you know the skills of an EESLD mentor?

Q4. Why do you want to become an EESLD mentor?
……..
Q5. Where, when and how do you think you will serve as an EESLD mentor?
……

Section II. Academic achievements and vocational training experiences (3 points)
Q1. What studies do you have? What qualification? In which country was it obtained?
…… ..
Q2. Do your studies include curricula, courses, or course modules that have learning outcomes included in the required EESLD mentor competencies?
……....
Q3. Do you have documents/diplomas attesting to your studies?
……..
Q4. What foreign languages do you know? At what level (written, read, spoken)?
…… ..
Q5. Do you have pedagogical skills? When and where were they obtained? Do you have documents/diplomas attesting to your studies?

Q6. What are your ICT skills? What software are you able to use?
……
Q7. Do you have training in national/European legislation? At what level?
……..

Section III. Professional experience (3 points)
Q1. Where have you worked so far? What positions did you hold? What were your duties?
……..
Q2. Do you have administrative experience?
……
Q3. Do you have experience in sustainable local development?
……..
Q4. Have you been involved in local development projects?
……..
Q5. Do you know the legislation on rural, urban, local, national, and regional development?
……
Q6. Do you have teaching experience? What are your teaching methods?
……

Section IV. Personal skills and competences (1.5 points)
Q1. How do you rate your ability to work under stress?

……
Q2. Do you consider yourself an adaptable, flexible person?
……..
Q3. How do you appreciate the relationship between autonomy and responsibility in the jobs you previously held?
……..
Q4. Have you been involved in activities in which written and oral communication skills have played an important role?
……..
Q5. Did you work as a team? How do you appreciate your ability to interact with students, colleagues, clients, and the local community?
……

Section IV. Other information. Hobby (0.5 points)
Q1. Do you have a hobby? How do you spend your free time?
……
Q2. Do you play a sport? Are you an amateur? Are you legitimate at a club?
……
Q3. Did you volunteer? When? Where? Have you coordinated volunteer student teams?
……
Q4. Are you a member of a professional association?
……..
Q5. Can you give a brief description of your personality?
……
The signature of the Interviewer:……

Based on the interview, the candidate for EESLD mentor will obtain an N_2 grade (on a scale of 1 to 10).

3.3.3.3. N_3 - Knowledge test

A. For students (applicants for EESLD Certificate)

The structure of knowledge for EESLD graduates will be established by each partner and should contain questions about:
- European legislation and funds related to sustainable development;
- Project Management;
- Collaborative planning;
- Digital marketing.

Based on the test, the candidate will obtain an N_3 grade (on a scale of 1 to 10).

B. For mentors

The structure of knowledge for EESLD mentors will be established by each partner and should contain questions about:
- European legislation and funds related to sustainable development;
- Project Management;
- Collaborative planning;
- Digital marketing;
- The psychology of education;
- Pedagogy.

Based on the test the candidate will get an N_3 grade (on a scale of 1 to 10).

3.3.3.4. N_4 - Aptitude/Abilities/skills test

A. For students (applicants for EESLD Certificate)

The aptitude/abilities/skills test will be a **case study**. The candidate is presented with the situation of a locality/area with a problem. S/he is asked to sketch a project to solve the given problem.
Based on the test the candidate will get an N_4 (on a scale of 1 to 10).

B. For mentors

The aptitude/abilities/skills test will be a **lesson plan for a case study**. The candidate is presented with the situation of a locality/area with a problem. S/he is asked to sketch a lesson plan that guides students to carry out a project to solve the given problem.
Based on the test, the candidate will get an N_4 grade (on a scale of 1 to 10).

3.3.4. (Partial) Validation based on previous experience

For student-candidates to obtain the EESLD certificate, at this stage a partial validation of the previous experience will be performed based on the competencies previously acquired in the formal, informal and non-formal frames, according to those detailed in 3.3.5.2. Depending on the grade obtained, the candidate will take the entire course (for levels 0 and I), will follow only certain modules (level II), or he/she will be allowed to participate directly in the exam (for level III).
In order to be an EESLD mentor, it is necessary to obtain level III but taking into account the assessment of the four additional competencies. In this case, the EESLD mentor certificate can be obtained without a final exam.

3.3.5. Evaluation Grid for initial and final evaluation of the candidate

3.3.5.1. The structure of evaluation grid

The evaluation grid is based on the European Qualifications Framework - EQF according to the Recommendation of the Council of the European Union on 22 May 2017 on the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning and was adapted and updated from the Ministerial Order no. 4.430/2009 on the use of the National Qualifications Framework in Higher Education, issued by the Ministry of Education, Research and Innovation, published in the Official Gazette of Romania, Part I, no. 545 / 5.VIII.2009. The grid is structured on eight-level descriptors, corresponding to the professional competencies and transversal competencies. There are three levels for each of the eight-level descriptors: I-Basic level; II-Mean level. III-Advanced level. To these is added the zero level for cases where the candidate's skills (before the start of the course, or after the completion) are insignificant.
On columns C1, C2, C3… etc. will be considered the competencies and must be trained in the course (learning outcomes), according to the EESLD profile.
Conclusion:
0 – No level/No Profile, $N_A \in (0; 2]$; **I.** Basic level/Partial Profile – Basic, $N_A \in (2; 5)$; **II.** Mean level/Partial Profile – Mean, $N_A \in [5; 8.5)$. **III.** Advanced level/Full profile, $N_A \in [8.5; 10]$

3.3.5.2. Detail of evaluation grid and utilization

STAGE 1. Before the Start of the Course (for students and for mentors)

After the candidate registers through an application, his/her file is analysed and the initial assessment is performed to establish the previously acquired competencies in the formal, non-formal and informal framework. For this stage, the evaluation grid will be used as follows:

- The candidate's CV is analysed and a grade of N_1 is given (see 3.3.3.1);
- An interview with the candidate is organized and a grade of N_2 is given (see 3.3.3.2);
- The candidate will take a knowledge test and will receive a grade of N_3 (see 3.3.3.3);
- The candidate will take a skills/abilities test and will receive a grade of N_4 (see 3.3.3.4);
- The weighted average of these grades will be calculated with an initial grade obtained (before the start of the course): $N_A = \sum_{k=1}^{4} \quad q_k \cdot N_k$
- Based on this first assessment, a bullet (•) will be written in columns C1, C2, C3…. for each descriptor, at levels I, II or III and the initial evaluation grade will be written (before the start of the course).
- Based on this first assessment it will be established whether the candidate will go through the whole course or only certain modules, thus:
    - For **0** – No level (No Profile, weighted average N_A between 0 and 2) and **I.** Basic level (Partial Profile – Basic, grades between 2 and 5), the candidate will complete the entire course;
    - For **II.** Mean level (Partial Profile – Mean, weighted average N_A between 5 and 8.5), the candidate will only go through certain modules established by the evaluator;
    - For **III.** Advanced level (Full profile, weighted average N_A between 8.5 and 10), the candidate will not take the course but will directly take the final exam.

      In case of mentors, will be accepted only mentors with Level III. The average grade N_A will be written on the mentor's certificate.

STAGE 2. After Graduating the Course (only for students)

- The candidate will take a knowledge test and will receive a grade of N_5;
- The candidate will take a skills/abilities test (or case study, or a project etc.) and will receive a grade of N_6;
- The weighted average of these grades (N_5 and N_6) will be calculated with a final exam grades N_B obtained (after graduating from the course)
- Based on this final assessment, a star (*) will be written in columns C1, C2, C3…. for each descriptor, at levels I, II or III and the final evaluation grade will be written (after graduating the from course).
- The N_A and N_B grades, as well as the general average $N_F = (N_A + N_B)/2$ will be written on the graduate's certificate.

Evaluation Grid for initial and final evaluation of the candidate[2]

Level descriptors				Competences/Skills according to the occupational standard	C 1	C 2	C 3	C 4	C 5	C 6	C 7	C 8	C 9	C 10
PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCES	KNOWLEDGE (cognitive dimension)	1. Knowledge, understanding and use of specific language	I.	Knowledge, understanding of basic concepts, theories and methods of the field and area of specialization; their proper use in professional communication	·	·								
			II.	In-depth knowledge of the area of specialization and, within it, of specific theoretical, methodological and practical developments; appropriate use of language in communication with different professional environments	*	*								
			III.	Systematic, advanced knowledge of concepts, methods, controversies and new hypotheses specific to the field; communication with specialists in related fields										
		2. Explanation and interpretation	I.	Using basic knowledge to explain and interpret various types of concepts, situations, processes, projects, etc. associated with the domain										
			II.	Use of specialized knowledge to explain and interpret new situations in broader contexts associated with the field										
			III.	Use of advanced principles and methods for explaining and interpreting, from multiple perspectives, new and complex theoretical and practical situations/problems, specific to the field										
	ABILITIES (Functional - actional dimension)	3. Application, transfer and problem solving	I.	Application of basic principles and methods for solving well-defined problems/situations, typical of the field in conditions of qualified assistance										
			II.	Integral use of the conceptual and methodological apparatus, in incompletely defined situations, to solve new theoretical and practical problems										
			III.	Selection and application of advanced principles, theories and methods of knowledge, transfer of methods from one field to another, interdisciplinary approaches to solve new and complex theoretical and practical problems										
		4. Critical and constructive reflection	I.	Appropriate use of standard evaluation criteria and methods to assess the quality, advantages and limitations of processes, programs, projects, concepts, methods and theories										
			II.	The nuanced and pertinent use of evaluation criteria and methods to formulate value judgments and substantiate constructive decisions										
			III.	Critical-constructive evaluation of existing projects and results worldwide, assessment of the stage of theoretical and methodological knowledge, identification of knowledge and applied priorities of the field										
		5. Creativity and innovation	I.	Elaboration of professional projects with the use of well-known principles and methods in the field										
			II.	Development of professional projects, innovatively using a wide range of quantitative and qualitative methods										
			III.	Design and implementation of original projects based on advanced methods that lead to the development of knowledge in the field, technology and / or working methodologies										
TRANSVERSAL COMPETENCES	Role competences	6. Autonomy and responsibility	I.	Responsible execution of professional tasks in conditions of limited autonomy and qualified assistance										
			II.	Execution of complex professional tasks in conditions of professional autonomy and independence										
			III.	Initiation and innovative development of complex theoretical and practical projects										
		7. Social interaction	I.	Familiarization with the roles and activities specific to teamwork and distribution of tasks for subordinate levels										
			II.	Assuming roles/functions of leading the activity of professional groups										
			III.	Assuming responsibility and ability to organize and lead the activity of professional groups										
	Personal and professional	8. Personal and professional development	I.	Awareness of the need for continuous training; efficient use of learning resources and techniques for personal and professional development										
			II.	Self-control of the learning process, diagnosis of training needs, reflective analysis of one's professional activity										
			III.	Development of projects focused on creativity as a basis for self-realization										
Initial evaluation grade (before the start of the course)														
Final evaluation grade (after graduating from the course)														
Notes														

0 – No level/No Profile, $N_A \in (0; 2]$; **I.** Basic level/Partial Profile – Basic, $N_A \in (2; 5)$; **II.** Mean level/Partial Profile – Mean, $N_A \in [5; 8.5)$. **III.** Advanced level/Full profile, $N_A \in [8.5; 10]$

C6, C7, C8, C9, C10 – additional competences for mentors

[2] Adapted and updated from the Ministerial Order no. 4.430/2009 on the use of the National Qualifications Framework in Higher Education, issued by the Ministry of Education, Research and Innovation, published in the Official Gazette of Romania, Part I, no. 545 / 5.VIII.2009

3.4. Identifying training needs for EESLD students-candidates
(only for students)

Based on this first assessment it will be established whether the candidate will go through the whole course or only certain modules (customized course), thus:

- **For 0** – No level/No Profile, weighted average NA ∈ (0; 2]; I. Basic level/Partial Profile – Basic, grades ∈ (2; 5), the candidate will complete the entire course;
- For **II.** Mean level/Partial Profile – Mean, weighted average NA ∈ [5; 8.5), the candidate will only go through certain modules established by the evaluator;
- For **III.** Advanced level/Full profile, weighted average NA ∈ [8.5; 10], the candidate will not take the course but will directly take the final exam.

Given that candidates obtain the EESLD certificate after taking an exam and mentors obtain certification after the initial assessment (only if they obtain level III) it is necessary to define what FINAL EXAM means for the two categories, as follows:
FINAL EXAM FOR EESLD CERTIFICATE CANDIDATES = The two examination tests, taken after the candidate has taken the customary course or obtained level III in the initial assessment (N_A mark): a knowledge test (grade N_5) and a skills/abilities test (grade N_6). The weighted average of these grades is the final exam grade (N_B grade)
FINAL EXAM FOR EESLD MENTORS = The two exam tests, taken in the initial assessment: a knowledge test (grade N_3) and a skills/abilities test (grade N_4). These grades are considered when determining the weighted average N_A, and if NA ∈ [8.5; 10], the applicant can receive the mentor certificate.

3.5. Flexible/modular training course for EESLD students-candidates
(only for students)

The two tests presented in paragraph 3.3.3 will be adapted according to the modules taken by the candidates (customized exam structure), so that:

- The candidate will take a knowledge test and will receive a grade of N_5;
- The candidate will take a skills/abilities test (or case study, or a project etc.) and will receive a grade of N_6;
- The weighted average of these marks (N_5 and N_6) will be calculated with a final mark N_B obtained (after graduating the course).

3.6. Certification of the European expert in sustainable local development

In the perspective of the sustainability of the project or future continuation of this project, the certification of the European expert in sustainable local development occupation can be approached and its inclusion in the category of regulated professions that benefit from the automatic recognition system between the member countries of the European Union.

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