

National Qualifications Frameworks and Recognition of Prior Learning

Michael Graham, European Training Foundation,
Zagreb 6 December 2012



Themes

- The EU and validation
- National Qualifications Frameworks(NQFs) and validation
- Validation in European Training Foundation (ETF) partner countries

WHAT IS THE ETF?

- Agency of the European Union
- **Vision**
To make vocational education and training in the partner countries a driver for lifelong learning and sustainable development, with a special focus on competitiveness and social cohesion.
- **Mission**
To help transition and developing countries to harness the potential of their human capital through the reform of education, training and labour market systems in the context of the EU's external relations policy.

Potential candidate countries:

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo (UNSCR 1244/1999)

Candidate countries:

Croatia, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey

Central Asia:

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument countries - ENP South:

Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, occupied Palestinian territory, Syria, Tunisia and Israel

European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument countries - ENP East:

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Russia

ETF cooperation with our partner countries

- Technical and policy advice
- Capacity-building
- Studies
- Projects
- Transfer EU experiences (Member States & EU policy level) to partner countries; apply EU instruments where useful.

Assumptions for VNFIL

- Standards: Education systems are able to develop a set of standards against which any learning can be assessed and accredited.
- Alternative pathway to certification: VNFIL can contribute to adult education and act as a new pathway to certification.
- Individual-centred system: individuals engage on a voluntary basis.
- Reducing cost: VNFIL is less costly for individuals and for society than repeat learning or training.
- Value and trust: VNFIL can deliver qualifications which are trusted and valued in the same way as qualifications obtained through formal education and training.

European developments in validation

No Europe –wide standards and qualifications

EU education tools (Europass, EQF, ECVET, EQAVET, ECTS, ESCO, Bologna)

EU experiences show that developments went through different phases

Specific EU actions

European Principles (2004)

European Guidelines (2009)

Consultation on “The promotion and validation of non-formal and informal learning”

Europe 2020 Strategy acknowledges role of validation in promoting LM access

Proposal for Integrated Europass Skills Passport

Proposal for Council Recommendation on VNFIL

NQFs and validation

- Validation possible without NQFs
- Learning outcomes basis of NQFs is key
- NQFs apply common assessment standards
- Credit

Validation in our partner countries

- Always linked to NQFs
- NQFs are reform tools for:
 - lifelong learning
 - outcomes-based curricula and qualifications
 - qualifications based on occupational standards
 - linking education and training to labour market
 - introducing quality assurance systems
 - engaging social partners

27 countries developing QFs

Potential candidate countries:
Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo

Candidate countries:
Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey

Other countries:
Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan

ENP South:

Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Tunisia and Israel

ENP East and Russia:

- Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine
- Russia



Context

- Informal labour market
- Skills are not valued
- Fragmentation of education and training sector
- Rigidity and input-based approach of education
- Some traditionalist opposition
- Not a priority in many countries

Validation in ETF partner countries

Value to the countries: lifelong learning e.g. flexibility for learners

- Recognising skills of returning migrants e.g. Kosovars returning from DE, AT
- Reality of varied providers e.g. NGOs
- In early stages, but emerging e.g. RPL guidelines in Kosovo
- Use in pilot sectors e.g. automotive and textiles in Tunisia
- Georgia, Armenia and Moldova use VNFIL for migration within mobility partnership.