
NATIONAL STRATEGY PAPERS (NSP) TO SUPPORT VNFIL (Policy Recommendations)



Edition

Centro de Formação Profissional Para o Comércio e Afins, CECO A

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The importance of lifelong learning is more than ever undeniable and validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL) is, therefore, a crucial building block of a real lifelong learning society, a society where all forms of learning “count” in the sense of being socially valued and treated equally by the education and training systems and by the labour market.

Validation has the potential to contribute to achieving the goals set by the Europe 2020 strategy, as it can contribute to matching skills supply and demand, supporting mobility across sectors and countries and fighting social exclusion but it also supports the ambitious goals set out in the European Skills Agenda of strengthening sustainable competitiveness, ensuring social fairness, putting into practice the first principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights (access to education, training and lifelong learning for everybody, everywhere in the EU) and building resilience to react to crises, based on the lessons learnt during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Progression opportunities need to be at the core of vocational education and training (VET) as set out in the Council Recommendation 2020 on VET for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience. VET need to be learner centred, offer flexible and modular pathways based on the recognition of the outcomes of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL) and validation mechanisms and need to be in place allowing the transfer, recognition and accumulation of individuals’ learning outcomes, as a contribution to the achievement of the 2025 EU-level objectives in the area of education and training, social and employment policies.

In 2012, the Council Recommendation on validation encouraged Member States to put in place national arrangements for validation by 2018 and the main findings of the “European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning 2018 update” clearly shows that, **although relevant progresses have been made, there was a lot of room to advocate for quality and efficiency of the VNFIL systems throughout Europe, supporting society and policymakers.** If achievement of the **2025 EU-level objectives** (where validation plays its role) is to be considered, then extra-efforts need to be made. This was the framework in which the PROFIL VNFIL project was born and this output developed, **addressing the still existing areas of improvement and gaps in partner countries’ national VNFIL strategies**, namely in terms of efficiency, quality, visibility and trust on the systems, attracting interests of stakeholders from different sectors of education and training.

So, the **main objective of this output** is to advocate for quality and efficiency of the VNFIL systems, supporting society and policymakers at national/regional level but also at European level.

For doing so, the **methodology** defined, used as basis what was already at disposal at European level (CEDEFOP work in this matter was an essential source of information) but also at national/regional level. It also took advantage of other project activities (e.g. good practices and tools described in

IO1 desk research; pilot testing of IO2 e-portfolio and self-assessment tests pilot testing; testing of IO3 training programme near VNFIL practitioners, stakeholders' committees, etc) to identify potential improvement areas and concrete recommendations for action, at a system level but also at providers level.



Details on the methodology can be found below and progress outputs can be found on annex 1.

Considering the **heterogeneity of the countries/regions involved in the project** (Portugal, Greece, Lithuania and Italy/Umbria region) as far as VNFIL systems development is concerned, the option was to keep in **this Strategy Paper only general and common recommendations** that could, depending on the stage of development of the national/regional system, serve as an input for quality and efficiency of the systems.

Based on these (European) recommendations, **National Strategic Papers (NSP) were developed** by partner countries, translating but also adapting them according to the specificities of their national/regional context.

2. OBJECTIVES & METHODOLOGY

The **main objective of this output** is to advocate for quality and efficiency of the VNFIL systems, supporting society and policymakers at national/regional level but also at European level by proposing a set of recommendations **addressing the existing areas of improvement and gaps in partner countries' national VNFIL strategies**, namely in terms of efficiency, quality, visibility and trust on the systems, attracting interests of stakeholders from different sectors of education and training.

To develop this output the following methodology was applied:

Development of a common structure for national data information collection and analysis	
Data information collection at national level	Identification of existing VNFIL systems characteristics in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy, Objectives & Priorities • Target groups • Sectors/areas addressed • Validation tools and methods in place • Link/Alignment with NQF • Link/alignment with other national policies (in terms of VET, Adult Learning, etc) • Governance & accountability • Investment in the development of VNFIL professionals' competences • Quality assurance measures and indicators of measurement
	Quality of existing VNFIL systems in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception of the quality of the systems in place • Visibility of the systems in place • Efficiency of the systems in place
Analysis and review of existing VNFIL systems response in terms of achievements, and shortcomings and implications for recommendations	Analysis conducted, at national level, with involvement of representatives from different stakeholders
	Reporting of this analysis provided by each country to the IO leader, following the common structure defined (Annex 1)

	Analysis of each country report in order to extract common EU recommendations
Recommendations drafting, approval & translation	Common EU recommendations organised according to defined contents areas
	Recommendations presented and discussed in project staff Learning Activity
	Approval of common EU recommendations (EN)
	Recommendations (translation/adaptation in partners languages)
Dissemination	

For each of the above-mentioned activities, the different perspectives from VNFIL candidates, professionals and institutional stakeholders including governmental bodies, social partners, private sector (labour market, companies) were considered. (i.e. using stakeholders committee meetings, national trainings for VNFIL professionals, e-portfolio and self-assessment tools testing by candidates, ad-hoc focus groups organised for this purpose, etc).

Based on the project application and on the evidences obtained from the data collection, analysis and review carried out, the following content areas were agreed among partners as being the areas around which recommendations for policy action (at system level and at providers level) would be organised.

CONTENT AREAS

- Capacity Building
- Improving the Quality of Alternative Assessments (E-tools)
- Matching Assessments to Needs (Self-Evaluation)
- Alignment with National Qualifications Frameworks
- Stakeholders Engagement
- Visibility and Credibility of the System
- Quality of the System
- Institutional and Political Framework

The main **SOURCES OF INFORMATION** used for the development of this output are as follows:

- Description of VNFIL Systems in each partner country included in IO1 desk research on existing VNFIL good practices and tools - <https://profi-vnfil.eu/compendium/>
- VNFIL good practices and tools described in IO1 desk research (from the following countries: Portugal, Greece, Lithuania, Italy, Slovenia, France, Finland, Cyprus, The Netherlands, Denmark, North Macedonia, Norway, Sweden) - <https://profi-vnfil.eu/compendium/>
- Desk research on existing methodologies for self-assessment, on legal requirements and on existing VNFIL portfolio and e-portfolio in partner countries (as part of IO2 development)
- CEDEFOP Reports available at <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/validation-non-formal-and-informal-learning>
- Main results deriving from interviews with key players / experienced VNFIL providers in each partner country, developed within IO1 to explore the current European situation on existing innovative and effective VNFIL tools, especially electronic ones (like e-portfolio) and to identify the most effective instruments needed to fulfil successful VNFIL
- Main results coming from IO1 online questionnaire on existing innovative and effective VNFIL tools, especially electronic ones - <https://profi-vnfil.eu/survey-for-innovative-vnfil-tools/>
- Main results coming from the pilot testing of the e-portfolio and self-assessment tests, as part of IO2 activities - <https://portfolio.profi-vnfil.eu/pt-pt/>
- Main results coming from IO3 online questionnaire on needs of VNFIL professionals in terms of urgent challenges and required competences, also those specifically related to the effective use of VNFIL e-tools - <https://profi-vnfil.eu/survey-for-vnfil-professionals/>
- Main results coming from the testing of the training programme near VNFIL practitioners conducted at national level as part of IO3 activities
- Data collected from stakeholders in Stakeholders Committees meetings or by other relevant means
- Data collected from VNFIL professionals participating in the project learning activity
- Structured analysis and review conducted at partners countries level on existing VNFIL systems response in terms of achievements, and shortcomings and implications for recommendations (Annex 1)

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Heterogeneity of the countries/regions involved in the project (Portugal, Greece, Lithuania and Italy/Umbria region) as far as VNFIL systems development is concerned, dictated the need to keep in this (European) Strategy Paper only general and common recommendations that could, depending on the stage of development of the national/regional system, serve as an input for more quality and efficiency.

Recommendations were also thought as contributions, at a system level but also at providers level. The rationale behind this is that although policy level is essential to set the framework and give the right visibility to VNFIL processes, providers also play a fundamental role in promoting the system and insuring efficiency and quality approaches to the processes. Adequate systems do not work without good, well prepared and committed providers but also the most skilled, organised and customer-oriented providers cannot be efficient and provide quality services to candidates unless, the grounds and the foundations of the systems are created and sustained, at system level.

This symbiotic relation is clearly central to VNFIL system development and progress as the research conducted within the project showed. Example: in Umbria region (the Italian regional system that was part of this project), there is a specific certification and registration mandatory for all VNFIL professionals wishing to provide VNFIL services to candidates but, VNFIL system is still under development, at a system level; on the other way around, Portugal have a system for the recognition, validation and certification of competences (VNFIL processes are known in Portugal as RVCC processes) in place since 2000, high in the political agenda, managed at ministerial level, offered for free to candidates with a lot of people already certified so far in the country (e.g. from January 2017 to April 2021, 83.090 persons obtained a full qualification and 560.608 a partial qualification, via VNFIL processes), but there is no mandatory training (initial or continuing) for VNFIL professionals, only requirements on the competences profile for the different kinds of professionals involved.

Recommendation Area: Capacity Building

It is not by chance that this is the first area of recommendation. No matter if we are building a VNFIL system from scratch or if we have a well established and recognised system, human resources involved (or to be involved) and their skills and competences need to be considered as a central building block of the system, foreseen from the very beginning. It seems that Europe performance in this matter is still progressing. As described in the “European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning 2018 – Final Synthesis Report” the level of comprehensiveness toward

the principle set out in the Council Recommendation on validation, “provision is made for the development of the professional competences of validation practitioners” was rated as low, in 2018.

Adequate definition of the kind of professionals to be involved, their profile and competence requirements but also well thought, efficient and quality provision of capacity building actions in the form of initial and continuing training activities but also other types of actions (working meetings, community of practices, forums for exchange, etc) for the different types/kinds of professionals/practitioners involved need to be in the core of the system.

Training need to consider the different dimensions of VNFIL work, the different profiles involved and their specific needs and a permanent need to adapt the different professionals’ skills and competences to the changing environment, digitalisation playing, also in VNFIL field, a central role. Therefore, recommendations are in the sense of ensuring a system where:

- Profiles and competences requirements of professionals involved are clearly defined and known
- Attributions, tasks and responsibilities of the different professionals/practitioners are clearly defined and known
- Initial training but also continuing training are systematically provided
- Training considers the different needs of the professionals involved (e.g. in Portugal and Lithuania training targeted to members of the jury is considered as a priority)
- Training is focused on the process itself (identification & documentation of competences; assessment tools and methods) but also on Adult Learning methodologies, soft skills, ethics, privacy and data protection issues, quality assurance, etc
- Training is also focused on the use of digital tools, raising the digital competences of professionals, taking advantage of COVID pandemic “lessons learned”
- Cooperation between competent bodies and VNFIL providers, also at capacity building level is strong

One good practice that can be followed is the one in place in Umbria Region, where an effective process of practitioners’ competences development is defined, that started in 2008 as one of the first Italian regions working, at that time, on training credits recognition and that foresees: 2 units of competence with the competences that professionals wanting to be involved in validation processes need to demonstrate; training activities to prepare for that and a final examination to be certified as such.

Another sensitive topic is related to the quantitative dimension of HR involved. The number and the status of practitioners (permanent link versus precarious contracts or even self-employed situations) need to be well-considered and adequate to validation process needs, so that

candidates' expectations are fulfilled, and know-how remains in the system. Also, territorial distribution of providers and professionals need to be planned and organised, again, to answer to the real needs of potential candidates.

Recommendation Area: Improving the Quality of Alternative Assessments (E-tools)

One of the lessons learned from COVID19 pandemics is that digitalisation of almost all the economic, social and even political processes is not only possible but an imperative, that each one of us need to embrace and explore its potential. VNFIL is not different and the experience gained during this crisis needs to be taken forward, improving, from one side, the way digital tools are used for the benefit of candidates and the system, and from the other side, focusing on the quality of the e-tools used and created for this purpose.

One of the aspects that project desk research showed was a variety of validation tools and methods available but mostly focused on face-to-face situations and interactions, although good practices examples on the use of alternative methods and e-tools were found. (<https://profi-vnfil.eu/compendium/>)

Therefore, we advocate for the following measures to be considered, as inputs for a high quality and efficiency of VNFIL, at system level but also at providers level:

- Clear acceptance and integration of digital tools in the VNFIL process
 - Online makes it possible to reach more people, with less cost (e.g. time)
 - It can be more attractive and efficient for certain qualifications and for the application of some methods (e.g. observation in the workplace)
 - Can boost the number of contacts and interactions
 - Can be an opportunity to reach candidates from other geographical areas, increasing the outreach potential of VNFIL processes
- Development of digital platforms/tools that could serve the purpose of supporting the development of VNFIL processes and the interaction between the different stakeholders involved (candidates, counsellors/assessors, members of the jury, certifying bodies) but that could also be used as a way to allow candidates to collect and demonstrate their skills and competences. At this point, the project e-tool developed need to be mentioned.

In fact, the tool <https://portfolio.profi-vnfil.eu/> is a web-based tool developed within the project that answer to the purposes above identified:

- Support VNFIL processes

- Source of information and sharing within certain groups or in specific areas
- Allow the collection of electronic evidence of a candidate's education, training and work path (e-portfolio)
- Serve as an initial screening tool for the candidate to understand if he/she is ready for a complete validation process or if he/she needs to improve his/her skills and competences before proceeding to a validation/certification process

Testing results in partner countries are very promising as utility, user friendliness and potential of use in the future were rated high among practitioners and candidates testing the tool.

Stakeholders involved during the project were, nevertheless, unanimous in the opinion that e-tools need to be integrated with face-to-face solutions in order not to exclude the less fortunate (in terms of digital literacy, hardware, software) and that digitalisation of the processes and the use of e-tools need to be implemented bearing in mind some stumbling stones:

- Steps need to be taken to avoid polarization of the system (better for some but much worse for others)
- Cyber security issues need to be addressed, by establishing specific regulations and good practices regarding data and privacy protection
- Training of professionals on the use of e-tools need to be planned and implemented (e-professional)

The possibility to include the social networking dimension in the e-tools is also advisable, bearing in mind its popularity and outreach potential.

Matching Assessments to Needs (Self-Evaluation)

One of the criticisms often made to the education and training system and therefore to the validation processes is that standards are designed according to the language of the VET system and not according to the language of the world of work, making it hard to use the standards for a coherent assessment of the skills and competences of potential VNFIL candidates, particularly when concerning the assessment and recognition of professional skills. Another problem frequently identified is that qualifications and standards do not accompany the labour market dynamics, being frequently outdated.

That's why we advocate for updated and "understandable/readable" (for candidates and for the labour market) standards (especially professional ones), that can better match assessment to the reality of candidates.

Also, we advocate that the existence and use of self-evaluation and self-assessment tools, apart from being relevant self-awareness and empowering tools, can be a way of better matching assessment to the needs of candidates, as they allow candidates to have a first contact with the skills and competences required in the standards, better informing the decision-making process of proceeding into a validation process.

In this sense, the use of e-tools for self-evaluation and self-assessment of skills and competences can also support this objective. It can serve as an initial screening tool for a candidate to understand if he/she is ready for a complete validation process or if he/she needs to improve his/her skills and competences before proceeding to a validation/certification process, accessible worldwide, making the process democratic and user-friendly. But it can also support digitalisation, as they can serve as a way of self-assessing digital competences of candidates. The use of digital tools for self-evaluation and self-assessment of skills and competences needs, nevertheless, to be carefully planned, not to exclude the less digitally literate, many of which are one of the targets of validation process in Europe.

Again, we would like to mention the web-based tool <https://portfolio.profi-vnfil.eu/> developed within the project as it answers to the purposes identified in the recommendation area “Improving the Quality of Alternative Assessments (E-tools)” but also to the purposes identified above: support self-evaluation and self-assessment of skills of competences; based on updated professional profiles and standards; better matching assessment to the needs of users; raising self-awareness on required skills and competences; serving as an initial screening tool for candidates to realise if their competences are in line with the standards before deciding to proceed to a validation/certification process.

Recommendation Area: Alignment with National Qualifications Frameworks

As described in the “European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning 2018 – Final Synthesis Report” the level of comprehensiveness toward the principle set out in the Council Recommendation on validation, “validation arrangements are linked to NQF and in line with the EQF” is rated as high in 2018 and confirmed by project research activities in 2021.

From a formal and institutional point of view, as stated in the Report above mentioned “qualifications included in the NQFs can be accessed through validation and lead to the acquisition of modules or a part of a formal qualification and standards for qualifications obtained through validation in education and training are mostly the same as standards in formal education and training”. The issue is not about formal value of validation; it is mostly about the value attributed by

the labour market and the society, which still do not consider qualifications obtained via VNFIL as having the same “value” as qualifications obtained via formal education.

The recommendation is, therefore, linked with the need to reinforce the visibility and credibility of VNFIL systems in society and in the labour market, from a system level but also with a lot of room for improvement regarding providers, who should also embrace this mission of raising the credibility of the system, by providing effective and high-quality services (see recommendations below regarding this topic).

Recommendation Area: Stakeholders Engagement

Engagement of the interested parties is key to any process and in VNFIL processes it is not different. Although formal involvement of a wide range of stakeholders exists in the countries considered in this output (education and training providers, validation providers, competent bodies, employment services, employers and employers organisations, trade unions, etc), broadly the recommendation goes in the sense of increasing this involvement and engagement, making sure that the relevant stakeholders have the skills and the resources (namely HR) to perform their role within the system. The following improvement measures were discussed:

- Improving and increasing the involvement, relationship and communication between the national education and VET authorities, ministries, employers and other relevant organisations, at system level but also among practitioners operating at providers level
- Improving the social value/recognition of certifications/diplomas obtained via VNFIL namely near employers and employee’s representatives but also within the large community of stakeholders from the education sector how still disregard qualifications obtained through VNFIL
- Raising the awareness of the benefits of learning (and lifelong learning, including VNFIL), as an empowering tool to exercise democratic values, so to make the labour market more dynamic and responsive
- Increasing the engagement of stakeholders, especially employers, in order to mobilize namely low-skilled employees and facilitate their access to validation services

As an example, even in Portugal a country with an organised and robust VNFIL system in place since 2000, although social partners are involved in the system with responsibility for different aspects of validation – from the design of qualifications and setting up of standards to the assessment of skills and competences, as members of the juries) - national project activities leading to the Portuguese NSP clearly showed that there is a need to raise employer’s awareness on how validation processes can affect their HR management policies namely making employers aware that the time invested by

employees in VNFIL processes can contribute to the employers duty of providing mandatory training hours to their staff.

Recommendation Area: Visibility and Credibility of the System

As described in the “European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning 2018 – Final Synthesis Report” the level of comprehensiveness toward the principle set out in the Council Recommendation on validation, “validation arrangements in place” is rated as high in 2018. In fact confirming the data from 2018, in 2021 at least in the countries/regions involved (Portugal, Greece, Italy/Umbria Region and Lithuania) there are validation arrangements available, however, it should be noted, that at least in Greece, Lithuania and Italy/Umbria Region, validation opportunities and arrangements remain limited and not well known by potential candidates, providers, the labour market and society at large and even in Portugal, a country with a well-established VNFIL system, recommendations are in the sense of raising the visibility and the credibility of the system.

This need of raising visibility and credibility of the system is directly linked with problems such as:

- Limited knowledge of the VNFIL system and its benefits by the different stakeholders, including candidates and employers, as a tool for professional and personal growth, social inclusion and labour market integration
- Difficulty in mobilizing employers and candidates to the system
- The need to fight against some social “distrust” regarding the validity and credibility of qualifications obtained through VNFIL processes
- Limited social and labour market value attributed to qualifications/certificates obtained via VNFIL
- No positive consequences/results are perceived deriving from obtaining a qualification/certification

Therefore, recommendations are in the sense of ensuring a system where:

- There is a consistent and coherent investment in information campaigns, that disseminate information and advertise the system and its benefits using channels and means that reach the entire population (massive dissemination) but also specific information campaigns addressing the different targets involved and their particular information needs (e.g., information campaigns targeted to social partners as a way to reach employers and candidates)
- Quantitative and qualitative performance criteria are balanced, preventing that pressure for reaching quantitative targets put at stake quality of processes and credibility of the system

- VNFIL policy is not depending on the political context but is fully integrated in a long-term national qualification strategy that insures the means and the resources needed for a continuing provision of VNFIL services fully integrated in the education and training system as simply another way of achieving a qualification and certification with the same “value”

Providers also have a role to play concerning the improvement of the visibility and credibility of the system, by:

- Investing in disseminating and informing their direct targets about the system, the process and its benefits
- Focusing on candidate’s needs (learners centred system) and on qualitative performance criteria despite the pressure to meet quantitative targets
- Fostering cooperation and complementarity among providers instead of promoting competition
- Encouraging networking and respecting the work of other providers
- Providing faultless services and acting according to quality criteria and codes of conduct that guide and rule the conduct and the performance of professionals in their relation with candidates and with other practitioners

Recommendation Area: Quality of the System

As described in the “European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning 2018 – Final Synthesis Report” the level of comprehensiveness toward the principle set out in the Council Recommendation on validation regarding, “transparent quality assurance measures” was rated as medium-high in 2018, which implies that quality assurance mechanisms are in place but that there is room for improvement in this area, confirmed by the project activities leading to the development of this Strategic Paper.

Therefore, recommendations are in the sense of ensuring a system where:

- Quality assurance frameworks specific to validation are encouraged instead of the application of general quality assurance frameworks
- A set of quality indicators and criteria are in place (e.g. quality charter)
- Quality approaches are also applied to the design and development of validation standards, methodologies and tools
- There are a Code of Ethical and deontological principles that guide the conduct of the various professionals involved in the process

- Specific regulations regarding data and privacy protection, covering cybersecurity issues are implemented
- Measures to insure/raise the perception of the quality of the system by stakeholders (candidates, employers and society) are implemented

At providers levels, the recommendations are in the sense of establishing procedures and applying practices that can contribute to raise the quality of the system but also the perception of quality by stakeholders:

- Quality approach to VNFIL processes is systematically and consistently seek and applied
 - At this point, a suggestion could be the creation of ad-hoc groups of providers that, among them, apply the Peer Review methodology. Peer Review is a solid methodology for quality assurance and development with quality indicators and criteria defined for validation of non-formal and informal learning, therefore, considered as an quality assurance framework specific to validation, that foster quality based on peer learning and peer assessment and that according to the experience of partners already using this methodology in Portugal, Lithuania and Italy is of utmost added value for quality development (for more information on this methodology <http://www.peer-review-network.eu/>)
 - Creation of communities of practices, working groups for sharing practices and knowledge, quarterly workdays between providers, etc
- Adoption of a Code of Ethical and deontological principles to guide and rule the conduct and the performance of providers and practitioners, but it can also be the organisation of team meetings to define and standardize internal conduct and procedures
- Adoption of specific regulations and good practices regarding data and privacy protection of candidates, professionals, and other stakeholders involved, covering cybersecurity issues

Recommendation Area: Institutional and Political Framework

Finally, some recommendations on measures and actions at institutional and political framework needed to insure reliable, trustily, high-quality and efficient VNFIL systems:

- Existence of clear structures and responsible bodies with clear accountability and mechanisms for sharing responsibilities among the different stakeholders involved in the process
- Fully integration of the validation system into the national education and training systems
- Definition of qualification standards and VNFIL standards based on learning outcomes

- Clear definition on VNFIL financing process
- Reducing the reliance on EU funds, which can be a challenge for the long-term sustainability of the system

4. ANNEXES

Progress outputs in the form of reports of the analysis and review of existing VNFIL systems response in terms of achievements, and shortcomings and implications for recommendations, conducted, at national level in the partner countries (Portugal, Italy, Lithuania and Greece) can be found on Annex 1.

Annex 1

		ANALYSIS OF VNFIL SYSTEMS	
SHORT DESCRIPTION		ACHIEVEMENTS / WELL DONE!	SHORTCOMINGS / AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT
VNFIL SYSTEMS CHARACTERISTICS			
Strategy, Objectives & Priorities	The strategy is the closer connection of education and training with the labour market, to strengthen the economy, and contribute to social cohesion. Aims to provide quality accreditation to unemployed and employed regarding their skills that are coming from non-formal and informal learning. Additionally, to provide certification of sufficiency to adult educators.	Progress has been made on the upskilling pathways recommendation in terms of offering opportunities for basic skills training to low-skilled adults.	A forecast implies a shortage of the medium qualified, while the supply of the high and low educated is forecast to sufficiently fill the demand within high and low-level occupations
Target groups (inclusion of high-risk groups)	Employed, Unemployed, Adult Educators. Persons with disabilities and former addicts are included.	In 2021 the new VNFIL exams reforms include special prediction for specialised tests for groups with disabilities. The implementation will come forward for next years onward.	Gender orientation of pupils in vocational training which favors males and, therefore, VET becomes less preferred by young females.
Sectors/areas addressed	Is addressed to all professional sectors	EOPPEP licenses Free Studies Workshops (EES), which provide services of non-formal education in a wide spectrum of learning options.	All areas covered
Validation tools and methods in place (explore the existence and use of e-tools and self-evaluation/assessment tools at system / practitioners levels)	Written examinations/Written works/Oral examination/Internship examination/Creation, monitoring and evaluation of an individual e-portfolio of knowledge and skills/Personal interview	Services provided by EOPPEP that guide and train individuals (specifically not adults)	EOPPEP's website is not user friendly and the navigation is difficult. Additionally, the information addressed in English are poor relatively to those addressed in Greek. Moreover the tests are not yet held online. Therefore a prediction of creating online tools (due to Covid19 restrictions) is predicted with 2021 reforms.

		ANALYSIS OF VNFIL SYSTEMS	
SHORT DESCRIPTION		ACHIEVEMENTS / WELL DONE!	SHORTCOMINGS / AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT
VNFIL SYSTEMS CHARACTERISTICS			
Link/Alignment with NQF	EOPPEP is the statutory body for the development and implementation of the Hellenic Qualifications Framework (NQF) in correspondence with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).	A draft presidential degree entitled Terms of formulation and implementation of the HQF: referencing to the EQF has been prepared and submitted to the Minister for Education, Research and Religious Affairs to strengthen its legal basis.	The main challenge preventing the indication of NQF and EQF levels on new certificates is the reluctance of awarding bodies (universities and other higher education institutions) to include this kind of information on their diploma supplements.
Link/alignment with other national policies (in terms of VET, Adult Learning, etc)	EOPPEP is the main administration body of the National Network for Lifelong Learning	-	-
Governance & accountability	EOPPEP is the main administration body of the National Network for Lifelong Learning	-	-
Investment in the development of VNFIL professionals competences	Adult education and training is achieved through funded, national or EU resources, adult education and lifelong learning institutions	Modernisation and expansion of VET in the country.	Investments can be applied to extend the time of those working after their completion of their education (IEK). The current time average is 9 months.
Quality assurance measures and indicators of measurement	The design of the National Framework for Quality Assurance in Lifelong Learning (π3) is in alignment with the recommendation of the European Parliament and Council 2009 / C 155/01 of June 18 in order to establish a European Reference Framework for quality assurance in Vocational Education and Training.	-	-
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Perception of the quality of the systems in place	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)	"Peer Review as a tool for quality assistance"	

		ANALYSIS OF VNFIL SYSTEMS	
		ACHIEVEMENTS / WELL DONE!	SHORTCOMINGS / AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT
VNFIL SYSTEMS CHARACTERISTICS			
Visibility of the systems in place	Certification of teaching, driving licences, computer skills e.t.c.	NQF and EQF levels on the qualifications documents they award (certificates and diplomas and Europass certificate and diploma supplements)	The visibility of frameworks to stakeholders outside education and training, particularly to employers, remains limited.
Efficiency of the systems in place	EOPPEP invests in quality, effective and reliable lifelong learning services in Greece, complemented by services and tools for lifelong career and mobility development for work and learning without borders.	Yet the whole procedures are taking effect only in printed documents but the new reforms predict an online (credential assessed) database.	The views of learners, teachers, trainers and employers are essential to improvement.

- 1) https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/adult-education-and-training-funding-33_en (B12)....
- 2) <https://www.eoppep.gr/index.php/en/quality-assurance> (and) https://www.eoppep.gr/images/DIASFALISH_POIOTHHTAS/plaisio.pdf (B13)...
- 3) https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/skills_forecast_2020_greece.pdf (D5)...
- 4) https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/greece_-_european_inventory_on_nqf_2018.pdf (C5)...
- 5) https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/greece_-_european_inventory_on_nqf_2018.pdf (C9)...
- 6) https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/greece_-_european_inventory_on_nqf_2018.pdf (D9)...
- 7) https://cumulus.cedefop.europa.eu/files/vetelib/2018/opinion_survey_VET_Greece_Cedefop_ReferNet.pdf (D6)...
- 8) <https://www.eoppep.gr/index.php/en/providers-programs-accreditation> (C7)...
- 9) <https://e-stadiodromia.eoppep.gr/> (C8)...
- 10) <http://ploigos.eoppep.gr/ekep/external/index.html> (C8)...
- 11) <https://www.eoppep.gr/index.php/el/> (D8)....
- 12) <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news-and-press/news/greece-apprenticeships-essential-part-national-vet-strategy> (C12)....
- 13) <https://www.e-dimosio.gr/ekpedefsi/186730/erevna-tis-eoppep-3-stous-4-apofitous-iek-echoun-ergasti-meta-tin-apofitisi/> (D12)...
- 14) <https://refernet.eoppep.gr/?p=443> (D16, C16)...
- 15) <https://eoppep.gr/index.php/en/eoppep-en> (B16)...
- 16) <http://eqavet.eoppep.gr/en/about-us> (B17)...
- 17) <http://eqavet.eoppep.gr/en/activity-en/study-visit-report-on-peer-review-as-a-tool-for-quality-assurance-by-mrs-concetta-fonzo> (C15)...
- 18) https://eoppep.gr/images/DIASFALISH_POIOTHHTAS/Quality%20Blocks_En.pdf (D17)...

		ANALYSIS OF VNFIL SYSTEMS	
SHORT DESCRIPTION		ACHIEVEMENTS / WELL DONE	SHORTCOMINGS / AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT
VNFIL SYSTEMS CHARACTERISTICS			
Strategy, Objectives & Priorities	<p>The National Decree that defined the VNFIL system in Italy is referred to the the following strategy of promoting lifelong learning as a personal right, through the guarantee of the recognition, the transparency and the exploitation of such learning, however acquired, to everybody. By defining the general norms and the essential levels of performance to obtain certification, it leaves to the Regions that are responsible of the process of certification, the formal recognition and validation. It sets a National System of Competences' Certification (SNCC).</p> <p>Despite the National Law, the system is under regional competences, thus each Region according to the National law and main requirements and criteria can developed each own system, pursuing the following objectives:</p> <p>a) to promote the transparency of learning and the coherence of training to the needs of companies and professions in order to facilitate the matching of labour supply and demand and to increase the productivity and competitiveness of the production system;</p> <p>b) to broaden the use of qualifications at National and European level in order to facilitate geographical and professional mobility, also with a view to internationalisation of companies and professions.</p> <p>It also specifies the minimum standards for 2 key processes, operationally defined as follows:</p> <p>a) the "identification and validation process", intended as a service provided by a body entitled in accordance with the National Decree - DLgs 13/2013 and aimed at the recognition of the competences acquired by the person through a mapping and assessment of formal learning, even in the event of interruption of the training, non-formal and informal learning. The "Support document for the identification of acquired competences" (art. 6) has to include the following:</p> <p>a. Personal information;</p> <p>b. Competences to be validated;</p> <p>c. Working experiences and formal, non-formal and informal learning relevant to the competences selected.</p> <p>The identification and validation process can either be completed with the release of the "Validation Document", an officially recognised document, or continue with the procedure for certifying the competences referred to in the following point b), always if the person requests it;</p> <p>b) the "skills certification procedure", understood as a service aimed at issuing a "Certificate" relating to the competences acquired by the person in formal contexts or validated as acquired in non-formal or informal contexts. The «Certificate» is a third-party certificate, an officially recognised certification.</p> <p>The legislation does not refer explicitly to a "Portfolio" although a preliminary set of documents are required – in line with the requirements that Portfolios have in other countries across Europe.</p>	<p>Despite the complexity of the VET and Labour Market policies in Italy, being regulated at both National and Regional level, the Validation system is now in place in alle the Regions. Since January 2021, with the Interministerial Decree "Provisions for the adoption of guidelines for the interoperability of public bodies entitled in the national skills certification system", the National System for the Competences' certification entered into force.</p>	<p>The regional validation systems are heterogeneous. In a nutshell, Regions can be classified into three groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regions in an exploratory phase. In these Regions a strategy for validation is emerging (experience in projects, programmes, types and training sectors), but is in the process of public formalisation and institutionalisation; • Regions in a formalisation phase. In these Regions, the strategy for validation has been formalised and/or have led to the development of a regional system of certification (not implemented yet). UMBRIA case • Regions in an implementation phase. In these Regions, the strategy of validation has been fully formalised and institutionalised as a regional system; the services are currently in development or already offered (to all citizens or to specific target groups). This can affect the efficacy of the whole system of validation not being fully understood and acknowledged by both practitioners and key stakeholders and individuals.
Target groups (inclusion of high-risk groups)	All target groups accessing Public Employment Services and all the other services (guidance, VET offer, trainships, etc) provided by other Entitled bodies. By the way, in UMBRIA for the moment only the PES are the entitled bodies.	In UMBRIA effective experimentation with National Civil Service Volunteers	The System in UMBRIA is not implemented yet.
Sectors/areas addressed	All, although until now, the experimental phase in UMBRIA has covered only National Civil Service Volunteers and the practitioners of VNFIL to be certified.	Effective actions in other regions, as fa as I know have been implemented for migrants and low skilled adults (i.e Lazio, Piemonte)	The System in UMBRIA is not implemented yet.
Validation tools and methods in place (explore the existance and use of e-tools and self-evaluation/assessment tools at system / practitioners levels)	The tool in place in UMBRIA is the Document of Transparency. We do not have specific knowledge of what used in other Italian Regions.	The Document of Transparency has proven to be effective for practitioner of VNFIL certification.	The System in UMBRIA is not implemented yet.
Link/Alignment with NQF	All the Regional Repertoires of Competences are referred to the National one, through the Atlas of Work and Qualifications. (https://atlantelavoro.inapp.org/atlante_lavoro_dettagli.php)	To design new professional profiles (and when the VNFIL system will be effectively implemented in Umbria to validate the competences), the expected competences, described in terms of Expected results of a specific Area of Activity, can be found in the Atlas.	The alignment is present, although in Umbria is not concretly utilised.

		ANALYSIS OF VNFIL SYSTEMS	
SHORT DESCRIPTION		ACHIEVEMENTS / WELL DONE	SHORTCOMINGS / AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT
VNFIL SYSTEMS CHARACTERISTICS			
Link/alignment with other national policies (in terms of VET, Adult Learning, etc)	According to the first point, the Validation system in place in Umbria is embedded into the VET policy, for what concerns the trainees enrolment process that could be facilitated by access credits recognition.	Former experiments of this approach have proven to be effective.	The alignment is present, although in Umbria is not concretely utilised for the moment.
Governance & accountability	Regione Umbria Governmental Body in 2018 has delegated many VET and Active Employment Policies to an Instrumental body, called ARPAL, which is the Regional Agency of Active Employment Policies. After an initial period of adaptation, now the Agency has its own staff and capacities to proceed with funding allocation for make the Validation system functioning. Regional legislative power remains in Regione Umbria hands.	High quality level of ARPAL staff working in the field.	Under-sized staff in ARPAL that negatively affect the concrete implementation of the VNFIL system. Delays of decision-making process on the topic, not considered enough strategic, also in light of post-pandemic interventions.
Investment in the development of VNFIL professionals competences	Regione Umbria has defined an effective process of practitioners competences development, that started in 2008 as one of the first Regions working, at that time, on Training Credits recognition. So far, only two training editions have been held: one specifically to accompany the certification process of those practitioners already trained and working in the training credits recognition (since 2008); one addressing newcomers for being certified for the first unit of competences, related to the accompaniment and support to competences identification and prior learning transparency, according to the Decree of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies 30th June 2015, also for the purpose of the recognition of the training credits in the Umbria Region.	High quality level of the training and the external Technical assistance who supported both the training and the certification exams for the practitioners	Lack of decision on the role of certified practitioners and the entitled bodies.
Quality assurance measures and indicators of measurement	At National level with the decree of January 2021, the guidelines (above mentioned) have been defined to systematise different operational provisions, mainly aimed at: a) identifying indicators, thresholds and methods of checking, evaluating and assessing minimum standards, also with the aim to establish essential performance levels and services guarantee; b) defining criteria for the Implementation of the National repertoire of Education and Vocational training qualifications and professional qualifications as for the Legislative Decree 13/2013 art. 8, also in light of the European education and Vocational education and Training credits and for its periodic updating, to be done at least every three years. c) progressive implementation and functional connection of the unique informative backbone as for the national Law 92/2012 art. 4 c. 51	Not applicable	The System in UMBRIA is not implemented yet.
ASSESSMENT OF THE QUALITY OF EXISTING VNFIL SYSTEMS			
Perception of the quality of the systems in place	As far as it concerns the experiments developed in Umbria, the system is effective and coherent with the expectations of the target groups participating in the piloting. More efforts should be done for raising awareness mainly of individuals, but also of policy makers, other relevant stakeholder in the field, about the importance of validation as an empowering tool to exercise democratic values and opportunities, so to make the labour market more dynamic and transparent.	Not applicable	The System in UMBRIA is not implemented yet.
Visibility of the systems in place	Lack of visibility. It is still a matter of experts and practitioners in the field, I would say all over Italy, in Umbria for sure.	Not applicable	The System in UMBRIA is not implemented yet.
Efficiency of the systems in place	Not applicable	Not applicable	The System in UMBRIA is not implemented yet.

				ANALYSIS OF VNFIL SYSTEMS		
SHORT DESCRIPTION		ACHIEVEMENTS / WELL DONE!		SHORTCOMINGS / AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT		
VNFIL SYSTEMS CHARACTERISTICS						
Strategy, Objectives & Priorities						
<p>In Lithuania VNFIL process is defined as the recognition of competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning is intended to test the knowledge, skills and abilities of individuals in order to obtain a diploma or a certificate attesting to their competence.</p>		<p>The process of validation of non-formal and informal ompetencies was initiated quite 1 while ago, but up till now no structured approach id being developed, during quarantine the process was stoppped totally</p>		<p>Emphasis on the issue at policy makers' level is missing, no clear procedures developed at country level. Integration of the validation system into the national education system, definition of qualification standards based on learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competences) as important as formal education outcomes, quality assurance of the validation process by establishing credibility and validity conditions and thus public recognition of validation results, linking validation outcome documentation to a minimum of at least the European credit system (ECVET for vocational training, ECTS for academic education) and the mandate of the European Qualifications Framework</p>		

				ANALYSIS OF VNFIL SYSTEMS		
		SHORT DESCRIPTION	ACHIEVEMENTS / WELL DONE!	SHORTCOMINGS / AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT		
VNFIL SYSTEMS CHARACTERISTICS						
Target groups (inclusion of high-risk groups)		All groups can participate in the validation process, the focus is on unemployed persons	Order signed by the Minister of Education signed in 2017 re DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURE FOR VALIDATION OF PRIOR LEARNING ACHIEVEMENTS, Employment service institution - the certifying organisation - introduces possibility for those, who have acquired certain practical skills and competences through direct work, volunteering, non-formal learning courses, traineeships or other non-formal or informal learning, but do not have a diploma or certificate of competence to validate those competencies	Availability of validation information where people live, study and work, need for consultation, improving the competence of validation process consultants and organizers, possibility to measure and certify personal competencies in companies (workplaces)		
Sectors/areas addressed		Validatio of non-formal and informal competencies id being conducted through Employment service institutions, licensed Labor market training centers and licensed local VET providers, having licence to perform the services, with the aim to cover all sectors	No structured approach and no clear procedures are in place	Emphasis on the issue at policy makers' level is missing, no clear procedures developed at country level.		
Validation tools and methods in place (explore the existance and use of e-tools and self-evaluation/assessment tools at system / practitioners levels)		Tests and exams • Methods of dialogue or conversation (interviews, debates) • Declarative methods • Observation • Simulations • Evidence gathered during work or other activities	Employment service institution - the certifying organisation - and licensed Labor market training centers and local licensed VET providers are developing and performing the process	Insufficient tools (tests, tasks, methodologies, etc.) • Different perception of the structure of qualifications, more precisely no clear general perception • Lack of qualified assessors • Relatively expensive process;		

				ANALYSIS OF VNFIL SYSTEMS		
		SHORT DESCRIPTION	ACHIEVEMENTS / WELL DONE!	SHORTCOMINGS / AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT		
VNFIL SYSTEMS CHARACTERISTICS						
Link/Alignment with NQF						
Link/alignment with other national policies (in terms of VET, Adult Learning, etc)		<p>https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/ce0399a00cd411e497f0ec0f2b563356 - Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Non-formal Adult Education and Continuing Education; https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/7f369150292911e79f4996496b137f39?jfwid=-fa58h42s9 - Order on the Approval of the General Principles for the Assessment and Recognition of Non-Formal and Informally Acquired Competences in Higher Education in Higher Education Institutions; https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/b7f45490007711e6bf4ee4a6d3cdb874?jfwid=f4nne5tdt - Resolution on the approval of the Development Program for Non-formal Adult Education and Continuing Education for 2016–2023</p>				
Governance & accountability		Employment service organisation is managing the process and collecting country statistics	Organisation, responsible for overall process management, is in place	More local Labor market training centers and VET providers could be involved, applying for the license for validation services and supporting the		

				ANALYSIS OF VNFIL SYSTEMS		
		SHORT DESCRIPTION	ACHIEVEMENTS / WELL DONE!	SHORTCOMINGS / AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT		
VNFIL SYSTEMS CHARACTERISTICS						
Investment in the development of VNFIL professionals competences	No clear milestones for the clear development of VNFIL professional vompetences	Separate initiatives of licensed Labor market training centers and VET providers mainly	Emphasis on the issue at policy makers' level is missing, no clear procedures developed at country level.			
Quality assurance measures and indicators of measurement	Standards of the certifying organization - Employment service institution	Standards are set, Employment service organisation is using the set guidelines for the process efficiency, visibility, quality	Emphasis on the issue at policy makers' level is missing, no clear procedures developed at country level.			
ASSESSMENT OF THE QUALITY OF EXISTING VNFIL SYSTEMS						
Perception of the quality of the systems in place	Standards of the certifying organization - Employment service institution	Organisation, responsible for overall process management, is in place	Linking validation outcome documentation to a minimum of at least the European credit system (ECVET for vocational training, ECTS for academic education) and the European Qualifications Framework			
Visibility of the systems in place	The process still under development and lacks visibility and introduvion to the society	The number of candidates who seek to validate previous formal and informal competencies is increasing every year	Emphasis on the issue at policy makers' level is missing, no clear procedures developed at country level.			
Efficiency of the systems in place	Processes are under development, statistics is getting better every year, efficiency issue still needs to be developed	The number of candidates who seek to validate previous formal and informal competencies is increasing every year	Best practices of other countries should be taken into account in order to improve the process at policy makers level			

		ANALYSIS OF VNFIL SYSTEMS	
SHORT DESCRIPTION		ACHIEVEMENTS / WELL DONE!	SHORTCOMINGS / AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT
VNFIL SYSTEMS CHARACTERISTICS			
Strategy, Objectives & Priorities	VNFIL system in Portugal is called - National System for the Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences (RVCC); it was created in 2000, at system level and it passed to some changes in the structure but the objectives and strategic priorities remain the same: to tackle the critical deficit of qualifications of the Portuguese adult population as part of an integrated strategy to foster the training and qualification of Adults in Portugal.	VNFIL system is, therefore, a part of the national policy/strategy and included in the public offers of the adult education policy	Reorganization of the network according to regional contexts and needs and according to the specificity of target groups; Objectives in quantitative terms (number of certified persons, ex) need to be realistic considering the "certifiable" existing people; and accompanied by a public campaign emphasising the added value of recognition; employers and the labour market need to be involved in this campaign.
Target groups (inclusion of high-risk groups)	Less qualified adults, unemployed people and NEET; Adults (aged 18 or plus) who do not hold either primary or lower-secondary education (4th, 6th, 9th grades), upper-secondary education (12th grade) or a professional certification ; Exceptionally to NEET; Also to Adults up to 23 years old - must have at least three years of professional certified experience to be eligible	Target groups are well defined and very broad, insuring equal access to all and inclusion of high-risks groups, such as underqualified people, unemployed, NEET population, etc. The system is publicly funded, free of charge for target groups.	Now that a lot of target groups representatives already certified their competences, the ones left are "the hard to reach", the ones that makes it very hard and time consuming to certify (fewer skills); Difficulty in mobilizing them; More and more candidates from other countries (implies the need to improve the system to answer to people speaking other languages; implies the provision of specific training to staff to deal with intercultural relations; implies the need to provide previous training to targets in PT)
Sectors/areas addressed	Applicable to all sectors and at non-higher education (level 1 to 4 EQF). VNFIL also possible in HE and it leads to credit awarding. Portuguese legislation enables the access of adults aged 23 or over who do not hold an upper-secondary diploma (standard admission requirement) to HE through the assessment of prior learning. HEI have autonomy to develop their own procedures to validate VNFIL (called accreditation process); validation cannot allow to obtain more than 1/3 of the total n. of ECTS of a degree.	Big effort in the sense of including in the system all sectors of activity. Applicable to level 1 to 4 EQF and also possible in HE	Level 5 EQF although being a non-higher education level is not yet included in the PT VNFIL system.
Validation tools and methods in place (explore the existence and use of e-tools and self-evaluation/assessment tools at system/ practitioners levels)	The VNFIL system follow a methodology organized in 3 main axes, that is defined at system level and applied at practitioners level: recognition, validation and certification. For each axe or phase, there are different methods, professionals and tools involved, that also vary if it is a school or/and professional VNFIL process. For each phase there are pre-defined tools and methods; self-evaluation is used at XXX stage; until the pandemics, the use of digital tools was limited to SIGO and to some experiences, at practitioners level, on the compilation of portfolio elements using digital tools; no e-portfolio existed. With pandemics, at system level, rules were defined in order to enable providers to develop the processes online but no particular e-tools were defined, leaving it open to providers. So far, no e-portfolio is part of the system, formally.	A wide range of validation tools and methods are foreseen at system level and largely used by practitioners (Diagnosis Document/Self Evaluation Document; Education and Training Pathway Document, Portfolio; Portfolio Analysis Document; Technical Interview; Job Performance Observation Grid; Practical Exercise Assessment Grid; Oral presentation in a jury). The use of a diversity of practices, tools and methods specially qualitative methodologies such as the portfolio is acknowledged as one of the strongest points of the RVCC process, because it is possible to adapt it to the specific needs of the individuals.	No e-tools foreseen in the system. Creation of a digital platform/tool for the development of processes and interaction between the different stakeholders is needed and identified by providers as a urgent need that needs to be addressed.
Link/Alignment with NQF	Fully aligned with the NQF; The standards used in Portuguese VNFIL system are equivalent to the training standards used in formal education.	Certificates and diplomas obtained through RVCC have the same legal value as any other way of obtaining a qualification	
Link/alignment with other national policies (in terms of VET, Adult Learning, etc)	There is an overall alignment between VNFIL policies and AE and VET policies	A reform is in place to make it even more explicit that follow a VNFIL process or to follow a training course have the same exact value and are only different ways to reach the same	
Governance & accountability	ANQEP, I.P. (National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education and Training) a public body under the joint supervision of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour, in coordination with the Ministry of Economics is entity empowered to manage and oversee the RVCC system in Portugal. But a wider range of other stakeholders are involved: the organisations who integrates the QUALIFICA Centers (less than 300) that can be public basic and secondary education schools, vocational training centres from the Institute for Employment and Vocational Training, professional/vocational schools, sectoral associations or local development associations, NGOs and private enterprises; the organisations who integrates the Sectoral Councils for Qualification in charge of the definition of the Professional Competences Standards; at territorial level, also employers, training institutions, organisations from the third sector and State are involved via the establishment of cooperation partnerships, with a view to outreach approach; Social partners are also involved in the RVCC system from the design phase of the standards (within the Sectoral Councils for Qualification) up to the certification of the candidates (employers and trade unions participate in the juries of certification of professional RVCC) covering central and regional governance levels.	Organisations and functions of each one in the provision of VNFIL is clearly defined at central level but with regional focus and are acknowledged by parties. Rules of functioning and responsibilities of each stakeholder are defined. Wide range of stakeholders involved.	More efforts need to be made to mobilize employers to the system; they do not recognise added value; More cooperation among providers and among staff within each providers but also among staff from different centers need to be enhanced ; Reorganization of the network according to regional contexts and needs and according to the specificity of target groups; Different types of providers answer to different types of governing bodies (Ministries, ex) - a better coordination between ANQEP and those governing bodies needs to be addressed.

		ANALYSIS OF VNFIL SYSTEMS	
SHORT DESCRIPTION		ACHIEVEMENTS / WELL DONE!	SHORTCOMINGS / AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT
VNFIL SYSTEMS CHARACTERISTICS			
Investment in the development of VNFIL professionals competences	The type of practitioners involved in the VNFIL system in Portugal are defined by law (Portaria no. 232/2016, 29/08). Also the tasks and responsibilities of each type of practitioner are defined, as well as the profile (competences required namely in academic terms and professional experience). Each VNFIL Center (Qualifica Center) is responsible for ensuring the training of their respective team, in accordance with the guidelines defined by ANQEP, I. P., without prejudice to the actions developed by the latter.	Clear definition of the profile, tasks, responsibilities and competences required by practitioners involved in VNFIL in PT. In the early stages of the system, ANQEP, I.P. provided initial training to professionals and up to few years ago organised at least one national big conference.	In Portugal, there are no specific paths or degrees to work in VNFIL. However, a couple of Master's include specific disciplines regarding the topic. Therefore, knowledge and abilities related to these professional activities are often drawn from experience in the workplace. Make it hard to recruit new workers. Centers need to "steal" workers from one another because there is a lack of initial, continuing training and/or specific training to VNFIL professionals. VNFIL professionals feel the need to have more continuing training, learning and sharing spaces to share problems and solutions among them. Need of training to work with foreigner candidates, need of training to work with the recognition of foreigner diplomas. Urgent need to develop training to social partners jury members
Quality assurance measures and indicators of measurement	At system level, evaluation, monitoring and quality assurance mechanisms are in place so as quantitative indicators of measurement which are monitored at central level, by ANQEP, using data provided by practitioners through SIGO platform.	ANQEP - responsible for monitoring, assessment and regulation of the RVCC system. Main Tools: SIGO (restricted access platform where validation centres register the progress made by the Adult); 5 regional monitoring teams (monthly, quarterly and annual reports produced). Quality assurance mechanisms: Existence of national standards for RVCC; Existence of guidelines for RVCC; Accuracy and reliability of the data provided by SIGO; Key performance indicators established for each QUALIFICA Center (quantitative approach); Training provided to the staff. The RVCC system has been the object of several external evaluations (2003, 2004, 2010, 2012)	Need of a quality charter shared by all QUALIFICA center, like a code of conduct to frame the intervention in terms of ethical and deontological principles (it used to exist a quality charter, not existing anymore; QUALIFICA centers use the quality system in place in the "host organisations". Key performance indicators established for each QUALIFICA Center are based on a quantitative approach that do not measure the quality of the process and of the results.
ASSESSMENT OF THE QUALITY OF EXISTING VNFIL SYSTEMS			
Perception of the quality of the systems in place			RVCC PRO benchmarks versus the reality of different professional performances to which the same designation is attributed
Visibility of the systems in place		With the "New Opportunities Initiative" (2005 to 2012) a huge investment in publicizing the VNFIL system in PT was made, covering, candidates, employers, society at large, with around 450 centers created and more than 500 thousands persons obtained a certification through VNFIL in this period. Even considering the lack of political will in the development of the adult education policy that affected the validation of non-formal and informal learning after 2012, it is noticed a reinforcement in trust in the VET system in the last couple years; this included trust in VNFIL system as part of the national learning strategies and structures of adult education and lifelong learning in PT	Short valuing that employers give to adult education and training in general and to RVCC and validation in particular when people possess a school certification or eventually a professional certification got by these means. Adult learners who developed RVCC processes find it hard to earn a better salary especially when showing a school and professional certification and this does not make adult learners more employable (there are still social recognition issues regarding the certificates obtained through RVCC in general education and VET; improving the social value/recognition of diplomas obtained via RVCC
Efficiency of the systems in place		The flexibility of the RVCC system contributes to the effectiveness and efficiency in obtaining a qualification, enabling the certification in less time and with lower costs than in formal education	Recognition of Certificates issued abroad, although being a formal responsibility of QUALIFICA Centers, staff do not have know-how for doing that which make the system not efficient