



D3.3: Validation set according to EQF

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Executive Summary

The [Fighting Terrorist Content Online \(FRISCO\)](#) project, funded by the European Commission – Internal Security Fund under Grant agreement No 101080100 brings together 8 partners from 6 different European countries between 2022 and 2024. Its objective is to assist Hosting Service Providers (HSPs) in adhering to the Terrorist Content Online (TCO) Regulation. Enacted as regulation (EU) 2021/784, this legislation, in effect from 7 June 2021 and applicable from 7 June 2022, outlines specific measures that HSPs must implement to combat the dissemination of terrorist content on their platforms.

The present EQF guideline has been developed within the framework of WP3 task 3.3 (“Designing of validation path of the skills learned according to the EQF”). It aims to guide in discovering the current European framework and its four parameters (knowledge, skills, autonomy, and responsibility) required for the evaluation of learning outcome, and additionally, provide an in-depth evaluation of how six European education systems, where FRISCO partners come from, have integrated EQF principles, transferability of accreditation and learning quality. Outcomes of this document will be released to partners to enhance the transparency, comparability, and portability of FRISCO qualifications, making it possible to compare qualifications from partners’ countries and other different countries and institutions. The start of this national process will then be at the discretion of each partner.

The training material developed by the FRISCO project is at EQF level 4 (see D3.1_FRISCO Competence Model). At level 4, it is expected that:

- The knowledge acquired for the student to be ‘factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study’.
- The ability to apply the knowledge (skills developed) should ‘range of cognitive and practical skills so that the student is able to develop creative solutions to specific possible problems related to the field of study’.
- The learner’s responsibility and autonomy to apply the acquired knowledge and skills will be within the presented guidelines of work that are to be predictable, but subject to change.
- The tasks are to require supervision with some level of responsibility.

The application and development of these doctrines have been analysed and contextualized in specific Member States, i.e. those from which the FRISCO partners come (Greece, Germany, France, Italy, Hungary, and the Netherlands), to clarify and trace the procedures that FRISCO partners could follow and develop to proceed with the recognition and validation of the skills developed with the FRISCO training according to EQF.

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List of Terms & Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
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BBiG	Vocational Training Act (in German Berufsbildungsgesetz)
BIBB	Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (in German Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung)
BMBF	German Ministry of Education (in German Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung)
B-L-KS	German Federal Government-Federal State Coordination Point (in German Bund-Länder-Koordinierungsstelle)
BQFQ	Vocational Qualifications Recognition Act (in German (in German Berufsqualifikationsfeststellungsgesetz)
CEDEFOP	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
CNCP	National Committee for Professional Certification (In French Commission Nationale de la Certification Professionnelle)
CVET	Continuing Vocational Education and Training
DQR	German Qualification Framework (in German Deutscher Qualifikationsrahmen)
ECVET	European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training
ENIC/NARIC	European Network for National Information Centres
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation Systems
EOPPEP	Greek National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications & Vocational Guidance (in Greek Εθνικός Οργανισμός Πιστοποίησης Προσόντων και Επαγγελματικού Προσανατολισμού)
EQF	European Qualification Framework
EQAVET	European Qualification Assurance in Vocational Education and Training
ESCO	European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations
ESG	European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
HSPs	Hosting Service Providers
HAC	Hungarian Accreditation Committee (in Hungarian Magyar Felsőoktatási Akkreditációs Bizottság)
HuQF	Hungarian Qualifications Framework

HWK	German Chamber of Crafts (in German Handwerkskammer)
HwO	Vocational Training Act (in German Handwerksordnung)
HQF	Hellenic Qualifications Framework
IHQ	German Chamber of Industry and Commerce (in German Industrie- und Handelskammer)
IKK	Hungarian Innovation Training Support Centre (in Hungarian Innovatív Képzéstámogató Központ)
INAPP	National Institute for Public Policy Analysis (in Italian Istituto nazionale per l'analisi delle politiche pubbliche).
INDIRE	National Institute for Documentation, Innovation and Educational Research (in Italian Istituto Nazionale Documentazione Innovazione Ricerca Educativa)
ITC	Information and Communication Technology
IVET	Initial Vocational Education and Training
KEE	Greek Central Scientific Committee
KSEEK	Greek Central Council of Vocational Education and Training
NOVETAL	Hungarian National Office of VET and Adult Learning (in Hungarian Nemzeti Szakképzési és Felnőttképzési Hivatal)
NQFs	National Qualifications Framework(s)
NRTO	Dutch Council for Private Providers of Education and Training (in Dutch Nederlandse Raad voor Training en Opleiding)
NSCC	National System for Certification of Competences
NVAO	Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (in Dutch Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatieorganisatie)
LLL	Lifelong Learning
LO	Learning Outcome
QNQ	Italian Qualification Framework (in Italian Quadro Nazionale delle Qualifiche)
RNCP	the National Register of Vocational and Professional Qualifications (in French Répertoire national des certifications professionnelles)
SBB	Dutch Cooperation Organisation for Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market (Samenwerkingsorganisatie Beroepsonderwijs Bedrijfsleven)

SSPAE	Greek Special Service for Social Integration and the Social Economy (in Greek, Ειδική Υπηρεσία για την Κοινωνική και Οικονομική Ένταξη - Ε.Υ.Κ.Ο.Ε.)
TCO	Terrorist Content Online
T&S	Trust and Safety
T/VEO	Terrorist and Violent Extremism Online
UWV	Dutch National Security Agency (in Dutch Uitvoeringsinstituut Werknemersverzekeringen)
VAE	Validation of Acquired Experience (in French Validation des Acquis de l'Expérience)
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VPL	Validation of Prior Learning
WHW	Higher Education and Research Act (in Dutch Wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek)

1 Introduction

1.1 The FRISCO project - Presentation

Terrorist and illicit content online poses an escalating concern, demanding attention from both security and public policy perspectives. In today's complex, interconnected world, countering the spread of terrorist content online necessitates a multifaceted approach. This approach must acknowledge the interdependence of global and digital phenomena and requires a combination of legislative, non-legislative, and voluntary measures based on collaboration between authorities and Hosting Service Providers (HSPs).

In response to this pressing need, Regulation (EU) 2021/784, dedicated to addressing the dissemination of terrorist content online (TCO Regulation), came into effect on 7 June 2021. It is set to be fully applicable from 7 June 2022, outlining a series of specific measures that Hosting Service Providers exposed to TCO Regulation must implement. These measures are instrumental in addressing the misuse of their services and collectively working towards a safer online environment.

In this context, the objective of the [Fighting Terrorist Content Online \(FRISCO\)](#) project is to support HSPs to comply with the TCO Regulation, through:

1. Informing Hosting Service Providers and increasing their awareness of the Terrorist Content Online Regulation and their new obligations
2. Developing and validating tools, frameworks, and mechanisms to support Hosting Service Providers in the implementation of the Terrorist Content Online Regulation
3. Sharing experience, best practices and tools to support the implementation of the Regulation.

The project activities are structured around a comprehensive approach that focuses on mapping the technical and human needs of Hosting Service Providers and their awareness levels regarding the Terrorist Content Online Regulation. This forms the foundation for the development and validation of essential tools, frameworks and mechanisms in WP2. WP3 will enhance the capacity building of HSPs and WP4 will support raising their awareness in relation to their compliance duties. Finally, WP5 will disseminate the results of the project.

As a direct outcome of the project, targeted Hosting Service Providers will gain a comprehensive understanding of online terrorist content, enabling them to better address and to comply with the TCO Regulation. This will lead to safer navigation online by reducing the risk of encountering terrorist content online.

The project has received funding from the European Commission – Internal Security Fund under Grant Agreement No 101080100 and will be realised between November 2022 and November 2024. The consortium responsible for the project comprises 8 beneficiaries from 6 different European countries, including [NCSR-D](#) (Greece), the [French Ministry of Interior](#) (France), [Tremau](#) (France), [Civipol](#) (France), [Violence Prevention Network](#) (Germany), [IVSZ](#) (Hungary), [D-Learn](#) (Italy) and [INACH](#) (Netherlands).

1.2 The FRISCO validation set according to EQF - Purpose and scope

The “FRISCO Validation set according to EQF” aims to draw a process to recognize and validate the skills acquired and the knowledge developed thanks to the project training activities (D.3.2 FRISCO e-Training Modules), to improve transparency, comparability, and portability of qualifications acquired by participants and learners, by making possible to compare qualifications from partners’ countries and other different countries and institutions. The FRISCO validation set will be released to partners to enhance the transparency, comparability, and portability of FRISCO qualifications, making it possible to compare qualifications from partners’ countries and other different countries and institutions. The start of this national process will then be at the discretion of each partner.

1.3 Approach for Work Package and Relation to other Work Packages and Deliverables

The project is delivered through five Working Packages (WP). WP1 will manage and coordinate the day-to-day management activities of the project. WP2 is dedicated to the development of relevant tools. WP3 aims to create a training program and to develop e-training modules, while WP4 helps raise awareness of HSPs. WP5 is dedicated to the dissemination and exploitation of results.

The present guidelines are realised within the framework of WP3, Task 3.3. In this task, the validation path of the skills acquired according to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is designed and released to partners to potentially improve transparency, comparability, and portability of qualifications acquired at national level. The start of this national process will then be at the discretion of each partner.

WP3 has two other tasks, Task 3.1 and Task 3.2. The aim of task 3.1 is to design and develop a model to map the competences micro and small HSPs need to acquire following the adoption of the TCO Regulation. Thanks to the results of state-of-the-art research carried out at the application stage and the mapping within WP2 (T2.1), the Competence Model has been designed, defining the knowledge, skills, and competences needed by micro and small HSPs to effectively implement the TCO and address the dissemination of terrorist content online on their platforms, given their societal responsibilities to protect their services from misuse by terrorists. It includes the competence standard, the set of evidence, and the process. In task 3.2 - based on the results of task 3.1 - e-training materials have been created and tested to help the micro and small European HSPs to better understand (i) the nature of terrorist content online, (ii) the means available to identify and remove them from their services and (iii) the mechanisms and processes to implement to comply with the TCO Regulation.

The results of WP3 (D3.1 FRISCO Competence Model, D.3.2 FRISCO e-Training Modules ([here](#)), D3.3 Validation set according to EQF) will be crucial in the implementation of all the project WPs, especially in the WP4, aimed to share experiences, develop best practices and raise awareness on the challenges posed by TCO, where the training materials developed and the competence model will play a fundamental role.

1.4 Methodology and Structure of the Deliverable

The FRISCO Validation Set serves as a comprehensive framework designed to recognize and validate the competences acquired through the FRISCO training path. This validation set encompasses the following key components:

1. **Methodology for Recognition According to the EQF:** The methodology is aligned with the European Quality Framework (EQF), which provides a structured reference for enhancing the transparency and comparability of qualifications across different countries and educational systems. The EQF methodology ensures that the competencies gained through the FRISCO training are recognized consistently and accurately.
2. **Guidelines:** Clear guidelines are provided to support the recognition process. These guidelines outline the procedures and criteria for validating competencies, ensuring a standardized approach that aligns with the EQF principles. They serve as a practical tool for both learners and validators to understand and navigate the recognition process.
3. **List of Knowledge, Skills, Responsibility, and Autonomy for Each Learning Outcome (LO):** The validation set includes a detailed enumeration of the specific knowledge, skills, responsibility, and autonomy associated with each learning outcome developed through the FRISCO training path. This detailed listing ensures that all aspects of the competencies are recognized and validated comprehensively.
4. **Comparability with EU Partners' Countries:** To facilitate international recognition and mobility, the FRISCO validation set includes a component for comparability with the qualification frameworks of EU partner countries. This comparability ensures that the competencies validated through the FRISCO path are recognized across different national contexts within the EU, promoting broader acceptance and integration of the qualifications.

Overall, the FRISCO Validation Set has been meticulously crafted to ensure a robust and reliable framework for recognizing the competencies acquired through the FRISCO training, in alignment with the standards and requirements of the EQF.

2 The European Qualification Framework

The European Qualification Framework (EQF) is an 8-level learning outcomes-based framework for all types of qualification systems in Europe. It aims to make degrees and competency certifications transparent, portable, and comparable across different national qualification frameworks, especially considering the high mobility of people and workers in Europe.

As referred by the Council Recommendation of 26 November 2018, the EQF serves as a tool to encourage lifelong learning by covering qualifications obtained through general, vocational, and academic education and training at all types and levels of national qualifications frameworks in Europe (from basic level 1, for example, school leaving certificates, to advanced Level 8, for example, Doctorates). It also encompasses qualifications obtained through both initial and ongoing education and training, which are increasingly accessible through common qualification databases. Directive 2005/36/EC addresses the recognition of professional qualifications in the EU, enabling professionals to move across borders and practise their occupation or provide services abroad. In addition to the EU Member States, another 11 countries are working towards implementing the EQF, namely Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway (European Economic Area countries), Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Türkiye (candidate countries), Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kosovo (potential candidates) and Switzerland.

The EQF Recommendation invites Member States to reference all newly issued qualifications (e.g. certificates, diplomas, certificate supplements, diploma supplements), and/or qualifications databases with a clear reference to the appropriate EQF and NQF level. To appropriately comply with it, all national referencing reports are presented to the EQF Advisory Group which endorses them if they satisfy the referencing criteria. Additionally, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) and the European Training Foundation (ETF), as European Agencies, play pivotal roles in facilitating EQF implementation. Their contributions are integral to the dissemination of information for this report. Lastly, the ENIC/NARIC network consists of national centres established to provide direct support to institutions and citizens in the recognition of academic qualifications.

2.1 The structure of EQF

The eight reference levels (see Table 1) are described in learning outcomes based on three parameters (knowledge, skills, autonomy and responsibility) and cover all types and all levels of qualifications in increasing levels with increasing autonomy and responsibility, ranging from handling recurring and simple problems and situations to new and complex ones. The accompanying recommendation clarifies the meaning of some crucial terms:

- Learning outcomes: A description of what a learner knows, understands, and can do at the end of a learning process; defined in terms of knowledge, skills, and responsibility and autonomy.

- **Knowledge:** The result of assimilating information through learning. Knowledge comprises facts, principles, theories, and practices related to a field of work or study. In the context of the EQF, knowledge is described as theoretical and/or practical.
- **Skills:** 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 (including the use of logical, intuitive, and creative thinking) and practical (including manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools, and instruments).
- **Responsibility and autonomy:** The learner's ability to apply knowledge and skills independently and responsibly.
- **Competence:** 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.

EQF Level	Knowledge	Skills	Competence
1	Basic general knowledge	Basic skills required to carry out simple tasks	Work or study under direct supervision in a structured context
2	Basic factual knowledge of a field of work or study	Basic cognitive and practical skills required to use relevant information to carry out tasks and to solve routine problems using simple rules and tools	Work or study under supervision with some autonomy
3	Knowledge of facts, principles, processes and general concepts, in a field of work or study	A range of cognitive and practical skills are required to accomplish tasks and solve problems by selecting and applying basic methods, tools, materials and information	Take responsibility for completion of tasks in work or study; adapt own behaviour to circumstances in solving problems
4	Factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study	A range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study	Exercise self-management within the guidelines of work or study contexts that are usually predictable, but are subject to change; supervise the routine work of others, taking some responsibility for the evaluation and

			improvement of work or study activities
5*	Comprehensive, specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work or study and an awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge	A comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems	Exercise management and supervision in contexts of work or study activities where there is unpredictable change; review and develop performance of self and others
6**	Advanced knowledge of a field of work or study, involving a critical understanding of theories and principles	Advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialised field of work or study	Manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable work or study contexts; take responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups
7***	Highly specialised knowledge, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge in a field of work or study, as the basis for original thinking and/or research Critical awareness of knowledge issues in a field and at the interface between different fields	Specialised problem-solving skills required in research and/or innovation in order to develop new knowledge and procedures and to integrate knowledge from different fields	Manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches; take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or for reviewing the strategic performance of teams
8****	Knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of work or study and at the interface between fields	The most advanced and specialised skills and techniques, including synthesis and evaluation, required to solve critical problems in research and/or innovation and to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice	Demonstrate substantial authority, innovation, autonomy, scholarly and professional integrity and sustained commitment to the development of new ideas or processes at the forefront of work or study contexts including research

Table 1 - EQF Levels

* The short cycle in higher education (associated with or within the first cycle), crafted by the Joint Quality Initiative as part of the Bologna process, aligns with the learning outcomes specified for EQF level 5.

** The descriptor for the first cycle in the European Higher Education Area's Qualifications Framework, as agreed upon by the higher education ministers at their Bergen meeting in May 2005 under the Bologna process, aligns with the learning outcomes specified for EQF level 6.

*** The descriptor for the second cycle in the European Higher Education Area's Qualifications Framework, as established by the higher education ministers at their Bergen meeting in May 2005 under the Bologna process, aligns with the learning outcomes specified for EQF level 7.

**** The descriptor for the third cycle in the European Higher Education Area's Qualifications Framework, as determined by the higher education ministers at their Bergen meeting in May 2005 under the Bologna process, aligns with the learning outcomes specified for EQF level 8.

3 How to use the EQF

3.1 The basic four validation features

Validation is a process that can be carried out by different stakeholders within the education and training sector, labour market, and the third sector. There are four different stages to validation:

1. **Identification** of an individual's learning outcomes acquired through non-formal and informal learning.
2. **Documentation** of an individual's learning outcomes acquired through non-formal and informal learning.
3. **Assessment** of an individual's learning outcomes acquired through non-formal and informal learning.
4. **Certification** of the results of the assessment of an individual's learning outcomes acquired through non-formal and informal learning in the form of a qualification, or credits leading to a qualification, or in another form, as appropriate.¹

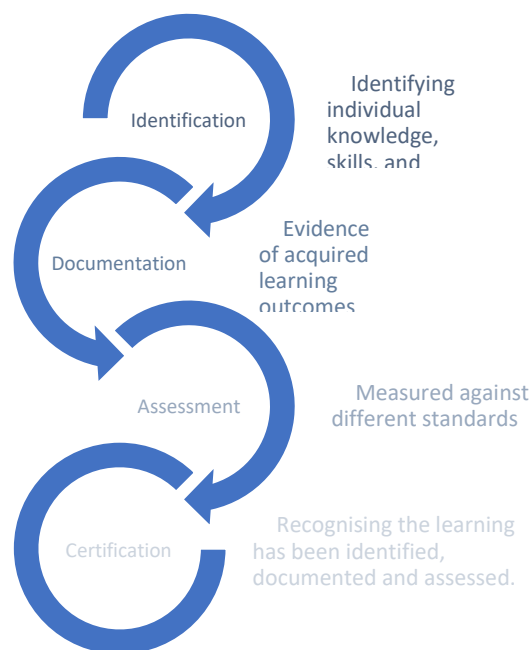


Figure 1 - The basic four validation features

3.1.1 Identification of qualifications

Validation begins with **identifying the knowledge, skills, and competencies** acquired, where the individual gains increasing awareness of their prior achievements. This stage is critical because learning outcomes vary among individuals and are gained in diverse contexts such as at home, in the

¹ Council of the EU, 2012, p. 3, points 2a to 2d

workplace, or through voluntary activities. Discovering and becoming more aware of one's own capabilities is an individual process, meaning that methods and approaches must be adaptable and open to unexpected results, avoiding designs that limit the range of knowledge, skills, and competencies that can be acknowledged.

In some countries, the identification phase is facilitated by standardized ICT tools that allow for self-assessment. However, this stage often requires the active involvement of advisers and counsellors who can engage in dialogue with the candidate and guide them toward suitable options and tools. During this initial phase, it is crucial to inform the individual about the costs and benefits of validation compared to further education and training. If validation is chosen, the appropriate form must be selected. Although ICT-based tools can reach a larger audience and are cost-effective, their standardized nature may overlook the unique combination of skills and competencies an individual has acquired. On the other hand, interviews and dialogue-based methods may be more expensive but can offer greater value to the candidate.

Table 2 Key questions and considerations on identification:

- Which procedures and tools support identification?
- How is guidance and counselling supporting and integrated into the identification phase?
- (!) Recognise skills and competences acquired in a variety of settings

Table 2 - Key questions and considerations on identification

3.1.2 Documentation of the skills

Following the identification stage, documentation involves providing **evidence of the acquired learning outcomes**. This often includes creating a portfolio that features a CV and a detailed career history, along with documents and work samples that demonstrate the individual's achievements. Validation must be open to various types of evidence, including written documents, work samples, and practice demonstrations, ensuring they offer sufficient insight into the acquired learning outcomes. Merely listing job titles or positions is insufficient. **Ensuring the portability of evidence requires some degree of coordination at both national and European levels. Common formats for presenting learning experiences, like those promoted by Europass, can facilitate this transfer, and enhance the understanding of these outcomes.** In some countries, identification and documentation are combined into one stage, focusing on collecting evidence to build a dossier for external evaluation.

Table 3 Key questions and considerations on documentation:

- What criteria are used for admitting evidence into the process?
- What formats are used for documenting non-formal and informal learning?
- To what extent do existing documentation formats support the transfer and portability of acquired knowledge, skills and competences?
- (!) Select the right validation tools (e.g. portfolio, examination, report, cv, observation, etc.

Table 3 - Key questions and considerations on documentation

3.1.3 Assessment of the skills

Assessment typically refers to the stage where an individual's learning outcomes are **measured against specific standards or reference points**. This process may involve evaluating written and documentary evidence as well as other forms of evidence. Assessment is vital for ensuring the credibility of the validation of non-formal and informal learning. In some instances, certificates earned through validation are seen as less valuable than those obtained from traditional courses and programs. To address these perceptions, which often stem from the novelty of validation, the **tools and processes must be presented transparently**.

A learning-outcomes-based assessment focuses on what a learner knows, understands, and can do, without being constrained by input factors like the duration or location of learning. This approach accommodates individual variations in learning careers. Many of the tools and methods used for assessing non-formal and informal learning are based on or like those used in formal education and training. Since validation aims to capture diverse individual learning experiences, assessment tools must be designed to evaluate the specific learning of each individual and the context in which it occurred. This differs from formal learning assessments, which are often applied to larger groups of students and give less priority to the needs of subgroups or individuals. The unique nature of individual learning outcomes may require multiple tools, such as a combination of written tests and practical challenges. Frequently, tools will need to include practical demonstrations, simulations, or evidence gathered from past practices.

Table 4 Key questions and considerations on assessment:

- Are assessment tools adapted to the individual's needs and characteristics?
- Which reference point (standard) is being used and how suitable is this for capturing the individual variation characterising non-formal and informal learning?
- Have the conditions for assessment been clearly defined and communicated in terms of procedure, tools and evaluation/assessment standards:
 - to candidates?
 - to employers and education institutions?

Table 4 - Key questions and considerations on assessment

3.1.4 Certification of the results

The final phase of validation involves certifying and formally recognizing the learning that has been identified, documented, and assessed. This certification can take various forms, but it often results in the awarding of a formal qualification or part-qualification. In certain industries or sectors, certification might also include issuing a license that permits the individual to perform specific tasks. Regardless of the form it takes, validation that leads to certification requires a summative assessment that officially confirms the achievement of learning outcomes against a predefined standard. This process must be managed by a reputable authority or organization to ensure its credibility. The value of a certificate or qualification obtained through validation heavily relies on the legitimacy of the awarding body. Summative approaches to validating non-formal and informal learning should be closely linked to, and ideally integrated into, national qualifications systems. Some countries issue

separate certificates or qualifications for non-formal and informal learning. While this may be suitable in certain contexts, it risks creating a perception of secondary, inferior certificates. To establish validation of non-formal and informal learning as a standard route to qualifications, alongside traditional formal education and training, a legal right to validation could be implied. This right, already present in some European countries, would ensure access to a qualification without specifying the learning path. The form this takes will depend on the national legal and political context, as well as the specific constraints and opportunities present.

Table 5 Key questions and considerations on certification:

- How is the credibility of the authority/awarding body assured?
- To what extent can the outcomes of validation (documents, portfolios, certificates, etc.) be exchanged into further education, job opportunities?
- (!) Ensure the credibility of validation by education providers and employers by involving different stakeholders in the validation process.
- (!) Follow-up after validation keeps track of the progress and mobility of individuals following completion of a validation procedure.

Table 5 - Key questions and considerations on certification

4 How to use the EQF

According to the Council recommendation of 2017, Member States are recommended to review and update, when relevant, the referencing of the levels of the national qualifications frameworks or systems to the levels of the EQF². Since the **primary function of the EQF is to serve as a translation tool, qualifications themselves are not directly incorporated into the EQF. Instead, they are integrated into the NQFs, where their level and recognition abroad can be comprehended concerning the eight EQF levels.** This translation process becomes apparent to individuals as EQF levels are progressively incorporated into national certificates and diplomas and integrated into the NQFs. Each country wanting to relate its national qualifications levels to the EQF must prepare a detailed referencing report that follows the 10 EQF referencing criteria.

4.1 EQF referencing criteria

As mentioned before, these criteria aim to ensure that the information and documentation made available to the public is validated by competent authorities of different EU member states that are unfamiliar with other competent authorities' qualification systems. The referencing criteria, as such, provide the overall direction for the referencing process. However, it is important to note that the



Figure 2 - EQF referencing criteria

criteria must be proven through practice. Agreeing on a set of referencing criteria is just the initial step; their application must be supported through guidance and the systematic exchange of experiences and best practices. The National Coordination Points, along with test and pilot projects, play a significant role in this ongoing process.

Thus, EQF Advisory Group agreed set of criteria is structured as follows:

1. The responsibilities and/or legal competence of all relevant national bodies involved in the referencing process are determined and published by the competent authorities.
2. There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualification levels in the NQF or systems and the level descriptors of the EQF.
3. The NQFs or systems and their qualifications are based on the principle and objective of learning outcomes and are related to arrangements for the

² 2017/ C 189/03

validation of nonformal and informal learning and, where appropriate, to credit systems.

4. The procedures for the inclusion of qualifications in the NQF, or for describing the place of qualifications in the national qualification system, are transparent.

5. The national quality assurance system(s) for education and training refer(s) to the NQFs or systems and are consistent with the principles on quality assurance as specified in Annex IV to the EQF Recommendation.

6. The referencing process shall include a stated agreement from the relevant quality assurance bodies that the referencing report is consistent with the relevant national quality assurance arrangements, provisions, and practice.

7. The referencing process shall involve international experts and the referencing reports shall contain the written statements of at least two international experts from two different countries on the referencing process.

8. The competent authority or authorities shall certify the referencing of the NQFs or systems with the EQF. One comprehensive report, setting out the referencing and the evidence supporting it, shall be published by the competent authorities, including the EQF National Coordination Points, and shall address each of the criteria separately.

The same report can be used for self-certification to the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area, in accordance with the self-certification criteria of the latter.

9. Within six months of having referenced or updated the referencing report, Member States and other participating countries shall publish the referencing report and provide relevant information for comparison purposes on the relevant European portal.

10. Further to the referencing process, all newly issued documents related to qualifications that are part of the NQF or systems (e.g. certificates, diplomas, certificate/diploma supplements) and/or qualification registers issued by the competent authorities should contain a clear reference, by way of NQFs or systems, to the appropriate EQF level.

4.2 EQF Quality Assurance Principles

Trust in the quality and level of qualifications with an EQF level is crucial to facilitating mobility across both sectoral and geographical borders, underscoring the importance of quality assurance. In line with national contexts and considering sectoral differences, quality assurance for qualifications aligned with an EQF level should:

- Address both the design of qualifications and the implementation of the learning outcomes approach.
- Ensure valid and reliable assessment based on agreed and transparent learning outcomes-based standards and cover the certification process.
- Include feedback mechanisms and procedures for continuous improvement.
- Involve all relevant stakeholders at every stage of the process.

- Comprise consistent evaluation methods, including self-assessment and external review.
- Be an integral part of the internal management of bodies issuing qualifications with an EQF level, including sub-contracted activities.
- Be based on clear and measurable objectives, standards, and guidelines.
- Be supported by appropriate resources.
- Include regular reviews of existing external monitoring bodies or agencies responsible for quality assurance.
- Make evaluation results accessible electronically.

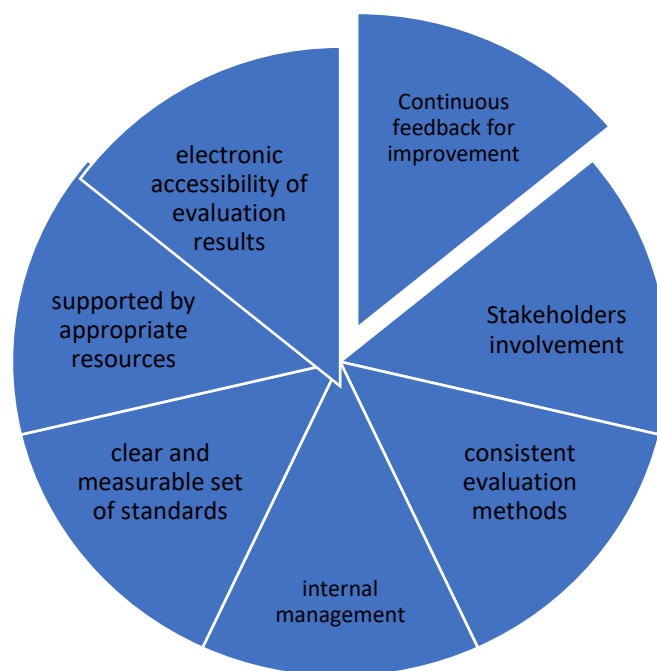


Figure 3 - EQF Quality Assurance Principles

5 Identification of National Education Frameworks

Each European country has its own National Qualifications Framework (NQF) aligned with the EQF. It is important to identify how local qualifications correspond to the EQF levels and how learning outcomes are assessed and awarded.

5.1 Comparison of qualifications

See the following table on EQF levels comparison to qualifications from different countries, as it is useful for employers, educational and training institutions, and competent authorities to accordingly set the acquired learning outcomes on the learning curricula.

EQF Levels	GREECE	ITALY	GERMANY	FRANCE	HUNGARY	THE NETHERLANDS
8	Doctorate (Διδακτορικό Δίπλωμα) (Universities)	<p>Research doctorate (Dottorato di ricerca)</p> <p>Academic diploma for research training (Diploma accademico di formazione alla ricerca)</p> <p>Specialisation diploma (Diploma di specializzazione)</p> <p>Second level university master (Master universitario di secondo livello)</p> <p>Academic specialisation diploma (Diploma accademico di specializzazione)</p> <p>Higher specialisation diploma or master (Diploma di perfezionamento o Master)</p>	Doctorate and equivalent artistic degrees (Doktorat und äquivalente künstlerische Abschlüsse)	Doctoral programmes	PhD/DLA - Doctor of Liberal Arts (Doktori fokozat)	Doctorate (Doctoraat)
7	<p>Master's degree (Μεταπτυχιακό Δίπλωμα Ειδίκευσης) (Universities/technological educational institutions (TEI)-higher education)</p>	<p>Master degree (Laurea magistrale)</p> <p>Second level academic diploma (Diploma accademico di secondo livello)</p>	Master's degrees and equivalent higher education qualifications (traditional German courses of higher education study such as the first degrees of "Diplom" or "Magister", State Examinations) (Master und	<p>Master's degrees</p> <p>Master's degrees in engineering</p> <p>Other vocational qualifications level 7 "by law"</p>	<p>Master degree (MA/MSc) (Mesterfokozat)</p> <p>"Advanced postgraduate qualifications (entry requirement is MA/MSc degree) Felsőfokú szakirányú továbbképzés"</p>	<p>Master Degree</p> <p>Other qualifications non-regulated</p>

		<p>First level university master (Master universitario di primo livello)</p> <p>Academic specialisation diploma (Diploma accademico di specializzazione)</p> <p>Higher specialisation diploma or master (Diploma di perfezionamento o Master)</p>	<p>gleichgestellte Abschlüsse (Diplom, Magister, Staats)</p> <p>Strategic Professional (IT) (certified) (Strategische/r Professional (IT) (Geprüfte/r))</p> <p>Other advanced vocational training pursuant to the Vocational Training Act or Crafts and Trades Regulation Code (level 7) (Sonstige berufliche Fortbildungsqualifikationen nach BBiG/HwO (Niveau 7))</p>	<p>Professional qualifications 7</p>		
6	<p>Bachelor's degree (Πτυχίο Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης) (Universities/TEI-higher education)</p>	<p>Bachelor degree- Laurea</p> <p>First level academic diploma (Diploma accademico di primo livello)</p>	<p>Bachelor's degrees and equivalent higher education qualifications (Bachelor und gleichgestellte Hochschulabschlüsse)</p> <p>Specialist commercial clerk (certified) (Fachkaufmann/-frau (Geprüfte/r))</p> <p>Business management specialist (certified) (Fachwirt (Geprüfter))</p> <p>Master craftsman (Meister/in)</p>	<p>Bachelor's degrees</p> <p>Vocational bachelor</p> <p>Bachelor universitaire de technologie</p> <p>Bachelor en sciences et en ingénierie</p> <p>Professional qualifications level 6</p> <p>Other vocational qualifications level 6 "by law"</p>	<p>Bachelor degree (BA/BSc) (Alapfokozat)</p> <p>Advanced VET qualifications (entry requirement is BA/BSc degree) (Felsőfokú végzettséghez kötött szakképesítés)</p> <p>"Advanced postgraduate qualifications (entry requirement is BA/BSc degree) Felsőfokú szakirányú továbbképzés"</p>	<p>Bachelor degree</p> <p>Other qualifications / non-regulated</p>

			<p>Operative Professional (IT) (certified) (Operative/r Professional (IT) (Geprüfte/r))</p> <p>Trade and technical school (advanced vocational training governed by federal state law) (Fachschule (Landesrechtlich geregelte berufliche Weiterbildungen))</p> <p>Advanced vocational training pursuant to § 54 of the Vocational Training Act (level 6) (Berufliche Fortbildungsqualifikationen § 54 BBiG (Niveau 6))</p> <p>Other advanced vocational training pursuant to the Vocational Training Act or Crafts and Trades Regulation Code (level 6) (Sonstige berufliche Fortbildungsqualifikationen nach BBiG/HwO (Niveau 6))</p>			
5	Vocational post-secondary school ‘degree’ for graduates of EPAL apprenticeship class, level 5 (post-secondary level) (Πτυχίο Επαγγελματικής Ειδικότητας, Εκπαίδευσης	Higher technical education diploma (Diploma di tecnico superiore)	<p>IT specialist (IT-Spezialist/in (Zertifizierte/r))</p> <p>Service technician (certified) (Servicetechniker/in (Geprüfte/r))</p>	<p>Undergraduate technician certificate</p> <p>Undergraduate technician certificates in agriculture</p>	<p>Szakirányú</p> <p>Postsecondary full and add-on VET qualifications (based on upper secondary school leaving examination) (Érettségire</p>	<p>Associate degree</p> <p>Other qualifications / non-regulated</p>

	<p>και Κατάρτισης Επιπέδου 5 - ΕΠΑΛ Μαθητείας)</p> <p>Vocational training diploma (post-secondary level) (Δίπλωμα Επαγγελματικής Ειδικότητας, Εκπαίδευσης και Κατάρτισης Επιπέδου 5) (vocational training institute) (Ινστιτούτο Επαγγελματικής Κατάρτισης, ΙΕΚ)</p> <p>Vocational training diploma (Δίπλωμα Επαγγελματικής Ειδικότητας, Εκπαίδευσης και Κατάρτισης Επιπέδου Μεταδευτεροβάθμιας Επαγγελματικής Κατάρτισης, ΙΕΚ) (post-secondary level)</p> <p>Post-secondary and not higher education diploma or 'degree' (Δίπλωμα ή Πτυχίο Ανωτέρας Σχολής)</p>		<p>Advanced vocational training pursuant to § 54 of the Vocational Training Act (level 5) (Berufliche Fortbildungsqualifikationen § 54 BBiG (Niveau 5))</p> <p>Other advanced vocational training pursuant to the Vocational Training Act or Crafts and Trades Regulation Code (level 5) (Sonstige berufliche Fortbildungsqualifikationen nach BBiG/HwO (Niveau 5))</p>	<p>Undergraduate certificates in technology</p> <p>Mastercraftsman qualifications</p> <p>Professional qualifications level 5</p> <p>Other vocational qualifications level 5 "by law"</p>	<p>épülő szakirányú OKJ szakképesítés)</p>	
<p>4</p>	<p>Vocational school (Επαγγελματικές Σχολές) (EPAS, ΕΠΑΣ) certificate (Πτυχίο ΕΠΑΣ)</p>	<p>Professional technician diploma (Diploma istruzione professionale)</p>	<p>General higher education entrance qualification (Allgemeine Hochschulreife (AHR))</p>	<p>Professional certificates</p> <p>Technician certificates</p>	<p>Certificate for upper secondary school leaving examination (érettségi bizonyítvány)</p>	<p>Pre-university education (vwo)</p>

<p>Vocational upper secondary school (Επαγγελματικά Λύκεια) (EPAL, ΕΠΑΛ) 'degree' (Πτυχίο Επαγγελματικής Ειδικότητας, Εκπαίδευσης και Κατάρτισης Επιπέδου 4- ΕΠΑΛ) EPAL certificate (Απολυτήριο Επαγγελματικού Λυκείου – ΕΠΑΛ Επιπέδου 4)</p> <p>General upper secondary school certificate (Απολυτήριο Γενικού Λυκείου)</p>	<p>Upper secondary education diploma (Licei - diploma liceale)</p> <p>Upper secondary education diploma (Diploma di istruzione tecnica)</p> <p>Upper secondary education diploma – vocational schools (Diploma di istruzione professionale)</p> <p>Higher technical specialisation certificate (Certificato di specializzazione tecnica superiore)</p>	<p>Subject-linked higher education entrance qualification (Fachgebundene Hochschulreife (FgbHR))</p> <p>Higher education entrance qualification for university of applied sciences (Fachhochschulreife (FHR))</p> <p>Dual vocational education and training (3-year and 3½-year training courses) (Duale Berufsausbildung (3 und 3 ½-jährige Ausbildungen))</p> <p>Full-time vocational school (vocational education and training governed by federal state law) (Berufsfachschule (Landesrechtlich geregelte Berufsausbildungen))</p> <p>Full-time vocational school (vocational education and training governed by federal law in healthcare and elderly care) (Berufsfachschule (Bundesrechtliche Ausbildungsregelungen für Berufe im Gesundheitswesen und in der Altenpflege))</p>	<p>Other vocational qualifications level 4 "by law"</p> <p>Baccalauréates Professional qualifications level 4</p>	<p>General upper secondary school leaving certificate (gimnáziumi záróbizonyítvány)</p> <p>Vocational grammar school leaving certificate (szakgimnáziumi záróbizonyítvány)</p> <p>Vocational secondary school leaving certificate (szakközépiskolai záróbizonyítvány)</p> <p>Full/add-on VET qualification of vocational secondary schools (szakiskolában megszerezhető teljes vagy ráépüléssel OKJ szakképesítés)</p> <p>Partial/full VET qualification of vocational grammar schools (szakgimnáziumban megszerezhető rész- vagy teljes OKJ szakké)</p>	<p>Pre-university education for adults (vavo-vwo)</p> <p>VET level 4 (MBO 4)</p> <p>Upper secondary general education for adults (vavo-havo)</p> <p>Upper secondary general education (havo)</p> <p>Other qualifications / non-regulated</p>
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			<p>Full-time vocational school (fully qualifying vocational education and training pursuant to the Vocational Training Act or Crafts and Trades Regulation Code) (Berufsfachschule (vollqualifizierende Berufsausbildung nach BBiG/HwO))</p> <p>Retraining qualification pursuant to the Vocational Training Act (level 4) (Berufliche Umschulung nach BBiG (Niveau 4))</p>			
3	<p>Vocational training school (Σχολές Επαγγελματικής Κατάρτισης, ΣΕΚ - SEK) certificate (post lower secondary level) (Πτυχίο Επαγγελματικής Ειδικότητας Επιπέδου 3 - ΣΕΚ)</p> <p>IEK certificate (initial vocational training-post lower secondary level) (Πιστοποιητικό Επαγγελματικής Κατάρτισης, Επίπεδο 1-IEK)</p>	<p>Professional operator certificate (Attestato di qualifica di operatore professionale)</p>	<p>Intermediate secondary school leaving certificate (Mittlerer Schulabschluss (MSA))</p> <p>Dual vocational education and training (2-year training courses) (Duale Berufsausbildung (2-jährige Ausbildung))</p> <p>Full-time vocational school (intermediate secondary school leaving certificate) (Berufsfachschule (Mittlerer Schulabschluss))</p>	<p>Secondary vocational certificates</p> <p>Secondary vocational certificates in agriculture</p> <p>Other vocational qualifications level3 "by law"</p> <p>Professional qualifications 3</p>	<p>Leaving certificate and VET qualification (vocational schools for SEN students) (Speciális szakiskolai záróbizonyítvány és OKJ szakképesítés)</p> <p>Lower secondary and secondary level partial, full and add-on VET qualifications (Alapfokú és középfokú teljes, rész- és ráépülékes OKJ szakképesítés)</p>	<p>VET level 3 (MBO 3)</p> <p>Other qualifications / non-regulated</p>

2	Lower secondary school certificate (compulsory) (Απολυτήριο Γυμνασίου)	Compulsory education certificate (Certificato delle competenze di base acquisite in esito all'assolvimento dell'obbligo di istruzione)	<p>Lower secondary school leaving certificate (Hauptschulabschluss (HSA))</p> <p>Vocational training preparation (vocational preparation scheme, prevocational training year, introductory training) (Berufsausbildungsvorbereitung (Niveau 2; BvB, BvB-Reha, BVJ, EQ))</p> <p>Full-time vocational school (basic vocational training) (Berufsfachschule (Berufliche Grundbildung))</p>	No qualifications registers available yet	<p>Primary (general) school leaving qualification (primary level educational attainment) (eight years) (általános iskolai záróbizonyítvány)</p> <p>Leaving certificate of skills development (vocational schools for SEN students) (eight years) (Speciális készségfejlesztő szakiskolai bizonyítvány)</p> <p>Partial VET qualification after Vocational Bridge Programme (Híd program tanúsítvány)</p>	<p>VET level 2 (MBO 2)</p> <p>Basic education 3 for adults (vavo)</p> <p>Pre-vocational secondary education - theoretical pathway (vmbo tl)</p> <p>Pre-vocational secondary education - combined theoretical pathway (vmbo gl)</p> <p>Pre-vocational secondary education - advanced vocational pathway (vmbo kb)</p> <p>Basic education 3 for adults (Basiseducatie 3)</p> <p>Other qualifications / non-regulated</p>
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1	Primary school certificate (compulsory) (Απολυτήριο Δημοτικού)	Lower secondary school-leaving diploma Diploma di licenza conclusiva del primo ciclo di istruzione	Vocational training preparation (vocational preparation scheme, prevocational training year) (Berufsausbildungsvorbereitung (Niveau 1; BvB, BvB-Reha, BVJ))	No comparison possible (no descriptors).	VET level 1 (MBO 1) Pre-vocational secondary education - basic vocational pathway (vmbo bb) Basic education 2 for adults (Basiseducatie 2)	Leaving certificate after six grades of primary school (for those who move to general secondary schools covering grades 7 to 12) (6. osztályos általános iskolai bizonyítvány)
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Table 6 - EQF Comparison to member States NQF systems

5.2 FRISCO learning outcomes within the EQF

By aligning with the EQF, the FRISCO project ensures that its curriculum is standardized and meets the educational and professional standards across Europe. This alignment helps participants gain recognized qualifications that can be valuable in their careers and further education.

The following table enables an overview of how each of FRISCO projects' modules aligns with previously referred learning outcomes and is designed to ensure that participants gain the necessary knowledge, skills, and competences as outlined in the EQF level 4 requirements.

EQF LEVEL 4	KNOWLEDGE — Factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study	SKILLS — A range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study.	RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTONOMY — Exercise self-management within the guidelines of work or study contexts that are usually predictable but are subject to change. Supervise the routine work of others, taking some responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work or study activities.

Table 7 - EQF Level 4

FRISCO MODULE	KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTONOMY
FRISCO MODULE 1 - CONTENT MODERATION IN A TRUST & SAFETY PERSPECTIVE: INTRODUCTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The user knows the definition and the drivers of T&S, plus the relevant abuses - The user knows the definition of content moderation and difference with censorship - The user knows the most famous T&S approaches, such as the reactive vs. proactive models - The user knows the existing models to moderate content online - The user knows the EU (and international) legal basis (in terms of regulations and acts) of content moderation online - The user knows the relevant technologies related to T&S - The user knows how to build a T&S team in a HSP - The user knows the best T&S/content moderation practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The user is able to define T&S and can recognise its drivers and relevant abuses - The user is able to identify the peculiarities content moderation and difference between content moderation and censorship - The user is able to distinguish and adopt the main T&S approaches (reactive vs. proactive models) - The user is able to recognise the current models to moderate the content online - The user is able to identify the relevant legal obligations in EU (and even at international level) in terms of acts and regulations to guide the online moderation of contents - The user is able to recognize and adopt the relevant technologies related to T&S 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The user can identify the main T&S/content moderation best practices and approaches - The user knows the relevant technologies related to T&S and can adopt them - The user can select, adopt and adapt the online moderating contents model which suits the most to HSPs - The user can moderate efficiently the online contents in his/her daily work activities

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The user is able to build a T&S team and adapt it to HSP’s needs - The user is able to identify the current T&S/content moderation best practices 	
<p>FRISCO MODULE 2 - TERRORISM AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM ONLINE (T/VEO): GENERAL OVERVIEW</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The user knows the manifestations of T/VEO - The user knows the differences and circulations between T/VEO and other phenomena such as online hate speech, conspiracy theories, disinformation, incel subculture - The user knows T/VEO types and practices. - The user knows the current situation of T/VEO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The user is able to define the T/VEO - The user is able to distinguish between T/VEO and other phenomena - The user is able to recognise the differences and circulations between all these phenomena - The user is able to identify the terrorist content online - The user is able to distinguish the dominant types of T/VEO - The user is able to identify the current situation of T/VEO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ability to recognise T/VEO - The user understands the differences and circulations between all these phenomena, and knows current state of affairs
<p>FRISCO MODULE 3 - TERRORIST (MIS)USES OF THE INTERNET AND ONLINE PLATFORMS: TRENDS AND PRACTICES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The user knows why (purposes) and how (methods) terrorists use the Internet to disseminate content online - The user knows the current trends relating to the spread of terrorist content online 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The user is able to identify why (the purposes) and how (the most common methods) terrorists use the Internet to disseminate and share content online - The user is able to distinguish the most common trends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ability in identifying and recognising why (the purposes) and how (the methods) terrorists use the Internet and disseminate content online and how terrorist content impacts

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The user knows how to assess the level of risk of a platform to be affected by terrorist content - The user knows how terrorist content impacts society and HSPs in terms of reputational damages, undermining users' trust, fees, etc. 	<p>(platforms) about the dissemination of terrorist content online</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The user is able to identify and assess the level of risk of a platform to be affected by terrorist content - The user is able to recognise the impact of terrorist content on society and the business sector (e.g. reputational damages, undermining users' trust, fees, etc.) 	<p>society and HSPs in terms of reputational damages, undermining users' trust, fees, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The user can assess the level of risk of a platform to be affected by terrorist content
<p>FRISCO MODULE 4 – TCO REGULATION: CONTEXT AND OVERVIEW</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The user knows the broader context in which the TCO Regulation operates - The user knows the main provisions of the TCO and how it impacts his/her business - The user knows the role HSPs must play in the fight against T/VEO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The user is able to recognise the broader context in which the TCO Regulation operates - The user is able to identify the main provisions of the TCO and the impact on business sectors - The user is able to understand the role HSPs must play in the fight against T/VEO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The user understands the context in which the TCO Regulation operates, its main provisions, how it can impact on HSPs' business and the role they must play in the fight against T/VEO
<p>FRISCO MODULE 5 - TCO REGULATION: MEASURES AND RELATED DUTIES FOR YOUR COMPANY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The user knows all the measures imposed by the TCO Regulation (e.g. removal orders, preservation of content, transparency reporting, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The user is able to recognise all the measures imposed by the TCO Regulation, such as the removal orders, the preservation of content, the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ability in identifying and adopting all the measures imposed by the TCO Regulation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The user knows all duties relating to these measures for the HSPs 	<p>transparency reporting, etc)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The user is able to distinguish all the measures imposed by the TCO Regulation 	
<p>FRISCO MODULE 6 - TCO REGULATION: IMPACTS AND ROAD TO COMPLIANCE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The user knows the impacts of TCO on HSPs' daily operations - The user knows the ways and tools HSPs could use to comply with the TCO Regulation - The user knows the next steps to be taken by HSPs to comply with the TCO Regulation - The user knows the resources made available by FRISCO project to comply with the TCO Regulation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The user is able to identify the impacts of TCO on HSPs' daily operations - The user is able to recognise and adopt the methods and tools HSPs could use to comply with the TCO Regulation - The user is able to identify the next steps to be taken by HSPs to comply with the TCO Regulation - The user is able to find and use the resources made available by FRISCO project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The user understands the impacts of TCO on HSPs' daily operations and can identify and adapt the methods and tools to comply with the TCO Regulation - Ability in using the resources and tools made available by FRISCO project to comply with the TCO Regulation
<p>FRISCO MODULE 7 – BEYOND TCO: HOW TO STAY ONE STEP AHEAD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The user knows most of the others/new/upcoming regulations on related topics/areas - The user knows the related measures, regulations, technologies, and debates to go further than the TCO regulation itself and stay one step ahead 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The user is able to identify the others/new/upcoming regulations on related topics/areas - The user is able to distinguish the related measures, regulations, technologies, and debates to go further than the TCO regulation itself and stay one step ahead 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The user distinguishes and understands the related measures, regulations, technologies, and debates to go further than the TCO regulation itself and stay one step ahead

Table 8 - EQF Comparison to FRISCO Learning Outcomes Model

6 Procedures in FRISCO countries

The EU has only limited competence in education policy, with each European country being responsible for establishing its education governance and curriculum. However, countries are asked to report on increasing efforts to balance national competencies with European qualification standards, including easier methods for qualification recognition and compliance with EU educational strategies. The following section delves into each FRISCO partner country's procedures, including national education governance structures, national efforts for easier qualification recognition paths, and new accreditation procedures for non-formal and informal learning.

6.1 Procedures in Greece³

6.1.1 VET Governance

As referred to in the 2022 CEDEFOP and **EOPPEP report on Vocational education and training in Europe**, the Greek government endorses **the national education policy formulated by the education ministry**. Social partners, such as trade unions and employer organizations, are involved in the legislative development process through participation in working groups.

Both public and private vocational education and training (VET) providers are overseen, evaluated, and typically funded by:

- The General Secretariat of Lifelong Learning
- The Directorates of Secondary or Professional Education under the education ministry or,
- Organizations supervised by the education ministry, such as the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) and universities.

Law 4763/2020 brings reforms to the governance of vocational education and training (VET) and Lifelong learning (LLL), fostering collaborative strategic planning of VET to mitigate overlaps, better cater to labour market demands, and **enhance autonomy at the provider level (EQF levels 3,4 and 5)⁴**.

Most specifically, under Law 4763/2020, the General Secretariat for VET, Lifelong Learning, and Youth within the education ministry takes on the responsibility of formulating, executing, coordinating, and overseeing policies in the relevant domains. It serves as the supervisory authority for the implementation and monitoring of VET and lifelong learning (LLL) initiatives. Moreover, the

³ The following information takes reference from CEDEFOP 2023 and CEDEFOP 2018 reports on Greece VET procedures, unless specific reference.

⁴ CEDEFOP and REFERNET (2023)

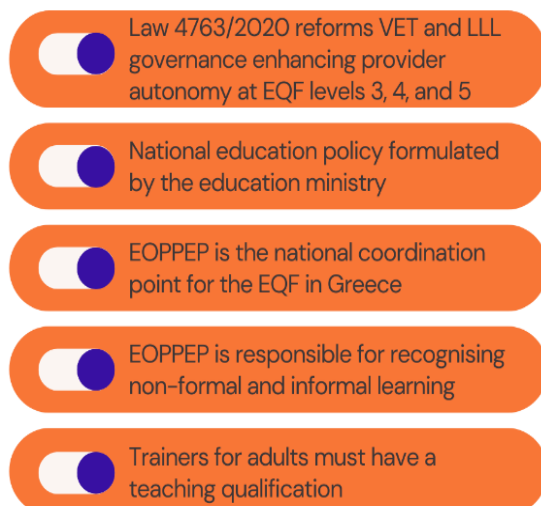
legislation establishes advisory bodies, comprising social partners and VET stakeholders, at both national and regional levels to bolster VET governance.

At the national level, the primary advisory body introduced is the Central VET Council (KSEEK), comprising representatives from the education ministry, pertinent ministries, employer and employee associations, and chambers. It operates on a three-year term and is tasked with monitoring labour market trends, aligning VET programs with labour market demands, and optimizing the spatial distribution of VET sectors and specialties to fine-tune the VET offerings⁵.

In each region, a council linking VET with the local labour market (SSPAE) has been established, including representatives from the labour market. Its objective is to harmonize VET programs with local labour market requirements and support the Central VET Council by proposing the VET sectors and specialties to be offered at the regional level⁶.

Additionally, a Central Scientific Committee (KEE) has been instituted to assist the General Secretariat and the Central VET Council. The committee's mandate involves conducting scientific research and providing evidence-based recommendations aimed at enhancing the quality and efficacy of VET and LLL programs⁷.

6.1.2 Qualification Recognition



According to law 4115/13, **EOPPEP is the statutory body responsible for the development and implementation of the regulatory framework for certifying qualifications and vocational guidance in alignment with the Hellenic Qualifications Framework (HQF).** Additionally, **EOPPEP is the national coordination point for the European Qualification Framework (EQF) in Greece.** It operates under the supervision of the Minister of Education, Research, and Religious Affairs, providing scientific and technical support for designing and implementing national vocational guidance policy and services, both to private and public entities.

Figure 4 - Most Relevant Characteristics of the Greek VET System

⁵ CEDEFOP; EOPPEP (2022)

⁶ CEDEFOP; EOPPEP (2022)

⁷ CEDEFOP; EOPPEP (2022)

As an organization dedicated to enhancing the quality, efficiency, and reliability of lifelong learning services (LLL), it focuses on the learning outcomes of non-formal and informal education to meet labour market needs. Thus, EOPPEP's regulatory framework for quality assurance encompass:

- Accrediting providers, trainers, occupational profiles, and curriculum standards.
- Creating a model system for accrediting outputs (accrediting knowledge, skills and competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning) and establishing the legal framework.
- Designing a system for recognizing and certifying qualifications acquired through non-formal and informal learning.
- Establishing a framework for licensing awarding bodies.
- Inspecting, monitoring, and evaluating awarding bodies.
- Implementing certification processes.

On the other hand, EOPPEP has the responsibility to recognize foreign secondary and postsecondary VET qualifications (EQF levels 2–5). If the recognition/equivalence procedure results in a vocational education qualification referenced to the HQF/EQF, the corresponding level is indicated in the recognition document given to the individual. The HQF register comprises over 1,000 qualifications based on learning outcomes that can be recognised in the formal education system. However, it does not list VET (HQF levels 2–4) and general education (HQF level 4) qualifications that are no longer awarded.

Lastly, EOPPEP maintains a register of private career guidance services. This register aims to inform citizens about available private-sector career guidance services, thereby improving access to these services. **To be listed in the register, private services must provide detailed information in their application, including their profile, the services offered, target groups, methodologies and tools used, and the qualifications of their practitioners, such as training in career guidance**⁸

6.1.3 Accreditation Procedures of Non-Formal and Informal Learning

Although the development of a Greek framework for the validation of non-formal and informal learning began in 2016, progress has been slow. In 2022–2023, advancing this system remains a strategic objective for EOPPEP.

Since 2014, a notable example of non-formal learning validation in Greece has been the certification of adult trainers. Trainers for adults must have a teaching qualification awarded upon accreditation to be eligible for publicly funded non-formal education programs, as per Law 3879, Article 19.3 (GOG 163/A/21.09.2010) on “Development of Lifelong Learning”⁹. Enrolment for the examinations requires meeting specific criteria related to educational attainment or proven professional experience. The updated system outlines three pathways for certification:

1. Direct certification based on conditions and criteria;

⁸ CEDEFOP; EOPPEP (2022)

⁹ EOPPEP (2024)

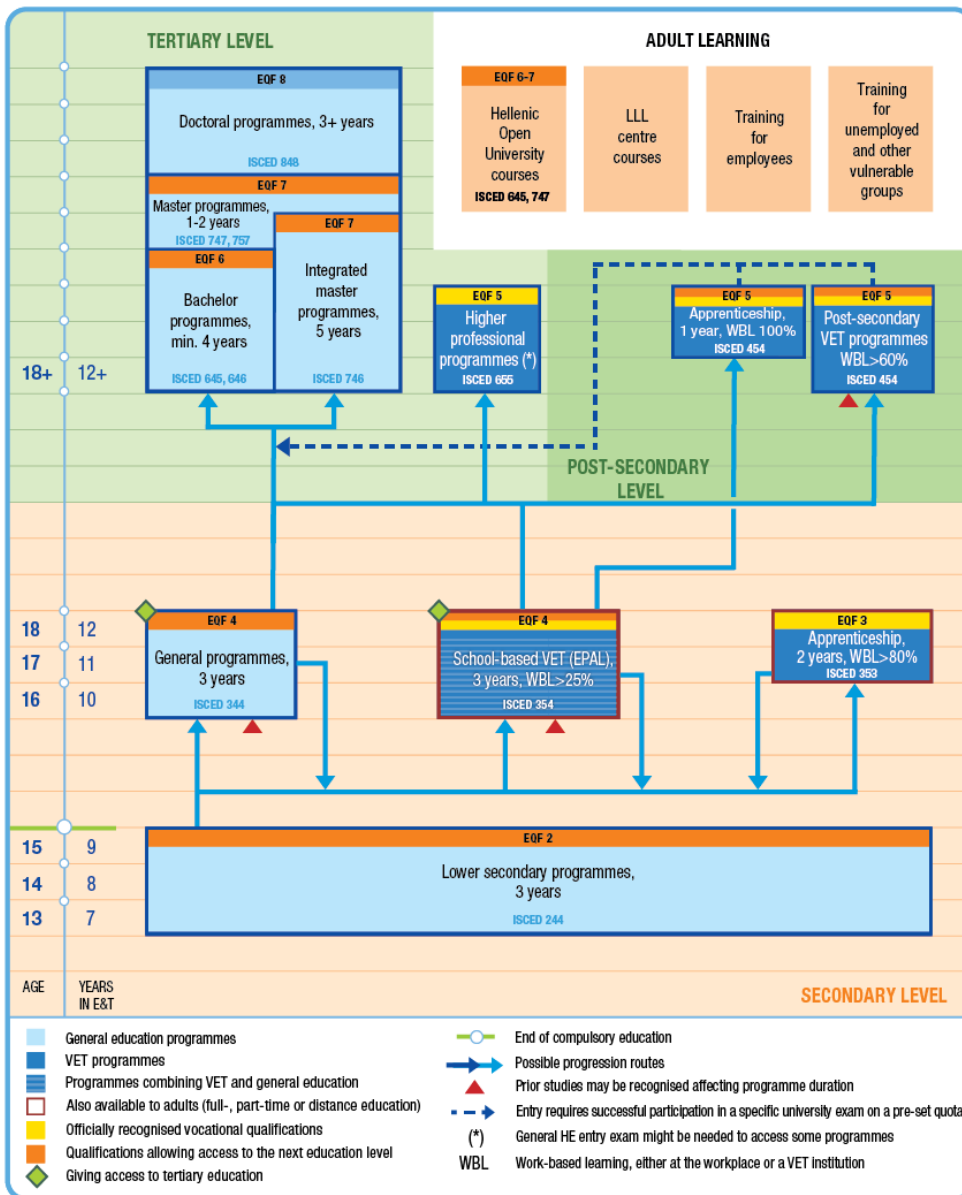
2. Participation in an assessment process followed by certification;
3. Enrolment in training programs followed by certification.

Despite the growing importance of informal and non-formal learning, these forms of learning are not yet adequately valued and recognized in Greek society. Law 4763/2020 aims to strengthen a cultural shift emphasizing the certification and validation of learning outcomes non-formal and informal learning. Additionally, it aims to encourage the active participation of social partners in the design and implementation of lifelong learning initiatives.

6.1.4 Validation procedure for FRISCO partners

To proceed with the accreditation validation, **partners are required to contact the coordination point, EOPPEP**. This involves the following steps:

1. Request Validation of Learning Outcomes: Partners must submit a formal request to validate the learning outcomes achieved. Please note that specific information regarding dates and **documentation to be submitted at the EOPPEP website is available only in Greek**. For further details on the services related to the certification of vocational training, partners must refer to the EOPPEP website contact point or have the beta digital assistance of the Greek government as a helpful tool (<https://www.gov.gr/en/upourgeia/upourgeio-paideias-kai-threskeumatou/ethnikos-organismos-pistopoieses-prosonton-epaggelmatikou-prosanatolismou-eoppep>). The beta digital assistant of the Greek government gives detailed information on procedures, however links to application forms are limited.
2. Integration into the National Database: Partners should seek inclusion in the national database of certified technical skills. **To be listed in the register, private services must provide detailed information in their application, including their profile, the services offered, target groups, methodologies and tools used, and the qualifications of their practitioners, such as training in career guidance.**
3. **Pay corresponding fees by using the special application of EOPPEP. After applying online, you need to send the required supporting documents to EOPPEP: either by post or by e-mail to protocol@eoppep.gr**



NB: ISCED-P 2011.
Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Greece, 2022.

Figure 5 - VET System in Greece

6.2 Procedures in Germany¹⁰

6.2.1 VET Governance

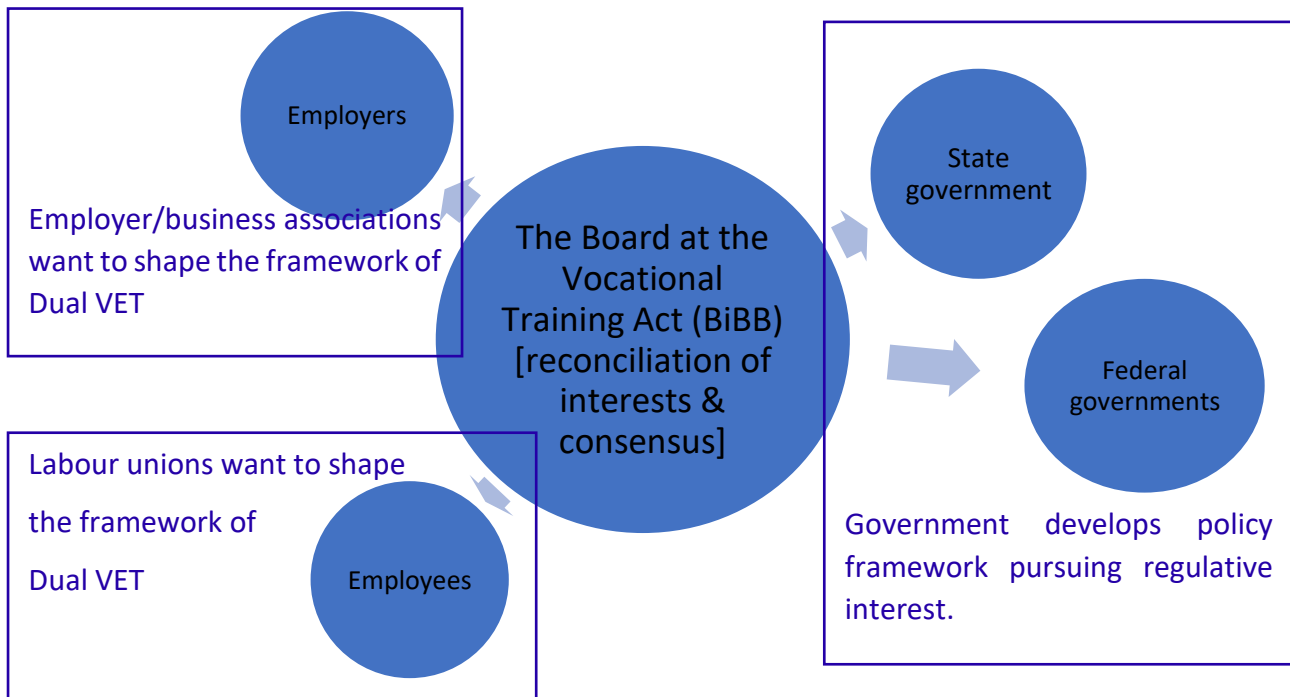


Figure 6 - German VET Governance visual graph

In Germany, the constitution delegates the responsibility for education to the Federal States, while the federal government oversees the company-based aspects of vocational education and training (VET) and continuing education¹¹. The governance system is characterized by a close partnership between the State and social partners at all levels. Here, the Vocational Training Act (BBiG) specifies the roles of various institutions in organizing, developing, and monitoring in-company initial vocational education and training (IVET), vocational training preparation, advanced vocational qualifications, and vocational retraining.

The federal government is responsible for designing the dual VET (or the apprenticeship system) content for nationally recognised occupations, involving different ministries depending on the sector, most commonly the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy. **Approval from the Ministry of Education (BMBF) is always required, as it provides coordination and guidance for VET policy for all training occupations.** Meaning that the Dual VET, or the apprenticeship system, relies on nationally recognized occupations and training regulations that ensure a national standard.

The BMBF monitors VET developments and publishes annual reports, supplemented by detailed data and background information from the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB).

¹⁰ Following information takes reference from CEDEFOP; BIBB 2022 German system description and CEDEFOP 2020 reports on Germany's VET procedures, unless specific reference.

¹¹ CEDEFOP, 2019

The BMBF also oversees the Vocational Training Act, the legal supervision, and funding of the BIBB, and measures to promote dual VET through support programs and special funding initiatives. These initiatives aim to create additional apprenticeship places in less popular regions and finance specific programs for disadvantaged groups. Additionally, the federal government supports continuing vocational education and training (CVET) and funds research projects to keep VET updated. Nationally, the BIBB is pivotal for consensus building among all VET stakeholders. Its four-party board advises the government on in-company vocational training issues, sets standards, designs training regulations, conducts research, promotes innovations, and develops practical solutions.

On the other hand, the responsibility for education in the Federal States is assigned by the Constitution and extends to VET in schools. **State ministries coordinate their activities via a standing committee to ensure uniformity and comparability.** The committee's decisions become legally binding when passed by individual State parliaments. The Federal States have vocational training committees with equal representation from employers, employees, and State authorities, which advise on vocational training issues in schools and contribute to schemes supporting disadvantaged youths and additional qualifications requiring school-based training.

The dual system thrives on close cooperation with social partners (employers, trade unions, and the government). Social partners have a significant influence on VET content and form, ensuring their requirements and interests are considered. Representatives of employer organizations and trade unions are members of the BIBB's main board and participate in vocational training committees at both Federal State and competent body levels. When changes are needed, representatives from the federal government, State governments, and social partners agree on the principles and are involved in drafting occupational standards and developing new training regulations. They also play a role in referencing the German qualifications framework to the EQF. This means that, **due to the distribution of responsibilities, there is no single body for the overall coordination and oversight of the Deutscher Qualifikationsrahmen - DQR (German Qualification Framework)**¹².

Other competent bodies, including professional chambers, are essential in Germany's VET system. They monitor training in companies, ensure the quality of in-company training, advise companies, trainers, and apprentices, maintain lists of training contracts, and organize and conduct exams. Each competent body has a tripartite vocational training committee representing employers, trade unions, and teachers. The chambers of industry and commerce (IHK), chambers of crafts (HWK), and professional boards for the liberal professions are self-governing private bodies assigned public tasks in dual VET, such as conducting examinations.

In summary, Germany's VET system involves a complex yet clear division of responsibilities among federal and State governments, social partners, and competent bodies, all working collaboratively to ensure the system meets the needs of industry and learners.

¹² CEDEFOP, 2023. European Inventory of National Qualifications Frameworks 2022 – Germany.

6.2.2 Qualification Recognition

The roles, responsibilities, and services of the key stakeholders in vocational education and training (VET) in Germany are governed by a comprehensive framework of rules and funding mechanisms, primarily established by legislation. This includes the aforementioned Vocational Training Act (BBiG), but also includes, Crafts Code (HwO), Upgrading Training Assistance Act, Works Constitution Act, German Social Code (SGB II and III), Skills Development Opportunities Act, Future of Work Act, as well as various school laws, higher education laws, collective agreements, and the Recognition Act. Meaning that **due to the distribution of responsibilities, there is no single body for the overall coordination and oversight of the Deutscher Qualifikationsrahmen - DQR (German Qualification Framework)**

The assignment of formal qualifications, which are regulated by federal or state governments, is determined through consensus within the DQR Working Group and the Federal Government-Federal State Coordination Point. This allocation process is detailed in the DQR handbook. The institution responsible for the legal regulation underlying the qualification submits an allocation proposal to the Coordination Point. The B-L-KS then reviews this proposal, with input from the DQR Working Group, to ensure the overall structure remains coherent¹³.

A procedure has also been established for the allocation of non-formal qualifications, which is currently in the introductory phase. For these qualifications, the respective providers—typically private or public organizations and civil society actors—are responsible for submissions.

For foreign qualifications, the Vocational Qualifications Recognition Act (BQFG), introduced in April 2012, grants individuals the right to have foreign-acquired qualifications compared to a German qualification by a competent authority. Paragraph 14 of this act outlines procedures for determining equivalence when no proof of prior learning is available, facilitating also the validation of non-formal and informal learning. The Qualifikationsanalyse (qualification analysis) was developed to support the practical implementation of this, providing methodological standards and tools for validating professional knowledge, skills, and competencies. The act applies to both initial vocational education and training (IVET) and regulated further vocational training. The BQFG's implementation and impact are regularly evaluated.

6.2.3 Accreditation Procedures of Non-Formal and Informal Learning

The implementation of the DQR, with its emphasis on learning outcomes, has also bolstered efforts to validate non-formal and informal learning. Various frameworks allow for the full or partial recognition of competencies acquired through informal or non-formal means. Validation processes are present across all education sectors, utilizing different, customized approaches and various instruments. This validation supports transitions between different education sectors.

Legislation for the validation of non-formal and informal learning exists within VET. This includes the external students' examination (Externenprüfung) under Paragraph 45 (2) of the Vocational Training

¹³ Federal Ministry of Education and Research, 2024

Act and Paragraph 37 (2) of the Crafts Code.¹⁴ These provisions allow for the awarding of full qualifications, equivalent to those acquired formally, within a recognized apprenticeship. Admission to the external students' examination typically requires specific employment experience, usually 1.5 times the length of the formal program or equally long periods of initial training in another occupation. Applicants may also need to convincingly demonstrate their vocational competence.

Similarly, in initial vocational education and training (IVET), individuals can gain admission to examinations for regulated further vocational training qualifications, such as the *Handwerksmeister* (master craftsman), through validation based solely on work experience, without compulsory preparatory training. General education school leaving certificates can also be obtained via external examinations (*Schulfremdenprüfung*, *Externenprüfung*, *Nichtschülerprüfung*) in all Länder, provided residence and minimum age requirements are met along with evidence of appropriate exam preparation.

As already expanded in the previous section, the Vocational Qualifications Recognition Act (BQFG), introduced in April 2012, grants individuals the right to have their foreign-acquired qualifications evaluated and matched to a German qualification by an appropriate authority. The BQFG applies to both initial vocational education and training (IVET) and continuing vocational education and training (CVET). The implementation and impact of the BQFG are regularly evaluated.

To support practical implementation, the *Qualifikationsanalyse* (qualification analysis) instrument was developed, establishing methodological standards and tools for validating professional knowledge, skills, and competences. This instrument was further developed in the *ValiKom* project, initiated in 2015, which aims to set up a validation system in Germany. The project targets adults who have acquired skills and competences through work but lack formal qualifications and certificates. The validation procedure is based on standards for assessing the equivalence of non-formally and informally acquired skills with formal qualifications and 'reference occupations' (recognized training or further training qualifications). It utilizes self-assessment and external assessment based on standards for assessing the equivalence of non-formally/informally acquired skills and competencies concerning formal qualifications and 'reference occupations' (recognized training or regulated further training qualifications).

Two KMK decisions form the basis for validation in higher education. The first decision, in place since March 2009, allows qualified workers without an upper secondary qualification to access higher education if they hold certain vocational qualifications. The second decision relates to granting credits for competences acquired at work. According to this policy, knowledge and skills gained outside higher education can be recognized for up to 50% of the equivalent content and level in formal qualifications. Procedures to credit non-formal and informal learning were developed and tested in the *Transitions from VET to Higher Education* initiative (*Übergänge von der beruflichen in die hochschulische Bildung*, ANKOM).

In addition to these decisions, there are several other initiatives and research projects focused on the validation of non-formal and informal learning. The Federal Institute for Vocational Education

¹⁴ CEDEFOP (2021).

and Training (Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung, BIBB) completed a project titled "Implementation of Methods for the Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning – Requirements and Possible Courses of Action."

The German public employment service, in cooperation with the Bertelsmann Stiftung, launched the MySKILLS project, a large-scale ICT-based assessment initiative. This project aims to develop and implement digital tests for assessing competences gained at work. So far, tests for eight professions have been completed.

6.2.4 Validation procedure for FRISCO partners

Given the complex governance structure of vocational education and training (VET) in Germany, you need to follow a systematic approach to get their courses validated and recognized. **Although procedures for the validation and allocation of non-formal qualifications within the EQF framework are still at the introductory phase, the respective providers of such qualifications —typically private or public organizations and civil society actors—are responsible for submissions. For this, it is strongly advisable to contact zuordnung@dqr.de beforehand.**

As a guidance, for formal qualifications, the structure is usually that the institution responsible for the legal regulation underlying the qualification submits an allocation proposal to the Coordination Point. The B-L-KS then reviews this proposal, with input from the DQR Working Group, to ensure the overall structure remains coherent. Additionally, attention to the following procedures should be considered helpful guidance throughout the process:

1. Understand the Legal Framework and Governance Structure:

- Federal and State Roles: Recognize that the Federal States are responsible for education, while the federal government oversees company-based vocational education and training (VET) and continuing education.
- Legal Requirements: The training provider must ensure compliance with the Vocational Training Act (Berufsbildungsgesetz – BBiG) and the Crafts and Trades Code (Handwerksordnung – HwO)¹⁵.

2. Accreditation and Validation Process

- Institutional Accreditation and approval: A training provider or company carries out the training and supervises the participants. The content of the training and the way the outcomes are documented should be agreed beforehand with the competent authority. The Recognition Finder can be used to determine the authority responsible for recognition¹⁶: <https://www.bmwk.de/Redaktion/DE/Artikel/Mittelstand/einheitlicher-ansprechpartner.html>
- The Central Office for Distance Learning of the Länder of the Federal Republic of Germany (Staatliche Zentralstelle für Fernunterricht der Länder der Bundesrepublik Deutschland – ZFU) decides whether a distance learning course is to be approved¹⁷.

¹⁵ Eurodyce, 2024

¹⁶ Anerkennung in Deutschland, 2024

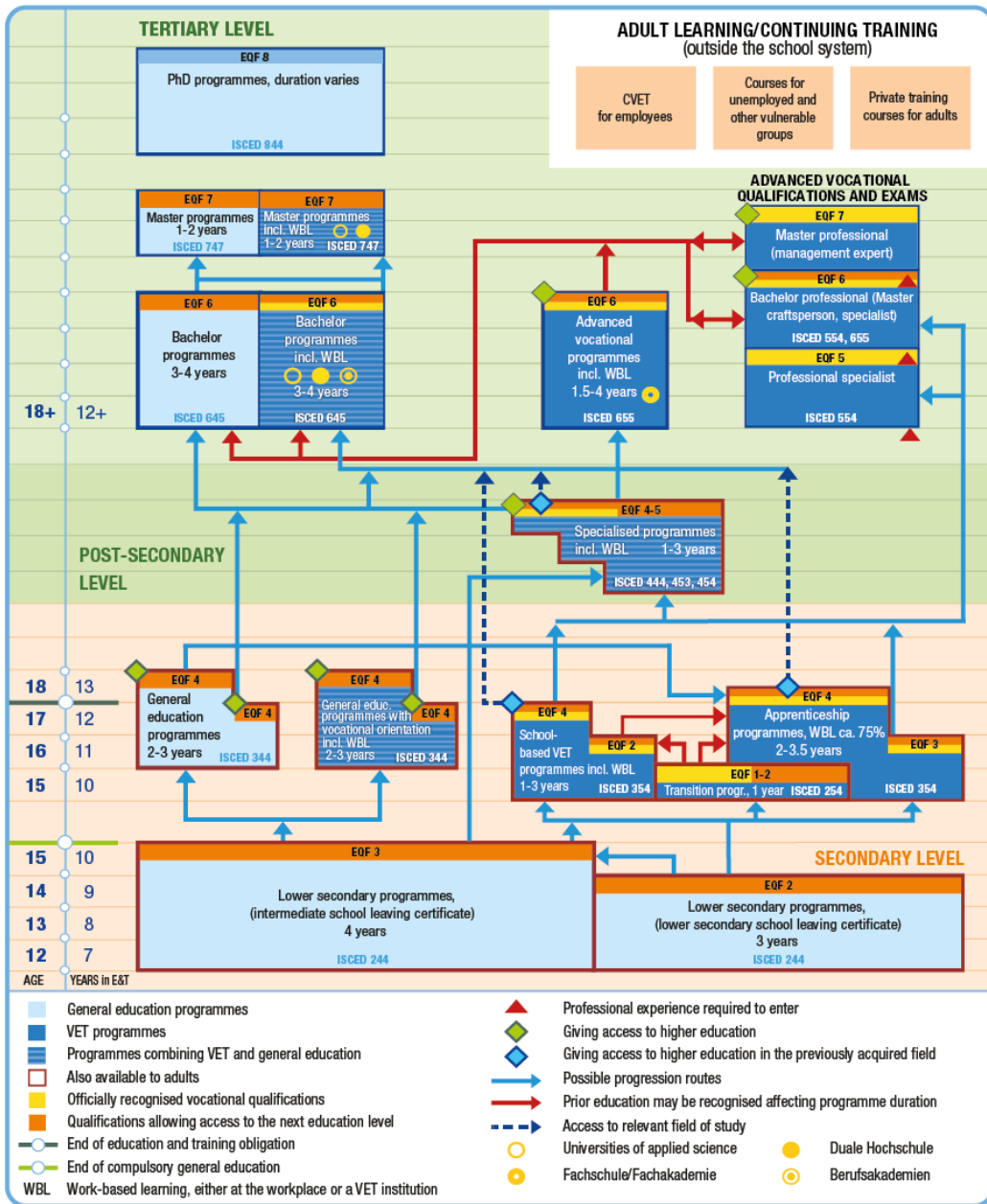
¹⁷ Eurodyce, 2024

3. Curriculum Development: The training course itself must be accredited, involving a review of the curriculum, training methods, and assessment procedures to meet the required standards, overseen by the competent authority. The statutory regulations require that the following key qualification features be stipulated: title of the qualification, examination objective, content and requirements of the examination with which the individual achievement of the objective and thus the quality of the qualification process is determined, admission requirements to the examination and examination procedure¹⁸.

4. Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning: The competent bodies (e.g., IHK, HWK) are responsible for adopting examination regulations and setting up examination boards to conduct aptitude examinations for trainers, as per the Trainer Aptitude Regulation (Ausbilder-Eignungsverordnung, AEVO). Leverage external examinations for validating non-formal and informal learning as outlined in Paragraph 45 (2) of the Vocational Training Act and Paragraph 37 (2) of the Crafts Code¹⁹.

¹⁸ CEDEFOP, 2023

¹⁹ CEDEFOP, 2023



NB: ISCED-P 2011. This is a simplified chart, based on the unified approach used for the spotlights on VET in all EU-27 countries plus Iceland and Norway. Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Germany, 2022.

Figure 7 - VET System in Germany

6.3 Procedures in France²⁰

6.3.1 VET Governance

Vocational training in France is a shared responsibility among the State, regions, and business representatives. The Ministries of Education and Higher Education primarily regulate initial vocational education and training (VET). Various ministries develop and award nationally recognized VET qualifications, certificates, and diplomas. Meaning that initial vocational education (available from upper secondary to higher education levels) and continuing vocational training have distinct funding sources and objectives. For example, the Ministry of Labour oversees vocational training for adults. The Ministry of Education and other relevant ministries' governance focuses on the following goals:

- “Develop standards for IVET qualifications, certificates, and diplomas in consultation with business representatives.
- Define examination regulations.
- Issue and award VET qualifications and diplomas.
- Offer various types of training in their institutions for school learners and apprentices.
- Recruit, train, and pay teachers.
- Monitor the quality of training and delivery”²¹.

The planning and execution of coherent vocational training regards Regions, with the exclusion of apprenticeship provision. They define policies based on economic and social priorities in consultation with the State and social partners.

On the other part, social partners, particularly, employer organizations and trade unions, are integral stakeholders in VET implementation. They contribute to:

- Develop VET qualifications, participate in examination boards,
- Offer in-company training, contribute financially to VET provision through the apprenticeship tax,
- Manage skills operators (OPCO),
- Oversee training schemes linked to the personal training account (CPF de transition professionnelle) enabling long-duration retraining for career changes, and roll out the Cléa vocational certificate, which attests to proficiency in key competences.
- Specifically, the governance of Continuing VET (CVET) system operates within a 'four-party system': the State, regions, employer representatives, and trade unions contribute to developing and implementing continuing vocational training and national apprenticeship policy. The key ministries involved are the Ministry of Labour (prepares and implements policies on labour, employment, and vocational training), the Ministry of National Education

²⁰ Following information takes reference from CEDEFOP; Centre inffo 2022 France system description, unless specific reference.

²¹ CEDEFOP; Centre inffo (2022)

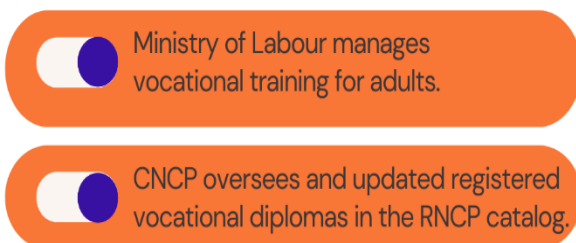
(participates in CVET through public schools), and the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, and Innovation. Since 2014, regions have been responsible for training specific audiences and appointing operators for professional development advice. Social partners sign inter-professional agreements shaping reforms, manage 11 'skills operators' (OPCOs), and handle the personal training account for career transition (CPF de transition professionnelle) scheme. They also contribute to diploma development and participate in examination boards.

The 2018 Law for the freedom to choose one's professional future established France Compétences, a governance and monitoring body overseeing VET implementation and financing. This single, four-party public institution operates under the Minister of Vocational Training, ensuring fair distribution and equalisation of apprenticeship funds to skills operators (OPCO) and regions.

Continuing vocational training includes lifelong learning programmes and schemes for vulnerable groups, targeting both the unemployed and those already employed. CVET supports workers in adapting to changing labour market needs and acquiring new VET qualifications through various routes and progression opportunities offered by a range of VET providers.

6.3.2 Qualification Recognition

The French national qualifications framework (NQF) is regarded as one of the earliest European qualifications frameworks. It was initiated in 2002 with the creation of the National Register of Vocational and Professional Qualifications (Répertoire national des certifications professionnelles or



RNCP), which now serves as the framework's technical backbone. Additionally, the National Commission for Vocational and Professional Qualifications (Commission Nationale de la certification professionnelle or CNCP) was established to oversee the management and updates of the RNCP until 2018²².

Figure 8 - Most Relevant Characteristics of the French VET System

The Social Modernisation Act established the right for individuals to have their learning outcomes from at least three years of work experience—whether as an employee, freelancer, or volunteer—recognized and assessed concerning a formal qualification²³. The French VAE (Validation des Acquis de l'Expérience) system carries out the recognition and enables individuals to obtain full or partial qualifications with a vocational and professional focus (finalité professionnelle) at all levels without the need for formal training. Moreover, VAE provides access to all the qualifications listed in the National Directory of Vocational Qualifications (RNCP).

²² CEDEFOP, 2019

²³ UNESCO, 2023

The RNCP catalogues all vocational diplomas and degrees accredited by the National Committee for Professional Certification (CNCP). This committee comprises representatives from the state and social partners and oversees the accreditation procedures for all qualifications. In line with the primary goals of the reforms, the qualifications listed in the RNCP are detailed in terms of learning outcomes aligned with competency standards.

Level	Knowledge	Skills	Responsibility and autonomy
4	A wide range of knowledge, practical and theoretical knowledge related to the professional field under consideration	Carry out activities that require a wide range of skills Be able to adapt existing solutions to solve specific problems	Organise one's work autonomously in contexts that are generally predictable but subject to change Consider interactions with related activities Participate in the evaluation of activities ²⁴

Table 9 - Level 4 VET system description in France

6.3.3 Accreditation Procedures of Non-Formal and Informal Learning

VAE has evolved from a national perspective, closely linked to lifelong learning, training, and employment policies, and is now integrated into the Labour and Education Code. The validation of non-formal and informal learning is closely linked to lifelong learning, training, and employment policies, building on long-established practices. The VAE (Validation des Acquis de l'Expérience) system results in qualifications registered in the RNCP and is overseen by France Compétences. VAE enables the awarding of full or partial qualifications with a vocational and professional focus (finalité professionnelle) at all levels, without requiring formal training²⁵. This means that both complete and partial validations are possible, with the latter providing a document that details the validated units of competences.

A key strength of the VAE system is its focus on certification, developed alongside the restructuring of the qualifications system in 2002. Qualifications obtained through VAE are identical to those awarded via initial or continuous formal education, training, or apprenticeships, and must be registered in the RNCP. The qualification standards (référentiels de certification) in the RNCP outline the knowledge, skills, and competencies, as well as their assessment concerning occupational standards (référentiels d'activités). A VAE procedure must be available for all qualifications registered in the RNCP, except those related to regulated professions.

Besides VAE, there is a mechanism for recognizing professional and personal experience, allowing access to programs through an exemption from standard requirements. At the higher education level, this procedure is known as validation des acquis professionnels et personnels. Additionally, skill audits (bilans de compétences) are conducted to identify skills and competences acquired during one's professional life, though they do not lead to certification and do not include an assessment

²⁴ République Française, 2021

²⁵ Mathou, 2019

procedure. Other types of competence portfolios are also developed outside of validation procedures.

6.3.4 Validation procedure for FRISCO Partners

In France, vocational training operates under a collaborative framework involving the State, regions, and business representatives. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education oversees initial vocational education and training (VET), while the Ministry of Labour manages vocational training for adults. Here's how qualification recognition is structured and implemented:

1. Register to National Qualifications Framework and Governance: The RNCP serves as the technical backbone of the French national qualifications framework (NQF). It catalogues all vocational diplomas and degrees accredited by the National Committee for Professional Certification (CNCP). To register, access France Compétences website and on the section “Outils et services” click section “Enregistrer une certification”. You can also directly click on the following link: <https://www.francecompetences.fr/liste-doutils/> Further information is only available in French language.

2. Registration in the RNCP must above all meet the conditions of adequacy with the realities and needs of the labour market. There are two registration ways:

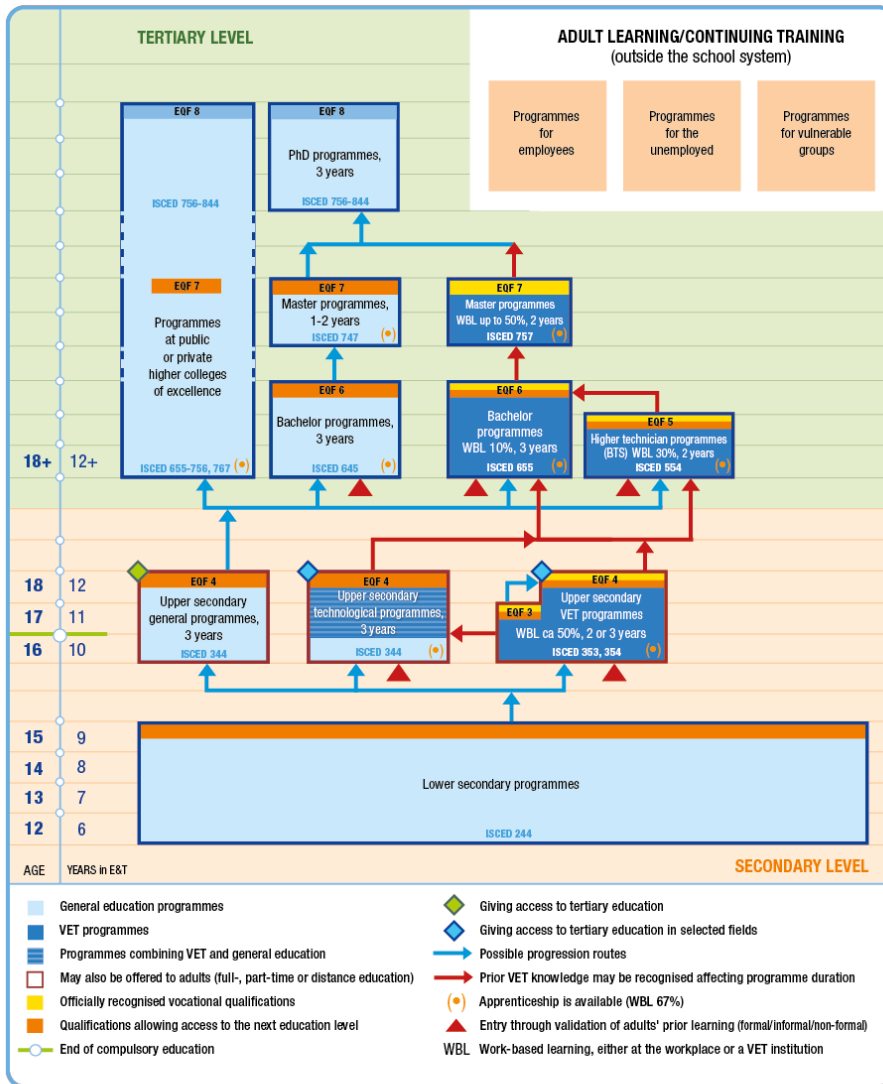
- Automatic Registration: Diplomas issued by the State, administered through various ministries, are automatically registered in the RNCP. This is a standard procedure since these diplomas hold official recognition from the State and its social partners. Among these automatically registered diplomas are those issued by state authorities²⁶.
- Registration on Request: Certifications not directly issued by the State undergo registration in the RNCP upon request. Institutions offering these certifications must compile a comprehensive dossier, which is then reviewed by a commission empowered to assess and decide on each application. The commission primarily evaluates eligibility based on the aforementioned registration criteria²⁷.

3. Duration and Auditing of Registration: A training program or certification can remain registered in the RNCP for up to five years. Renewal of registration is necessary to maintain listing in the directory and typically occurs within the validity period. Furthermore, regular audits may be conducted on training programs and certifications. Based on audit outcomes, registrations in the RNCP may be either confirmed and updated or revoked²⁸.

²⁶ Eurodyce, 2024

²⁷ ESCE, 2024

²⁸ ESCE, 2024



NB: ISCED-P 2011. The French qualifications framework is not linked to European qualifications framework level 1; vocational qualifications have not been established at level 2.
Source: Cedefop and ReferNet France, 2022.

Figure 9 - VET System in France

6.4 Procedures in Italy²⁹

6.4.1 VET Governance

The Ministry of Education defines the VET framework within national school pathways (technical and professional institutes) for higher technical education and training courses, in agreement with the Ministry of Employment. It holds sole responsibility for higher technical institute programs, including the definition of guidance documents and the monitoring and assessment of the training chain.

The Ministry of Education also oversees the revision of the national repertory of occupational profiles for higher technical institutes, introducing new technical profiles and updating existing ones. This repertory lists occupational profiles considered in the design of training courses. The National Institute for Documentation, Innovation and Educational Research (INDIRE) monitors higher technical institute courses.

The Ministry of Labour defines the VET framework for interventions within vocational education and training pathways, higher technical education, and training (in agreement with the Ministry of Education), apprenticeship training, and continuing vocational training (CVET) provided within the public system.

The National Institute for Public Policy Analysis (INAPP) oversees national vocational education and training pathways, apprenticeship training programs, and continuing vocational education and training (CVET) initiatives. Regions and autonomous provinces are responsible for planning, programming, organizing, and implementing interventions within vocational education and training pathways, higher technical education, higher technical education and training, post-vocational education and training pathways, and post-university education. They oversee most types of apprenticeship-based training and publicly funded CVET interventions, in agreement with social partners.

The programming of higher technical education and higher technical education and training interventions is outlined in specific planning documents known as three-year plans. These documents allow regions and autonomous provinces to define their strategy for post-secondary education and training, integrating various supply chains of higher technical education and training hubs.

Social partners have an advisory role in formulating training policies and contribute to translating these policies into training pathways. They also play a key part in promoting in-company, sectoral, and territorial training programs funded by regions or joint interprofessional funds for continuing training. Additionally, they help develop and organize active labour market policies. Beyond their advisory role at national and local levels, social partners are crucial in regulating professional apprenticeships.

²⁹ Following information takes reference from CEDEFOP; INAPP 2022 Italy system description, unless specific reference.

6.4.2 Qualification Recognition

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) represents the national mechanism for referencing Italian qualifications to the EQF, with the function of aligning the Italian qualification system with those of other European countries. During the updating of the Italian referencing report of qualifications to the EQF, where required by the specificity of the qualifications, internal sub-levels within the eight levels can be provided.

Level	Knowledge	Skills	Responsibility and autonomy
4	A wide range of knowledge, integrated from a factual and/or conceptual perspective, with depth in certain areas. Interpretative ability.	Utilize a range of knowledge, methods, practices, protocols, materials, and tools through adaptations, reformulations, and re-elaborations to solve problems. Activate a set of cognitive, relational, social, and activation skills necessary to overcome increasing difficulties. Typically: PROBLEM SOLVING, COOPERATION, and MULTITASKING.	Ensure the achievement of objectives by coordinating and integrating the activities and results of others, participating in the decision-making and implementation process, in a generally predictable context subject to unforeseen changes.

Table 10 - Level 4 VET system description in Italy

Since 2012, Italy has progressively developed a national legal framework for validation. Law No. 92/2012, aimed at labour market reform, initiated the creation of a national system for the certification and validation of non-formal and informal learning, emphasizing lifelong learning. This law established rules and regulatory standards for validation/certification services and involved parties, aiming to ensure transparency, usability, and broad accessibility. Subsequently, Law No. 92/2012 led to the implementation of various measures, including Legislative Decree No. 13/2013 on the national certification of competences and validation of non-formal and informal learning. Article 3 of this decree outlined key principles and features of the validation system:

- Focus on competences acquired in formal, non-formal, or informal contexts.
- Validation can result in the attainment of a whole qualification or parts of it.
- The system is designed to be simple, accessible, transparent, accurate, confidential, and fair.
- Documents and certificates issued during the validation process are public.
- Quality assurance is maintained through a shared and progressive system of indicators, tools, and standards applied nationally.

Decree No. 13/2013 established a comprehensive national validation system covering all qualifications from general and higher education (under the Ministry of Education) and VET (under regional authorities and the Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano). It also includes professional and regulated qualifications (under the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Economic

Development). Qualifications obtained through validation are equivalent to those obtained in the formal system, following the EQF criteria. **The decree specifies three types of standards for validation and certification services: process standards (identification, assessment, and attestation - Article 5), attestation standards (certificate types and information to be registered - Article 6), and system standards (roles and responsibilities of involved actors - Article 7).** These standards are consistent with those in the formal system and vary by sector: education standards for school and higher education qualifications, occupational standards for VET, and occupational standards for professional qualifications

The adoption of the “Italian Referencing Report of the Qualifications to the EQF” in 2013, Italy gradually transitioned into a second phase of EQF implementation. This phase began with a comprehensive process of interinstitutional cooperation, culminating in the formulation of the Italian strategy for lifelong learning. Subsequently, further reform measures were introduced to reinforce this strategy, broadening the legislative framework and extending its range of beneficiaries. These measures included the reform of employment services and active labour market policies, the introduction of citizenship income, the establishment of a dual system, the reform of professional institutes, and the implementation of the Upskilling Pathways Recommendation³⁰.

The decree created a national repository of education, training, and professional qualification, integrating national, regional, and sectoral qualification repositories referenced to the EQF, serving as a unified framework for competence certification. Over time, the goal is to achieve greater permeability between subsystems and credit recognition through descriptive standardization. The national technical committee, led by the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education and including all qualification authorities, is responsible for establishing the validation system. The committee, operational since January 28, 2014, is tasked with defining national guidelines for the validation of non-formal and informal learning and competence certification. This task, the final step in setting up the validation system, remains incomplete.

In 2015, an agreement on a common operational framework for national recognition of regional qualifications and related skills was reached, followed by an inter-ministerial decree from the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education. This framework established mutual recognition mechanisms for regional qualifications and standardized procedures for validation services.

Regional implementation of this policy is ongoing, with varying progress. A significant application was seen in the third sector through the National Programme of Competence Validation for Volunteers in the Civil Service under the Youth Guarantee 2015/17. This initiative aimed to validate the competences of over 5,000 civil service volunteers across 11 regions, following the national framework's standards.

Currently, regions are the only operational bodies authorized for validation. The primary challenge ahead is to extend validation services to other target groups, ensuring reliability and sustainability.

³⁰ ANPAL, 2023

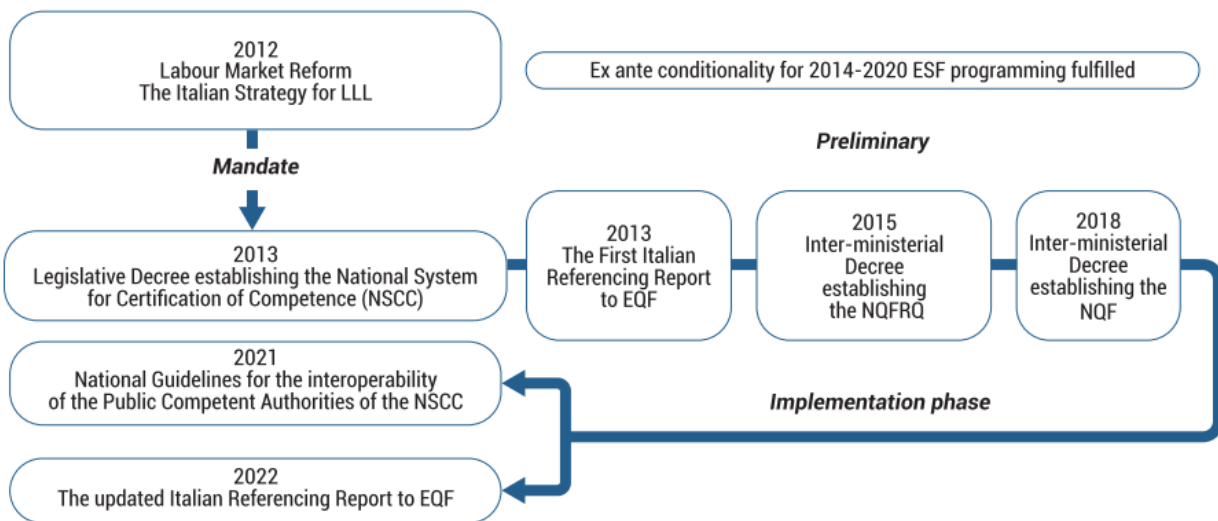


Figure 10 - The legislative process for the concrete putting into practice of the NSCC³¹

6.4.3 Accreditation Procedures of Non-Formal and Informal Learning

The validation system established by Decree No 13/2013 is a comprehensive, nationwide framework that encompasses competencies related to qualifications listed in the national repository of education, training, and vocational qualifications³², following EQF Recommendation. Within this evolving context, two primary areas of innovation have emerged:

1. The implementation of the National System for Certification of Competences (NSCC). This system introduces new services for the identification, validation, and certification of competences acquired in formal, non-formal, and informal contexts within various education and vocational training systems. It mandates referencing to the EQF as a criterion for including qualifications in the National Repository of Education and Vocational Training Qualifications.
2. The establishment of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Similar to other countries, Italy's NQF serves as a unified framework that improves the organization, modernization, and description of all public education and vocational training systems. It also provides the conditions necessary for referencing all nationally and regionally issued qualifications³³.

The interconnection between the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the gradual implementation of the National System for Certification of Competences (NSCC) was reinforced by the inter-ministerial decree on the National Guidelines for the interoperability of the competent authorities of the NSCC. This decree established the NQF as the benchmark for services related to the identification, validation, and certification of competencies.

³¹ ANPAL, 2023

³² Perulli, 2019

³³ ANPAL, 2023

The guidelines detail the measures required to operationalize the NSCC, stating that public competent authorities within the NSCC, through their designated bodies, can, upon request and following the standards outlined in the guidelines, identify, validate, and certify credits and competencies acquired through prior learning. These competencies may be recognized as part of qualifications listed in their repertoires and the national repository, potentially up to the full number of competence units required for a complete qualification. QNQ qualifications obtained through the validation process are transferable across different sectors of education within the NSCC³⁴.

6.4.4 Validation procedure for FRISCO partners³⁵

To validate a course according to the procedures outlined in the "Italian Referencing Report of the qualifications to the EQF," several key steps must be followed:

1. Apply for Accreditation/Qualification: the entities that can apply for accreditation procedures are:

- Entities that have a deed of incorporation and bylaws drawn up as a public act and that expressly include, in their statutory purpose, training in at least one of the areas specified in the annex to Directive 170 of 2016 can apply for accreditation.
- Professional associations of school staff and disciplinary associations linked to scientific communities that have a deed of incorporation and bylaws drawn up as a public act and that expressly include, in their statutory purpose, the training of teaching staff (Article 3, paragraph 1.b of Directive 170) can apply for qualification.
- Entities that are already qualified include: Educational institutions belonging to the school education system, Universities, university consortia, and inter-university consortia, Institutions of higher artistic, musical, and coreutic education, Public research bodies, Museum institutions, Cultural entities representing EU member countries whose languages are included in the Italian school curricula (Article 1, paragraph 5 of Directive 170 of 2016).

2. Application Submission Procedures: Entities that meet the required criteria (Article 2 of Directive 170 of 2016) and Associations that meet the required criteria (Article 3 of Directive 170 of 2016) can submit their application for accreditation through the S.O.F.I.A. Platform (<https://www.istruzione.it/pdggf/>). Applications, accompanied by all the documentation required by Article 4, paragraph 2 of Directive 170 of 2016, must be submitted by October 15 of each year.

3. Review and Response: The Administration assigns a deadline for the applicant to present any counterarguments if requested by the National Technical Committee. If the eligibility process is not positively concluded by July 15, the entity, after addressing the reasons for exclusion, can reapply by October 15 of the following year.

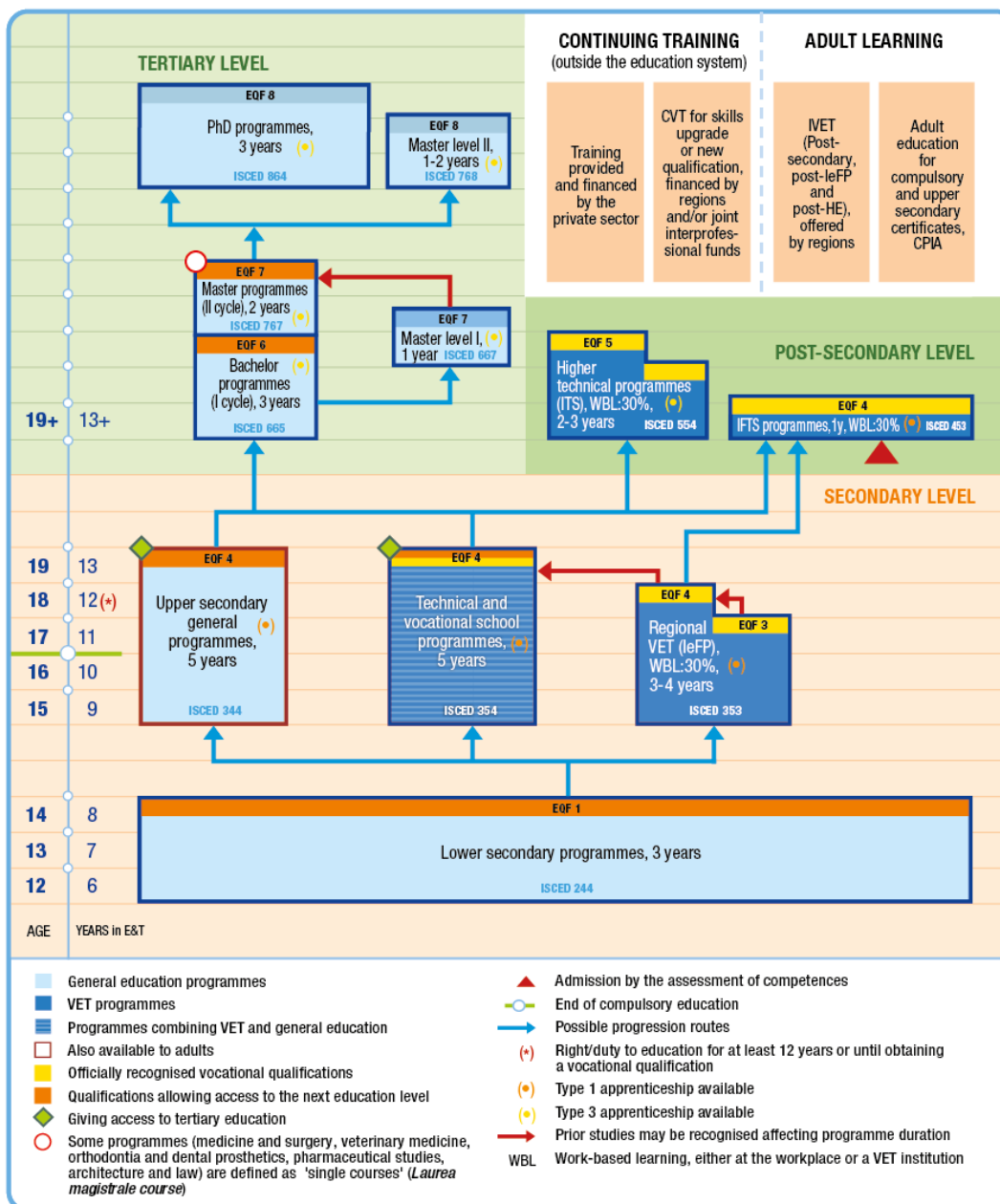
4. Final Decision: If the outcome is positive, the Director General issues the accreditation/qualification decree by the end of the school year.

³⁴ European Commission and CEDEFOP, 2022

³⁵ Following information has been retrieved from Ministero dell'Istruzione e del merito, 2024

For further information regarding the accreditation/qualification process, you can write from a standard email account to: accreditamento.ent@istruzione.it or check the following link: <https://www.istruzione.it/pdgg/fare-formazione.html>

To be considered that all specific information regarding documentation is only available in Italian language.



NB: ISCED-P 2011.
Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Italy, 2022.

Figure 11 - VET System in Italy

6.5 Procedures in Hungary³⁶

6.5.1 VET Governance

Since 2018, the Ministry of Innovation and Technology (Innovációs és Technológiai Minisztérium) has held central governance and administrative responsibility for VET and adult training, with other ministries responsible for sector-specific qualifications. The Ministry of Innovation and Technology manages all vocational occupations and qualifications, while specific sectors are overseen by respective ministries. For example, the Ministry of Human Capacities handles the healthcare and artistic sectors. The training system and structure of IVET institutions in the healthcare sector mirror those managed by the Ministry of Innovation and Technology. However, artistic vocational programs maintain the old training system and structure (vocational grammar schools) and are subject to the Act on National Public Education. These programs also offer vocational qualifications, but their students are not eligible for the financial incentives available in other VET programs.

The government is responsible for VET in areas beyond the competences of the ministries. The Ministry of Human Capacities oversees public education, including VET provided within the formal school system, while higher education falls under the Ministry of Innovation and Technology. Higher VET, however, is regulated by the HE Act rather than the VET Act. The Ministry of Innovation and Technology and the Ministry of Human Capacities are responsible for the framework curricula of VET and general education, respectively, with other ministers handling qualifications standards in their sectors.

The National Office of VET and Adult Learning (NOVETAL) and the IKK Innovative Training Support Centre Plc. (IKK) are state administrative bodies under the Ministry of Innovation and Technology that support VET policy implementation. NOVETAL manages VET centres, evaluates their professional tasks, ensures legal and operational efficacy, and monitors their budget and operation. It also develops the draft National Register of Vocational Occupations, monitors its implementation, and proposes amendments. NOVETAL operates the national reference point for ECVET and EQAVET, coordinates national and international VET and adult learning projects, and manages EUROGUIDANCE services and EPAL membership.

IKK implements provisions of the VET Act (No LXXX/2019) related to innovation and digitalization, supports EU-funded projects, and develops VET teaching materials, examination content, and teacher assessment methodology. It also organizes professional examinations and evaluates the quality management systems of VET institutions.

The Education Authority, an agency of the Ministry of Human Capacities, operates national systems of assessment in public education, manages the uniform admission procedure to upper secondary

³⁶ Following information takes reference from CEDEFOP; IKK 2022 Hungary system description, unless specific reference.

education, conducts the secondary school leaving exam, provides pedagogical counselling services, and handles qualification procedures within the teacher career system.

The Pest County Government Office administers adult training, registers vocational exams, and inspects adult training providers and programs. Employment departments of county/capital government offices, part of the national employment service led by the Ministry of Finance, offer training support for vulnerable groups.

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry plays a key role in VET policy advice, qualifications development, accreditation, supervision of practice providers, provision of apprenticeship contracts, and career guidance services. Social partners participate in the VET Innovation Council, sectoral skills councils, and the County Labour-market Reconciliation Roundtable, influencing VET policy and promoting in-company, sectoral, and territorial training programs.

Most VET schools have been integrated into a network of 41 vocational centres since 2013, which coordinate education and training activities, manage finances, and foster partnerships with businesses. State-maintained VET schools in agriculture are operated by the Ministry of Agriculture and belong to a network of agricultural VET centres. Other ministries, universities, church entities, foundations, and associations also maintain VET schools, receiving funding from the central government budget based on agreements with the minister responsible for VET.

Practical training is integral to all VET programs, provided either in schools or companies through vocational employment contracts. Dual VET, offered through these contracts, is a key part of the specialized vocational training provided by technical and vocational schools. Companies may establish joint sectoral training centres to support SME and micro-enterprise training capacity. Additionally, higher education institutions offer vocational programs at EQF level 5, including mandatory company-based practice periods organized via cooperation agreements and student work contracts.

Adult training requires a training contract between the learner and the provider. The Pest County Government Office handles the authorisation of adult training providers, who must operate a quality assurance system. Providers include public and higher education institutions, regional training centres, chambers of economy, private training companies, NGOs, and employers offering in-company training.

6.5.2 Qualification Recognition

The legal framework governing vocational education and training (VET), higher education, and adult education in the country permits the validation and recognition of prior learning, **but there is no comprehensive policy for validating non-formal and informal learning**. Validation practices are limited and fragmented, with sectoral approaches dominating the development of validation processes. Although recent strategies such as the Lifelong Learning Strategy 2014-20, the Mid-term Strategy Against Early School Leaving, and the National Social Catching Up Strategy explicitly mention validation as an objective, there is no coherent approach detailing specific tasks, procedures, or responsibilities. In mid-2016, the government adopted the National Digital Education Strategy, which

references validation in the context of adult learning as a tool for accessing training but lacks detailed recommendations.

Current validation practices are disjointed, missing essential elements like strategic goals, funding, stakeholder participation, quality assurance, and participant preparation. Validation development in each sector typically occurs through isolated projects. Under the New Hungary Development Plan, various sectoral projects in public education, vocational education, and higher education aimed to establish validation procedures to varying extents.

In adult training, the recognition process involves matching previously acquired competencies with training standards, evaluation (usually through tests), and exemption from parts of the training program. The first Adult Training Act (2011), enacted in 2013, defined prior learning assessment and recognition as an individual right. The new Adult Training Act retained this framework, making prior learning assessment mandatory in vocational education and language training, though it did not simplify the application process for state-subsidized programs³⁷.

VET provision is modularized, and qualifications and requirements are described in terms of competencies, aligning VET more closely with a learning-outcomes-based approach. The regulation of the VET examination system has been open to validation since the 1993 Law on VET ([35]), allowing applicants to take exams without enrolling in formal VET programs, though this option is seldom used.

Without a comprehensive validation policy and procedure, educational institutions operate validation independently within their respective legal frameworks. Adapting to a learning-outcomes approach remains a significant challenge for implementing validation in Hungary, as training programs are not typically written in terms of learning outcomes. However, two successful validation procedures exist for single competence certification: the European Computer Driving Licence examination scheme, which certifies ICT skills acquired by any means, and foreign language proficiency examinations.

Further development and implementation of the NQF is expected to support validation through the learning outcomes approach, as the framework is open to including qualifications obtained through the validation of prior learning in non-formal and informal settings. However, no specific rules have been established linking validation to the NQF. Validation primarily occurs within educational institutions, with little involvement from social partners in its development.

6.5.3 Accreditation Procedures of Non-Formal and Informal Learning

The legal frameworks for vocational education and training (VET), higher education, and adult education permit the validation and recognition of prior learning. National strategies emphasize promoting validation as a key objective, yet there is no overarching policy or procedure for validation. As a result, validation practices are limited and fragmented, with each education sector developing validation through isolated projects. The shift towards a learning-outcomes approach aids the

³⁷ European Commission et al., 2024

implementation of validation. In adult training, assessing prior learning (competence) is mandatory. Legal provisions for validation in formal school-based VET and adult education are outlined in the new VET Act. The project "Improving the Quality and Content of 21st Century Vocational Training and Adult Education" piloted the introduction of a validation system, with pilot programs completed in November 2020 and a study on the quality assurance system for validation finalized in September 2021. In 2022, a methodological guide on expert training was developed.

Further development and implementation of the Hungarian Qualifications Framework (HuQF) is anticipated to support validation, as the framework is open to including qualifications obtained through the validation of prior learning in non-formal and informal settings. **However, there are no established rules linking validation to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) so far.**

6.5.4 Validation procedure for FRISCO partners³⁸

1. Regulatory Framework: Accreditation procedures in Hungary are governed by specific laws and regulations. The primary body overseeing education and training course accreditation is the Hungarian Accreditation Committee (HAC).

- Adult training is governed by the Act on Adult Education (Act LXXVII of 2013), though significant regulatory changes have been underway since 2019. As of September 1, 2020, preparing for vocational or partial qualifications has become a high priority. When an adult educational institution offers training for a partial qualification under the Act LXXX of 2019 on Vocational Education and Training, VET regulations also apply.

2. Application Submission: Institutions seeking accreditation for their training courses must submit an application to the HAC in a mail form. This application typically includes:

- According to Article 16 of Government Decree 12/2020 on the implementation of the Act on VET, program requirements must include the name of the vocational training, a classification code for the training areas, and the qualification's HuQF and EQF levels, as well as the Digital Competence Framework level. Article 34 stipulates that professional certificates must specify the HuQF, EQF, and Digital Competence Framework levels.
- Detailed Course Description: Objectives, curriculum, teaching methods, and expected outcomes.
- Institutional Information: Details about the institution, including legal status, infrastructure, and educational mission.
- Faculty Information: Qualifications and experience of the teaching staff.
- Quality Assurance Measures: Processes for maintaining and improving course quality.

3. Documentation Requirements: the application must be accompanied by several supporting documents, including course Syllabi, faculty resumes, institutional Accreditation, and facilities Description.

4. The HAC evaluates the application through several stages:

³⁸ MAB, 2024

- Initial Review: A preliminary check to ensure all required documents are submitted and the application is complete.
- Expert Assessment: Subject matter experts review the course content, teaching methods, and faculty qualifications.
- Site Visit: A team may visit the institution to verify the information provided and assess the facilities.

5. After the evaluation, the HAC makes a decision, which can be:

- Full Accreditation: The course meets all criteria and is accredited for a specified period.
- Conditional Accreditation: The course meets most criteria but requires minor improvements.
- Rejection: The course does not meet the required standards.

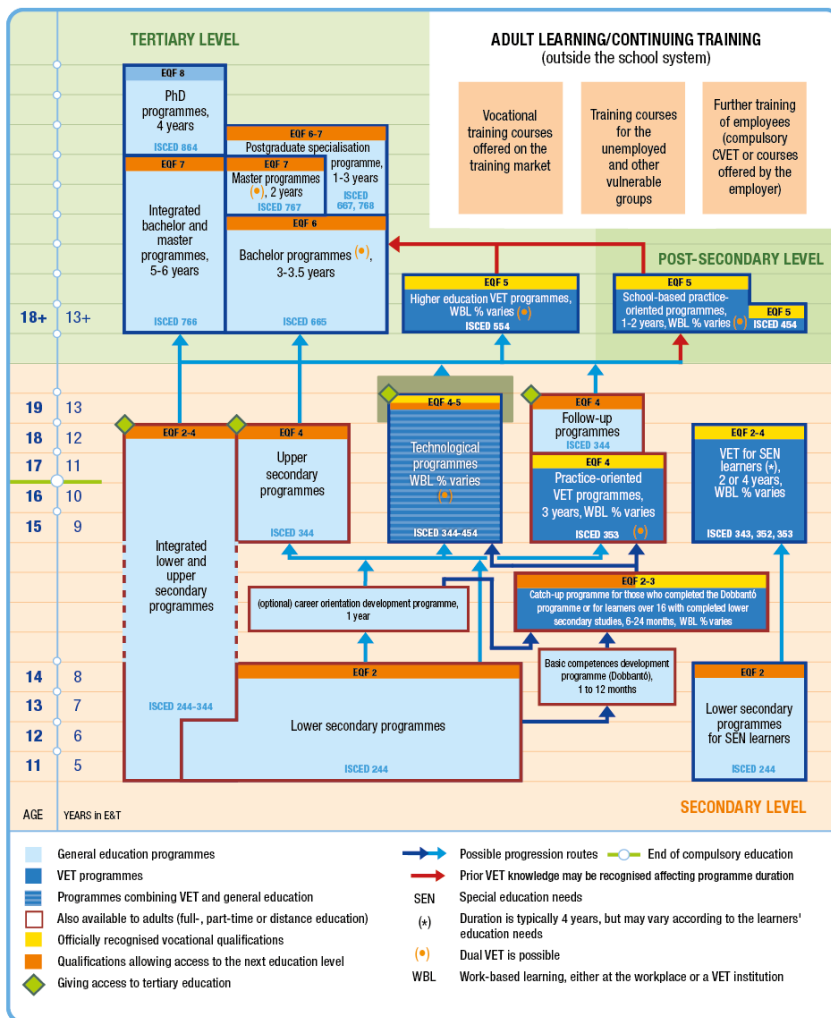
6. Post-Accreditation Monitoring: Accredited courses are subject to periodic reviews to ensure continued compliance with accreditation standards. This may include:

- Annual Reports: Institutions may need to submit yearly progress reports.
- Renewal Applications: Accreditation must be renewed after a certain period, typically every five years.
- Random Inspections: The HAC may conduct unscheduled visits to verify ongoing compliance.

7. If an application is rejected or receives conditional accreditation, institutions can appeal the decision.

For more detailed and specific information, institutions should refer to the HAC's official guidelines and consult with HAC representatives directly at <https://www.mab.hu/en/home-page/>

Once more, detailed information is only available in Hungarian language.



NB: ISCED-P 2011.
Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Hungary, 2022.

Figure 12 - VET System in Hungary

6.6 Procedures in The Netherlands³⁹

6.6.1 VET Governance

One of the core principles of the Dutch education system is freedom of education, which encompasses the freedom to establish schools, organize teaching, and determine the educational principles (freedom of conviction). **Freedom to organize teaching allows both public and private schools to decide, within legal boundaries, what and how subjects are taught.** The education ministry sets quality standards, including required subjects, the number of teaching days/hours per year, and teacher qualifications. These standards apply to both public and government-funded private education.

The Dutch VET system operates at three organizational levels: national, sectoral (especially in upper secondary VET), and regional/local (or school) levels. **Within the institutional VET framework, the Cooperation Organisation for Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market (Samenwerkingsorganisatie Beroepsonderwijs Bedrijfsleven - SBB) plays a crucial role.** SBB ensures strong links between VET and the labour market to produce well-qualified professionals. It is responsible for maintaining upper secondary VET qualifications, accrediting and coaching companies offering work placements, and collecting relevant labour market information. Representatives from vocational education and social partners collaborate on the VET qualifications system, examinations, work placements, program efficiency, and more. SBB also addresses cross-regional and cross-sector themes.

The Dutch Council for Private Providers of Education and Training (NRTO) advocates for the interests of private, non-subsidised providers of educational programs in secondary education, VET, and higher education. These providers are legally recognised by the Ministry of Education to offer regulated courses, including VET courses at both upper secondary and tertiary levels.

The Adult and Vocational Education Act regulates the governance of upper secondary VET schools, providing them with significant autonomy in policymaking. **Schools have full control over the deployment and ongoing professional development of teaching staff, the program offerings, regional industry-specific training portfolios, the organisation of learning, and the selection of cooperation partners.** School management is also responsible for deciding how to allocate the annual lump sum grant from the ministry among personnel costs, materials, housing, and future investments. Annual audit reports provide transparency on how the grant is spent.

Governance encompasses internal, vertical, and horizontal dimensions. The internal dimension refers to the organisation of internal management and control; the vertical dimension involves the accountability relationships between schools and the government; the horizontal dimension pertains to the (accountability) relationships between a school and its local stakeholders.

³⁹ Following information takes reference from CEDEFOP; ECBO 2022 The Netherlands system description, unless specific reference.

6.6.2 Qualification Recognition

The NCP-NLQF Agency, established in February 2012 as a coordination point for EFQ criteria, supports external groups in classifying unregulated qualifications impartially and professionally. These groups include 15 experts for evaluation, 4 auditors for site visits, and various commissions and boards such as the Quality Commission, Classification Commission, Programme Board, and Appeal Commission. Committees and the Programme Board comprise representatives from the labor market, regulated education, and non-regulated education, serving terms up to eight years. The NCP's core responsibilities include:

- Validating educational providers, determining NLQF levels for non-formal qualifications,
- Maintaining a public register, managing the NLQF framework in the Netherlands,
- Fostering awareness about NLQF and EQF among stakeholders.

The Dutch Qualification framework (NLQF) aims to enhance the role of validation as an integral part of the qualifications system. It aims to make the relationships between non-formal labour market qualifications and formal qualifications more transparent. The NLQF levels and the use of level descriptors help to elucidate the broader value of individuals' skills and competencies beyond their occupational performance.

Sectoral organizations can have their standards validated against an NLQF level. A sector standard utilized for learning or career guidance in the labour market pathway can be registered at a specific NLQF level. Efforts are ongoing to link national and sector standards through the NLQF⁴⁰. The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the importance of competence validation to facilitate entry into sectors with labour shortages and to retrain individuals who lost their jobs⁴¹.

The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is used in higher education, while the principles of the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) are applied in VET.

When it comes to the recognition of Foreign Qualifications, both the NLQF (National Qualifications Framework) and EQF (European Qualifications Framework) levels are considered when recognizing foreign qualifications. This process can be challenging, as similar qualifications from different countries may be referenced at different EQF levels. Instances of this issue have been identified with qualifications from the Netherlands, Germany, and the Flemish Region of Belgium⁴².

6.6.3 Accreditation Procedures of Non-Formal and Informal Learning

A system for the validation of prior learning (VPL), known as Erkenning van Verworven Competentie, was established in 1998 to bridge the gap between educational offerings and labour market demands

⁴⁰ Duvkot, 2019

⁴¹ NLQF NCP, 2020

⁴² NLQF NCP, 2019

by recognizing existing knowledge and skills. By 2016, VPL had evolved to operate along two distinct pathways: one linked to the labour market and the other to the education system⁴³.

- The labour market pathway focuses on career guidance and development for adults, enhancing employability and aligning employees' skills with occupational profiles or on-the-job learning. All non-formal qualifications are considered valid for VPL⁴⁴. This involves the recognition and documentation of prior learning through a formal procedure aimed at both employed individuals and job seekers. The process leads to the award of a validated skills portfolio (certificate). Successful VPL procedures result in the issuance of a certificate of experience (ervaringscertificaat), acknowledging vocational and general competencies according to sectoral or formal education standards, and/or a certificate of professional competence (vakbekwaamheidsbewijs) associated with professional standards, or a certificate of generic and transversal competencies (competentiebewijs) aligned with human resources systems⁴⁵. The National Knowledge Centre for Validation of Prior Learning oversees quality assurance for these certificates.
- The educational pathway validates competencies acquired through formal, non-formal, and informal means against national qualification standards. This supports further learning, grants exemptions, or enables the acquisition of partial/full formal qualifications in VET and higher education, as well as entry into education programs. Both VET and higher education qualification standards are linked to the NLQF. Legal provisions for validation are embedded within the legislation governing VET and higher education. VET schools receive support to validate competencies at NLQF levels 2–4. In higher education, VPL is predominantly available in higher professional education (hoger beroepsonderwijs) and less so in research universities. Initiatives since 2016, based on the learning outcomes approach, have been piloted to make learning routes more flexible for students in part-time and work-based programs, incorporating independent learning and validation.

Individuals or their employers must pay for validation. Financial support often comes from sectoral training funds (for employers), tax benefits (for individuals), or, for those receiving occupational disability benefits, from the National Social Security Agency (UWV).

6.6.4. Validation procedure for FRISCO partners⁴⁶

The accreditation of training courses in the Netherlands involves a structured process managed primarily by the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO). This process ensures that courses meet the required quality standards for higher education and vocational training. Here's a detailed overview of the procedures:

⁴³ CEDEFOP; ICF International, 2016

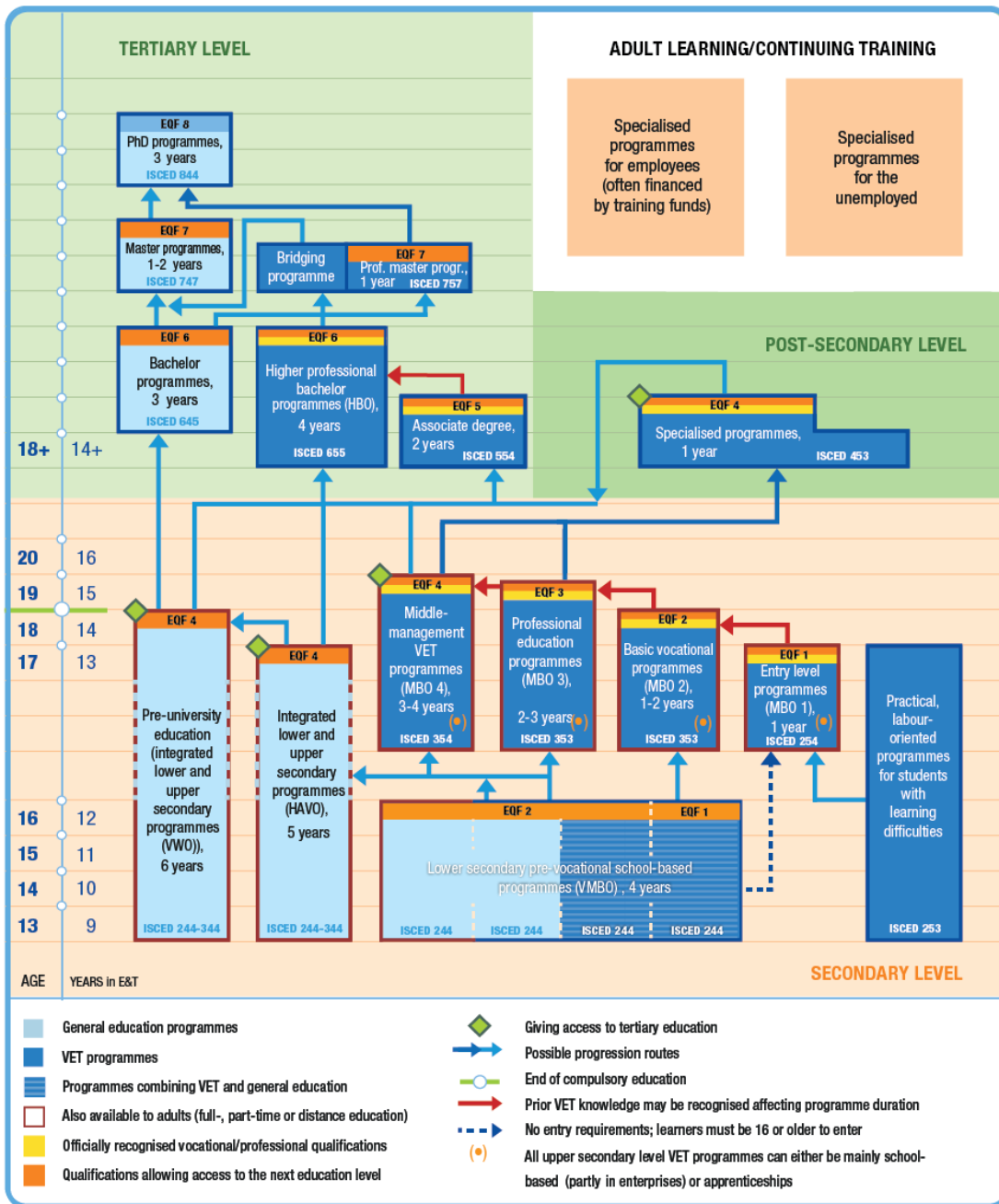
⁴⁴ European Commission and CEDEFOP, 2022

⁴⁵ CEDEFOP (2023)

⁴⁶ NVAO, 2024

1. Regulatory Framework: Accreditation procedures in the Netherlands are governed by the Higher Education and Research Act (WHW). The NVAO is responsible for accrediting higher education institutions and programs.
2. Institutions seeking accreditation must prepare a comprehensive application, including:
 - Program Description: Detailed information about the program’s objectives, curriculum, teaching methods, and expected outcomes.
 - Institutional Overview: Information about the institution, including its legal status, mission, and strategic goals.
 - Faculty Details: Qualifications, experience, and teaching responsibilities of the faculty members.
 - Quality Assurance Plan: Measures in place to ensure the ongoing quality and improvement of the program.
 - Self-Evaluation Report that includes SWOT Analysis and performance Indicators.
3. Submission of Application and initial review: The complete application, including the self-evaluation report and supporting documents, is submitted to the NVAO. The NVAO conducts an initial review to ensure the application is complete and meets the formal requirements. If any documents are missing or additional information is needed, the institution is notified.
4. Peer Review: an independent panel of experts, typically consisting of academics, professionals, and sometimes students, conducts a peer review. This process includes:
 - Document Review: Analysis of the submitted application and self-evaluation report.
 - Site Visit: The panel visits the institution to verify information, conduct interviews with faculty, students, and management, and inspect facilities.
5. Evaluation Report: After the site visit, the peer review panel prepares an evaluation report outlining their findings, including strengths, areas for improvement, and recommendations.
6. Accreditation Decision: The NVAO reviews the evaluation report and makes an accreditation decision. The possible outcomes are: Full Accreditation (is accredited for a specified period of usually six years), Conditional Accreditation (the institution must address issues within a set timeframe), and Rejection.

Further information is available at <https://www.nvao.net/en/procedures/the-netherlands/initial-accreditation>



NB: ISCED-P 2011.

Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Netherlands, 2022.

Figure 13 - VET System in The Netherlands

7 Conclusions

The document presented here aims to provide an initial insight into national qualification frameworks, helping partners navigate their complexities. The use of the table of acronyms is strongly advised as translation to local language of technical terms are available to facilitate the evaluation by examiners. This will also help local training institutions to better find relevant institutions or important legal provisions in the native language. Indeed, it is strongly recommended to seek additional information in the local language on relevant coordination point websites or ministry websites, as resources in English are very limited.

Although limited resources in English have been found for certain States, there has been noticeable interest and progress towards a more European-friendly recognition system. The EQF is expected to increase its influence in the validation processes of all member countries' national education systems, with more standardised procedures for the validation of non-formal and informal learning, and improvements in the transparency and quality of national qualification systems. It should be noted, however, that there are still certain discrepancies in the validation of national qualification frameworks compared to other qualification frameworks, with cases where an EQF level 4 qualification in country A is perceived as EQF level 5 in country B.

Additionally, while the standardization of national qualification frameworks has been completed in all six member states, the recognition of qualifications remains slow, particularly in federalist states or those with complex governance systems. Most specifically, Germany, Italy and Hungary have faced varying degrees of difficulties in developing evaluation procedures for EQF framework qualifications, as this requires reviewing by various ministries, at both national and regional levels of governance. Indeed, none of the three States have concluded clear procedures for formal and informal learning validation and qualification.

Since 2016, there has been greater involvement from member states in building easier procedures for the validation of informal learning, mostly by a) digitalising the process and b) setting clear coordination points. National Coordination Points (NCPs) responsible for managing the alignment of national qualification levels with the EQF have been established in all six partner countries. However, in Italy, ANPAL ceased to be the coordination point as of February 2024, with no further updates provided. Such changes are usual, therefore, it is highly encouraged to contact the following coordination point emails or websites before proceeding with the submission of documents:

- EOPPEP in Greece - website (most information only available in Greek): www.eoppep.gr/index.php/el/ or e-mail: protocol@eoppep.gr
- Federal Government-Federal State Coordination Point in Germany: zuordnung@dqr.de
- Commission Nationale de la Certification Professionnelle in France: <https://www.francecompetences.fr/liste-doutils/>
- EQF NCP at ANPAL <https://www.anpal.gov.it/eqf> (last updated February 2024) or INAPP (independent evaluator) in Italy <https://www.inapp.gov.it>
- The Hungarian Accreditation Committee website in Hungary: <https://www.mab.hu/en/home-page/>
- NLQF (Nationaal Coördinatiepunt) website in the Netherlands: <https://www.nlqf.nl/english>

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