

System of verifying qualifications

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 SLOVAKIA

Timeline

2019 Implementation 2020 Implementation 2021 Implementation
2022 Implementation 2023 Implementation 2024 Implementation

ID number 35287

Background

Occupational standards embedded in the National system of occupations (NSO) and qualification standards in the National system of qualifications (NSQ) were developed in the past through ESF projects. However, the country does not yet have procedures in place to validate learning outcomes acquired outside formal education: standards for only 40 qualifications have been recognised so far for the purposes of validation. The only way for individuals to obtain a certificate of professional competences allowing them to start a business is through an examination assessing achieving these standards. Obtaining a certificate of professional competences on the basis of this examination, according to the Lifelong Learning Act (568/2009), is not fully equivalent to obtaining a qualification in formal education.

Objectives

The aim of the national ESF project, System of verifying qualifications, is to set up a comprehensive system for verifying qualifications and results of non-formal and informal learning. The specific objectives are to:

- (a) establish structures and set mandatory procedures for lifelong learning with an emphasis on the validation and recognition of qualifications;
- (b) pilot in practice the system of validation of qualifications and their parts (units of learning outcomes).

Description

The project System of verifying qualifications, run by the State Institute of Vocational Education, started in 2019 and is expected to be completed on 1 February 2023. It aims to complement existing qualification standards of the National system of qualifications (NSQ) by developing assessment manuals and to suggest and pilot processes of validation of non-formal and informal learning concerning approximately 300 qualifications. 72 qualification cards placed in the national registry of NSQ should be innovated. It is also expected that these qualifications will be recognised by the education ministry for certification of professional competences in line with Lifelong Learning Act (568/2009).

The budget of the project is approximately EUR 12 million.

2019 Implementation

In 2019, implementation of the project started.

2020 Implementation

The State Institute of Vocational Education, in cooperation with a partner organisation Asseco, developed a proposal for the establishment of a system of validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL), nationally referred to as the system of verifying qualifications. In 2020, the first versions of manuals describing the position of system players (authorised awarding bodies, authorised specialists and validation specialists) were developed. Manuals for key activities were also produced, such as on

- (a) creating units of learning outcomes;
- (b) developing assessment manuals for 312 qualifications.

These documents were reviewed by external specialists. Once the network of institutions awarding qualifications is established and validation specialists have undergone retraining, the proposed VNFIL system is planned to undergo testing.

2021 Implementation

Two guides were completed: a manual prescribing an obligatory framework for the creation of respective assessment manuals and a manual for the creation of units of learning outcomes. The first assessment manual composed of three units of learning outcomes was developed. 330 qualifications were pre-selected as relevant for validation piloting processes.

A document regulating the establishment of institutions entitled to validate non-formal and informal learning was submitted to the sectoral councils for their opinion. Specialists for two registers were recruited. The first register contains the list of national experts (so-called national guarantors) covering 24 sectors of the economy responsible for quality assurance of processes in respective sectors. The second register contains the list of specialists (so-called authorised persons) entitled to assess portfolios of evidence in accordance with the evaluation manual created in the project and to act as a member of the validation examination committee. They were obliged to complete a qualification programme composed of two components. The first component valid for all authorised persons was developed and accredited by the education ministry and followed by a specialised second component.

The EQAVET National reference point was assigned by the education ministry to assess procedures of validation of non-formal and informal learning from the quality assurance point of view within the project System of verifying qualifications.

2022 Implementation

In addition to the two aforementioned guides, two new documents were produced. A guide was prepared on informing VET schools, higher education institutions, and employers about the expansion of activities in lifelong learning. This concerns, in particular, new governance structures and procedures for the validation of non-formal and informal learning. Furthermore, a strategy paper drawing also on sectoral strategies developed under the ESF project Sector-driven innovations for an efficient labour market was elaborated. It set priorities for lifelong learning in 24 sectors of the national economy and identified

- (a) qualifications and qualification standards that need to be established;
- (b) existing labour market relevant qualifications that should be included in validation piloting.

As of 31 December 2022, 178 assessment manuals were developed covering 178 out

of the 330 pre-selected qualifications.

A document regulating the designation of authorised institutions was developed. 51 institutions met the requirements and were registered as authorised institutions for validating non-formal and informal learning.

73 national guarantors responsible for quality assurance of validation processes were officially registered. 23 authorised persons already completed both components of the training and were officially registered.

As of 31 December 2022, validation was carried out in two areas. The qualification 'Furniture machine operator' was awarded to 15 applicants, and 20 qualifications were awarded in the field 'Extraction and treatment of raw materials and geology'.

237 applicants were registered for validation in the automotive industry making this sector dominant not only in the labour market but also in validation processes.

On 21- 23 November State institute of Vocational Education hosted peer reviewers from seven organisations from five countries of the EQAVET Network (Belgium-Flanders, Czechia, Hungary, Portugal and Slovenia) to get the feedback from peers feeding into adjustments of the system as well as modifications of the underpinning legislation.

2023 Implementation

The final monitoring report of the project confirmed the creation of a methodological framework, along with structures and procedures for validation processes. Crucial components of the system were established, including authorising body, authorised institutions, authorised specialists, national guarantors, and the development and use of units of learning outcomes and assessment manuals. The operational framework and prerequisites for these components were also defined.

During the pilot phase:

- 150 institutions were authorised to deliver validation;
- 376 validation specialists, and 111 national guarantors responsible for quality assurance were selected;
- 314 manuals were developed, out of which only manuals related to 43 qualifications of the NSQ register were applied as there were only demands for validation related to 43 qualifications;
- 2 702 individuals were awarded relevant qualification certificates.

2024 Implementation

The education ministry incorporated only some of the system concepts into the new Act on adult education. However, it did not accept experts and institutions originally identified by the project as ready for running validation. According to the education ministry, it is necessary to rebuild personnel capacities anew. In October, a round table of experts discussed a proposal for a future national project aimed at building personal capacities. The project envisions training approximately 500 people to prepare them for a role in:

- (a) creating occupational and qualification standards (embedded in respective 'cards');
- (b) accrediting educational programmes for adults;
- (c) conducting validation of learning outcomes.

The quality of the national guarantors is decisive for ensuring the overall quality of the processes. The guarantors are responsible for:

- (a) developing the methodology to evaluate the applicants' competence portfolios and against standards;
- (b) evaluating the professional competence of authorised specialists conducting the

- assessment of learning outcomes;
(c) cooperating with authorised institutions in the assessment and recognition of units of learning outcomes based on competence portfolios.

Experts can only be included in the education ministry's register of national guarantors with the consent of the Sector Councils Alliance, making it a key player in quality assurance. To enable the wider application of the validation of non-formal and informal learning, further efforts are needed to enhance personnel capacities in skills audits and consultancy for creating competence portfolios.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth
- State Institute of Vocational Education (ŠIOV)
- Sector Councils Alliance
- Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport (until 2024)

Target group

Learners

Adult learners

Education professionals

School leaders
Adult educators

Entities providing VET

Companies
VET providers (all kinds)

Other stakeholders

Social partners (employer organisations and trade unions)

Thematic categories

Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Coordinating VET and other policies
Further developing national quality assurance systems

Transparency and portability of VET skills and qualifications

Comprehensive national qualification frameworks
Developing and applying qualifications smaller/shorter than full
Learners' possibilities of accumulation, validation and recognition of learning outcomes acquired non-formally and informally

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Lifelong guidance

Subsystem

CVET

Further reading

[Act No 568/2009 on lifelong learning \[Zákon c. 568/2009 Z. z. o celoživotnom vzdelávaní\]](#)

[National system of occupations website](#)

[National system of qualifications website](#)

[System of verifying qualifications project information \(in Slovak\)](#)

[EQAVET Network members report on VNFIL system](#)

[Act No 292/2024 on adult education](#)

Related policy developments

2024 Approved/Agreed

Act on adult education (292/2024)

The education ministry initiated new legislation instead of the originally proposed law on lifelong learning, which was previously recommended by the Lifelong learning and counselling strategy for 2021-30 and approved by the government.

 SLOVAKIA

Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

CVET

2024 Implementation

Sector Councils Alliance

The amendment to the Act on employment services established the Sector Councils Alliance (SCA) as the interest association of legal entities.

 SLOVAKIA

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2024 Implementation

Creation of centres of excellence in VET

The creation of CoVEs is determined by the Lifelong learning and counselling strategy for 2021-30 adopted by the government on 24 November 2021.

 SLOVAKIA

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2024 Implementation

Slovak national qualifications framework

The development of the SKKR has been a lengthy process. It progressed in parallel to the wider reform of VET and involved various stakeholders.

 SLOVAKIA

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2024 Implementation

Flexible routes to labour market relevant qualifications

The so-called 'shortened studies' (ISCED 353) were put in place in 2015/16 in line with the Act on VET (61/2015). They target young people and adults who want to broaden or deepen their qualification or acquire another one to improve their employability.

 SLOVAKIA

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2024 Implementation

National programme for the development of education

On 27 June 2018, the government approved the National programme for the development of education (NPDE). The NPDE was adopted, with 106 measures to be fulfilled until 2027. Some measures related to regional schooling and higher education are relevant also to VET.

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

“ … ” **Cite as**

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<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/35287>