

System for the anticipation of qualifications needs

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 PORTUGAL

Timeline



ID number 28700

Background

In the legal framework of the National qualifications system (SNQ), the National Agency for Qualification and VET (ANQEP) is described as the body responsible for identifying the priority thematic areas of VET programmes and their spatial distribution, avoiding overlaps and better addressing labour market needs.

In 2014, the System for the anticipation of qualifications needs (SANQ) was developed. It utilises systematic mechanisms, different quantitative and qualitative variables and a combination of diagnosis, forecasting and planning.

Law No 82-A/2014, which approved the major planning actions for 2015, reinforced the importance of a qualification needs diagnosis system.

Objectives

SANQ is a diagnostic tool aiming to identify qualification needs at national and regional level and to set priority levels for qualifications, which are taken into consideration when planning education and training provision and in the updating of the National catalogue of qualifications (CNQ).

Description

In 2015, SANQ was set up under a coordination council that includes ANQEP, the Institute for Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP), the Cohesion and Development Agency (AD&C) and social partners. It assesses the dynamics of the economy and the labour market, which influence the demand for skills in the short and medium term. It also gathers key information for lifelong guidance. The use of SANQ has been strengthened through the diversity of data analysed and the involvement of a significant and representative number of stakeholders at the regional and local levels.

SANQ's centrality in shaping the VET provision network has strengthened its role in meeting regional needs. For that purpose, the Intercity communities and metropolitan areas (CIM/AM) contribute to fine-tune the relevance levels of the qualifications assessed in the central SANQ module (at the NUTS II level), to the specificities of the economy and the labour market, in line with the national framework strategy for economic and social development.

The methodology established by the SANQ makes it possible to identify the relevance of each qualification and its evolution trends, setting priorities and criteria for the network of education and training provision. It influences the number and design of education and training areas, education and training provision related to EQF/NQF levels 2, 4 and 5 qualifications to respond to regional labour market needs. It aims to reinforce responses to sectoral, professional and territorial needs and dynamics, ensuring the alignment of vocational education and training initiatives to these needs and dynamics and prioritising emerging areas of competence.

The methodology foresees updating the central SANQ module every 3 years and updating or adjusting the regional SANQ module annually. SANQ is then applied by ANQEP and other public bodies in the process of defining the EQF levels 2 and 4 for young people. Other institutions also use SANQ as input for defining training provision for adults and/or level 5 EQF training provision.

2015 Implementation

3 CIM/AM participated in the regional module.

2016 Implementation

10 CIM/AM participated in the regional module.

2017 Implementation

11 CIM/AM participated in the regional module.

2018 Implementation

13 CIM/AM participated in the regional module.

2019 Implementation

16 CIM/AM participated in the regional module.

2020 Implementation

From December 2019 through 2020, 19 of 23 CIM areas defined their regional qualification needs for the SANQ. They developed a regional in-depth diagnosis (Módulo de aprofundamento regional), identifying their priority education and training areas. It covered CEF programmes at EQF level 2 and professional programmes at EQF level 4, according to regional and territorial-specific characteristics.

In March 2020, centrally defined guidelines and criteria (Dispatch No. 3262-A/2020) were issued to shape the network of VET offers. They focus on how institutions providing education and training programmes for young people (CEF), professional and specific curriculum programmes will plan and organise their provision to avoid overlaps and address regional labour market needs.

In November/December 2020, the central SANQ module was updated in accordance with its regular update timeframe (every 3 years), with the definition of the relevance levels for qualifications at the NUTS II level for the following 3-year period.

2021 Implementation

Between December 2021 and February 2022, 21 of the 23 CIM (intercity communities) areas defined their regional qualification needs for the SANQ.

Dispatch (*Despacho*) No 12818/2021, of 30 December, created an interministerial commission to coordinate the VET system within the national qualifications system (SNQ). Its missions included monitoring and promoting the political and strategic coordination of the VET system, specifically regarding SANQ.

2022 Implementation

The measure is part of the NIP under the Innovation and resilience package.

The regional SANQ module update encompassed 21 of the 23 CIM/AM for the 2022 implementation phase.

2023 Implementation

In 2023, the central SANQ module (NUTS II level) was updated with new data on the supply of and demand for qualifications in the labour market, and long-term prospective scenarios, as such creating a new baseline for the regional SANQ module update, which included all CIM/AM in Continental Portugal (23).

All CIM/AM participated in the regional SANQ module update, enriching the data collected and the process outcomes.

2024 Implementation

A small update was needed to the central SANQ module, during September/October 2024, as the NUTS II in Portugal were adjusted for a better territorial management. The Lisbon Metropolitan Area (AM Lisboa) was divided into 2 NUTS II (*Grande Lisboa and Península do Tejo*), and 3 CIM/AM that were part of the Centro and Alentejo NUTS II were joined to create a new NUTS II (*Oeste e Vale do Tejo*). These changes had to be reflected in the Central SANQ module, thereby constituting a different baseline for CIM/AM to perform their regional assessments against.

From the end of 2023 until February 2024, a new regional SANQ module update was carried out by 22 of the 23 CIM/AM.

2025 Implementation

In 2025, a new regional SANQ update was carried out, once again with the participation of all CIM/AM.

A new Dispatch (*Despacho*) No 3886-A/2025 was published on 27 March 2025, with updates to the criteria defining the CEF and Professional Courses provision.

Bodies responsible

- National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education and Training (ANQEP)

Target group

Entities providing VET

Companies

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)

VET providers (all kinds)

Thematic categories

Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Engaging VET stakeholders and strengthening partnerships in VET
Establishing and developing skills intelligence systems

European priorities in VET

VET Recommendation

VET agile in adapting to labour market challenges

Osnabrück Declaration

Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET

Subsystem

IVET CVET

Further reading

[Decree-Law \[Decreto-Lei\] No 14/2017, 26 January 2017](#)

[Decree-Law \[Decreto-Lei\] No 396/2007, of 31 December 2007, modified by Decree-Law \[Decreto-Lei\] No 14/2017, of 26 January 2017](#)

[Dispatch \[Despacho\] No 3262-A/2020, of 12 March 2020](#)

[Dispatch \[Despacho\] No 12818/2021, of 30 December 2021](#)

[Dispatch \[Despacho\] No 3886-A/2025, of 27 of March](#)

Related policy developments

2025 Implementation

VET agreement

The VET agreement is to be a common ground of a tripartite understanding, between the government and the social partners, in the following areas of intervention:

 PORTUGAL

Type of development

Strategy/Action plan

Subsystem

CVET

“ … ” **Cite as**

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). System for the anticipation of qualifications needs: Portugal. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2025 update) [Online tool].

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28700>