Building blocks for a European Comparative methodology – lessons from Cedefop's 'Comparing VET-qualifications project'

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Comparing VET qualifications: towards a European Comparative Methodology

Overall aims:

__scale up, strengthen and development of methodologies allowing for systematic and regular international comparisons of the content and profile of VET qualifications

__strengthening quality and relevance of VET qualifications

Framework Contract (4 work assignments) commissioned to:

__3s Unternehmensberatung GmbH (AT) – lead

__Ockham-IPS (NL) – consortium partner

CEDEFOP
European Centre
for the Development
of Vocational Training

Duration: 2017-2020

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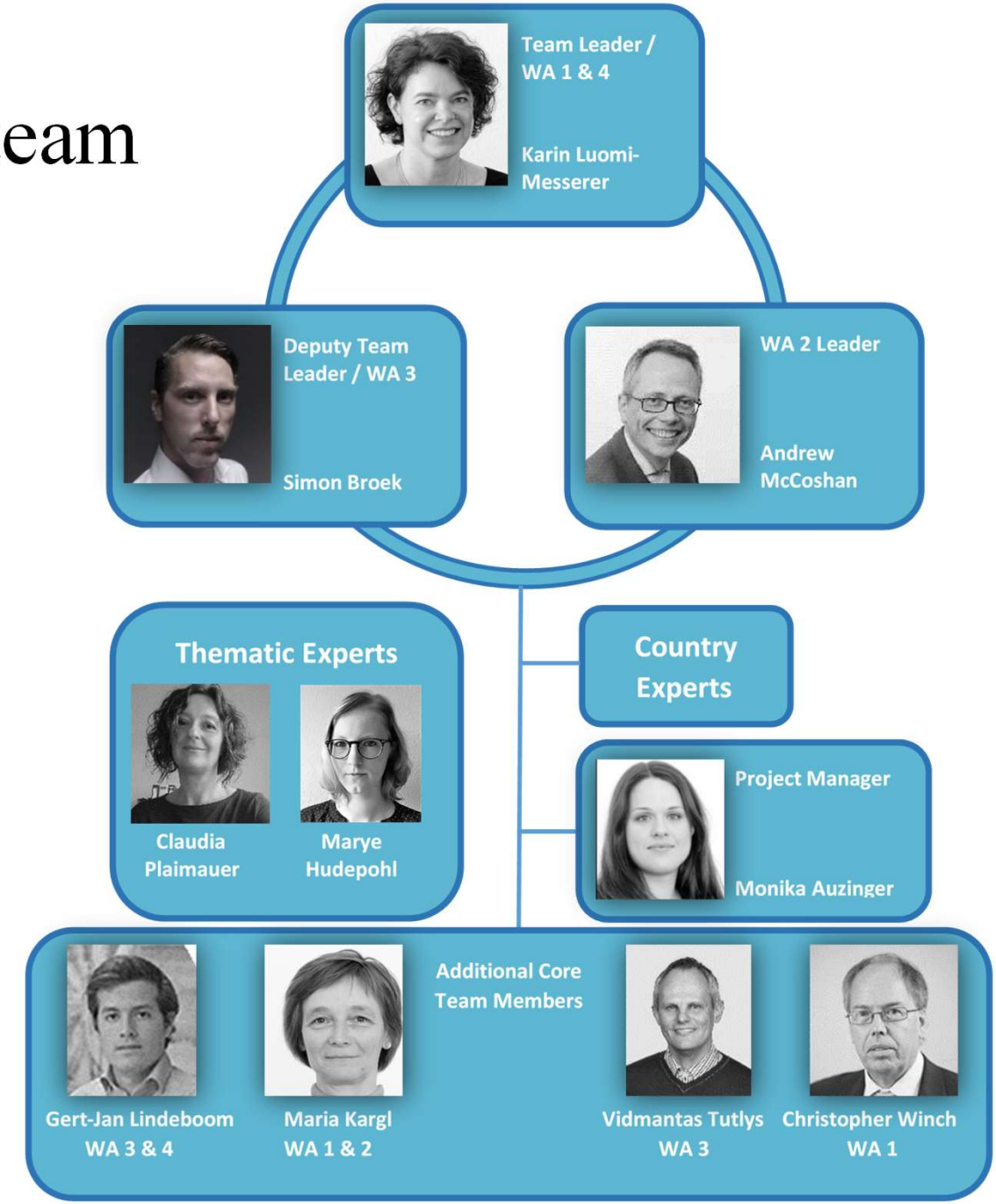
Our team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Country Experts
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Gert-Jan Lindeboom
WA 3 & 4
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WA 1 & 2
Vidmantas Tutlys
WA 3
Christopher Winch
WA 1

10 countries

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Ireland	Andrew McCoshan
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Lithuania	Vidmantas Tutlys
Netherlands	Simon Broek, Marye Hudepohl
Austria	Monika Auzinger, Karin Luomi-Messerer
Finland	Jouko Luomi
United Kingdom – England	Chris Winch

10 profiles

see Cedefop study: 'The role of learning outcomes in supporting dialogue between the labour market and education and training; the case of vocational education and training'

Bricklayer/Masonry
Health care assistant
Hotel assistant/receptionist
ICT service technician
Plumber (cooling and heating)
Sales assistant
Dental assistant
Logistics technician
Machine Operator (Automation/CNC)
Farm management professional (Agriculture)

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Overarching objective: Strengthening quality and relevance of VET qualifications

Objective: to prepare methodologies allowing for systematic comparison of the purposes, content and profiles of VET qualifications on a cross-border basis.

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intended learning outcomes of qualifications → Actual learning outcomes asked for by the labour market
Appreciation of the relevance of qualifications to working life

WA1: Design / select a reference point for comparing intended LOs and LOs asked for

- BB1: Definition of requirements for reference points for comparing national VET qualifications
- BB2: Exploration and testing of reference points for comparing national VET qualifications

Relevance in wider context (Cedefop, EC projects and activities (e.g. ESCO)

Key question 1: Do we have a fixed point – what is our reference point for comparison?

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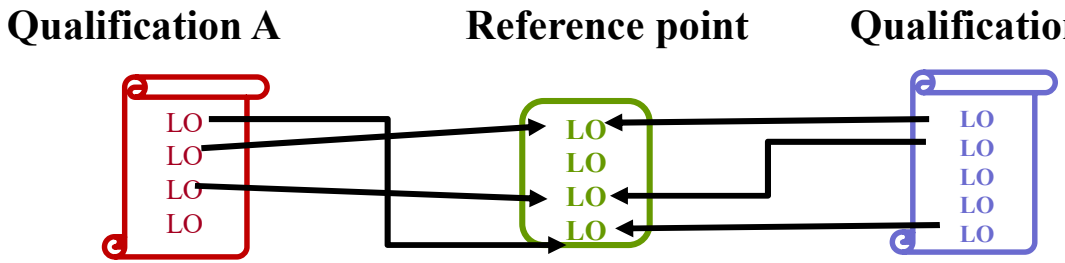
Reference points for comparing qualifications

__conceptual fixed points for mapping learning outcomes included in national qualifications

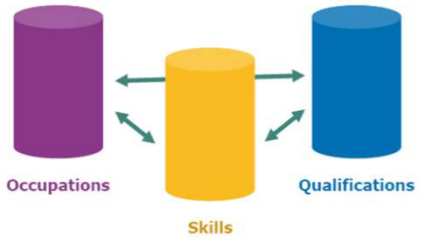
__usually have the form of occupational skills profiles (OSP): profiles that describe the requirements or essential characteristics of occupations in terms of knowledge, skills, competences, professional interests, work values, etc.

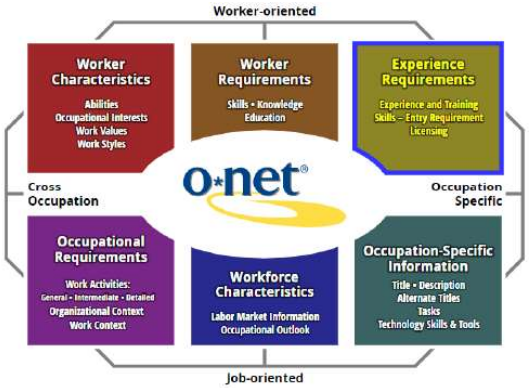
__can be independent profiles, e.g. referring only to a specific occupational profile, or they can be part of a more complex 'reference system' (a systematic approach to develop and maintain OSP for different economic sectors and occupational fields)



Reference points for comparing qualifications – examples used

ESCO
European Skills/Competences, qualifications and Occupations





WorldSkills Standards Specifications

worldskills

VQTS Competence Matrix

VQnet
www.VocationalQualification.net

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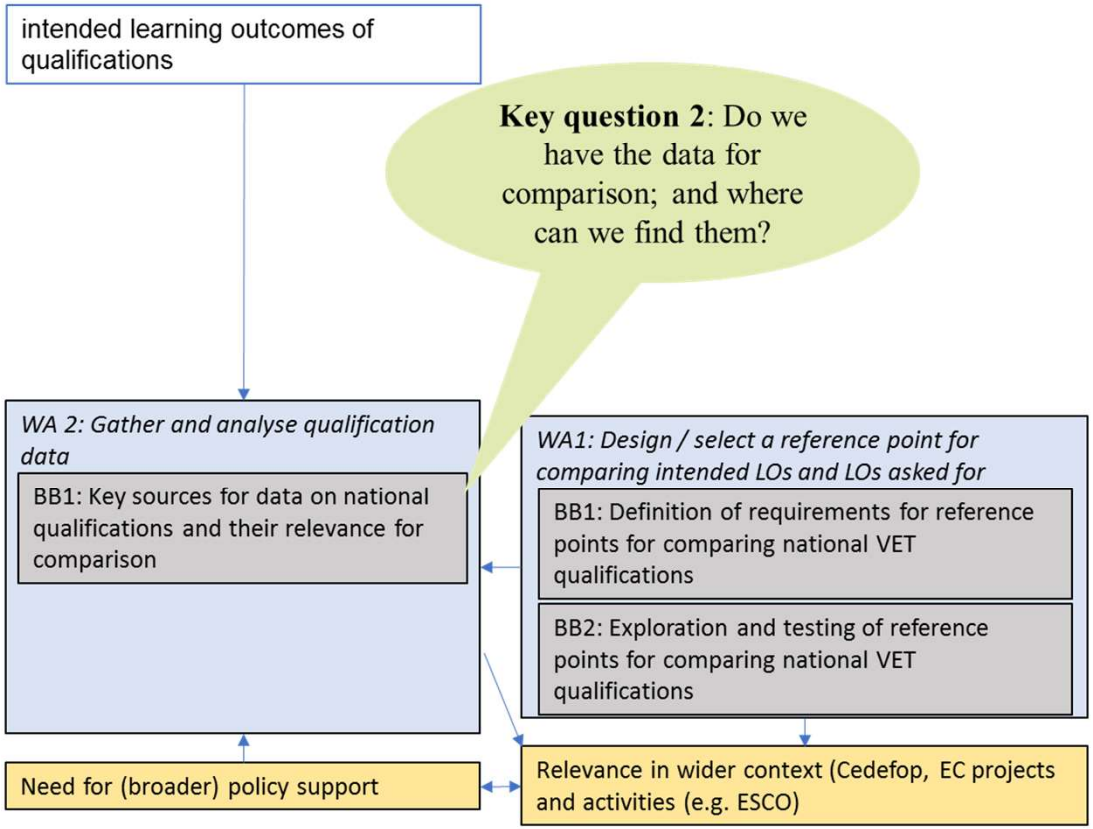

Data sources for national IVET qualifications

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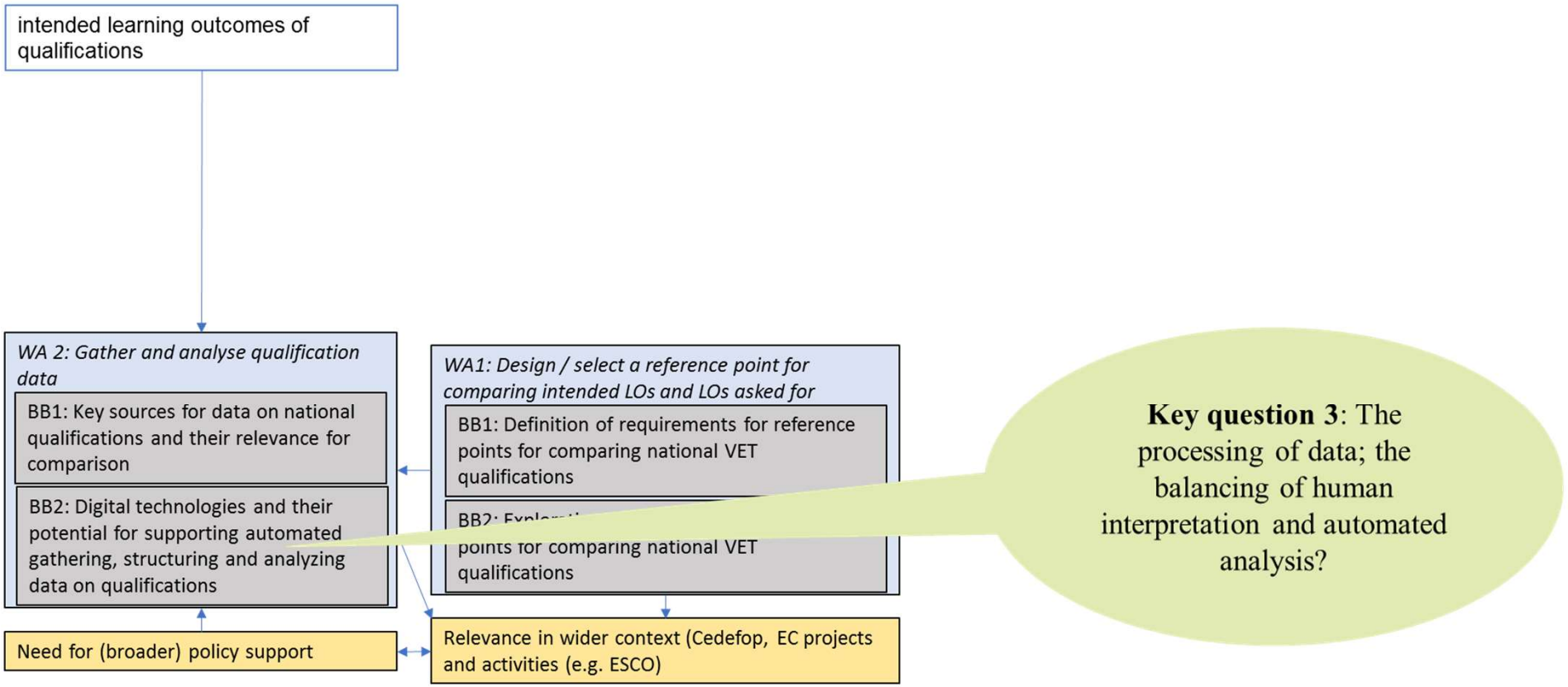
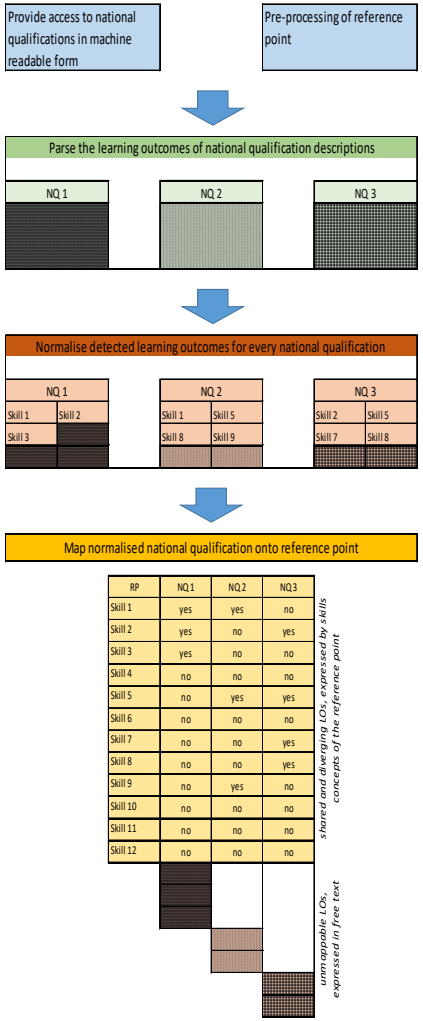
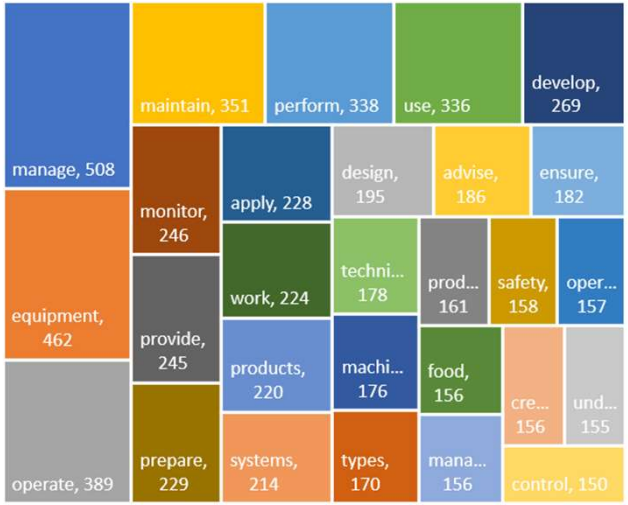
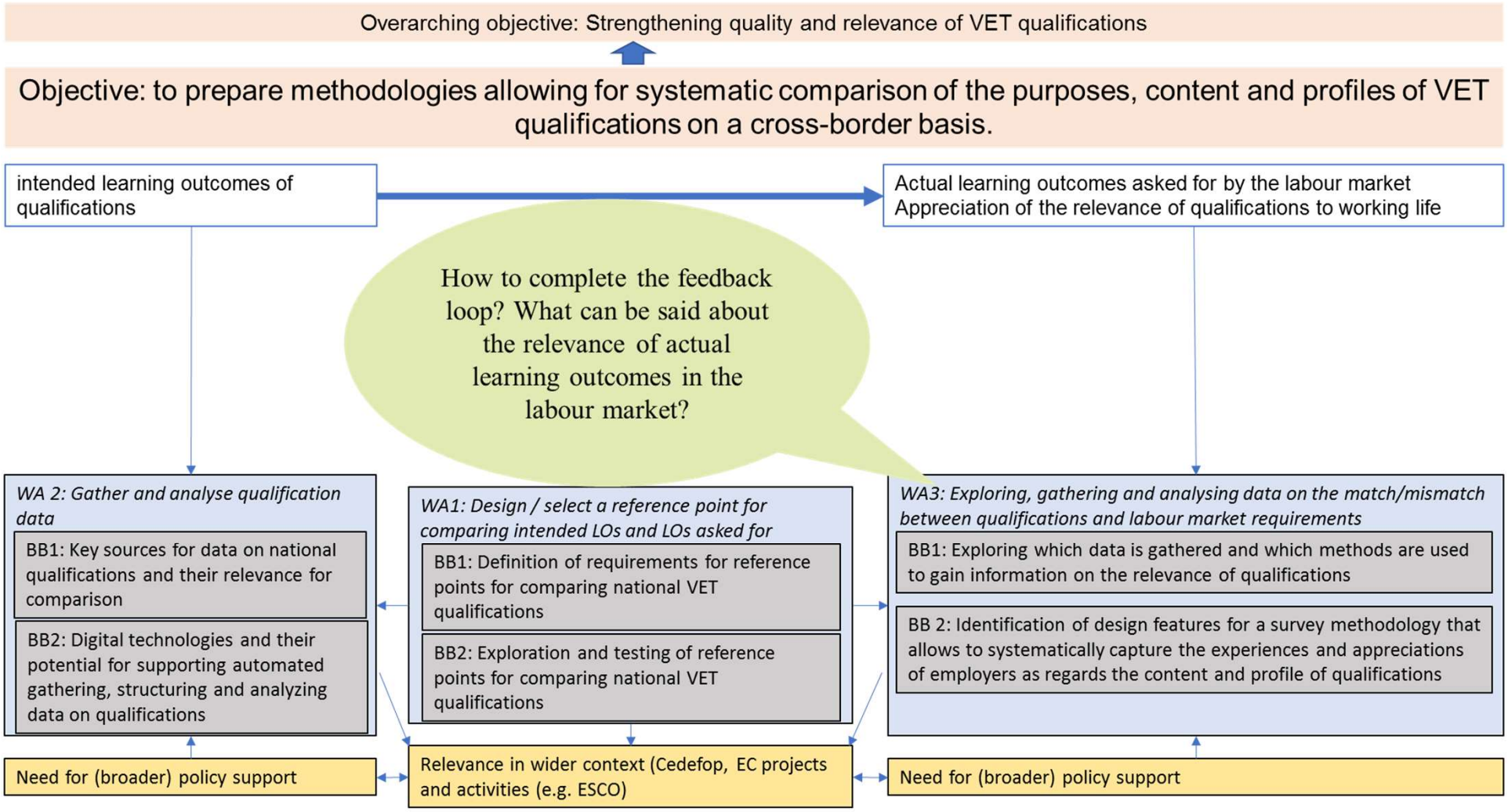


Is it at all possible to design and test an automated workflow (prototype) for comparing detailed overviews of learning outcomes by qualification?

- Conditions of the workflow and reference point
- Possibilities of automation
- Challenges encountered and solutions found
- Outcomes of any testing exercise



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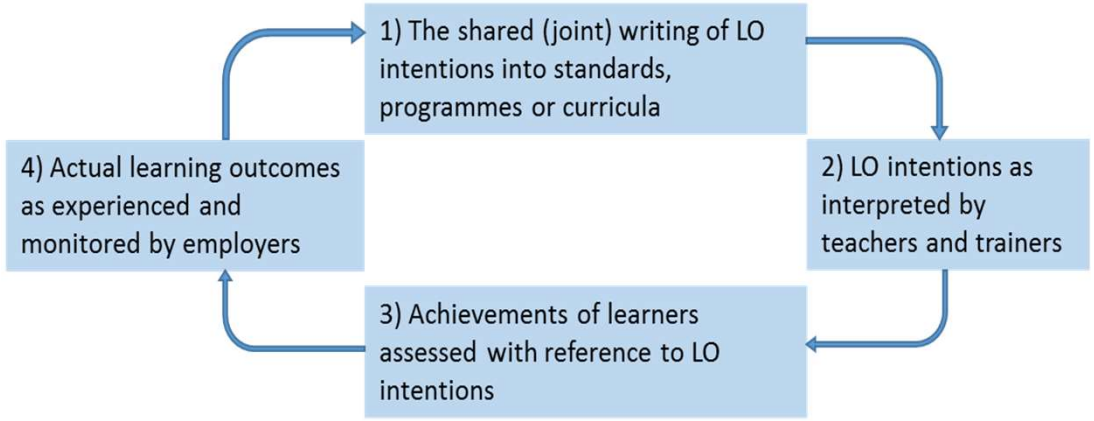
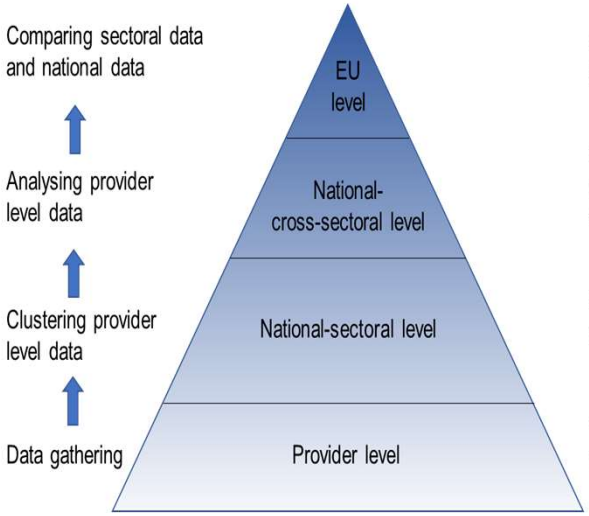
Objective: to prepare methodologies allowing for systematic comparison of the purposes, content and profiles of VET qualifications on a cross-border basis.
intended learning outcomes of qualifications
Actual learning outcomes asked for by the labour market
Appreciation of the relevance of qualifications to working life
How to complete the feedback loop? What can be said about the relevance of actual learning outcomes in the labour market?
WA 2: Gather and analyse qualification data
BB1: Key sources for data on national qualifications and their relevance for comparison
BB2: Digital technologies and their potential for supporting automated gathering, structuring and analyzing data on qualifications
WA1: Design / select a reference point for comparing intended LOs and LOs asked for
BB1: Definition of requirements for reference points for comparing national VET qualifications
BB2: Exploration and testing of reference points for comparing national VET qualifications
WA3: Exploring, gathering and analysing data on the match/mismatch between qualifications and labour market requirements
BB1: Exploring which data is gathered and which methods are used to gain information on the relevance of qualifications
BB 2: Identification of design features for a survey methodology that allows to systematically capture the experiences and appreciations of employers as regards the content and profile of qualifications
Need for (broader) policy support
Relevance in wider context (Cedefop, EC projects and activities (e.g. ESCO)
Need for (broader) policy support

- Look at the learning outcomes feedback loop
- Assess what vacancy texts can say about learning outcomes linked to qualifications
- Assess graduate surveys
- Assess the employers' satisfaction of graduates learning outcomes (Employer Satisfaction Survey)
- Design a methodology and test it





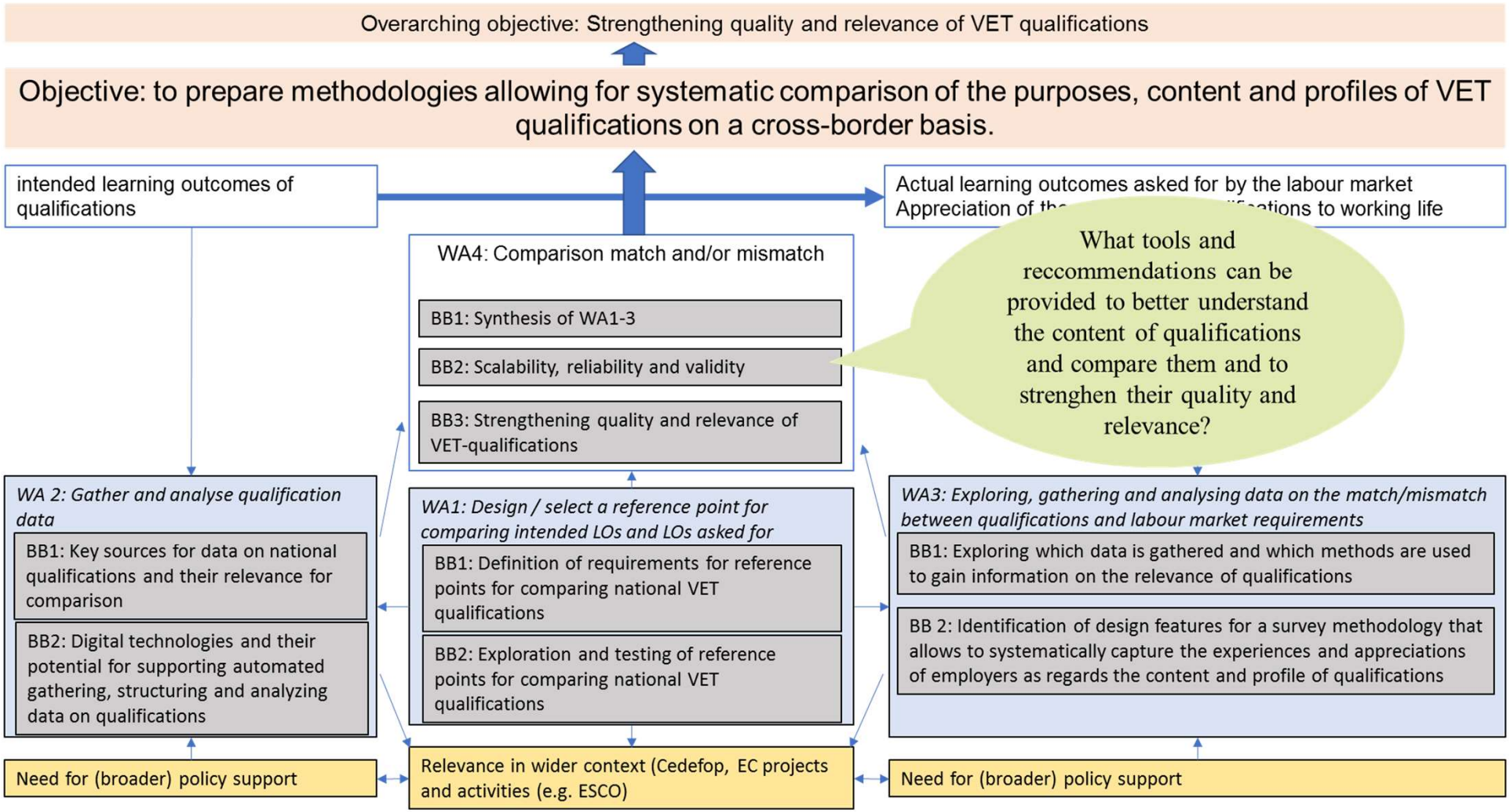
The objectives of an ESS approach are:

4: to compare different VET systems in how employers assess the achieved learning outcomes.

3: to generally see tendencies at national level how employers value the VET system in providing specific sets of learning outcomes.

2: to identify sectoral emerging needs in terms of learning outcomes.

1: to support VET providers to better align their provision to the needs of their direct labour market stakeholders.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Appreciation of the
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WA4: Comparison match and/or mismatch
BB1: Synthesis of WA1-3
BB2: Scalability, reliability and validity
BB3: Strengthening quality and relevance of VET-qualifications
What tools and reccommendations can be provided to better understand the content of qualifications and compare them and to strenghen their quality and relevance?
WA 2: Gather and analyse qualification data
BB1: Key sources for data on national qualifications and their relevance for comparison
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Comparing VET qualifications: key aspects

What is compared:
sources of national qualifications → key question 2

With what:
reference points or systems → key question 1

How:
methods used – such as manual comparison; automated gathering, structuring and analysis of data on qualifications supported by digital technologies
→ key question 3

For what purpose?
↓
potential use cases

Potential use cases #1

Supporting the improvement and further development of national qualifications:

identification of differences and similarities

__allows judging own priorities and solutions and gaining inspirations from other countries' choices

__can support mutual learning between countries

Supporting the international cooperation across countries

__ e.g. specifying learning outcomes that can be addressed in mobility phases or in joint programmes

__might require identification of 'core profiles' or 'core learning outcomes' that are included in the national qualifications preparing for the same occupation

Potential use cases #2

Showing differences and similarities of qualifications in the EQF context:

__qualifications from different countries with a similar profile and the same EQF level (e.g. for exploring the consistency of levelling decisions - 'horizontal comparison');

__qualifications that are supposed to be similar but linked to different EQF levels

Applying for a job or further learning programme in another country with a VET qualification:

__in case a specific VET qualification is an access requirement – identifying similarities and differences: can help decide whether it is worth applying; can provide arguments as to why one's own qualification can be considered sufficient; can provide insights into what additional LO would be required

Potential use cases #3

Obtaining a VET qualification in another country based on work experience and non-formal learning:

__a reference point that facilitates the mapping of LO contained in national qualifications and their translation into other languages can also be used for validation of prior learning

__it support the identification and documentation of a person's learning outcomes acquired through non-formal and informal learning in another country with a view to obtaining a vocational qualification

… Other use cases

Thank you!

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