

The information hub on validation of non-formal and informal learning

Putting together 20 years of research in the field

7 October 2025

Importance

Of validation of non-formal and informal learning

Strengthening European Competitiveness

Competitiveness today is less about relative labour costs and more about **knowledge and skills** embodied in the labour force.

Draghi, M. (2024). *The Future of European Competitiveness Part A: A competitiveness strategy for Europe.*



CEDEFOP

European Centre
for the Development
of Vocational Training



Validation

contributing to lifelong learning and competitiveness

Social inclusion

- wider access to education and employment
- better integration of migrants based on their skills
- young people volunteering experiences count
- key role on modularization, making learning more flexible
- Increasing individualised learning paths

Competitiveness

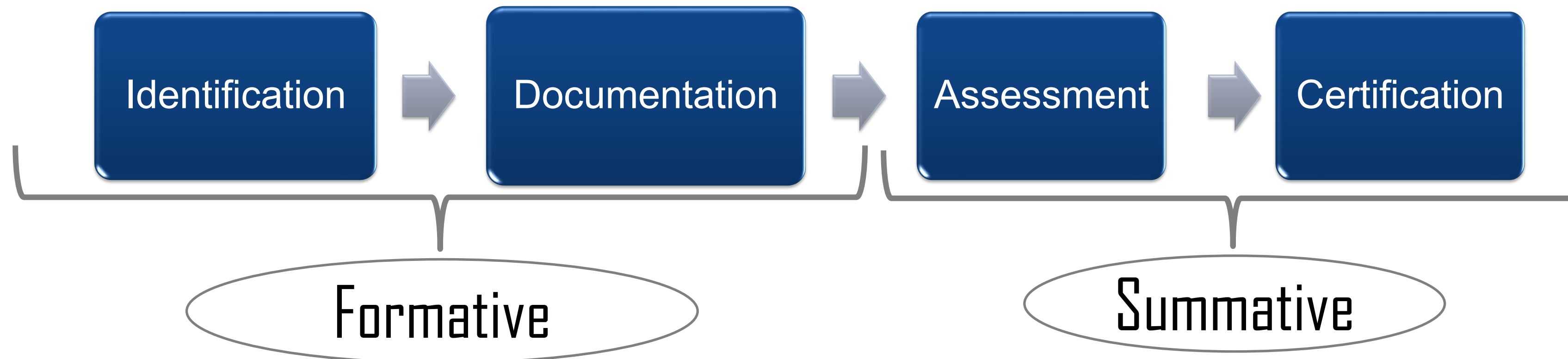
- access to more suitable jobs
- faster transitions
- easier redirection of careers
- Better up- and re-skilling
- attracting talent, “skills first approaches”
- matching skills supply and demand

The history and concept

Of validation of non-formal and informal learning

VALIDATION of non-formal and informal learning and its objectives

Validation means a process of confirmation by an authorised body that an individual has acquired learning outcomes measured against a relevant standard



Invisible
Informal
Suspicious

Recognition of prior learning (RPL)

Skills assessment

Credit exemptions

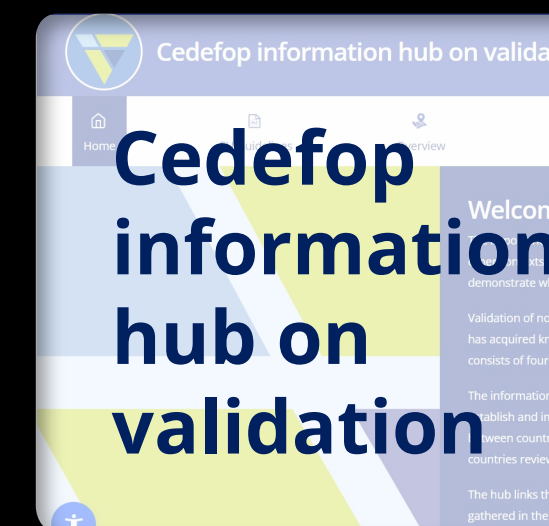
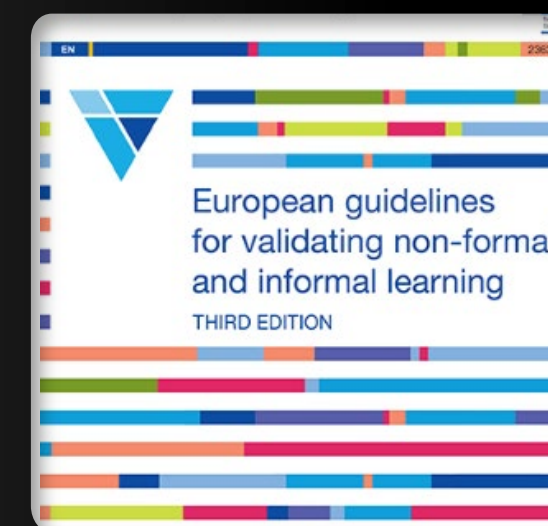
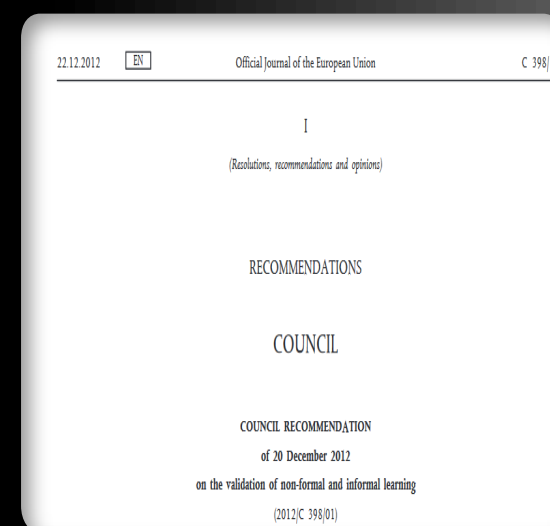
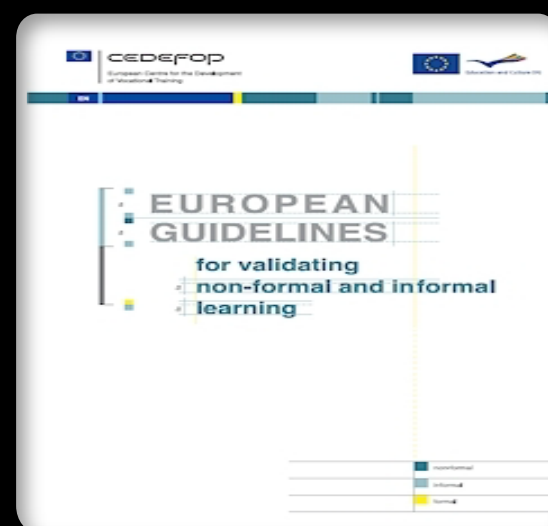
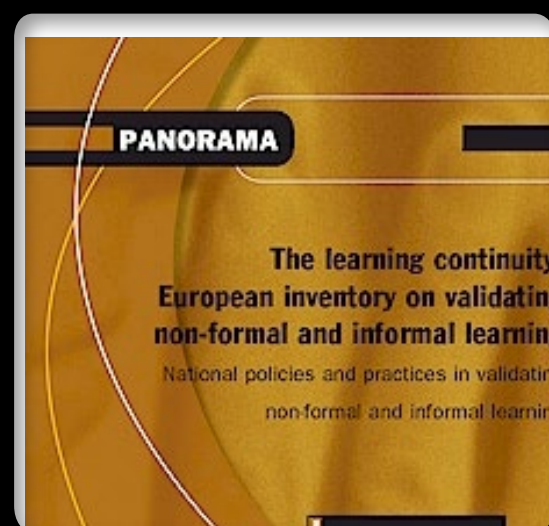
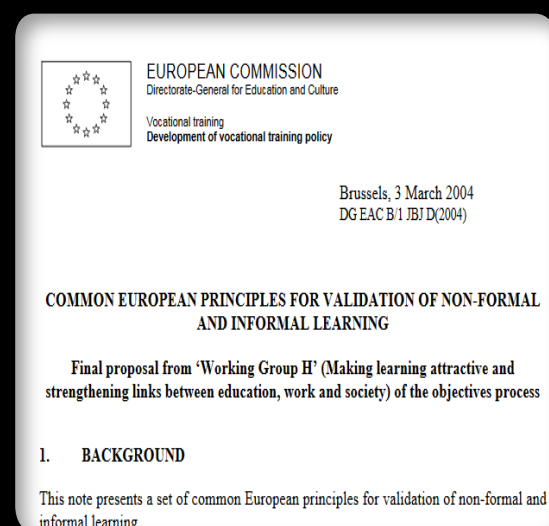
Prior learning assessment (PLA)

Recognition, Validation and Accreditation of non-formal and informal learning (RVA)

Formal
Accepted
VALID
WITH VALUE



20 years working together with EU policies



2025
Cedefop hub

Adapted from: Villalba, E., & Bjornavold, J. (2017), Villalba-García (2016), Villalba-Garcia, E., Souto-Otero, M., & Murphy, I. (2014)

A European approach

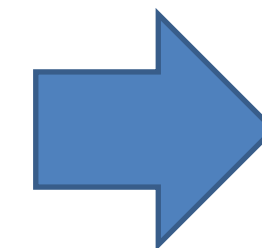
Of validation of non-formal and informal learning

What is the purpose of the guidelines and how do they add value?



- Builds on the principles outlined by the 2012 Recommendation
- Identifies relevant factors for the design, development, promotion and implementation of validation
- Written for everybody involved in developing, implementing and operating validation
- Addresses common challenges at different levels and contexts and act as a source of inspiration and reflection for peer learning
- Works together with the European Inventory

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications/3093>



Any solution must be fit for purpose and reflect the context in question. The Guidelines point to available options, and the implications of these, when establishing and operating validation arrangements

A harder than expected climb

Translation into other languages (ES, DE, IT, FR)
ETF – Russian

Nov. 2023

GOAL

May 2023

Published
guidelines

Publication of the guidelines (EN)

Dec 2022 - EQF AG Written
comments

28-29 November 2022

Last discussion at EQF AG

October 28 – 2nd Draft TO
EQF AG

July - September 2022

Consultation with EQF project group
on validation

Ground work since 2020

Projects and events and forums

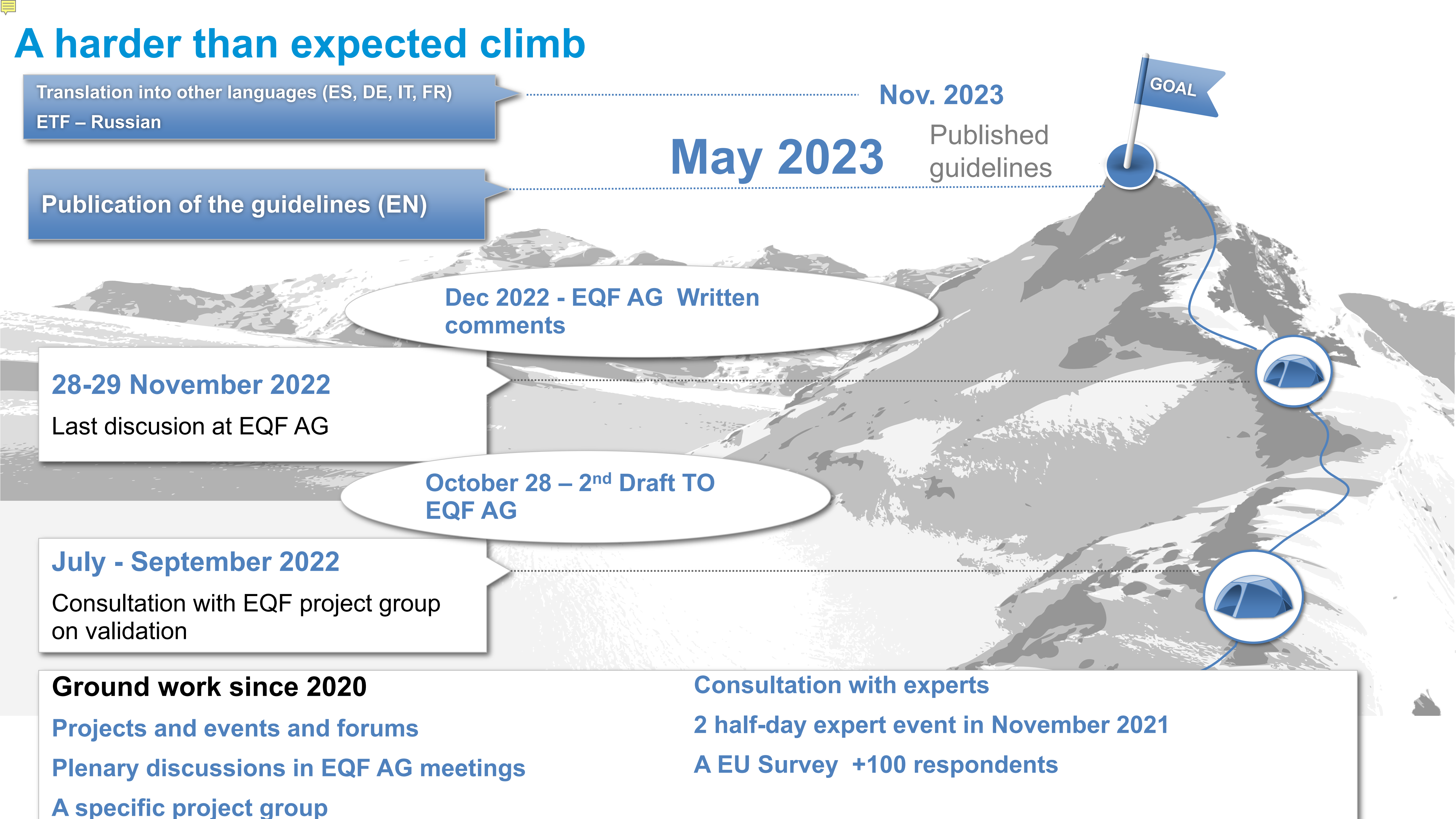
Plenary discussions in EQF AG meetings

A specific project group

Consultation with experts

2 half-day expert event in November 2021

A EU Survey +100 respondents



EU guidelines

Key questions on validation



CHAPTER 2

A strategic vision: the individual at the centre

CHAPTER 3

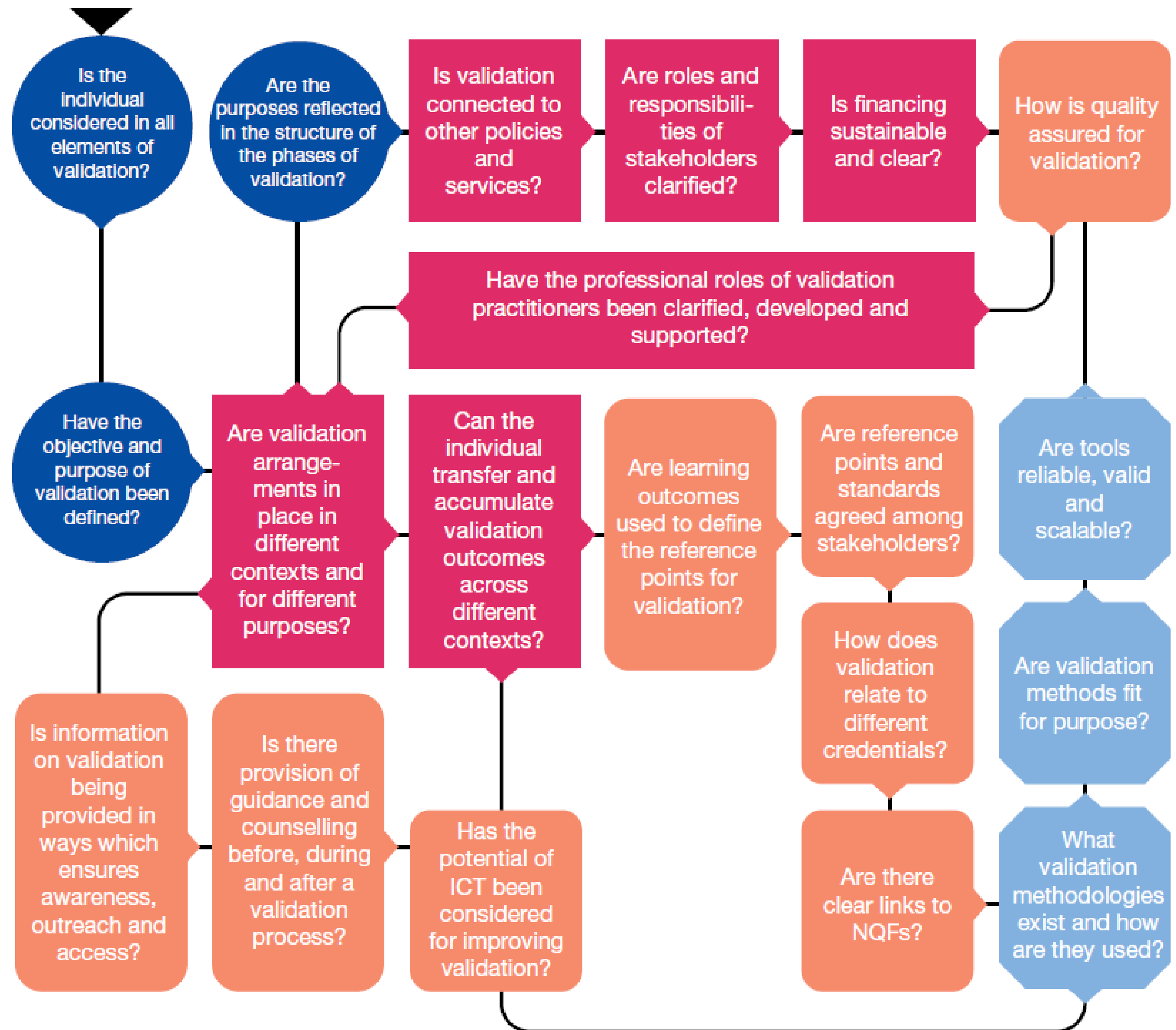
Validation as a facilitator of individual, lifelong and life-wide learning

CHAPTER 4

Validation provision elements

CHAPTER 5

Validation methodologies and tools



Source: Cedefop (2023). European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning. Luxembourg: Publications Office. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2801/389827>

Collecting evidence

Of validation of non-formal and informal learning

The European inventory update

Regular updates

2004, 2005, 2008, 2010, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2023 editions

32 country covered in 2023
EU, EFTA, other countries and case studies and more
+ 11 ETF countries

Covering **Education and training**, **Labour market** and **third sector** arrangements

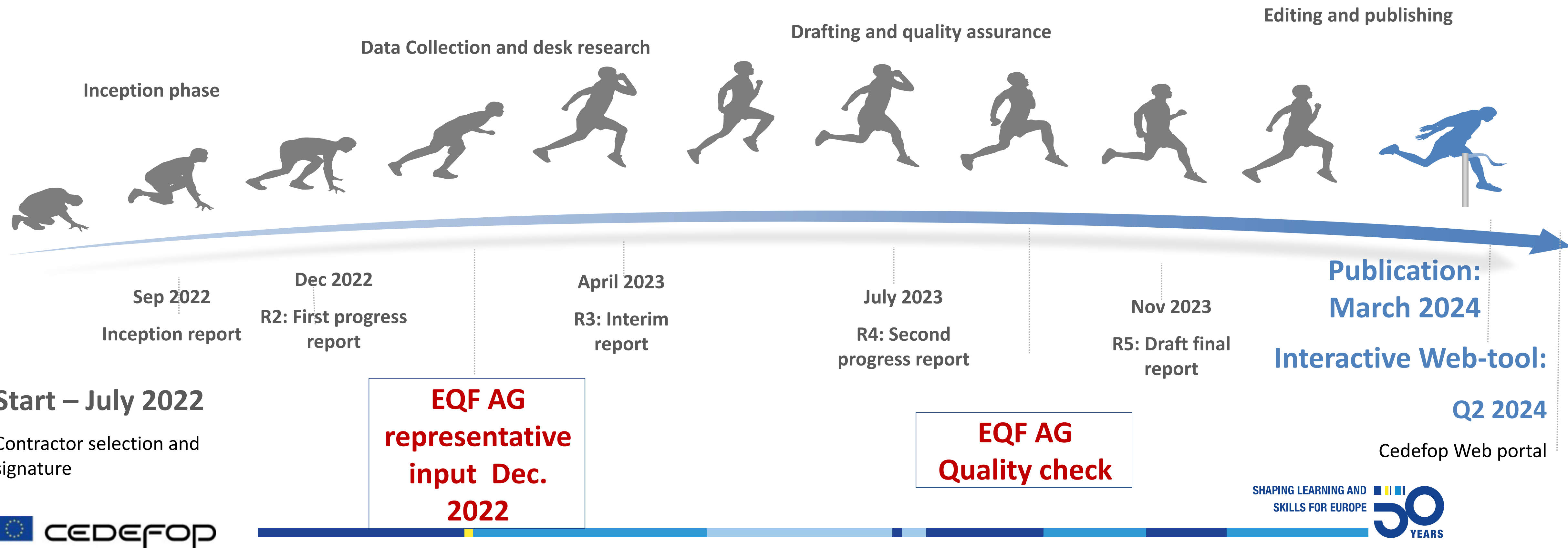
Country, case and thematic reports that cover special interest issues

2023 edition



CEDEFOP

European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training



Learning from each other

European inventory on validation

Regular updates

2004, 2005, 2008, 2010, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2023 editions

Comprehensive information

Country and thematic focus



32 countries covered in 2023
EU, EFTA, other countries and case studies
and more + 11 ETF countries

Covering Education and training, Labour market and third sector arrangements

Country, case and thematic reports that cover special interest issues

Bringing it all together

The information hub on validation of non-formal and informal learning

New web visualization tool learning from each other made easy

The screenshot displays the CEDEFOP website's 'Welcome' page. At the top, the CEDEFOP logo is on the left, and navigation links for 'VIEW MORE ONLINE TOOLS', 'LOGIN', 'REGISTER', and 'English' are on the right. Below this is a blue header with the text 'Cedefop information hub on validation of non-formal and informal learning'. A white navigation bar contains icons and labels for 'Home', 'EU Guidelines', 'Overview', 'Countries', 'Comparison', 'Publications', 'Events', and 'About'. The main content area features a 'Welcome' section with a green and blue background. It includes a paragraph about the importance of skilled citizens, a definition of validation, the hub's purpose, and a link to the 'Read more / Contact us' button. A yellow banner at the bottom of the page says 'Read the EU Guidelines for validation online →'. Logos for CEDEFOP, the European Commission, and the European Training Foundation (ETF) are visible in the bottom right of the screenshot.

- Collaborative effort building on previous work

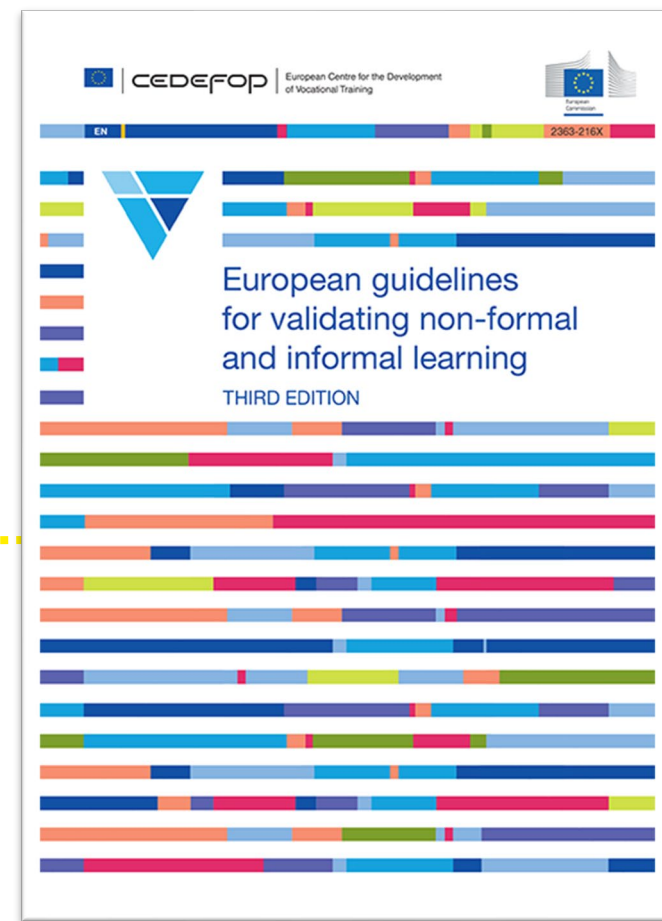
- Meaningful, targeted comparative, country data

- Easy access to specific information, more peer learning

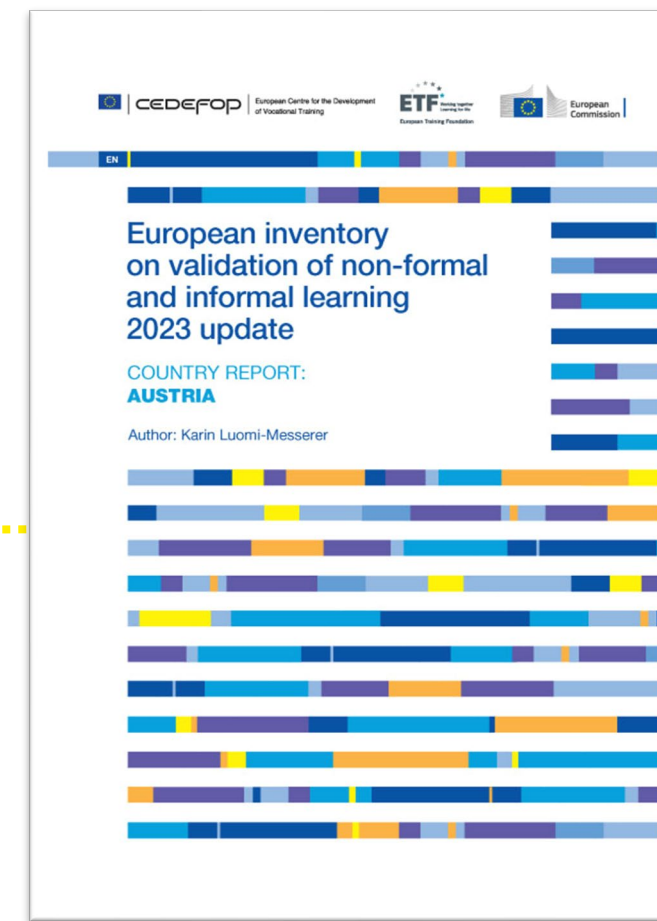
<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/validation-non-formal-informal-learning>

Sources of information

Three main sources



European Guidelines on validation



European inventory country reports

Country	Validation system	Validation body	Responsible	Validation process	Validation tools	Equivalency
Austria	Formal	Ministry of Education, Science and Research	Ministry of Education, Science and Research	Formal	Formal	Formal
Austria	Non-formal	Ministry of Education, Science and Research	Ministry of Education, Science and Research	Non-formal	Non-formal	Non-formal
Austria	Informal	Ministry of Education, Science and Research	Ministry of Education, Science and Research	Informal	Informal	Informal
Bulgaria	Formal	Ministry of Education and Science	Ministry of Education and Science	Formal	Formal	Formal
Bulgaria	Non-formal	Ministry of Education and Science	Ministry of Education and Science	Non-formal	Non-formal	Non-formal
Bulgaria	Informal	Ministry of Education and Science	Ministry of Education and Science	Informal	Informal	Informal
Cyprus	Formal	Ministry of Education and Sports	Ministry of Education and Sports	Formal	Formal	Formal
Cyprus	Non-formal	Ministry of Education and Sports	Ministry of Education and Sports	Non-formal	Non-formal	Non-formal
Cyprus	Informal	Ministry of Education and Sports	Ministry of Education and Sports	Informal	Informal	Informal
Czechia	Formal	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports	Formal	Formal	Formal
Czechia	Non-formal	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports	Non-formal	Non-formal	Non-formal
Czechia	Informal	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports	Informal	Informal	Informal
Denmark	Formal	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Education	Formal	Formal	Formal
Denmark	Non-formal	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Education	Non-formal	Non-formal	Non-formal
Denmark	Informal	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Education	Informal	Informal	Informal
Estonia	Formal	Ministry of Education and Research	Ministry of Education and Research	Formal	Formal	Formal
Estonia	Non-formal	Ministry of Education and Research	Ministry of Education and Research	Non-formal	Non-formal	Non-formal
Estonia	Informal	Ministry of Education and Research	Ministry of Education and Research	Informal	Informal	Informal
Finland	Formal	Ministry of Education and Culture	Ministry of Education and Culture	Formal	Formal	Formal
Finland	Non-formal	Ministry of Education and Culture	Ministry of Education and Culture	Non-formal	Non-formal	Non-formal
Finland	Informal	Ministry of Education and Culture	Ministry of Education and Culture	Informal	Informal	Informal
France	Formal	Ministry of National Education	Ministry of National Education	Formal	Formal	Formal
France	Non-formal	Ministry of National Education	Ministry of National Education	Non-formal	Non-formal	Non-formal
France	Informal	Ministry of National Education	Ministry of National Education	Informal	Informal	Informal
Germany	Formal	Ministry of Education and Research	Ministry of Education and Research	Formal	Formal	Formal
Germany	Non-formal	Ministry of Education and Research	Ministry of Education and Research	Non-formal	Non-formal	Non-formal
Germany	Informal	Ministry of Education and Research	Ministry of Education and Research	Informal	Informal	Informal
Greece	Formal	Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs	Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs	Formal	Formal	Formal
Greece	Non-formal	Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs	Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs	Non-formal	Non-formal	Non-formal
Greece	Informal	Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs	Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs	Informal	Informal	Informal
Hungary	Formal	Ministry of Human Resources Management	Ministry of Human Resources Management	Formal	Formal	Formal
Hungary	Non-formal	Ministry of Human Resources Management	Ministry of Human Resources Management	Non-formal	Non-formal	Non-formal
Hungary	Informal	Ministry of Human Resources Management	Ministry of Human Resources Management	Informal	Informal	Informal
Ireland	Formal	Ministry of Education and Skills	Ministry of Education and Skills	Formal	Formal	Formal
Ireland	Non-formal	Ministry of Education and Skills	Ministry of Education and Skills	Non-formal	Non-formal	Non-formal
Ireland	Informal	Ministry of Education and Skills	Ministry of Education and Skills	Informal	Informal	Informal
Italy	Formal	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Education	Formal	Formal	Formal
Italy	Non-formal	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Education	Non-formal	Non-formal	Non-formal
Italy	Informal	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Education	Informal	Informal	Informal
Lithuania	Formal	Ministry of Education and Science	Ministry of Education and Science	Formal	Formal	Formal
Lithuania	Non-formal	Ministry of Education and Science	Ministry of Education and Science	Non-formal	Non-formal	Non-formal
Lithuania	Informal	Ministry of Education and Science	Ministry of Education and Science	Informal	Informal	Informal
Latvia	Formal	Ministry of Education and Science	Ministry of Education and Science	Formal	Formal	Formal
Latvia	Non-formal	Ministry of Education and Science	Ministry of Education and Science	Non-formal	Non-formal	Non-formal
Latvia	Informal	Ministry of Education and Science	Ministry of Education and Science	Informal	Informal	Informal
Malta	Formal	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Education	Formal	Formal	Formal
Malta	Non-formal	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Education	Non-formal	Non-formal	Non-formal
Malta	Informal	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Education	Informal	Informal	Informal
Netherlands	Formal	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science	Formal	Formal	Formal
Netherlands	Non-formal	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science	Non-formal	Non-formal	Non-formal
Netherlands	Informal	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science	Informal	Informal	Informal
Poland	Formal	Ministry of National Education	Ministry of National Education	Formal	Formal	Formal
Poland	Non-formal	Ministry of National Education	Ministry of National Education	Non-formal	Non-formal	Non-formal
Poland	Informal	Ministry of National Education	Ministry of National Education	Informal	Informal	Informal
Portugal	Formal	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Education	Formal	Formal	Formal
Portugal	Non-formal	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Education	Non-formal	Non-formal	Non-formal
Portugal	Informal	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Education	Informal	Informal	Informal
Romania	Formal	Ministry of National Education	Ministry of National Education	Formal	Formal	Formal
Romania	Non-formal	Ministry of National Education	Ministry of National Education	Non-formal	Non-formal	Non-formal
Romania	Informal	Ministry of National Education	Ministry of National Education	Informal	Informal	Informal
Slovakia	Formal	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports	Formal	Formal	Formal
Slovakia	Non-formal	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports	Non-formal	Non-formal	Non-formal
Slovakia	Informal	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports	Informal	Informal	Informal
Slovenia	Formal	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Education	Formal	Formal	Formal
Slovenia	Non-formal	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Education	Non-formal	Non-formal	Non-formal
Slovenia	Informal	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Education	Informal	Informal	Informal
Spain	Formal	Ministry of Education and Vocational Training	Ministry of Education and Vocational Training	Formal	Formal	Formal
Spain	Non-formal	Ministry of Education and Vocational Training	Ministry of Education and Vocational Training	Non-formal	Non-formal	Non-formal
Spain	Informal	Ministry of Education and Vocational Training	Ministry of Education and Vocational Training	Informal	Informal	Informal
Sweden	Formal	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Education	Formal	Formal	Formal
Sweden	Non-formal	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Education	Non-formal	Non-formal	Non-formal
Sweden	Informal	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Education	Informal	Informal	Informal
Turkey	Formal	Ministry of National Education	Ministry of National Education	Formal	Formal	Formal
Turkey	Non-formal	Ministry of National Education	Ministry of National Education	Non-formal	Non-formal	Non-formal
Turkey	Informal	Ministry of National Education	Ministry of National Education	Informal	Informal	Informal

European inventory country fiches



Cedefop information hub on validation of non-formal and informal learning



Allows to **read** the guidelines online and **connect** to country examples

Provides an **overview** of validation arrangements in Europe

Presents **detailed information** on the validation arrangements per country

Allows for **comparison** across countries of **specific aspects** on validation arrangements

Provides links to relevant **publications** and **events**

[Read the EU Guidelines for validation online →](#)

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/validation-non-formal-informal-learning>

Thank you

www.cedefop.europa.eu

Follow us on social media



Ernesto.villalba-Garcia@cedefop.europa.eu



CEDEFOP

European Centre
for the Development
of Vocational Training